# Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) Grant Programme 2023–2026 Guidance Document

## Guidance for Individual Applicants

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This guidance is intended to help you fill in the application form for the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme 2023-2026.

This guidance is to help you fill in the application form with the information we need to decide whether to give you a grant. We recommend you get someone to check over your application form before you send it to us to ensure you have answered all the questions and that your answers are clear.

This guidance note is for applications submitted by individual organisation. For partnership applications please see the associated guidance document on our webpage.

If you need additional support or guidance to complete your application, you will find a list of resources that may help at the end of this document

The application form needs to be completed online. Applications will be open from the 1st September 2022. Visit the [OMVCS webpage](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200101/voluntary_organisations/7706/funding_and_grants_for_voluntary_and_community_sector) for the online application form.

# General guidance

## Word counts

You will be assessed on the quality of what you write not on the quantity. The application has questions with different word counts. Depending on the level of funding you are requesting, we suggest that you use the following as a guide for how much you write:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Suggested amount to write** | | | |
| Word Count Maximum | Small  (£30,000 - £120,000 over 3 years, £10,000 - £40,000 a year) | Medium  (£120,001 - £210,000 over 3 years, £40,001 - £70,000 a year) | Large  (£210,001 - £300,000 over 3 years, £70,001 - £100,000 a year) |
| 300 | 150 | 200 | 300 |
| 500 | 300 | 400 | 500 |
| 1000 | 750 | 850 | 1000 |

You will not be penalised for going under or above the suggested limits as long as you are under the maximum for that question. However, answers that are very short are unlikely to contain enough information to score highly.

You can use bullet points and lists and you do not need to write in whole sentences as long as the meaning is clear.

## Mandatory questions

All questions on the form are mandatory, and the form will not allow you to submit if you do not answer them. Where you are asked to fill in service user numbers, where numbers are 0 (e.g. your service works with no residents aged 90 plus), input an answer of 0.

## Evidence required

Applicants at all levels of funding are expected to supply the evidence necessary to support statements they make in their application. For applications at the larger level (£210,001 - £300,000 over 3 years, £70,001 - £100,000 a year) there are some questions we require more and different types of evidence to. These are highlighted for the relevant questions in this document.

## Additional information

The assessment panel will be making their decisions based on only the information you include in your application. You cannot attach additional documentation or provide hyperlinks within the online form.

## Work in Manchester

Throughout this application form we mainly want to hear about the work you do in Manchester with Manchester residents. Where you describe activities or evidence from outside Manchester, you should explain how this is directly relevant to work with Manchester residents.

|  |
| --- |
| Before You Apply Before filling in your application you may wish to check that you meet the minimum eligibility requirements for the fund via our eligibility checker which you can find here: [OMVCS Applicant Eligibility : OMVCS23-26 Eligibility Checker (manchester.gov.uk)](https://surveys.manchester.gov.uk/s/omvcschecker/) |

Assessment Framework

Applications will be scored on six criteria. The assessment panel will be looking across the whole application for evidence of the criteria, though some questions will apply to one of the criteria more than others.

