

VCFS GRANTS 2027–2031

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES



FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY,
AND FAITH ORGANISATIONS OF ALL SIZES,
FROM GRASSROOTS GROUPS TO ESTABLISHED ORGANISATIONS.
BUILDING HEALTHIER, FAIRER AND MORE CONNECTED
COMMUNITIES ACROSS GREENWICH.

**FIND OUT MORE AND APPLY:
[ROYALGREENWICH.GOV.UK/VCFS-GRANTS](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/vcfs-grants)**



VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR GRANTS FUNDING 2027-2031

Prospectus

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Our Values and Principles.....	5
The VCFS Investment Programme Model	6
Strength in People - Themed Grants	8
Themed Grant Priorities.....	8
Priority Groups and Our Equity Approach	9
Who Can Apply	10
What the funding can support.....	11
Timeline for grant applications and award.....	12
The Application Process	13
Guidance, Training and Support.....	14
Aligning to the Council's Corporate Priorities and Strategies.....	18
Funding Priorities	20
Befriending and Social Connection for Vulnerable Adults	21
Carers (life course approach).....	24
Community Centres	26
Creative Health and Socially Engaged Arts and Culture	28
Homelessness and supporting people at risk of rough sleeping	30
Information, Guidance, Advice and Specialist Support	32
Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Learning Disabilities and Autism (life course approach).....	35
Volunteering Infrastructure.....	37
Voluntary Opportunities for families known to Children's Social Care.....	38
Appendices	39

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the new Royal Borough of Greenwich Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) Grants Prospectus 2027-2031.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is committed to working in genuine partnership with the VCFS to improve lives, reduce inequalities and build fairer, healthier and more connected communities. We recognise the VCFS as a vital part of our community infrastructure, with organisations of all sizes providing trusted support, reaching residents who may not engage with statutory services, strengthening communities and helping people to thrive.

Our resources as a council are limited, so we need to focus our investment where it can make the greatest difference. This means responding to local need and inequalities, with partners focused on achieving clear and meaningful outcomes for residents and communities. This also means a fair distribution across our neighbourhoods, ensuring interventions and services are delivered where people need them most.

This VCFS investment programme is about strengthening the sector for the long term. The VCFS has faced significant pressures and disruption in recent years, including the loss of some established organisations. While the council cannot financially support the whole sector, we want to work with organisations to build their capacity, resilience, and independence. This includes supporting organisations to diversify their income and develop new partnerships to create a strong and sustainable VCFS for the future.

We are also committed to embedding co-design and co-production in how services are developed and delivered. People with lived experience should have a meaningful role in shaping the services and support they use. We want to help organisations strengthen their understanding and practice of co-production through training and support and encourage its use in developing services that respond to what communities need.

Funding is available to organisations of different sizes and stages of development, from grassroots community groups to established organisations delivering larger services.

Free support, guidance and training is also available to help organisations prepare strong applications and make the most of this opportunity.

This Prospectus provides an overview of the grants programme and application process. It draws on evidence of local need, the council's strategic priorities and engagement with residents, communities and stakeholders.

Our Values and Principles

As part of the planning process for this model, we engaged with stakeholders from across the borough to hear their views and gather their insights. This engagement has shaped the following principles for the grants programme, which emphasise the importance of working in partnership, listening to residents and providing early and equitable support to help build strong, connected communities.

- **Additionality:** Delivery of community-based activity that meets local need and delivers on our commissioning outcomes.
- **Capacity building:** Supporting grassroots organisations to develop skills and the infrastructure to be our commissioned providers of the future.
- **Community Voice:** Enhancing insight, community voice, coproduction opportunities, community power to feed into priority setting for further commissioning.
- **Empowerment:** Enabling the VCFS to be partners in our response to resident need.
- **Building Partnerships:** Supporting the voluntary sector to build partnerships with one another and statutory organisations.
- **Prevention:** Investing early and targeting support to help maintain independence and improve health, wellbeing and resilience.
- **Equity:** Promoting fairer, healthier lives for all.

All applications must be grounded in these core values.

We are committed to ensuring that resources are directed to where need is greatest and that communities experiencing disadvantage are prioritised. We expect all funded activity to align with race equity principles, actively challenge discrimination and promote fairness across our Borough.

Safeguarding is fundamental to high-quality delivery, and applicants must demonstrate appropriate policies, practices and their commitment to keeping people safe.

The VCFS Investment Programme Model

The Council's investment in the VCFS for 2027–2031 will be delivered through a combination of funds outlined below:

1. **Strength in People** - Themed grants supporting resident need and commissioning priorities
2. **Strength in Services** - VCFS Commissioned services supporting resident need and commissioning priorities
3. **Strength in Neighbourhoods** - Small, neighbourhood-based grants supporting resident need and neighbourhood priorities
4. **Strength in Community Organisations** - Development grants supporting the needs of individual organisations

For clarity, grants support community-led activity delivered in line with agreed service delivery plans, while commissioning involves procuring specific services against a defined specification and contract.

This investment is allocated to grants that help address resident needs and the Council's commissioning priorities, with some very specific areas moving to VCFS commissioning arrangements in 2027.

Information about smaller neighbourhood-based grants, development grants and commissioning will be made available separately from October 2026.

The summary below sets out the 2027-2031 model.

1. Strength in People <i>Themed grants supporting commissioning priorities</i> Opens September 2026 £2.35M per year over 4 years Priorities include: ▪ Befriending and Social Connection for Vulnerable Adults ▪ Carers (life course approach) ▪ Community Centres activity ▪ Creative Health and Socially Engaged Arts and Culture ▪ Homelessness and supporting people at risk of rough sleeping ▪ Information, Guidance, Advice and Specialist Support ▪ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Learning Disabilities and Autism (life course approach) ▪ Volunteering Infrastructure ▪ Volunteering opportunities for families known to Children's Social Care	2. Strength in Services <i>VCFS commissioned services supporting commissioning priorities</i> Information available from October 2026 £550K per year over the commissioning cycle Priorities include: ▪ Domestic abuse ▪ Employment support ▪ Specific Carers support
3. Strength in Neighbourhoods <i>Smaller neighbourhood-based grants supporting specific neighbourhood-based priorities</i> Opens March 2027 £100K per year (combining with other funds to build 4 neighbourhood funds) over 4 years Priorities include: ▪ Neighbourhood-based priorities ▪ Ageing Well ▪ Social Connection ▪ Health, wellbeing and resilience	4. Strength in Community Organisations <i>Development grants supporting infrastructure costs</i> Opens June 2027 £400K per year over 2 years Priorities include: ▪ Supporting infrastructure costs ▪ Based on organisational needs ▪ Linked to RBG commissioning priorities

STRENGTH IN PEOPLE - THEMED GRANTS

This prospectus focuses on the **Strength in People** funding available in September 2026.

£2.35 million has been allocated to the Strength in People Grants Programme, which provides funding across a number of priority themes, as set out above.

More detail about each funding theme and the criteria required to apply for funding is outlined in the funding priorities section, later in this document.

