

In this issue, we share updates on the Adult Skills Fund Residency eligibility, alongside news on our VCFSE Community Integration & ESOL grants. We spotlight the 1-to-1 Mock B1 English Test organised by Hongkongers in Britain, helping participants prepare with confidence. Also featured is the ILR B1 English Test Prep Workshop. World Jewish Relief is launching STEP for Ukrainians and Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders, offering free online employment support & English classes. You'll also find updates on venues' hire hosted by Macc & a free webinar on registering a charity with the Charity Commission. Finally, check out 15 exciting funding opportunities available at local, regional & national levels.



Adult Skills Fund – Residency Eligibility Update

In June 2025 the Department for Education [announced changes to Adult Skills Fund \(ASF\) residency eligibility](#) requirements aimed at simplifying eligibility for ASF courses.

From **1st August 2025**, **BN(O) visa holders** and other migrant communities will **no longer need to prove 3-years residence in the United Kingdom** to access funded courses. Instead, BN(O) visa holders will be able to access a course **on day one of learning** providing they can prove ordinary residence and meet other standard eligibility criteria.

These [updated ASF funded rules](#) only apply in areas where ASF is non-devolved. In Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas where ASF is devolved (in the North West this is **Liverpool City Region** and **Greater Manchester**) DfE have allowed these areas to either:

- **Adopt the new rules from 1st August 2025, or**
- **Delay implementation until 1st August 2026**

For specific eligibility details, please contact your local MCA's ASF team directly.

Update: VCFSE Community Integration & ESOL Grants

We're pleased to share an update on our two recent **grant funding opportunities: VCFSE Grant Funding for Integration Support & Community Grant Funding for ESOL Support** aimed at supporting **Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders, Homes for Ukraine (HfU) and Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) visa holders and Communities for Afghans (CfA)**. These grants focus on **community integration** and **non-accredited English language (ESOL) support** across the **North West of England**.

Applications for both funding streams have now closed. We expect to announce up to **30 grant recipients** from a range of organisations across the region shortly. Once confirmed, we'll share details of the successful organisations so you can **connect** with those delivering the funded projects.

1-to-1 Mock B1 English Test – Boost Your Confidence!



Worried about passing the B1 English Test? Join the **1-to-1 Mock B1 English Test** organised by **Hongkongers in Britain** to prepare with confidence.

In this 30-minute online session, an experienced instructor will speak with you in English about your chosen topic and the six official test topics. You'll receive personalised feedback on your spoken English, helping you improve your performance and feel more confident on test day.

Dates: Multiple time slots available throughout October 2025 | **Capacity:** 1 participant/session | **Fee:** £20 | **Location:** Online.
Registration Link: <https://hongkongers.org.uk/book-b1-mock>

ILR B1 English Test Prep Workshop



Feeling Unsettled About the B1 English Test for your ILR Application? As you near your fifth year on your BN(O) visa, the B1 English language test can feel like a significant hurdle.

Hongkongers in Britain (HKB) offers an interactive workshop to build your confidence and equip you with the necessary vocabulary, grammar and skills for success. **Workshop Satisfaction Rating (Last 6 Months): 4.7 / 5.**

Workshop Details
Dates: Mondays & Wednesdays – 13, 15, 20, and 22 October 2025 |
Time: 20:15 – 22:15 | **Languages:** Cantonese & English |
Capacity: 12 participants per session | **Location:** Online | **Fee:** £64 (up to 40% refundable*)

Refund Eligibility (up to 40%)

You may apply for a partial refund if you meet **either** of the following conditions:

1. You pass your B1 English test by **19 November 2025**
2. You attend **all four workshop sessions**

Registration Link:

<https://hongkongers.org.uk/book-b1-workshop>

New opportunities for Ukrainian & Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders



World Jewish Relief is launching STEP for Ukrainians and Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders in England. This free online programme, funded by the UK Government, offers personalised employment support and English classes and is run in partnership with the British Council.

STEP is open to participants living in England, aged 18 or over, who are on a Ukrainian visa scheme or a Hong Kong BN(O) visa. The programme is designed for those looking for work or hoping to find a better job, while also improving their English and building confidence.

