

Greater Manchester State of the VCFSE Sector 2026: Participant information sheet and consent

About the Greater Manchester State of the VCFSE Sector survey

The Greater Manchester State of the Sector survey is a research project by Salford CVS, the VCSE Data and Insights Observatory at Nottingham Trent University, and in partnership with Local Infrastructure Organisations across Greater Manchester.

The survey explores the experiences of voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations across a range of important themes, including:

- **Role of VCFSE organisations in communities** – capturing who organisations work with, the needs they see, and the role they play locally.
- **Workforce and volunteers** – understanding the people who deliver and support the sector's work.
- **Assets and funding** – looking at how organisations are funded, their assets, how stable finances are, and what challenges and opportunities exist.

By gathering this information, the survey helps build a clear picture of the VCFSE sector's role, contribution, and needs across Greater Manchester. The findings will be used to support planning, funding bids, advocacy, and decision-making at both local and GM-wide levels.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You work or volunteer for a VCFSE organisation in Greater Manchester. Your perspective will help ensure the research reflects the diverse range of organisations and local contexts across GM.

What will taking part involve?

You will complete an online survey on Qualtrics, a certified survey platform. You will be asked about your organisation's activities, workforce and volunteers, funding and financial position, assets, and the communities it supports. Where organisations are members with their respective LIOs, we will use these details to prepopulate questions for you to confirm or

update. You will be invited to take part in a focus group which explores the themes in the survey and to add local context. You will be asked if you would like to receive insights about this research, including being notified about when the report is published and the opportunity to receive an Individual Insights Report, showing how your responses fit within the bigger picture in Greater Manchester.

Can I provide estimates?

Yes. We recognise exact figures aren't always available. Informed estimates are welcome where needed.

How long will I have to complete the survey?

The survey will be open between January – March 2026, the exact dates will be shown on the survey landing page. Most respondents take 15–30 minutes. You can pause and return using the same browser.

Why is completing this survey important?

The findings of this survey will help to build a clear picture of VCFSE sector's role, contribution, and needs across Greater Manchester. Your responses will feed into accessible outputs designed for practical use: a GM-wide report, ten locality summaries, and an interactive dashboard for your organisation to use, all of which will support planning, funding bids, advocacy, and decision-making at both local and GM-wide levels.

What happens to the data I provide?

Your data will be analysed to build an understanding of the experiences of VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester. All results will be aggregated and anonymised in any published outputs. If you confirm or update organisational membership data originally provided by LIOs, we will return the updated version to them. We will only share back information that LIOs already hold.

Are there any risks of taking part?

There is minimal risk associated with taking part in this study. Participation is voluntary, and you may skip any question you prefer not to answer. Only aggregated, anonymised findings will be reported.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary – there is no requirement to take part. If you start the survey and then wish to withdraw, please email VCSEObservatory@ntu.ac.uk within five working days of starting or submitting; we will delete your details and responses where feasible. After that point, we cannot guarantee that anonymised data may already be incorporated in analysis and outputs, so your data will be anonymised in line with GDPR requirements and retained as part of the study. No information will link back to you or your organisation.

Your data – our ethics, standards and obligations

Please ensure you have read and understood the below before taking part in the survey.

Invitation and Purpose

You are invited to take part in the Greater Manchester State of the VCFSE Sector 2026 survey, exploring the state of the voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Greater Manchester, including the challenges, opportunities, and needs of VCFSE organisations. The purpose of the survey is to measure, evaluate, and communicate trends and insights that provide a robust evidence base on the sector's role, contribution, and needs. You will be asked about your organisation's financial position and funding experiences, its workforce and volunteers, and the communities it serves. Your responses will help build a robust, evidence-based picture of the VCFSE sector's strengths, challenges, and value across Greater Manchester. The findings will be used to inform local and GM-wide decision-making, support advocacy for the sector, and provide resources and insights that are useful to individual organisations.

