



Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support  
Grant

## **Question Guide and Application Guidance Notes**

**Deadline for applications:  
12 midday Monday 15 September 2025**

## **Bristol City Council Voluntary and Community Sector (VCSE) Infrastructure Support Grant**

The Bristol City Council (BCC) Voluntary and community sector (VCSE) Infrastructure Support Grant is part of the City Council's commitment to support a thriving, more equitable VCSE ecosystem and a One City, Many Communities approach. It provides infrastructure support to voluntary and community sector organisations so they:

- have access to knowledge and skills
- can work together
- have an organised way for the city to collaborate with a diverse network of organisations

Bristol City Council understands the vital role of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in the life of the city. A thriving VCSE sector contributes directly to the wellbeing of individuals and communities by redressing disadvantage and inequality; delivering services; promoting inclusion; strengthening voice and influence; and enabling social action.

We recommend you read the **Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant: Funding Approach** to fully understand what the priorities and strategic framework are for the grant programme. This is available on the Bristol City Council website: [Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant Funding Approach](#)

The Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant is an annual grant of £316,608 per year over four years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030.

This question guide and guidance notes will help you to apply for the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

#### **Organisation structure**

The Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant is open to applications from the voluntary and community sector, and social enterprise organisations, that have one or more of the following structures or forms.

*Before you start to complete the application you should use this checklist to ensure that at least one of the structures below applies to your organisation.*

The organisation is:	Yes
A Community Interest Company limited by share (Schedule 2 with 100% asset lock only)	
A company limited by guarantee	
A community benefit company registered as an Industrial and Provident Society	
A Charitable Incorporated Organisation	
A Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by guarantee	

## Eligibility checklist

The Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant is open to applications from voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations which meet the specified criteria below.

Before you start to complete the application, you should use this checklist to ensure that **all** the statements below apply to your organisation. If you are unable to answer "Yes" to **all** the statements below, your organisation is ineligible for the VCSE Sector Infrastructure Support Grant. The exception to this is if an organisation is applying as part of a partnership with a Lead Partner (see page 7 for more information). In this case, you must be willing to work towards meeting the eligibility criteria within 6 months of the start of the grant.

	Yes	No
Your organisation is non-governmental.		
Your organisation is already based in or delivering services in Bristol (it has an established presence in Bristol and the work your organisation does is for the benefit of Bristol people).		
Your organisation is constituted (it has a governing document – a set of rules - either a constitution, or a Memorandum and Articles of Association).		
Your organisation has a set of objectives that allows it to undertake the activities you are proposing. (The constitution must allow your organisation to undertake the activities you are requesting funding for).		
Your organisation is value driven, for the social good.		

Your organisation is non-party political.		
Your organisation has at least three trustees or directors or management committee members (who are not related to each other and are not paid shareholders).		
Your organisation reinvests any financial surpluses to further objectives that bring a significant community benefit to Bristol.		
Your organisation is 'not for profit': it does not distribute any of its surpluses or assets through share dividends to individuals or shareholders.		
Your organisation has a bank account in its own name, with two signatories who are not relatives and do not live together.		
Cheques and other payments (of over £100) have to be authorised by two signatories who are not related and do not live together.		

## Baseline Standards

These are the governance standards which the council requires all grant-funded VCSE organisations to meet. These are available on the BCC website: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/9022-baseline-standards-revised-april-18/file>.

Please note, the council's baseline standards are currently being updated. Successful organisations will need to meet the *updated* standards as part of the conditions of their grant agreement.

## Local Priority

We want to prioritise local organisations. In order to do this, to be eligible for this fund organisations must have their main headquarters in Bristol and have at least 3 trustees who are residents of the Bristol area. However, we will consider partnership applications which include partners who are non-local organisations, which meet the other eligibility criteria, and which bring specialist expertise to the city not otherwise available locally. Lead partners are expected to have 3 Bristol based Trustees and all other partners would be expected to have 3 Bristol based Trustees by the start of the grant period (April 2026) if successful.