Life Course Approach

Several themes use a life course approach, which means it covers both young people and adult-focused activities. As a result, we welcome applications that focus on a specific age group, multiple age groups, or key transition points throughout life. You do not need, however, to work across all age groups to bid for this strand. Funding will be awarded across the life course to ensure a balanced range of provision for residents of all ages.

Themed Grant Priorities

Funding is available under the following themes:

- Befriending and Social Connection for Vulnerable Adults
- Carers (life course approach)
- Community Centres – with a focus on social connection and health and wellbeing
- Creative Health and Socially Engaged Arts and Culture
- Homelessness and supporting people at risk of rough sleeping
- Information, Guidance, Advice and Specialist Support
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Learning Disabilities and Autism (life course approach)
- Volunteering Infrastructure
- Volunteering opportunities for families known to Children's Social Care

Priority Groups and Our Equity Approach

Equity is an important aspect of the work we all do to create a fairer, healthier borough. This model has been developed to support this aspiration, moving expectations to work with our priority groups into all themes and applications rather than stand-alone representation. We will work with organisations to ensure community voice is heard, specifically for underrepresented communities and will strengthen the sector support function to make sure this happens collaboratively.

We expect all applicants to consider how they are listening and responding to communities, building interventions in response to and with communities and engaging communities in co-design and co-production.

While applications are welcome from all eligible organisations, priority will be given to proposals that support our communities facing the greatest inequalities, including:

- Global Majority communities
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- LGBTQI+ communities
- People living with SEND, Learning Disabilities and/or Autism
- People experiencing homelessness and at risk of rough sleeping
- People living with mental health needs, including people living with addiction
- People living with physical disabilities
- Unpaid Carers

Please note that some themes from the last grants round are moving from grants to commissioned arrangements and smaller grants. Support for people who have experienced domestic abuse, specific carers' service provision, and employment support will all be made available through commissioning rounds later in 2026. This commissioning funding remains ring-fenced for VCFS organisations.

The sector support aspect of this funding is not included in these themed grants as before. This is because it is an important function that helps other organisations through the process, so it will be available on a different timescale. We are also starting a 'building a sector support model for the future' workstream in September to ensure that when the sector support grant opportunity is available next year it will be a co-designed offer that is responding to sector need.

We want to support organisations committed to working collaboratively, building strong partnerships, and making the most of the skills, assets and resources within our communities. We welcome applications from organisations of all sizes and levels of experience, whether currently funded by the Council or not, as long as they operate within

the Royal Borough of Greenwich and demonstrate a commitment to supporting the priority groups outlined above.

Who Can Apply

This programme is open to voluntary, community and faith sector organisations delivering activities in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

As a group, you can apply for funding if you are a:

- Registered Charity
- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Educational Establishment
- Religious Organisation
- Social Enterprise
- Constituted Community Organisation
- Friends of Group
- Tenants and Residents Association

Additionally, we will need to ensure that your organisation:

- Is non-statutory
- Is formally constituted
- Operates in the not-for-profit sector
- Has a properly elected management committee
- Operates in the Royal Borough of Greenwich

The following **will not** be considered for funding:

- Private groups or Companies
- Profit-making or trading arms of organisations
- Groups seeking funding for the purposes of fundraising or redistribution
- Political Parties
- Organisations using funds to engage in political activity or political campaigns
- Churches or religious organisations if the activity is intended to promote the religion itself, or if people must take part in religious services in order to benefit.
- Organisations where ‘campaigning’ is the main purpose or activity, except local groups addressing specific health and social inequalities
- Organisations currently under investigation by the Charity Commission. However, if the Charity Commission has investigated the organisation within the last two years and the investigation has concluded, provide details of the outcome for consideration in the eligibility assessment

Please note, applications will be subject to a higher level of scrutiny if they are from:

- Organisations with outstanding undisputed debts to the Council and no agreed repayment arrangement and
- Organisations with a poor track record of delivering and monitoring KPIs in previous council grant rounds with no agreed transformation plan

We will take a fair and proportionate approach to funding decisions to ensure a balanced distribution of investment and to maximise benefit across communities.

Organisations may submit more than one application, provided each proposal is distinct and/or addresses a different funding theme. However, no organisation will be awarded more than three bids.

Only the lead applicant of a consortium or partnership needs to submit an application. Additional information about partner organisations may be required at a later stage. For support with developing consortium bids, please contact sectorsupport@bvsc.co.uk

What the funding can support

Funding can be used for costs directly associated with delivering activities/programmes, or support for beneficiaries, where these contribute to achieving the priority outcomes. No more than 15% can be allocated to overhead costs.

This grant does not fund:

- Capital expenditure
- Retrospective costs
- Unrelated organisation costs
- Activities outside the scope of the Themed Priorities

Examples of Capital expenditure not eligible include:

- Buildings & Facilities: Acquiring a new office, community centre, or charity shop.
- Significant Refurbishment: Major structural improvements like replacing a roof, rewiring etc.
- Vehicles: Purchasing a minibus for transporting clients or a van for collecting donated goods.
- IT Infrastructure: Upgrading major network systems, servers, or acquiring hardware that exceeds standard capitalisation thresholds

Organisations are advised not to apply for more than 50% of their total yearly expenditure.

Please contact VCS-Grants@royalgreenwich.gov.uk if you need to discuss individual circumstances.

Timeline for grant applications and award

The table below outlines the current timeline for this funding process. Themed grants will be available to apply for in September and October 2026, for 6 weeks, with other opportunities launching in 2027. We are working towards the dates outlined below and will communicate through the grants' website if any agreed dates change, or any yet to be agreed dates become confirmed.

Funding programme timeline

Activities listed in chronological order.

Activity	Timeline
Training and support sessions	Ongoing
Strength in People themed grants - applications open	14 September 2026 (open for 6 weeks)
Strength in People themed grants - applications close	26 October 2026
Information available about Strength in Services commissioning opportunities (specific carers support, domestic abuse, employment support)	October 2026
Strength in People themed grants assessment period	27 October – 8 December 2026
Strength in People - Funding decisions	December 2026
Strength in People - Grant awards	January 2027
Strength in People - Service delivery plan development and mobilisation	January to March 2027
Strength in Neighbourhoods grants - applications open	March 2027 (timelines to be agreed)
Strength in People themed grants - delivery starts	April 2027
Strength in Community Organisations development grants - applications open	June 2027 (exact timelines to be agreed)

The Application Process

Organisations will need to complete the application form online via Plinth. We will circulate further information and provide video support about the Plinth platform.

A template will be available to download so organisations can review the questions before completing them online. Please look at the application guidance before completing your application.

If you require this prospectus, guidance or application form in an alternative format, or need any support or reasonable adjustments to complete your application, please contact us. We will work with you to provide appropriate assistance.

Applications will be assessed by council officers with specialist knowledge of the funding theme and other experienced grant assessors who bring an objective perspective to the assessment process.

Based on the information submitted, some applicants may be invited to attend an interview. This provides an opportunity to clarify aspects of their application and respond to questions from the assessment panel.

