



YOUTH GUARANTEE

Funded by **UK Government**

Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Community Grants Programme

Round 2 - June 2026

23rd, 24th & 25th June 2026

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**LIVERPOOL
CITY REGION**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

METRO MAYOR
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
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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.

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.

1. Background



- The LCR Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports 18–21-year-olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- Focused on helping young people to build confidence, overcome barriers and take positive steps towards employment, education or training.
- VOLLA grants programme runs alongside Local Authority-led YGT programmes also funded by the LCR Combined Authority.
- First round (Dec-25 – March-26) funded 35 projects, collectively supporting 500 young people.
- 6 Round 1 projects re-funded (£300k).
- £450k available for new grants round.



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. Investment themes

- **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
- **Care leavers** and care experienced young people
- Support for those experiencing, or with experience of, **homelessness**
- Individuals with **multiple barriers and disadvantage**, including at least one of the above
- **Sector routeways** - mentoring/ coaching and capacity-building in key employment sectors
- **Financial skills** and money management
- **Literacy & numeracy skills**
- **Softer skills**, including confidence building, communication skills, team/ trust building

3. Investment themes



- **13 themes listed are the only ones that will be considered** – but are very broad
- Multiple themes may be combined and addressed within one application.
- Application form (C4) - **identify primary focus** (one theme only) plus and secondary themes

Note: care leavers and care experienced young people:

- Significant LCR Trailblazer funding already ring-fenced at LA level for this group.
- Potential duplication or displacement will be carefully considered during appraisal.
- Successful applicants targeting this group must collaborate closely with LAs in their role as corporate parent.

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 that has more than one member and is **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, capacity & capability checked through due diligence process.

Previously funded organisations

- Are eligible to apply.
- Previous performance considered as part of assessment process. Questions on form to reflect.



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 name - **one organisation cannot apply on behalf of another.**
- Successful applicant organisation **legally accountable** & responsible for all aspects.
- **Partnership working is actively welcomed** and will be looked upon favourably in the assessment process.
- Applicant organisation responsible for any third-party organisations working on the project.



5. Available funding

- **£450,000** available across LCR.
- One grant round.
- Fair distribution of grants across boroughs.
- **£10k - £40k** available per application.
- **Spent deadline 31 March 2027** – defrayed (left bank), not just committed/accrued.

Applying for more than one grant

- Application must **relate to a specific LA area where delivery will take place** – not LCR-wide or multi-borough.
- Can submit one or more applications.
- Each borough-specific application must be deliverable and financially viable as a standalone project, even if applications for other boroughs are unsuccessful.



5. Out-of-borough recruitment

- Seeking '**place-based**' delivery to meet local needs.
- Projects must primarily operate in the participant's home borough.
- **Exceptions** to recruit out-of-borough participants are permitted (e.g., proximity to borders, travel convenience, access to niche provision, or other personal reason)
- Provided that:
 - Out-of-borough participants are **not disproportionate** compared to overall numbers.
 - Projects **do not actively target** people who would need to travel unreasonable distances to access support.



6. Strategic Fit

- Must ensure strategic fit with activities already in place in the LA area applied for.
- Applications reviewed for local strategic fit by LA rep(s) from that borough.
- Need to set out how project will be aligned to existing service delivery and how it avoids duplication, or displacement of existing local activities and services.
- Consider wider strategic context/ environmental factors, e.g. market changes, cases for change, policy priorities, or emerging local needs.
 - Hard evidence and rationale proving there is a problem or gap that your project solves.
 - How your proposal supports current local/ national objectives
 - Direct responses to local demographic shifts, employment/ education/ public health data, or specific emerging issue



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

- Data, documentation & evidence - **participants, delivery & finances**.
- Reporting frequency – **monthly/ quarterly** to meet LCRCA requirements - individualised approach, **based on risk/** past timeliness and compliance.

A. Participant-related documents

- **Provided for mandatory use & regular submission:**
 - Enrolment, expenses, exit/outcomes forms
 - Participant data spreadsheet - *usual info required (see funding spec for list)*
- **Others used in planning and tracking - use your own** – will be best suited to nature of your provision. **(Not routinely submitted, but auditable)**
 - Good-practice documentation expected to be in place: initial assessment, ILP/ action plan, attendance registers/sign-in sheets, progress reviews.
 - CRM records may also complement key participant documentation.

8. Monitoring & evaluation

B. Financial records relating to project expenditure:

- Expenditure spreadsheet - [provided for mandatory use & regular submission](#)
- Supporting evidence:
 - Staff costs (payroll records, payslips)
 - Invoices, receipts
 - Defrayment evidence (bank statements)
 - Procurement evidence - where appropriate.

(Sample size based on risk)

C. Evaluation

- Participant case studies (min. 2) – template provided, but videos & soundbites even better
- Evaluation report - by 30th April 2026
- Participation in central LCRCA/ DWP evaluation – visits, interviews, case studies, etc.

