**NEWS**

**Preston Community Network AGM and next networking event**

We would like to thank everyone who attended our AGM in the Function Suite at Preston Town Hall on Friday.

A special thanks to Chief Inspector Bevan of Lancashire Constabulary who spoke about the Prosper Partnership and other issues where policing affects the VCFSE sector.

Our next event will be one of our bi-monthly networking meetings which will take place on Thursday, January 29 so please get this date in your diary.

Venue and speakers to be confirmed shortly.

**PCN Benefits and Poverty Consultation Group**

Following the last consultation group meeting which took place in person at the Town Hall two weeks ago, Preston MP Sir Mark Hendrick’s office were in attendance and kindly agreed to request Sir Mark write to Lancashire County Council regarding the potential for closer working between the Adult Social Care and Welfare Rights Services.

We are very pleased to say this was actioned immediately and Sir Mark quickly received a reply from Mark Wynn at the County Council advising that the matter would be looked into as a matter of urgency.

We are also moving onto other issues raised as quickly as possible and they will be discussed at the next Benefits and Poverty Consultation Group meeting which will take place on Friday, January 23 with a provisional 10am start.

As previously agreed by the group, we are alternating our bi-monthly meetings between online and in person and this time it will be the online version.

Any members who would be interested in joining the group are very welcome onboard should drop us a line at the usual email address.

**Lancashire Women secure new home**

Long standing member group Lancashire Women now have a new Preston office at Norwest Court, Floor 1, Guildhall Street, PR1 3NU

[Please find attached](https://mcusercontent.com/ba0ae121ad89db52c97b1a711/images/42974784-6c9b-8431-203b-7c2b6d7926eb.png) the group’s latest ‘What’s On’ guide, which includes details of upcoming groups, workshops, and services.

**Support for Tenants Living in Unsafe or Unhealthy Housing**

We have been contacted by Tahmina Begum of the Support for Tenants group.

They assist tenants whose health or wellbeing is affected by unsafe housing conditions, including damp, mould, leaks and inadequate heating.

Many such tenants rely on VCFSE groups for support and the group aim is to ensure they receive the repairs and guidance they are legally entitled to at no cost to them and without creating additional work for your team.

The service includes free property inspections, legal support, practical assistance and interpreters and translators for those who need language support.

You can arrange referrals for service users via [www.supportfortenants.co.uk/start-a-claim](http://www.supportfortenants.co.uk/start-a-claim), emailing [help@supportfortenants.co.uk](mailto:help@supportfortenants.co.uk) or calling 0800 030 4669.

**Desks Free to a Good Home**

DENW have three desks available for free – Must arrange own transport. Please contact [hello@disability-equality.org.uk](mailto:hello@disability-equality.org.uk) or Telephone 01772 558863 if you are interested. [Desk Picture](https://mcusercontent.com/ba0ae121ad89db52c97b1a711/images/9856d1d2-912a-cdfb-4a9c-9d861057a89d.jpg)

**YOUTH NEWS**

**Preston Residents Card**

The Preston Resident Pay-As-You-Go Card is a FREE annual membership available exclusively to Preston residents. It gives access to a range of discounted activities across Fulwood Leisure Centre and West View Leisure Centre.

Residents can sign up online by following the steps below - or speak to a member of staff at their centre.

There is a Junior residents card for under 18’s and adults card for over 18’s

[Preston Resident Card](https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/preston/news/preston-resident-card)

Please see the press release below for further details:

['Better' Leisure Centre in Preston launch resident discount card - Preston City Council](https://www.preston.gov.uk/article/11617/Better-Leisure-Centre-in-Preston-launch-resident-discount-card)

Any queries on this are to be sent to [west.view@gll.org](mailto:west.view@gll.org) or [fulwood@gll.org](mailto:fulwood@gll.org) dependant on which centre the query relates to, or to visit a centre where a team member will be happy to answer any questions.

**Kings Trust – Get Funding to Train and Learn**

The Kings Trust are offering Development Grant awards to young people to help them overcome a financial barrier to training, employment or education. Awards typically range from £175-£250 but can go up to £500. [More information on the flyer attached.](https://mcusercontent.com/ba0ae121ad89db52c97b1a711/images/2ff02658-d77a-b46d-1c79-517ee94b5218.png)

**Kings Trust Team Programme - Blackpool**

We’re excited to announce that recruitment is now open for our next 12-week TEAM programme, based at Southshore Fire Station, starting 12 January 2025.

Who it’s for:  
Young people aged 16–25 who are *not currently in employment or education*.

What you will gain:

* A free, structured 12-week programme of engaging activities and personal development.
* Industry recognised qualifications and real-life work experience.
* Team challenges, a community project, and a chance to build your CV and confidence.

No impact on benefits if you are currently receiving them.

