

STRONGER VOICES

PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT PACK

2023-24

Hello!

Thinking of applying to the Stronger Voices programme? This pack contains all the information you will need to help you apply, including an overview of the programme and the key dates you need to know.

Communications training for equality organisations can be transformative and pivotal for driving the change you want to see in the world. We know that communications training is hard to come by, especially for equality organisations with tight budgets and stretched capacity. Stronger Voices is a groundbreaking programme for small and medium organisations, because it's

designed for and by equality organisations - plus it's completely free.

Funded by City Bridge Trust and in partnership with Equally Ours, we have trained 75 equality organisations over the past five years to strengthen their strategic communications and secure media coverage. We are proud to be back for our sixth year to work with organisations like yours to increase your knowledge, confidence and ability in communications to amplify the voices of the communities you support.



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I feel more equipped to create comms campaigns and materials to amplify the voices of the people we support and to reach more people.

Switch Back, Amy Davidson, Communications and Campaigns Manager

What is the Stronger Voices Programme?

Stronger Voices is a six-month strategic communications training programme specifically designed for UK equality organisations, grassroots community-centred movements, and user-led charities based in London. The programme aims to empower you, the experts in your field, with the skills, knowledge, and tactics to amplify your voice, mobilise your audience, raise their profile in the media and influence meaningful change.

What is the aim of the programme?

The programme aims to provide you with the communications skills and strategies to raise the profile of your work and organisation, campaign for change and pitch and secure media coverage based on narratives that better reflect the root causes of inequality. We also create greater connections and collaboration between the organisations on the programme, leading to a stronger voice for the wider equality sector and a peer network of support.

Who is it for?

This programme is for people who work for an equalities organisation that are responsible for the day-to-day communications that may need upskilling, support or direction in their communications.

The programme will help you build a foundational understanding of communications as a whole, tailored to your organisation. After the programme, you will have a well rounded understanding of communications and key skills that you can apply to your role such as: framing key messages for your audiences, developing a social media strategy, and getting your story into the media.

We understand that your time is precious and resources are limited, which is why this intensive six-month course is completely free. We require one lead contact who attends the entire programme, however, the programme is designed to be flexible, allowing different individuals from your organisation to attend different sessions along with you.

Can I apply?

To apply to the programme as the lead applicant, you must be responsible for the day-to-day communications at your organisation, even if you have other non-communications-related responsibilities.

You can apply if you meet the following essential criteria:

- Is an organisation with an intersectional equalities purpose
- Is working in one of the 33 London boroughs
- Is a small to medium sized organisation with a turnover of £2 million or less.



We also set a desirable criteria and priority will be given to organisations that meet one or more of this criteria:

- Organisations campaigning for systemic change and/or tackling structural inequality in their work for communities in London
- Organisations that want to raise awareness, influence public opinion, and engage with or speak truth to power

- Organisations that can demonstrate they are user-led.

If you meet the essential criteria, we encourage you to apply even if you don't meet the desirable criteria. FAQ's about the criteria can be found at the bottom of the Stronger Voices Webpage, which is [linked here](#).

How do I apply?

We have an application form on survey monkey. The questions ask you about your organisation, including constitution and financial resilience, as well as questions about your current communications ability and future communications goals.

[Start your application here](#). The deadline to submit your application is Sunday 10 of September, 11.59pm.



What are you looking for in the application?

We want to know the impact participating in this programme will have on your organisation and the cause you work for. We use the information provided in the application form to select the 20 participants for this programme. Your application should demonstrate:

- How you meet our essential and desirable criteria
- Your commitment to the programme and availability to attend the dates
- What you hope to gain from improving the communications of your organisation

If you have any further questions on your eligibility, contact Rabia, the Stronger Voices Senior Programme Manager on rabiam@mediatrust.org.

What will the programme cover and how is the programme structured?

The programme covers four core learning areas: strategic communications, growing and mobilising your audience, engaging with the media and peer learning and collaboration. The programme will encompass the following core activity:

- Seven training workshops
- One Communications Audit
- Four Peer Networking Sessions
- At least one Framing Surgery reframing your comms
- One Mock Speed Pitching event
- One Speed Pitching with Journalists Event



Strategic communications

- Communications for Change Workshop
- Campaigning Workshop
- Intersectional Storytelling Workshop
- Framing Surgeries

Growing and mobilising your audience

- Social Media Workshop
- Comms Planning 101 Workshop
- Communications Audit (Charity Challenge Day)

Engaging with the media

- Media Interview Training
- Get Your Story into the Media Workshop
- Pitching Surgeries
- Mock Speed Pitching session and a Speed Pitching with Journalists Event

Peer learning and collaboration

- Four Peer Networking Sessions
- A buddy system
- Networking opportunities and collaboration within sessions

Application dates and process

Below are key dates for the application process including opportunities to join a Q&A session and decision date. Part of the application process may involve follow up questions and/or an informal phone or online interview so please make note of the week these will take place. If successful candidates are unresponsive during the clarification week, we may reallocate your place to another organisation.

