



YOUTH GUARANTEE

Funded by **UK Government**

Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Community Grants Programme Liverpool City Region

15th, 16th & 20th October 2025

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**LIVERPOOL
CITY REGION**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

METROMAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION



Purpose of the fund, applicant eligibility, eligible expenditure, the application process & compliance

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Agenda



1. Background & context
2. Focus of the fund
3. Key themes of investment
4. Applicant eligibility & partnership working
5. Funding available & multiple areas/ grant applications
6. Strategic fit
7. Compliance – safeguarding; EDI, DP
8. Monitoring & evaluation
9. Eligible expenditure
10. VAT
11. Application process and timescales
12. Assessment process and scoring methodology
13. Application form – required info & evidence
14. If you are successful
15. If you are unsuccessful
16. Q&A

1. Background



[Get Britain Working](#) White Paper, Nov-24.

Govt's plans to reform employment support landscape.

Includes 2 trailblazer strands - Economic Inactivity & Youth Guarantee.

LCR appointed as 1 of 8 initial Youth Guarantee Trailblazer areas.

Aim to test “new ways of supporting young people into employment or training, by bringing together and enhancing existing programmes in partnership with local areas to reduce inactivity.”

YG Trailblazer designed to test, learn and evaluate what works, by:

- Listening to young people – noting what the challenges are and what would help;
- Working with employers to create/offer paid work experience, in work support, and support them to help disadvantaged young people;
- Offering employability, wrap around, pastoral and other support to help overcome barriers and personal challenges.

1. Context



- Higher youth economic inactivity and NEET rates in LCR than regionally and nationally – and increasing.
- NEET rates vary by borough, but all still above national average. Longstanding areas of disadvantage in all boroughs with significantly higher levels of worklessness & NEET.
- Proportion of NEET young people affected by L-T or temporary sickness also risen in recent years – 1 in 4 citing sickness as barrier to participation in 2023, compared to 1 in 10 in 2012.
- 80% more likely to have special educational needs and disabilities.
- Nearly twice as likely to have a health condition.
- Twice as likely to have no qualifications.
- More than twice as likely to be from a disadvantaged background.
- More likely to have lower pay, higher unemployment and reduced life chances, along with greater mental health problems later in life.

2. Focus of the fund



- Aimed at supporting young, **18-21 year old NEET LCR residents**, by providing access to education, training, or employment support.
- ‘Hard to reach’ communities (geographic & thematic) & individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage &/or who are difficult to engage.
- Help to overcome personal challenges and barriers.
- Overall aim of supporting onward progression to employment, Apprenticeships, education/ training, or employment support (e.g. Ways to Work, Connect to Work, Restart & other).
- Innovative & flexible approaches meeting specific place-based and thematic needs/ challenges welcomed.
- **Grant awards will seek to fill gaps and not duplicate or displace existing activities.**

3. Key themes of investment

- **Mental health** support – including dealing with bereavement support
- Special Educational Needs and **Disabilities (SEND)**
- **Neurodivergent** young people
- Youth **offending** and recidivism
- Young, **single parents**
- Support to prevent **substance misuse**, current drug users, and CPD for professionals working with drug users
- **Financial skills** and money management
- **Team/trust building**
- Building **soft and communication skills**, as well as **literacy** and **numeracy**
- **Mentoring/coaching** and capacity-building in specific sectors
- **Confidence building** for targeted vulnerable groups **including homelessness**
- Individuals with **multiple barriers and disadvantage**, including at least one of the above

3. Key themes of investment



- Themes listed are the only ones that will be considered – set by LCRCA – fairly broad though!
- Multiple themes may be combined and addressed within one application.

Note:

- Care Leavers and Care Experienced Young People – significant LCR Trailblazer funding has been ring-fenced at a Local Authority level to support this group. Not say that can't/ won't fund projects supporting this group by default, BUT, potential duplication and displacement will be carefully considered as part of the appraisal process.

4. Applicant Eligibility Criteria



All of the following need to be met to be eligible to apply:

1. **Legally constituted, VCFSE sector** organisations, run on a not-for-profit basis, with an operational base in the Liverpool City Region.

Organisations must have:

2. Governing document/ constitution.
3. Board of Directors/ Trustees consisting of **more than one** member, and **not made up entirely of related family members**.
4. A bank account in its own name with **at least two unrelated authorised signatories**.
5. Been in existence for at least **12 months** and be a going concern.

Financial standing, governance arrangements, capacity and capability will be checked through due diligence processes.

