



UK Shared Prosperity Fund
‘Digital Connectivity in Community Facilities’
Grants Programme

Borough Briefings – w/c 6th June 2023

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Purpose of the fund, applicant eligibility, eligible expenditure, the application process & rules

**Stu McGrory and Andy Coulson
VOLLA Consortium**



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Agenda

1. Background to the fund
2. Purpose and scale of the fund
3. Successful Round 1 Organisations
4. Applicant eligibility
5. Subsidy Control (*previously State Aid*)
6. Procurement compliance and Value for Money
7. Eligible and ineligible expenditure
8. Application process and timescales
9. Application form – required info & evidence
10. Monitoring & evaluation
11. Future grants rounds
12. Q&A



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1. Background to the fund

- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**
 - **Replacement for EU Structural Funds (ESF & ERDF)**

UK-SPF Investment Priority	Communities and Place
Delivery Strand	Support for the voluntary and community sector, including digital and financial inclusion
UK-SPF Intervention	E15: Digital connectivity for local community facilities



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2. Purpose and scale of the fund

Overall purpose – to support VCFSE sector organisations to:

- Improve public-facing IT (i.e. computer drop-in) facilities
- Create new facilities in priority (D.E. and deprived) areas where currently no, or sparse provision.

(Not about improving organisations' general IT infrastructure, nor funding the delivery of digital skills training, or any other activities.)

Aim – to:

- Upgrade outdated and/or poor quality digital kit (computer devices) and/or improve broadband connectivity, where current kit and/or connections can be evidenced as being poor
- Increase capacity: purchase more digital devices, where current facilities insufficient to meet evidenced demand
- Target neighbourhoods, where there is currently a lack of community-based digital facilities, to help local community-based organisations to set up new drop-in facilities.



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2. Purpose and scale of the fund

- Grants of between £2,500 and £10,000 per successful applicant



Borough	% split	Available Funding: 3 yrs (2022-2025)	Total £ Awarded (Round 1)	Under (+) /over (-) budget		Original Planned R2 Budget	+/- R1 under/over spend	Revised R2 Budget
Halton	7.87%	£102,554	£0	£35,083	under	£16,907	£35,083	£51,990
Knowsley	10.14%	£132,135	£19,911	£25,292	under	£21,784	£25,292	£47,076
Liverpool	33.17%	£432,239	£165,408	-£17,541	over	£71,259	-£17,541	£53,718
Sefton	16.79%	£218,791	£38,349	£36,499	under	£36,070	£36,499	£72,569
St Helens	12.19%	£158,848	£13,566	£40,775	under	£26,188	£40,775	£66,963
Wirral	19.84%	£258,536	£62,000	£26,444	under	£42,622	£26,444	£69,066
Total	100.00%	£1,303,104	£299,234	£146,553	under	£214,829	£146,553	£361,382

Surplus carried forward to R2



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3. Successful Round 1 Organisations

Knowsley



Organisation Name	Purpose of Funding	Location	Ward
Young Adult Respite Service CIC	New	Huyton	St Gabriels
L14 Community House Ltd	Increase capacity	Fincham	Page Moss
Swanside Community Centre	Increase capacity	Huyton	Swanside

St Helens

Organisation Name	Purpose of Funding	Location	Ward
Roll Model Youth and Community Development CIC	Increase capacity	St Helens North	Moss Bank
Perth Community Centre	Increase capacity	Thatto Heath	Thatto Heath



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3. Successful Round 1 Organisations – Liverpool (1)

