The Spirit of Manchester Awards celebrate and highlight all the excellent work being carried out in Manchester’s voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. There are hundreds of charities and community groups all across the city and thousands of local people at work every day to support our communities.

This year’s Awards will be open for nominations on 1 March 2019

We’re excited to be inviting applications for a new category this year, which will be unveiled soon. A list of the categories can be found on the next page.

Look out for our new Awards logo

Our Media Assistant, Tony, has been designing a new logo for us to use which we will be debuting very soon, watch this space!
Don’t miss the chance to highlight and celebrate all the work you do. Maybe you volunteer your time or you are part of a community group or you may be from a business that gives back to the community. Whatever it is this is your chance to showcase your work.

2019 Award Categories

- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Volunteering Team Award
- Employee Volunteering Award
- Volunteer Involving Organisation Award
- Service User Involving Organisation Award
- Inspiring Campaign Award
- Partnership and Collaboration Award
- Community Space Award
- Business Award
- Community Cohesion Award
- Equalities Award
- Health and Wellbeing Award
- The Dr Sylvia Sham Award for Contribution to the Sector
- Plus one more category to be revealed soon!

The deadline for nominations is: 30 April 2019 (midnight)

How can we develop leadership in Manchester’s voluntary, community and social enterprise sector?

The next VSA will be a leadership conference and the Macc AGM

Tuesday 26 February 2019, 1pm - 4.30pm
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre

You don’t have to be a CEO or senior manager to ‘do’ leadership. We’re not talking about hierarchy, status or job titles – effective leaders can be anywhere and everywhere.

This event will look at how we use relationships, values, different behaviours and trust to influence positive change in Manchester’s VCSE sector – and beyond. It’s about finding and connecting future leaders, building supportive networks and in doing so, ensuring the sustainability and impact of our organisations and our work.

We’ll look at how you lead when you’re not in charge, how you lead across sectors and even how you lead when you’re not part of the organisation that you want to influence.

There will be a range of interesting speakers and participative workshops. As part of this event, Macc will be holding its Annual General Meeting and electing new members to our Board of Trustees, talking about how governance and leadership sit together and reflecting on Macc’s role in supporting and developing leadership in the city.

Click here to book your place

If you have any queries, contact Helen, 0161 834 9823, or email: helen@macc.org.uk
Active Communities

In 2019, the Active Communities Team will be reflecting on its work to date and will be developing and sharing a strategy (expressed in a new and interesting way!) that points to how we’ll continue to increase the role of people in Manchester through volunteering, active citizenship and asset-based community development.

We’re also excited to be supporting the delivery of another round of The Spirit of Manchester Active Communities Fund mini-grants programme; that aims to reduce or remove the perceived barriers that affect getting involved in volunteering, active citizenship and community activity.

Some highlights and key happenings for our citizen-facing projects and services in 2019 will include:

- The formal launch of Skill Givers; which links employers with local voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises, who support their community to get active in Manchester and Salford

- The Greater Manchester Older People’s Network will start the year with a celebration event that will also focus on progressing the work of the network in campaigning to make Greater Manchester a more age-friendly place to live and experience ageing

- Volunteer Centre Manchester is pleased to once again be invited to sit on the national Volunteers’ Week Working Group and will once again be laying on a programme of events and activities to mark the celebration movement that recognises the contribution of volunteers over the course of a week (1-7 June 2019)

We’re continuing to grow…

In late 2018, Macc learnt that it had been successful in a bid to the Our Manchester Investment Fund. Commencing in 2019, Active Communities will welcome a new team member that will be working on the Hour Manchester project; that will create an interconnected Timebanking network across Manchester.

Hour Manchester will also develop a social coin or digital currency; exploring ways of converting the hours earned through a timebank into points that can be ‘spent’ locally – watch this space!

All the very best for the year ahead, look after each other – and come and collaborate with us in 2019!

The Active Communities Team
Greater Manchester Older People’s Network

We would like to wish all of our Greater Manchester Older People’s Network members a very happy new year!

We started 2019 with our celebration event, ‘Celebrating the Greater Manchester Older People’s Network: Where are we now and where are we going?’ on 8 January 2019.

It was a fantastic event with great presentations from James Baldwin from Transport for Greater Manchester, Liz Jones from Macc, Wendy Cocks from Care and Repair and Pascale Robinson from Better Buses Manchester. We were also treated to a fantastic performance by the Silver Circus from Skylight Circus Arts.