4. VCFSE sector definition

Organisations run on a not-for-profit basis, including:

1. Registered Charity
2. Charitable Incorporated Organisation
3. Community Interest Company (CIC)*
4. Company Limited by Guarantee
5. Social Enterprise (not-for-profit)
6. Other legally constituted Voluntary / Community Group

**** CICs Limited by SHARES see note on ineligible applicants.***

- Unsure about your organisation status or have queries around your constitution/ governing document? Contact the Grants Team for further guidance prior to submitting your application.

4. Ineligible Organisations

Applications will not be accepted from:

- Organisations whose governing document allows profits or dividends to be shared among members, share holders, or directors - whether or not they actually do distribute them (incl. CICs Ltd by Shares).
- Individuals, or organisations that consist of one family (i.e. Board made up entirely of related family members).
- Unincorporated bodies that are not a legal entity.
- Statutory bodies / public authorities, i.e. Local Authorities, Parish and Town Councils, NHS, etc.
- Schools, colleges or universities
- Housing Associations
- Private Companies Ltd by Shares
- Grant making bodies applying for funding to redistribute to individuals or groups.
- Applications to fund political or religious activities (**however, faith-based organisations are eligible**)
- Organisations/ groups whose sole purpose is to campaign, or organisations seeking funding for any campaigning activity.

4. Legal responsibility and partnership working

- Organisations must apply in their own right.
- One organisation cannot apply on behalf of another.
- Successful applicant organisations will be legally accountable and responsible for all aspects of the funded project.
- Partnership working is actively welcomed and will be looked upon favourably in assessing applications.
- The applicant organisation will be responsible for any third-party organisation/s, paid or unpaid, who will be working on the project.

5. Available funding

- £711,000 available across LCR.
- One grant round.
- Fair distribution of grants across boroughs.
- £10k - £40k available per application – don't apply for more than max, or less than min.
- **Must be spent by 31 March 2026** – defrayed (paid out of bank), not just committed/accrued.

Applying for more than one grant

- You can submit one or more applications.
- Each application must be specific to one Local Authority Area only.
- Each individual application needs to be deliverable/ financially viable as a self-contained project in the absence of success in securing funding in other boroughs applied for.

6. Strategic Fit

- Must ensure a strategic fit with activities already in place in the LA area where the activity will take place.
- Need to explain how the activity will be embedded and mapped into existing service delivery and how it avoids duplication, or displacement of existing local activities and services – both mainstream/publicly-funded services, and other provision delivered locally.
- Consider wider strategic context/ environmental factors, e.g. market changes, cases for change, policy priorities, or emerging local needs.
- Applications will be reviewed for local strategic fit by a representative(s) of the Local authority from the borough the application relates to.

(Hence the need for borough-specific applications)

7. Compliance

All relevant laws, rules and regulations, including:

- Safeguarding
- Prevent Duty
- Safe recruitment, DBS checks
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Equality Act 2010, Equality Impact Assessment
- British values
- Data protection & GDPR
- Procurement

8. Monitoring & evaluation

- Info (participant & financial) will be required **monthly**
- Precise requirements currently being agreed with LCRCA

Likely to include:

- Participant forms/ data
 - Personal info - name, address contact details, NI No., etc
 - Personal characteristics, e.g. gender, age; ethnicity, disability, educational attainment, etc.
 - Outcomes achieved
- Expenditure – spreadsheet & evidence
- Delivery related evidence (e.g. initial assessment, ILPs/PDPs, progress forms) - TBC
- End-of-project evaluation report, by 30th April 2026
- Participation in central LCRCA/ VOLA evaluation

9. Eligible costs



Directly employed staff

Gross + Employer's NI + Employer's pension (+ any other taxable incentives linked to pay) x % of time on project.
List individually – with description of time commitment to project (hpw/ dpw, months)

15% of direct staff costs - no other indirect overheads costs can be included

Equipment – small items that can be reasonably described as revenue funded

Delivery partner fees, incl. their staff costs (*don't count towards 15% o/heads calculation*)

Consultancy - if you buy in self-employed consultants or sessional staff (*costs don't count towards 15% o/heads calculation*)

Cost heading	Description/ how calculated	Total (£)
Internal staff costs <i>(As well as gross salary, don't forget to factor in employer's pension & NI contributions + any other taxable incentives linked to pay)</i>		
SUB-TOTAL		
Overheads		
Flat rate 15% of internal staff costs		
Participant costs		
Travel/ transport		
Refreshments/ lunch		
Childcare		
Other expenses		
Click to enter text.		
SUB-TOTAL		
Other costs		
Materials		
Small items of equipment		
Publicity/ advertising		
Community events		
Evaluation		
Delivery Partner fees		
Consultancy fees		
Staff travel/ expenses		
SUB-TOTAL		
TOTAL COST/ AMOUNT REQUESTED (Staff + Overheads + Participant + Other Costs)		

9. Value for money

- Proposed costs should be reasonable and proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed project.
- Appropriateness, reasonableness & VFM will be considered as part of assessment process.