If you know any young person who’d benefit from this opportunity, or if you think you’re a good fit yourself - please get in touch as soon as possible.

[I’ve attached a poster for your convenience](https://mcusercontent.com/ba0ae121ad89db52c97b1a711/images/ae0e3993-26d8-9743-00f3-1adb8c2711db.png); feel free to forward this email on to anyone you think might be interested or who supports young adults in this age group.

💡 *Want a quick peek?* Here’s a short video: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=186836152567533>

**Youth Advisory Board – New Members Welcome – Ernest Cook Foundation**

We’re looking for young people to join our Youth Advisory Board to help shape a bold, youth-led future for our work with young people and nature. To help define both the role and the direction of youth voice across the Ernest Cook Trust. Please share this exciting opportunity with young people aged 15-25, through your school, youth groups, community and volunteering connections. Many thanks in advance.

We’ve extended the deadline for Youth Advisory Board applications!  
If you’re aged 15–25 and passionate about youth voice, social action and helping more young people connect with nature, there’s now more time to send us your application.  
  
📅 Application deadline: midday 9 January 2026  
✅ Paid monthly meetings  
✅ Learn new skills + join national events  
✅ Work alongside other young changemakers  
✅ Annual residential  
✅ Opportunities to join creative projects and working groups  
🌟 We particularly welcome applicants from backgrounds underrepresented in the environmental sector.  
  
Details of how to apply on our website 👉 [https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/jobs/](https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/jobs/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHh6zZDQolUkzTPUX3LoazjEVPSB1LHRDElFR-0OSTpG-CyS4EUkmgJuHWWEX_aem_kCm6skjk41xAGeJD7gJMDA)

**TRAINING**

**ICANN 2026 Webinars**

Our friends at ICANN Advocacy are putting on some online webinars in 2026. These are aimed at the VCFSE sector and will focus on educating the sector on the benefits system and the process as a whole. These sessions start in on January 20th and there is a 50% discount for voluntary sector employees/volunteers!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/2026-pip-wca-child-dla-webinars-4798711>

**PCN Potential Training Sessions**

Thank you to those who have shown some interest after we put in last weeks newsletter about some potential training sessions. For those who missed last week: these would be free of charge for all PCN members. If any organisation has any interest in the following sessions, please let me know via [glennm@prestoncn.org](mailto:glennm@prestoncn.org) and we will organise a session or two:

* Change management – This session can be adapted to any kind of change that your team are going through. Both in the workplace and at home.
* Emotional resilience and regulation
* Team Dynamics
* Confidence and Resilience
* Customer Service
* Mental Health Awareness

**VACANCY/SURVEY**

**Advocates**

ICANN have a new job opportunity for two part-time advocates to cover for Maternity leave (9 months) 🌟  
17.5 Hours per week each or we may consider a single 35 hour post.

Closing date: Monday 19th January at 9.00am  
Interviews will be held on Thursday 29th January  
Applications by CV with covering letter stating why you believe you will be suitable for the role  
📧For job description and person specification, please contact [admin@i-cann.org.uk](mailto:admin@i-cann.org.uk) if you would like an informal chat about ICANN and the role, please request this in your email and include a number to contact you on.

**State of the Sector Report**

It was great to be present at the launch of the first VCFSE State of the Sector Report for Lancashire & Cumbria at the University of Lancashire last week.

Community CVS CEO Garth Hodgkinson hosted the event and Professor Catherine Leyshon of Quay Research introduced the findings of the survey and the conclusions drawn from the data gathered.

Preston Community Network played a part in publicising and distributing the survey in the city and also completed a microbiome study of smaller VCFSE groups in the Ribbleton ward which was highlighted at the presentation.

The full report will be available early 2026 but all slides from the launch event can be viewed by clicking [here.](https://locallancashire.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=52977ac6da2879df478f345ff&id=653fcaa3bf&e=bbd87df89e)

**Third Sector Trends in England and Wales**

The extensive national survey entitled ‘Third Sector Trends in England and Wales : people, work, ambition and impact’ has now been published and can be viewed [here.](https://www.stchads.ac.uk/research/third-sector-trends-in-england-and-wales/)

[A good summary of the report can be found on the attached document.](https://mcusercontent.com/ba0ae121ad89db52c97b1a711/files/387e8273-d670-f13a-278d-478dbfd711c6/Third_Sector_Trends_2025_Second_report_on_people_work_ambition_and_impact.docx)

**FUNDING**

**COSARAF Foundation**

Charities can apply for grants of up to £2,000 to support individuals and families in financial hardship from the COSARAF Foundation.

Funding is intended to help with essential living costs, household items, utilities, rent arrears and education or work expenses when all other options have been exhausted.

Priority goes to the most financially excluded households, especially families and carers, and applications are assessed every six weeks.