9. Eligible costs

Explain calculations based on time commitment to project – e.g.
 (£2,500 gross per month + £116.16 Er's NI + 6% Er's pension) x 50%
 on project x 6 months = £16,596.96



Internal staff costs (direct employees)

- **“Direct employee” = employed directly by Applicant Organisation** under an employment contract, with tax and National Insurance processed via PAYE, as opposed to self-employed contractors, who invoices for services.
- **Self-employed contractors/ freelancers/ consultants (including Company Directors who invoice for their services) & delivery partner staff should be included in 'Other' costs below**

Staff member/ job title	Responsibilities on project	How calculated	Total Cost (£)
	Work out an employee's National Insurance contributions - GOV.UK	As well as gross salary, don't forget to include employer's NI & pension contributions + any other taxable incentives linked to pay	
STAFF COSTS SUB-TOTAL			£ -
Overheads contribution (See FAQ Section 4 for explanation of how the flat rate overheads contribution is applied)			
Flat rate 15% of internal staff costs (auto-calculates)			£ -

*** Flat rate 15% overheads contribution - no other indirect overheads costs can be included**

9. Eligible costs



Participant costs			
Item Category	Description - why needed deliver your project	How calculated	Total Cost (£)
Travel/ transport			
Refreshments/ lunch			
Childcare			
Other expenses			
Other (add as appropriate)			
PARTICIPANT COSTS SUB-TOTAL			£ -
Other costs			
Item Category	Description - why needed deliver your project	How calculated	Total Cost (£)
Staff travel/ expenses			
Materials			
Small items of equipment	That can be reasonably described as revenue funded (generally <£1k)		
Publicity/ advertising			
Community events			
Evaluation			
Delivery Partner fees			
Consultancy fees	Includes Company Directors who invoice for their time		
Other (add as appropriate)			
OTHER COSTS SUB-TOTAL			£ -
TOTAL COST/ AMOUNT REQUESTED (Staff + Overheads + Participant + Other Costs)			£ -

Don't count towards 15% o/heads contribution



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

Activity/ Milestone	Notes	Timescale/ Deadline
Queries	YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk – we aim to respond within 3 working days	Mon 6 th July, 5pm
	Updated Q&As published online weekly	
Application deadline	Email form & supporting documents to: YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk	Sun 19th July
Assessment, moderation & decisions		Aug – early Sept
Applicants notified of outcome	No appeals process, feedback provided on request	By Weds 9th Sept
Briefing workshop	MANDATORY for successful applicants – Mann Island, Liverpool	Fri 11th Sept <u>Save this date</u>
Pre-grant due diligence	Submit policies, insurance, DBS & bank details, plus any required clarification	W/c 14 th Sept
Grant Agreements issued, 1st payment	Following completion of pre-grant due diligence	From w/c 14th Sept

11. Application process and timescales

- Application form & supporting documents available on website (<https://volamerseyside.org.uk/ygt>)
 1. Funding Specification & Grant Guidance
 2. Application form
 3. Budget spreadsheet
 4. Application guidance – advice on how to complete the form
 5. FAQs
- Completed applications (with requested supported documents) and any questions emailed to: YGT@volamerseyside.org.uk
- **Application deadline: Sunday 16th July 2026**



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
3. Decision making group:
 - Chaired by VOLA Trustee, plus range of key stakeholders including LCRCA

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	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-D19, D20
Social Value and environmental impact	10%	G1, G2

13. Application form – structure

A. Project Contact Details
B. Organisational Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief overview of project, (150 words)• Geographical focus – borough of delivery; delivery locations; target recruitment areas• YGT investment theme(s) addressed<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select primary focus - either a specific demographic group or a delivery theme• In other column, tick any additional themes that your project will also address
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timescales – expenditure and delivery
D2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What you will do – detailed description of your proposed project, its activities and delivery model, different stages and key delivery milestones
D3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working
D4, D5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target groups and engagement approaches
D6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks and contingency planning
D7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation
D8, D9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need and Strategic Fit
D10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience, capacity, capability and readiness to deliver
D11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality
D12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Prevent
D13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality, diversity and inclusion
D14 - D19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output & outcome targets
D20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for proposed targets

Assessment Criteria
<p align="center">Project Implementation</p> <p align="center">20%</p> <p align="center">(D4 also VFM)</p>
15%
20%
<p align="center">Quality & Compliance</p> <p align="center">20%</p>
ref. VFM & target feasibility



13. Application form – structure

	E. Project Costs
E1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter total amount requested on form & complete separate budget spreadsheet
E2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any match funding, or in-kind support – though not essential, this will be looked upon favourably.
	F. Other Current Funding
F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of funding for similar activities
F2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures to avoid double funding and double counting
	G. Social Value & Environmental Impact
G1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Value - how will your project provide additional social value to the local community? Propose at least one measurable SV target for the project
G2	
	H. Declaration and Document Checklist

Assess. Criteria
Costs, VFM & feasibility of targets 15%
Compliance
SV & Env Impact 10%



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 CLG).
- 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.
- VOLLA 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 7th September (from Wednesday)

1. Queries & pre-grant conditions
2. Mandatory briefing workshop – Friday 11th

(Eligible expenditure from date of notification)

W/c 14th September

3. Pre-grant due diligence - insurance, policies, confirmation of bank account details
4. Grant Agreement issued – ASAP following completion of above
5. Submit monthly budget forecast
6. Active delivery commences – planning, recruitment & registration, etc.



14. If you're successful

6. Payments:

- Payment 1 (60% up-front) – not made until 3-5 complete
- Subsequent payments subject to satisfactory performance & receipt of required monitoring info/evidence
- Payment 2 (30%) Jan-27, following approval of Dec-26 claim.
- Payment 3 (10%) – Apr-27, following approval of Mar-27 claim

7. Friday 12th March 2027 - delivery to participants complete/ latest exit date

8. Weds 31st March-27 – spend deadline

9. 30th April 2027 - evaluation report required



15. If you're unsuccessful

- Unsuccessful applicants will be informed by email Tues 8th/ Weds 9th Sept
- VOLLA is unable to enter into detailed individual discussions.
- Where requested, more detailed feedback will be provided, but this will be later, as priority will be on quickly 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.
- If the matter cannot be resolved in this way, VOLLA 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!

VOLLA Team

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