Organisation Name	Purpose of Funding	Location	Ward
A2B Origin Education	Increase capacity	Picton Road	Wavertree
Al Ghazali Multi-Cultural Centre	New	Picton	Picton
Autism in Motion Liverpool CIC	Increase capacity	Norris Green	Norris Green
Be Free Campaign	New	Town Centre	Riverside
Blackburne House	Increase capacity	L8, Hope Street	Princess Park
Breckfield & Nth Everton Neighbourhood Council	Increase/Upgrade	Breckfield	Everton
Croxteth and Gillmoss Community Federation	Increase capacity	Croxteth	Croxteth
Dovecot & Princess Drive Community Association	New	Knotty Ash	Yew Tree
Employability Solutions	New	Garston	Speke-Garston
Everton Development Trust	Upgrade	Everton	Everton
Granby Toxteth Development Trust	Upgrade	L8, Lodge Lane	Picton
Joseph Lappin Partnership Ltd	New	Wavertree	Old Swan



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3. Successful Round 1 Organisations – Liverpool (2)

Organisation Name	Purpose of Funding	Location	Ward
Kensington Community Learning Centre	Upgrade	Kensington	Kensington & Fairfield
Moulana Community CIC	New	Toxteth	Princess Park
Pagoda Arts	New	China Town	Riverside
Riverside Learning & Education Centre	Increase/Upgrade	L8, Park Road	Riverside
Rotunda ltd	Increase capacity	Kirkdale	Kirkdale
STEC	Increase capacity	Speke	Speke-Garston
Sustainability Development	New	Wavertree	Kensington & Fairfield
Thriving Spaces CIC	Increase/Upgrade	Town Centre	Riverside
Transform Lives Co	Increase capacity	L8, Hope Street	Princess Park
Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council	Upgrade	Vauxhall	Kirkdale
Voice of Nations CIC	Increase capacity	Wavertree	Wavertree
Woodlands Community Centre	Upgrade	Belle Vale	Belle Vale



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3. Successful Round 1 Organisations - Sefton

Organisation Name	Purpose of Funding	Location	Ward
Home-Start Southport and Formby	New	Southport	Kew
Brunswick Youth and Community Centre	New	Bootle	Linacre
Marine in the Community	New	South Sefton	Victoria
Sefton O.P.E.R.A	Upgrade	Bootle	Derby
Kindfulness Coffee Club	Increase capacity	Bootle	Linacre
Friends of Maghull District CIC (Maghull Advice Centre)	New	Maghull	Suddell
Merseyside Expanding Horizons (Big Onion Youth Hub, The Strand)	Increase capacity	Bootle	Linacre
Ukraine Welcome Centre (Blundelsands Methodist Church)	Increase capacity	Crosby	Victoria



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3. Successful Round 1 Organisations - Wirral

Organisation Name	Purpose of Funding	Location	Ward
Shaftesbury Youth Club	New	Birkenhead	Prenton
Spider Project	New	Birkenhead	Birkenhead and Tranmere
Leasowe Play Youth and Community Association	New	Leasowe	Leasowe and Moreton East
Merseyside Society for Deaf People (at WSBPS)	Increase capacity	Birkenhead	Cloughton
Equilibrium NW CIC	New	Birkenhead	Bidston and St James
Wirral Change	Increase capacity	Birkenhead	Birkenhead and Tranmere
Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust	New	Prenton	Bidston and St James
Crea8ing Community CIC	New	Birkenhead	Cloughton
Our Happy Hub CIC	New	Prenton	Cloughton



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4. Applicant Eligibility Criteria (1)

All of the following need to be met:

1. Grass-roots, VCFSE (not-for-profit) organisations with operational (public access) base in the Liverpool City Region
2. Annual turnover not exceeding £1.5 million
(as per last publicly available accounts, preferably for financial year ending <12 months from date of application.)
3. Organisation has been in operation for a minimum of 12 months
4. Organisation has a Governing Document/Constitution (*we may need to review this*)
5. Organisation has an independent bank account for payment of the grant
6. Grant must be used to fund facilities based in the Liverpool City Region

Organisations must be a 'going concern, with evidence of a recent financial track record



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4. VCFSSE sector definition

Organisations run on a not-for-profit basis, including:

1. Constituted Voluntary / Community Group
2. Social Enterprise (not-for-profit)
3. Registered Charity
4. Charitable Incorporated Organisation
5. Community Interest Company (CIC) *
6. Company Limited by Guarantee

*** CICs Limited by SHARES should contact the Grants Team prior to submitting an application.**

- Unsure about your organisation status or have queries around your constitution/ governing document? Contact the Grants Team for further guidance prior to submitting your application.



