

Equality Impact Assessment [version 2.12]



Title: Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>Grant funding</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Already exists / review <input type="checkbox"/> Changing
Directorate: Adults and Communities	Lead Officer name: Penny Germon
Service Area: Communities	Lead Officer role: Head of Service, Communities

Step 1: What do we want to do?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to assist decision makers in understanding the impact of proposals as part of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Detailed guidance to support completion can be found here [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

This assessment should be started at the beginning of the process by someone with a good knowledge of the proposal and service area, and sufficient influence over the proposal. It is good practice to take a team approach to completing the equality impact assessment. Please contact the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) early for advice and feedback.

1.1 What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this proposal?

Briefly explain the purpose of the proposal and why it is needed. Describe who it is aimed at and the intended aims / outcomes. Where known also summarise the key actions you plan to undertake. Please use plain English, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Equality Impact Assessments are viewed by a wide range of people including decision-makers and the wider public.

<p>This report seeks approval of the approach to funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant. If approved, this would mean VCSE organisations could be invited to apply for the funding for the period 2026-2030, setting out their proposals to align with the approach. The grant is for VCSE Infrastructure Organisations to provide support to the VCSE sector in Bristol through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building • Networks and partnership brokerage • Voice and influence <p>This grant is part of the City Council’s commitment to support a thriving, more equitable VCSE ecosystem and a one city, many communities approach. It is about providing infrastructure support to community and voluntary sector organisations so they have access to knowledge and skills, they can work together and there is an organised way for the city to collaborate with a very diverse network of organisations. Bristol City Council understands the vital role of VCSE organisations in the life of the city. A thriving VCSE sector contributes directly to the wellbeing of individuals and communities- by redressing disadvantage and inequality; delivering services; promoting inclusion; strengthening voice and influence; and enabling social action.</p>

1.2 Who will the proposal have the potential to affect?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bristol City Council workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The wider community
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioned services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City partners / Stakeholder organisations	
Additional comments:		

1.3 Will the proposal have an equality impact?

Could the proposal affect access levels of representation or participation in a service, or does it have the potential to change e.g. quality of life: health, education, or standard of living etc.?

If 'No' explain why you are sure there will be no equality impact, then skip steps 2-4 and request review by Equality and Inclusion Team.

If 'Yes' complete the rest of this assessment, or if you plan to complete the assessment at a later stage please state this clearly here and request review by the Equality and Inclusion Team.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	[please select]
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Step 2: What information do we have?

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

Please use this section to demonstrate an understanding of who could be affected by the proposal. Include general population data where appropriate, and information about people who will be affected with particular reference to protected and other relevant characteristics: [How we measure equality and diversity \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/equality-diversity)

Use one row for each evidence source and say which characteristic(s) it relates to. You can include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data e.g. from national or local research, available data or previous consultations and engagement activities.

Outline whether there is any over or under representation of equality groups within relevant services - don't forget to benchmark to the local population where appropriate. Links to available data and reports are here [Data, statistics and intelligence \(sharepoint.com\)](#). See also: [Bristol Open Data \(Quality of Life, Census etc.\)](#); [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#); [Ward Statistical Profiles](#).

For workforce / management of change proposals you will need to look at the diversity of the affected teams using available evidence such as [HR Analytics: Power BI Reports \(sharepoint.com\)](#) which shows the diversity profile of council teams and service areas. Identify any over or under-representation compared with Bristol economically active citizens for different characteristics. Additional sources of useful workforce evidence include the [Employee Staff Survey Report](#) and [Stress Risk Assessment](#)

Data / Evidence Source [Include a reference where known]	Summary of what this tells us
Monitoring and reporting submitted by current grant recipients Voscur and Black South West Network throughout current grant period (2022-present), including demographics of participants in EVCSE funded activities.	Equalities data is collected by grant funded organisations which shows that in the first 2.5 years of the Current Enabling the VCSE grant 2022-2026, participants were broadly representative of Bristol's population. There are some areas of underrepresentation including young people (aged 16-25 account for only 3 % of participants compared to 23.4% of the Bristol population). This could be accounted for by the fact young people may be students or not yet working, and if they are working they are generally more junior members of staff who may be less likely to seek infrastructure support on behalf of their organisation, especially leadership development. Also disabled people account for 9% of participants compared with 17% of Bristol population. Women account for 65% of participants in funded activities which is representative of the national

