

# Welcome to the Community Buildings Forum

30 April 2024

**+** READING **VOLUNTARY** ACTION

# Purpose of this session

- Opportunity to hear about spaces
- Ways of using and sharing space
- Ask questions
- Offering or requesting
- Networking

# Agenda

- |       |                                     |                              |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 10.15 | Welcome and introduction from RVA   | Herjeet, RVA                 |
| 10.25 | Overview of community spaces        | Herjeet, RVA                 |
| 10.35 | RBC approach to community buildings | Mark Redfern, RBC            |
| 10.45 | Commercial leases in Reading        | Fiona Brownfoot, Hicks Baker |
| 10.55 | RBC hubs and community centres      | Pennylope Kapere, RBC        |
| 11.05 | Voluntary sector spaces on offer    | From the floor               |
| 11.15 | Q&A with the panel of speakers      |                              |
| 11.30 | Funding and other support from RVA  | Herjeet, RVA                 |
| 11.35 | Networking opportunity              |                              |
| 12.00 | Close                               |                              |

# Who's in the room today?

Your name?

Your organisation?

Offering/requesting or both?

The word "hello." is written in a vibrant, multi-colored cursive font. Each letter is filled with a different color: 'h' is teal, 'e' is yellow, 'l' is orange, 'l' is red, 'o' is purple, and the final 'o' is blue. The text is set against a white background within a teal-bordered box.

# Overview of community buildings

1. Different ways of using buildings (tenure)
2. Third sector policy – how RBC releases properties

Example	Tenure	Advantages	Disadvantages
Ad-hoc space as required	Simple hiring agreement (licence)	Flexible, inexpensive	Availability, storage
Regular hirer (e.g. 12 months)	Simple hiring agreement (licence)	More stability, relatively inexpensive	Sufficient funds to cover the agreement period, storage
Hot-desking	Simple hiring agreement (licence)	Flexible working for staff, less overheads than lease, good for community based work or multiple locations	Disparate team, ensure you have storage Relationship is important Ensure clear agreement
Sharing premises with defined space  With one other organisation or 'community hub'	Simple hiring agreement (licence) or sub-lease	Reduced overheads (shared with other organisation(s); Pooled resources for better location/premises; could improve beneficiary experience 'all in one place'	Relationship is important Ensure lead organisation Ensure clear agreement Ensure break clause Lease option will have greater liability/responsibility Ensure you have sufficient funds
Purchasing building	Long leasehold/ Freehold	In control of the space More 'permanent'	Most expensive Biggest risk – defaults on mortgage/repossession Responsible for everything for the building Need to have funds up front Need to have stable income

Overview of community buildings

## Third sector policy – how RBC releases properties

- When Council asset declared surplus
- Advertised for leasehold (occasionally freehold)
- Third sector organisations can bid
- All bids to be considered by Policy Committee
- If successful, leases are negotiated (usually 5 year with break clause)

Overview of community buildings

Third sector policy – how RBC releases properties to the third sector

- Properties advertised via RVA News
- Usually 8 week lead in, and advance notice
- They simultaneously advertise on open market
- Ensure you are signed up to receive RVA News – [register here](#)

## Overview of community buildings

### Tips:

- Start preparing early
- Use the RBC scoring system as a guide
- Much you can do in advance before property released:
  - organisational structure,
  - accounts,
  - property management experience,
  - property manager on your team,
  - certain elements of your Business Plan,
  - how your activities are linked to RBC priorities – see current RBC Strategic Plan 2022-2025 here

Overview of community buildings

The RBC Scoring System – 10 areas:

1. Level of financial offer (market value?)
2. Basis of offer (conditional/unconditional)
3. Detail of the offer
4. Organisational structure
5. Accounts – 2 years
6. Property management experience
7. Property manager on the team
8. Business Plan
9. Building summary (works required)
10. Current activity linked to RBC priorities

Overview of community buildings

For more support with governance and getting ready contact:

[Herjeet.Randhawa@rva.org.uk](mailto:Herjeet.Randhawa@rva.org.uk)

Tel: 0118 9732273

# RBC Approach to community buildings

Mark Redfern, VCS Partnerships Manager  
Reading Borough Council



# RVA Community Buildings Forum

30 April 2024

# Property Request Forms



# Property Request Forms

Property request forms have been introduced to simplify the process for charities and community groups to register an interest in leasing or renting council-owned accommodation.