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4. Ineligible Organisations

We cannot not fund organisations whose governing documents allow profits or dividends to be shared among share holders, directors and/or employees.

Ineligible organisations:

- Individuals (not representing a group) or groups that consist of one family
- Statutory bodies / public authorities, i.e. Local Authorities, NHS, etc.
- Housing Associations
- Private Companies Ltd by Shares
- Organisations distributing profits to members or shareholders
- Grant making bodies applying for funding to redistribute to individuals or groups
- Political groups



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5. Subsidy Control (prev. known as 'State Aid')

- **To be eligible: organisations cannot have received public funding subsidies totalling more than £315,000 in last 3 financial years:**
 - Including proposed value of grant being applied for.
- Confirmation required on application form.
- Previous subsidy recipients should have received notification from funding body that provided the subsidy.

Legal background

- Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) exemption for small subsidies (prev. known as 'De Minimis') applies: £315k cap.
 - 3 financial years means elapsed part of current financial year (starting 1 April last) & the 2 preceding financial years.
 - £315k includes any aid given under the EU State Aid De Minimis regulations and small subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance under UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement after 31/12/20 but before this section of the new Act came into force.



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6. Procurement compliance and Value for Money

- Don't just go to the first 'high street' retailer or supplier that comes up on Google!
- **3 quotes required for purchases of any collection of similar items totaling £2,500+ (including VAT) – condition of grant**

Why?

- Shopping round/ seeking comparative quotes gets better deals and drives value for money
- **Public funding, so must comply with National Procurement Rules**
- National Procurement Rules are complex!
- **3 quotes = simplest and safest approach**
- Quotes can include online price comparisons
- Save evidence of quotes obtained, including screenshots, if online price comparison

***** Note: this does not constitute professional/ legal procurement advice*****



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7. Eligible expenditure

Cost/ expenditure type	Eligible?	Comment
Broadband connectivity (min. 30 MBPS speed required – see later)	✓	Installation costs and ongoing contract (2 years max.) Evidence of ongoing payments required.
Computer devices (e.g. PCs, laptops, android tablets, Chromebooks)	✓	Consider: - Most appropriate devices to meet evidenced need. - Mixture of different types- maximise capacity & budget.
Necessary software/ licenses , e.g. MS Windows, MS Office, anti-virus	✓	No bespoke/ specialist applications permitted, unless clearly justified (e.g. assistive or adaptive technology) (3 yrs max, if ongoing annual subscription)
Necessary ancillary accessories & equipment , e.g. Wi-Fi Access Points/ boosters, monitors, keyboards, mice, headsets, printers, laptop bags, tablet covers, desk/ security locks , secure storage lockers , charging cabinets	✓	Must be proportionate – e.g. to value of grant, no. of computer devices being funded, facility size.
<u>Supplier</u> configuration and installation costs	✓	<u>Reasonable</u> supplier costs of configuring devices (e.g. installing software) and/or installing (e.g. cabling) – only where no internal expertise/capacity to do.
IT office furniture	✓	Need must be clearly justified & proportionate to no. of computer devices, facility size & nature of grant being awarded (e.g. clearly necessary for new facility).

