

**Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Community Grants  
Programme – Liverpool City Region  
Funding Specification and Grant Guidance  
Round 2 - June 2026**

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## 1. Introduction

### What is VOLTA?

VOLTA is a consortium of Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) service providers operating in the Liverpool City Region.

VOLTA exists, primarily, to provide a formal structure for supporting the VCFSE sector in the provision of skills and employment support across the city region; promoting, organising and facilitating cooperation and partnership working between VCFSE organisations.

As well as convening and coordinating collaborative delivery of projects amongst our consortium members, we also work with the wider VCFSE sector in the skills and employment arena, for example, through managing grants programmes such as this one.

If you don't already know who we are and want to find out more, please visit our [website](#).

### The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Programme

The [Get Britain Working](#) White Paper, published in November 2024, sets out the Government's plans to reform employment support. Its main aims are to:

- Support people outside the workforce to move back into work.
- Give young people access to training, apprenticeships, or employment support.
- Help people find work, develop skills and progress in their careers, whether unemployed or already in work, alongside clear expectations to engage with support and take reasonable steps towards employment.
- Support employers to recruit, retain and develop staff, including through the merger of Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service.

The White Paper commits £240m to trial new approaches to helping people move into work, including £45m for eight Youth Guarantee Trailblazer (YGT) areas. The Liverpool City Region (LCR) has been selected as one of these areas to test different ways of supporting young people into employment, education or training.

The Youth Trailblazer will test, learn from and evaluate what works by:

- Listening to young people to understand their challenges and what support would help.
- Working with employers to offer paid work experience, in-work support and help for disadvantaged young people.
- Providing employability, wraparound, pastoral and other support to address barriers and personal challenges.

The LCR Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports 18–21-year-olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). It helps young people build confidence, overcome barriers and take positive steps towards employment, education or training.

The first grant round funded 35 projects, which collectively supported 500 young people between December 2025 and March 2026.

This grants programme runs alongside Local Authority-led YGT programmes also funded by the LCR Combined Authority.

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## 2. Context

The Liverpool City Region faces significant challenges in the labour market, more profoundly than regional and national averages.

The level of youth economic inactivity is increasing across LCR, as are NEET rates. LCR Combined Authority data indicates that since 2022, LCR NEET rates have increased (+1.1%), and at 4.8% are significantly higher than regional (4.1%) and national rates (3.2%).

Liverpool has the highest proportion of NEET of the six LCR local authorities at 5.7%, whilst Sefton at 3.5% has the lowest rate, which is still above the national average. However, there are areas of disadvantage in all boroughs that are known to have significantly higher levels of unemployment, inactivity and NEET rates than average.

The proportion of young people who are NEET and who are affected by long-term or temporary sickness has also risen in recent years, with over one in four citing sickness as a barrier to participation in 2023, compared to one in 10 in 2012.

Among other things, those who are NEET are:

- 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.

Being NEET has a significant adverse impact upon an individual's life chances. Evidence shows that both short and especially long-term periods as NEET are strongly linked to poorer outcomes across multiples domains of life.

NEET experiences have long lasting consequences, with people formerly NEET in younger life much more likely to remain disadvantaged, unemployed or in precarious work.

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### 3. Focus of this Community Grants Programme

This grants programme is aimed at supporting young, **18–21-year-old residents of the Liverpool City Region**, who are not in employment, education or training (**NEET**), by providing access to education, training, or employment support.

It will fund a range of inclusive, NEET-focused projects across the city region, which support workless young adults from traditionally 'hard to reach' communities (geographic and thematic) and individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage and/or who are difficult to engage, to overcome personal challenges and barriers; with the overall aim of supporting onward progression to employment, education or skills opportunities, including but not exclusive to:

- Apprenticeships and other forms of work with training opportunities.
- Learning and skills opportunities, such as those provided by local FE colleges, training providers and community learning provision; or
- Employment support such as Ways to Work, Connect to Work, Restart or other local or DWP-funded employment support services.

We encourage innovative and flexible approaches that meet specific place-based and thematic needs and challenges.

Grant awards will seek to fill gaps and not duplicate or displace existing activities and services. This will form part of the assessment process.