Requests received will be initially checked against the council's register of available accommodation and then kept on file and considered against new properties that become available.

5 requests have been made so far and have received feedback.

As this is a new process and still under review, we would appreciate any feedback or suggestions on how to improve.



# Community Ownership Fund



# Community Ownership Fund

This fund helps community groups buy or renovate assets that would otherwise be lost to the community. Assets are venues and meeting spaces used by the local community, such as:

- community centres, cinemas and theatres, galleries, museums, music venues, parks, post office buildings, pubs, shops, & sporting and leisure facilities

Assets can be at risk of being lost to the community from:

- closure or end of lease
- neglect or dereliction
- an unsustainable current business model
- being for sale
- being listed for disposal
- being part of a community asset transfer

The asset must offer value to local people. You must be able to run it sustainably for the long term.



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# Community Ownership Fund

Round 4 is the final round of the Community Ownership Fund. There are two bidding windows in Round 4 to allocate remaining funding. Round 4 Window 1 was open from 25 March 2024 to 10 April 2024. Round 4 Window 2 will open in late May. Specific timings tbc.

Before you can submit a full application to the Community Ownership Fund, you must first submit an expression of interest (EOI). This is a short form that enables us to assess whether your project may be suitable for COF. Once completed, the form will give you a result within minutes.

Funding request – information needed:

- What do you plan to use COF's funding for?
- Will the leasehold have at least 15 years when your organisation submits a full application? (optional)
- How much capital funding are you requesting from COF?
- Do you plan to request any revenue funding?
- Do you plan to secure match funding (either cash or in-kind)?
- Where do you plan to source match funding? (optional)
- What progress have you made to secure this funding? (optional)
- Does your project include an element of housing?
- Will you need planning permission for your project?
- What stage are you at in securing planning permission? (optional)



# Protect Duty



# Protecting Public Spaces

There has been an increase in terrorist attacks in publicly accessible locations – anywhere that people visit, congregate in, or pass through

14 attacks in the UK since 2017 to date

One of the main features of these attacks is the targeting of people

Publicly accessible locations are a potential target, it is essential that owners and operators of all such locations understand the risks faced and consider appropriate action

The **Protect Duty** aims to improve protection of the UK's publicly accessible places from terrorist attacks and ensure that businesses and organisations are prepared to deal with incidents



# How will this work?

Owners and operators of certain locations will need to increase their preparedness for and protection from a terrorist attack

Depending on the size and nature of the activities that take place there

A two-tiered model will ensure proportionality in the exercise of the Duty:

- A **standard tier** (for 'qualifying locations' with a maximum capacity of over 100) must undertake activities to improve protective security and preparedness.
- An **enhanced tier** (for 'qualifying locations' with a maximum capacity of over 800) will place additional requirements on high-capacity locations to the requirements for a standard tier



# Who does this apply to?

A primary qualifying condition for premises is that they are wholly or mainly used for one or more specified uses:

- Retail e.g. stores or shopping centres
- Hospitality and nightlife e.g. bars, pubs, restaurants, cafés nightclubs and other public clubs
- Entertainment e.g. theatres, cinemas, and concert halls and arenas
- Sports grounds
- Recreation and leisure, e.g. public sports/leisure centres, ice rinks and gyms
- Public Libraries, museums and galleries
- Public conference centres, exhibition halls and other venues for hire
- Visitor attractions
- Hotels, holiday parks and similar holiday accommodation
- Places of worship
- Healthcare
- Education and childcare
- Public transport, including train stations, ports and airports
- Public services and facilities



# Six-week consultation launched 5th February 2024

The consultation on the updated approach to Standard Tier sought views to make sure the new requirements do not place undue burdens on smaller businesses, while still protecting the public

The [consultation was open to the public until 18 March](#). It particularly sought views from those responsible for smaller premises, especially those in the community and voluntary sector.