The assessment criteria and scoring methodology are set out in the application guidance accompanying the application form that will be available in September 2026.

GUIDANCE, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Checks and Finances

As a Council, we have a responsibility to the VCFS and the residents they serve. To ensure the sector's viability and sustainability, we reserve the right to take a strong interest in your finances and governance arrangements to ensure effective oversight of all aspects of your operations that serve our residents.

As part of your application, we will ask for your:

- Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Children Policy (if your organisation directly delivers a service for children and/or young people)
- Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy
- Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- Audited accounts for the last two years. If these are not available, an alternative means of demonstrating financial status will be required, e.g., independently examined accounts

As part of your application, you will be asked to provide information about your organisation, including its legal status, governance, financial position and the people or communities you support. All information submitted must be accurate and up to date.

To verify the information provided, the Royal Borough of Greenwich will undertake a range of due diligence checks. Relevant council officers and, where appropriate, accredited external organisations may carry out these checks. We may also verify information using publicly available sources relating to your organisation and where relevant, named individuals associated with it. Any personal information supplied will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR Data Protection Act 2018.

In some circumstances, the Council may need to carry out more detailed due diligence. If required, we may request additional information or supporting documentation before making a funding decision.

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).

Whilst this prospectus relates to time-limited grant funding and notice has been given to current grantee recipients, in some circumstances TUPE can still apply. Please do seek independent professional advice on the effect of TUPE (including any subsequent

amendments to TUPE) if you think it may affect you. The Council can give no assurances, warranties or assumptions as to the effect of TUPE and successful applicants will be deemed to have satisfied themselves as to the applicability of TUPE.

Service Delivery, Monitoring and Evaluation

Successful organisations will be asked to supply further policy information post-award. Organisations will then work closely with their relevant monitoring officers to agree detailed Service Delivery Plans.

Key considerations when developing service delivery plans include:

- Adopting a strength-based approach, highlighting what organisations are able to do best and aligning these strengths to achieve the necessary outcomes
- Working together to ensure the criteria outlined under each funding theme can be achieved
- Setting targets proportionate to funding allocation
- Encouraging a joint approach to creating performance indicators
- Ensuring that indicators are meaningful, evidencing impact and identifying areas for improvement.
- Identify clear measures to demonstrate the equity approach and social impact

Social Impact

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for its communities through services it delivers directly, through external provider contracts and grants, and through its strong relationships with the voluntary, community and faith sector.

We encourage applicants to demonstrate how their projects will create and deliver positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes that benefit local people.

This could include how projects will:

- Improve the health, wellbeing, and resilience of local communities.
- Create opportunities for local people through employment, training, volunteering, or skills development.
- Adopt an equity and inclusion approach by reducing barriers to participation and supporting underrepresented groups.
- Strengthen community connections and foster collaboration between organisations, residents, and local partners.

- Support environmental sustainability through responsible use of resources, carbon reduction, biodiversity enhancement, or other climate-positive actions.
- Deliver long-term benefits that continue beyond the funding period.

We are committed to building a meaningful monitoring and evaluation framework that helps us tell our collective story about equity and social impact and demonstrates the impact of funded activities across all grant themes.

Use of AI

We appreciate that AI is a handy tool that might be able to save time but be careful about ‘overusing’ it. Please always check its accuracy and relevance. It is much better to use AI to refine what you have already written. AI tools don’t necessarily capture your work or what makes your application stand out.

When applications are assessed, it is important to see and hear the knowledge and skills of those who will be delivering. AI cannot replace or replicate an organisation's passion and knowledge of the work they undertake.

Our Partnership Commitments

Grant awardees will be expected to sign up to the following commitments and undertake specific training as part of their formal grant agreements. You can sign up to specific offers through the links here

- [Greenwich Safeguarding Children Training](#) and [Safeguarding Adults Training](#)
- [Equality and Equity Charter](#) (if not already signed up)
- [Borough of Sanctuary Pledge of Support](#) (if not already signed up)
- Complete [Make Every Opportunity Count](#) (MEOC) in Greenwich training
- Sign up to the [Greenwich Community Directory](#)
- Sign up to the [VCFS Bulletin](#) and the [Community Champions Bulletin](#)
- Sign up to be a member of the quarterly Children's Provider Forum (for those activities/programmes working with Children)
- Where applications relate to food, please note Appendix D

VCFS organisations can also access ongoing support and training from the council and/or [Bexley Voluntary Service Council \(BVSC\)](#).

Any support outlined in this prospectus is also available for free and is equally available to both successful and unsuccessful applicants. The Community Development Team will be

available to signpost to further funding opportunities if bids are not successful through this process.

Community Development Team

If anything in this prospectus is unclear, please submit a question to VCS-Grants@royalgreenwich.gov.uk. We will endeavour to publish all questions and all responses in a timely manner, so that all applicants can benefit fairly from any points of clarification.

Please note that we can only clarify issues within the prospectus, not assist you with writing your application.

Greenwich Action for the Voluntary Sector (GAVS) – Bexley Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)

If you are considering a partnership or collaborative bid, GAVS, delivered by BVSC, can help you build connections with other organisations, provide advice on collaborative working, and identify organisations that may be well placed to work with you.

Find out more on their [website](#) or contact: sectorsupport@bvsc.co.uk

Additional Information

In addition to the offer from BVSC, the Royal Borough of Greenwich offers a range of support for the VCFS including:

- Information that can help organisations understand the local data and equity picture at [Greenwich Data Observatory](#) and [Fairer, Healthier Greenwich](#).
- [Greenwich Community Directory](#): Our online directory for information about groups/activities in the borough, including onboarding support to promote your organisation
- A range of training to help organisations support their service users. One example of this is [Make Every Opportunity Count](#). Further information about other training is available [here](#).
- Our [Community Champions](#) bulletin, sharing information about health and wellbeing plus training opportunities.
- VCS-Grants@royalgreenwich.gov.uk: to receive a sector funding bulletin, info about bid writing courses or any queries about the above

Aligning to the Council's Corporate Priorities and Strategies

Corporate Plan

The Council's new Corporate Plan will set out the vision and priorities for Greenwich to be a great place to live, work, study, visit and be. The new plan will launch later in the year, but in the meantime, applicants can refer to the current Our Greenwich Plan to learn more about the council's priorities.

[Our Greenwich Plan | Home | Supported by Royal Borough of Greenwich](#)

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Greenwich Health and Well-being Strategy 2023-28 sets out the high-level priorities for our work to improve the health of the Greenwich population. The priorities span the course of a resident's life: Start well, Be well, Feel well, Stay well, and Age well. By working together on these shared priority areas, we will support Greenwich residents to benefit from better health outcomes throughout their lives.

The Voluntary and Community Sector is vital in delivering change and improvement across this agenda, providing important channels for messaging, role modelling of good practice, service provision and enabling and supporting community and public engagement to shape local work.

[Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

Children and Young People Plan 2024-2029

We want to make sure children; young people and their families are at the heart of everything we do in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) sets out our partnership vision and priorities for the next five years. This plan has been developed in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers and those who work to support children and young people across the borough.