	average of 67% women in the voluntary sector as reported by NCVO.																								
Equalities Statistics: What is available and where to get it. Guidance note August 2024 https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/8193-equalities-statistics-august-2024/file	Provides a demographic breakdown of the Bristol population and is used to identify areas of higher deprivation and lower representation within Bristol's many communities.																								
Enabling EVCSE engagement and survey report	A relatively diverse and representative range of VCSE organisations responded to the survey and took part in engagement conversations. The majority were in agreement that the priorities of EVCSE were still relevant and the feedback received about what could be improved has been taken into account in developing the approach.																								
Census 2021	The Census details the demographic profile of Bristol.																								
The population of Bristol	Updated annually. The report brings together statistics on the current estimated population of Bristol, recent trends in population, future projections and looks at the key characteristics of the people living in Bristol.																								
Bristol Key Facts 2023	Population profiles for equalities groups bring together detailed analysis looking at equalities groups and how they differ in relation to age, health, employment, education and housing, and maps the distribution of equalities groups across the city.																								
Ward profile data (bristol.gov.uk)	The Ward Profiles provide a range of datasets, including population, life expectancy, health and education disparities etc. for each of Bristol's electoral wards.																								
Bristol Quality of Life Survey 2023-24	<p>The Quality of Life (QoL) survey is an annual random sample of the Bristol population. The latest survey results show that inequality and deprivation still impact nearly every aspect of people's lives measured in the survey.</p> <p>The Quality of Life 2023/24 data dashboard shows which indicators, wards, and demographic groups are performing better or worse than the Bristol average.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;">Quality of Life 2023-24 Indicator:</th> <th style="width: 30%;">% who volunteer or help out in their community at least 3 times a year</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group</td> <td>Percentage</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bristol Average</td> <td>48.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10% most deprived</td> <td>38.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 to 24 years</td> <td>36.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50 years and older</td> <td>53.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disabled</td> <td>44.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian/Asian British</td> <td>54.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black/Black British</td> <td>44.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups</td> <td>54.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic</td> <td>51.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Quality of Life 2023-24 Indicator:	% who volunteer or help out in their community at least 3 times a year			Group	Percentage	Bristol Average	48.4	10% most deprived	38.6	16 to 24 years	36.1	50 years and older	53.2	Disabled	44.2	Asian/Asian British	54.5	Black/Black British	44.7	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	54.3	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	51.6
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	White Minority Ethnic	40.4
	White British	48.9
	Female	49.3
	Male	47.3
	LGB+	44.7
	Trans	53.1
	Christian	56.0
	Other religion	58.7
	No religion or faith	43.0
	Rented from housing association	42.6
	Rented from private landlord	34.1
	Rented from the council	35.0
	All carers	61.6
	Single parents	50.7
	No qualifications	32.8
Additional comments:		

2.2 Do you currently monitor relevant activity by the following protected characteristics?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation

2.3 Are there any gaps in the evidence base?

Where there are gaps in the evidence, or you don't have enough information about some equality groups, include an equality action to find out in section 4.2 below. This doesn't mean that you can't complete the assessment without the information, but you need to follow up the action and if necessary, review the assessment later. If you are unable to fill in the gaps, then state this clearly with a justification.

For workforce related proposals all relevant characteristics may not be included in HR diversity reporting (e.g. pregnancy/maternity). For smaller teams diversity data may be redacted. A high proportion of not known/not disclosed may require an action to address under-reporting.

EVCSE has not previously gathered data on other equalities groups such as refugees, asylum seekers, care leavers or protected characteristics such as pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership.

We also know not everyone shares their information by completing equalities monitoring, so data is often incomplete. Of a reported 4613 participants in funded activities in the first 2.5 years of the grant, equalities monitoring information was provided for 1127 people. This is because organisations are supported through the programme as well as individuals, in which case equalities data is collected at organisational level rather than participant level. Equalities data is generally collected for individuals who attend networks, training, peer support sessions and events and that is what is reported to us as funders.

Further, data about geographic representation in EVCSE activities is incomplete.

We are having ongoing conversations with organisations funded through EVCSE about improving participant equalities and geographic data collection. Improvements have been made and we continue to work in partnership to find solutions to challenges.

The 2021 census reveals data about LGBT+ people for the first time. In Bristol, 6.1% of the population over the age of 16 are LGBT+ according to the latest census. The Equalities Statistics June 2021 briefing note includes an

estimated figure for LGBT+ people in Bristol based on responses to the quality of life survey of 9.1%. We have used this higher figure to measure our equalities impact against.

2.4 How have you involved communities and groups that could be affected?

You will nearly always need to involve and consult with internal and external stakeholders during your assessment. The extent of the engagement will depend on the nature of the proposal or change. This should usually include individuals and groups representing different relevant protected characteristics. Please include details of any completed engagement and consultation and how representative this had been of Bristol's diverse communities.

Include the main findings of any engagement and consultation in Section 2.1 above.