The results of the consultation are currently being reviewed by Government. Following the conclusion of the consultation process, the Bill will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows

There will be a significant period prior to implementation of the legislation expected to be at least 18-24 months to ensure sufficient time to plan and prepare



# Commercial Spaces

Fiona Brownfoot  
Hicks Baker Agents

# Fiona Brownfoot MRICS

Director – Retail & Leisure

- Property search
- Terms
- Lease Options
- Availability

**hb** hicks  
baker  
commercial property



# Property search - Line up your ducks!!!!

## Know your parameters:

- Size
- Type
- Location
- Budget – T.o.C. and fit out
- Flexibility / commitment

## Your 'team'

- Decision maker / process
- Legal signatory
- Solicitor / General practice Surveyor / Building surveyor
- Fit out designer / contactor / PM

# Terms - Principle Headings

- Length of lease
- Break clauses / timing / notice / penalty
- Statute
- Rent
- Rent review - omv / upward downward / rpi / cpi / capped
- Incentives
- Repairing obligations / schedule of condition / yielding up - dilapidations
- Conditions - subject to building survey / drain survey / planning

(Code of Leasing <https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/rics-standards-and-guidance/sector-standards/real-estate-standards/code-for-leasing-business-premises-1st-edition>)

# Lease Options

- Permanent 5+ years FRI
- Flexible - rolling mutual break
- Meanwhile / Tenancy at Will



# Availability – Where to look

- Rightmove Commercial
- LoopNet
- Zoopla
- EGProperty Link
- RBC
- Boards

# RBC Hubs and Community Centres

Pennylope Kapere

Sustainable Communities Manager

Sian James

Community Hub Strategic Coordinator

[More details and contact information here](#)



Team  
Reading

# Sustainable Communities Team

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

## Meet the Sustainable Communities Team

The sustainable communities team manage the four community centres:

- Whitley Wood
- Hexham
- Coley Park
- Lyndhurst

Our sustainable communities team creates and promotes initiatives that show Reading as an inclusive, clean, green, healthy, safe and desirable place to live, work, study and visit. Using the four centres as hubs, the team are focused on the communities they represent, helping local residents to care for and get involved with their local environment and the people around them, creating opportunities for local people.

### Meet two of our Estate Maintenance Officers



#### Nathan Porter

Estate Maintenance Officer

Overseeing all tenant improvement projects covering central Reading, Caversham & Emmer Green, Dee Park and Woodley



#### John Billins

Estate Maintenance Officer

Covering Whitley & Whitley Wood, and parts of Katesgrove area



**Pennylope Kapere**  
Sustainable Communities Manager

**Robert Stirling**  
Community Development Officer

**Emily Prince**  
Community Development Officer

**Joe Northcote**  
Sustainable Community Officer

**Sarah Hunnerman**  
Sustainable Community Officer

## Contact Us

**Allocations Team**  
0118 937 2172  
allocations@reading.gov.uk

**Antisocial Behaviour Team**  
0118 937 3787  
asb.team@reading.gov.uk

**Contact/Call Centre for Housing Services**  
0118 937 2161

**Complaints**  
0118 937 3787  
housing.complaints@reading.gov.uk

**Debt Advice**  
0118 937 2197  
debt.advice@reading.gov.uk

**Environmental Services**  
(rubbish and recycling)  
0118 937 3787

**Housing Benefits**  
0118 937 3707  
benefits@reading.gov.uk  
www.reading.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

**Rent Helpline**  
0118 937 2784

**Repairs**  
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm  
0800 318296 (freephone) or  
0118 937 3757 from a mobile  
www.reading.gov.uk/rbctenantrepairs

**Repairs**  
(out of hours emergencies)  
0118 937 3737

**Tenant Participation Team**  
0118 937 2730  
tenant.participation@reading.gov.uk

### The Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints about the housing organisations registered with it including housing associations and local authorities. Its service is free, independent, and impartial. For more information on the Housing Ombudsman Service go to:  
Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk) or  
[socialhousingcomplaints.campaign.gov.uk](http://socialhousingcomplaints.campaign.gov.uk)  
Phone: **0300 111 3000**  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

The Ombudsman is currently recruiting new members for its Resident Panel, if anyone is interested in getting involved: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/resident-panel/join-the-housing-ombudsman-resident-panel/>



# Who are we

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The Sustainable Communities Team, is part of the wider Community Partnership Service (this includes Community Safety, Housing and Tenant engagement and the Anti-Social Behaviour Team). And it sits within Housing and Communities.