What STEP offers:

Participants benefit from personalised employment support, including 1-to-1 sessions with a dedicated advisor, assistance with CVs, cover letters, job applications and interview preparation, as well as career guidance tailored to their individual skills and goals. They also have access to webinars with employers. Alongside this, participants can access high-quality English classes delivered online by expert British Council teachers. Learners study in small groups at their own level, combining live classes with self-study and webinars. On completion, participants receive a British Council Certificate of Attendance and an English Score Test Certificate.

Flexible programme options are available:

-A 3-month programme with daily English classes (Mon–Frid) plus weekly employment support.

-A 6-month programme with English classes three days a week (Mon, Tue & Thu) plus weekly employment support.

How to apply

To register, visit

<https://tinyurl.com/mrx9hwkz>, call the freephone number 0800 319 6089 or email step@worldjewishrelief.org

Alternative Venue Discussion Group

Date & Time: Monday 6th October 2025, 2pm – 3pm

Manchester Community Central (Macc) will be hosting the next Alternative Venue Discussion Group, providing a space for VCSE organisations to come together and explore venue needs whether permanent, temporary or ad hoc. Statutory and private sector colleagues are also warmly invited to join.

This session offers an opportunity for groups to share what they require from venues, as well as for those with venue hire availability to promote their spaces. Attendees are also welcome to introduce new projects or programmes of work and connect with other VCSE organisations.

To attend, please sign up via the link below.

[Click here for sign-up link:](#)

For any questions, please contact Milly emily.mckinnell@macc.org.uk

Webinar: Registering a Charity in England and Wales

Date & Time: Thursday 30th October 2025, 2pm – 3:30pm

Venue: Online | **Cost:** Free | **Provider:** NCVO

This **free** webinar, hosted by NCVO, offers a clear and practical guide to setting up and registering a charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Ideal for those considering starting a charity, small charities approaching the registration threshold or trustee boards exploring structural changes.

What to expect:

Key steps to register a charity | common myths and misconceptions | insights from a newly registered charity | guidance from NCVO and the Charity Commission

[Click here for registration Link](#)

Funding Opportunities in the North West and Nationally

In the following section, we will share new **external** funding opportunities available across different regions in the Northwest and nationally that may be useful and worth considering. Please note that some of the funding opportunities from the newsletter I sent previously are still open. Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Please Note – the funding below is external to the RSMP and is shared with you after researching funding across the region and nationally. The RSMP has no role in the drafting, commissioning or awarding of funding. Please ensure you read all eligibility criteria associated with each funding opportunity.

Health and Wellbeing Fund (Salford)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support new and existing projects that improve the health and wellbeing of Salford residents through community-led activities
Specific Eligibility Criteria	VCSE organisations based in Salford: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover up to £10,000: eligible for up to £1,500 • Turnover up to £300,000: eligible for up to £5,000
Grant amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to £1,500 for small VCSEs • Up to £5,000 for medium VCSEs
Location	Salford
Deadline	12pm, Monday 27 th October 2025
Contact	grants@salfordcvs.co.uk Honor Johnstone honor.johnstone@salfordcvs.co.uk
Website	Health and Wellbeing Fund Salford CVS

Women’s Mental Health Fund (Salford)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support projects that improve women’s emotional wellbeing and mental health in Salford
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that support maternal mental health, mental health of women affected by domestic violence and mental health of women experiencing (peri-)menopause • must be a VCSE group or organisation and a full member of Salford CVS
Grant amount	Up to £3,500
Location	Salford
Deadline	Friday 24 th October 2025
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grants@salfordcvs.co.uk • honor.johnstone@salfordcvs.co.uk
Website	Women's Mental Health Fund Salford CVS

Rochdale Creates Youth Arts Festival: Small Arts Commissions (Rochdale)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Co-create engaging new work or diverse events with young people in Rochdale, increase town centre footfall, support local arts organisations and build lasting community-artist relationships
Specific Eligibility Criteria	Open to individual artists and arts organisations with a strong connection to Rochdale.

