

**VOLA Consortium**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)  
**Annual Report**  
**&**  
**Audited Financial Statements**  
**For the year ended**  
**31 March 2025**

# VOLA Consortium

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# VOLA Consortium

## Trustees' Annual Report (including Directors' Report)

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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The trustees, who are also Directors for the purposes of the Companies Act, present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

## The Charity

VOLA Consortium is constituted as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. The company is registered in England and Wales No. 08746685. The charity is registered with the Charity Commission No. 1158777. The principal governing document is the Company Memorandum and Articles of Association as amended on 25th September 2014.

## Objectives and Activities

The charity's objects are:

- a) the advancement of education and lifelong learning in such ways as the trustees think fit;
  - b) the provision of crime prevention and offender rehabilitation services;
  - c) the promotion of the voluntary sector in the Liverpool City Region and the surrounding areas in particular by:
    - i) building the capacity of charitable and voluntary organisations operating within the area of benefit and providing them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose but in particular the advancement of education and the rehabilitation of offenders; and
    - ii) promoting, organising and facilitating co-operation and partnership working between charitable and voluntary organisations and statutory and other relevant bodies within the area of benefit.
- For the purposes of this clause, "the voluntary sector" means charities and voluntary organisations defined as follows: "Charities are organisations, which are established for exclusively charitable purposes in accordance with the law of England and Wales. "Voluntary Organisations" are whole or a significant section of the community, and which are not permitted by their constitution to make a profit for private distribution. Voluntary organisations do not include local government or other statutory authorities"*
- d) To further such purposes as are charitable within the laws of England and Wales as the Trustees shall from time to time determine.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

# VOLA Consortium

## Trustees' Annual Report (including Directors' Report)

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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#### **Consortium Membership**

In its eleventh year of operation as a registered charity, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, VOLA Consortium's membership stands at 66 voluntary sector organisations (67 last year); with one former member unfortunately ceasing trading in September 2024.

#### **Activities and Services**

Over the last twelve months, the charity's operations have focused on providing employment support to economically inactive people and continued support for the local digital inclusion agenda. This has been enabled by investment from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), delivered through two key projects:

- Continued delivery of the 'Digital Connectivity For Local Community Facilities' grants programme;
- 'The Progress Partnership' - a new Community-Led Employment Support project.

#### **The Progress Partnership**

*The Progress Partnership* project commenced in April 2024, initially funded until March 2025, with the aim of supporting 680 economically inactive city region residents into or closer to employment, with a target of 50% into paid work, education or training.

A 14-strong delivery partnership was formed, comprising consortium members with expertise in working with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, women, disability, and neurological/neurodivergent conditions, amongst others; all groups represented disproportionately in terms of economic inactivity.

A team of experienced Key Workers support people in a holistic manner, through individually tailored packages of support, to help them overcome the challenges that prevent them actively looking for work.

The project uses a blend of one-to-one and small group work to help participants to access support services and opportunities to build confidence and create pathways for progression. In addition to signposting and encouraging individuals to access complementary 'barrier removal' services, Key Workers draw on their wealth of experience in providing tailored employability support such as coaching, confidence building, CV writing, job-search skills and interview techniques; which are introduced at the right point in people's journeys.

In addition to the primary Key Worker support service, most project delivery partners provide other 'in-house' barrier removal services (e.g. recreation, advice, health/wellbeing, food banks/pantries, clothes-banks and training services), with embedded links to other such services where not delivered in-house. Proactive referral to complementary activities and services is a key feature and clear strength of the delivery model, supporting people's personal and social development.

Contractual recruitment targets were exceeded by 12%, with 764 local people engaged and supported, 84% of whom identified as being socially excluded.

The partnership has been highly successful in reaching the priority groups it set out to engage. 56% of participants were female; 47% disclosed a disability or long-term health condition, 37% were from ethnic minority backgrounds (both far surpassing their respective 25% targets); 21% were aged over 50 and 3% over 65.

# VOLA Consortium

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During the year, 419 people completed their programme of support, with 93 continuing on programme into the subsequently announced Year-2 extension of the project.