The team manage 4 community centres across the Reading area, providing opportunities for activities, services and experiences that create a greater sense of connection and belonging. We put the needs of the community at the heart of everything we do to make a real impact for local people. We work across multi-partnerships to maximize the use of our community centres.

Our aim is to uphold the corporate vision which is to ensure that Reading is inclusive, green, clean, healthy and safe. We want Reading to be a desirable place for people to live, work, study and visit. We want to provide the opportunity for everyone to benefit from the economic growth of Reading using our centres as a hub.



# The Community Centers

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**Whitley Wood Community Centre:** 28-35 Lexington Grove,  
Reading RG2 8UG

**Hexham Road Community Centre:** 1A Bamburgh Cl,  
Reading RG2 7UD

**Lyndhurst Community Centre:** Lyndhurst Rd, Tilehurst,  
Reading RG30 6UB

**Coley Park Community Centre:** 140 Wensley Rd, Coley  
Park, Reading RG1 6DW



# Charging Rates of Community Centres

COLEY	Main Hall	Small Hall	Annexe
Business	£24.00	£22.00	£22.00
Charity & Private Function	£22.00	£18.00	£18.00
Voluntary linked to RBC	£8.00	£6.00	£6.00
WHITLEY WOOD	Large Hall	Small Hall	Kitchen
Business	£12.00	£4.40	£2.00
Charity & Private Function	£7.50	£3.00	£1.00
Voluntary linked to RBC	£5.50	£2.00	£1.00
HEXHAM	Hall	Riko's Room	
Business	£27.00	£20.00	
Charity & Private Function	£24.00	£17.00	
Voluntary linked to RBC	£18.00	£15.00	
LYNDHURST	Hall		
Business	£14.00		
Charity & Private Function	£9.00		
Voluntary linked to RBC	£7.00		

We do not currently take a deposit, but we ask for:

- security keyholding fee - £25 + VAT or £50 + VAT on a bank holiday
- £11% Public Liability Insurance contribution for low-risk one-off hires without insurance



# Current Programmes at Centres

Day	Event
<b>Monday</b>	Jigsaw Creative Care
	Rainbows
<b>Tuesday</b>	Coffee Morning
	Food Pantry (also have Citizens Advice Reading every fortnight) Church Prayer Group
<b>Wednesday</b>	Over 50s Lunch club
	Community Health Checks (2nd Wednesday of the month) Love Your Neighbourhood event (2nd Wednesday of the month) Reach Out (LGBTQ+)
<b>Thursday</b>	Playgroup
	Jigsaw Creative Brighter Futures for Children Senior Young Carers
<b>Friday</b>	Fifi's Vision (peer to peer support group for families with SEND) Over 60s social club (except the last Friday of the month) Jigsaw Creative iCare social club (last Friday of the month)
<b>Sunday</b>	church groups (all day)
<b>Other groups that meet at the community centre</b>	Rainbows



# Image of Old Whitley Wood Community Centre

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Before



# Image of NEW Whitley Wood Community Centre

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After



# Image of NEW Whitley Wood Community Centre

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After



Pennylope Kapere for partnerships:  
[pennylope.kapere@reading.gov.uk](mailto:pennylope.kapere@reading.gov.uk)

Community Centre Bookings and Enquiries:  
[sustainable.communities@reading.gov.uk](mailto:sustainable.communities@reading.gov.uk)

THANK YOU 😊



## **SOUTH READING COMMUNITY HUB**

**South Reading Community Hub is located on Northumberland Avenue in Whitley and is a multi-use community space aiming to provide**

- Local residents with a modern library
- Brighter Futures for Children, Children's Centre
- A large hall and kitchen area for hire
- Multiple rooms in various sizes available for hire
- A nursery aimed at local residents and their children
- A community association: Whitley Community Development Association (WCDA) to support community engagement.
- WCDA Community Café offering surplus food and drop-in sessions such as benefits advice
- A variety of classes and courses throughout the week such as rhyme time, karate and so much more.