| **Scoring Area** | **A high scoring application will demonstrate** | **Weighting (%)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **(1) Links to aims of programme** | * Have a clear link between their work and the aims of the fund and what the fund is trying to achieve * Has a clear understanding of the needs, strengths and issues facing the communities they work with, and has awareness and understanding of the current context for Manchester residents | 30 |
| **(2) Demonstrating Impact** | * They have a clear understanding of the needs, strengths and issues facing of the communities they work with and has awareness and understanding of the current context for Manchester residents * That they have a track record of working in Manchester and making a positive, lasting impact to Manchester residents * That their proposed activities are the same or similar as successful existing activities they’ve done   + If the activities are significantly different to the proposed activities, to what extent is it:     - Linked to the service users the organisation already has links with     - Using the same general methodology/skills that the organisation has shown success in * Based on evidence and needs and strengths of the communities the organisation works with * That their outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) in relation to their proposed activities. That the proposed outcomes are achievable and aligned to the amount of funding being bid for | 20 |
| **(3) Well Run** | * Clear governance structures that are in line with best practice, and that they have a plan for the future * Has staff with appropriate skills to carry out their activities * The ways in which they collect feedback and respond to it * How they’ll manage the funding, and how they will monitor success, including how their outcomes will be monitored and reported on with detail about what, how, and when information will be collected, who from, and how this will be used to improve the organisation through evaluation * That they have a diverse range of income streams, meaning that they would be able to successfully continue if one or more of those streams ended * That there is a well thought-through alignment between a set of SMART outcomes and the amount of funding they’re asking for | 20 |
| **(4) Collaborative** | * How they collaborate with others (i.e. other VCSE orgs, public sector, private sector) to enhance their work * How their work connects with what’s going on in the city | 10 |
| **(5) Strengths Based Approach** | * How they substantively involve residents in the work of the organisation and their own outcome setting * Have a clear understanding of the needs of the communities they work with and has awareness and understanding of the current context for Manchester residents * Works with service users from a position of strengths and involves them in their own outcome setting | 10 |
| **(6) Value for Money** | * That they have a diverse range of income streams, and would be able to successfully continue if one or more of those streams ended * A clear and reasonable breakdown of funding that is appropriate to the activities proposed and the previous work and impact made * Clearly explained costs, including a description of how costs have been worked out * Has a plan for the future | 10 |

Each of the above criteria will be scored out of 5.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | Failed to meet the requirements. Unacceptable quality of responses. Major doubts/reservations about bid/project. |
| **2** | Meets only a small number of requirements. Poor quality of the responses. Reservations about bid/project |
| **3** | Generally meets the requirements. An average quality response but lacks sufficient detail across the answer to warrant a higher mark. Some reservations about bid/project. |
| **4** | Meets most of the requirements, Good quality of responses with good supporting evidence. Small amount of reservations about bid/project but assessor is generally happy |
| **5** | The application meets all of the above criteria. No reservations about bid/project |

# Detailed guidance notes – Individual organisation application

We have only supplied guidance for questions we consider need clarification.

## Eligibility

### This section asks you to confirm your eligibility for the Our Manchester VCS (OMVCS) Grant Programme.

If your application is successful, we will ask you for the documentation and evidence required in this section. Our offer of grant funding will be withdrawn if you do not supply the information and documents when requested during the due diligence process.

### Is your organisation constituted or formalised with an agreed set of rules or governing document in place?

To be eligible for the funding your organisation must be constituted, or in the case of organisational set ups that do not adopt a constitution, be formalised with an agreed set of rules or governing document in place. This means that organisations that are set up as Community Interest Companies (CICs) who have Articles of Association are able to apply.

## About you and your organisation

### Name of organisation

Please use the legal name of your organisation (as shown in your governing document). If your organisation is also known by other names, put these in brackets. If you are applying as a partnership, this should be the name of the lead organisation.

### Address of organisation

The address should be the registered address of your organisation. For organisations who have both a regional and Manchester office, please put your Manchester address.

### Main contact person and second contact person

Both contact people should be key members of your organisation with detailed knowledge of your application. We will only contact the second contact person if the main contact person is unavailable.

### Social media accounts

Insert the website and main active social media links.

### Reference numbers

If your organisation has more than one status (eg. charity and company) then please list them all.

## Vision, values and activities

We want to understand how your vision and values underpin what you do in Manchester

### Tell us about your organisation’s vision, values and activities

Provide a summary about the type of work your organisation does, what communities/people you work with and what you hope to achieve with your work. We want to know about the work your organisation does generally in this section – there will be space later in this application to outline what you want to do and achieve with this bid.

### Tell us about how your organisation is run and managed

In this section include a summary of your organisational structure and how your organisation is managed and run, to ensure effective activities with good outcomes.