59% of 764 participants progressed to a positive destination following the support they received, including 153 people in employment or self-employment, 160 in education/training and 172 moving from economic inactivity into active job-search. In addition, 154 people indicated an improvement in basic skills on exit, with 76 achieving basic skills qualifications.

Beyond the 'hard' job and progression outcomes, the project is helping to bring about significant improvements in personal development, aspiration & motivation, health & wellbeing and employability, with clear success in building personal capacity and supporting transformational growth. These underpinning enablers and softer skills lay sustainable foundations for future employability, particularly among those facing multiple disadvantage.

A robust, independent evaluation took place in February and March 2025, with a comprehensive report produced that detailed the varied successes of the project, including a suite of heart-warming case studies highlighting the real-life stories and positive impacts on the people it supported. This is available on the charity's website ([www.volamerseyside.org.uk](http://www.volamerseyside.org.uk)).

#### **'Digital Connectivity For Local Community Facilities' Grants Programme**

In its third year, this £1.3 million grants programme is available to LCR-based, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations that provide, or are planning to provide public-access digital facilities to their communities. These include both facilities that are 'open-access' to the general public and those targeted at specific client groups. The primary focus is on supporting places where people can go to 'get online' and that support LCRA Digital Inclusion priorities.

The overall purpose of the grants programme is to support VCFSE sector organisations to:

- Create new facilities in areas of need (spatial and thematic); and
- Improve or expand existing facilities.

In addition to the 117 grants made in the first three funding rounds, a further 65 grants were awarded over two more funding rounds in this financial year, taking the total investment to £1,314,849 through 182 individual grant awards.

In total, over the five funding rounds 161 individual organisations received funding, covering 170 different sites. 21 organisations were funded more than once (19 twice and 1 three times); 12 of which for the same site and 8 for different sites. 83 completely new facilities were created, with 87 existing facilities either upgraded and/or expanded in terms of capacity.

Funding has been awarded to a wide variety of organisations, including 76 registered charities, 19 CIOs and 66 other not-for-profit organisations (46 CICs, 11 CLGs, plus 9 others), including 12 Churches and a Mosque.

Beneficiary organisations possess a wide nature of functions, activities and target groups. General purpose community centres/hubs accounted for the largest proportion of grant recipients (35%), providing open-access digital facilities to their local communities. Advice, education, training & employment support providers accounted for a significant proportion (16%), as did organisations working with children & young people (19%), minority ethnic communities (11%), disability (9%), and mental health (6%).



# VOLA Consortium

## Trustees' Annual Report (including Directors' Report)

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A multitude of other organisations with different remits, specialisms, and target groups have also benefited from the funding, including health, mental health, advice agencies (e.g. CABs), youth centres, older people, carers, family support, domestic violence services, addiction recovery, homelessness support, veterans' organisations, LGBTQ+ groups, sports clubs, creative arts initiatives, and even an urban farm and local community allotment.

As a result of the investment, 93 facilities reported improved digital connectivity through faster broadband/internet speeds, and 162 reported increased usage of their IT facilities.

Beneficiary Organisations reported an overall increase of 4,373 weekly IT users, with an average rise of 26 per facility. Increases ranged from single figures for some organisations to more than 50 for others, depending on the size and nature of the organisation and its IT facilities.

A comprehensive, independent evaluation of the grants programme took place in early 2025 whereby 97 out of 161 funded organisations responded. This was an excellent response rate, with universally high levels of satisfaction reported in relation to all elements of the Programme's application process and guidance, as well as the support they received individually from the Grants Team at VOLA.

A detailed evaluation report is available on the charity's website. It analyses programme design and rationale, delivery and performance, positive impacts for beneficiary organisations and their service users, key success factors, and recommendations for future development.

#### **Future Opportunities and Developments**

Following the announcement by government in the Autumn Budget of a transition year for UKSPF, in February 2025 the LCRCA confirmed a one-year extension to both of VOLA's UKSPF projects until March 2026. This secures the charity's future for the coming twelve months, whilst the government's new plans for skills, employment support and communities unfold.