More info [here.](https://click.mlsend.com/link/c/YT0yODkyOTY3MTQ2MjU2NjAzNjExJmM9aThyMCZlPTAmYj0xNTAxMjAyMDkyJmQ9djVvMWw3Zw==.0OTgap2nmbkmIo-Qd0no3CJPwN1ta_qFYiZQicO1Zzs) This is a rolling programme with no fixed deadline.

**Alliance for Youth**

A new anchor grants fund has been launched by theAlliance for Youth group.

The fund will provide unrestricted two-year grants of up to £40,000 per year to organisations helping young people develop leadership, build collective power and drive social impact.

With a focus on youth-led and underrepresented groups, the fund aims to strengthen the infrastructure of youth organising nationwide.

Closing date is January 26 and you can find more information and application details

[here.](https://www.allianceforyouthorganising.org.uk/)

**The Leathersellers**

Grants to groups for work benefitting vulnerable people in deprived communities are available from the new Leathersellers programme which begins on December 15.

Application details [**here.**](https://communitycvs.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3754f6a136f6d39f017b95235&id=52efab2698&e=f105be099a)

**7stars Foundation**

There are grants now available to groups supporting young people facing challenges from 7stars Foundation.

Deadline is February 1 and you can find more details [here.](https://communitycvs.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3754f6a136f6d39f017b95235&id=ec292aba6a&e=f105be099a)

**Veolia Environmental Trust**

Groups working on community and environmental projects can obtain grants from the Veolia Environmental Trust.

Deadline is January 8 and there are more details [**here.**](https://communitycvs.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3754f6a136f6d39f017b95235&id=7310b9ddff&e=f105be099a)

**EVENTS**

**Disability Awareness**

DWP Disability Awareness Sessions which may be of interest to your service users ae taking place during January and details are on the attached flyer.

**Cups of Comfort**

Our member group B.L.O.O.M by SMA are holding one of their popular bereavement support events next week.

Details on attached flyer and book by clicking [here.](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-cups-of-comfort-womens-bereavement-support-tickets-1975124472466?aff=oddtdtcreator)

**DENW Christmas Party**

Just a quick reminder that the Disability Equality NW Christmas Party takes place this Friday, December 12 from 1-3pm at the group’s Community Hub, 23 Sedgwick Street, PR1 1TP

To book your place and advise of any dietary/access requirements please email [matthew@disability-equality.org.uk](mailto:matthew@disability-equality.org.uk) or call 01772 558863.

**Weekly Round-up**

Below you will find a summary of events happening this week. Registration is not required unless stated. Please also keep an eye on the weekly events in Section Two of the Events section of our website [here.](https://prestoncn.org/events/)  
As always, please check with the event provider to make sure that the event is still running.

**Thursday, December 11**

6.30pm to 8pm: Adoption Information Event

 Our online Adoption Information Events are the perfect place to learn more! Whether you’re in the early stages or have been thinking about adoption for a while, our events will give you valuable information and a feel for what it’s like to adopt with Caritas Care.

To book online [click](https://www.caritascare.org.uk/event/adoption-information-event/2025-12-11/) here or ring 01772 732313 or email [recruitment@caritascare.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@caritascare.org.uk)

**Friday, December 12**

1pm: DENW Christmas Party

Hosted by Disability Equality NW at their Sedgwick St Community Hub.

All welcome.

**Sunday, December 14**

10am-Noon: Willow Weaving Workshop. Learn how to make a Christmas wreath

Location: Lets Grow Preston, Ashton Park.

Tickets £5 click [here.](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/willow-weaving-workshops-tickets-1785562919759?aff=oddtdtcreator&fbclid=IwY2xjawN1WDFleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETA1c1BLbElncld0dXNlZzB0AR6d0j_8n5BGuA_m6sRE6K6vCjOUWrv10B7uUdYLTrTV6u0j5crV8HKpNee_3Q_aem_ULe52PfFbHNQU68TjbeHtA)

**Monday, December 15**

1pm: DENW Monthly Monday Wellbeing Walk

*This event rearranged from Dec 1*

Location: Meeting at the Disability Equality (NW) Community Hub, 23 Sedgwick Street, Preston, PR1 1TP, at 1pm.

If you have any requests to be included in the walking route or a future walk, please call 01772 55 88 63, or email [**matthew@disability-equality.org.uk**](mailto:matthew@disability-equality.org.uk)

**Tuesday, December 16**

6.15pm-7.15pm: *Cups of Comfort Women’s Bereavement Support Meeting*

Location: Fulwood Methodist Church, Watling Street Road, Fulwood PR2 8EA.

Registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-cups-of-comfort-womens-bereavement-support-tickets-1975124472466?aff=oddtdtcreator>