## **What type of activity will the VCSE sector infrastructure support grant fund?**

The council's investment will contribute to the following outcomes for Bristol's citizens and VCSE sector:

- building capacity and resilience to improve outcomes for people and communities
- strategic leadership and development of the sector
- bringing diversity and creativity to city development and decision making
- Greater equity within and for the VCSE sector

VCSE infrastructure organisations hold expertise and knowledge, as well as connections to VCSE sector organisations, which enable them to respond with an offer created for Bristol's unique VCSE ecosystem. Funding applications must demonstrate how the proposed activities respond to priorities identified by VCSE organisations themselves. These priorities may evolve over the four years of the grant. The grant will fund both new and continuing activities, and applications can include a contribution to overhead costs.

## **What we won't fund**

The VCSE Sector Infrastructure Support Grant will not fund:

- applications that will not contribute to the 3 key priorities of the VCSE Sector Infrastructure Support Grant
- applications that do not embed the 5 community development principles as set out in the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant: Funding Approach
- applications targeted at children (where children aged under 16 are the primary or sole participants)
- capital costs (for example, the costs of equipment, vehicles, land, buildings, building refurbishment, repairs or maintenance or landscaping)
- political or religious activities
- projects or activities held in inaccessible venues. It is essential that Disabled people can participate in activities funded by the VCSE Sector Infrastructure Support Grant
- projects or activities that the state or a statutory body has a legal obligation to provide
- any costs incurred when putting together your grant application

- projects or activities that happen or start before the start date of the grant and the council's funding agreement
- endowments (to provide an income)
- loans or interest payments

## Value of the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant

The Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant is an annual grant of £316,608 per year over four years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030.

### Timetable

Application forms and guidance notes published	June 2025
<b>Closing date for applications</b>	<b>Monday 15 September 2025</b>
Applications assessed & decision made	September – December 2025
Applicants informed	December 2025
End of Grant impact assessment undertaken as appropriate	January to March 2026
Negotiation of Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant funding Agreement(s) including monitoring indicators and impact methodology	January to March 2026
Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant funding agreement(s) commences for successful applicant(s)	1 April 2026

### Application options

#### Collaborative working

The city council is committed to building and maintaining a trusting and respectful working partnership with infrastructure organisations. Infrastructure organisations have a key role in enabling purposeful collaboration with the VCSE sector so that together we can improve outcomes for communities experiencing the greatest inequity.

We expect **all** applications to demonstrate collaborative working in the way they deliver their work, regardless of the size of grant they are seeking or

whether they are pursuing a solo grant or a more formal Partnership grant. This approach reflects the relational/relationship-oriented way of working which underpins the grant programme.

## **Solo Grants**

Solo applications are those made by individual organisations. **Organisations can only make one solo application.**

## **Partnership Grants**

A partnership application can be submitted when a partnership or collaboration of two or more eligible organisations propose to work together to deliver the priorities of the VCSE Sector Infrastructure Support Grant.

Organisations can be part of partnership applications as well as submitting an application for an individual grant.

Partnership applications can be either Lead Partner collaborations or partnership collaborations without a lead partner.

## **Partnership Applications (with a Lead Partner)**

Only the Lead Partner will have a grant agreement with the council. The other parties will have agreements with the Lead Partner, which are the responsibility of the Lead Partner.

Only the Lead Partner will complete the application form. However, each party must complete, sign and submit a Memorandum of Understanding, which the Lead Partner will upload as part of Section Two of the application form. This must cover that all organisations involved in the partnership either meet the eligibility criteria specified above or are willing to work towards meeting the eligibility criteria within 6 months of the start of the grant. A template is available [here](#). This will help partners to develop and describe their ways of working together. It aims to prevent the situation where either an organisation is not aware that it has been included in a collaborative application or where an organisation has been involved in the development of the partnership application but does then not receive any of the allocation.