## WHAT CAN WE OFFER...

**South Reading Community Hub has rooms for hire throughout the entire year, this includes**

- Weekdays – Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm and
- Weekends 8am to 10pm (subject to availability)
- Main hall can hold up to 140 people
- 5 additional rooms holding between 4-40 people.
- We offer very reasonable discounted rates for charitable organisations.
- We may also be able to offer introductory start-up funding for groups who want to get established. Prices may vary, please refer to our website for more information
- Potential to include event on 'Whats on Reading' or other promotional material



## **SOUTHCOTE COMMUNITY HUB**

**Southcote Community Hub is located on Coronation Square in Southcote and is a multi-use community space aiming to provide**

- Local residents with a modern library
- Brighter Futures for Children, Children's Centre
- Multi-purpose/IT Training room
- A large hall and kitchen area for hire
- A nursery aimed at local residents and their children
- A community association: Southcote Community Association which requires support to support community engagement.
- A variety of classes and courses throughout the week such as rhyme time, over 50's and so much more.



## WHAT CAN WE OFFER...

**South Reading Community Hub has rooms for hire throughout the entire year, this includes**

- Weekdays – Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm and
- Weekends 8am to 10pm (subject to availability)
- Main hall can hold up to 50 people
- 2 additional rooms holding between 2-20 people.
- We offer very reasonable discounted rates for charitable organisations.
- We may also be able to offer introductory start-up funding for groups who want to get established. Prices may vary, please refer to our website for more information
- Potential to include event on 'Whats on Reading' or other promotional material



## WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

**We are open to all possibilities of hirers, particularly groups that will add value to the community, for example**

- Children's groups
- Mental health and wellbeing (tbc)
- Creative workshops (dance and drama)
- Music (African drumming)
- Education (homework club)
- Environmental (gardening)
- Sports
- WE ARE OPEN TO ALL DISCUSSIONS, IDEAS AND POSSIBILITIES.

## WHO TO CONTACT

### **Sian James – Community Hub Strategic Coordinator**

To book a viewing or contact for a discussion:

- [sian.james@reading.gov.uk](mailto:sian.james@reading.gov.uk)
- 07976670178

South Reading Community Hub  
252 Northumberland Ave  
Whitley  
Reading  
RG2 7QA

Southcote Community Hub  
Southcote Lane  
Reading  
RG30 3BA

## **VOLUNTEERS**

- We have many volunteering opportunities available and we are always grateful for your time and help (no matter how small). If you feel you might be interested in volunteering, there are lots of options available to you and we would be happy to discuss with you further.

Voluntary sector spaces

Open to the floor to share

Any questions for the panel?



# RVA support

- RVA Advice Service

Contact [Herjeet.Randhawa@rva.org.uk](mailto:Herjeet.Randhawa@rva.org.uk) or call 0118 9732273 for 1:1 support with getting ready for funding/ governance advice.

- Volunteer Development

Helping groups recruit volunteers and volunteer management guidance. Contact [Steve.hendry@rva.org.uk](mailto:Steve.hendry@rva.org.uk)

- Get Online

Drop-in sessions in community venues to help people use online devices safely and with confidence Contact [david.neale@rva.org.uk](mailto:david.neale@rva.org.uk)

- Ready Friends

supporting local community action on loneliness.  
Contact [rhiannon.stocking-williams@rva.org.uk](mailto:rhiannon.stocking-williams@rva.org.uk)

# RVA support

- **Social prescribing**  
connecting people with local community services and events to improve their health and wellbeing. Contact [social.prescribing@rva.org.uk](mailto:social.prescribing@rva.org.uk)
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion support**  
Support and guidance for your organisation to improve its EDI  
Contact [azra.raja@rva.org.uk](mailto:azra.raja@rva.org.uk)
- **Publicising and promoting VCS activities**  
to local people and strategic partners Contact [info@rva.org.uk](mailto:info@rva.org.uk)

