



Expression of Interest (EOI): Community Conversations Consultation

June 2025





Introduction

Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (CVS), commissioned by Bolton Council and working in partnership with the [Belong Network](#), is inviting Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations across Bolton to take part in a borough-wide consultation project: **Community Conversations**.

The aim is to gather deep, meaningful insights from communities across the borough to inform and inspire the development of Bolton Council's new **Cohesion Strategy**. We want to hear from VCSE organisations working with all demographics and in all areas of Bolton.

We absolutely recognise the expertise and knowledge of the VCSE sector and understand the significant benefit of the trusted and strong relationships VCSE organisations have with communities.



What is the Community Conversations Project?

In response to the violent disorder that occurred in Bolton Town Centre and across the country in August 2024, this project seeks to understand experiences of Bolton residents, how their communities are changing, and what cohesion means to them.

We aim to gather **hundreds of in-depth conversations** between **July and October 2025**, facilitated by trusted VCSE organisations who already have strong relationships with their communities. These are organisations that regularly engage with local people, understand the nuances of their lived experiences, and are well-positioned to create safe, open spaces for honest dialogue.



Who Can Apply?

We welcome EOIs from VCSE organisations that:

- Are based in or work within Bolton.
- Have trusted relationships with community members.
- Already have regular sessions with community members and participants.
- Are confident in facilitating open, respectful, and inclusive conversations.
- Work with communities across any of the twenty wards in Bolton and with any of the following groups (though not limited to):
 - Young people
 - Adults
 - LGBTQ+ communities
 - Refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants
 - Faith communities and those with no faith
 - People living with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions.



What's Involved?

Participating VCSE organisations will:

- Facilitate either **25 or 50 conversations** with community members.
- Use a **pre-set list of questions to** guide discussions.
- Submit **anonymised responses** online, during or soon after each conversation takes place.
- Attend a **3-hour in-person training session** in how to appropriately design and facilitate the conversations (held at Allerton House Community Centre, Allerton Court, Deane, Bolton, BL1 2NE) on either:
 - Thursday 17th July or Friday 18th July
 - Morning (9am–12pm) or Afternoon (1pm–4pm)

Conversation sessions can be delivered however best suits your organisation and community – whether in small groups, one-to-one sessions, or informal gatherings.



Funding Available

VCSE organisations will receive an **unrestricted fee** for their time and contribution:

- **£1,250** for 25 conversations
- **£2,500** for 50 conversations

This fee can be used however your organisation sees fit – staff time, volunteer expenses, room hire, refreshments, participant incentives, or core costs. We may ask how the funding was used during the monitoring process, but there are no restrictions.

The overall funding available is £25,000 and each organisation can only apply once.

Payment Schedule:

- 50% paid upfront by project start date
- 50% paid upon completion of the project and submission of monitoring



Key Dates

Date	Milestone
Tuesday 24th June	Expressions of Interest open
Wednesday 9th July (11:45pm)	Expression of Interest deadline
Friday 10th July	Assessment of EOIs and due diligence completed
By Sunday 13th July	Successful VCSE organisations notified
17th or 18th July	Mandatory training (choose one 3-hour session)
21st July – 19th October	Conversations take place
26th October	Final monitoring deadline



What Will You Be Asking?

You will ask participants pre-set questions, which will be shared with you during the training sessions. You will also ask the participants for mandatory demographic information.

Demographic Information:

- How many people were in the group?
- What area do they live in?
- What is the make-up of the group? (gender, cultural identity, age bracket)

This process will mean asking pre-set questions under the following themes:

- Change
- Belonging
- Riots
- Town
- Trust
- Barriers to Cohesion.



Support

- Support to VCSE organisations is available throughout this consultation process from Bolton CVS.

Please contact bethw@boltoncvs.org.uk for more information or to ask any questions.

How to Apply

Please complete the Expression of Interest form by **Wednesday 9th July at 11:45pm** using the following link:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/dTs6w8XgHC>