



One minute guide

Third Sector

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What do we mean by the 'Third Sector'?

In Leeds, when we talk about the 'third sector' we mean voluntary organisations, charities, community groups, informal self-help groups, and the community work of faith groups.

We also include social enterprises and community interest companies where there is a wider accountability to the public through a governance board or a membership.

The third sector is that part of society and the economy, which is organised primarily around the aim of creating a better society. When it trades, it does so in order to advance that aim.

Although the aim of the third sector is generally not to make a profit for personal gain or for shareholders, the contribution to the economy is significant. For example, nationally 1 in 50 UK employees work in the third sector (Labour Force Survey/NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac).

Third sector groups or organisations often provide support for local people.

The third sector has previously been known by other terms including: the 'Voluntary Sector'; and the 'Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector'.

What do we have in Leeds?

The third sector in Leeds is powered by thousands of volunteers, employing substantial numbers of paid workers, and contributing significantly to the economy. It is diverse in its activities and reaches across the city into most neighbourhoods and communities.

In 2020, a study into the scale, scope and reach of the parts of the third sector in Leeds, focused on health and wellbeing, estimated that there were more than 3,500 organisations in Leeds.

Of these, more than 75% were small organisations (turnover of less than £100,000) working to make a difference in neighbourhoods, amongst communities of interest or on specific issues. The health and care part of the sector has an estimated income of more than £281 million. It is estimated that the sector hosts nearly 20,000 people in paid worker or trustee roles, and 40,000-70,000 volunteers.

Third Sector Infrastructure and Young Lives Leeds Forum

The third sector in Leeds is supported by strong local infrastructure which includes [Forum Central](#), [Voluntary Action Leeds \(VAL\)](#), [Leeds Community Foundation](#) and [West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service](#). The third sector in Leeds is well connected, with representation at citywide forum such as the Health and Wellbeing Board. The sector also has its own formal networks and forum for strategic discussions and decision making, including Third Sector Leeds (TSL), an alliance that represents the third sector in Leeds.

The Young Lives Leeds Forum (YLL) is the strategy and development partnership established for third sector organisations that work with children, young people and their families. It aims to improve partnership and joint working across the sector, support improvement and act as a point of contact for partner agency engagement with the third sector. YLL is hosted by Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL).

The YLL Forum meets bi-monthly and is open to any third sector provider with an interest in and commitment to developing improved outcomes for children, young people and families across the city. As of April 2021, its membership includes 560 organisations. YLL also represents third sector organisations for children, young people and their families on a number of strategic partnerships and boards.

What is Doing Good Leeds?

Doing Good Leeds is the website for third sector organisations in the city including those working with children, young people and families. The site includes information on volunteering, training, jobs, support for third sector organisations, news & events.

The Doing Good Leeds website is managed by VAL, and brings together the combined knowledge and experience of organisations that support the third sector and advocates on their behalf.

Key contacts and for more information

If you want to know more about Young Lives Leeds and the Doing Good Leeds website you can contact Voluntary Action Leeds tel: 0113 2977920 and you can visit the [Doing Good Leeds](#) website.

For information relating to the work of Forum Central, please contact hello@forumcentral.org.uk or tel: 0113 2421321.