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**Kim Groves,
Chair of Third Sector Leeds**

TSL Round up May 2025

I am writing with both sadness and pride to let you know that I will be stepping down from my role as Chair of Third Sector Leeds after two years, as I turn my focus to the final chapter of my career, supporting young people through Inspiring Positive Futures.

It has been an immense privilege to serve and advocate on behalf of the 3,200 organisations and 31,000 volunteers who make up the heart of our sector, working across Leeds and West Yorkshire. Alongside the many achievements of our collective work, some personal highlights for me have been:

- Launching the **Third Sector Strategy**, and seeing it shape and grow new strategic partnerships.
- Chairing **TSL Goes Local events**, which gave me the chance to meet so many inspiring groups doing amazing things across Leeds.
- Attending the launch of the city's first **Volunteering Strategy**, where I was reminded once again of the enormous contribution volunteers make to our city.
- Presenting awards at the **Compassionate City Awards**, and being deeply moved by people's stories of determination, grit and kindness.
- Co-chairing the **Third Sector Partnership**, and watching that forum grow as a space where statutory partners, educational institutions and the third sector work as real partners to address mutual challenges.

Through all the changes and challenges facing our sector - locally, regionally and nationally - we have remained steadfast in our commitment to ensuring charities and community groups can continue their vital work. Our collective efforts, particularly through the Third Sector Partnership and Team Leeds Way, show the power of collaboration and what's possible when we work together as equals.

Leeds is well-placed to lead the way, but the road ahead will continue to test us, particularly as the effects of long-term funding cuts impact those who are already most disadvantaged. Still, I remain hopeful, knowing that our sector's resilience, creativity, and spirit of collaboration will see us through whatever lies ahead.

I would like to thank the following people for their support: Megan Russell, Sam Powell, Pip Goff, Adrian Curtis, Helen Hart, Jo Volpe, Hannah Bailey, Steve Hoey, Jeannette Morris-Boam, Rifhat Malik, Julia Preston, Dave Paterson, Maggie

Dawkins, Gayle Graham, Tony Macaluso, Ali Mahgoub, Simon Philips, Steph Taylor, Nik Peasgood, Cllr Mary Harland, Cllr James Lewis, Tom Riordan, Ed Whiting, James Rogers, Paul Money, Fiona Bolam, Lewis Sinkala, Mariana Pexton, Ash Lucas, Mike Eakins, Nadeem Siddique, Tracy Grieg, and Alex Cant.

Kim Groves

Chair of Third Sector Leeds

In this round up we talk about:

[Leeds Best City Ambition consultation](#)

[Connect to work](#)

[Third Sector Strategy update - workforce](#)

[TSL Breakfast meeting agenda](#)

[Further News](#)

Leeds Best City Ambition - third sector views

Third Sector Leeds, in collaboration with Health and Care Leaders and Leeds City Council, is hosting a key online workshop to explore how the city's

refreshed *Best City Ambition* can better reflect and support the priorities of the third sector.

The virtual event will take place on **Tuesday 20 May 2025, from 3pm to 5pm via Microsoft Teams**, and invites third sector leaders and advocates to contribute their insights and shape the future direction of the city's strategy.

With Leeds City Council currently revisiting its *Best City Ambition*, this session offers an important opportunity for the third sector to help influence the city's shared goals. Discussions will focus on enhancing collaboration, amplifying third sector leadership, and aligning the Ambition more closely with the sector's vital role in communities across Leeds.

What's the Best City Ambition?

This is the name for the collective ambition for Leeds to be the Best City in the UK – “where we work together in partnership to achieve our goals, proud of our strengths and track record of success, but focused fiercely on tackling poverty and reducing inequalities wherever we can”. There are currently three pillars of the Best City Ambition: health and wellbeing, inclusive growth, and zero carbon. To achieve these, the ‘Team Leeds’ approach has been developed, which is a way of different partners working together and supporting one another. You can read more about [Team Leeds, and the Best City Ambition here.](#)

Register for a place at the event

Share your thoughts via survey

Connect to work

Funding is coming into Leeds from Department of Work and Pensions to support people into, and in work, with a focus on those furthest from the labour market. £800-900k is expected to be invested in the third sector to support this, in two parts:

1. Supporting people with health needs to stay in work – called ‘Thrive @ Work Hub’

Launched in April, the Thrive at Work Hub offers support to staff to stay in work, return after illness, or explore other job options. Referrals can be made by individuals or their managers, and is open to the third sector. Support includes:

- **Integrated Coaching Service** (Inspire North) – Combining work coaching, health coaching, and social prescribing to empower employees.
- **Leeds Workplace Adjustment Service** (Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust) – supporting managers around reasonable adjustments and workplace adaptations.
- **Mental Health Fast Track** (Vivup) – Rapid access to mental health support and therapies.
- **Muscular-skeletal (MSK) support**

Find out more and refer

2. Supporting people with health needs into/towards work

This funding is specifically for locally rooted Leeds community organisations who support people who have significant health conditions and are economically inactive and start to progress them towards employment. The funding programme is being developed by Leeds City Council in partnership with Forum Central.

Although funding arrangements have not yet been confirmed, these are expected to be:

- £720,000 grant funding to scale up existing innovative interventions that are well evaluated as well as new activities and innovative approaches
- Funding limited to this financial year (must be spent by April 2026) with a minimum 13 weeks of support per participant

There will be a 'Meet the Funder' event on Tuesday 2nd June, 1pm - 2pm with more information on funding requirements and how to apply.

Register for the Meet the Funder event

Third Sector Strategy: Workforce

This year, Third Sector Leeds (TSL) members have chosen *workforce* as the key focus area from the Third Sector Strategy. The TSL Leadership Group has

agreed on the following actions, complementing ongoing work by the Third Sector HR Network and Leeds Health and Care Academy on pay and training:

- Promote the third sector as a career choice to boost recruitment and retention
- Increase third sector presence at jobs and careers fairs using the [iCare Ambassadors](#) programme
- Develop supporting materials, such as “A Day in the Life of a Youth Worker”

How can I get involved?

If you have ideas or comments around the proposed work for the year ahead, we'd love to hear them! If you would be interested in helping to develop materials to support better recruitment, please get in touch with megan.russell@val.org.uk

TSL Breakfast meeting

TSL met with Ed Whiting, the new CEO of Leeds City Council, along with Mariana Paxton and the Leader of the Council on 12 March. Ed outlined his vision for leveraging Leeds' assets to navigate current challenges while

remaining hopeful about future opportunities. Key discussions included the impact of Employers National Insurance Contribution increases on the third sector, with Ed and Mariana committing to explore parity with other providers and address cost pressures in the future. TSL and LCC will work on joint communications to clarify mixed messages in the sector.

The group also discussed developing a unified city message to shape policy and delivery of support around work and health, emphasizing support for older people, women, LGBTQ+ communities, migrants, and other communities that third sector partners work closely with.

Further resources and sector news

[Funding available](#) to support organisations raising awareness and increasing uptake of vaccinations in priority areas of Leeds - deadline 23 May.

[New survey](#) as part of research into experience of people who do paid work in the VCSE sector, to inform future support programmes - closing date 18 July.

[Free workshops for community sport organisations](#) on topics such as unlocking new revenue streams, attracting, retaining and supporting volunteers, and inclusive marketing to increase your reach.

Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network have just launched a [new report on](#)

[creative health activity in Leeds](#), with almost 100 organisations and practitioners contributing.

Want to learn more about using AI? [Free training on using Microsoft Copilot for Not-for-Profits](#) coming up.

Opportunity to find out more about the [Leeds Beckett offer to the third sector](#) and communities our sector works with on June 16th - [register here](#).

Local businesses (including third sector organisations) can access [free support to recruit a graduate](#) through a new programme coordinated by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Save the date! TSL partnering with University of Leeds to explore the impact of grassroots organisations petitioning government - 3rd July details to follow.

We want to hear from you!

If you have any questions or comments around this update, or if you would like to share your thoughts about any of the topics covered here, then please contact Meg Russell on megan.russell@val.org.uk or by calling 0113 297 7928

Want to share good news from your community?

[Doing Good Leeds](#) is a great place to share your successes and promote the work of the third sector in building strong and

resilient communities in Leeds. [Click here](#) to register and take the first step in sharing your good news!



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