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### 4. Key themes of Community Grant investment

As prescribed by the LCR Combined Authority, the scope of this community grants programme is **limited to the following themes** that grants should focus upon (recognising that themes may be combined and addressed within one grant award):

- Mental health support – including dealing with bereavement.
- Support for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Neurodivergent young people.
- Support for those with a record of youth offending and recidivism.
- Support for young, single parents.
- Support to prevent substance misuse, including substances with high addictive potential such as ketamine; support for current drug users; and CPD for professionals working with drug users.
- Care leavers and care experienced young people.

- Support for those experiencing, or with experience of, homelessness.
- Sector routeways - mentoring/ coaching and capacity-building in specific employment sectors.
- Financial skills and money management.
- Literacy & numeracy skills.
- Softer skills, including confidence building, communication skills, team/ trust building.
- Support for individuals who experience multiple barriers and disadvantage including at least one of the above.

We recognise that other issues may affect young people's quality of life. However, themes outside the list above will not be considered as part of this grant programme.

**Note:** Significant LCR Trailblazer funding has been ring-fenced at Local Authority level to support **care leavers and care experienced young people**, with delivery led by Local Authorities. Applicants targeting this priority group should therefore be aware that potential duplication or displacement will be carefully considered during appraisal. Successful applicants working with this group will also be required to collaborate closely with the relevant Local Authority or Authorities in their role as corporate parent.

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## 5. Who is eligible to apply?

Applications are invited from **legally constituted**, VCFSE sector organisations, run on a not-for-profit basis, with an operational base in the Liverpool City Region.

Organisations must have:

- A governing document/ constitution.
- A Board of Directors/ Trustees that has more than one member and is not made up entirely of related family members.
- A bank account in its own name with at least two unrelated authorised signatories.
- Been in existence for at least 12 months and be a going concern.

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

The definition of 'VCFSE Sector' is - an organisation run on a not-for-profit basis, including:

- Registered Charity
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Community Interest Company (CIC) – [see below for CICs Limited by Shares](#)
- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Social Enterprise (not-for-profit)

- Other legally constituted Voluntary / Community Group

### Legal responsibility and partnership working

**Please note:** Organisations must apply in their own name and cannot apply on behalf of another organisation.

Organisations whose grant applications are successful will be legally accountable and responsible for all aspects of the funded project.

Whilst partnership working is actively encouraged and looked upon favourably in the assessment process, the grant applicant will be responsible for any third-party organisation/s, paid or unpaid, who will be working on the project.

### Applications will not be accepted from

- Individuals, or organisations that consist of one family (i.e. organisations whose Board of Directors/ Trustees are made up entirely of related family members).
- Unincorporated bodies that are not a legal entity.
- Statutory bodies, including Parish and Town Councils.
- Schools, colleges or universities.
- Health authorities, or for activities that should be funded by the health service.
- Housing Associations.
- Private Companies Ltd by Shares.
- Organisations that distribute profits to members or shareholders, or whose constitution permits this, even if they do not currently do so – [including CICs Limited by Shares](#).
- Applications to fund religious or political activities (however, faith-based organisations are eligible to apply).
- Grant-making bodies applying for funding to redistribute to individuals or groups.
- Organisations/ groups whose sole purpose is to campaign, or organisations seeking funding for any campaigning activity.

### Previously funded organisations

Organisations funded in the first grant round (December 2025 – March 2026) are eligible to apply. Previous performance will be considered as part of the assessment process.

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## 6. Funding available

**£450,000** is available across the city region, to be allocated in this single funding round.

Grants of between **£10,000** and **£40,000** are available per application.

All funding must be fully spent and have physically left your bank account by the end of March 2027. Committed or accrued costs do not qualify.

### Applying for more than one grant

Eligible organisations may submit more than one application. However, **each application must relate to the specific Local Authority area where the project will be delivered.**

Each borough-specific application must be deliverable and financially viable as a standalone project, even if applications for other boroughs are unsuccessful.

### Out-of-borough recruitment

We are seeking 'place-based' delivery to meet local needs, meaning projects must primarily operate in the participant's home borough. Exceptions for recruitment of out-of-borough participants are permitted (e.g., proximity to borders, travel convenience, access to niche provision, or other personal reason), provided that:

- The number of out-of-borough participants does not make up a disproportionate percentage of overall enrolments.
- Projects do not actively target people who would need to travel excessive or unreasonable distances to access support.