In the first 6 months of the funding, we expect to see a plan for how you will work as a partnership.

## **Partnership Applications (no lead partner)**

Each partner will have a grant agreement with the council.

Each partner must complete a separate application form.

Many of the questions in Sections 3, 4 and 5 require responses that fit together to show how you will work collaboratively. In these cases you can provide the same response.

The council will want one organisation to act as the point of co-ordination for the application and for communication over the course of the grant, once awarded. This is for administrative purposes only and all members of the partnership are equally responsible for delivery of their separate funding agreements. It's important to ensure that the grant budget provides for the additional work and cost of this administration role over the lifetime of the grants.

## **Organisations previously funded by Bristol City Council**

The VCSE Sector Infrastructure Support Grant will accept applications from organisations which previously received funding from the Enabling the VCSE Sector grant programme, and would expect this to be building on work previously funded.

If an organisation funded through the Enabling the VCSE Sector grant is applying to continue the work funded previously, we want to understand:

- If, and how, your proposed work builds on activity previously funded.
- What you've learnt from delivery of previously funded work. We'll look for this information to be included in the answers to questions 3a and 3c of the application form.
- What progress has been made towards greater financial sustainability (this progress should be explained in question 5e (Budget spreadsheet) where there is space for applicants to outline and explain the costs of their proposal.)

Where organisations have been previously funded by Bristol City Council, it is important to note that their track record in terms of monitoring and grant management will be taken into account as part of decision making for this grant programme.

## **How to submit your application**

The Council is using the Find a Grant platform to manage applications to this grant programme. Find a Grant is a grant management function that is managed the Government. This service allows you to apply for the VCSE

Infrastructure Support Grant online by creating a profile and saving your application as you go.

[Home - Find a grant: https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/](https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/)

**You must register your organisation on Find a Grant in order to apply.**

Here is a video with instructions on how to register with the Find a Grant service:  
[Introducing Find a Grant for grant applicants](#)

Where a file upload is requested for some of the answers, you can submit this in Word, Excel or PDF format. You must make sure that any electronic supporting documents clearly show the organisation's name in the file name.

It is the applicant's responsibility to return completed documentation via the Find a Grant Platform.

**The completed application, all supporting documents and disclosures must be submitted through Find a Grant before the deadline: 12:00 noon on Monday 15 September 2025.**

Please note: It will not be possible to complete your application responses or submit supporting documents on Find a Grant after the deadline has passed. Application documentation (including any parts of the supporting documentation) that is received after the deadline will not be considered.

## **Support and Advice**

### **Information sessions**

To find out more about applying for the VCSE Sector Infrastructure Support Grant, you can attend an online information session, run by the council's Community Resources team. These sessions will give you more information on the priorities of the fund, the application process and how to put together an application.

For the dates of these sessions, and to sign up, please follow this link:  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/vcse-sector-infrastructure-support-grant-information-session-tickets-1408300828689?aff=oddtcreator>

### **Asking questions**

All queries, questions and requests for information regarding this grant funding application process should be made in writing to the Bristol City Council

Community Resources team at [investmentandgrants@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:investmentandgrants@bristol.gov.uk). We will not provide advice on the telephone or face-to-face.

Any questions should be submitted no later than **4pm on Friday 5 September 2025**. Please note, we want to make sure that every organisation gets the same information and advice so when we respond to questions or requests, we will communicate the answers to all other applicants via the Bristol City Council Website. The identity of the organisation asking such questions will remain confidential.

During the grant process, any communication between applicants and the Council should be in writing via email. After the closing date for receipt of applications, the council expects only to make contact with applicants for the following purposes:

- To clarify information contained in the grant application responses
- To clarify anything relating to documentation provided
- To clarify and discuss the scope of proposals as necessary to inform our allocation decisions
- To inform applicants of the award decision
- To agree the funding commencement date

## **Answering the questions**

### **General notes**

Please read each question and this Guidance fully and carefully. You will find questions in **bold text** and guidance in normal text. It is worth having this Guidance document open while you complete the application form so that you can ensure you answer all the questions effectively. It could also help to have a Word document open if you would like to take notes or draft answers.