This plan sits alongside other key strategies and aligns with the 'Our Greenwich' corporate plan and other partnership plans, particularly the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

[Children and Young People's Plan](#)

Community Resource Strategy

RBG's Community Resource Strategy recognises the importance of belonging, aspiration and community that Greenwich VCFS groups provide. The strategy includes a series of principles that help shape the community sector and community assets, enabling both more meaningful participation and a more efficient approach to service provision.

[Community Resource Strategy](#)

Culture Strategy

Our People, Our Culture our Future, the Councils Culture Strategy (2024 to 2030) sets out an ambitious vision for 2030, positioning culture and creativity as key drivers of community wellbeing, economic growth and place-making. It prioritises increasing participation in culture, supporting children and young people through cultural education and skills development, and strengthening the local creative economy through partnerships, talent development and investment.

Guided by a dedicated Culture Board and delivered through cross-sector collaboration, the strategy calls on partners to ensure that culture remains accessible, inclusive and representative of Greenwich's communities, helping to establish the borough as a leading destination for creativity, learning and cultural innovation by 2030.

[Royal Greenwich's Culture Strategy | Royal Borough of Greenwich](#)

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The following pages of this prospectus outline the priority areas for themed grants. As a reminder, small grants for social connection and health and wellbeing, including emotional health and wellbeing, and development grants supporting infrastructure costs will be available in Spring/Summer 2027. The Strength in People themed grants priorities include:

- Befriending and Social Connection for Vulnerable Adults
- Carers support (life course approach)
- Community Centres – with a focus on social connection and health and wellbeing
- Creative Health and Socially Engaged Arts and Culture
- Homelessness and supporting people at risk of rough sleeping
- Information, Guidance, Advice and Specialist Support
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Learning Disabilities and Autism (life course approach)
- Volunteering Infrastructure
- Volunteering opportunities for families known to Children’s Social Care

And as another reminder, a life course approach means we welcome applications that support young people and adults, focus on a specific age group, multiple age groups, or key transition points throughout life. You do not, however, need to work across all age groups to bid for strands that highlight a life course approach.

You will note a maximum bid threshold at the beginning of each funding area. This means we cannot fund bids over this figure, but we welcome all bids below the maximum. If you genuinely feel you can contribute to the priority area with £10K, but the threshold is £80K, you can still submit your application for the smaller amount.

Befriending and Social Connection for Vulnerable Adults

The maximum threshold for a single bid is £60k.

This means we cannot fund bids over this figure, but we welcome all bids below £60K

Purpose

For the purposes of this funding priority, vulnerable adults are those who are experiencing significant social isolation, loneliness or disconnection from their communities, and who have limited or no access to informal support networks.

The aim is to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and support individuals to maintain independence and connection within their communities.

This may include individuals who:

- Are parents with mental health needs
- Live alone and have little or no regular contact with family, friends or neighbours.
- Experience chronic loneliness or social isolation.
- Experience reduced independence, mobility issues or frailty that limit their ability to engage with others and maintain social networks.
- Have experienced bereavement, loss, major life changes or other circumstances that have reduced their support networks.
- Face barriers to participation due to disability, culture, language, confidence, mobility or financial circumstances.

Demand for befriending services has remained consistently high throughout the current funding cycle. Services report:

- Sustained and significant demand, often operating at or near capacity
- Waiting lists at peak periods
- Consistent year-round need, with some seasonal fluctuations

This reflects broader issues including:

- Increasing social isolation, particularly among older people, carers and vulnerable adults
- Ongoing pressures on carers, with a need for respite and emotional support
- The long-term impact of financial and social pressures on wellbeing

Befriending programmes are a vital part of the local support offer, providing meaningful social connection and emotional support that enhances wellbeing and helps residents stay engaged within their communities.

Services may include:

- Creative options for one-to-one befriending (face-to-face, telephone or digital)
- Group-based social opportunities
- Peer support models
- Support for carers through respite befriending
- Targeted provision for underrepresented and marginalised groups, including provision which reflects individuals' cultural identity.

Expected Outcomes

- Fewer residents experience loneliness, social isolation and disconnection from their communities.
- More people develop and maintain meaningful social relationships and support networks.
- More residents report improved emotional wellbeing, confidence and sense of belonging.
- More people are able to participate in social, community and peer support activities that are important to them.
- More people are able to contribute to their communities and participate as active citizens.
- Residents from underrepresented and marginalised communities have access to befriending opportunities that are inclusive, culturally appropriate and responsive to their needs.
- More residents report improved overall wellbeing and quality of life as a result of increased social connection and support.
- Carers have improved access to social and emotional support, helping them to maintain their wellbeing and caring role.
- More people feel empowered and supported to maintain their independence and manage their day-to-day lives.

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.

- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

Carers (life course approach)

A life course approach means we welcome applications that focus on a specific age group, multiple age groups, or key transition points throughout life. You do not need to work across all age groups. Funding will be awarded across the life course to ensure a balanced range of provision for residents of all ages.

The maximum threshold for a single bid is £65K

This means we cannot fund bids over this figure, but we welcome all bids below £65K

Purpose

An unpaid carer is someone of any age who provides care or support to a family member, friend, or loved one who could not cope without their help. Caring responsibilities may arise at different points across the life course and for a wide range of reasons, including physical illness, disability, mental health needs, learning disability, addiction, ageing or frailty.

People may be lifelong carers or become carers suddenly or gradually, and caring roles often change over time. This includes:

- Young carers, who may provide emotional or practical support within families
- Young adult carers, balancing caring with education, training or early employment
- Working-age adults, managing caring alongside employment and family responsibilities
- Older carers, who may experience their own age-related health needs while continuing to care

The VCFS sector in Royal Greenwich has played a vital role in supporting unpaid carers at different stages of life, often providing trusted, accessible and culturally responsive support. We are seeking VCFS-led proposals that help address the inequalities faced by carers, recognising how these may emerge early, intensify during key transitions, and accumulate over time.

We are inviting bids that focus on three key areas:

- 1. Building social connection/reducing isolation**
- 2. Respite and/or peer support**
- 3. Coproduction of activities developed with and for carers**

We are particularly interested in services that recognise the changing needs of carers across the life course and support people through key transitions, including:

- Fun, inspiring activities for young carers, including access to safe spaces and trips/visits

- Flexible respite and wellbeing support that enables carers to take breaks appropriate to their age, stage of life and caring intensity
- Creative, person-centred respite options that support both the carer and the person they care for
- Peer-led or intergenerational support groups, including age-specific or transition-focused groups (e.g. young carers moving into adulthood, older carers experiencing declining health)
- Day opportunities or activities for cared-for people, enabling carers to focus on their own health, education, employment or social participation
- Support during life transitions, such as starting or leaving education, entering or exiting employment, changes in caring intensity, or bereavement

Expected Outcomes

Funded projects should contribute to outcomes that reflect improved wellbeing and sustainability of caring roles across different life stages, including:

- Carers feel they have enough social contact at a level that is meaningful to them
- Carers are aware of support offers across the borough
- Carers can spend more time doing things they value or enjoy
- Carers have sufficient time and support to look after their own health and wellbeing
- Carers' physical and mental health is not negatively affected by their caring role, particularly during periods of transition or increased demand

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

Community Centres

The maximum threshold for a single application is £70K

This means we cannot fund bids over this figure, but we welcome all bids below £70K

Purpose

The Royal Borough of Greenwich recognises community centres as vital community assets that play a significant role in supporting residents, strengthening neighbourhoods and improving quality of life.