Activity	Key Dates	To Note
• Applications Open	• Wed 2 August	• Applications open for five weeks
• Q&A event one	• Thurs 17 August	• <u>Sign up here</u>
• Q&A event two	• Wed 23 August	• <u>Sign up here</u>
• Applications close	• Sun 10 September	• Deadline is 10PM Sunday

Activity	Key Dates	To Note
• Decision email	• Wed 4 October – Wed 11 October	• You will receive an email with your application outcome
• Informal interviews and/or follow up	• Wed 4 October – Wed 11 October	• Must be available for a call this week
• Confirmation of your place	• Thurs 12 October	• All candidates must formally confirm their place by 12 October
• Welcome Breakfast	• Thurs 19 October	• If successful, we kick off with a virtual welcome breakfast at 10AM

Programme Timeline

To get the most out of the programme requires a strong level of commitment and regular attendance. We understand that one person may not be able to attend 100% of programme, so we do allow for one other staff member to attend sessions in your place or additionally - however, notice must be given. Before applying, please cross reference the below dates with your availability between October 2023 – March 2024. Feel free to share the timeline below with your team, highlighting the dates for the Communications Audit (Charity Challenge Day) as the majority of your organisation will be required to attend.

Most of the programme is delivered on Tuesdays or Thursdays mornings (10am-12.30pm). Some sessions will be in the afternoon but the entire programme will occur during work hours. The workshops are split into two sessions and are no longer than 2.5 hours per session. No session is longer than 3 hours (other than the charity challenge day). Most of the programme is virtual but please note the in-person sessions below.

Month	Activity	Dates	Format
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Breakfast • Comms for Change Workshop Part 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thurs 19 Oct • Tues 31 Oct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • Online
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms for Change Workshop Part 2 • Peer Networking Session 1 • Campaigning Workshop Part 1 • Campaigning Workshop Part 2 • Intersectional Storytelling Workshop Part 1 • Intersectional Storytelling Workshop Part 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thurs 1 Nov • Tues 7 Nov • Tues 14 Nov • Thur 16 Nov • Tues 28 Nov • Thurs 30 Nov 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • In person • Online • Online • Online • Online

Month	Activity	Dates	Format
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Networking Session 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tues 5 Dec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Workshop Part 1 • Social Media Workshop Part 2 • Comms Planning 101 Workshop Part 1 • Comms Planning 101 Workshop Part 1 • Peer Networking Session 3 • Group Framing Surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tues 9 Jan • Thurs 11 Jan • Tues 23 Jan • Thurs 25 Jan • Tues 30 Jan • Tues 30 Jan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • Online • Online • Online • In person • In person

Month	Activity	Dates	Format
February	• Framing Surgery	• Thurs 1 Feb	• Online
	• Communications Audit (Charity Challenge Day)	• Tues 20 OR Thu 22 Feb	• Online
	• Get Your Story into the Media Workshop Part 1	• Tues 27 Feb	• Online
	• Get Your Story into the Media Workshop Part 2	• Thurs 29 Feb	• Online
March	• Peer Networking Session 4	• Tues 5 Mar	• In person
	• Optional Pitching Surgery 1	• Thur 7 Mar	• Online

Month	Activity	Dates	Format
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Interview Training • Mock Speed Pitching with Journalists Session • Speed Pitching with Journalists Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tues 12 OR Thurs 14 Mar • Tue 19 Mar • Thur 21 Mar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person • Online • Online

The graduation will be held on Tuesday 30 April 2024, in person.

If you have any further questions, you can join our Q&A sessions or contact Rabia, the Senior Programme Manager for Stronger Voices on rabiam@mediatrust.org.

Join us for one of the two Q&A sessions if you have any questions about the programme, eligibility, or the application process. Sign up below:

Thursday 17 August

Wednesday 23 August

For further enquiries, please contact Rabia, the Stronger Voices Senior Programme Manager, at rabiam@mediatrust.org.

Best of luck with your application!