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## 7. Applications

Fully completed, signed applications and supporting documents must be emailed to [YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk](mailto:YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk) by **11.59 pm, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2026.**

- Incomplete or unsigned applications will be rejected.
- Respect the word counts: answers exceeding these will be capped at the limit.
- Do not alter the application form.
- Submit the form in Word format only.

The application form has eight sections. **Sections D-G will be scored** by the assessors.

<b>A. Project Contact Details</b>
<b>B. Organisational Details</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation date; staff numbers; governance registration number(s); organisational overview; financial information; insurance; policies; compliance (DBS, Data Protection/ GDPR, Procurement)</li> </ul>
<b>C. Project Summary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief project overview. This section will be used to brief a strategic advisory panel consisting of Local Authority representatives</li> </ul>

<b>D. Full Project Details</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timescales – expenditure and delivery</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What you will do – detailed description of your proposed project, its activities and delivery model, various stages and key delivery milestones</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target groups and engagement approaches</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks and contingency planning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation (<a href="#">see section 13 of this specification</a>)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need and Strategic Fit (<a href="#">see section 9</a>)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience, capacity, capability and readiness to deliver</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding and Prevent (<a href="#">see section 10</a>)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality, diversity and inclusion (<a href="#">see section 11</a>)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outputs, outcomes &amp; feasibility of proposed targets</li> </ul>
<b>E. Project Costs (<a href="#">see section 14</a>)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter total amount requested on form <b>&amp; complete separate budget spreadsheet</b></li> <li>• Cost categories - staff costs, participant costs, other project costs</li> <li>• Overheads = flat rate contribution, calculated as 15% of direct project staff costs</li> <li>• Any match funding, or in-kind support – though not essential, this will be looked upon favourably.</li> </ul>
<b>F. Other Current Funding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of funding for similar activities</li> <li>• Measures to avoid double funding and double counting</li> </ul>
<b>G. Social Value &amp; Environmental Impact</b>
<b>H. Declaration and Document Checklist</b>

**Supporting documents:**

**Your application will not be considered unless you submit the following documents via email by the stated deadline:**

- Governing document/constitution
- Most recent annual accounts & annual report

**The following will also be required if your application is successful:**

Policies & Procedures

- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding – children & young people &/or vulnerable adults (as appropriate)
- Prevent Duty
- Equality & Diversity
- Compliments & Complaints

- Data Protection
- Anti-fraud
- Whistleblowing
- Environmental

#### Evidence of valid insurance cover

- Public Liability Insurance (minimum £2m)
- Employers Liability Insurance (minimum £5m)

#### Banking details

- Bank statement/ other confirmation of bank account name (in name of organisation) and at least 2 unrelated signatories.

As part of VOLTA's grant funding agreement with the LCRCA, the LCRCA reserves the right to view, at any time, all necessary paperwork in relation to the grant, including financial and delivery records; relevant policies/ procedures; and quality assurance scheme certificates.

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## 8. Questions

Any questions should be emailed to [YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk](mailto:YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk) by 5pm, Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2026. We aim to respond to queries within 5 working days.

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## 9. Strategic Fit

Applicants should ensure strategic fit of the proposed project with activities already in place in the Local Authority area where delivery will take place.

Each applicant is required to set out how the proposed project will be aligned to 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.

Applicants should also 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 to which the application relates.

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## 10. Safeguarding & Prevent

Grant recipient organisations working with children or vulnerable adults will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service.

As this funding is likely to result in an organisation working directly with young people or vulnerable young adults, Grant applicants must ensure they have robust safeguarding policies in place and comply with the [Prevent Duty](#) requirements.

Responsibilities and commitments in this regard will be assessed as part of the application process; and successful applicants will need to submit up-to-date Safeguarding and Prevent Policies as part of pre-grant award due diligence processes.

Confirmation of appropriate (Standard or Enhanced) DBS checks with appropriate Barred list checks, in accordance with DBS guidance, will also be required for all personnel involved with the project; and Grant Recipients will be required to provide regular reports on safeguarding to VOLTA as part of project monitoring processes.

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## 11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. Liverpool City Region has an ageing population, and a workforce that has an underrepresentation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic people; disabled people; people of marginalised genders; carers and those with caring responsibilities.

