Dragons Den - top tips for successful funding bids

During November 2013 we invited commissioners and experts in public health to form a mock ‘Dragons Den’ panel at our scheme coordinator workshops. The ‘Dragons’ listened to several schemes mock funding pitches and shared their advice and expertise on applying for funding. We’ve collated their advice below and you can watch the pitches here.

Prior to the pitches from schemes, some of our ‘Dragons’ helped to set the scene of public health and provided some valuable advice about how best to work with public health teams. You can see a sample of their presentations here. Several of our ‘Dragons’ suggested this following animation as a simple way of explaining the new NHS, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health and Wellbeing Boards and all the other information it’s helpful for people working with public health teams to know about.

Preparing your bid

When preparing funding applications, the ‘Dragon’s’ suggested you think about the following questions:

- What’s new about your scheme? How do you get people who are not interested in walking to start walking?
- What difference are you making and to who? Know who you are targeting and be specific.
- How will you know when you have reached your target group?
- How will you demonstrate the health gain of your walkers?
- When will you know if the programme is adding value? Can you evaluate its success?
- Have you thought about a backup plan if it’s not working?
- How is your project sustainable?

Top tips

From years of experience commissioning services and projects, the ‘Dragon’s’ could share some inside knowledge to help you stand out from the crowd with your funding bids:

- **Keep it simple**- use bullet points and be clear what you are asking for and why.
- **Who are you targeting?** know your local population- review the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to understand the inequalities in your area.
- **Tailor made**– do your research - how does your local public health team work and what are their priorities? Tailor your application so it meets their needs.
- **Get to know your local contacts**- local consultants in public health, local health and wellbeing boards, the local Healthwatch contact and the relevant council member. Could you attend a Health and Wellbeing board meeting?
- **Evidence**- present the evidence of what works and demonstrate outcomes.
• **Evaluate** - build in evaluation from the beginning.
• **Partnership working** - don’t forget to add in evidence where you have links with primary care, secondary care, the voluntary and social sectors - how does your group connect to the community? Do you have local advocates who can support your bid?
• **Figures** - show the numbers of people you have helped. Demonstrate how the public health benefit outweighs the cost - you could consider using tools like the World Health Organisation’s [HEAT](https://www.who.int/healthpromotion/dietphysicalactivity/heat).
• **Be innovative** - how do you attract and maintain walker attendance.
• **Long term goals** - demonstrate exit strategies for walkers onto other activities.
• **Volunteers** - include any resource required to support volunteers and make sure you can measure their contribution and impact for future funding bids.
• **Be creative** in the way you pitch - could you make use of video, stories or get them walking.
• **Be open to change** - if your idea isn’t working, revise it and discuss with the funder.

**More funding advice**

For more information about funding, see our guidance pages [here](#) where you can find out where to look for other sources of funding as well as read about more funding hints and tips. Remember, if you are successful with your funding bid – let us know – we’re always keen to hear about success stories and share on the website!