



# Spirit of Manchester Fund 2025/2026

## Bringing Communities Together

### Mini-grants Programme Guidance



Macc is the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector support organisation for the city of Manchester. The Spirit of Manchester is our annual celebration of the work of thousands of voluntary organisations, community groups, charities and social enterprises in the city.

It includes the Spirit of Manchester Fund, which is our yearly fundraising drive from which we give out all donated money via a small grants programme like this one.

This year, eight £500 grants are available to small and grassroots VCSE organisations that are members<sup>1</sup> of Macc.

Submit completed applications via the online form by 12 noon (midday) on Wednesday 22 October 2025.

Successful applicants will be able to use the funding between December 2025 and 30 June 2026.

### Funding aim

This year's theme for the Spirit of Manchester mini-grants, **Bringing Communities Together**, aims to support activities that cultivate a genuine sense of belonging among diverse groups within the city. In a context where tensions, prejudice and acts of intolerance – such as discrimination against minoritised ethnicities, migrant communities, LGBTQ+ individuals, people living with disabilities and those of different faiths or lifestyles – are sadly prevalent both daily and in the media, these projects should seek to promote understanding, harmony and respect.

Beyond strengthening social connections, the grants – eight awards of £500 each – will fund initiatives that create meaningful opportunities for shared experiences, enable dialogue and mutual learning. Examples include community events, intercultural exchanges, opportunities for young people to talk about difficult topics in a safe space, initiatives that tackle online hate, or simply collaborative projects that aim to bring communities that make up Manchester together, to counteract division and nurture an environment of social cohesion, where everyone feels valued and has the opportunity to contribute.

### Who can apply?

To be eligible, organisations must be:

- members of Macc
- be small and grassroots VCSE organisations
- operating wholly within and for the benefit of the city
- receiving an average annual income no greater than £50,000

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<sup>1</sup> As part of being the VCSE sector support organisation for the city of Manchester, we are also a membership organisation: <https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/who-we-are/membership>. This funding opportunity is available only to Macc members.

## For how much can you apply?

To help ensure that we allocate all available funding we invite applications for exactly £500. Your organisation may submit only one application.

## Eligible costs: what we can fund?

Any of the usual kinds of costs that relate to events, educational or media production and similar projects that will help bring communities together, e.g. venue hire, refreshments, volunteer expenses, printing costs, materials, consumables, etc..

## What we cannot fund

We cannot fund any activity that does not take place in Manchester or is not aimed at bring communities together. Funding is not available to further political or religious aims or to pay for speakers from within the applicant organisation.

## What support is available to applicants?

Macc's capacity building team can provide free support for applicants through their usual referral process. Groups can call 0333 321 3021 between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday or contact [info@mcrcommunitycentral.org](mailto:info@mcrcommunitycentral.org) to request support and the team will manage requests subject to their capacity.

For general queries, please email [grants@macc.org.uk](mailto:grants@macc.org.uk).

## How and when to apply

Please read in full this guidance and the application form to ensure your proposal meets the criteria. The fund will close to applications at **12 noon (midday) on Wednesday 22 October 2025**.

If you have not received an email acknowledging receipt within two working days of submission please contact 0161 834 9823 and ask for Oliver Cranfield.

## How will Macc assess applications and when will we notify the outcome?

A small group of VCSE sector representatives will assess eligible bids and identify successful applicants. We will inform all applicants of the outcome of their application by email no later than Monday 10 November 2025. We will provide brief feedback from the assessment panel to unsuccessful applicants.

## Due diligence checks

If you are successful in applying for one of the grants, before the funding is paid you will need to assist us in carrying out due diligence checks. We will ask you to provide copies of the following information about your group:

- governing document (e.g. constitution, etc.)
- most recent signed annual accounts (or a Treasurer-signed income and expenditure statement for the last twelve-months if annual accounts are not available)
- a recent bank statement (it must cover at least a one-month period)

and include dates after 1 September 2025)

- either a financial management policy or the home addresses of two trustees

The information requested above is required as part of our standard due diligence checks to ensure funding recipients are currently active in Manchester and financially solvent. Macc is obliged to collect this and other information in its role as administrator of charitable funding.

In strict accordance with The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, all personal and financial information will be stored confidentially. Macc's Information Commissioner's Office reference is Z9595019 and we are re-registered annually on 10 September. Upon request, Macc can provide our data protection and information security policies and if more detailed information is required, please let us know.

**Please note:** If your project involves working with children or vulnerable adults, you will need to provide a copy of your safeguarding policy.

### **If successful, when will we receive the grant?**

On receipt of an offer letter from Macc during November 2025, organisations will need to complete and return an 'Acceptance of Grant Offer' form together with the due diligence information requested (see previous section). Subject to you providing the requested information quickly, we aim to transfer approved funding within a few days.

### **How long will we have to spend the grant?**

Successful applicants must have entirely spent their funding by 30 June 2026. That is also the deadline date for submitting a Spirit Story.

### **Providing a Spirit story about Bringing Communities Together**

There will be no monitoring or reporting requirements for this funding. Our only condition is that by 30 June 2026, successful applicants provide us with at least one story we can use to highlight the fund, your work and the work of the VCSE sector.

**Length:** the story should be 300 words maximum or a two-minute film / audio piece

**Title:** you could use an alliteration, pick out the main point of the story or use a quote

**Summary/first sentence:** what different communities your project brought together

**Story:** more details about the Bringing Communities Together project we funded, including who was involved, when, what, why and where. We want to hear the human story of what difference your project has made to different communities. Please include at least one quote from a project participant if possible.

**Images:** Please send two or three images for us to use with the story, whether it is a written article or a video/audio. This helps the story to be noticed more.

**How we will use your stories:** These stories will be used on the Manchester Community Central website, and shared on social media and in our publicity for the Spirit of Manchester Fund and Spirit programme. This could include during the Spirit of Manchester Story weeks twice a year and the lead-up to the Spirit of Manchester Awards. They may be edited slightly (cut down) to fit the particular use.