

## Covid-19 – Immediate support for the VSCE sector

This note sets out some immediate sources of support (financial and otherwise) for VSCE organisations providing a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Financial support

#### National

The following national funding pots are available specifically for VSCE organisations responding to, or struggling as a result of, Covid-19:

- You can choose to **furlough workers** (send them home but keep them on payroll) and the Government will pay up to 80% of their salary up to £2,500 per month. This is only available if employees are sent home and are not able to do any work, though they may still be allowed to volunteer (though not for the organisation paying their salary). More information [here](#).
- If you make more than half of your income through trading, you may be able to access a range of other business support schemes put in place by the Government. See [here](#) for more details of these.
- Arts Council England have launched an emergency funding package for cultural organisations and individual artists. More information [here](#).
- The National Emergencies Trust has launched an appeal. Greater Manchester's share of this funding will be distributed through Forever Manchester. More information [here](#).
- Waitrose has a new [£1m Community Support Fund](#). Teams in individual stores are being asked to choose the best way to use their share of this, so if you have a branch nearby you may wish to contact them.
- The Sylvia Adams Trust is offering grants of up to £5,000 (unrestricted) to organisations who provide early years support and will experience an increase in demand due to Covid-19. More information [here](#).

#### Greater Manchester level

- As well as distributing NET funds, Forever Manchester has launched their own [Community Support Fund](#), offering grants of up to £1,000.
- The [Mayors Charity](#) will be launching an appeal for support to help the effort to move homeless people in GM into hotels.
- GMCA has a programme funding up to [sixty Covid-19 Creative Commissions](#) worth £500 each. Artists and creators are being invited to produce creative work about Greater Manchester's response to COVID-19 and be paid to do so and survive the COVID-19 lockdown.

- [United We Stream](#), launching this week, will broadcast entertainment from GM artists and creatives online each day at 7pm. There will be a donations page where viewers can watch for free but can buy a 'virtual ticket' for whatever price they choose to enjoy the channel. Income from the stream will go to Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy Charity (8%), the Mayors Charity (22%), and to supporting Greater Manchester's night time economy (70%).
- The [Stockport Local Fund](#) is giving out grants of up to £1000 to organisations supporting the Covid-19 response in Stockport, especially those supporting vulnerable groups.
- The [Salford Crisis Fund](#) is a responsive fund offering VCSE organisations grants of up to £500 to help address immediate need arising from the coronavirus crisis.

## Digital support

Many VCSE sector organisations are having to pivot quickly to distance working and working-from-home arrangements. This can be a challenge for a sector which hasn't always done this traditionally, and who don't have the budget or staff to quickly mobilise digital infrastructure.

A wide range of technology tools and companies have introduced offers to support organisations responding to Covid-19. A few that might be helpful for you include:

- **Microsoft Teams** is being widely used by public services (including across the NHS). It includes video-conferencing facilities, the ability to share files, and instant messaging tools (like SMS messages, but on a computer). Microsoft are now making a free version of Teams available to anyone. This might help you to engage more effectively with public sector organisations in your area. [This webpage](#) explains how people can sign up.
- **Zoom** is also being widely used (and proving to be quite stable) for people to video-conference over the internet. Find out more about how to use it [here](#).
- **Dropbox** is a service for sharing files remotely. It is offering free Business accounts for 3 months to charities and non-profits working on Covid-19 response. Sign up [here](#).
- **Mailchimp** is a system for sending out email newsletters (it simplifies distribution lists, scheduling of emails etc). It is making a similar offer of free access to its paid-for service (called 'Standard') to Governments and charities who need to communicate with people about the disease. Sign up [here](#).