

# Working at Voscur



## Background

Voscur is the support and development agency for Bristol's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. We support organisations in and around Bristol to increase their impact and help more local people. We work with the investors that commission and fund the work of the VCSE sector to ensure they make informed decisions and design effective services. We also build relationships between providers and investors to help them work together and coordinate services – this maximises their social value. You can find out more about our impact from 2017-18 in the [Voscur Annual Report](#).

We are often still called an 'infrastructure' organisation because our purpose is to help other organisations, rather than individual citizens. There are similar organisations all over the country, many with 'CVS' in their name, such as South Gloucestershire CVS. However, the 'Council for Voluntary Service' way of working has changed hugely since such organisations were established in the 1970s – 1990s; many have changed their name to reflect new approaches and business models: Doing Good Leeds and Colab Exeter, for example.

Voscur has also changed significantly since it began, and the publication of the 2019-29 [Bristol VCSE Strategy](#) and [Bristol in Partnership](#) this year marked another new phase of growth. Previously our focus has been on linking VCSE groups with public sector commissioners, funders and policymakers. That role remains at the heart of what we do, but we now also work with a broader range of social investors (Bristol & Bath Regional Capital, Resonance), national organisations (Locality, Power to Change), commercial businesses (National Lottery Community Fund, Quartet), researchers (University of Bristol, Bath University, University of the West of England) and specialists (School for Social Entrepreneurs). We also generate a much higher proportion of our own income by selling our expertise and delivering contracts, rather than being funded primarily by the local authority.

## Voscur's values and culture

- **Respect and empathy** – we believe it's important to be empathetic and respectful in our work with colleagues, partners and the public. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes and considering their perspective can lead to better decision-making and communication. As employees of a VCSE sector organisation, it is particularly important that Voscur staff act with empathy. We also expect every member of staff to follow our Equality and Diversity policy, and further our commitment to inclusion in their work.
- **Collaboration** – every staff role at Voscur includes an element of working with other people on projects, where tasks are split between everyone involved. Some of these are

one-off projects, such as pieces of commissioned work with healthcare providers, or recurring projects, such as our AGM and our Social Impact Awards, known as the Voscur. We also help with coordination and collaboration between our members and stakeholders, as set out in [Bristol in Partnership](#).

- **Lifelong learning** – as part of professional development at Voscur, we encourage staff to attend courses, workshops or other learning activities that contribute to improving the skills and knowledge needed for day-to-day work. Voscur also offers a range of [training sessions](#) and [events](#) for the VCSE sector that staff are welcome to attend. We don't expect you to 'know it all,' but it's good to be curious, keep an eye on what's going on locally and nationally, and ask questions when you don't know the answer to something.
- **Enthusiasm** – technical knowledge and experience are among the most obvious things we look for in Voscur staff, but enthusiasm is also important. Working at Voscur involves being interested in people and projects, sharing your thoughts and supporting and enhancing your colleagues' ideas - and taking turns to make the cups of tea to fuel that idea generation!
- **Work-life balance** – just like the employees of organisations we support, Voscur employees have a life outside the office. We also recognise that workplace wellbeing and productivity are improved when staff are happy, supported, motivated and well-rested. Many of our staff work part-time hours. For those times when you may need to spend extra hours on a project, we operate a TOIL system (Time Off In Lieu).



### Benefits of working at Voscur

- **A diverse team** – our strength is in bringing together people with different opinions, personalities, talents and backgrounds who work together to get results. Obviously who we are changes over time, but collectively we tend to be more diverse than the city as a whole in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and disability. Voscur staff come from all corners of Bristol, the South West and beyond.
- **Central Bristol location** – based on the edge of Queen Square, the Voscur office is a 10 minute walk from Bristol Temple Meads, two minutes from the Ferry Boat stop at the Watershed, and has several bus stops nearby. There are bike racks opposite the building for staff to use, but we promise nobody wears Lycra in the office...
- **Supportive and welcoming atmosphere** – we invest time and resources in your learning, support staff to take on new responsibilities, and ensure our organisational culture is open, positive and collaborative. We also make a point of celebrating everyone's birthday (and a lot of our staff seem to have turned 21 again).
- **Workplace pension scheme and Living Wage** – as a team member at Voscur, you have access to the Auto Enrolment Pension Scheme. Voscur contributes 7% to this scheme, more than double the minimum employer contribution amount set by the Pensions Regulator (3%). Voscur is also a member of the Living Wage campaign.



*This document was last updated in February 2019.*