Community centres are often the heart of local communities, providing welcoming, accessible spaces where residents can connect, access support, and participate in local activities. They act as important hubs for community-based services, both through activities delivered directly by the organisations that manage centres and through the wide range of groups, services and partners that operate from them.

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how they will work collaboratively with partner organisations, resident groups and service providers to deliver a comprehensive community offer. We would expect to see the service user voice in the planning and development of activities.

Partnership bids are welcome when they demonstrate greater impact and provide coordinated support across multiple areas. We welcome grant applications relating to social connection, promoting health and wellbeing and supporting diverse communities across the life course. Example interventions include:

Children and young people: Services and diversionary activities that reduce the risk of involvement in crime and support positive participation in community life.

Social connection and inclusion: Activities that reduce loneliness and isolation, strengthen social and community networks, and create welcoming, inclusive environments, including support following bereavement or reduced community engagement.

Healthy ageing: Support for older and frail residents to age well through social connection, physical activity, nutrition and opportunities to maintain independence.

Intergenerational and community cohesion: Activities that bring together people of different ages and backgrounds and celebrate culture, identity and diversity.

Health and wellbeing: Activities that promote physical activity, healthy eating, positive mental health, emotional wellbeing and healthier behaviours.

Confidence, resilience and learning: Learning and development opportunities that build confidence, independence, resilience and skills throughout life.

Digital inclusion: Support that enables residents to use digital services and stay connected with family, friends, services and opportunities.

Prevention and early intervention: Community-led approaches that identify needs early, prevent problems from escalating and strengthen individual and community resilience.

Expected Outcomes for Focus Areas

- Contribute to stronger, more connected communities and improve outcomes relating to wellbeing, independence and social participation.
- Improve health and wellbeing outcomes and support residents to lead healthier, more active and connected lives
- Promote confidence, independence and lifelong learning.
- Improve social connection
- Improve access to service information and signposting to other activities and/or services, including promotion of the Community Directory.

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect and unsafe use of premises.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

Creative Health and Socially Engaged Arts and Culture

The maximum threshold for a single bid is £75k

This means we cannot fund bids over this figure, but we welcome all bids below £75K

Purpose

This funding priority supports arts and cultural organisations that are socially engaged and community centred, using creativity to connect people, improve wellbeing, and help individuals and communities to thrive and flourish.

The grant programme will fund arts and cultural activities that work in partnership with communities and local service providers to address social challenges and embed creative practice in community settings such as schools, youth clubs, neighbourhood venues, care and health environments, and public spaces.

Funded activity will address social challenges, including wellbeing, inequality, isolation, mental health problems, disengagement from education or employment, and barriers to cultural engagement and participation, using arts and culture as a preventative and inclusive approach to embed creativity into everyday life, providing residents opportunities for connection, personal growth and quality of life.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved wellbeing, confidence and mental health for isolated or underrepresented residents
- Increased social connection, supporting networks and partnerships and community cohesion across generations and cultures
- Positive engagement of young people and children at-risk children to improve relationships with education and support services
- Reduced inequalities and barriers to participation in arts and culture, enabling more underrepresented communities to access and benefit from cultural opportunities
- Stronger integration between culture, health, and social care through social prescribing and preventive pathways
- Boost community awareness of climate change and sustainability, using creative approaches
- Nurturing homegrown talent from all sections of our diverse communities. Providing skill sharing and development opportunities, progression routes, and platforms to highlight the exceptional talent within the borough.
- Collaborative working across the arts and cultural sector, alongside partnerships and consultation with diverse community groups and organisations, pools resources, skills and knowledge. This approach broadens access, engagement and participation while also increasing the impact and ambition of high-quality cultural projects, programmes and events delivered across the borough.

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

This funding priority will align closely with the following cross cutting themes.

- **Carers**
 - Arts and cultural opportunities for unpaid carers to reduce stress, isolation and burnout
- **SEND/Learning Disabilities and Autism**
 - Inclusive creative opportunities and accessible cultural participation
- **Domestic Abuse**
 - Trauma informed creative work supporting recovery, expression and confidence
- **Children and Young People (including those in social care or at risk)**
 - Collaborating with schools in underrepresented areas, youth clubs, and targeted youth provision.
- **Mental Health and Social Prescribing**
 - Embedding arts and culture within community wellbeing and social prescribing pathways
 - Links to Public Health, Primary Care Networks and VCFS infrastructure
- **Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability**
 - Facilitating creative engagement that supports behaviour change, awareness, and community action.

Homelessness and supporting people at risk of rough sleeping

The maximum threshold for a single application is £100K

Purpose

Too many residents in the Royal Borough of Greenwich experience homelessness at different stages of their lives, often with significant and long-lasting impacts on their health, wellbeing, life chances and economic stability. Homelessness can occur for families, early in adulthood, later in working life, or in older age, and the timing of homelessness can shape both immediate risks and long-term outcomes.

Across the life course, homelessness can disrupt education, training, employment, relationships and access to essential services. When experienced during key transitions such as leaving the family home, moving from education into work, relationship breakdown, release from institutional settings, or later-life changes in health or income, homelessness can contribute to cumulative and entrenched disadvantage over time.

The Council's strategic priority is to prevent homelessness wherever possible and to ensure that, when homelessness does occur, it is brief, non-recurring and does not undermine longer-term life chances. This life-course approach recognises that effective prevention and recovery require early, age-appropriate and sustained support, particularly during periods of heightened vulnerability.

This includes:

- **Early prevention:**
Intervening at the earliest opportunity to support individuals or families at risk of losing their accommodation, particularly within the private rented sector (PRS). This includes supporting people during key life transitions, such as young adults leaving the parental home, people entering or exiting employment, or individuals experiencing changes in health, relationships or caring responsibilities.
- **Crisis response:**
Ensuring that people who do become homeless have immediate access to support and safe, appropriate accommodation, with responses tailored to age, circumstance and level of risk. This is particularly important for families, younger adults, people leaving institutions and those experiencing acute crises.
- **Recovery and resettlement:**
Supporting individuals to rebuild stability in their lives, access sustainable housing solutions, and improve longer-term outcomes across the life course. This includes supporting pathways into education, employment, improved health, financial stability and independence, and preventing repeated cycles of homelessness.

A single PRS service will play a critical role in delivering these objectives. It will act as a key preventative and stabilising service, improving access to and sustainment of private rented

accommodation, reducing reliance on temporary accommodation, and preventing recurring homelessness at different life stages.