# RVA Training and Forums

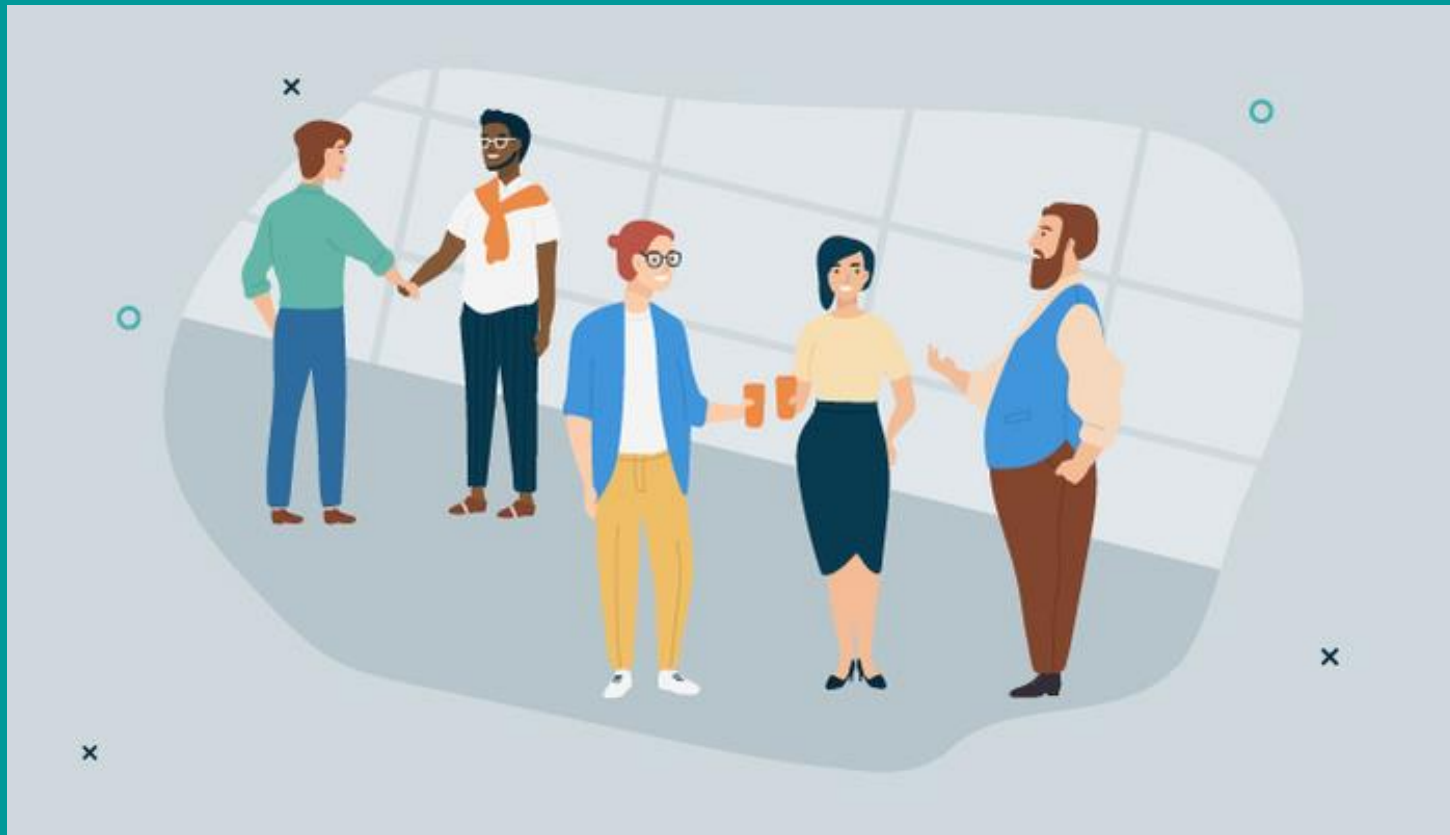
- Safeguarding Adults Training [7 May 9.30am-1pm](#)
- First Steps towards Safe and Sound [16 May 1pm-2pm](#)
- Meet the Funder event 21 May [10.30-12noon](#)
- Safeguarding Children Training [4 June 10am-1pm](#)
- Trustee Training [13 June 10am-1pm](#)

See all our training [please click here](#)

Sign up to RVA News [please click here](#)

Register with RVA's Directory [please click here](#)

# Networking



# Thank you!

- Please complete feedback forms
- Keep in touch at [info@rva.org.uk](mailto:info@rva.org.uk)
- Slides to follow via email (with the links)
- Thanks and see you next time!

**+ READING VOLUNTARY ACTION**