If you are managing a workforce change process or restructure please refer to [Managing a change process or restructure \(sharepoint.com\)](#) for advice on consulting with employees etc. Relevant stakeholders for engagement about workforce changes may include e.g. staff-led groups and trades unions as well as affected staff.

In developing thinking for Enabling the VCSE, we have engaged with internal and external colleagues and partners including:

- VCSE organisations working on equalities issues including race equality
- VCSE organisations based in areas of multiple deprivation in North, South and Central Bristol, including those operating as community hubs
- VCSE infrastructure organisations including Voscur, Black South West Network and Locality
- Members of the Bristol Funders Network
- Council staff from other Core Cities managing comparable grants/ contracts
- Colleagues from the Communities service

50 people took part in engagement conversations, of which 12 were internal Bristol City Council Stakeholders.

An online survey was published on the council's consultation hub (<https://www.ask.bristol.gov.uk/enabling-the-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-sector-grant>) between 28 November and 16 December 2024. The survey included a link to register for two open engagement events.

Respondents could choose to answer some or all of the questions in any order and save and return to the survey later.

A total of 88 people responded to the online survey.

Two online public engagement events targeted at VCSE organisations were held on 10th and 16th December 2024. Those attending events were from a wide range of organisations working in Bristol.

Black South West Network promoted the online events to their network of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic groups. BCC colleagues promoted it to their networks including through the Community Exchange network and the Communities newsletter.

A total of 14 people attended the open engagement events. Of these, at least 6 were Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic-led organisations. There may have been other equalities-led organisations present but as we did not ask this question systematically, this was not recorded.

Demographics of survey respondents:

Respondents were asked their age. 78 respondents selected their age, of which:

- 0 (0%) respondents were 18-24
- 10 (12.8%) respondents were 25-34
- 23 (29.5%) respondents were 35-44
- 17 (21.8%) respondents were 45-54
- 16 (20.5%) respondents were 55-64
- 6 (7.7%) respondents were 65-74
- 3 (3.8%) respondents were 75-84

- 0 (0%) of respondents were 85 +
- 3 (3.8%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked whether they consider themselves to be a Disabled person. 80 people responded, of which:

- 14 (17.5%) respondents considered themselves to be a Disabled person
- 61 (76.3%) respondents did not consider themselves to be a Disabled person
- 5 (6.3%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked their ethnic group. 77 respondents selected their ethnic group, of which:

- 6 (7.8%) respondents selected Asian or Asian British
- 13 (16.9%) respondents selected Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- 4 (5.2%) respondents selected Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- 44 (57.1%) respondents selected White British
- 3 (3.9%) respondents selected Other White Background
- 0 (0%) respondents selected Gypsy, Roma or Traveller
- 6 (7.8%) respondents selected other
- 1 (1.3%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked their religion / faith. 78 respondents selected their religion / faith, of which:

- 41 (52.6%) respondents selected No religion
- 0 (0%) respondents selected Buddhist
- 20 (25.6%) respondents selected Christian
- 0 (0%) respondent selected Hindu
- 0 (0%) respondents selected Jewish
- 5 (6.4%) respondents selected Muslim
- 1 (1.3%) respondent selected Pagan
- 0 (0%) respondents selected Sikh
- 9 (11.5%) respondents selected Other
- 2 (2.6%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked their sex. 75 respondents selected their sex, of which:

- 42 (56%) respondents identified as female
- 28 (37.3%) respondents identified as male
- 0 (0%) respondent identified as other
- 5 (6.7%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked whether they consider themselves to have a gender identity different from their sex recorded at birth. 74 people responded, of which:

- 1 (1.4%) respondent said yes
- 69 (93.2%) respondents said no
- 4 (5.4%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked their sexual orientation. 76 respondents selected their sexual orientation, of which:

- 2 (2.6%) respondents selected Bi
- 2 (2.6%) respondents selected Gay/Lesbian
- 58 (76.3%) respondents selected Heterosexual / Straight
- 12 (15.8%) respondents preferred not to say
- 2.6 (2%) respondents selected that they use another term

Respondents were asked whether they are pregnant or have given birth in the last 26 weeks. 77 people responded, of which:

- 1 (1.3%) respondent said yes
- 69 (89.6%) respondents said no
- 7 (9.1%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked whether they are a carer. 76 people responded, of which:

- 9 (11.8%) respondents said yes
- 61 (80.3%) respondents said no
- 6 (7.9%) respondents preferred not to say

Respondents were asked whether they are a refugee or asylum seeker. 74 respondents responded, of which:

- 0 (0%) respondents said yes
- 70 (94.6%) respondents said no
- 4 (5.4%) respondents preferred not to say

Characteristics of respondents and their organisations:

This survey was targeted at VCSE organisations, who were the primary audience. Therefore, it is assumed that those responding were doing so on behalf of their VCSE organisation.

