



VOLA Membership Prospectus

What is VOLA?

VOLA Consortium is a successful consortium of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations delivering learning/ skills, employment support and criminal justice services across Liverpool City Region. We provide an opportunity for small to medium size VCSE providers to work in collaboration to deliver contracts of a scale they would otherwise not have the individual capacity to achieve.

The Consortium's core business is to win contracts/ grants and manage their successful delivery through quality assured, collaborative supply chains.

Operating as a Social Enterprise and legally constituted in October 2013, VOLA Consortium is a Company Ltd by Guarantee (8746685) and a registered charity (1158777). However, the consortium has actually been in operation in an unincorporated form since 2007 through a hybrid managing agent/lead provider model.

VOLA has a strong track record of success in managing and delivering complex and challenging public sector contracts supported by solid business management and support infrastructures. Since its inception, it has won almost £18m of publicly funded contracts/ grants, supporting over 9,000 learners and 800 employers to date.

Our Mission, Vision and Values:

Vision: a sustainable consortium of VCSE providers which make a significant and valued contribution to learning, skills, employment support and to crime prevention and rehabilitation of offenders in Liverpool City Region and surrounding areas.

Mission: to enable the people of Liverpool City Region to: progress in learning and employment; to overcome barriers; and to make a positive contribution to their communities and the wider society.

Values - we are committed to:

- Promoting and enabling the VCSE Sector as a provider of learning, skills, employment and criminal justice services;
- Creativity and innovation;
- Excellence: in delivering high quality provision, ensuring the best outcomes for learners;
- Integrity: to be open, honest, fair and transparent in all that we do;
- Collaboration: with members and strategic partners;
- Inclusion: ensuring equality of opportunity in all that we do.

Our Mission, Vision, Values were developed and agreed in consultation with existing VOLA members.

Key Aims

VOLA exists to:

- Facilitate collaborative working between VCSE organisations, to contribute to learning, skills, employment and criminal justice policy agendas.
- Build capacities & capabilities of VCSE providers, particularly SMEs, to deliver quality assured learning/ skills, employment, crime prevention and offender rehabilitation services.
- Contract and project manage delivery of learning, skills, employment support and interventions to prevent crime and rehabilitate offenders.

What can VOLA provide for member organisations?

If the VCSE Sector is to be successful in its attempts to effectively engage in these ever evolving and increasingly competitive public service delivery agendas, it needs to be able to operate collectively and present a unified voice.

Our service offer includes:

- **Opportunities to tender and deliver contracts** normally out of scope for small and medium sized VCSE organisations;
- **Workforce development and capacity building** programmes based on response to member needs;
- **Quality assurance and improvement programmes** to share and maintain standards of practice;
- Opportunities to contribute to relevant **research and consultations**;
- **Full and Associate membership**: Tiered membership is based on the level of readiness and/or commitment a particular VCSE organisation wishes to make towards collaborative working through the consortium.
- **Information and Communication**: Keeping members informed of key developments in the sectors we operate.

Eligibility Criteria

a. Associate Membership is open to any VCSE Sector organisation, involved in the delivery of learning, skills or employment support; crime prevention or rehabilitation of offenders in Liverpool City Region that:

1. Commits to the consortium's Mission, Vision and Values;
2. Supports the development and furtherance of the consortium as a whole;
3. Provides information required to support consortium development.

Associate members have no voting rights at Annual or Extraordinary General Meetings and will not normally be delivery members without additional due diligence.

b. To become a Full Member, organisations must, **in addition**, meet specified essential criteria regarding quality of delivery, financial standing, track record, etc. Organisations must demonstrate that they have appropriate policies, procedures, systems, processes and organisational standing that:

1. demonstrate organisational probity;
2. demonstrate the potential to become a delivery partner on consortium contracts and projects;
3. ensure the provision of a safe environment for service users, in particular for vulnerable adults and young people;
4. ensures compliance with legislative requirements in relation to Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and data protection.

And commit to providing appropriate information in a timely manner to support consortium funding applications and proposals.

Full members have a vote at VOLA Consortium Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings. Full members have potential to be delivery members on consortium contracts/ projects, though additional due diligence checks are usually undertaken when planning individual funding bids and projects.

Note (1): As per the Charity Commission's definition, VCSE organisation means "charities and voluntary organisations" defined as follows: "Charities" are organisations, which are established for exclusively charitable purposes in accordance with the law of England and Wales. "Voluntary Organisations" are independent organisations, which are established for purposes that add value to the community as a whole, or a significant section of the community, and which are not permitted by their constitution to make a profit for private distribution. Voluntary organisations do not include local government or other statutory authorities.

Note (2): proof/ evidence of organisation status (e.g. governing document showing reinvestment of surpluses clauses) and operational base in LCR may be required.

Processing of Applications

When received, applications will first be reviewed by the VOLA management team and, if complete, will then be reviewed/ approved by the VOLA Consortium Board of Directors. If incomplete, the management team will contact applicants for outstanding information and the application will not be processed for Board consideration/ approval until all outstanding information is received.

Applicants will be informed of the Board's decision regarding their application for membership within 21 days of the Board's consideration of the application.

If an application for membership is declined, the applicant will be informed, including the reasons for refusal. Applicants are entitled to make a written representation about a decision to refuse membership. The Directors' decision following any written representation will be notified to the applicant in writing but shall be final.

It is unlikely that applications for Associate membership will be declined other than where applicant organisations are ineligible for consortium membership (i.e. if it is not able to demonstrate its VCSE status or doesn't operate in LCR) or the application is incomplete.

If an applicant applies for Full membership status but does not satisfy the qualifying criteria (e.g. does not have required policies in place), VOLA will endeavour to assist the applicant to address any gaps to enable re-application at a later date.