Some questions have word limits as shown. You will not be able to submit any extra words over the limit. Bullet points are acceptable.

Your application is an online form. Answers will be formatted as either a text box, multiple choice or file upload. You can save and review your answers before submitting.

## Eligibility Assessment

The following questions are part of the Find a Grant due diligence checks which need to be completed before continuing.

### Eligibility

In this section, you will be asked if your organisation meets the eligibility criteria, as outlined on pages 4-6 of this document.

### Your details

In this section, you will be asked for your name, organisation type, address, Charity Commission and/or Companies House numbers (if applicable).

### Funding

In this section, you will be asked how much funding your organisation requires as a grant and where the funding will be spent. Please ensure you select 'South West England' for location.

## Section One: Eligibility and organisation information

In this section, you will be asked for your contact details and website. You'll then be asked a series of questions which check your eligibility for the fund.

Bristol City Council is under a duty to protect the public funds and assets it administers. We may use the information you have provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. We may also share this information with bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

- **1a. Main email contact**
- **1b. Secondary email contact-** Used if the primary contact misses an email due to technical issues, spam filters, being unavailable or leaves the organisation or changes roles.
- **1c. Organisation website-** If you do not have a website you could add a link to an active social media platform (eg. Facebook) that reflects your organisation's work.
- **1d. Organisational Structure: This is a Pass/Fail question.** If your organisational structure does not fit within one of those in the list provided (as detailed on pages 2 and 3 of this document), your application will not be taken forward.

- **1e. Briefly describe your organisation's core purpose and the activities you currently provide in Bristol.** 500 words. This question is not scored and is for information only.
- **1f. Baseline standards:** Please see page 4 of this document for more information about meeting the council's Baseline standards. Here is a link to BCC baseline standards: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/9022-baseline-standards-revised-april-18/file>
- **1g and 1h. Safeguarding: This is a Pass/Fail question.** If you answer 'yes', that you will be working with young people and/or vulnerable adults then you must either confirm that you have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place or that you commit to putting them in place before the start of any grant in April 2026. If we offer you grant funding, you will be asked to supply copies of all your policies before the start of the grant as evidence of this.
- **1i. Insurance: This is a Pass/Fail question.** We will not consider your application further if you do not commit to obtaining Public Liability £5million and Employer's Liability £5million insurance before the start of any grant funding.
- **1j. State Subsidy rules:** This question is to help you as an organisation and the council identify if there is any potential risk that our grants may trigger State Subsidy considerations. It helps us identify where we need to make a State Subsidy risk assessment and, potentially, take any actions to manage risk of breaching the rules.
- **1k. Your organisation bank account: This is a Pass/Fail question.** We will only fund organisations that have a bank account in their name.
- **1l. Financial safeguards: This is a Pass/Fail question.** Do your cheques and other payments (of over £100) have to be authorised by two signatories who are not related and do not live together? We will only fund organisations that have this financial safeguard in place.

You will then be asked to upload the following:

- **1m. A copy of your governing document: This is a Pass/Fail question.** Your governing document must demonstrate that it allows you to do the work you are proposing. This could be a Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- **1n. A full list of current Trustees/Management Committee Members/Directors,** including names, addresses, roles and relationships to each other (if any): **This is a Pass/Fail question.** We will check that there are at

least 3 trustees/directors, that they are not related or living together and are not paid shareholders. To be eligible for this fund, at least 3 of the organisation's trustees must be resident in the Bristol area and have an active role in the organisation. The exception is partnership applications. Lead partners would be expected to have 3 Bristol based trustees/directors at application stage. Other partners have until the start of the grant period (April 2026) if successful, to have 3 Bristol based trustees / directors.

