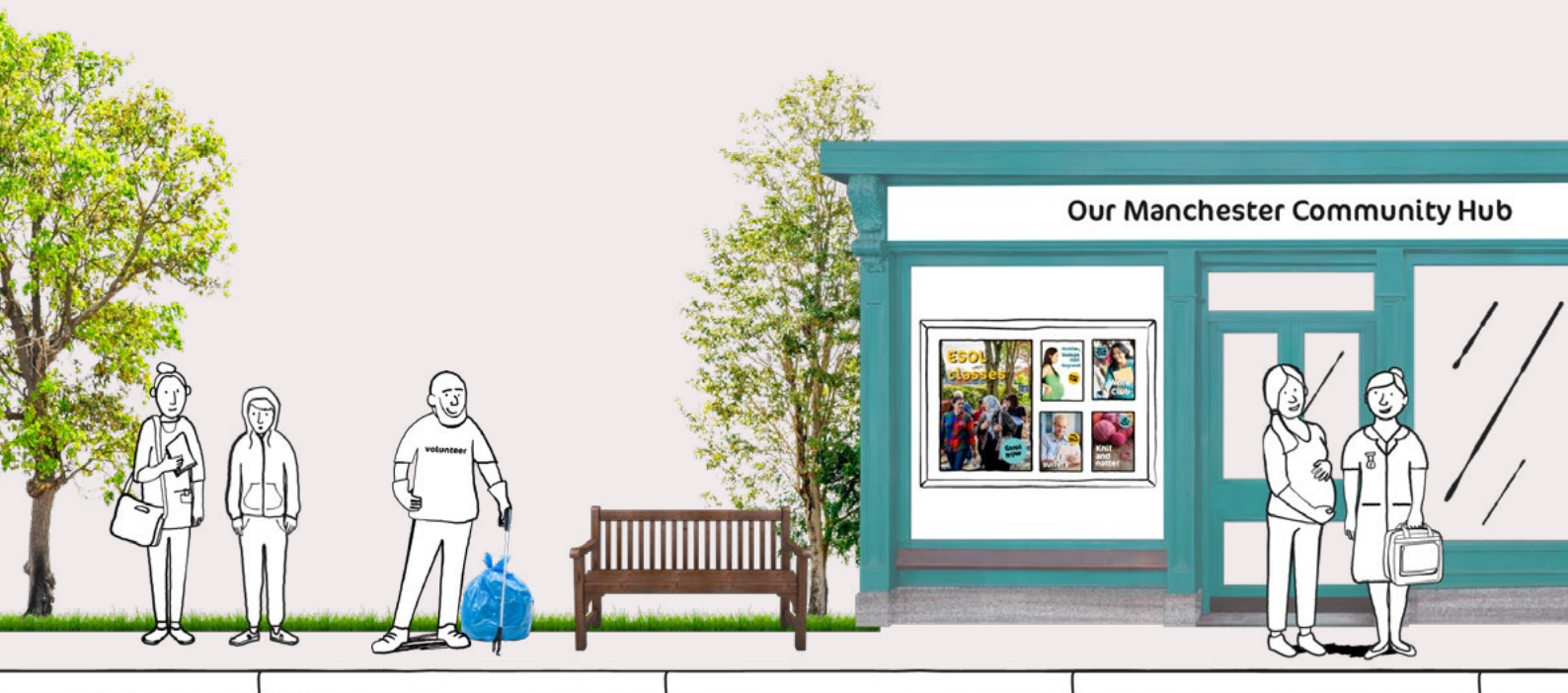




# Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS)

## Grant Programme Prospectus

2023–2026



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# 1. Introduction

I am very pleased to introduce the second round of the Our Manchester VCS grants programme.

When the late Deputy Leader Sue Murphy launched the first programme in 2017, we made a clear commitment to invest in a thriving and sustainable voluntary sector delivering great outcomes for Manchester residents. This hasn't changed – the voluntary sector remains critical to delivering these outcomes and reaching residents and communities. As a council we are committed to working in partnership with the sector to deliver on our shared ambitions.

However, the landscape we are working in has changed greatly. In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic we extended the programme in each of the last two years to give stability to the sector. Looking back, it has been humbling to see the tremendous amount of activity and support that has been delivered to Manchester's communities. During these most difficult of years, the impacts on individuals' lives have been at least partially eased by the truly remarkable work of the VCSE sector.