7. Ineligible expenditure

Cost/ expenditure type	Eligible?	Comment
Ongoing IT maintenance/ support contract costs	X	Applicants may wish to consider such support contracts to fulfil ongoing IT support needs, or already have them in place, but not fundable through the grant.
Capital building works	X	E.g. building adaptations to increase IT room space.
Staff costs	X	None whatsoever permitted, whether to source, install or otherwise configure equipment, ongoing maintenance, management, or costs associated with assisting users.
Organisational overheads, including insurance	X	None of any nature permitted, whether relating to staff, utilities, insurance, or other organisational overheads.
Training/ activity delivery costs (service users)	X	Costs associated with subsequent delivery of training or other activities relating to the IT facility ineligible.
Training costs (staff)	X	Costs associated with training staff in use of new devices, software, etc. ineligible
Volunteer related costs	X	
Projects/ costs aimed at purely recreational activities	X	Equipment or software

Outreach delivery - need primary venue/ location that the equipment would be based/ used at for the majority of time



8. Application process and timescales

Milestone	Month								
	June	July			Aug	September			
Application window launched	Mon 19 th								
Q&A Deadline		Wed 5 th							
Application Deadline (5pm)			Mon 17th						
Due diligence checks & follow-up				18 th – 26 th					
Applications assessed, moderated & decisions made					X	X			
Applicants informed (successful/ unsuccessful)							Fri 15 th		
Grant Agreements issued								Fri 22 nd	
Grants paid									Fri 29 th

8. Application process and timescales

- Briefing workshop attendees will be emailed notification of launch
- **Application documents will be available on website (www.volamerseyside.org.uk/ukspfgrants)**
 - Application form (Word document)
 - Eligibility criteria and application guidance
 - FAQs
 - Ward data (Digital Exclusion and IMD)
- **Q&As – deadline 5pm, Wednesday 5th July** (we will respond within 3 working days)
- **Application deadline – 5pm, Monday 17th July**
- **Questions and completed applications (with requested supported documents) to be emailed to: ukspfgrants@volamerseyside.org.uk**



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9. Application form – required info & evidence

- **Supporting documents required with application**
- **Insurance and key policies required**
- **Value For Money**
- **Demonstrate need**
- **Project outputs and outcomes**
- **Publicity**
- **Opening times and accessibility**



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9. Application: Supporting Documents Required

Published set of accounts for your last financial year

Exceptions: e.g. if your organisation:

- Is exempt from requirements (e.g. charities with <£10k turnover, which are not also Cos Ltd by Guarantee).
- Has only just been in operation for 12 months and no accounts are available yet.

Contact Grants Team prior to submitting application to check that the form of accounts you propose to submit will be acceptable

Annual Report, covering your recent activities and achievements

- E.g. Charity Annual Report, CIC34 Report, or Directors Report and Accounts (providing there is a substantial paragraph on activity and achievements during the year) would all suffice.

If none of the above are available (regardless of whether you are legally obliged to have one):

- Submit brief report (500 words max) covering activities and achievements in past 12 months.



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9. Application form – Insurance and key policies required

B9 Does your organisation have the following?

Insurance:

- Public Liability, Employers Liability, Contents - that covers full replacement value of any assets funded

Policies:

- Risk Assessment / H&S Policies
- Internet Security Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy(s) – which include(s) reference to online safeguarding of children and young people &/or vulnerable adults (as appropriate)
- Commitment to Environmental Sustainability – including how you will dispose of waste electrical or electronic equipment

If not currently in place, option to confirm they will be in place before project is funded (Condition of Grant)



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9. Application form – Value for Money

C4 Explain the process you have &/or will undertake to ensure that what you purchase is “fit for purpose” and provides good value for money: (Max 250 words)

Fit for purpose

- People, Purpose, Place – [See slides from ‘technical tips’ briefing session \(15th June\)](#)

Value for Money

- National procurement rules: £2,500+ = minimum 3 quotes – need to comply and keep evidence
 - Screen shots online price comparison

Cheapest option is not always necessarily the best!

- Consider suitability, specification, durability, etc.



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9. Application form – demonstrate need



C5 How have you identified the need for your project? (Max 250 words)

UPGRADE outdated and poor-quality digital kit and/or improve broadband connectivity where current connections are poor.