In the afternoon, delegates had the opportunity to discuss housing, health and transport in GM and to identify which areas the GMOPN could focus on in 2019. We also had a great panel discussion led by Nigel Rose from Macc, with Pam Smith from Stockport council, Warren Heppolette from the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, James Baldwin from Transport for Greater Manchester and Wendy Cocks from Care and Repair.

The event was a huge success and we will be taking on-board all the recommendations that delegates came up with, in order to shape our campaign agenda for this year.

We are also looking forward to the launch of our new working groups in February of this year. The groups will meet every two months, to share news on what work is already going on in Greater Manchester in the three different areas of housing, health and transport and to plan work for the network to focus on throughout the year.
Over the next few months we’re working with groups to make a series of informative videos to be shown in the waiting rooms of GP surgeries around Manchester. The videos will be led by the groups, and feature the work they do, with the aim of informing local patients about nearby available support and activities they may not have otherwise known about or thought to follow up on.

Initially, we’re working with Didsbury Good Neighbours (DGN) and Friends of Didsbury Park (FoDP), who are both based in Didsbury Park, to create two short videos that will also reflect the values and aims of the groups.

FoDP wants to focus on raising awareness about the beauty and features of the park itself as a community hub, as well as promoting their work within it and perhaps getting more people involved with maintaining it. DGN hopes to place more emphasis on the help and support it provides for its members, whilst also letting people know how they can get involved as a volunteer.

These videos will then be displayed in the nearby Barlow Medical Centre, who will then monitor the impact the videos have had within the practice by working with Macc, DGN and FoDP. It is hoped that should the videos be proven useful, that there is the potential for this project to be developed to include more GP surgeries around Manchester.

Watch this space – or the screens in your own Manchester-based surgery
New year, new you? New us too…

We all start the New Year with some sort of resolution, even if not spoken aloud the new year gives us the chance to make changes and develop. Well, that is no different here at Volunteer Centre Manchester.

After taking on an extra member of staff in 2018 and with our wider Active Communities Team support network continuing to grow we’re in a good position to take stock and develop the way we work with organisations and volunteers. We are going to be focusing on three major areas during 2019.

The first area we are looking at is the accessibility of our service and the way in which people looking to volunteer can find opportunities with us. A particular priority is how our online registration works. It is important that volunteers from all walks of life have a smooth interaction with Volunteer Centre Manchester, both in person and online. Therefore, over the next year we’ll be looking to streamline the journey from that first initial interest in volunteering to finding those brilliant opportunities to do good.

Secondly, we want to refresh our training offer for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. Over the next few months, we’ll be talking to organisations and volunteers about what training they would like or find it hard to access and developing training that reflects the ambitions and needs of the sector.

Our third focus will be challenging the voluntary sector to think critically about how accessible and inclusive their volunteer opportunities are. We will be looking to work collaboratively with organisations who exhibit great practice in the accessibility of their opportunities as well as working with organisations who work with groups who may face barriers to volunteering so we can better learn how to work inclusively.

Each one of these strands is part of Volunteer Centre Manchester’s overall aim (or you could call it a resolution) for 2019; to make it possible for every resident of Manchester to benefit from volunteering and to better equip volunteering involving organisations with the tools to be able to benefit from the diverse experiences of the citizens of Manchester.
A day in the life of the Training Co-ordinator

After a nightmare journey of travelling in through the snow, (living in the hills does that for you) I remember that half of the Macc workforce are attending internal staff training. After ensuring that everything is ready to go for the session, I read my emails, respond to an enquiry and then attend the weekly team meeting where we discuss referrals and have a general catch up.

Once team meeting is finished, I pick up my idea to try and be a bit clever and arrange an in-house First Aid training session to be delivered here at our office next Monday. My thoughts around this are to be able to offer VCSE groups places at a discounted rate whilst also ensuring that the first aiders here at Macc receive their annual refresher session.

Today I have taken 4 calls – one person enquiring about legal structures for their group (email sent), another caller looking for support with taking on a building (suggested booking onto CAT workshop), later in the day I had an enquiry about booking onto the funding your project workshop (sorted).

All in all it has been another busy but enjoyable day with plenty of office banter particularly from me and my sheer dislike of snow.

A day in the life of the Communications Worker

I start the morning replying to email requests for support from groups and requests from colleagues for help.

I carry on working on some monitoring stats for our funder, it’s not for everyone but I do quite enjoy pulling off our stats and getting all the numbers together!