### **VOLA's commitment:**

VOLA is fully committed to equality, diversity & inclusion (EDI) in all that we do. In developing this grants programme, we have undertaken a robust Equality Impact Assessment to highlight issues, risks and key actions that will be undertaken to ensure that the project is delivered in a way that ensures equality while recognising and allowing for the diverse needs of both grant applicants and the individuals who will ultimately access their support.

We actively welcome applications from organisations collaborate with people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act and/or other barriers to inclusion. We have endeavoured to ensure that publicity channels have reached organisations working with underrepresented groups.

Through the decision making processes, we will ensure, as far as is practically possible, a fair representation of projects focussed on underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities - aligned to the priority groups outlined in this funding specification, e.g. young

people with mental health issues, SEND, disability, neurodiversity, offenders, single parents, those with substance misuse issues, and Care Experienced young people.

### **Racial equality and support available:**

We actively welcome and support the submission of applications from organisations supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

We aim to use plain English in all documentation wherever possible, although some technical terms may be unavoidable.

We will do our best to support applicants who experience language barriers. You may wish to use [Google Translate](#). If this does not work well for you, please contact us and we will try to help.

### **Expectations of Grant Recipients:**

Organisations whose applications are successful will be required to:

- Comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Conduct equality impact assessments where appropriate.
- Actively promote the fundamental **British values** of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and promote principles that support equality of opportunity for all.

Responsibilities and commitments in this regard will be assessed as part of the application process. Successful applicants will need to submit an up-to-date Equality & Diversity Policy as part of pre-grant award due diligence processes; and supply demographic equality monitoring data relating to project participants as part of project monitoring processes.

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## **12. Data Protection and GDPR**

Successful applicants will be expected to have appropriate policies in place to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the updated Data Protection Act 2018, through which organisations are now held more accountable for technical and organisational measures in relation to their security and protection of data, particularly data that identifies residents (personal data).

As personal data that contains sensitive information (such as names, addresses and other personal details) will be collected as part of community grant evidence, Grant Recipients will be required to ensure this data is managed appropriately and in line with government regulations on GDPR and data protection principles.

Successful applicants will need to submit an up-to-date Data Protection Policy as part of pre-grant award due diligence processes, and supply participant monitoring data as part of project monitoring processes. Data Sharing responsibilities and agreements will be included in the Grant Funding Agreement.

All data, evidence and documents relating to funded projects must be **retained for** a period of **seven years** from the end of their project. Grant Recipients must ensure that data and documentation is not kept longer than necessary.

Where appropriate, VOLA and Grant Recipients will seek **participant consent** to share their individual personal data for programme reporting purposes.

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### 13. Monitoring, evidence and reporting requirements

Successful applicants must supply regular data, documentation, and evidence to VOLA regarding participants, delivery, and project finances. Reporting frequency (monthly or quarterly) will be tailored to meet LCRCA requirements and will be adjusted based on a risk assessment of your past monitoring timeliness and compliance.

Personal information that successful applicants are required to collect from participants and share with VOLA includes:

- Name; address; date of birth; telephone number; email address; NI number.
- Other personal characteristics: such as gender; age; ethnicity; employment & training status; disability, learning difficulty or health condition; previous educational attainment; health & non-health related barriers to work or education.
- Details of progression to paid work, further education/ training, or other positive outcomes achieved following participation, including employer name and job role, college/training provider, course/qualification or support programme, and start date.

#### Monitoring data, documentation and evidence required by VOLA.

a. Standardised participant forms issued by VOLA (mandatory use by all projects):

Document/ Form	Copy required by VOLA?
LCRCA Privacy Notice	No, but must be provided to all participants
Participant Information Sheet	No, but must be provided to all participants
Enrolment Form	Yes
Expenses/ Incentives Form	Yes
Exit/ Leaver Outcome form	Yes

For all other documentation used in the planning and tracking of participant progress and attendance, successful applicants should use their own processes and forms, as they will be best suited to the individual nature of their provision.

- VOLA does not routinely require copies of 'in-house', delivery-related forms as part of regular monitoring returns. However, a documented audit trail of assessment, action planning and progress review is required, which VOLA reserves the right to review as part of its quality monitoring processes.
- Expected good-practice planning and tracking records include initial assessments, individual learning plans/action plans (or equivalent), attendance registers/sign-in sheets and progress reviews. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) records may also complement key participant documentation.

b. Participant data spreadsheet - issued by VOLA (mandatory use).

c. Financial records relating to project expenditure:

- Project expenditure spreadsheet
- Evidence of staff costs (payroll records, payslips), invoices, receipts, defrayment evidence (bank statements) and, where appropriate, procurement evidence.

d. Project-end evaluation report, required by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2027.

