

This statement is from Joanne Roney OBE, Chief Executive at MCC, Cllr Sue Murphy, Deputy Leader of the Council (Executive Member for the VCSE), and Claire Yarwood, Acting Chief Accountable Officer at Manchester Health & Care Commissioning (MHCC).

The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) is, and will continue to be, a vital part of this city. Following the COVID-19 outbreak and all the emergency work supporting people in Manchester, we want to thank the sector for continuing to do everything it can to work with us and – equally as important – we want you to know that we are with you, we value you, and will do our utmost to help and support you.

Through our organisations' various departments, teams and officers we are in regular contact with VCSE groups and organisations and are hearing about the impact on you and those you work with, and of course also about how we can help you.

We know that groups and organisations have been facing the challenge of closing buildings and adapting services whilst looking after their own staff and those who rely on those services. We also know that you are having to plan for the impacts of COVID-19, particularly financially, where short-, medium- and long-term plans will have to be developed against a backdrop of changing needs and demands.

As senior leaders in the Council and MHCC, we have asked, and will continue to encourage, all our teams working with the VCSE sector in Neighbourhoods, Commissioning, Health and Social Care and the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Team to provide:

- up-to-date information, advice and guidance
- reassurance about our funding commitments
- flexibility with any resources we can make available and with processing payments to you, including funding in advance where possible and appropriate.

Our message and approach applies to monitoring and reporting too, where we will use our relationships with you to live and breathe the Our Manchester way of working together.

The good relationship between MHCC, the Council, and the VCSE sector is helping us now – and it will in the future – as we all continue to work through this situation together. Let's be open and honest with each other and continue to work together to support everyone in this city, particularly the most vulnerable.

The Council is also keeping its website up-to-date with Coronavirus information:

<https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/500361/coronavirus>

It covers a wide range of information, and should be the first port of call for anyone needing information on support available for Manchester people.

It also gives more information on our **new freephone helpline – 0800 234 6123 – for our Manchester Community Hub**, aimed at getting urgent help to the most vulnerable.

Across the city a community of charities, businesses, community groups and the Council have all come together to make sure people have the support they need during this challenging time. If you have any ideas about how your group can help, please contact omfunds@manchester.gov.uk

If you haven't already, we encourage you to connect to all the information, advice, guidance and support being provided by the support organisation Macc. This includes information about funding, online tools and forums for further conversations, and access to volunteering opportunities, offers and requests. As they're our commissioned VCSE infrastructure

provider, we'll make sure that Macc continue to be involved in both strategic and operational conversations and developments, which will be reaching out and extending the conversations and involvement with the sector
<https://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/coronavirus-advice-and-resources>

We Love Mcr - Covid-19 Community Response Fund

We Love MCR Charity are now offering funding support to groups and organisations dealing directly with the impact of COVID-19 on their communities in the city of Manchester and have created the COVID-19 Community Response Grant. Constituted groups and organisations can apply to this fund for £500 – £3,000 for the items, equipment or supplies they need to support their communities in this difficult time.

Forever Manchester – Community Support Fund

During these uncertain times, we know that grassroots community groups are responding to the impact of COVID-19 through kindness, coming together to help those most affected however they can. To support these local responses, Forever Manchester is offering awards of up to £1,000.

At this unique time, we want to be as helpful as possible as the situation unfolds. With so much pressure and daily changes in health and social care, unexpected things will happen and there are things we will get wrong. Please bear with us if we do, and let us know.

We recognise the impact on your funding and we commit to sharing any news on emergency funding with you as soon as possible.

We want to thank you for your hard work and support to the people of this city. The work that the VCSE sector is doing to help local people is extremely valuable during these difficult times and we don't take it for granted. Your passion, commitment, skills, knowledge and experience is vital in keeping our communities strong.

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