- **1o. A copy of your most recent annual report and a full set of signed accounts.** These documents will be used to check that financial stability, financial governance and governance are satisfactory. If you do not have these documents (for example if your organisation is new or a CIC) please attach documents that we can use to check your organisation's financial stability, financial governance and governance (for example, bank statements).

## Section Two: General Information

This section tells the council briefly about your organisation, your proposal, whether you are applying as a single organisation or as part of a Partnership application. If it's as a Partnership the council wants to know the other organisations you will work with. **This section is not scored** and is for information to get an overview of the types of applications being submitted.

- **2a. What is the name of your organisation?**
- **2b. Have you previously received or are you currently in receipt of a Bristol City Council grant?**

Please tell us about any other Bristol City Council grants you have received or currently receive. If this does not apply to you, answer NA.  
300 words

- **2c. Please provide a brief summary of your application and its overall goal for the 4 years of funding.** 300 words
- **2d. Is this application being made by a single organisation, as part of a Partnership or by a Lead Partner?**
- **2e. If this application is being made by a Partnership or Lead Partner, please tell us the names of the other partner organisations.**

- **2f. If you are making any grant applications as part of a Partnership, please tell us briefly about your organisation's role in the delivery of the application.**

In no more than 500 words, if you are making any grant applications as part of a Partnership, please tell us briefly about your organisation's role in the delivery of each application.

This, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding, will help us to check that Partnership applications are being made with the full knowledge, consent and engagement of all parties. If you are making any grant applications as part of a Partnership, please tell us briefly about your organisation's role in the delivery of the proposal.

- **2g. If this is a partnership application with a Lead Partner, please attach a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding in place between you and the other organisations. These must be signed by all the organisations involved.**

This question asks for a document to be uploaded and is optional.

- **2h. Do you agree to your application being shared with other funders?**  
Bristol City Council connect and collaborate regularly with other funders. With your permission, we may share your application with other funders if there may be an opportunity to align additional funding from other sources.

## **Section Three: Your Proposal**

### **Understanding and Knowledge of the VCSE Sector in Bristol**

- **3a. Please tell us about your knowledge/your partnership's knowledge of the local Bristol VCSE ecosystem and how it is organised. What are the strengths, priorities and concerns of the sector?**

This is your opportunity to show us that you know and understand the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector in Bristol and are aware of how it works as an ecosystem. Focus here on both the assets of the existing sector that you are aware of and the challenges they face. We are not looking for a list of general strengths, priorities and concerns that could apply to any organisation- we are looking for evidence that you understand the specific context we are in as a city at this time, and your analysis here should be current and relevant for the duration of the four year programme. Please use evidence, links to

surveys and any other relevant data, intelligence and information within your response. This knowledge and understanding is what sets the scene for your vision and should clearly inform your approach which you will detail in the following questions.

500 words

## **Vision**

- **3b. What is your strategic vision for VCSE infrastructure support in Bristol? What would a successful offer look like for you and what would be the impact of that, during the 4 year programme?**

Please make sure your strategic vision for VCSE infrastructure support in Bristol is relevant to our current context; to this time and to Bristol specifically. Think about any anticipated contextual changes which could affect VCSEs in Bristol during the 4-year programme, which will run from April 2026 - March 2030. Your vision should be informed by the knowledge and understanding you have evidenced in the first question.

500 words

## **Supporting the VCSE sector**

- **3c. Please tell us about the experience that your organisation/ partnership has in providing support to the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector, covering the key priority areas: capacity building, purposeful networks and VCSE sector role in decision making and a one city approach**

We'd like to hear about work you are already doing with community, voluntary and social enterprise sector organisations to support them to thrive. We will expect you to be able to demonstrate that you provide support at various levels including 1:1 support, collectively and via networks and strategically. We will also expect the support you have experience in providing to have covered a range of themes from governance to financial sustainability to partnership development and advocacy and city decision making. We will take into account the track record of applicants in providing high quality, accessible and varied support to a range of different types of organisations in the city, as well as the impact of this support.