Tell us about the skills of your staff and how that helps you to deliver effective and safe activities.

In this section also include how your organisation plans for the future and ensures its sustainability. You could reference organisational strategies and planning as evidence as part of this answer.

### How do informal and formal partnerships and relationships with other organisations enhance the work you do?

In this answer we want to know how your organisation collaborates with others, either formally or informally, to support and enhance the work you do and maximise the impact you are able to make on residents’ lives. We want to know how your work connects to what is going on in the city and in your local communities.

Informal partnerships and relationships could include your organisations involvement in local or thematic networks, representing your organisation’s work in multi-agency steering groups, providing advice and support to peer VCSE organisations in your local area or other relevant arrangements.

Formal partnerships/relationships might include organisations you’ve previously or currently work in partnership with, and partnerships where there are formal or semi-formal documents in place between the partners (e.g. Service Level Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding).

## The people you work with

### Tell us about the positive impact you've had in Manchester within at least the last 18 months

In this section we want to know about your work, connection and impact with Manchester residents. You should include what work you’ve done (activities), when, what difference that work made and how you know you’ve made a difference.

You should include work that has taken place within at least the last 18 months if you have not been operating for at least 18 months within Manchester you are not eligible for this funding.

Please also note, whilst your organisation may include work with Manchester and non-Manchester residents, we ultimately will be assessing based on your organisations work understanding and connection with Manchester residents.

### Provide a case study of someone you’ve worked with which helps to demonstrate the impact your organisation has had

To bring the work you do to life, we’d like all applicants to provide a case study demonstrating the difference that you’ve made to someone/the communities you have directly supported.

For the smaller level grant applicants, we expect direct service user feedback, quotes, or a short case study.

For the larger level grant applicants, we would expect to see a case study with quotes/feedback from a service user demonstrating that there’s a proven benefit to the work and the approach taken.

### Service user data

We want to know your best estimate for the number of individual Manchester people you have provided a direct service for over the most recent year you have records for. The estimate must be based on evidence in records. If you have provided a number of services for a single Manchester citizen, then this counts as one individual user. Please include all services you provide for Manchester citizens, not only those funded by Manchester City Council.

## Volunteers

### Tell us about your volunteer offer, how you support volunteers to upskill them, and how they help you deliver effective and safe activities?

Please include all types of relevant volunteering activity that contribute to activities with Manchester people, including the work of unpaid trustees and non-formal volunteers.

### Volunteer numbers

We want to know your best estimate for the number of individual Manchester people that volunteers for your organisation. The estimate must be based on evidence in records.

## Proposed Activities

### Which aim or aims does your activity support? Tick all that apply

We will not score your application more highly if you tick more than one of the aims of the grant programme.

### Tell us about your proposed activity. Your response should include:

### what you plan to do

### how this supports the aim/s of the fund that you have identified above

### what difference it will make to the individuals/communities you work with

In your answer, also include how many people you propose to work with.

Your answer should include how your proposed activities link and address the strengths, needs and issues faced by the individuals/communities you work with that you identified in question 30. Tell us about how your activities will help to address the needs and challenges faced by the people you work with, and why you are taking this approach.

Your proposed activities do not have to be the same as your existing activities. However, where they are significantly different or if you are planning developments, you will need to explain the basis for the new activities and how they are:

* + Linked to the service users the organisation already has links with
  + Using the same general methodology/skills that the organisation has shown success in
  + Based on evidence and needs and strengths of the communities the organisation works with

### Tell us about the outcomes and indicators for your activity. List at least 3 outcomes for this work.

An outcome is the difference you want to achieve as a result of the funding. An indicator is how you will track and gather evidence on to measure progress.  
  
For example, an outcome for your project may be “to see a decrease in isolation of older people in Harpurhey”, and an indicator to track your success could be “50 of our service users are supported to become involved in befriending schemes”, or “100% of older people we work with feel more knowledgeable about what’s in their local area”.

