

Introduction

Third Sector Leeds (TSL) is a third sector led approach to co-ordinating the engagement of the sector in partnership working. It is aimed at addressing issues regarding the lack of influence on decision making in the city, despite the size of the sector and the wide range of vital services it delivers. Third Sector Leeds also acts to enhance the ability of the sector to respond to new challenges.

TSL is not separate organisation, its purpose is not to replace, duplicate or compete with existing organisations and networks playing a representative role. It is a voluntary alliance of representatives from the sector and does not hold any funds nor employ staff.

Third Sector Leeds exists to be the focal point for the third sector in Leeds to engage with and influence the decision making processes of all its key stakeholders, especially the Leeds Initiative and its partners including Leeds City Council and NHS Leeds.

Definition of Third Sector

Third Sector, Voluntary and Community Sector and Civil Society are just a few of the terms used to describe some or all of the organisations that are not part of government or the private sector. There is no agreed or universal definition of the sector and groups tend to self-define and determine who and what they are. However, their defining characteristic is that they are value-led for public benefit.

The term 'Third Sector' describes voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises, charities, faith groups, cooperatives and mutuals both large and small. However, it is understood that each term comes with values attached and that no term is acceptable to all.

The Third Sector can be described as:

A diverse, active and passionate sector in which organisations in the sector share common characteristics, that is, they are:

- non-governmental
- value-driven
- principally reinvest any financial surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives.

The term encompasses voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises, charities, faith groups, cooperatives and mutuals both large and small.

This definition will be used throughout these Terms of Reference.

Aims of Third Sector Leeds

- Ensure that the sector contributes to the social, environmental and economic well being of Leeds
- Promote the development of a thriving third sector in Leeds including access to resources and commissioning opportunities
- Work with statutory partners, including the Leeds Initiative, Leeds City Council and NHS Leeds and act as a focal point for engagement with the third sector in Leeds
- Promote the use of the Compact for Leeds as the basis for relationships between third sector and public sector organisations and encourage the use of Compact principles with other stakeholders
- Promote collaborative working by third sector organisations to maximize the sector's contribution to improving the lives of the people of Leeds
- Engage constructively with statutory partners
- Facilitate effective engagement of the third sector on strategic partnerships and boards
- Facilitate the availability of and promote the use of expert advice from the third sector to inform policy decisions by key stakeholders, statutory bodies in particular
- Identify any gaps in network coverage of the key themes of the Vision for Leeds, City Priority Plan and related delivery plans to promote the development of networks where such gaps exist
- Proactively develop third sector policies regarding key strategic issues
- Engage with sub-regional, regional and national third sector organisations to influence the development of wider policy and strategy whilst bringing good practice examples into Leeds for the same local purpose.

Membership of Third Sector Leeds

Membership is open to all third sector networks, forums and organisations who operate within the Leeds Metropolitan District and who are committed to working together to achieve the aims of Third Sector Leeds. If a network or forum becomes a member of Third Sector Leeds then all network members will automatically also become members.

The membership of Third Sector Leeds is comprised of third sector organisations rather than individuals. Any individual interested in the work of TSL can keep informed through the TSL website: www.thirdsectorleeds.org.uk

Leadership Group

The work of Third Sector Leeds is informed by a Leadership Group which is drawn from its wider membership.

This Leadership Group is made up of representatives of thematic networks and key third sector organisations which reflect the diversity of the sector. These representatives are required to have an understanding of the key strategic issues affecting the Leeds Metropolitan District and commit to attending Leadership Group meetings and carrying out any agreed actions within agreed timescales.

Key networks may be represented by a network coordinator or a member of the network but no organisation shall have more than 2 representatives on the Leadership Group regardless of whether they are representing their organisation or a network.

Additionally the Leadership Group may agree time-limited co-option of up to 4 individuals who they consider would bring necessary additional expertise to the Group.

Where there is no thematic network to provide and support representation, the Leadership Group provides the support and feedback route for these representatives. The representatives are entitled to and expected to attend Leadership Group meetings but are not entitled to vote. When new networks are established, representation moves from the Leadership Group to these new networks.

A Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Leadership Group from its membership. The maximum term of office is three years.

The Leadership Group may set up subgroups to work on specific key strategic issues and specifically a subgroup to lead on the development of Third Sector Leeds.

The key networks and organisation which are included in the Leadership Group are reviewed annually, taking into account any changes to the key strategic objectives of Third Sector Leeds and ensuring that the Leadership Group remains effective and broadly reflective of the diversity of the sector.

Key Networks and Organisations

The key networks that make up the Leadership Group are:

- Young Lives Leeds
- Environment Forum
- Leeds Churches Together in Mission/LFF
- Health and Wellbeing Network
- Mental health, older people, learning disability, PSI
- Leeds Infrastructure Consortium
- Crime Prevention and Reduction Forum
- Advice Leeds
- Leeds Accommodation Forum
- BME network

In addition, the following organisations are currently represented:

- Groundwork
- Learning Partnerships
- Leeds Community Foundation
- re'new
- St Anne's Community Services
- Voluntary Action Leeds

Meetings

The Leadership Group meets a minimum of two times per quarter. Minutes are produced within 2 working weeks of the meetings and circulated to all members of Third Sector Leeds.

Third Sector Leeds hosts two open forums for the wider membership per year. Not less than 4 weeks notice of these meetings is given, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and members will be requested to submit items for the agenda.

Additionally there may be other events during this first year arranged by the Leadership Group to seek the views of the membership on specific issues.

Third sector representation on partnerships

Third Sector Leeds aims for maximum achievable representation of the sector by building upon and strengthening the existing representative structures. Networks continue to organise representation on appropriate thematic partnerships and boards and are supported by Third Sector Leeds.

Anyone identified by TSL to be its representative should identify themselves as such. Representatives of TSL should take every opportunity to promote the values of the sector and recognise that they have been nominated to represent the interests of the sector as a whole rather than their own organisation.

The Leadership Group of Third Sector Leeds seeks to provide representation on key strategic partnerships:

- Leeds Initiative Board
- Public Sector Resources Group
- Locality Working and Community Engagement
- Third Sector Partnership
- Three of the five Strategic Partnership Boards (where there is no thematic network to appoint a representative) – Housing and Regeneration; Sustainable Economy and Culture; Safer and Stronger Communities.

From time to time, it may be appropriate for TSL to appoint representatives to some of the sub groups or working groups of the above partnerships. This is determined on a case by case basis.

Third Sector Leeds encourages, promotes and supports the development of appropriate thematic networks where none currently exist. Where such new networks are established, representation will move from the Leadership Group to the networks.

Facilitation of Third Sector Leeds

Voluntary Action Leeds, supported by other member organisations will be responsible for facilitating the operation of Third Sector Leeds. Following the evaluation of the role played within TSL by Voluntary Action Leeds, the following have been agreed as the current Voluntary Action Leeds role within TSL.

- 1) Secretariat support to the leadership group and the development group

Defined as: circulating minutes, papers and agenda, proactive contribution to agenda making for Leadership group meetings, organising meetings and contribution to organizing TSL events.

- 2) Ensure efficient and effective communications around Leadership group and events

Contribution to the Communications group as they look at additional communications issues

- 3) Overview of national and local policy issues, lead on consultation on appropriate consultation documents (whilst not taking away from particular forums responsibility to respond to consultations)

- 4) Responsibility for ensuring delivery of TSL work programme

- 5) Act as senior officer to the chair/vice chair at partnership meetings/events.
- 6) Oversight of Compact issues on behalf of the sector
- 7) Responsibility for effective mechanisms of accountability of representation for those appointed by the Leadership Group
- 8) Work with the chair and vice chair on sensitive sector issues at senior level

Voluntary Action Leeds will provide this through 2 ½ days of administrative support and 2 days of senior officer support.

Identity

Third Sector Leeds has developed a distinct logo and identity that members are expected to include on all paperwork, communication and marketing related to the work of Third Sector Leeds.

These terms of reference will be reviewed annually.