*The Progress Partnership (TPP)* received £668k to support a minimum of 442 economically inactive residents to move into or closer to employment. Additionally, the *Digital Connectivity For Local Community Facilities* grant programme received a further £284k, with a target of distributing 32 grants to support local facilities. Despite a 25% reduction in revenue funding (applied consistently across all LCRCA UKSPF projects), through careful budget planning, we have managed to retain all TPP project delivery partners and sustain staffing at 2024/25 levels, both key priorities of the Board.

Originally planned to end in March 2025, the twelve month UKSPF extension was the result of political pressure from within the sector, together with local and mayoral combined authorities across the UK, in which VOLA played an active role, alongside its partners in VS6. The aim of this transition period is to provide more certainty ahead of wider funding reforms over the coming twelve months, planned to facilitate a smooth transition from the current UKSPF programme to a new funding framework in the future; details of which are as yet unknown.

With funding in place to ensure the charity's immediate sustainability until March 2026, and negotiations currently under way concerning the extension of a more recently secured funding stream until March 2027 (see Financial Review section), further new sources will be identified in the coming year to support the charity's longer-term sustainability. The Consortium Manager will continue to work closely with key stakeholders, including VS6 and the LCR Combined Authority, to influence policy and strategy and to stay alert to emerging opportunities.

# VOLA Consortium

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Of particular interest is the government's *Get Britain Working* (GBW) White Paper, published in November 2024, which presents both risks and opportunities to the wider employment support sector and to the charity itself. Our priority for the coming year is to proactively engage in the emerging local GBW landscape to influence its design and, ultimately, to ensure we position the consortium and wider VCFSE sector to capitalise on the opportunities it presents. The new *Connect to Work* employment support programme for economically inactive people and the *Youth Guarantee* Trailblazer for inactive young people aged 18-21 have been identified as key funding priorities for the charity.

## Financial Review

During the 2024/25 financial year, charitable activity generated an income of £1,391,857 to be used to further the organisation's objectives.

Following a slight reduction in unrestricted reserves of £3,567 last year, unrestricted reserves increased significantly this year, by £11,998, leaving a carry forward balance of £44,289. A modest (£5,750) underspend on The Progress Partnership project over the year, against total advance grant payments received from our funder (LCR Combined Authority), was held by the charity at financial year-end, and has since been returned to the funder.

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, the charity maintained a healthy balance sheet, with sufficient cash at bank (£64,035) and accrued income (£30,627) to more than cover all accrued expenditure relating to the financial year (£50,373).

With the charity's forecast income from the two UKSPF-funded projects in relation to anticipated levels of expenditure, current financial projections provide the Board of Trustees with strong confidence in the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for the coming 2025/26 financial year.

Further to this, a new contract has recently been secured from the LCR Combined Authority (September 2025) to manage a Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Community Grants programme. The initial contract runs until March 2026, with a potential three-year extension clause. Central government has since confirmed additional funding for the Trailblazer programme in 2026/27; and we are currently in negotiations with the LCR Combined Authority concerning the 2026/27 funding level. This provides assurance of the charity's ability to continue as a going concern until at least March 2027, with potential for an even longer period of financial stability.

### Reserves

Unrestricted cash reserves are ample to cover anticipated financial liabilities in the event of the charity's closure.

The charity maintains a reserves policy of £5,000 to cover the costs anticipated (e.g. financial and legal costs) in the event of the charitable company being wound up. This policy reflects the charity's continued position in relation to staffing and fixed assets, in that it does not directly employ any staff and, therefore, has no direct employment or redundancy liabilities, nor does it have any loans or other liabilities in relation to buildings either owned or leased.

This policy has been reviewed again this year and will continue to be reviewed annually, subject to amendment should the charity's risk profile change, for example, if the charity began to directly employ staff or secure premises.

The charity has no subsidiary undertakings, nor is any fund within the charity's accounts materially in deficit.