Grant amount	Up to £8,000
Location	Rochdale, Greater Manchester
Deadline	Tuesday 14 th October 2025
Contact	admin@rochdalecreates.co.uk
Website	Rochdale Creates Youth Arts Festival: Small Arts Commissions Action Together

Wheels and Walks (Greater Manchester)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support community groups in Greater Manchester to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling activities that encourage active lifestyles and long-term community engagement
Specific Eligibility Criteria	Community groups based in Greater Manchester aiming to deliver local walking, wheeling or cycling activities
Grant amount	Up to £5,000
Location	Greater Manchester
Deadline	27 th October 2025
Contact	WheelsandWalks@tfgm.com
Website	Wheels and Walks TfGM Bee Active

UKSPF Digital Connectivity Grants – Round 7 (Liverpool City Region)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support the development or improvement of public-use digital facilities in community settings across the Liverpool City Region, particularly in areas of high digital exclusion and deprivation
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constituted, not-for-profit VCFSE sector organisations with a public access base in the Liverpool City Region • annual income must be £1.5 million or less • must have existed for at least 12 months • organisations previously funded through this programme cannot reapply • private companies limited by shares, statutory bodies, housing associations and political groups are not eligible <p><i>Please click the link to read the FAQ doc which includes useful information</i></p>
Grant amount	Applicants can apply for up to the maximum amount allocated to their borough: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton – £7,911 • Knowsley – £5,633 • Liverpool – £5,250 • Sefton – £6,600 • St Helens – £9,200 • Wirral – £8,304
Location	Liverpool City Region (specific eligible areas in Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral)
Deadline	Friday 24 th October 2025
Contact	ukspfgrants@volamerseyside.org.uk
Website	UKSPF Digital Connectivity Grants – volamerseyside

LCVS Community Impact Fund (CIF) (Merseyside)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support local VCFSE groups delivering projects in health, education, income stability and arts & culture
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constituted VCFSE organisation, not-for-profit • established for at least 12 months
Grant amount	Up to £3,000
Location	Merseyside
Deadline	Friday 17 th October 2025 at 5 PM
Contact	Stephanie.Gregory@lcvs.org.uk Becky.Lazare@lcvs.org.uk
Website	OPEN LCVS Community Impact Fund (CIF)

Lancaster Community Fund (Lancaster District)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support local volunteer organisations delivering projects and activities that benefit people in the Lancaster District
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications welcomed from disadvantaged communities • priority given to new and smaller grassroots groups with low income • funding priority: increase community involvement, build community wealth and resilience, contribute to carbon reduction and sustainability and improve individual and community wellbeing
Grant amount	Up to £1,000
Location	Lancaster District
Deadline	2 nd November 2025
Contact	sharonphillips@lancastercvs.org.uk
Website	Funding Opportunities - LDCVS - Lancaster District Community & Voluntary Solutions

Lancashire Red Rose Responding Fund (Lancashire)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	support local charities, voluntary and community organisations helping vulnerable people, specifically relating to mental health
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations with annual income under £350,000 • must support one or more of the following groups: BAME, LGBTQ+, people with physical or learning difficulties, older people, young people up to age 25 • must provide mental health support for diagnosed conditions • must demonstrate delivery by trained professionals, volunteers or community workers
Grant amount	Up to £5,000
Location	Lancashire
Deadline	17 th October 2025
Contact	applications@cflm.org.uk
Website	Lancashire Red Rose Responding Fund - CFL

The BIBAs Foundation (Lancashire)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Develop an enterprising culture among young people aged 16–24 in Lancashire
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations and individuals permanently based in Lancashire • must support young people aged 16–24 • eligible applicants include charities, social enterprises, community groups and individuals
Grant amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to £5,000 for community groups • up to £2,000 for individuals
Location	Lancashire
Deadline	3 rd November 2025
Contact	applications@cflm.org.uk
Website	The BIBAs Foundation - CFL

