



# About the Advice Workforce Development Fund

Welcome to today's *Helping Hands: valuing the advice workforce* conference. The day promises to be packed full of learning, insights and ideas to take forward from the Advice Workforce Development Fund programme (AWDF), the Advising Londoners Partnership (ALP), and the delegates alike.

For those of you who have not come across the AWDF programme before, here are a few notes to put you in the know...

The Advice Workforce Development Fund (AWDF) is a collaborative programme dedicated to strengthening and sustaining the social welfare advice sector in London. Funded by **London Funders' Propel** programme, its mission is to build a sustainable, effective and diverse advice workforce that serves Londoners at the point of need. The programme also aims to sustain and drive investment into the sector while also serving as a host for the development of a comprehensive London-wide advice strategy.

While many delegates will already be familiar with the background, the AWDF was created in response to long-standing concerns around recruitment, retention, pay, training, and support in the advice sector. It brings together funders, advice providers, and infrastructure bodies to take a strategic, coordinated approach to tackling these challenges.

The programme is made up of several key elements:

1. Eight Propel-funded projects, delivered locally across London, are testing and modelling new approaches to recruitment, retention, training, and progression in the advice workforce. Each project contributes to learning being shared across the whole sector.
2. A Steering Group of 21 partner organisations, from front-line advice providers embedded within the communities they serve, to funders and membership or umbrella bodies. Its role is to set the strategic direction, shape the long-term vision, and ensure the Fund's activities are aligned with sector needs.
3. A range of dynamic, sector-led Task & Finish Groups, which are able to take a deeper dive into particular workforce-related issues, and commission further research projects where necessary. Groups currently in operation include:
  - **Pay & Conditions** – looking at pay levels, job security, and employment practices. This group has overseen research that will be launched at the conference.
  - **Organisational Capacity** – exploring what advice organisations need to support and develop their staff effectively.

- **London-wide Advice Strategy** – we are proud to host the early development of a London-wide advice strategy, which has involved engaging a wide range of stakeholders across the advice ecosystem. Some of the findings of a recent Advice Strategy Roadmap project, which helped shape this early thinking, will be shared in the morning break-out session that bears its name.

The Fund has also been working to maximise use of the Apprenticeship Levy in the advice sector, helping organisations understand how apprenticeships can support career pathways and build capacity.

We hope delegates enjoy hearing about all the learning generated so far and feel inspired to contribute to the next phase of this important work.