- User feedback/ survey data. If none exists, “straw poll”, if necessary (short timescales).
- How old is the equipment? Types, makes/models. Describe condition, faults/defects. Broadband speed test.
- Link to question C7 – “If you currently provide public access to computers in this location, on average how many people per week currently access this service?” & C9 “On average how many new or additional people will access computer equipment (per week) as a result?”
- Geographical context (ref. map & ward data spreadsheet)

* 10. How satisfied are you with the condition/ quality of the public-use IT equipment your organisation has? 1 = Equipment is very poor quality, slow and/or dated software - 10 = Equipment is very good, fast and/or up to date software

1 10

* 11. How satisfied are you with the quality of your Internet connection for public-use? 1 = Connection is very poor quality, slow and/or likely to fail - 10 = Connection is very good quality, fast and/or unlikely to fail

1 10

We will be cross referencing this with existing data



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9. Application form – demonstrate need



C5 How have you identified the need for your project? (Max 250 words)

INCREASE CAPACITY, by providing funding to purchase more devices, where current facilities are insufficient to meet demand.

- Link to question C7 & C9
- User feedback/ survey data.
- What are your current computer drop-in opening hours? Are there any time limits on usage?
- Geographical context (see map & spreadsheet)

17. On average how many people a week use your facilities to access the internet? 

- 0-10
- 11-50
- 51-100
- 100+

We will be cross referencing this with existing data



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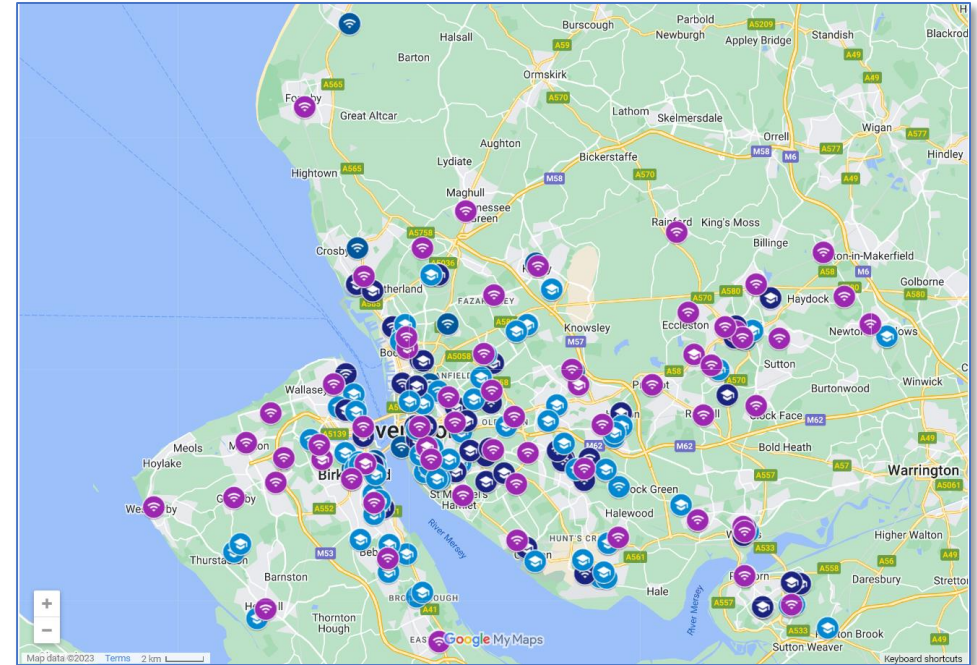
9. Application form – demonstrate need



C5 How have you identified the need for your project? (Max 250 words)

COMPLETELY NEW FACILITY: “Target neighbourhoods, where there is currently a lack of community-based digital (computer) facilities, to set up new digital drop-in facilities”

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=14nT7JJPQXFjgq_J6HDD-gJon6OqBJPc0&usp=sharing/



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9. Application form – demonstrate need



C5 How have you identified the need for your project? (Max 250 words)