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## 14. Eligible costs

Proposed budgets/ grant awards should be reflective of the true costs of delivering the Community Grant activities. Eligible costs include:

- **Salary and associated on-costs** (employer's pension & [NI contributions](#), plus any other taxable incentives linked to pay) of directly employed staff necessary to operate the Community Grant project.
- **Overheads contribution – paid as a flat rate 15% of internal staff costs. No other indirect overhead cost can be included** in project budgets or funding claims.
- **Participant costs:** including travel/ transport; refreshments/ lunch; childcare; equipment or uniforms required for jobs secured; other reasonable expenses; or reasonable incentives linked to attendance, retention or achievement.
- **Other direct costs required to deliver the project:** materials; staff travel/ expenses, publicity; community events; evaluation; Delivery Partner fees; consultancy fees, small items of equipment, including hardware and software that would reasonably be described as revenue funded.

Budgets and project delivery should demonstrate value for money. Proposed costs must be reasonable and proportionate to the scale and nature of the project.

Value for money is a key element of the of the assessment criteria.

## Value Added Tax

**VAT**, which is recoverable, by whatever means, is ineligible, even if it is not actually recovered by the final beneficiary or individual recipient. Irrecoverable VAT can be claimed as an eligible cost, provided the cost/claim can be substantiated by appropriate evidence from the organisation’s auditors or accountants, should this be requested by the Grants Team, the LCR Combined Authority, government auditors. or others appointed on their behalf.

If you are unsure about your organisation’s VAT status, please seek professional advice.

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## 15. Timescales: application, assessment and award process & project delivery

Activity/ Milestone	Notes	Timescale/ Deadline
Application launch	Application form & guidance <a href="#">here</a>	<b>Fri 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026</b>
Online briefings	Book place, or view slides afterwards <a href="#">here</a>	Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup> June, 1pm Weds 24 <sup>th</sup> June, 11am Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup> June, 12pm
Queries	<a href="mailto:YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk">YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk</a> – we aim to respond within 3 working days	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> July, 5pm
	Updated Q&As published <a href="#">here</a> weekly	
<b>Application deadline</b>	Email form <b>&amp; supporting documents</b> to: <a href="mailto:YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk">YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk</a>	<b>Sun 19<sup>th</sup> July</b>
Assessment, moderation & decisions		Aug – early Sept
<b>Applicants notified of outcome</b>	No appeals process, feedback provided on request	<b>By Weds 9<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>
<b>Briefing workshop</b>	<b>MANDATORY for successful applicants</b> – Mann Island, Liverpool	<b>Fri 11<sup>th</sup> Sept</b> <b><a href="#">Save this date</a></b>
Pre-grant due diligence	Submit policies, insurance, DBS & bank details, plus any required clarification	W/c 14 <sup>th</sup> Sept
<b>Grant Agreements issued, 1<sup>st</sup> payment</b>	<b>Following completion of pre-grant due diligence</b>	<b>From w/c 14<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>
<b>Delivery commences</b>		<b>W/c 14<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>
Financial claims & monitoring returns	Dates to be confirmed	Monthly & quarterly
<b>Delivery complete</b>	<b>Latest participant end-date</b>	<b>Fri 12<sup>th</sup> March 2027</b>
<b>Expenditure deadline</b>	<b>Left bank account, not just accrued</b>	<b>Weds 31<sup>st</sup> March-27</b>
Final financial claim & monitoring return		Mon 5 <sup>th</sup> April-27
Evaluation report		By 30 <sup>th</sup> April-27

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## 16. Assessment process and scoring methodology

### Eligibility assessment and due diligence:

Following submission, the Grants Team at VOLA will check applications for completeness, (including all required supporting documentation), undertake eligibility checks and necessary due diligence. They may need to contact applicants where eligibility cannot be clearly confirmed, or information or required documentation is missing.

All eligible and complete applications will then be allocated to the assessment team.

