

Closing Time and Date:	12pm on Monday 21 st September
Shortlisting:	Week commencing 21 st September
Notification of Interview:	by 5pm, Friday 25 th Sept
Interview:	Friday 2 nd October
Submission instructions:	Proposals to be submitted to ben.whalley@gaddum.org.uk with the subject line "MHLG CONSULTANCY PROPOSAL SUBMISSION"

1. Purpose

The MHLG is seeking to appoint a provider to work alongside the group, undertaking work that will lead to:

- A refreshed purpose, vision and understanding of the MHLG's place in the system.
- A clear workplan for the VCSE mental health sector in Greater Manchester.
- Objectives aligned to VCSE, NHS GM, Local Authority and wider system transformation priorities.
- A practical influencing approach to strengthen the VCSE sector's voice in commissioning, service reviews, investment, service viability, data, estates and neighbourhood/community mental health developments.

The total financial envelope for this commission is £22,000 (subject to audit confirmation).

2. Background and rationale

The MHLG has reached an important point in its development. The group continues to provide a trusted space for VCSE mental health leaders to share intelligence, offer peer support and develop collective responses to system issues. It is also an established reference point for NHS GM's mental health team.

However, the current operating context has changed significantly.

The MHLG has therefore identified the need for an evidence-led and coordinated refresh of our approach. This includes strengthening the group's identity, articulating VCSE priorities in its own terms, building stronger evidence about impact and value, and using that evidence to influence commissioners, statutory partners and wider system leaders.

3. Strategic opportunity

This commission provides an opportunity to move the MHLG from reactive issue-based discussion into a more proactive strategic leadership role across the system. Doing so will lead to strategically aligned membership and representation of VCSE leaders from across the system.

The proposed work should therefore support the MHLG to answer five core questions:

1. What is the MHLG for now and how do we best link in to the wider system's strategies (e.g. Live Well, Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy, NHS Long Term Plan etc)?
2. What is the collective VCSE mental health offer to Greater Manchester?
3. What are the shared risks facing VCSE mental health providers?
4. What are the priorities the MHLG should pursue over the next one to three years?
5. What memberships, relationships and evidence are needed to secure better outcomes for communities and a more sustainable VCSE mental health sector?

The MHLG is therefore seeking to appoint an external consultant, consultancy partnership or suitably experienced VCSE/system development specialist to deliver a time-limited MHLG strategic review and development programme.

The commission should include two core linked components

Component 1: Root-and-branch strategic review of the MHLG

This would explore the current purpose, role, governance, membership, strengths, limitations and influence of the MHLG. It would ensure that the MHLG has a clear understanding of where it can add value to key external strategies, e.g. Live Well, Mental Health & Wellbeing, NHS Long Term Plan etc.

Component 2: Development of a refreshed workplan

We anticipate this containing the following areas. Throughout this component, the successful provider will be expected to apply a strong equity, diversity and inclusion lens, ensuring that the needs, experiences and outcomes of diverse communities, including underserved, marginalised and seldom-heard groups, are appropriately reflected in both the analysis and resulting recommendations:

1. Processes to developing / generating key messages from MHLG to the wider system, aligned to system priorities,
2. Integration into the wider NHS GM commissioned estate of providers (most notably NHS providers),
3. Inflationary uplifts, unfunded cost pressures and broader service viability risks for the VCSE sector,
4. A broader MHLG sight of the NHS GM commissioned estate, including investment into the VCSE sector compared to NHS provision, and associated opportunities for the MHLG to support NHS GM in its planned commitment to increase investment into VCSE providers, and
5. Data, impact, outcomes and the importance of VCSE providers being visible within the Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS) and other system data routes.

The above should not be seen as a definitive list.

4. Indicative scope of work

The successful provider would be expected to deliver the following:

A. Discovery and engagement

- Interviews or structured conversations with MHLG members.
- Interviews or structured conversations with NHS Greater Manchester representatives.
- Engagement with key VCSE leaders across localities and thematic areas.
- Engagement with key selected system stakeholders.
- Review of relevant MHLG documents and meeting outputs.
- Identification of common themes, risks, opportunities and strategic priorities.