Lancashire County Council Warm Spaces Grant Scheme – Round 1 (Lancashire)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support organisations in providing warm, safe and welcoming spaces for Lancashire residents during winter, especially those most in need.
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary/community organisations, registered charities, constituted groups/clubs, CICs, town and parish councils and faith organisations are eligible • be applying for funding for a project taking place within the Lancashire County Council area. • be a building freeholder (owner) or have obtained all the relevant permissions from the freeholder to run this warm space. • agree to abide by the Lancashire Warm Spaces Charter • agree to register to the online directory, and therefore hold and fully comply with up to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Liability Insurance ○ safeguarding policies and procedures ○ appropriate risk assessments
Grant amount	Up to £750
Location	Lancashire County Council area
Deadline	19 th October 2025
Contact	warmspaces@lancashire.gov.uk
Website	Lancashire warm spaces grant scheme - Lancashire County Council

SWAP Fund (Cheshire)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support community-led projects that improve safety, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and promote positive change across Cheshire
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community groups, charities, not-for-profit organisations, registered or non-registered groups • funding priority: improve community safety, reduce offending and reoffending, support victims of crime, address crime and anti-social behaviour, create positive activities for young people and promote crime prevention and early intervention • CICs are eligible
Grant amount	£100 – £5,000
Location	Cheshire
Deadline	17 th October 2025
Contact	pcc@cheshire-pcc.gov.uk
Website	SWAP Fund

Anne Duchess of Westminster Fund (Cheshire West)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support small-scale projects or activities that benefit adults in Cheshire West, focusing on themes such as mental health, community disadvantage, isolation, employment and disability
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small charities, voluntary and community organisations • based in Cheshire West • annual income must be under £100,000 • projects must support adults only • priority given to new applicants although previous applicants may apply
Grant amount	Up to £1,000 (microgrant)
Location	Cheshire West
Deadline	Sunday 19 th October at 5pm (expressions of interest close)
Contact	enquiries@cwva.org.uk
Website	Anne Duchess of Westminster Foundation - micro grants

Common Ground Award by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (England)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support VCSE organisations in building social cohesion and bridging social capital through investment in facilities, equipment or spaces
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCSE organisations operating in England with charitable, benevolent or philanthropic aims • CICs are eligible • Funding can be used for facilities, equipment or spaces that promote social cohesion
Grant amount	Up to £10,000 per organisation (exceptional cases may receive more)
Location	England

Deadline	21 st November 2025
Contact	CGA@communities.gov.uk
Website	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-ground-award-prospectus/common-ground-award-prospectus

National Lottery Heritage Grants (the UK)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support projects that connect people and communities to their own heritage or heritage in the UK, whether national, regional or local
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not-for-profit organisations, CICs, private owners of heritage assets or partnerships • projects must not have started before funding decisions • must align with four investment principles: saving heritage, protecting the environment, inclusion, access and participation and organisational sustainability • it is beneficial to attending one of their Helping You Apply webinars or watching the film version. These take you through project development and the new application process, step-by-step and give you some top tips. • to get advice on your worked up project idea you can submit a Project Enquiry Form. This stage does not form part of the formal application process. • it is essential that you read sections 1 to 5 of the National Lottery Heritage Grants £10k-£250k programme guidance as this explains everything that you need to understand to apply.
Grant amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between £10,000 and £250,000 • Typically paid in three stages: 50% in advance, 30% in advance, 20% in arrears
Location	The UK
Deadline	No fixed deadline – applications can be submitted at any time
Contact	north@heritagefund.org.uk
Website	National Lottery Heritage Grants £10,000 to £250,000 The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The Tree Council – Branching Out Fund (the UK)	
Focus/Aims of Fund	Support community tree planting projects across the UK during the 2025/26 winter season.
Specific Eligibility Criteria	Open to schools, constituted community groups, charities, CICs, Tree Warden networks, residents’ associations and other not-for-profit organisations across the UK.
Grant amount	Between £250 and £2,500 per application.
Location	The UK
Deadline	14 th November 2025
Contact	geraldine.creaven@treecouncil.org.uk
Website	Branching Out Fund - The Tree Council