500 words

## Delivery Model

- **3d. Please describe your organisation/partnership's delivery model.**

**How will your model:**

- **Be inclusive, centring equity** and reflective of the diversity of the city? How will your organisation / partnership be able to deliver support to a diverse range of organisations run for or by equalities communities and within deprived communities?
- **Be joined up and collaborative**, taking into account what else is happening in the city, the region and nationally to ensure best use of time and resource and to avoid duplication or confusion?
- **Be clearly and transparently defined and communicated, as a joined-up offer through a 'one front door' for organisations across the city?**
- **Signpost and refer VCSE organisations** between partners to ensure the experience of organisations is as smooth as possible?
- **Be place based and delivered at a local level for Bristol and its many neighbourhoods and communities**, with the acknowledgement that the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant sits within a system which is multilayered (with intersections with WECA, ICB, VCSE alliance)?
- **Prepare the sector for the long term**, building sustainability and to enable the sector to be effective leaders in the [One City approach](#).

In answer to this question we would like you to give us an overview of your delivery model and what you plan to do to ensure your activities and work align with the approach to funding for this grant programme, as summarised by the bullet points above which highlight key features of the work we expect to see.

500 words

- **3e. How are VCSE organisations part of your organisational governance and how will your delivery model be shaped and influenced by the VCSE sector?**

Please explain how you work with and involve the VCSE sector in your organisation and how they will be involved in shaping this work. This could be through membership or through your board of trustees for example.

If your organisation has members, what is the role of your members and what's your membership structure? How do members influence decisions?

Please show how you are/ will be responding to changing priorities and making use of resources to enable flexibility and innovation within your delivery model. Tell us how you will seek and respond to feedback from the VCSE sector including that gathered through [the BCC survey in December 2024](#)) to ensure your approach to VCSE infrastructure support meets the sector's needs.

You are welcome to use evidence gathered through your own membership surveys as well as the reports provided from [the BCC December 2024 survey](#). We will also anticipate that applicants will have a mechanism for collecting ongoing feedback and input from the sector so that the programme remains flexible to changing needs.

500 words

- **3f. Is the operating model dependent on additional funding? Does the model require community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations to pay any fees or charges?**

Please outline any match funding you would require in order to deliver this model, or any other sources of income you'd be reliant on, including any plans to charge VCSE organisations for support and how this would work. We would like to have clarity about the model for fees and memberships relating to this work including eligibility/ prioritisation for free support, and the level of free support that would be available.

300 words

## Section Four: Theory of Change

The intention of the council's investment in VCSE infrastructure is that it will contribute to:

- building capacity and resilience to improve outcomes for people and communities
- strategic leadership and development of the sector
- bringing diversity and creativity to city development and decision making
- greater equity within and for the VCSE sector

This will be achieved through 3 key priorities:

- Practical capacity building support

- Purposeful networks
- VCSE sector role in decision making and a One City approach

For each of these Priorities we would like you to apply basic 'theory of change' principles to describe:

- The opportunities and assets within the city and the VCSE sector that you want to build on; the challenges you want to address.
- The actions and activities you will deliver to build on these assets and to address the challenges that you identify.
- How you know this will create effective impact – what evidence do you have to support your approach?
- The indicators and measures you propose using to demonstrate your impact.
- How your proposed way of working delivers against the 5 community development principles.

'Theory of Change' is an impact-focused planning tool, that can help organisations plan and develop their work. It is increasingly used by funders and VCSE organisations to demonstrate the impact of the work funded or undertaken. It gives a structure to show how outcomes are achieved through identifying the issue, how to intervene and how to evaluate the impact of the intervention through data collection. Using a theory of change can help organisations to maximise their impact.

500 words per priority.