Expected Outcomes

The data demonstrates a clear need for a targeted, flexible PRS service that adopts a life-course approach and is responsive to different stages of need. The service should:

- Improve access to private rented accommodation through proactive landlord engagement, incentives, tenancy matching and tailored support for landlords.
- Provide age and circumstance-appropriate support to sustain tenancies and prevent repeat homelessness, particularly during periods of transition.
- Reduce demand on temporary accommodation by supporting earlier access to settled housing.
- Contribute to reductions in rough sleeping and support people to move into stable, long-term accommodation that supports improved outcomes across health, employment and independence.

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

Overall, community groups must demonstrate their ability to deliver a high-quality, inclusive and life-course-informed PRS service that meets the needs of Greenwich residents and contributes to the Council's strategic homelessness objectives.

Information, Guidance, Advice and Specialist Support

There are 3 funding levels you can apply for under this theme:

- **Information and guidance only (level 1)**
 - **The maximum threshold for a single application is £65K**
- **Generalist advice (level 2)**
 - **The maximum threshold for a single application is £100K**
- **Specialist advice (level 3)**
 - **The maximum threshold for a single application is £225K**

Purpose

Access to timely information, guidance, advice and specialist support plays a vital role in helping residents understand their rights, access services, maintain independence and improve their wellbeing.

Across the borough, voluntary and community sector organisations provide a range of support at different levels, from information and guidance for specific communities through to more specialist advice and casework. These services are often trusted by communities that may face barriers to accessing mainstream services and provide valuable expertise in supporting residents with particular needs and protected characteristics.

The purpose of this funding is to support a coordinated boroughwide system of information, guidance, advice and specialist support that ensures residents can access the right help at the right time, whilst strengthening collaboration across providers.

We recognise that residents' needs are often complex and do not sit neatly within a single service. Many residents require support across multiple areas of their lives and may benefit from being supported by different organisations at different points in their journey. We are therefore seeking applications that demonstrate how organisations will work together as part of a wider borough-wide network, with clear referral pathways, joint working arrangements and shared approaches to supporting residents.

Funding may support provision across different levels of support, including:

- **Information and Guidance (level 1):** Providing residents with accessible information, guidance, signposting and support to access services, opportunities and resources. This is likely to include support for specific communities or vulnerable residents.
- **Generalist Advice (level2):** Providing advice that helps residents understand their options and next steps in resolving a problem or issue. This may include support with

form filling, practical assistance and helping residents navigate complex systems, whilst maintaining a focus on early intervention and prevention.

- **Specialist Advice and Casework (level 3):** Providing specialist support, advocacy and casework where residents have more complex needs or problems requiring detailed intervention. This may include specialist advice relating to areas such as welfare benefits, housing, debt, immigration or other areas of expertise.

Organisations do not need to provide every level of support themselves but should demonstrate how they contribute to an integrated borough-wide offer and how residents will be supported to access specialist assistance where required.

Expected Outcomes

Funding awarded under this priority is expected to contribute to:

- Residents receiving timely, accurate and accessible information, guidance and advice that helps them resolve issues at the earliest opportunity.
- Improved resident confidence, independence and ability to navigate services.
- Increased access to appropriate support for residents who experience barriers to accessing mainstream services.
- Improved coordination between information, advice and specialist support providers.
- Stronger referral pathways between organisations, ensuring residents receive support that matches the complexity of their needs.
- Reduced duplication and fragmentation across the local information and advice system.
- Increased awareness of the support available within local communities.
- Improved outcomes for residents through joined up and person-centred approaches to support.
- Stronger partnership working across the voluntary and community sector, council services and wider stakeholders.
- Better identification of emerging needs and gaps in provision across the borough.

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.

- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents’ needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

Partnership Expectation

As part of this funding priority, organisations will be expected to participate in boroughwide partnership arrangements to strengthen coordination across the information and advice system.

This should include:

- Active participation in relevant information and advice networks and forums.
- Development and maintenance of clear referral pathways between providers.
- Joint problem-solving where residents have multiple or complex needs.
- Sharing knowledge and intelligence on emerging trends and resident needs.
- Promoting awareness of the wider information and advice offer available within the borough.
- Working together to ensure residents can move seamlessly between different levels of support as their needs change.
- We would particularly welcome bids from groups of providers working together, either with a partnership agreement in place, as a formal consortium, a lead and sub grant model or some other suitable arrangement.

This funding is intended to support a connected and collaborative system where specialist expertise is retained, community trust and local knowledge are valued, and residents experience a more joined-up journey through information, guidance, advice and specialist support services.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Learning Disabilities and Autism (life course approach)

Independence, Inclusion and Life Transitions Across the Life Course

A life course approach means we welcome applications that focus on a specific age group, multiple age groups, or key transition points throughout life. You do not need to work across all age groups. Funding will be awarded across the life course to ensure a balanced range of provision for residents of all ages.

The maximum threshold for a single application is £65K

This means we cannot fund bids over this figure, but we welcome all bids below £65K

Purpose

People with a learning disability and/or autism experience significant inequalities in health, wellbeing, employment and social inclusion across the life course.

This funding priority supports people, including children and young people, with a learning disability and/or autism to live independent, fulfilling lives across the life course, with a strong focus on inclusion, wellbeing and participation in community life.

While statutory services provide essential care and support, there is a significant opportunity for VCFS organisations to deliver additional, preventative and enabling support that builds independence, reduces isolation and improves quality of life at different stages of life.

This includes support from early childhood through adulthood, with particular emphasis on pre-diagnosis support and transitions

We are seeking to invest in community-based approaches that are person-centred, strengths-based and flexible, helping people to build skills, relationships and confidence over time, and to access opportunities within their local communities.

We are inviting bids that focus on five key areas:

- 1. Pre-diagnosis and early family support**
- 2. Support for children and young people that may be struggling to engage in education, alongside their families**
- 3. Befriending and building social connection/reducing isolation**
- 4. Respite and/or peer support**
- 5. Coproduction of activities/interventions relating to SEND/LD and/or Autism**

Expected Outcomes

Funding awarded under this priority is expected to contribute to:

- Increased independence, confidence and life skills for young people and adults with SEND, a learning disability and/or autism
- Improved wellbeing and reduced social isolation through participation in community life
- Better support for families and carers, including improved resilience and access to guidance
- Smoother and more effective transitions into adulthood (18–25), with reduced drop-off in support
- Increased access to meaningful activity, including volunteering, community education and preparation for employment where appropriate
- Improved access to early help and pre-diagnosis support for families

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

Volunteering Infrastructure

The maximum threshold for a single application is £70K

Purpose

Volunteering provides an important way for people to contribute to civil society and to donate their time to improve life in the Borough. Volunteering also represents an important tool for gaining experience and skills that can help with accessing employment.

This priority seeks to increase opportunities for people to volunteer, raise awareness of volunteering opportunities, and work with VCFS organisations to identify and match volunteers with organisations.