Respondents were asked which areas of interest their VCSE organisations work in. They could select all that applied. 82 respondents responded.

Respondents selected 20 areas of interest, the most common of which were:

- 49 (59.8%) responded Health and wellbeing
- 44 (53.7%) responded Community development
- 34 (41.5%) responded Neighbourhood
- 31 (37.8%) responded Children and families
- 24 (29.3%) responded Information, advice and guidance
- 21 (25.6%) responded Resident-led organisation
- 21 (25.6%) responded Jobs and skills
- 20 (24.4%) responded Equalities
- 19 (23.2%) responded Environmental
- 15 (18.3%) responded Arts and culture

Respondents were asked which group their VCSE organisation primarily works with. 72 respondents responded.

Respondents selected 13 groups that their organisations work with, the most common of which were:

- 39 (54.2%) responded Specific geographical community or neighbourhood
- 37 (51.3%) responded People impacted by poverty
- 34 (47.2%) responded Children and / or Young People
- 34 (47.2%) responded Families
- 32 (44.4%) responded Older people
- 31 (41.7%) responded Disabled people
- 20 (27.8%) responded New migrant, refugee, asylum seeker
- 16 (22.2%) responded Lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Respondents were asked which areas of Bristol their VCSE organisations works in. They could select all that apply. 35 areas were selected by respondents, the most common of which was citywide. This area was selected by 42 respondents.

After citywide, the top 11 areas of Bristol selected, worked in by the organisations responding were:

- **Ashley (9 respondents)**
- Bedminster (11 respondents)
- **Central (8 respondents)**
- Easton (8 respondents)
- **Filwood (11 respondents)**
- **Hartcliffe and Withywood (8 respondents)**
- **Knowle (9 respondents)**
- **Lawrence Hill (7 respondents)**
- **Lockleaze (8 respondents)**
- Southville (7 respondents)
- **Windmill Hill (7 respondents)**

The wards highlighted bold above contain lower super output areas which fall within the 10% most deprived according to the 2019 Indexes of Multiple Deprivation. Filwood, Hartcliffe and Withywood and Lawrence Hill have particularly high levels of deprivation with the majority of the ward falling within the 10% most deprived.

Respondents were asked what their VCSE organisation's annual turnover is. 79 respondents selected their organisation's annual turnover, of which:

- 14 (17.7%) responded below £20k
- 7 (8.9%) responded £20k to £50k
- 16 (20.3%) responded £50k to £250k
- 17 (21.5%) responded £250k to £1m
- 16 (20.3%) responded over £1m
- 9 (11.4%) responded not applicable

From this data we can see we heard from fewer younger people than their proportion in the Bristol population. We did however hear from organisations that work with Young People.

We heard from close to representative numbers of Disabled people, LGBTQ+ people and people from Black and minoritised ethnic communities compared to the Bristol population; fewer men than women; one gender-reassignment respondent and one respondents who was pregnant or had given birth in the last 26 weeks.

In engagement events, we heard from people representing diverse VCSE organisations. At least 6 were organisations that were Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic-led. There may have been other equalities-led organisations present but as we did not ask this question systematically, this was not recorded.

Survey and engagement key findings and how they have informed our approach to funding

Findings from the online survey, open engagement events and targeted engagement conversations have informed the development of the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant approach to funding. Applicants will need to show they have responded to the feedback and findings of the survey and engagement in their proposals.

Clarity of offer of support available

Findings:

76% of respondents to the survey said they were clear about what support is available when their organisation needs it, and where to go to access it, which is very positive. The remaining 24% said they were not clear of the offer. This percentage rose to over 30% for Asian, Black, Black British, Caribbean and African survey respondents, and over 30% of respondents from certain wards: Southmead, Hotwells and Harbourside and Asheley wards. During engagement conversations, predominantly smaller organisations and organisations based in more geographically isolated locations at the edges of the city stated that they were not clear about the support offer or how to access it.

Qualitative feedback consistently showed that people felt the support offer could be more clearly communicated.

Response: We have included a key requirement that proposals for the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant should "Clearly and transparently define and communicate a joined up offer". We also expect proposals to include a practical capacity building support offer which is clearly communicated, inclusive of and proactively targeted towards organisations that are: led by equalities groups; neighbourhoods and places experiencing greatest disadvantage and smaller and emerging community groups.

The underpinning principles of 'Equity and Inclusion' and 'Place-based' indicate that EVCSE activities should:

- Take positive action to address systemic disadvantage and inclusion.
- Remove barriers to participation, proactively building an inclusive practice to ensure provision for the people who tend to be excluded and underrepresented.
- Ensure representation and participation of our diverse VCSE sector in important city conversations.
- Strengthen neighbourhood organisations and working, reaching out into particularly geographically excluded or historically less engaged neighbourhoods.