The Black Lives Matter movement has exposed again the depth of inequality that is still so entrenched in our world, which increased during COVID-19, and now the cost-of-living crisis is pushing many more families into poverty. The global challenges around climate change require us to lead and act now for the sake of our collective future.

The updated Our Manchester strategy for the city captures our resolve to tackle these challenges together. Despite the financial challenges the Council faces, it is maintaining its commitment to this grants programme in recognition that the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is well placed to reach and support residents affected by issues such as wellbeing, poverty and inequality.

In updating this programme we have taken an Our Manchester approach. This means building on the strengths of what has gone before and not seeking to fix what wasn't broken. It means listening and responding to the sector through engagement and codesign and bringing that experience and insight together to create a refreshed grants programme that is fit for the challenges we face today.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in our engagement conversations, the co-design group, and to every individual and organisation working hard for Manchester. You are a vital part of the life of the city and what makes it a great place to live, work and visit.

With every good wish,



Councillor Joanna Midgley  
Deputy Leader and Executive Member  
for the Voluntary and Community Sector

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## Note from the OMVCS Programme team

This prospectus is designed to give you an overview of the funding programme and help you understand what you need to put in your application. Alongside this prospectus there is guidance on how to answer the application form questions, support sessions throughout September and August 2022, and an eligibility checker. All this can be found here on [our website](#).

## 2. Critical information

### Minimum criteria for applicants

To be able to apply for this funding, your organisation must meet the following criteria:

- Already have worked with Manchester citizens for at least 18 months
- Must be a constituted voluntary and community-sector organisation with its own bank account and meet all minimum eligibility requirements (see page 9 for more details)
- Must be working to at least one of the OMVCS programme aims
- Must be able to show evidence of the 5 principles of the fund (see page 10 for more details).

Further details on the criteria for the fund can be found in this prospectus

### Grant amounts

The total available in this funding programme is £2.4million per year, over three years from April 2023 to March 2026.

Applicants can apply for a small, medium or large grant as listed below:

Funding Level	Over three years	Annual Equivalent
Small	£30,000 – £120,000	£10,000 – £40,000
Medium	£120,001 – £210,000	£40,001 – £70,000
Large	£210,001 – £300,000	£70,001 – £100,000

### Key dates

For additional information and details of events please visit our website.

The programme covers a three-year period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.

The anticipated timeline for the application, evaluation and award process is:

#### Stage 1: Launch

- The programme opens for applications from 9am on 1 September 2022.
- Programme information events throughout August and September 2022

#### Stage 2: Application period

- Online application will be available from 1 September 2022 until 5pm on 10 October 2022
- Support with your application will be available from Macc including individual support and a range of workshops.

#### Stage 3: Decision-making

- The programme board will consider recommendations and make a provisional offer by early December 2022, the exact date is to be confirmed. This provisional offer will then be subject to a due diligence process.

#### Stage 4: Grant award

- Grant confirmation letters will be issued.

**How to apply**

Applications must be completed online. Applications will be open from the 1 September 2022. Visit the webpage for the online application form.

If, for accessibility reasons, you require the application form in an alternative format, please contact [omfunds@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:omfunds@manchester.gov.uk).

**Need help with your application?**

Macc are able to support applicants.

A guidance note is published alongside this document to help you complete the application.

Information can be found on [our website](#).

# 3. Purpose and aims

## Strategic context

The purpose of the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) grant programme is to support and invest in a healthy and thriving local voluntary sector, so that it can continue to support Manchester's residents and focus on what the sector excels at in addressing some of the city's highest priorities.

The Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025 sets the long-term vision for Manchester's future, its potential and its people. The strategy's priorities are for all of Manchester, across communities, geographies and sectors. Since the strategy was initially launched, the city and its VCSE sector has faced enormous challenges, not least those brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic deepened existing inequalities for many Manchester communities, adversely affecting people's health, their security, and their ability to access support. The strategy was reset in 2021 with the Forward to 2025 strategy and, set the strategic context the refreshed OMVCS grant programme needs to operate in and is available to review on our website.

## Aims of the OMVCS Fund

The OMVCS grant programme has three clearly defined and interconnected aims that align with the Our Manchester Strategy.

Applications will need to demonstrate how they meet one or more of the following aims:

### 1. Addressing inequalities and building inclusion

We aim to strengthen the contribution of Manchester's VCSE sector to take action that addresses the inequalities experienced by a diverse range of people in the city.