Expected Outcomes

- Promote and encourage the take-up of volunteering
- Broker a range of volunteering opportunities
- Raising the profile of volunteering across the borough
- Volunteering is taken up by an increased range of people, particularly vulnerable people, disadvantaged communities and communities with protected characteristics
- Engagement with underrepresented groups
- Delivery of training on volunteering best practice
- Engagement with local organisations

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

Voluntary Opportunities for families known to Children's Social Care

The maximum threshold for a single application is £80K

Purpose

The Families First agenda and the Children and Young People's plan identify the need for family support services that provide practical support to reduce the risk of neglect. Feedback highlights the need to support families in building confidence in applying appropriate boundaries for their children and in adopting healthy lifestyles.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased practical skills and making changes required to reduce risk
- Increased family routine
- Boundaries and behaviours
- Strengthening emotional health and wellbeing and peer support
- Providing practical support to establish routines and access community support
- Improving engagement in education and learning
- Increased father engagement

Expected Criteria

Organisations applying under this priority should be able to demonstrate:

- **Experience** – experience of delivering relevant services
- **Outcomes based delivery** – outcomes approach, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- **Equity and inclusion** – an approach that ensures services are accessible, relevant and trusted, particularly by residents who may face barriers to participation.
- **Partnership working** – effective collaboration with statutory services, community organisations and other partners to provide appropriate referrals and respond to residents' needs.
- **Safeguarding** – robust arrangements to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.
- **Co-design and lived experience** – a clear approach to involving people with lived experience in the design, delivery and ongoing development of interventions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Children's Service - Safeguarding requirements

Organisations are expected to:

Training and Development

- Ensure relevant staff and volunteers attend the following Greenwich Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) training:
 - Basic Safeguarding Induction
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children
 - MASH and Thresholds (half-day session)
- Maintain a record of safeguarding training completed by staff and volunteers.
- Subscribe to and regularly review updates from the GSCP newsletter.

Leadership and Governance

- Nominate a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or safeguarding lead officer.
- Ensure the safeguarding lead attends any role-specific safeguarding training as required.

Policies and Procedures

- Have an up-to-date safeguarding policy in place.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the organisation's safeguarding policy and Greenwich safeguarding procedures, and understand how to respond to concerns.

Safer Workforce

- Maintain appropriate and up-to-date DBS checks for all staff and volunteers who are in contact with Children and Young People.
- Demonstrate the use of safer recruitment practices when recruiting staff and volunteers.
- Providers are to have a procedure in place for recording and reporting health & safety incidents and serious health & safety incidents to Health & Safety Executive.

APPENDIX B

Safer Recruitment Advice for Children’s Services Commissioned Providers

This guidance is intended to support providers in understanding the expectations of the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) Children’s Services in regards to staff and volunteers working with children and young people in Greenwich and any information arising from Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS). Please note, references below to ‘employee’ should be read as being also applicable to volunteers.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with existing contractual agreements with RBG, current legislation and any regional or national guidance in relation to safer recruitment.

For more information please also see [Safer recruitment | NSPCC Learning](#)

I. Information that will lead to an individual automatically being unsuitable

I.1 Enhanced Disclosures provide details of whether the individual is included on a list of people named as barred from working with children or adults considered vulnerable.

- Children’s Barred list (Formerly List 99 and POCA — Protection of Children’s Act list)
- Adults Barred List (Formerly POVA – Protection of Vulnerable Adults)

I.2 Candidates/employees who are named on the lists are considered unsuitable to work with children/adults and must not be employed in Regulated Activity. There is no discretion. It is a criminal offence to allow someone to engage in Regulated Activity when barred.

I.3 It is a criminal offence for a person on either list to apply to work with children or adults considered vulnerable. If a Disclosure reveals that a job applicant on these lists has applied to work with children, or a Disclosure reveals that an existing employee or volunteer is registered on one of the lists, you have a legal duty to inform the police.

I.4 In addition to these RBG would consider the following as barriers to working with Greenwich families:

- Assault or any conviction involving harm to a child such as physical, sexual, emotional
- Grievous Bodily Harm /assault against an adult both recent and historical
- Domestic violence

- Fraud and dishonesty – while this can be dependent upon the case/situation – we have to trust staff work with RBG families and in our view this would compromise the ability to do this and is a risk when working with vulnerable people.

2. Senior Management Accountability

- 2.1 As part of the decision making on whether an employee or volunteer can work each provider should have a designated senior manager who will take accountability for signing off decisions on whether to employ an individual based on information coming to light through a DBS or otherwise. Within this guidance this role will be referred to as ‘senior accountable manager’.

3. Making Decisions Using Disclosure Information

- 3.1 The fact that someone has a conviction or a caution would not necessarily prevent them from taking up or continuing to work with RBG families, although serious consideration must be given to the information that has been received before a decision is made.
- 3.2 If an individual denies that the convictions relate to them, a further check must take place. This can be done by the individual contacting the DBS and advising that there is a dispute on the evidence submitted. The DBS should then undertake an investigation.
- 3.3 If a disclosure reveals information of convictions, reprimands or cautions, the provider should first check whether the individual has previously disclosed details of any convictions or cautions. The recruiting manager should discuss the case with their senior accountable manager, meet with the applicant (or employee) where necessary and seek advice from HR Professional for a final decision as to whether to proceed with the appointment (or future employment).
- 3.4 If the individual has not disclosed the convictions, either on an application form (or to their manager if already employed) when the offence took place, they should be asked why they had not done so. Non-disclosure of relevant information or the disclosure of false information by candidates/employees will normally lead to a withdrawal of an offer of employment, or the instigation of the provider’s disciplinary procedures respectively.
- 3.5 When an offence has been disclosed and is subsequently detailed on a DBS the manager will be required, if appropriate, to undertake an investigation. The manager should explore with the applicant/employee the circumstances surrounding the convictions/cautions and when they took place. The manager may also contact the

relevant police disclosure unit (detailed on the DBS certificate) to verify or obtain further information. The Manager should inform and seek consent from the individual before making contact with the police disclosure unit. Prior to any final decision being made by the senior accountable manager regarding the outcome of the investigation the manager should seek advice from a HR professional and the RBG Child Protection Officer (LADO).

- 3.6 In the case of a new appointment, the decision as to whether to confirm or withdraw the offer of employment will be documented. Attached to this pdf is an example of how the Borough documents this information. Providers should have an equivalent form of a similar or higher standard. If the decision is made to appoint, the form needs to be kept on the employee's personal file. If the decision is not to appoint a record will be retained on the recruitment file.
- 3.7 When an existing employee discloses an offence the manager will, in the first instance, need to make a decision, regarding deployment of the individual, pending further investigation. Dependent on the disclosure and the position held by the employee the manager will need to consider if the following are necessary in the interest of the provider:
- Closer supervision of the employee in their job
 - Temporarily transfer the employee to other duties
 - Suspension on full pay, subject to disciplinary investigation
- 3.8 On receipt of a DBS which details the disclosed offence the manager will be required to undertake an internal investigation. At the outcome of the investigation the manager will determine if a formal disciplinary investigation is required or if the employee may remain in post. When the decision is to take no further action, details of the offence, the investigation and the outcome should be detailed on a document (see paragraph 3.6) and retained on the employee's personnel file.
- 3.9 It is expected that if a decision is taken that the employee may remain in employment the matter will not need to be reconsidered each time a DBS is processed which details the offence. The only exception would be if the employee has changed position within the organisation and has different responsibilities or if the manager has concerns regarding the conduct of the employee.