- Strengthen a One City, Many Communities approach, by supporting place-based networks and collaborating with community hubs and anchor organisations who hold trusted relationships in their local communities.

Priorities

Findings: Respondents were asked to consider which of the 5 existing EVCSE priorities they thought should be retained within the grant programme. Each of the 5 priorities received support from at least 70% of respondents to be retained. The most commonly selected priorities were:

'Support the VCSE sector by accessing local, regional and national assets including; funding and investment opportunities, skills, knowledge, private sector support, data, policy and practice' (82%)

and

'Build on the existing business skills and capacity for enterprise. This includes supporting VCSE to access grant funding, find new sources of funding, earned income, income generation and management of assets.' (80%)

The view that the existing priorities continue to be relevant was echoed during engagement conversations.

Respondents to the survey were also asked to identify from a list of 14 options which areas of VCSE infrastructure support they saw as a high, medium or low priority and which were not a priority at all. Of this list, the options that were more commonly selected as a high priority were:

Voice and influence, advocacy and policy shaping (66% selected as high priority)

Help with accessing funding (65% selected as high priority)

Networks (57% selected as high priority)

Support building partnerships (53% selected as high priority)

Strategic support e.g. enabling your organisation or a group of organisations to work together to influence policy or advocate for yourselves (53% selected as high priority)

The options that were least commonly selected as a high priority and more commonly selected as a low priority were:

Digital and IT support (25% selected as high priority, 36% selected as low priority)

Practical operational support e.g. with facilities management, event planning or volunteer recruitment (25% selected as high priority, 38% selected as low priority)

An analysis of the qualitative feedback showed that the things people found most useful about the support and training they received were: bespoke and tailored 1:1 support for their organisation; access to specific expertise when needed; governance and policy advice and support; and fundraising support. Similarly, during engagement conversations people expressed priorities including business and financial planning, partnership brokerage and good governance.

Feedback showed that people felt networks were useful, but that there were too many, and that there was sometimes a lack of clarity of purpose.

There were some comments suggesting training, retaining and recruiting trustees was a priority for organisations.

Although building/ asset acquisition, management and maintenance was not highly prioritised by survey respondents, multiple people mentioned that recent support on this theme had been beneficial for their organisation at a critical time.

When asked what was missing from the current offer, some of the themes raised were democratic engagement specifically with ward councillors, amplification of the VCSE sector's own voice in strategic forums (supporting them to speak for themselves and increase their influence), brokerage of relationships/ connections with consultants, wellbeing support for leaders, information sharing and briefings and support to challenge systemic inequity/ exclusionary structures.

It was clear from engagement conversations that the needs of organisations vary depending on their size and stage of development. More established organisations were interested in support with voice, influence and policy shaping as well as support accessing specialised technical expertise.

Response: There are three key priorities set out in our funding approach which have been designed to reflect learning from the current EVCSE programme as well as feedback gained through the survey and engagement:

1. Practical capacity building support which should cover themes including:
 - a. Best practice in VCSE sector governance
 - b. Financial planning, sustainability, fundraising and income diversification
 - c. Assessing, Measuring, understanding and communicating impact
 - d. Taking on and effectively managing assets and infrastructure
 - e. Accessing appropriately skilled consultants and other specialist expertise at the right time

- f. Proactively avoiding crisis situations through contingency and business planning
 - g. Trustee, staff and volunteer recruitment, retention, and capacity building
 - h. Leadership development
 - i. Accessing and making the most of Bristol City Council grant opportunities and social action programmes including The Bristol Impact Fund and Can Do Bristol.
 - j. Support to access local, regional and national assets
 - k. Support for collaboration and partnerships, consolidation, and mergers
2. Purposeful networks
 3. Voice and influence

All proposals should be sharpened and influenced by the VCSE sector, including taking feedback from this engagement process into account in developing the offer.

Delivery of support

Findings: Our analysis of the qualitative feedback and comments gathered through engagement conversations identified the following prominent themes which were raised in several comments:

1. **Timing of support:** Several comments were made about the need for support to be timely and responsive. Some organisations felt that they were often better placed to follow up a query or issue, or to pursue a strategic priority themselves due to delays or lack of timely response from infrastructure organisations.

Response: We acknowledge that EVCSE is part of a bigger picture of investment of time and resources in VCSE infrastructure and capacity building support in Bristol. Sometimes, peer and self-led support mechanisms are the best option. A clearly defined and communicated offer will help organisations to go to the best place for support, with confidence they are eligible to receive it. Improved systems of signposting and referrals should reduce delays and ensure the experience of organisations is as smooth as possible.