- **4a. Priority 1: Practical capacity building support**

**The capacity building offer should respond to the changing needs and priorities of the sector. It should be inclusive of and accessible to organisations that are: led by equalities groups; neighbourhoods and places experiencing greatest disadvantage; and smaller and emerging community groups. An agreed proportion of development support should also be made available to organisations in receipt of or seeking to access Bristol City Council funding or buildings, where this would increase equity and/or the organisation is of strategic importance to the city. The offer should include free to access support including bespoke, intensive support for organisations who meet strategic priorities, and should cover themes including:**

- **Best practice in VCSE sector governance, especially in volunteer run, equalities led, and small organisations.**
- **Financial planning, sustainability, fundraising and income diversification which could include contracts and tendering,**

**business and enterprise.**

- **Assessing, understanding, and communicating impact, including social value.**
- **Taking on and effectively managing assets and infrastructure; or finding ways to sustainably access exciting community assets.**
- **Accessing specialist expertise at the right time.**
- **Proactively avoiding crisis situations through contingency and business planning.**
- **Trustee, staff and volunteer recruitment, retention, and capacity building.**
- **Leadership development.**
- **Accessing and making the most of Bristol City Council grant opportunities, communities of practice and social action programmes including The Bristol Impact Fund and Can Do Bristol. Support to access local, regional and national assets including funding opportunities (investment, grants, social value, contracts), private sector support, data, policy and practice.**
- **Support for collaboration and partnerships, consolidation, and mergers, to make the most of existing assets and resources and reduce competition.**

500 words.

<b>What are the opportunities and assets within the city and the VCSE that you want to build on?</b>
<b>What are the challenges you want to address?</b>
<b>What actions will you take to build on the assets you identify and to address the challenges?</b>
<b>How do you know this will create effective impact – what evidence do you have to support your approach?</b>
<b>What indicators and measures are you proposing to demonstrate the impact of your activities? (maximum of four)</b>
<b>How does your proposed way of working deliver against the 5 community development principles?</b>

Practical capacity building support is the Council's priority for this grant programme. We expect applicants to consider how they deploy resource to ensure the emphasis of their approach is on providing direct, practical

support to community, voluntary and social enterprise sector organisations. We would expect this work to account for around 70% of resource and workload.

In this section you could talk about various forms of capacity building including 1:1 intensive support, group support and training, and support to build partnerships. We will be looking for evidence that the actions you propose to take will build on the skills and expertise of the sector itself in the delivery of this work.

Please be aware that we expect applicants to include support for organisations in receipt of or seeking Bristol City Council funding or buildings (for example, through the Community Asset Transfer process).

- **4b. Priority 2: Purposeful networks**

**Clearly defined and purposeful networks for information exchange, mutual support, peer learning, building connections, sharing assets (skills, learning, time, money, experience, knowledge, buildings etc.) and collaborating on shared goals. Networks should be representative of the diversity of the VCSE sector, building on recent successful work to address gaps in the sector and contribute to capacity building as well as enabling and facilitating the sector to interact with the city.**

500 words

<b>What are the opportunities and assets within the city and the VCSE that you want to build on?</b>
<b>What are the challenges you want to address?</b>
<b>What actions will you take to build on the assets you identify and to address the challenges?</b>
<b>How do you know this will create effective impact – what evidence do you have to support your approach?</b>
<b>What indicators and measures are you proposing to demonstrate the impact of your activities? (maximum of four)</b>
<b>How does your proposed way of working deliver against the 5 community development principles?</b>

--

- **4c. Priority 3: VCSE sector role in decision making and a One City approach**

This work should build the capacity of the VCSE sector, to enable it to:

- i. Work together and with the wider city system for the common good.**
- ii. Contribute to strategic and operational decision making including in shaping and achieving the ambitions of the City Councils Corporate Strategy and the One City Plan.**
- iii. Take positive action to address systemic disadvantage.**