4. Factors to consider when making a decision

- 4.1 An applicant's/employee's criminal record should be assessed in relation to the tasks they will be required to perform and the circumstances in which the work is to be carried out. Factors to consider include:

- An examination of the circumstances leading up to the offence, e.g. the influence of financial or domestic circumstances.
- The seriousness of the offence.
- Whether the individual's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making re-offending less likely.
- The degree of intent on behalf of the offender.
- Any relevant information offered by the applicant about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed.
- The nature of the job, i.e. does the nature of the job present any opportunity for the post-holder to re-offend in the course of their work?
- The degree of risk that the offence suggests that the individual represents.
- The length of time since the offence took place.
- The extent of job supervision i.e. does the job involve one-to-one contact with children or other vulnerable groups and what level of supervision will the postholder receive.

4.2 RBG would recommend the application of the HCPC standards of professional conduct in regard to Social Workers or relevant professional standards for the service commissioned when making a decision.

4.3 In addition consideration **must be given to the reputational risk** both to the provider and RBG. It must be considered how the person being supported may feel should they be made aware or how it may be viewed externally were this person be working with children, parents and families.

APPENDIX C

Adult Safeguarding information

Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding is a core responsibility of all providers commissioned by RBG. Providers must ensure that people are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm, and that safeguarding is embedded in every aspect of service delivery. Safeguarding in Greenwich is underpinned by the London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy, Practice Guidance and Procedures.

Safeguarding Culture and Accountability

Providers must foster a culture of vigilance, openness, and accountability. This includes:

- Clear safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect local and national guidance.
- A designated Safeguarding Lead within the organisation who is responsible for oversight and escalation.
- A commitment to zero tolerance of abuse and neglect.
- Systems for reporting, recording, and responding to safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding must be seen as everyone's responsibility, and staff must be empowered to act when concerns arise.

Staff Training and Competence

All staff must receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role, including:

- Level 1 and Level 2 safeguarding adults training as a minimum.
- Training on Making Safeguarding Personal, the Care Act 2014, and the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- Awareness of types of abuse, including financial, psychological, discriminatory, and institutional abuse.
- Understanding of whistleblowing procedures and how to escalate concerns.

Training must be refreshed regularly, and staff competence must be monitored through supervision and appraisal.

Identifying incidents and responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Providers must have clear procedures for:

- Recognising signs of abuse or neglect.
- Reporting concerns internally and to the RBG Safeguarding Adults Team or Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT) duty social worker.

- Cooperating with safeguarding investigations and enquiries.
- Supporting service users through safeguarding processes, including advocacy and trauma-informed approaches.

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded accurately and securely, with outcomes and actions documented.

Partnership Working

Providers must work in partnership with:

- The Royal Borough of Greenwich Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Health and social care professionals.
- Advocacy services.
- Families and carers (where appropriate).
- London Fire Brigade.
- Police.
- Local housing teams.
- Oxleas mental health services

This includes attending safeguarding meetings, contributing to protection plans, and sharing relevant information in line with GDPR and safeguarding legislation.

Prevent Duty and Exploitation Awareness

Providers must ensure staff are trained in the Prevent Duty, which aims to safeguard vulnerable individuals from radicalisation and extremism. This includes:

- Recognising signs of grooming and exploitation.
- Understanding referral pathways.
- Promoting resilience and inclusion among people who use services.

Providers must also be aware of risks related to county lines, modern slavery, and mate crime, and take proactive steps to protect service users.

11.7 Safeguarding in the Environment

Providers must ensure that the physical environment supports safeguarding, including:

- Secure premises with appropriate access controls based on residents needs.
- Safe storage of medication and personal belongings.
- Privacy and dignity in personal care and support.

- Systems to prevent bullying, harassment, and peer-on-peer abuse.
- Signing in and out methods for all staff, residents and visitors to ensure that people are aware of who is in the building at all times especially if an emergency arises. Records must be kept and should be available to the council upon request.

Environmental safeguarding must be considered in all new property developments and service expansions.

Provider must comply with the Care Act 2014 safeguarding duties and the London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy, Practice Guidance and Procedures. [London-Multi-Agency-Adult-Safeguarding-Policy-Practice-Guidance-and-Procedures-November-2025.pdf](#)

The Provider must notify the Council of all safeguarding incidents and work cooperatively in investigations and reviews. The Provider must have clear reporting routes, any safeguarding concerns must be logged immediately and reported to the appropriate authority (e.g. Adult Social Care and HIDE within agreed timescales).

APPENDIX D

Food Safety Requirements

For organisations applying that will be working with food

- Food safety related training is required including minimum Food Hygiene Rating 4, allergen training and food hygiene.
- If subcontracting food, then organisations need to comply with all legislative requirements
- This includes due diligence with food providers, making sure food safety management tools are up to date.

All Providers whether they prepare their own food, or source from elsewhere food must:

- Register with the Royal Borough of Greenwich as a food business by completing the Food Business Registration form (if not already registered) and have achieved a Food Hygiene Rating Score (FHRS) score of 4 or 5. If you feel you do not need to register as a food business, you will need to agree this with the Commercial Environmental Health team.
- Have a completed food safety management system in place such as Safer food, better business for caterers | Food Standards Agency. This system must be on site, available and up to date at all times. This system must also cover suppliers and checks that have been made on their suitability including arrangements for food transport and storage where ready-made meals or similar items are being delivered.
- Have a minimum of two staff with at least Level 2 food hygiene training within the organisation. A list of accredited food safety courses can be provided.
- Have a minimum of two staff with completed Food Standards Agency allergen training.
- Have at least one dedicated supervisor on site at all times with respect to food safety. This member of staff must be fully trained to at least Level 2 in food hygiene and must have completed allergen training.
- Ensure that all other staff and volunteers are trained and/ or supervised and instructed in food hygiene matters appropriate to the activity they are carrying out.
- Organisations that only serve food that has been prepared elsewhere are still required to have suitable facilities for hand washing for serving staff and children (with hot and cold water, soap and towels), sanitising materials, hot or cold food storage (if food is not being served immediately) and appropriate arrangements for refuse disposal.
- Where an organisation is operating out of a premises that is not their own (such as a school or community venue), the organisation will need to ensure that adequate pest control arrangements are in place. Responsibility for the provision of sanitiser, cloths, soap and hand drying materials must be clarified in advance of the programme.
- Ensure information on allergens and ingredients is available, for every meal served. Food items which are pre-packed for direct sale must be labelled with the name of the food and an ingredients listing with allergens highlighted in bold/different font. Where food is to be

taken away, pre-packed for direct sale requirements will apply (Natasha's Law), for more information see here <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/introduction-to-allergen-labelling-changes-ppds>

- Ensure that cultural food is handled correctly.