2. **Location:** Qualitative feedback referred to the need for face-to-face training and meeting organisations at their premises. This aligns with discussions during targeted engagement conversations when several organisations talked about the capacity building support they already provided within their specific geographies, and how the EVCSE programme could add value to this if support could be offered on location to bolster existing activities.

Response: One of the underpinning principles of EVCSE is 'place-based'. We know there has been a conscious effort to do more outreach as part of the existing programme and expect this to be built upon, to strengthen a One City, Many Communities approach, by supporting place-based networks and collaborating with community hubs and anchor organisations who hold trusted relationships in their local communities.

3. **1:1, bespoke support and follow up:** There was a lot of positive feedback about 1:1, bespoke support which was tailored to the needs of the organisation. Several comments about capacity building support referred to the need for wrap around support and clear written follow up. Several comments and discussions centred around signposting to other services and follow up support and resources when infrastructure organisations are not in a position to support.

Response: One of the priorities of EVCSE is practical capacity building support. We have specified that the capacity building offer should include free to access support including bespoke, intensive support for organisations who meet strategic priorities.

4. **Referrals and join up between infrastructure organisations:** It was clear from engagement conversations that organisations would appreciate a clear and transparent system for referrals between infrastructure organisations, the council, and ideally other organisations including funders. This would mean regardless of where they made their first point of contact, they could be guided to the right source of support and advice. Some organisations were unclear about how infrastructure organisations worked together and which organisation they were 'eligible' to contact.

Response: We have specified that proposals will need to demonstrate how activities will signpost and refer VCSE organisations between partners to ensure the experience of organisations is as smooth as possible.

2.5 How will engagement with stakeholders continue?

Explain how you will continue to engage with stakeholders throughout the course of planning and delivery. Please describe where more engagement and consultation is required and set out how you intend to undertake it. Include any targeted work to seek the views of under-represented groups. If you do not intend to undertake it, please set out your justification. You can ask the Equality and Inclusion Team for help in targeting particular groups.

Once the funding has been approved and the grant has been awarded, we will work closely with funded VCSE infrastructure organisations to ensure feedback from the VCSE sector informs their approach to delivering VCSE infrastructure from March 2026. Successful applicants are expected to work with the VCSE sector to shape the programme as it develops.

Through regular meetings, we are able to ensure consideration is made about the accessibility of the support offer, for example how it is communicated, how it is tailored to ensure its appropriate for small and volunteer led organisations as well as larger more established organisations, whether appropriate venues and formats of support (face to face vs online) are offered.

We will also continue to work with and feed in any useful insight received through this engagement to the current grant recipient organisations, to ensure input from the sector is considered in planning for the final year of the 2022-2026 current programme. over the application process and how to make the process as accessible as possible, including by developing a programme of support targeted at equalities-led and small organisations to develop applications.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts of the proposal in this section, referring to evidence you have gathered above and the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Also include details of existing issues for particular groups that you are aware of and are seeking to address or mitigate through this proposal. See detailed guidance documents for advice on identifying potential impacts etc. [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people based on their protected or other relevant characteristics?

Consider sub-categories and how people with combined characteristics (e.g. young women) might have particular needs or experience particular kinds of disadvantage.

Where mitigations indicate a follow-on action, include this in the 'Action Plan' Section 4.2 below.

GENERAL COMMENTS (highlight any potential issues that might impact all or many groups)

The current Enabling VCSE grants will finish on 31st March 2026. If any organisations currently funded are not to be funded going forward, an assessment will be undertaken of the risks and impacts of the termination of funding will be undertaken and where possible any identified potential negative impacts will be mitigated.

Analysis of data from the first two years of EVCSE 2022-2026 indicates a disproportionately positive impact for many groups with protected characteristics listed below.

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Age: Young People

Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes No

Potential impacts:

For the purposes of EVCSE 'young people' are 16-25. Equalities monitoring shows that 3% of participants were young people, lower than the Bristol population (16%). This could be explained by the following:

- This is a demographic group that is often more reluctant to fill in equalities monitoring forms and therefore the true number may be higher.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is possible that, as participants in the programme are professionals and volunteers in the VCSE sector, young people are less represented within the cohort of possible participants. Young people are often under-represented in engagement and consultation in Bristol and are less satisfied than average with the way the council runs things. Children and young people in Bristol are considerably more ethnically diverse than the overall population of Bristol.
Mitigations:	We have regular discussions with funded organisations to address gaps in provision and think about how to target audiences who are not being reached.
Age: Older People	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	For the purposes of EVCSE 'older people' are 65 and over. Equalities monitoring shows that 6% of participants were older people, lower than the Bristol population (13%). It is also possible that, as participants in the programme are professionals and volunteers in the VCSE sector, older people are less represented within the cohort of possible participants.
Mitigations:	We have regular discussions with funded organisations to address gaps in provision and think about how to target audiences who are not being reached. Our funding agreements specify that accessible venues must be used for hosting funded activities.
Disability	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	Equalities monitoring shows that 9% of project participants were Disabled people, lower than the Bristol population (17%). Voscur currently run a specific 'communities of equalities' network, which some Disabled organisations participate in. The requirement to make reasonable adjustments is 'anticipatory' so we must think in advance and ongoing about what disabled people might reasonably need. Disabled people must not be charged for their reasonable adjustments, accessible formats or other adaptations. It is a legal requirement under the Equalities Act to ensure information is accessible to disabled employees and service users.
Mitigations:	We have regular discussions with funded organisations to address gaps in provision and think about how to target audiences who are not being reached. We will continue to work together to ensure VCSE infrastructure is relevant, useful and targeted towards Disabled people. Our funding agreements specify that accessible venues must be used for hosting funded activities. We also work with funded organisations to consider accessibility of communications and format of support.
Sex	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	65% of participants are women compared with 28% men. According to National Council for Voluntary Organisations 67% of voluntary sector workers are women so this is not unexpected.
Mitigations:	No mitigations.
Sexual orientation	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	7% of participants identified as LGB+, compared to 9.1% of Bristol population according to quality of life survey data.
Mitigations:	Continued conversations about reaching LGB organisations and work by funded organisations to engage with LGB+ organisations through the LGBTQ+ network. This work is currently funded by BCC (through a different grant programme) and by the Integrated Care Partnership, however, there is a knock on positive impact on the EVCSE programme as members of the LGBTQ+ community are engaged with the work of Voscur and BSWN and therefore more likely to seek support and engage with networks etc.
Pregnancy / Maternity	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	We do not collect equalities data about pregnancy/ maternity from EVCSE participants.
Mitigations:	
Gender reassignment	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Potential impacts:	1% of participants reported being transgender. This is proportional to the Bristol population (0.8%).
Mitigations:	See mitigations for sexual orientation
Race	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	<p>The EVCSE programme currently funds BSWN to work specifically to support Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities. 96% of their participants are from Black and minoritised communities and 68% are from African and Caribbean communities. 7% are from south Asian communities. Across the whole programme, taking into account equalities data from both Voscur and BSWN, 50% of participants are from Black and minoritised communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services may lack cultural competence because minoritised ethnic staff are under-represented. • People who do not speak English as a main language may require information in plain English and community language translations or videos. • The top countries of birth outside the UK for Bristol residents, according to the 2021 Census, are Poland, Somalia, India, Romania, and Jamaica.
Mitigations:	<p>EVCSE 2026-2030 will continue to centre equity and emphasize the importance of providing targeted support to Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities. This is explicitly stated within the approach to funding.</p> <p>Funded organisations will be encouraged to provide materials in alternative formats and other languages.</p>
Religion or Belief	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	<p>40% of participants are from faith communities compared to 42% of the Bristol population. Muslims are disproportionately represented and account for 10% of participants compared to 7% of the Bristol population.</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census findings, there are over 45 religions represented in Bristol. Approximately 1 in 15 people in Bristol are Muslim, making Islam the second most practiced religion in the city after Christianity.</p>
Mitigations:	No mitigations
Marriage & civil partnership	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	NA
Mitigations:	NA
OTHER RELEVANT CHARACTERISTICS	
Socio-Economic (deprivation)	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	<p>The EVCSE programme disproportionately benefits those areas considered in the top 20% most deprived in the city. The majority of participants are from the wards of Easton, Knowle, Hartcliffe and Withywood, Central, Ashley, Lawrence Hill, Filwood and Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston, all of which are more deprived areas of the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bristol has 41 areas in the most deprived 10% in England, including 3 in the most deprived 1%. The greatest levels of deprivation are in Hartcliffe & Withywood, Filwood and Lawrence Hill. • In Bristol 15% of residents - 70,800 people - live in the 10% most deprived areas in England, including 17,900 children and 7,800 older people.
Mitigations:	Continue to have a targeted approach which prioritises those organisations working in areas of high deprivation. Our approach seeks to build on the successful outreach programme which has begun to see positive benefits during the current programme.
Carers	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Other groups [Please add additional rows below to detail the impact for any other relevant groups as appropriate e.g. asylum seekers and refugees; care experienced; homelessness; armed forces personnel and veterans]	

Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	

3.2 Does the proposal create any benefits for people based on their protected or other relevant characteristics?

Outline any potential benefits of the proposal and how they can be maximised. Identify how the proposal will support our [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination for a protected group
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- ✓ Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

Yes. Equity is a key principle on which the approach to Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Grant is built, and the infrastructure support that is provided through the programme should prioritise equalities organisations and those operating in the most deprived parts of the city, through providing capacity building, networks and partnership support and voice and influence.