A	B	C	D	E
Ward	Decile (1 is most excluded)	Population over 65	Risk of Low Broadband Coverage [Higher = Worse]	Indices of Multiple Deprivation [Lower = Worst]
1 Birchfield	9.4	19.30%		
2 Norton North				
3 Farnworth				
4 Beechwood				
5 Halton Brook				
6 Mersey				
7 Ditton				
8 Kingsway				
9 Broadheath				
10 Halton View				
11 Norton South				
12 Hough Green				
13 Halton Lea				
14 Halton Castle				
15 Grange				
16 Stockbridge	3.3	15.40%	0	1.9
17 Swanside	8.8	19.50%	10.8	4.5
18 Whiston & Cronton	4.6	17.30%	0	2
19 Whitefield	3.7	15.60%	3.5	1.3
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9. Application form – demonstrate need



C5 How have you identified the need for your project? (Max 250 words)

For Example:

Postcode Areas with no provision on map	Ward	Digital Exclusion Decile (1 is most excluded)
L4	Anfield	3.2
L33	Northwood	4.5
L35	Whiston & Cronton	4.6
L12	West Derby	5
L29	Manor	6.3
CH47	Meols	7.3
L35	Rainhill	7.3
L38	Ravenmeols	7.5
L16	Childwall	8.1

Approx. Number of orgs offering digital facilities nearby	Ward	Digital Exclusion Decile (1 is most excluded)
8	Grange	2.3
4	Cambridge	2.4
1	County	2.4
1	Cherryfield	2.4
6	Clubmoor	2.7
8	Halton Castle	2.8
5	Kirkdale	2.8
3	St Oswald	2.9



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9. Areas of high risk of digital exclusion & no/ limited provision



When looking at the map and Digital Exclusion data, areas with a high risk of digital exclusion, deprivation and no, or limited digital facilities that jump out, include:

- Liverpool – Anfield, Tuebrook, Fazakerly
- Knowsley – Northwood (Kirkby), Stockbridge Village, Prescot/Whiston
- Sefton, North Southport
- Wirral – Seacombe
- *There are others, but these tend to be more affluent, often with older populations (hence higher risk of DE)*

Note: This doesn't mean we will only fund facilities in the above areas and not others, these just appear to be under-served with potential demand. Wherever you are applying for, you need to assert the need in your application – e.g. you may work with a specific demographic group, or local facilities can't cope with demand.



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9. Application form – Project outputs and outcomes



C8

Please tell us what impact your project will have, who will benefit and how? (Max 500 words)

- Impact for you as an organisation:
 - Who (tell us about what you do and how it will positively impact this)
 - How (footfall/ service users, volunteers?)
- Impact for individuals:
 - Who (specific demographic groups?)
 - How (wider impact – DI/ confidence/ digital skills/ social inclusion/ employment, etc?)
- Impact on the wider community:
 - Who (where are you based, communities served)

C10 How will you measure/record the impact of your project? (Max 250 words) C1

- Links to Question C9 – *also see section 10 of presentation.*



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9. Application form – publicity



C11

How will you publicise your computer facilities and ensure that people know about them, when they are open and how to access them? (Max 250 words)CI

- What are you going to do to ensure people know your facility is available for them to use?
 - Is social media alone sufficient?
- Is publicity going to be tailored to specific target groups? If so, how.
- Particularly important for brand new and expanding facilities.



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9. Application form – opening times and accessibility



C12

When will your computer facility be open for people to use (specific days & times)?

Will there be any time limits on how long people can access the computer facility?

If you are targeting a specific audience/ demographic group, tell us:

- who will access the equipment
- what will you do to ensure that your facility is suitable for their specific needs

(Max 250 words)CI

- How you have considered the ways that your will facility will be accessed by your target audience.
- What are the proposed opening times? Will they be convenient for your target group?
- Will the facilities be free to access?
- Will your target audience need any specialist equipment, building modifications?