# VOLA Consortium

## Trustees' Annual Report (including Directors' Report)

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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#### Reference and administrative details

Charity number:	1158777
Company number:	08746685
Registered Office:	Burlington House, Crosby Road North, Waterloo, Liverpool, L22 0LG

#### Our advisors

Auditors:	Anita Mason BA(Hons) BFP FCA, Mitchell Charlesworth, Suites C, D, E & F, The Plaza, 100 Old Hall Street, Liverpool, L3 9QJ
Bankers:	Unity Trust Bank Plc, 9 Brindleyplace, Birmingham. B1 2HB
Solicitors:	Brabners, Horton House, Exchange Flags, Liverpool. L2 3YL

#### Directors and trustees

The directors of the charitable company (the charity) are its trustees for the purposes of charity law. The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year-end were as follows:

##### Trustees

James Brett	Claire Cook
Andrew Coulson (Appointed 11 December 2024)	Nicola Crosby
Damian France (Chair of Trustees)	Debbie Gayle
Raymond Moore	Mark Ord
Angela White OBE	

## Structure, Governance and Management

#### Governing Document

VOLA Consortium is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association amended on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014. It is registered with the Charity Commission. Anyone over the age of 16 can become a member of the Company and there are currently 9 trustee members (8 in 2023/24), each of whom agrees to contribute £1 in the event of the charity winding up. In addition to the trustees, the charity had 66 membership organisations as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, who also agree to contribute £1 in the event of the charity winding up.

#### Appointment of trustees

As set out in the Articles of Association the trustees are elected by members of the charitable company attending the Annual General Meeting. The longest service one third of trustees retires each year and are able to offer themselves for re-election.



# VOLA Consortium

## Trustees' Annual Report (including Directors' Report)

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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## Structure, Governance and Management (*Continued*)

### Trustee induction and training

New trustees undergo an induction process to brief them on: their legal obligations under charity and company law, the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and inform them of the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity. During the induction process they meet key employees and other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

### Organisation

The board of trustees, which can have up to 12 members, administers the charity. The board normally meets quarterly. A Manager is appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity. To facilitate effective operations the Manager has delegated authority, within the terms of delegation approved by the trustees, for operational matters including finance, employment, and service delivery activity. The Manager and other members of the staff team are employed by Sefton Council for Voluntary Service, a VOLA membership organisation, with VOLA Consortium being recharged for any staff time incurred in the operation of its projects. A written membership agreement is in place outlining the terms of this staffing relationship.

### Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

None of our trustees receives remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. Any connection between a trustee or senior manager of the charity and any client or supplier is disclosed to the full board of trustees in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party. In the current year no such related party transactions were reported.

### Risk Management

The trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity faces;
- the establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the annual review; and
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise or manage any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

This work has identified that financial sustainability is the major financial risk for the charity. A key element in the management of financial risk is a regular review of available liquid funds to settle debts as they fall due, regular liaison with the bank and active management of trade debtors and creditors balances to ensure sufficient working capital by the charity.

Attention has also been focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety of clients and data protection. These risks are managed by ensuring accreditation is up to date, having robust policies and procedures in place and regular awareness training for staff working in these operational areas.

# VOLA Consortium

## Trustees' Annual Report (including Directors' Report)

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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## Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of VOLA Consortium for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- 1) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- 2) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- 3) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- 4) state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 5) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for the safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

### Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

### Disclosure of Information to the auditor

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information that they are aware of which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

### Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the board of trustees on **16 December 2025** and signed on their behalf.



**Damian France**  
**Chair of Trustees**

# Independent Auditor's Report

## To the members of VOLA Consortium

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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#### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Vola Consortium for the Period ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

#### **In our opinion, the financial statements:**

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the Period then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

#### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of Vola Consortium in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Please note that the previous year's comparative figures are unaudited as an independent examination of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 was performed.

#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Vola Consortium's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

#### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

# Independent Auditor's Report

## To the members of VOLA Consortium

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustees' report; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or - the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

#### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing Vola Consortium's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

# Independent Auditor's Report

## To the members of VOLA Consortium

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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#### **The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with directors and other management;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company, including the Charities Act 2011, taxation legislation and data protection, anti-bribery, employment and health and safety legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit
- We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:
  - making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
  - considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations. To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:
    - performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
    - tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
    - assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions. In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:
  - agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
  - reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance; and
  - enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



# Independent Auditor's Report

## To the members of VOLA Consortium

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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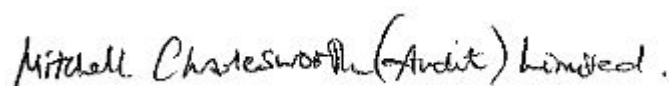
#### Other matters