Then it’s time for our weekly team meeting, some group referrals to go through and the usual catch on key things and a discussion about how the training bookings are looking. Then there’s the discussion about who should write the main article for the newsletter (who’s going to get the task this time?) and we decide let’s do the Day in the life of the Capacity Building Team a refresh on the Day in the Life of an Organisational Development Worker article we did a few years ago.

Back to my emails after the team meeting. I respond to and move the emails with articles for the ebulletin in to a folder ready to put together later in the week.

More spreadsheets and monitoring stats, which by the end of the day I’ve had enough of. In between this I answer calls to our support line and to the main Macc office number, too many calls from sales people, there’s also emails coming in to respond to.
A day in the life of an Organisational Development Worker

Tuesday is team meeting day. Today there were only five new cases to allocate, and of those two came my way – one involving support to a health network and the other a new charity looking to support Asian women.

We also discussed the introduction, on a trial basis, of a regular ‘drop-in’ session for groups or individuals to discuss project ideas at an early stage so we can put them on the right track early on, or else direct them to the appropriate support for their needs.

Prior to the team meeting I had a lengthy discussion with a group regarding a training session. My afternoon was spent planning a trustee recruitment training session and updating some of the resources.

And whilst not attending to all this, I had email conversations setting up meetings with groups; meetings with the Our Manchester team at Manchester City Council; setting dates for direct training with a group and advising a group on their discussions with the Charity Commission regarding conversion of their organisation from a CIC to a CIO – and helping the group to answer the detailed questions from the Charity Commission.

A day in the life of the Capacity Building Team Manager

Week four, 2019: my aloe vera plant has doubled in size (too many half-drunk cups of chamomile tea) and already 16 new requests for group support, including: choosing a legal structure; registering CIOs; sourcing grants; reviewing funding bids and trust deeds; turning projects into new organisations. Good job we have a dedicated team to provide information, bespoke 1:1 support and training, promote opportunities and be a listening ear.

Ongoing 2018 groups supported are exploring partnership working, business planning, community asset transfer and board development so there’s a juggling act with this and new work and not overstretches our resources - but we’re good at juggling.

Keeping abreast of themed work across Macc and the sector and where the team has a role to play and priorities for support in the coming year. Time to think about improvements to monitoring and evaluation, tracking any support gaps. Comments on internal policy drafts; a meeting on digital services and – hopefully - time to move beyond GDPR (though there’s always data cleansing…). Emails pop up constantly so a quick scan then back to the monitoring report for our funder. Must be time for a brew now (I need it more than the aloe vera does).
Training – tell us what you need…

It is that time again where we ask you to help us in identifying what training you are looking for in 2019 by completing our annual training needs analysis.

Whatever your priorities are for this year, we want to be sure that our training offer is relevant to you and your organisation. Therefore, we want to hear from anyone and everyone – whether you are the chief executive or a volunteer this is your opportunity to tell us what you are looking for, any barriers that you face with training and most importantly, what we can do to help.

The results allow us to scope the training we can offer through the year, where there are gaps we can look to bridge them and there will always be some surprise topics that come along during the year.

The questionnaire this year has undergone a mini-makeover with a new section added to allow you to feedback on any training you may have accessed previously from us as we are always keen to hear about your experiences (good or bad).

As always, your answers will be kept confidential with the option to leave your contact details at the end.

Please help share the questionnaire to colleagues and networks – it should not take more than five minutes to complete and it really does help us to plan the training programmes throughout 2019.

To complete the questionnaire visit: https://bit.ly/2DdiJST

Many thanks

Cheryl, Training Co-Ordinator

training@mcrcommunitycentral.org
Public speaking is often a topic that can raise a fear in people – I can’t just stand up in front of a load of people and speak - what if I say the wrong thing, what if I don’t get my message across, how do I keep the attention of the audience? All of these thoughts plus undoubtedly 1000s more questions are running through your mind and this is even before you stand up to talk.

In October, we decided to run a Public Speaking workshop working with Stephen Dows from Stand and be Counted whom we actually got to know through a wedding (but that’s a completely different story). Stephen has a vast and varied knowledge and experience in Public Speaking – being a compere himself he quotes on his LinkedIn page that he and microphones have a good relationship.

Manchester Parent Champions were amongst the attendees to the workshop. The champions are a dynamic group of parent/carers with a child or younger person with special educational needs or disability. The group have over 155 members working on many exciting projects all over the city to help improve services for young people with disabilities. This workshop offered the group an opportunity to build on existing skills, learn new techniques, build on confidence and gain an understanding in how to prepare themselves to be better speakers.