### 2. Promoting communities' health and wellbeing

We aim to support the services and assistance delivered by Manchester's VCSE sector, have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents and address some of the day-to-day barriers that prevent people from being well.

### 3. Tackling poverty

We aim to support VCSE sector work that creates routes out of poverty for Manchester residents, such as through work, skills, advice, food and basic living support. We want to focus on addressing some of the conditions and causes that lead to poverty, working to prevent some of the poorest outcomes.

## 4. What will be funded

The programme will fund a wide variety of activity across the neighbourhoods of Manchester that meets these aims.

The grant programme will fund activities for adults across a range of priority groups, including:

- A. Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- B. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans plus (LGBT+) communities
- C. Disabled people
- D. People who care for others with significant health and/or social care needs
- E. Care leavers
- F. Older people
- G. Women
- H. People with physical or mental illness
- I. Homeless people
- J. Ex-armed forces personnel and their families
- K. People experiencing poverty

Activities are not required to focus on any one of these groups in isolation, and it is anticipated that intersectional issues (i.e. for South Asian women, older LGBT+ people, disabled ex-forces personnel etc.) will be addressed by some applicants.

Organisations that primarily provide youth services should not apply for this fund, as funding for youth services is provided through the Youth, Play and Participation Service which will be finalised and announced in autumn 2022. For more information please contact [mushtaq.khan@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:mushtaq.khan@manchester.gov.uk).

### **Types of activities and services that can be funded**

This programme will fund:

1. Direct services or activities that are accessible to and appropriate for a diverse range of local people or users of the organisation. These activities might include:
  - provision of community facilities
  - sessions for a variety of groups
  - regular group activities
  - one-to-one support.
2. Influencing and change activities that seek to influence other organisations or communities about the needs, wishes, experiences and rights of the main users of the organisation. These activities might include:
  - facilitating engagement of users with consultations
  - promoting and representing users' interests
  - supporting users to represent their needs and wishes
  - contributing to the development of policy and strategy (i.e. Manchester City Council strategy)

3. Networking, collaboration and partnership support activities that are carried out by an organisation, over an extended period of time, to improve the overall effectiveness of a range of organisations with the same residents. These activities might include:

- co-ordinating a network of organisations
- promoting and facilitating joint working
- developing mechanisms for sharing resources and information.

The Our Manchester VCS grant programme can be used for direct service delivery and core costs.

**Examples of fundable activities could include:**

A community-led foodbank providing culturally appropriate meals with an associated befriending and support offer to improve residents' health and wellbeing and help them engage with health services.

Nature-based activities promoting biodiversity and inspiring activity around climate change, also reducing isolation and improving the wellbeing of key resident groups, eg. older people, people with learning disabilities and people experiencing mental-health issues.

Outreach and identification of carers in the city to provide them with information and advice and access to respite, health and wellbeing activities, training, support and social opportunities.

Working with individuals or families facing multiple disadvantage, including financial difficulties, drug or substance use, securing stable housing etc, and advising them of the support available to enable good independent choices.

Immediate and longer-term support for survivors of domestic abuse including practical help, advice, counselling, and social activities.

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**NOTE**

The OMVCS grant programme cannot fund all types of VCSE activity and is not intended to be the first grant received by a new organisation. Manchester City Council provides other sources of funding which may be more appropriate for new and / or small local community groups. Visit our website for further information. Manchester's VCSE infrastructure organisation, Macc, also has details of a wide range of other funding opportunities currently available.



# 5. Eligibility and requirements of applicants

The purpose of this fund is to invest in a healthy and thriving voluntary sector to support Manchester residents. It would like to support organisations that can demonstrate good practice in both their operational activity and the impact they have on the lives of Manchester residents. This section outlines the minimum eligibility criteria for the Our Manchester VCS Fund and the expectations that organisations must evidence in their application.

## Eligibility criteria

In summary, the fund is open to voluntary and community sector organisations that are already delivering services to Manchester residents. This means not-for-profit, non-governmental, community-based organisations that are value driven and reinvest surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives for the community.

'Manchester residents is defined as all people normally resident in the 32 electoral wards of Manchester, including people who are temporarily homeless.