Your outcomes should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

These outcomes will be used as a basis for part of the monitoring and evaluation of your activities and you will need to report on your success in achieving them.

For the larger level grant applicants, we would expect to see well-planned and compelling outcomes that lead to a lasting change in the lives of the target group.

### What tools and methods will you use to measure and monitor these outcomes?

Tell us about how you will know you’ve made a difference.

For the larger level grant applicants, we would expect to see clear evidence of an outcomes framework being in use and that it can demonstrate the organisation’s success in achieving and monitoring good outcomes.

**Please note:** The OMVCS fund's strength-based principles are closely aligned with the Our Manchester Carers Strategy which is coproduced with the Manchester Carers Support VCS. Organisations which identify support to carers as their primary activity are required to commit to membership of the Carers Manchester Network (CMN), to actively support the strategy and the developing Manchester Carer Support Pathway.

The CMN promotes mutual support and coordination of activity across the City to increase reach and effectiveness of support services via the Carer Manchester Contact Point. This provides carer focussed information and advice, linking carers to the extended support that is available on a neighbourhood or specialist basis.

## Finances

This section covers the entire funding you are requesting over a three-year period. You must summarise the full amount you are asking for – this figure cannot be raised at a later date.

Please note that for organisations funded in the current Our Manchester VCS Grants Programme, there is no cap on the level of funding that you can apply for.

However, if you are applying for more than 100% of your current annual income you are unlikely to be successful.

### How will you spend the grant over 3 years?

In this section you need to tell us how you will spend the grant that you are asking for, eg. staffing, rent, stationery and equipment.

Your response to this question should cover only those services or activities you are requesting funding for.

You will need to demonstrate how your spend over the funded period takes account of inflation increases in the same period. Whilst this is not fully known at the time of application, you should include some budget assumptions which reflect how inflation will affect how the grant is spent and on what.

### How have you worked out your costs?

Explain the thinking behind your costs and how they represent good value. Where you are asking for a contribution to core costs, detail what these costs are and how the funding requested has been calculated.

### Tell us about what income your organisation has received over the last 18 months with a brief description of how the money was used.

We want to know about grants, contracts, donations, trading income, charging, investment income and any other significant income that contributes to the diversity of your funding and to funding activities with Manchester people. This should be for the most recent 18 months you have records for. The aim is to gain a good overview of the main sources of income that sustain the work of your organisation.

Below is the definition of what each heading means:

* Type: this is the type of income you have received, and could include grants, contracts, donations, trading, etc.
* Source: the provider of the grant or contract, main sources of donations, trading, etc
* Amount: amount you have received
* Start and end date: Start and end date of when you received the funding
* Use: briefly describe the agreed activities

If your organisation works with people from outside Manchester, you may want to include examples of other income to illustrate diversity, but you do not need to list all your income.

You do not need to include small amounts.

For larger level grant applicants, we would expect to see experience of managing larger funds.

## Added Value

Please note this section will not be formally scored as part of the assessment process. However, it will be used to provide a basis for your agreement with us and monitored over the next 3 years.

### Real Living Wage

You’ll need to tell us if you’re a living wage employer. If you are not currently an accredited living wage employer, we do not expect you to have this in place before receiving OMVCS funding. In this section you will need to tell us about what you’ve already done and what you intend to do to become a living wage employer.

We will expect you to make progress against your plans, with a view to becoming a living wage employer within the first two years of the funded period. In your application please include an estimated target date for accreditation. Steps you might take to become a living wage employer include:

* Signing up to the Living Wage Foundation to get advice and guidance on how to implement the real Living Wage in your organisation
* Creating your plan for implementation and sustainability
* Ensuring direct staff are paid the living wage
* Ensuring main contractors such as cleaning staff are paid the living wage
* Getting accredited
* Encouraging partners to get accredited

Applicants should include the costs of accreditation in the budget section of your application. You can find out the costs for your organisation by contacting the Living Wage Foundation – visit the [Living Wage Foundation website](https://www.livingwage.org.uk/become-a-living-wage-employer)

### Climate change

Manchester is committed to playing its full part in tackling the global climate emergency. As a city we have committed to urgent action to reduce our CO2 by at least 50% during 2020-2025 down to zero by 2038 at the very latest. The Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 sets out the high-level strategy for meeting our objectives and targets. VCSE organisations receiving the OMVCS grant funding need to have a plan showing how they will achieve zero carbon by 2038.