500 words

<b>What are the opportunities and assets within the city and the VCSE that you want to build on?</b>
<b>What are the challenges you want to address?</b>
<b>What actions will you take to build on the assets you identify and to address the challenges?</b>
<b>How do you know this will create effective impact – what evidence do you have to support your approach?</b>
<b>What indicators and measures are you proposing to demonstrate the impact of your activities? (maximum of four)</b>
<b>How does your proposed way of working deliver against the 5 community development principles?</b>

## **Section Five: Staffing, Implementation and Budget**

### **Social Value**

- **5a. Please set out the additional economic, social and environmental benefits that will be created by your proposed delivery model, and how you will measure added social value and impact.**

This question will not be scored, and we will work with successful organisations to agree how additional social value and impact is reported on.

300 words

### **Staffing & structure of delivery**

- **5b. Tell us about the proposed management and staffing structure for your VCSE infrastructure support proposal for Bristol. Include how each partner will be involved where you are working in partnership. Which staff will deliver the outcomes and key features / activities and how will they be managed? Please include the key behaviours, skills and knowledge you are expecting from staff delivering this work and provide information on how you will ensure their knowledge/skills are up to date.**

In this question we are asking for the management and staffing structure relating to the funded work specifically. Please be specific about staff who will be delivering the funded activities. In the next question, you have an opportunity to talk about how this structure fits into your wider organisation and any other work you do.

300 words

- **5c. Where these grant funded activities would form part of a wider portfolio of work, please explain how this fits into the wider organisation.**

Briefly explain what other work your organisation delivers, how this complements and sits alongside VCSE infrastructure support and how the funded work is hosted within your wider organisation e.g. Where the staff members involved sit within your wider structure, whether the funded work makes up the entirety of their role etc.

200 words

### **Implementation**

- **5d. Please provide an implementation plan, including actions covering the transition from the existing Enabling VCSE grant, up to the first year of service delivery. This should include:**
  - **A timeline illustrating the service implementation and any partnership/collaborative working development from grant award to the first year of delivery**
  - **Actions and key milestones**

- **A transition plan for employees transferring under TUPE regulations (where applicable)**
- **Risk management strategy**
- **Management of demand: how will you use the VCSE sector infrastructure support grant to support conflicting priority demands clearly and transparently and how will it fit with support you deliver using other revenue/funding (e.g. charging for services, delivering with other grant funding)?**

We would like to understand how you would effectively prepare for the start of the grant, to ensure a smooth transition from the current Enabling VCSE programme to the new programme which will begin on 1 April 2026. This includes thinking about how you will work together with any partners or other organisations who may be successfully awarded a grant through the VCSE sector infrastructure support programme.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations 2006 protect employees' rights when an organisation, or part of it, transfers from one employer to another.

Employees have the right to be transferred on the same terms and without loss of service-related employment rights.

Acas offers [step-by-step guidance on handling a TUPE transfer](#).

500 words

## **Budget**

- **5e. Please attach your completed budget spreadsheet**

Please complete the budget spreadsheet with the anticipated costs of delivering the activities/ work you have outlined in your application. This includes salaries (direct salaries of those involved in delivering the work and proportion of salaries of managers, administrators or other staff who may support the work); direct costs such as meeting costs or marketing costs directly related to deliver of the work; and overheads, which are costs that the grant will contribute to such as office costs, insurances etc.

If you are applying for the grant in partnership with another organisation, please indicate within the budget spreadsheet how the overall grant of £316,608 per annum would be shared between

partners and then outline your organisation's budget for your share of the overall grant.

### **Additional evidence**

- **5f. Additional evidence (optional) - please use this space to upload a word document or pdf containing any additional evidence you wish to supply such as diagrams, pictures and links.**

The Find a Grant system may not allow you to include diagrams, pictures and links within your text answers to questions. Therefore, we are providing this additional space for you to include these as a document upload. Please indicate clearly which question number the evidence relates to and refer to it within the text answer for the related question. Ensure any standalone text included in this document is taken into account within the word count for the relevant question.