Members reported that they often find themselves in situations such as meetings, appointments, events where the subject can be very personal and emotions are heightened. This can lead to a struggle in getting your point across whilst remaining cool and calm. The workshop allowed them to understand how to prepare better for these situations, what techniques / styles can be used and most importantly to not be afraid. There is a danger that you think you know everything about public speaking if you are regularly faced with having to speak but actually, there is a lot still to be learnt. The group definitely recommend anyone whether you are new to public speaking or have been speaking for years to attend this course.

The group offered some useful feedback on their experience of the training.
“"I have a child with a disability and English is my second language, but I want to help others in my community, but I am not always confident about how I come across. This course gave me tips and advice and confidence on how to communicate better”

“"I was a teacher in my own country but there was a war and when I came to the UK I lost my confidence to tell my story to others. This course has helped me get back the skills I had but I think it has also given me better skills now”

We are running the next Public Speaking workshop on Thursday 28 March 2019. For further information and to book your place visit: https://bit.ly/2M5E4kB
The next Voluntary Sector Assembly event will be held on the 26 February. Entitled ‘How can we develop leadership in Manchester’s voluntary, community and social enterprise sector?’, there will be a range of interesting speakers and participative workshops.

As part of this event, Macc will be holding its Annual General Meeting and electing new members to our Board of Trustees, talking about how governance and leadership sit together and reflecting on Macc’s role in supporting and developing leadership in the city.

Macc and Salford CVS are both 100 years old in 2019 and we are starting to plan a celebration and reflection event that will be held in July. More details will be available soon.

Making sure the VCSE sector is involved in consultation and decision making in the city is key if all residents are going to benefit from investment, services and opportunities. In addition to the work Macc carries out, we know there are organisations across the city who attend meetings and do representation work beyond their own organisations. The P&I team will be doing some research to build up a picture of this work, and look at how Macc can support the organisations involved.

Birkenhead Council held a regional conference last week to showcase the work they have been doing with CLES to look at how wealth can be ‘made to stick’ in an area, and the spending power of big organisations such as councils, hospitals and universities can create more benefits for local residents. Frankly, it all seemed rather straightforward; employ local people, buy from local businesses, and keep land and other assets in local ownership. So why aren’t we doing more of it?

Greater Manchester Combined Authorities carried out consultation on creating a Good Employment charter. In principle a good idea – who doesn’t want to see good quality jobs with training, development and the living wage? – but Macc raised questions around monitoring and quality control, how large national and international companies could be influenced to offer better terms and conditions locally, and how tender processes needed to promote living wage.
VCSE sector representatives have had a set of meetings with Manchester Local Care Organisation (the overarching organisation for statutory-provided community health and care services) to develop a memorandum of understanding between the two sectors. This memorandum will be launched soon and is best understood as setting an agenda for further action.

We have been facilitating a series of co-production meetings with MCC Sports and Leisure commissioning and Gateway Debt Advice in Collyhurst and Communities for All in Cheetham Hill and their stakeholders to develop a plan to support people in their areas to do more activity.

One of the key issues identified as part of the Our Manchester Grants Programme is the under-investment in North Manchester due partly to the lower number of VCSE organisations. We have been working with the Grants Programme Team to set up a North Manchester Inquiry which will develop recommendations to be presented to the Programme Board on how to develop a more vibrant, stronger, and more thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester.

We’re currently undertaking a review of the Community Explorers network that we facilitate in partnership with MHCC to ensure that it remains a useful space for connecting, sharing information and keeping up to date with all the changes to the way that health and care services are planned and delivered in Manchester. Part of this will involve looking at how it fits in with the wider structures and other meeting so VCSE organisations can make an informed decision about what meetings they attend and where they have the best opportunity to get involved.

We’re also continuing the systems leadership conversations across Manchester with a wide variety of people who want to build relationships and collaborate differently across sectors. Our Brew and Biscuits matching scheme has been overwhelmed with people who want the opportunity to meet others, and we’ll soon be launching a TED Talks Cinema Club to share and discuss new ideas.

The Policy and Influence Team

Karen Dyson  
Nigel Rose  
Claire Tomkinson  
Helen Walker
Do you want your own copy of this newsletter?
If you’re reading this in a library or at another organisation and you would like to receive your own copy of the newsletter then email us at: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org