In this section you should tell us about what you have already done and what you plan to do in the future, and provide 3-5 specific actions for the funded period.

Plans will look different for each organisation funded through OMVCS and you may already have plans in place. If your organisation already has plans in place please tell us about these.

As part of your future plans you could consider the following areas:

* Commitment - How will you demonstrate your organisation’s commitment to achieving zero carbon by 2038?
* Monitoring - How will you understand your organisation’s carbon footprint so you can monitor progress?
* Workforce - What does your workforce need to ensure progress against your plan?
* Operations - What changes will be made to the way your organisation operates?
* Engagement - How will you involve others (such as beneficiaries and partners) in your journey to becoming zero carbon?

The following are more specific suggestions that you might want to commit to as part of your planning for the three year funded period covered by OMVCS. Not all of these suggestions will apply to every organisation, and the following list is intended as helpful suggestions that you may want to consider and include in your plan, and applicants are free other actions not on this list:

* Adopt the city’s target of zero carbon by 2038 (this can be demonstrated by signing up to the Manchester Commitment to Act)
* Commit to join the city’s journey to the 2038 target by setting objectives and targets for your organisation for direct emissions, with an action plan
* Assign a senior lead with responsibility for overseeing that the commitment is met
* Assign roles and responsibilities for delivering commitments, and actions
* Commit to measuring and monitoring key environmental impacts. If already doing this, you might commit to further developing understanding of impacts.
* Provide access to accredited carbon literacy training, or equivalent, to all staff across the organisation and for other key stakeholders such as trustees and volunteers.
* Provide access to additional environmental skills and training opportunities where relevant
* Understand and monitor your energy usage
* Reduce energy usage
* Work with suppliers, landlords, etc to reduce energy usage
* Reduce reliance on fossil fuels
* Sustainable staff commuting
* Sustainable business travel
* Use local people, products and services
* Reduce, reuse, recycle
* switch to green service providers for services including IT, HR, banking, waste management
* Understand your organisation’s digital footprint (I.e. the impact on the environment of your website, digital storage and any other digital services you use)
* Go paperless
* Use sustainable suppliers for food and drink
* Move from meat-based to vegetarian and vegan food offers
* Grow your own food
* Conserve water
* Protect and encourage nature

Further support is available at our website - Zero Carbon Culture Guide [website link](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/ZeroCarbonCulture). Aimed at Manchester’s culture sector, this comprehensive guide produced by Julie’s Bicycle contains inspiration and ideas that are relevant to any organisation.

The Carbon Trust website has lots of resources and tools to help you understand, measure and reduce your carbon footprint. You can access these online – [Carbon Trust website link](https://www.carbontrust.com/resources).

If you are a member of NCVO their member content area contains resources and a template for becoming an environmentally friendly organisation. [Visit the NCVO website](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/).

Further resources and support

You may find it helpful to look at the following resources before completing the application

You will find the prospectus and a video summarizing the key points of the prospectus on [our website](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200101/voluntary_organisations/7706/funding_and_grants_for_voluntary_and_community_sector). You will also find the link the application form, and a word document of the application form questions you can use to see the questions that will be asked. Please note you should not fill in this word document, only the online application will be accepted.

Macc, the city’s VCSE infrastructure support service, will be providing support to VCSE organisations wishing to apply, including discussing proposal ideas and briefings. You can find out more on the [Macc website](https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/news/our-manchester-vcs-grants-2023-2026). Macc also provides a wide range of support generally for VCSE organistations, including funding support, capacity building, training.