



Weston Charity AWARDS

Constantly evolving landscape means charities must “adapt or die”, warns major UK funder

Political and financial environment among the major disrupters for small charities

The [Garfield Weston Foundation](#) says that the constantly evolving political landscape and uncertain economic environment are among the key factors impacting on the success of small charities today. As it announces the winners of the Weston Charity Awards, it is calling on small charities to develop ways to become more resilient to ensure they flourish.

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

“We are living through a period of unprecedented change. Charities must be resilient and sustainable if they are to support people through such disruptive times. The better prepared charities are, the better placed they are to deliver the support needed. It is quite literally a case of adapt or die. This is why the Weston Charity Awards help charities become stronger, more effective and fit for the future.”

The Garfield Weston Foundation has identified five areas of major disruption, which it says offer equal amounts of risk and opportunity, depending on how they are managed. These are:

1. **Politics:** From the general election to Brexit to devolution, the large constitutional debates are slowing down day-to-day policy making, while at the same time presenting fundamental changes.
2. **The economy:** Austerity measures, an uncertain financial climate and a difficult funding environment for charities mean many organisations are already struggling to make ends meet. This has the potential to get much worse before it gets better.
3. **Technology:** Technology can be a powerful tool for charities when it comes to raising money, awareness and delivering social change – if they know how to utilise it.
4. **Trust and transparency:** Small charities need to get used to increased scrutiny and do more to communicate their impact.
5. **Increasing demand:** Demand for services looks set to continue, as too does the need for charities to address other less tangible issues, such as social cohesion and inequalities.

Some 17 charities working in the areas of youth, welfare and community have won Weston Charity Awards this year. The [Weston Charity Awards](#) give small charities across the North of England and the Midlands unrestricted funding plus access to strategic support and mentoring from business leaders through the organisation [Pilotlight](#). This combined package has a proven track record with previous winners reporting multiple benefits including increased income and better leadership capabilities.

Pilotlight’s Chief Executive, Gillian Murray, says:

“This is an opportunity for the Award winners to develop and hone the skills they need to ensure they can weather the storm and become more robust in today’s changing climate. They end the year-long Pilotlight programme with more resilient and adaptable organisations.”

Steve Clark, Centre Manager of Hordon Youth and Community Centre – winner in 2015 – says:

“After two years, our turnover has increased by more than 50% and we’ve more than doubled our capacity. Meanwhile, our knowledge has improved and our physical structure has changed. All of this was underpinned by the work we did through the awards. It has opened up so many doors for us. We would never have been able to achieve all we have without the support we received.”

The 17 winning charities will receive their awards in a celebration event being held today [Wednesday 14 June] at Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum.

– ENDS –

Winners of the Weston Charity Awards 2017:

Blackburn Youth Zone, which provides sports, art and youth work to more than 2,000 young people across Blackburn and Darwen, aimed at building confidence and raising their aspirations for the future.

Family Help Darlington, which provides safe, temporary accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic abuse from all over the UK.

Focus Charity in Leicester, which provides volunteering opportunities to 340 young people each year that help them contribute positively to the community and to themselves.

Home Start Trafford and Salford, which aims to prevent family crisis and ensure children have the best possible start in life.

Hull Children’s University, which provides learning experiences for children from low-income households aimed at giving them the opportunity to discover hidden talents and ignite their aspirations for the future.

Jericho Foundation in Birmingham, which finds paid work experience opportunities for people who experience significant barriers to employment, such as substance misuse, mental health and disabilities.

Learning Partnerships in Leeds, which provides opportunities and support for children, young people and adults to access education, employment, training and volunteering.

Leeds Jewish Welfare Board in Leeds, which offers practical and emotional support for people with learning difficulties, mental health problems, physical disabilities and more.

Mentor Link in Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire, which offers listening support and guidance to young people experiencing difficulties including self-harm, bullying, traumatic bereavement and family breakdown.

Moving On in Durham, which aims to prevent homelessness in young people through the provision of a diverse range of services from advice, education and training to running its own lettings agency.

New Vic Theatre in Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire, which offers a fully functioning professional theatre, and a number of educational and community services, which aim to tackle social problems head on.

NIDAS (Nottinghamshire Independent Domestic Abuse Services) in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, which runs projects that increase the safety and wellbeing of families put at risk by domestic abuse.

Sporting Force in Bishop Auckland, which supports veterans into work placements, social networks, and support, through the vehicle of football.

The Welcome Centre in Huddersfield, which is a food bank that provides practical, short-term support to help local people in crisis through offering basic essentials such as food, toiletries, household items and bedding.

Wirral Ark in Birkenhead, which provides accommodation and support for people affected by homelessness.

YMCA North Tyneside, in North Shields and Tyne and Wear, which provides supported, transitional accommodation for young people aged 16-25 who are affected by, or threatened with, homelessness due to family breakdown or moving on from care.

YSS in Worcester, which enables young people, adults and families who are vulnerable, have complex needs and face difficult life challenges to lead positive and constructive lives in society and to achieve their potential.

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.