

# Community Partners Award - Guidance Notes

## Community Partners Award Information

The Community Partners Award recognises community organisations that are working with businesses in order to achieve excellence in social impact. Community organisations will need to demonstrate good practice and innovation in facilitating and building cross-sector partnerships that benefit Greater London. Community organisations may be charities, schools, community groups or social enterprises. Their partnerships must be with business or public sector bodies (environmental initiatives are not eligible).

## Eligibility

- For community organisations, schools, charities or social enterprises in Greater London.
- Social enterprises are only eligible to apply for the Community Partners Award since, unlike a private sector business, social impact is the core purpose of the business.
- Community organisations, schools, charities or social enterprises can apply themselves, or nominations are welcome from businesses or public bodies. The nominee must be informed before the application is submitted. In this category there will also be the opportunity for a small and a larger community organisation to be recognised.
- The same initiative cannot be submitted in more than one category. All partners involved in the same initiative must decide which category it best fits into and submit one application to that category only.
- If your initiative was shortlisted in 2018 you can apply again with the same initiative (or another) in any category, however the judges will be looking for ways in which your initiative has developed over the past year.
- If your initiative won an Award in (2018), it should not be entered in any category for three years following receiving the Award. For example, any initiative that won in 2018 should not be entered again until 2022. When submitting in following years the initiative should have had substantial changes made to it since winning the award. You may apply with a different initiative to this year's Dragon Awards.

## Your Initiative

The initiative described in your application must benefit Greater London communities. Wider activity beyond Greater London will not be scored in your application, so should only be referenced to give wider context for your work.

Applications can focus on either a single partnership or wide-ranging business engagement.

Where two or more organisations are working in partnership on the same initiative, only one application should be submitted. Please make it clear if you are making a joint application.

## What are the Judges Looking for?

Judges will be looking for innovative and effective ways of working with businesses or public bodies that:

- Engage and manage business interest.
- Build and maintain relationships through effective communications and relationship management.
- Engage, manage and support business partners to make a social impact.
- Evaluate the value of the partnership and ways in which it can be strengthened.
- Have an eye to the future when the level of business involvement may change.
- Evidence that the initiative has had a positive impact on the business, e.g. improving company culture or making organisational practices more inclusive.

## Examples of Partnerships May Include:

- Working with a business to engage, manage and support employee volunteers in different roles to address a social need.
- Working with a marketing business to run a campaign addressing a societal issue.

## Judges' Tips

- Don't assume knowledge – ask someone who doesn't know the project to tell you where the gaps are.
- Inspire us – show how you have responded to a real need, leveraged your capabilities to respond to that need, and made an impact.
- Talk about the future – we want to know what happens next, how will the impact be sustained – often forgotten.
- For community partners – explain your role in managing the partnership, why are you the best partner to the business.

## Previous Winners

Please follow the link to see videos of previous organisations who have won in this category:

- [Winner videos](#)

## Completing the Application

### **Organisation Details - Section 1 (Not scored)**

Guidance for this section can be found within the online application form itself. If you have any further questions, please get in touch with us at [DragonAwards@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:DragonAwards@cityoflondon.gov.uk).

### **Your Initiative - Section 2 (Scored)**

The Awards judges will only be able to take into account the information you supply in your application in the scored questions. With a tight word count, it is important to make every word count.

To do well you must be able to demonstrate substantial impact. Generally, if your programme has been running for less than one year you may not have sufficient data.

- Each question will be scored on a scale from 0 – 10.
- If a question is left unanswered, zero points will be awarded.
- Please be aware of the weighting for each question.

#### **Question 1. Please describe the partnership and your role in setting it up.**

This question will count for 20% of your total score. [300 words maximum]

This question focuses on the role of the community partner in the development of the partnership and assesses the strategic fit of the partnering organisations.

To score highly in this question, please try to include information regarding as many of the below points as possible:

- When the partnership was set up and who with.
- Why you chose this business(es) to partner with.
- Why your organisations are a good fit e.g. shared values and mutual benefit.
- What the partnership aims to achieve.
- How beneficiary groups and activities are selected.

## **Question 2. What makes the partnership successful?**

This question will count for 25% of your total score. [300 words maximum]

This question looks at the ongoing support provided by the community organisation to enable effective and impactful partnership working that achieves maximum impact.

To score highly in this question, please consider the following and provide examples:

- How are the relationships managed and maintained?
- Do you have an agreement, MOU or partnership plan in place?
- What processes are in place e.g. monitoring and evaluation?
- How are volunteers from the business supported by the community organisation, including induction, training, and communications with them?
- How are problems resolved if they arise?
- What is innovative about your partnership?

## **Question 3. What difference has this initiative made to your organisation, your business partner and wider society (qualitative and quantitative)?**

This question will count for 40% of your total score. [800 words maximum]

The judges will be looking for the impact of your partnership, how social impact has been achieved collaboratively with your partner(s) and the benefits to your beneficiaries, your business partner(s) and you as an organisation. Where possible, this should include how much progress has been made since the partnership started i.e. where you started and where you are now. Please focus your answer on the impact and only give a very brief indication of your partnership inputs and outputs if you feel it is necessary.

Further information about measuring impact can be found [here](#).

To score highly in this question, try to include quantitative and qualitative evidence of as many of the following as possible:

- The difference made to the community as a result of the partnership (e.g. number of people with increased confidence, number of people who learnt new skills, number of jobs gained etc).
- Any benefits to your charity, such as lessons from the partnership being applied to other projects.
- Any benefits to the business as a result of the partnership (e.g. the number of employees who felt that their communication skills had improved as a result of volunteering), enhanced company reputation (e.g. reputation amongst clients).
- Any of the partnership's aims that have been achieved.

**Qualitative evidence of impact**

- Short case studies from community beneficiaries.
- Quotes from employee volunteers.
- Quotes from business or community leadership, such as CEOs.

**Quantitative evidence of impact**

- Statistics that demonstrate improvements for the community, such as the percentage of people in the project who reported improved skills or the percentage increase in procurement spend going to social enterprises who in turn have a social impact.
- Statistics that demonstrate improvements for the community partner, e.g. money saved from a new IT system brought in on the advice of employee volunteers or increased visibility through a business campaigning on an issue to audiences not normally reached by the community organisation.
- Statistics that demonstrate improvements for the business, e.g. the percentage of employee volunteers who reported an increase in their communication skills as a result of volunteering or a shift in company policy to become London Living Wage accredited with details of increased staff engagement and improved external reputation as a result.

**Question 4. What plans do you have for the future?**

This question will count for 15% of your total score. [200 words maximum]:

The judges will be looking for evidence of a partnership with sustainable social impact. Please consider the following when answering this question:

- Do you plan to scale the partnership or apply learning to other partnerships?
- Are there any future collaborations planned?
- Are there any plans in place for after the partnership has ended in order to sustain the social impact made?