### Application assessment, scoring and shortlisting:

Assessors use a systematic process to score all applications, taking account of stated evidence of need; proposed impact; quality: compliance and value for money; and the nature, experience, capacity, capability and readiness to deliver of the applicant organisation. Social Value and environmental impact are also considered.

Each application is reviewed by at least two assessors. The assessment panel then discusses applications and agrees funding recommendations, including which projects to support, grant amounts and any conditions.

### Local Authority review of strategic fit:

Applications will also be reviewed for local strategic fit by a representative(s) of the Local authority from the borough the application relates to.

### Decision making:

A multi-agency group will consider the assessment panel's recommendations before making final decisions. The group will include key city region stakeholders, such as senior officers from the LCR Combined Authority, a Local Authority, Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), a young person's representative, and a member of the LCR Race Equality Hub.

### 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 in applicant's ability to meet the requirements.
1	Poor - unsatisfactory response	Substantially unsatisfactory response. Significantly fails to meet the requirements of the question(s). Inadequate detail provided/ questions have not been answered/ answers not directly relevant to the question.

2	Partial - 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. Limited information/ inadequate/ only partially addresses the question.
3	Satisfactory – 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 but fails in some areas. Acceptable level of detail, accuracy and relevance, but contains minor weaknesses or lacks clarity in a small number of areas.
4	Good/ very good - fully satisfactory response (fully compliant with requirements)	Robust response. Meets the requirements in relation to the question(s) asked. Comprehensive response in terms of detail and relevance to the question.  Proposal provides a high level of confidence in ability to deliver the requirements.
5	Excellent - outstanding response (fully compliant, with some areas exceeding requirements)	Outstanding response. Fully addresses and exceeds all requirements in relation to the question(s) asked. Answers the question(s) with precision and relevance, with no weaknesses identified. Includes innovation and/or added value, exceeding expectations.  Proposal provides full confidence in ability to not only deliver the requirements but also exceed some.

### Assessment Criteria and Weighting

Criteria	Weighting	Relevant Questions
Project implementation	20%	D2, D3, D5, D6, D7
Need & strategic fit	15%	D8, D9
Experience, capacity, capability & readiness to deliver	20%	D10
Quality & compliance	20%	D11, D12, D13, F2
Costs, value for money & feasibility of targets	15%	E1, E2, D4, D14-D20
Social Value and environmental impact	10%	G1, G2

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### 17. Is there any support or advice available to help us apply?

As referred to in Section 15, online briefing workshops are delivered alongside launching the application window. If you are unable to attend, you can access the slides [here](#).

**Guidance on completing the application form** is also provided, containing detailed instructions and helpful hints and tips – [see separate document](#).

For further advice and support, you may wish to speak to a local infrastructure support agency, such as a Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), or another partner organisation that might be able to assist.

To remain independent and ensure transparency of the process, the Grants Team at VOLTA can only offer brief, factual advice on the application process in response to questions raised at the briefing sessions, or via the published email address, and cannot comment on the validity or quality of your proposals/ application.

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## 18. Payment of grants

Following sign-off of the Grant Funding Agreement, successful applicants will be required to provide a monthly forecast of project costs.

Following this, VOLTA will pay an up-front payment of 60% of total grant value to help with cashflow for the project. Payments will not be made until a signed Grant Funding Agreement and financial forecast are received.

Subsequent payments will be made subject to confirmation of satisfactory performance and the receipt of required monitoring information and evidence.

- The second payment (30% of total grant value) will be paid in January 2027, following submission and approval of the December 2026 monthly claim.
- A retention payment of 10% will be retained until the end of the project to ensure final monitoring requirements are met.

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## 19. Unsuccessful applicants

Unsuccessful applicants will receive an email from us notifying the outcome, which will include brief general feedback on why your application has been unsuccessful.

Due to the anticipated high volume of applications, we regret that we are **unable to enter into detailed individual discussions regarding unsuccessful applications**. Constructive feedback will be provided where requested, though this may not be immediately after the initial funding decision is communicated, as priority will be on mobilising approved projects.

There will be no appeal process, and applicants will not have the right of appeal. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the process, please discuss it first with the Grants Team at VOLTA. If the matter cannot be resolved in this way, VOLTA has a formal complaints procedure. In the unlikely event of a formal complaint, these should be emailed to:

[YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk](mailto:YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk).

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