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with current Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

#### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Anita Mason BA (Hons) BFP FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited,

Statutory Auditor and Accountants

Suites C, D, E & F,

14<sup>th</sup> Floor The Plaza,

100 Old Hall Street,

Liverpool,

L3 9QJ

Date 16 December 2025

VOLA Consortium  
Statement of Financial Activities  
(Incorporating Income & Expenditure Account)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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**Current Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	Note	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Charitable activities	2	-	1,391,857	1,391,857	453,954
Total Income		-	1,391,857	1,391,857	453,954
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities	3, 4	10,997	1,381,524	1,392,521	591,412
Total expenditure		10,997	1,381,524	1,392,521	591,412
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>(10,997)</b>	<b>10,333</b>	<b>(664)</b>	<b>(137,458)</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	12	22,995	(22,995)	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>11,998</b>	<b>(12,662)</b>	<b>(664)</b>	<b>(137,458)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Funds b/fwd		32,291	12,662	44,953	182,411
Funds c/fwd		<b>44,289</b>	-	<b>44,289</b>	44,953

The Statement of Financial Activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

VOLA Consortium  
Statement of Financial Activities  
(Incorporating Income & Expenditure Account)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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***Previous Year Ended 31 March 2024***

	Note	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2024 £
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>				
Charitable activities	3	2,600	451,354	453,954
Total Income		2,600	451,354	453,954
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Charitable activities	4, 5	6,167	585,245	591,412
Total expenditure		6,167	585,245	591,412
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		(3,567)	(133,891)	(137,458)
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	13	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		(3,567)	(133,891)	(137,458)
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Funds b/fwd		35,858	146,553	182,411
Funds c/fwd		32,291	12,662	44,953

*The notes on pages 19 to 27 form part of these financial statements*

VOLA Consortium  
Balance Sheet  
As at 31 March 2025

Company Number: 08746685

	Note	2025 £	£	2024 £
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Debtors	8	30,627		618
Cash at bank and in hand	9	64,035		87,944
		94,662		88,562
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	10	50,373		43,608
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			44,289	44,953
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	13		44,289	44,953
<b>Funds of the charity</b>				
Designated Funds			-	-
General Fund			44,289	32,291
Total Unrestricted Funds	11		44,289	32,291
Restricted Fund			0	12,662
Total Restricted Fund	12		0	12,662
<b>Total Funds</b>			44,289	44,953

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the board of trustees 16 December 2025.



**Damian France**  
**Chair of Trustees**

*The notes on pages 19 to 27 form part of these financial statements*

VOLA Consortium  
Statement of Cash flows  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Net income per Statement of Financial Activities	(664)	(137,458)
Adjustments for:		
Decrease/(Increase) in trade and other receivables	(30,009)	474,382
(Decrease)/Increase in trade and other payables	6,765	(291,393)
<b>Net cash (used in) /provided by operating activities</b>	<b>(23,908)</b>	<b>45,531</b>
<b>Net cash from investing activities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net cash from financing activities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net (decrease) /increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(23,908)</b>	<b>45,531</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year</b>	<b>87,944</b>	<b>42,413</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	<b>64,035</b>	<b>87,944</b>
<b>Components of cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash and bank balances	64,035	87,944
	<b>64,035</b>	<b>87,944</b>



# VOLA Consortium

## Notes to the Accounts

### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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#### **1 Accounting Policies**

##### **1a. Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), and the Companies Act 2006 and the UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016.

VOLA Consortium meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

The functional currency used by VOLA Consortium is the £ Sterling.

##### **Financial instruments**

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

##### **Critical accounting estimates and judgements**

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

##### **1b. Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis**

On assessment of income streams and the required fixed and variable overheads required to complete the ongoing projects successfully, the trustees consider that the accounts should be prepared on a going concern basis.

VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts (*continued*)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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**1 Accounting Policies (cont.)**

**1c. Income**

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

**1d. Deferred income**

Income from donations and grants, including capital grants are deferred when the following conditions are met:

- a) when donors specify that donations and grants given to the charity must be used in future accounting periods, the income is deferred until those periods
- b) when donors impose conditions which have to be fulfilled before the charity becomes entitled to use such income, the income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the preconditions for use have been met.

