



Weston Charity
AWARDS

Small charities at risk of crisis, warns major UK funder

Garfield Weston Foundation says too few charities are applying for core costs over fears they'll be turned down

The [Garfield Weston Foundation](#) has revealed that only a quarter of charities are applying for funding for their core costs, putting charities and their services at risk. The Foundation called the trend “worrying”, as it announced the winners of the [Weston Charity Awards](#) that gives small charities across the North of England and the Midlands unrestricted funding and strategic support.

The Garfield Weston Foundation’s Director, Philippa Charles, says:

“Our job is to support charities to become more resilient and sustainable so that they can do more of their excellent work – that’s why we launched the Weston Charity Awards. Yet, we were shocked to find that only 25% of charities applying to us over the last five years ask for funding for core costs. Supporting the running costs of a charity is crucial if we are to avoid charities experiencing a slow decline. Charities tell us they are too afraid to ask for this sort of funding for fear of being turned down. Having supported thousands of charities over the last 60 years, we know how important it is that charities feel able to apply for this sort of funding so that they can continue to deliver great services.”

Sixteen charities working in the areas of youth, welfare and community have won Weston Charity Awards this year and alongside funding, they will have access to a team of senior business leaders through the organisation [Pilotlight](#).

The awards come at a time when charities are seeing demand for their services increase while budgets are being cut and small charities’ income is falling. According to research by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) around 60,000 organisations (37%) are running without any reserves.¹

Michelle Nicholson, says being chosen as a winner of the Weston Charity Awards couldn’t have come at a better time:

“We have set some good foundations and we are making good progress with the women who access our services. We’d really like to have a stronger plan to build on that. For instance, we recognise that getting these women back into employment can be very difficult. Not all employers are able to support them in the way that we do, and so we’d like to develop a social enterprise, such as a coffee bar or printing service, that will enable us to get more of these women into jobs.”

Pilotlight’s chief executive, Gillian Murray, says:

“For most small charities it is vital to have a solid plan in place to be stronger and more resilient organisations in today’s challenging environment. Having worked with hundreds of charities we know that being able to partner with a team of dynamic business leaders means that they can develop their

¹ NCVO: Civil Society Almanac 2016: <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac16/>

leadership skills and plan strategically to achieve long-term sustainability. Former award winners report that they feel better equipped and more confident to face the future, especially as they continue to see demand for their services increase.”

The 16 winning charities will receive their awards in a celebration event being held today [Thursday 9 June] at Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum.

Having expanded the awards to reach charities across the North of England and the Midlands, the Garfield Weston Foundation hopes the awards might develop further and reach more areas of the UK.

– ENDS –

Notes to Editor:

Philippa Charles, Director, Garfield Weston Foundation, and Gillian Murray, Chief Executive, Pilotlight are available for interviews.

To request an interview, please contact: Becky Slack at Slack Communications on 07854 221 568 or at becky@slackcommunications.co.uk

Winners of the Weston Charity Awards 2016:

- [Apex Charitable Trust](#) – supports former offenders into employment, training, education and voluntary work across Merseyside.
- [Disability Action Yorkshire](#) – Harrogate-based charity providing services that help disabled people live life the way they want to.
- [Falcon Support Services](#) – works with those that are homeless, at risk of homelessness or vulnerable within Leicestershire, providing supported accommodation and community projects to help them live independently and positively contribute to their communities.
- [Hope Support Services](#) – provides support for young people when a close family member is diagnosed with a life threatening illness, locally in Herefordshire & Gloucestershire and nationally via its Hope Online portal.
- [Key Changes – Unlocking Women’s Potential](#) – is a gender-specific organisation designed to support and tackle social barriers for women who have experienced the criminal justice system and those at risk of offending in South Yorkshire.
- [LD:NorthEast](#) – supports people with learning disabilities and their carers across North Tyneside and Newcastle.
- [Malvern Special Families](#) – provides safe, stimulation and fun social opportunities to children and young people with disabilities in South Worcestershire.
- [Project 6](#) – works to reduce harm caused by substance abuse for individuals and their families in Keighley and Airedale, West Yorkshire.
- [SAFE](#) – Greater Manchester-based charity working to prevent human trafficking by educating those at risk and the industries where trafficked people are exploited.
- [Sight Advice South Lakes](#) – supports blind and partially-sighted people across Cumbria to maintain their independence.

