

THIRD SECTOR LEEDS: General Election 2024 third sector briefing

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You will be aware that a general election has been scheduled for Thursday 4th July 2024.

As representatives of third sector organisations in Leeds, you play a crucial role in empowering our communities and fostering civic engagement. This briefing aims to share information and tools to encourage voter registration, support with key messages when speaking to local candidates and campaign 'do's and don'ts' in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines.

Key information for people you support

Registering to vote

Anyone wishing to vote in Leeds in next month's general election is encouraged to be aware of the key dates and information ahead of polling day. Leeds City Council have detailed all the information you need [here](#), with the deadline to register being **midnight on Tuesday 18th June 2024**. If your organisations supports people with [dementia](#), [autism](#) or [a learning disability](#), here are some targeted resources.

Please also note all voters voting in person at a polling station must have Voter ID. More information on this can be found [here](#).

Information on candidates across Leeds

All candidates across the 10 different constituencies where people in Leeds live will be published after 4pm on Friday 7 June 2024 and can be accessed [here](#). [WhoCanIVoteFor](#) is also a helpful resource.

TSL four key messages

Over recent months, Third Sector Leeds (TSL) has been lobbying for change on four key messages and met Members of Parliament to play our part in influencing change and policy.

These four Key Messages are central to our approach in influencing the next government, ensuring communities in Leeds are supported.

1. Tackling poverty: Household Support Fund must continue for at least a further year, and further investment in communities is urgently needed in the longer term to address the root causes of poverty
2. Improving housing: Community-led housing and planning is central to moving out of the housing crisis and preventing homelessness
3. Prioritising local: Limit the profit that private businesses can make from public money
4. Prioritising third sector: A stronger third sector prevents people from living in poor health as they age

We encourage you to use these four key messages when speaking to candidates and other stakeholders.

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Campaigning support - 'do's and don'ts'

Elections are a fantastic opportunity for third sector organisations to speak out about the issues that matter to them and the people they support.

There are, however, certain guidelines you must follow, as set out by the Charity Commission.

Charity campaigning in the UK is regulated year-round and must remain independent of party politics. During elections, charities must also comply with charity and electoral laws overseen by the Charity Commission and the Electoral Commission. For guidance on permissible activities, refer to resources like [this blog by Bond](#) and [this](#) by the Charity Commission Chair's, which explain the rules and restrictions in detail.

Third Sector Leeds has also put together a letter to all candidates asking them to respond to our Four Key Messages, with responses being published on the Doing Good Leeds website.

Local resources: The State of the Sector and Third Sector Strategy

The [State of the Sector](#) report provides an invaluable update on what the Third Sector in Leeds now looks like. It shows much to celebrate: a sizeable Third Sector working across important areas of work with diverse beneficiary groups. However, it also shows a picture of a sector – which like our public and health sector partners – is under significant stress.

Between 2020 and 2022, the sector has experienced a:

- 10% drop in the number of registered (charitable) organisations
- 25% drop in the number of volunteers reported to the charity commission
- 34% drop in the paid workforce

You can see our response to the report [here](#).

Third Sector Leeds has also produced [our Leeds Third Sector Strategy](#) co-designed with communities and working with the public sector and health, setting out a path towards a more diverse and resilient third sector in an environment where central government policy and decision making is directly impacting both the sector and communities.

This is not a strategy for the third sector – it's a strategy for the whole city, including our elected representatives, to better understand, support and work in partnership with the sector to continue playing a vital role in supporting communities in Leeds to thrive.

Both these documents can be used to help you frame and contextualise conversations you may have during this period.

National resources: other key campaigns

There are a number of national campaigns that TSL has supported, providing a range of tools and resources that you may find useful. Some of these include:

[Building Thriving neighbourhoods: The Locality manifesto](#) – Locality are calling for five big reforms to kickstart a community power revolution

A Home for Everyone – Homeless Link’s campaign outlining the approach the next Government must take to end homelessness

Lift the Ban – Refugee Action-led campaign to overturn the Government’s ban on people seeking asylum being able to work

The Voluntary Sector Manifesto - NCVO’s manifesto calling for the Government to invest in the voluntary sector as an equal partner of the state.

We hope this briefing has been useful and encourages you to participate in the general election process. If you have any questions, please do get in touch with TSL by contacting megan.russell@val.org.uk

About Third Sector Leeds

TSL is the forum in Leeds that promotes, represents and advocates for civil society groups and organisations (known as the ‘Third Sector’) in Leeds.

We work closely with large organisations that set the direction for the city, including the Council and the Integrated Care Board (NHS) in order to:

- Influence decisions that affect the communities the third sector works with.
- Ensure that as many third sector organisations as possible, particularly the smaller ones, are involved in discussions on city-wide challenges and solutions.
- Ensure third sector organisations can access information and support to help them play their part in changing Leeds for the better.

The work of TSL is guided by a Leadership Group who contribute from the perspective of the field in which they are active (e.g. young people, health and wellbeing, LGBT+). Members are nominated by city forums with particular interests. Where no forum exists, positions are advertised and TSL Leadership Group members approve representatives into their position based on their skills and experience.

Details of the membership of TSL’s Leadership Group are available [here](#)