**1e. Donated services and facilities**

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

**1f. Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- a) Expenditure on charitable activities includes the educational activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- b) Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts (*continued*)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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**1 Accounting Policies (cont.)**

**1g. Funds Accounting**

All income and expenditure together with gains and losses are allocated to a specific charitable fund.

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity.

Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be used solely for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

Further details of restricted funds together with their purposes are set out in note 12.

**1h. Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**1i. Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**1j. Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

**1k. Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts (*continued*)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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**2. Charitable Activity Income**

	<b>Restricted 2025 £</b>	<b>Unrestricted 2025 £</b>	<b>Total 2025 £</b>
<b>Current year ended 31 March 2025</b>			
LCRCA - UKSPF The Progress Partnership	830,907	-	830,907
LCRCA - UKSPF Digital Connectivity Grants	560,950	-	560,950
VSNW - VS6 representative roles	-	-	-
WEA - Multiply Steering Group	-	-	-
	<u>1,391,857</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,391,857</u>

	<i>Restricted 2024 £</i>	<i>Unrestricted 2024 £</i>	<i>Total 2024 £</i>
<b>Previous year ended 31 March 2024</b>			
LCRCA - UKSPF The Progress Partnership	-	-	-
LCRCA - UKSPF Digital Connectivity Grants	451,354	-	451,354
VSNW - VS6 representative roles	-	2,500	2,500
WEA - Multiply Steering Group	-	100	100
	<u>451,354</u>	<u>2,600</u>	<u>453,954</u>

VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts *(continued)*  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

3. Charitable activities

	General Funds	VCF Capacity Building	Education and Training	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Direct staff costs	2,200	39,459	69,599	111,258	48,321
Project costs	-	521,271	750,286	1,271,557	539,663
Share of support costs (see note 4)	997	212	698	1,907	932
Share of governance costs (see note 4)	7,800	-	-	7,800	2,496
	<u>10,997</u>	<u>560,942</u>	<u>820,583</u>	<u>1,392,521</u>	<u>591,412</u>

The direct staff costs are the total seconded staff costs charged to VOLA.

The average number of seconded employees for the year was 5.

Analysis by fund

Restricted funds	-	560,942	820,582	1,381,524
Unrestricted funds	<u>10,997</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,997</u>
	<u>10,997</u>	<u>560,942</u>	<u>820,582</u>	<u>1,392,521</u>

Previous year ended 31  
March 2024

Restricted funds	-	585,245	-	585,245
Unrestricted funds	<u>6,167</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,167</u>
	<u>6,167</u>	<u>585,245</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>591,412</u>

4. Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2025	2024	Basis of allocation
	£	£	£	£	
Contribution to overheads	1,907	-	1,907	932	Allocated across all 3 funds
Independent examiners fees	-	-	-	2,496	Allocated to General Funds
Independent audit fees	<u>-</u>	<u>7,800</u>	<u>7,800</u>	<u>-</u>	Allocated to General Funds
	<u>1,907</u>	<u>7,800</u>	<u>9,707</u>	<u>3,428</u>	



VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts (*continued*)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

5. Financial instruments

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Carrying amount of financial assets</b>		
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost	94,662	88,562
<b>Carrying amount of financial liabilities</b>		
Measured at amortised cost	50,373	43,608

6. Trustees

No remuneration was paid to trustees during the year (2024 - nil)

No Expenses were reimbursed to trustees during the year (2024 - nil)

7. Related Party transactions

During the year, a large number of consortium members participated in the charitable projects led by VOLA. The purpose of VOLA's operations is to lead charitable projects on behalf of its consortium members and other associated charities, hence, multiple consortium members received payments from VOLA in the period, which have been recognised as restricted expenditure in the statement of financial activity. For further detail on which related parties received funding and amounts they received please contact [stuart.mcgrory@volamerseyside.org.uk](mailto:stuart.mcgrory@volamerseyside.org.uk).