- [SELFA \(Skipton Extended Learning For All\)](#) – supports vulnerable, disadvantaged and disabled children to improve self-confidence, self-esteem and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- [Sport 4 Life UK](#) – works with unemployed and socially excluded young people in Birmingham to improve their employability and life skills.
- [Staffordshire Women's Aid](#) – supports women and children living with, escaping or recovering from the impacts of domestic and sexual violence.
- [The Wellspring Stockport](#) – frontline resource centre for homeless and disadvantaged people in Stockport, open 365 days a year.
- [Women Acting in Today's Society](#) – provides services to women in Birmingham, including ex-offenders and those who have experienced domestic abuse.
- [Zest – Health for Life](#) – addresses health inequalities and social isolation of people living in disadvantaged areas of Yorkshire, predominantly East Leeds and Rotherham.

Case Study: Key Changes – giving women a clean break

Across the UK, more than 13,500 women are imprisoned each year. More than half (53%) of these women report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child². Once out of jail, they are often left to deal with the stigma of having a conviction for the rest of their lives. Repeat reoffending is common – 45% of women are reconvicted within a year of living prison, a figure that rises to 77% for women who have served more than 11 previous custodial sentences.

There are some 214 women³ in Sheffield alone who are part of the criminal justice system, and just like their peers around the country, they struggle to find work and regular accommodation – two of the key factors in preventing reoffending.

Key Changes in Sheffield aims to change all of that. Founded three and a half years ago by Michelle Nicholson, the charity works with women who are in, or have been through, the criminal justice system by providing them with practical and emotional support designed to instil a sense of self-belief. Services range from a women's centre that can be attended as a drop-in or to access a range of classes and training opportunities; a mentoring scheme that offers a confidential and non-judgmental listening service; and a salon where women can train as hairdressers to improve their employment prospects.

“No one wants to give these women an opportunity. They're misunderstood and society doesn't know what to do with them. Many of these women have internalised the abuse they have experienced to think they are a bad person and so use substances and alcohol to self-medicate. Many of them are very damaged, and experience post-traumatic stress disorder. We use role models and have strong boundaries, but it can be a long process,” explains Michelle.

Key Changes applied to the Weston Charity Awards after it recognised the value expert business support could play in achieving its goal of long-term sustainability.

“We have set some good foundations and we are making good progress with the women who access our services. We'd really like to have a stronger plan to build on that. For instance, we recognise that getting these women back into employment can be very difficult. Not all employers are able to support them in the way that we do, and so we'd like to develop a social enterprise, such as a coffee bar or printing service, that will enable us to get more of these women into jobs,” says Michelle.

² <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/ProjectsResearch/Women>

³ Sheffield Probation Service

One example of the impact Key Changes has on employability is Danielle who was referred to Key Changes as part of the community order she had been given for drink driving and assault. She took part in the charity's hair-dressing scheme and is now employed as a stylist.

"I've worked around the clock to build this charity and provide a helping hand to the women that need us," adds Michelle. "We have a strong solid team in place now and a mix of funding sources, but it hasn't been easy. I'm looking forward to working with Pilotlight on our strategic planning as I think this is just what we need to take us forward."

Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded, grant-making trust and still run by the Weston family. Since it was established in 1958 the Foundation has given over £900 million to charities across the UK. In the last year alone the Foundation donated over £58 million. From small community groups to large national institutions, the Foundation supports a broad range of organisations and activities that make a positive impact in the communities in which they work. Over 1,800 charities across the UK benefit each year from the Foundation's grants.

www.garfieldweston.org

Pilotlight is a unique charity that has been connecting the business and charitable worlds for over ten years, to make both more effective. The Pilotlight Programme is about coaching charity and social enterprise leaders to develop their business skills, strengthen their organisation and increase its impact. After a year working with Pilotlight, our partner organisations report a positive impact on key indicators such as strategic vision, financial management and board effectiveness.

The Pilotlight Programme enables executives to develop their leadership skills outside of their usual environment. They coach charities, collaborate with other business executives, stretch their skills and broaden their perspectives.

Since 2003 Pilotlight has worked with over 500 charities and social enterprises and more than 1000 business leaders.

For more information please visit: www.pilotlight.org.uk.