The Enabling the VCSE Grant will:

- Take positive action to address systemic disadvantage and exclusion
- To support communities experiencing inequity to build thriving VCSE organisations
- Remove barriers to participation, proactively building an inclusive practice to ensure provision for the people who tend to be excluded and under-represented
- Ensure representation and participation of our diverse VCSE sector in important city conversations
- Support VCSE organisations to build excellence in equalities, diversity and inclusion practice and policies

Step 4: Impact

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

What are the main conclusions of this assessment? Use this section to provide an overview of your findings. This summary can be included in decision pathway reports etc.

If you have identified any significant negative impacts which cannot be mitigated, provide a justification showing how the proposal is proportionate, necessary, and appropriate despite this.

Summary of significant negative impacts and how they can be mitigated or justified:

There are communities who do not currently access VCSE infrastructure support or engage with infrastructure organisations funded through EVCSE. This includes the Gypsy and traveller community, Easton European community and some other racially minoritised communities. Young people also account for a smaller than proportional number of those who participate in the activities funded. There are also some areas of the city which experience significant deprivation in the lowest 20% or 10% Multiple Deprivation which we believe may not be benefiting as much as they could from neighbourhood focused work – it is difficult to identify gaps due to issues with collection of geographic data. Our main mitigation for all these communities is to work with funded partners to improve outreach and targeting, informed by the data they provide through monitoring.

Summary of positive impacts / opportunities to promote the Public Sector Equality Duty:

EVCSE funding will positively impact on equalities communities, especially those living in the most deprived areas of the city and citywide equalities communities. Our approach requires funded organisations to take positive action in their work to prioritise supporting and reaching out to organisations led by the communities they work with and represent.

Equalities monitoring data shows that racially minoritised communities are disproportionately benefitting from EVCSE funded work. Work carried out with BSWN over the past two and a half years has helped to target Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities, who have benefitted from capacity building support, leadership development and networks specifically targeted at their communities and organisations. EVCSE funding has enabled the development of a communities of equality network, led by Voscur. The EVCSE 2026-2030 will continue to centre equity and inclusion as a key underpinning principle, and we will continue to work closely with funded organisations to ensure equalities organisations, organisations in deprived communities and smaller organisations are prioritised for support.

4.2 Action Plan

Use this section to set out any actions you have identified to improve data, mitigate issues, or maximise opportunities etc. If an action is to meet the needs of a particular protected group please specify this.

Improvement / action required	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Continue to work with funded organisations, meeting on a quarterly basis for strategic and monitoring meetings to ensure work is targeted appropriately and serving equalities communities in the city. Work together to discuss challenges, highlights, gaps in provision and collective solutions	Community Resources Manager	Ongoing throughout current programme and 2026-2030 programme.
Work with funded organisations to improve collection of consistent monitoring data, particularly around geographic reach of their work, where there is currently a significant gap in data. Consider ways to collect organisational data using different forms, as well as individual participant data.	Community Resources Manager	Ongoing throughout current programme and 2026-2030 programme.
Meet regularly with organisations successfully funded in EVCSE programme 2026-2030 to ensure our approach to funding is upheld, feedback from VCSE sector is taken on board during work planning and there are ongoing mechanisms for the sector to influence and shape the programme so that it is responsive and adaptive to change.	Community Resources Manager	From March 2026.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured?


How will you know if you have been successful? Once the activity has been implemented this equality impact assessment should be periodically reviewed to make sure your changes have been effective your approach is still appropriate.

Funded organisations carry out 6 monthly monitoring and attend a 6 monthly monitoring meeting when demographics of participants and other findings from monitoring reports are discussed in detail. Feedback is provided which helps shape priorities for work in the coming months. This approach helps us to ensure a close working relationship and gives opportunities to collectively discuss challenges, gaps in provision and collective solutions. The data collected and conversations we have with funded organisations will be aggregated and used to inform the approach to any future funding.

Step 5: Review

The Equality and Inclusion Team need at least five working days to comment and feedback on your EqIA. EqIAs should only be marked as reviewed when they provide sufficient information for decision-makers on the equalities impact of the proposal. Please seek feedback and review from the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) before requesting sign off from your Director¹.

¹ Review by the Equality and Inclusion Team confirms there is sufficient analysis for decision makers to consider the likely equality impacts at this stage. This is not an endorsement or approval of the proposal.

Equality and Inclusion Team Review: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>	Director Sign-Off: 
Date: 15/01/2025	Date: 3 March 2025