10. VAT

- When you buy things that include VAT, the VAT element is an ineligible cost if your organisation is able to recover it (even if it is not subsequently recovered).
 - I.e. if you claim VAT back, don't include it in your budget/ financial claims.
- Irrecoverable VAT can be claimed as an eligible cost, provided the cost can be substantiated by appropriate evidence from the organisation's auditors or accountants, if requested.
- In proposing your budget, do not add VAT on top of the proposed cost
 - I.e. if your proposed total costs are £10k, do not add 20% on to make it £12k
- If you are unsure about your organisation's VAT status, please seek professional advice.

11. Application process and timescales

Milestone	Month							
	Oct		Nov		Dec			
Application window launched	Tues 14 th							
Q&A Deadline (5 pm)		Wed 29 th						
Application Deadline (11.59 <u>pm</u>)			Sun 9 th					
Eligibility, due diligence, assessment & decisions made				By 28 th				
Applicants informed (successful/ unsuccessful) – including conditions & queries to be resolved					W/c 1 st			
<u>Mandatory</u> briefing workshop (date TBC)					W/c 1 st			
Grant Agreements issued: when pre-grant conditions met					ASAP from W/c 1 st			
Delivery commences/ first payments made						ASAP from W/c 8 th		

11. Application process and timescales

- Application form & supporting documents available on website (<https://volamerseyside.org.uk/ygt>)
 - Application form (Word document)
 - Funding Specification & Grant Guidance (PDF)
 - Application guidance – advice on how to complete the form (PDF)
- Completed applications (with requested supported documents) and any questions emailed to: YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk
- Application deadline: Sunday 9th November 2025

12. Assessment process

1. Eligibility assessment and due diligence:
 - Governing documents, governance, accounts, online searches, completeness of form, etc.
2. Application assessment, scoring and shortlisting:
 - Team of experience assessors
 - Systematic process to score all applications
 - Each application assessed by minimum of two assessors
 - **Local Authority review of strategic fit**
 - Assessment panel/ moderation - reach consensus on recommendations to make
3. Decision making group:
 - Chaired by VOLA Trustee, plus range of key stakeholders including LCRCA. Composition of group currently being finalised.

12. Scoring methodology

Score	Classification	Definition
0	No response or response not relevant	No, or inadequate response. Completely fails to meet the requirements in relation to the question(s) asked, providing no confidence.
1	Poor - unsatisfactory response	Substantially unsatisfactory response. Significantly fails to meet the requirements of the question(s).
2	Partially acceptable response but with significant areas of weakness	Weak or unconvincing response. Fails in most aspects to meet the requirements in relation to the question(s) asked.
3	Acceptable response (substantial compliance with no major concerns)	Acceptable response to the question. Meets most of the requirements in relation to the question(s) asked.
4	Good/ very good - fully satisfactory response (fully compliant)	Robust response. Meets the requirements in relation to the question(s) asked. Comprehensive response in terms of detail and relevance to the question. Provides high level of confidence.
5	Excellent - outstanding response (fully compliant, with some areas exceeding requirements)	Outstanding response. Fully addresses and exceeds requirements in relation to the question(s) asked. Provides full confidence.

12. Assessment Criteria and Weighting

Criteria	Weighting	Relevant Questions
Project implementation	20%	D2, D3, D5, D6, D7
Need & strategic fit	20%	D8, D9
Experience, capacity, capability & readiness to deliver	20%	D10
Quality & compliance	20%	D11, D12, D13, F2
Costs and value for money	10%	E1, E2, D4, D14-D19
Social Value and environmental impact	10%	G1, G2

13. Application form – structure

A. Project Contact Details
B. Organisational Details
• Incorporation date; staff numbers; governance; registration number(s); brief organisational overview (100 words); financial information; insurance; policies; compliance (DBS, Data Protection/ GDPR, Procurement)
C. Project Summary
• A brief overview of the project, (150 words) • Geographical areas - delivery venue(s) & recruitment. • YGT investment theme(s) addressed. This is section used to brief strategic advisory panel of Local Authority reps

13. Insurance and key policies required

Copies will be required if your application is successful – no need to submit with application.