We will accept applications from the following types of voluntary and community sector organisation:

- registered charity
- community-interest company limited by guarantee
- community-interest company limited by share (schedule 2 with 100 per cent asset lock only)
- company limited by guarantee
- community-benefit company registered as an industrial and provident society
- charitable incorporated organisation
- unincorporated charitable association

## Your organisation must:

- be applying for funding to work with adults (may include family focused work) (adult is defined as a person aged 18 or over)
- have been delivering services to Manchester residents for at least 18 months
- be constituted and have a bank account in the organisation's name
- have at least three trustees or directors (who are not related to each other and are not paid shareholders)
- have a set of objectives that allows you to undertake the activities you're proposing
- be value-driven, for the social good
- be non-party-political
- provide services or activities that are not religious or political in nature and that do not promote religious or political affiliation (please note that faith groups can apply but not for activities related to worship or the promotion of a particular faith)
- reinvest any financial surpluses to further social, environmental and/or cultural objectives that bring a significant community benefit to Manchester
- not distribute any of your surpluses or assets through share dividends to individuals or shareholders.

**You will need to provide:**

- the key policies and procedures that outline the way the organisation works, which includes as a minimum:
  - your governing document (constitution, articles of association, etc.)
  - safeguarding policy (including your named safeguarding lead)
  - health and safety
  - data protection
  - equal opportunities
  - finance
- copies of your insurance cover certificates
- annual reports or equivalent covering the past 18 months
- your annual accounts for at least the last 12 months. Only in cases where these are not available, provide a signed statement from the trustees/directors describing why the accounts are not available, the organisation's financial position for the last 12 months and current expectations about the future position (this should be signed by two trustees/directors – preferably the chair and treasurer)
- evidence of four quorate board meeting/management committee reports in the last 18 months.

Applicants will be asked to confirm they meet these requirements at application stage, which will then be confirmed at due diligence. Any organisation not able to provide evidence of these during due diligence will be unsuccessful in receiving funding.

**Expectations of funded groups**

As well as meeting the eligibility requirements, organisations must demonstrate in their application how they work according to the following five expectations:

- 1. Demonstrating impact**
- 2. Well-run**
- 3. Strength-based approach**
- 4. Collaborative**
- 5. Value for money**

These expectations are explained in more detail below. They will look different for each organisation and the application will need to demonstrate how they are met. There is a separate guidance document and support available to help you with your application.

**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**, we'll be expecting more and different types of evidence that you will need to include in your application. Please see the guidance document for more information.

## **Demonstrating impact on Manchester residents**

The programme will fund organisations that can demonstrate the impact they have had on Manchester residents within the past three years. We want to know how you're addressing the challenges that people are facing and about the difference you're making in their lives.

In your application we will be looking for evidence of:

- how your organisation understands the challenges residents you work with are facing and how it has supported them to address or manage these challenges.
- how your organisation understands the challenges your service users are facing and how it has supported them to address or manage these challenges
- how the work your organisation does meets at least one of the fund's aims.

## **Well-run**

The programme aims to fund thriving and sustainable organisations. Part of evidencing this involves organisations demonstrating that they are structured and managed well to make the best impact through their activities.

For the purpose of the fund, the term 'well-run' means that organisations show:

- effective governance including a functioning board and key policies
- that staff and volunteers with the appropriate skills and support carry out their activities
- a clear development plan
- a sustainable funding plan (including reserves where relevant) that demonstrates diversity of income and/or plans to further diversify funding sources during the next three years

In your application we will be looking for evidence of:

- how your organisation is managed, including:
  - how you support volunteers and staff
  - how you respond to feedback
  - how you monitor the difference you're making
- how you have managed previous funding and how you'll manage this funding
- your organisation's plans for the next three years including income diversity .

## **Strength-based approach**

The programme aims to fund organisations that work with and build on the unique strengths, capacities and knowledge of Manchester citizens of each community and area in the city.

In your application we will be looking for evidence of:

- a good understanding of the people and communities you work with and how you use this to inform and improve your activities
- activities carried out in a way that builds on the skills, abilities, knowledge, connections and capacities of those people and the assets of the community
- involvement of the people you're working with in the work you are doing. This could include involving people in their own support plans, in service design, and in the organisation's governance
- relevant and appropriate use of voluntary donation of time by Manchester residents, in any capacity, in the delivery of activities and in the planning and governance of those activities
- adaptation of delivery where appropriate, eg. in response to stakeholder feedback, data about the communities you work with.

## **Collaboration**

The programme will consider supporting organisations that are connected to other voluntary and community sector organisations, public and private sector organisations, either formally or informally, to enhance the quality and scale of their work.

In your application we'll be looking for evidence of:

- how your organisation collaborates with others (i.e. VCSE organisations, public bodies and / or local businesses) to support and enhance the work you do and maximise the impact you are able to make on residents' lives
- how your work connects to what is going on in the city.