**Remuneration of key management personnel**

The remuneration of key management personnel is as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Aggregate compensation	40,408	29,165
	40,408	29,165

8. Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	-	-
Accrued Income	30,627	618
	30,627	618

9. Cash at bank and in hand

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank	64,035	87,944
	64,035	87,944

VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts (*continued*)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

**10. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2025 £</b>	<b>2024 £</b>
Grants Payable	6,929	19,995
Trade creditors	29,894	21,117
Accruals and deferred income	7,800	2,496
Unallocated grant funds repayable	5,750	-
	<u>50,373</u>	<u>43,608</u>

**11. Unrestricted Funds**

***Previous year ended 31 March  
2024***

	<i>Balance brought forward £</i>	<i>Income £</i>	<i>Expenditure £</i>	<i>Transfers between funds £</i>	<i>Balance Carried forward 2024 £</i>
General Fund	35,858	-	(6,167)	2,600	32,291
General Fund – VSNW/ VS6 representative roles	-	2,500	-	(2,500)	-
General Fund – WEA, Multiply Steering Group	-	100	-	(100)	-
<b>Total Funds (previous year)</b>	<u>35,858</u>	<u>2,600</u>	<u>(6,167)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,291</u>

***Current year ended 31 March  
2025***

	<b>Balance brought forward £</b>	<b>Income £</b>	<b>Expenditure £</b>	<b>Transfers between funds £</b>	<b>Balance Carried forward 2025 £</b>
General Fund	32,291	-	(10,997)	22,995	44,289
<b>Total Funds (current year)</b>	<u>32,291</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(10,997)</u>	<u>22,995</u>	<u>44,289</u>

The transfer between funds relates to a surplus generated over the last two financial years resulting from the simplified cost option applied to the two UKSPF projects by funders, in relation to overheads contributions, which are paid at a flat rate of 15% of project staff costs attributable to these projects.

VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts (*continued*)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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**12. Restricted Funds**

<b>Previous year ended 31 March 2024</b>	<b>Balance brought forward £</b>	<b>Income £</b>	<b>Expenditure £</b>	<b>Transfers between funds £</b>	<b>Balance Carried Forward 2024 £</b>
UKSPF – Digital Grants	146,553	451,354	(585,245)	-	12,662
<b>Total Funds (current year)</b>	<b>146,553</b>	<b>451,354</b>	<b>(585,245)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,662</b>

<b>Current year ended 31 March 2025</b>	<b>Balance brought forward £</b>	<b>Income £</b>	<b>Expenditure £</b>	<b>Transfers between funds £</b>	<b>Balance Carried Forward 2025 £</b>
* UKSPF – Digital Grants	12,662	560,950	(560,942)	(12,670)	-
** UKSPF – The Progress Partnership	-	830,907	(820,582)	(10,325)	-
<b>Total Funds (current year)</b>	<b>12,662</b>	<b>1,391,857</b>	<b>(1,381,524)</b>	<b>(22,995)</b>	<b>-</b>

\* UKSPF – Digital Grants project (*Digital Connectivity for Local Community Facilities*) provides grants and support for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to improve public-facing IT facilities & create new facilities in priority areas.

\*\* UKSPF - The Progress Partnership is a community-led employment support initiative that provides Key Worker support to economically inactive residents of the Liverpool City Region to help them to overcome barriers that prevent them from actively looking for work.

Both projects are funded by the UK Government through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

VOLA Consortium  
Notes to the Accounts (*continued*)  
For the year ended 31 March 2025

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**13. Analysis of Net Assets**

*Previous year ended 31 March 2024*

	<i>Unrestricted Funds £</i>	<i>Restricted Funds £</i>	<i>Total Funds £</i>
<i>Net Current Assets</i>	<u>32,291</u>	<u>12,662</u>	<u>44,953</u>
	<u>32,291</u>	<u>12,662</u>	<u>44,953</u>

**Current year ended 31 March 2025**

	<b>Unrestricted Funds £</b>	<b>Restricted Funds £</b>	<b>Total Funds £</b>
Net Current Assets	<u>44,289</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>44,289</u>
	<u>44,289</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>44,289</u>

**14. Company Limited by Guarantee**

The company is limited by guarantee, not having a share capital. The liability of members is limited to £1 each in the event of winding up.