Insurance:

- Public Liability (min. £2m), Employers Liability (min £5m) **

Policies:

- Health & Safety, with appropriate risk assessments in place *
- Safeguarding – children & young people &/or vulnerable adults (as appropriate) *
- Prevent Duty **
- Equality & Diversity *
- Compliments & Complaints *
- Data Protection *
- Anti-fraud **
- Whistleblowing **
- Environmental **

**** Must be in place at time of applying***

***** If not currently in place, option to confirm they will be before project is funded (Condition of Grant)***

13. Application form – structure

	D. Full Project Details
D1	• Timescales – expenditure and delivery
D2	• What you will do – detailed description of your proposed project, its activities and delivery model, different stages and key delivery milestones
D3	• Partnership working
D4, D5	• Target groups and engagement approaches
D6	• Risks and contingency planning
D7	• Monitoring and evaluation
D8, D9	• Need and Strategic Fit
D10	• Experience, capacity, capability and readiness to deliver
D11	• Quality
D12	• Safeguarding and Prevent
D13	• Equality, diversity and inclusion
D14 - D19	• Outputs & outcomes

Assessment Criteria
Project Implementation 20% (D4 also VFM)
20%
20%
Quality & Compliance 20%
ref. VFM

13. Application form – structure

	E. Project Costs (see section 14)	Assess. Criteria
E1	- Staff costs, participant costs, other project costs - Overheads - flat rate contribution, calculated as 15% of direct project staff costs	Costs & VFM 10%
E2	Any match funding, or in kind support – though not essential, this will be looked upon favourably.	
	F. Other Current Funding	
F1	Details of funding for similar activities	Compliance
F2	Measures to avoid double funding and double counting	
	G. Social Value & Environmental Impact	
G1	- Social Value - how will your project provide additional social value to the local community? Propose at least one measurable SV target for the project - Environmental impact - how will you seek to minimise this?	SV & Env Impact 10%
G2		
	H. Declaration and Document Checklist	

13. Application: Supporting Documents Required

1. Governing document/ constitution

2. Published set of accounts for your last financial year

Exceptions: e.g. if your organisation:

- Is exempt from requirements (e.g. charities with <£10k turnover, which are not also Cos Ltd by Guarantee).
- Has only just been in operation for 12 months and no accounts are available yet.

Contact Grants Team prior to submitting application to check that the form of accounts you propose to submit will be acceptable

3. Annual Report, covering your recent activities and achievements

- E.g. Charity Annual Report, CIC34 Report, or Directors Report and Accounts (providing there is a substantial paragraph on activity and achievements during the year) would all suffice.

If none of the above are available (regardless of whether you are legally obliged to have one):

- Submit brief report (500 words max) covering activities and achievements in past 12 months.

13. Application form: advice & support

- **Read and follow the application guidance document!**
 - Clear, step by step - designed to help submit a good application.
 - Particularly useful if inexperienced at bid writing, but useful even if you are.
- Need Further advice and support? Try your local CVS, or partner organisation/individual you know that might be able to assist.
- VOLA must remain independent and ensure transparency of the process.
- Grants Team can only offer brief, factual advice on the application process in response to questions raised and cannot comment on the validity or quality of your proposals/application.

14. If you're successful

W/c 1st December

1. Queries & pre-grant conditions
2. Insurance, policies, bank details - confirmation of account name (in name of org.) & min. 2 unrelated signatories
3. Grant Agreement – ASAP following completion of 1 & 2
4. Briefing workshop – mandatory (date/ time TBC)
5. Monthly budget submitted
6. Payments:
 - First, up-front payment to help with cashflow – not made until 3 & 5 complete
 - Subsequent payments are subject to satisfactory performance & receipt of required monitoring info/evidence
 - Frequency of payments currently being agreed with the LCR Combined Authority
 - Small retention payment may be retained until project end – TBC
7. **ASAP from w/c 8th December** - delivery commences
8. **31st March 2026** - delivery and expenditure complete
9. **30th April 2026** - evaluation report required

15. If you're unsuccessful

- Unsuccessful applicants will be informed by email w/c 1st December - will include brief general feedback on why unsuccessful
- VOLA unable to enter into detailed individual discussions. Where requested, we will provide more detail feedback, but might be slightly later, as priority is on mobilising funded projects.
- No appeals process and no right of appeal.
- If you are unhappy about any aspect of the process, please discuss it first with the Grants Team at VOLA.
- If the matter cannot be resolved in this way, VOLA has a formal complaints procedure. In the unlikely event of a formal complaint, these should be emailed to:
YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk.



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Questions?



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Thank you and good luck!

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