This research is being conducted by the VCSE Data and Insights Observatory at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), in partnership with Local Infrastructure Organisations across Greater Manchester.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research by the University involving human participants is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately, and their rights respected. This study has been considered by Nottingham Trent University's Schools of Business, Law and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethics opinion. Further information can be found at: <https://www.ntu.ac.uk/research/research-and-impact/research-governance>.

Legal Basis and roles for processing personal data

For this project, Salford CVS acts as the Data Controller and Nottingham Trent University (NTU) acts as the Data Processor, as defined under UK GDPR. Salford CVS determines the purposes and means of processing personal data for this project. NTU processes personal data on behalf of Salford CVS and only in accordance with the controller's documented instructions. Salford CVS' full privacy notice can be viewed here:

<https://www.salfordcvs.co.uk/salford-cvs-full-privacy-notice>

The Research Privacy Notice outlines what NTU does with personal data and how we protect personal data and the rights of research participants during research activities in accordance with UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018. For more information regarding the RPN, please click on the following link: <https://www.ntu.ac.uk/policies/research/research-privacy-notice>

All personal data collected through this survey is held securely by NTU in its capacity as data processor and is not shared with Local Infrastructure Organisations or any third party unless explicitly stated and agreed by Salford CVS in its role as data controller.

What will happen to my data?

Your completed survey responses will be used in research outputs. However, no identifying information about you, your organisation, or any other personal details will be included in published materials. If your organisation's data is used to prefill answers to any questions, an updated version of only this data will be provided back to LIOs. The data we hold will be stored securely on NTU servers. Only ethically approved researchers with NTU login credentials will be able to access this information.

If you opt in to receive an individual insights report, we will send you a personalised interactive report showing how your organisation's responses compare to other organisations in GM.

Anonymised data, including analysed survey responses that cannot identify you or your organisation, may be used in the future to help build a better picture of the UK VCFSE sector. Any secondary use of the data will be subject to the terms outlined in the data sharing agreement between NTU and Salford CVS.

How will the data be used?

We will use data from this survey to produce a range of publicly available outputs, including a GM-wide report, ten locality reports, and an interactive dashboard. Data may also be used

to inform policy briefings and presentations, academic publications, and future VCFSE sector research.

Who can I contact if I have any questions or concerns?

Michelle Warburton, Salford CVS Project Manager for Greater Manchester State of the VCFSE Sector 2026:

- **Email:** michelle.warburton@salfordcvs.co.uk
- **Phone:** +44 (0)161 787 7795
- **Address:** Salford Community & Voluntary Services, 5 Irwell Place, Eccles, Salford, M30 0FN

Dr Ben Evans, NTU Project Lead for Greater Manchester State of the VCFSE Sector 2026:

- **Email:** ben.evans@ntu.ac.uk
- **Phone:** +44 (0)115 848 6864
- **Address:** Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, 50 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham NG1 4FQ

For general queries about the VCSE Data & Insights National Observatory, please contact VCFSEObservatory@ntu.ac.uk.

If you would like to talk to somebody who is not directly involved in the research, please contact Professor Jo Richardson, Associate Dean for Research at NTU:

- **Email:** jo.richardson@ntu.ac.uk
- **Phone:** +44 (0)115 848 2999
- **Address:** Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, 50 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham NG1 4FQ

Data Controller (Salford CVS) Data Protection Officer

The contact details of the Controller's Data Protection Officer are:

Name: Kirsten Robinson

Email: kirsten.robinson@salfordcvs.co.uk

Data Processor (NTU) Data Protection Officer

Please contact the Data Protection Officer if:

- You have a question/query about how your data is being used by NTU;
- You would like to report a data breach (if you believe that your data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately);
- You would like to raise a complaint about how your personal data is being used by NTU

Address: Data Protection Officer, Nottingham Trent University, 50 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, NG1 4FQ.

Email: DPO@ntu.ac.uk