B. Evidence gathering

- Light-touch data gathering from MHLG members.
- Review of existing evidence on demand, complexity, workforce, funding and outcomes where available.
- Development of a shared evidence framework for future use by the MHLG.
- Identification of gaps in current data and recommendations for strengthening VCSE evidence, including links to MHSDS and local provider data.

C. Development activity

- Facilitation of one or more MHLG development sessions.

- Testing and refining with members.
- Supporting the group to agree a realistic approach.
- Supporting discussion about what should be led collectively, what should be led by subgroups, and what should be escalated through existing system routes.

D. Outputs

- A concise strategic review report.
- A refreshed MHLG workplan.
- A SMART one-year delivery plan.
- A set of key influencing messages.
- Recommendations for governance, workstreams and future engagement.
- Optional slide deck or briefing pack for use with NHS GM, Local Authorities, VCSE partners and wider stakeholders.

5. Required expertise

The successful provider should be able to demonstrate:

- Strong understanding of the VCSE sector.
- Strong understanding of mental health systems, commissioning and partnership working.
- A clear understanding of governance structures within Health, Local Authority and NHS Greater Manchester.
- Experience of strategy development with multi-agency or membership groups.
- Ability to work sensitively with senior leaders.
- Understanding of health inequalities, prevention, community-based support and social value.
- Ability to translate complex system issues into clear, practical and compelling outputs.
- Experience of facilitation, engagement and evidence synthesis.
- Understanding of public sector commissioning, contract management and service review pressures.
- Ability to produce concise, high-quality written outputs suitable for senior system audiences.

The provider should be values-aligned with the VCSE sector and able to work in a way that is collaborative, transparent, proportionate and practical.

8. Indicative budget and timeline

The total indicative budget envelope is up to £22,000, subject to final confirmation, and it is anticipated that the work will take place across Q3, ready for a Q4 refreshed workplan.

The proposed budget could be structured as follows:

Area of spend	Indicative allocation
Strategic review, engagement and analysis	£9,000
Strategy development and annual objectives	£5,000
Facilitation of development session(s) and engagement events	£3,000
Design, launch, communication or influencing materials	£3,000
Contingency / flexibility	£2,000
Total	£22,000

This is an indicative profile only. Bidders should be invited to propose the best use of the available resource and may suggest a different allocation where it provides better value.

The MHLG reserves the option not to spend the full amount on the consultancy element if a more proportionate proposal is received.

7. Procurement approach

Given the value and nature of the work, the MHLG will run a proportionate competitive process.

The approach will be:

1. Issue a short invitation to quote / expression of interest.
2. Invite written proposals from suitably experienced consultants or organisations.
3. Assess proposals against agreed criteria.
4. Shortlist and, if required, hold brief clarification interviews.
5. Award the work based on quality, value, understanding of the brief and fit with VCSE values.
6. Confirm governance, reporting and payment arrangements.

8. Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Understanding of the VCSE mental health sector and Greater Manchester system and population contexts	30%
Quality and practicality of proposed methodology and outputs	20%
Relevant experience and credibility	20%
Strength of approach to engagement, inclusion and facilitation	20%
Value for money	10%

9. Governance and oversight

Gaddum currently administers the MHLG funds, with spending decisions made collectively by the group. Gaddum will directly contract with the successful provider, but oversight and accountability will always be to the MHLG.

For this commission, oversight will be provided by a small task and finish group reporting back to the MHLG. This group will:

- Review proposals.
- Recommend the preferred provider.
- Act as the main point of contact and supplier management during delivery.
- Review draft outputs.
- Bring final recommendations back to the wider MHLG for approval.

The task and finish group represents MHLG members and, where appropriate, input from those with specific insight into commissioning, data, VCSE infrastructure and system influencing.

10. Contact Details

If you have any questions or would like to discuss, please contact

- simone.spray@42ndstreet.org.uk – Chair, MHLG (and CEO of 42nd Street)
- kris.wraxall@gaddum.org.uk – VCSE Integration Lead (hosted by Gaddum, working for the MHLG and placed into NHS Greater Manchester)
- ben.whalley@gaddum.org.uk – MHLG Lead for Transformation (and CEO of Gaddum)