## **Value for money**

The value for money an application delivers will be assessed in the context of the whole application. It will consider the evidence supplied across all the principles, the impact that is delivered against the investment needed and the total contribution to the programme aims.

Bids will not be assessed against each other;, instead they will be assessed for unreasonable costs.

In your application we will be looking for evidence of:

- a three-year budget for what is being applied for and a clear explanation of costs. As far as possible, these costs should be based on industry standards or other standards, such as the Real Living Wage (for further information see the guidance document and see [www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates))
- how your organisation meets all the principles, makes a positive difference to residents, and how the work you're doing contributes to the programmes aims
- how much of the income of your organisation would come from this grant.

## 6. Funding

The total available in this funding programme is £2.4million per year, over three years from April 2023 to March 2026.

The OMVCS Grant Programme Board may decide to set aside a small percentage of this fund in a targeted fund to support work with geographic communities or communities of identity where no applications of sufficient quality are received.

The fund is split into three sizes of grant, all of which will be allocated for a period of three years:

Funding Level	Over three years	Annual Equivalent
Small	£30,000 – £120,000	£10,000 – £40,000
Medium	£120,001 – £210,000	£40,001 – £70,000
Large	£210,001 – £300,000	£70,001 – £100,000

No single application can be for more than £300,000 over the life of the grant or £100,000 in one year.

All applicants, irrespective of grant size, must show evidence of the five expectations outlined in the section on Eligibility. Organisations are free to apply at any level they think best suits their situation; however, the level of evidence we expect to see increases at the large level of funding.

Organisations that are receiving funding at present are not restricted to re-applying at their current funding level.

Successful organisations will receive the amount they request, subject to the Council's budget setting processes, as detailed in an agreed funding schedule, except in exceptional circumstances which would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Organisations can apply for one grant only; however, they may also be a beneficiary from a second application as a named partner. You cannot be a lead partner if you are also submitting an individual application (see partnership applications for more information).

### Partnership applications

Organisations can apply in partnership only where a partnership already exists and where this is the best way of delivering the desired impacts. All partnerships must demonstrate a track record of working together for at least 18 months.

Where a partnership wishes to apply for the fund, one organisation must complete the application on behalf of the partnership, known as the lead partner. Other organisations in the partnership application are known as named partners. You must have at least two partners (lead plus named partner) to submit a partnership bid, and there should be a significant amount of funding that goes to the partner organisation.

Further information on this is in the guidance document for the fund.

Lead partners will be expected to:

- confirm that all partner organisations named on the application meet the fund's eligibility requirements and undertake due diligence on partners (see guidance document for more information)
- take responsibility for distribution of funds to partner organisations
- state of how any conflicts in the partnership are to be resolved
- collate and submit monitoring information on behalf of the partnership.

Partnerships will be expected to have an agreement in place that includes (but is not limited to) how they will work together to deliver activities, keep people safe (in terms of health and safety and safeguarding), monitor the work, and pass on funding.

All formal partners will be expected to take part in the due diligence process pending confirmation of the award of the grant. The OMVCS Programme Team will undertake due diligence of the partnership arrangements

### **Cost that can be funded**

The programme can fund core and delivery costs associated with delivering your activities, including:

- salaries
- training
- volunteer costs
- management costs
- premises costs
- utilities and overheads
- equipment
- monitoring and evaluation
- partnership costs

This programme will not fund:

- major refurbishments
- the purchase of vehicles, land or buildings
- projects where the main aim is research/evidence gathering
- religious or political activity
- costs of activities taking place outside Manchester local authority boundaries.

The grant will be paid in six-monthly amounts up front; however, these amounts will vary to reflect what the applicant organisation has budgeted for in its application.

# 7. Decision-making

All applications will be initially assessed to ensure they meet the criteria for the programme. A selection panel will then assess bids and make recommendations on which applications should be funded. The final decision about the overall programme will be taken by a separate Programme Board.

The selection panel will be chaired by a non-voting representative of the Council's voluntary sector infrastructure support organisation (which is ineligible to apply for this funding). The panel will comprise representatives from key Council services and strategic partners. Measures will be taken to ensure that conflicts of interest are properly addressed and no VCSE organisations have a competitive advantage as a result of this.