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10. Monitoring Requirements

Required Information	Required Evidence	When required?	Reporting deadline
1. Baseline of typical no. of current weekly users of digital facility (prior to creation/ improvement to facility).	Number, plus brief summary of how calculated.	Prior to facility being created/ improved. <i>Review figure from application & amend if nec.</i>	Following Grant Agreement sign-off, <u>prior to payment being made.</u>
2. Photographs.	Before and after shots of the facility.	Prior to and post creation/ improvement of facility.	Before: following GA sign-off, <u>prior to grant payment.</u> After: within 1 month of new equipment in situ.
3. Confirmation/ details of improved broadband speed (<u>where funded</u>).	Evidence of BB speeds prior to and post installation/ upgrade. <i>Best achieved through screen-shots of 'before' and 'after' speed tests.</i>	Prior to and post installation/ activation of new/ improved BB line.	Before: following GA sign-off, <u>prior to grant payment.</u> After: within 1 month of installation/ activation.

Notes:

a. Use <https://fast.com/>, or any other reputable online speed checker tool to check broadband speed.

b. It is a requirement of UKSPF funding, and therefore a Condition of Grant that new or improved broadband services purchased through the Grant offer speeds of at least 30 'megabits per second' (mbps) and, where relevant, are faster than the 'mbps' speed of the existing broadband line in use.

10. Monitoring Requirements

Required Information	Required Evidence	When required?	Reporting deadline
Site visit.	Confirmation of equipment in situ.	Equipment must be in situ within 3 months of receipt of Grant payment.	N/A – VOLA to arrange with 3-months.
Evidence of purchases made/ expenditure incurred.	Breakdown of expenditure & redacted bank statements.	ASAP after all purchases made.	On request - ASAP after all purchases made.
Ongoing broadband contract costs - evidence of payment.	<i>Save other evidence (quotes, invoices, receipts) for audit sample.</i>	Quarterly	Ongoing, within 1 week of Quarter-end.
No. of users in typical week, post creation/ improvement of facility.	Number + anonymised attendance register/ signing-in sheet data. <i>VOLA does not require copies of signing-in sheets, but must be kept in event of future audit.</i>	Record attendance data each time facility is open. <i>Within first 6-months, select comparable week to that of 'before' benchmark data.</i>	6-months post creation/ improvements. (May be requested earlier.)
Brief written summary of how the Grant was used and impact on your organisation and users.	Brief written report - no additional evidence required. <i>Link back to proposed impact from application.</i>	6-months post creation/ improvement of facility.	6-months post Grant payment.
Case study(s) - focus on the facility &/or individual user(s).	Written, recorded, or filmed case study(s).	As appropriate.	<i>(Optional)</i> On request.

10. Evaluation

- Participation in the central evaluation (to be undertaken by VOLA &/or the LCRCA) is a Condition of Grant.
- Grant Recipients will support the process by default through the monitoring info provided.
- Impact report and case studies important!
- Requests may be made for additional info, such as interviews with the evaluation team.
- Process will be designed to be as 'light touch' as possible and will not place an unduly onerous obligation on Grant Recipients.
- Further details will be provided in due course.



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11. Future grants rounds

- **3 further grants rounds proposed** (1 more in 2023/24 + 2 in 2024/25)
- Provisional timescales – precise date TBC:
 - R3: Nov 2023 – Jan/ Feb 2024 (LCR: £214,829 +/- R2 slippage)

Rounds 2 & 3 to allow longer application window due to summer and Christmas holidays

 - R4: April – June 2024 (LCR: £213,829)
 - R5: Sept – Nov 2024 (LCR: £213,829 +/- R4 slippage)
- Funding priorities, application process & timescales will be reviewed after each round to ensure continuing suitability.



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Technical 'hints & tips' briefing: Thursday 15th June, 2-3pm

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82043013798?pwd=b1ZGeUgrWkxQYTRKSG80QUFXdIUwUT09>

Email: jack.shields@volamerseyside.org.uk to confirm attendance



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Questions?



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Thank you and good luck!

**Andy Coulson/ Jack Shields/ Stu McGrory:
0151 920 0726 (x 213)**

ukspfgrants@volamerseyside.org.uk



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