The panel will seek to identify a programme that:

- supports the funding programme's core purpose
- proportionately targets areas of underrepresentation across neighbourhoods and communities of identity (including but not limited to North Manchester VCSE organisations, Black, Asian and minority ethnic-led VCSE organisations, VCSE organisations supporting people who have experienced racial inequality)
- demonstrates a balanced range of activities that deliver against the funding programme's aims

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be informed by email. Feedback will be available upon request.

There is no appeals process.

## **Due diligence**

Following the offer of a grant, Manchester City Council will carry out checks to make sure that the information given in the application form is accurate.

Applicants will be asked to produce all documents and other evidence mentioned in the application.

If all the checks are satisfactorily passed, a final grant offer will be made, subject to agreement of the City Council's budget.

## 8. Ongoing relationship

Manchester City Council wants to maintain and build high-quality relationships with organisations that are funded, to increase the effectiveness of both Manchester City Council and the organisations it funds.

The intention of Manchester City Council is to create a relationship with grant-holders based on a culture of collaboration, open dialogue and trust. This includes:

- giving feedback on monitoring forms and negotiating changes or developments in the work of organisations
- bringing organisations together to promote learning and exchange
- informing organisations about Manchester City Council strategies, policies and developments relevant to the work they do
- promoting the work of the organisations
- supporting organisations to put in place plans in keeping with the intentions of the programme

All organisations that receive a grant must agree to:

1. be open, transparent and co-operative
2. complete monitoring and other required forms in a timely manner
3. join in and take an active and constructive part in a small number of key networks relevant to the funding
4. assist in Manchester City Council's engagement with Manchester residents
5. put in place plans in keeping with the intentions of the programme (see Added value below)
6. comply with additional requests for information, including from external evaluators

### Monitoring

Organisations will be required to provide information on a six-monthly basis as detailed below.

Type of information	Description
Activities	What activities have taken place and with how many Manchester citizens
Outcomes	Progress towards outcomes
Volunteering	Number of volunteers and estimates of volunteer hours
Additional funding	Description and amounts of additional funding
Service user data	Breakdown by area and characteristic of all Manchester citizens who have used services
Case studies / user stories	Narrative descriptions of activities, impacts and outcomes for groups or individuals supported
Finance form	Expenditure



## **Added value**

Over the period of the grant, organisations are required to put mechanisms in place to monitor and increase their overall social, environmental, and economic benefit. Specifically, organisations will be expected to commit to the following:

### **Climate Change Action Plans**

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and Manchester has committed to becoming a zero-carbon city by 2038 at the latest. The Our Manchester Strategy aims to accelerate the pace of change on zero-carbon and it's vital that this acceleration is supported by the OMVCS Fund.

All applicants will need to include their zero carbon plans for their organisation as part of the application process. Progress against these plans will be monitored for successful applicants throughout the funded period. Further information on the climate change requirement and how to address it is included in the guidance document, and resources and support will be available from Macc.

### **Real Living Wage Plans**

The Council has set out its plan for Manchester to become a Real Living Wage City, aiming to narrow the gap that exists between what our residents earn and what others working in the City earn. Manchester's paid and volunteer VCSE sector workforce is huge, and it is important that the City's commitment to the Real Living Wage is reflected in the OMVCS Fund. All applicants are required to outline how their organisation will work towards achieving the Living Wage Employer Mark, accredited by the Living Wage Foundation, by March 2025. Applicants are advised to include the costs of accreditation in their bids. More information on this is included in the guidance document and support is available from Macc.

### **Diversifying income**

Where organisations are reliant on most of their funding from a small number of sources they must agree to devise and implement a plan to increase their financial resilience by diversifying their income (which is separate from increasing income, but both may be relevant). Organisations will be supported to agree realistic targets to achieve over the three-year period.

## 9. How to apply

Application forms can be completed online. Applications will be open from the 1st September 2022. Visit the webpage for the online application form.

### **Data sharing**

The OMVCS grant programme works closely with other funders in the city to maximise our investments and work together for the good of the sector and the city. Shared data across funders can be used to speed up decision making and communication, identify gaps in provision and better targeting of support to organisations. By applying to this fund you agree to allow data about your organisation and its activities to be shared with other funders.

No personal data will be shared, and it will be stored securely in line with our privacy notice.

[www.manchester.gov.uk/directory\\_record/431777/policy\\_partnerships\\_and\\_research\\_service](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/431777/policy_partnerships_and_research_service)

### **Getting help**

There are a number of ways you can get help to apply for funding. [Visit our website](#) to find out more.