

## Charity sector release

### **Virtual-led coaching for Weston Charity Awards 2021 as lockdown delivery model shown to work**

A group of twenty frontline charities from the North of England, the Midlands and Wales have been announced as winners of the 2021 Weston Charity Awards and will each receive strategic planning support from a dedicated, senior team facilitated by leadership charity Pilotlight along with a core grant of £6,500 from Garfield Weston Foundation.

Between them, the winners provide services to over 72,000 people and range in size from £100,000 to £2.5 million annual income. The charities support families experiencing domestic violence, people with physical impairment and homeless people among other causes.

A majority of the selected charities (listed below) have been hit financially by the Covid-19 pandemic and tell Weston Charity Award organisers that they are feeling the strain from being in “survival mode” all year.

#### **Philippa Charles, director of the Garfield Weston Foundation said:**

*“As the pandemic shifts, we are seeing an altered landscape for small charities. Our selected charities have shown courage and resilience this year in delivering vital services in the face of uncertainty and growing need. This year, more than ever, the Foundation is helping charities shift gear by providing dedicated support for long-term planning. The Weston Charity Awards have a proud record of helping charities to adapt services, diversify income and thrive into the future.”*

Among this year’s recipients are charities Disability North and Kingstanding Regeneration Trust.

**Disability North** provides user-led advice, support and activities to disabled people across the North of England. Its CEO Dr Victoria Armstrong said:

*“We’re exploring options to develop independent living apartments along with a new contemporary hub to host our activities that will further promote the welfare of disabled people in our region. We will benefit tremendously from external input as we embark on this business transformation.”*

**Kingstanding Regeneration Trust** in the West Midlands supports young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) and dealing with a range of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Its CEO Karen Spence said:

*“I am passionate about helping young people overcome barriers to employment and applied for a Weston Charity Award as we need both support and challenge to develop our thinking about growing the charity, diversifying income and succession planning.”*

#### **Best of both worlds as Pilotlight Programme combines virtual and face-to-face delivery**

After a year in which all Pilotlight programmes have been delivered digitally, this will be the first cohort of Weston Charity Award winners to embark upon a new blended model that includes a series of virtual coaching sessions over ten months with a hand-picked team of senior business and charity leaders along with some face-to-face meetings. Although satisfaction rose last year among

charity leaders participating in what became a virtual coaching experiment, they reported fewer indirect benefits such as relationship and network-building.

**Ed Mayo, chief executive of Pilotlight said:**

*“Last year taught us a lot about delivering online leadership coaching and we discovered many unexpected benefits for charity leaders and for senior professionals offering their time. Despite the easing of lockdown restrictions, starting with these twenty charities, we will keep the best of what we have learned, using virtual delivery at key points, helping to engage charity Board members through the ease of access. We also believe it will power our ambitions to attract a larger and more diverse group of business leaders to join us.”*

The Small Charity Leaders Insight Report 2020<sup>i</sup>, published by Pilotlight in the Autumn, shows there is huge unmet demand for external pro bono support from those running smaller charities - around two-thirds (66%) of those polled for the report said they were actively seeking skilled pro bono support at the end of 2020, but nearly half (44%) were concerned that managing corporate volunteers would be time-consuming.

Pilotlight research also shows a strong appetite for skilled volunteering among UK workers. A major poll<sup>ii</sup> during the pandemic revealed that one in ten workers (11%) already gives their time to charity with the help of their employer, whilst 50% want to volunteer their professional skills to charities but struggle to find the time or means to do so. Over three quarters of workers said they expect business to help people volunteer.

**Notes to editors**

1. For **photography** of the winning charities in action, **interviews** with the charities or with spokespeople from the Garfield Weston Foundation and Pilotlight, **please contact Julie Kangisser on 07711 818496 or Sam Burne James on 07848 380 394.**
2. A full list of Weston Charity Awards 2021 winners and a description of their primary services

**Wales**

- **Boys and Girls Club of Wales** - Youth work & infrastructure support to youth clubs
- **Hijinx Theatre** - Theatre productions where neurodivergent and neurotypical actors work together as equals.
- **Neuro Therapy Centre** - Holistic support and peer support

**West Midlands**

- **Kingstanding Regeneration Trust** - Employability training, qualifications, support
- **Pentabus Theatre** - Theatre workshops, masterclasses, work experience and mentorship for YP
- **Legacy West Midlands** - Fitness groups, arts & heritage projects
- **Dorothy Parkes Centre** - Social clubs, sports activities

### East Midlands

- **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum** - Food, financial support, ESOL
- **One Roof Leicester** - Housing and emergency accommodation

### North West

- **Salford Foundation** - Targeted youth programmes, women's support services
- **Sefton Women's and Children's Aid (SWACA)** - 121 and group support, refuge and counselling
- **Stockport Women's Centre** - Holistic casework, counselling, complementary therapies
- **Stockport Without Abuse** - Refuge accommodation, crisis and criminal support
- **All Arts & Media** - Radio production training, live broadcast for those at risk of isolation
- **N-Vision, Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Society for the Blind** - Residential care and community based services

### North East

- **The Children's Foundation** - Mental health & wellbeing workshops, social activities, nutritional meals for families
- **Young Asian Voices** - Youth groups, employability, sports academy
- **Disability North** - User-led advice, support and activities to promote independent living

### Yorkshire and the Humber

- **The Exodus Project** - Activity clubs, & weekend activity centre
- **Friends of St Nicks** - Volunteering, ecotherapy, social groups

3. **About the Weston Charity Awards:** Now in its eighth year, the Awards celebrate and support great frontline charities working in the fields of community, welfare and youth. Funded by the Garfield Weston Foundation and delivered by Pilotlight, charities with incomes under £5 million in the North of England, the Midlands and in Wales can apply. Initially launched in the North East of England in 2014, the Weston Charity Awards quickly expanded to the North West, the Midlands and, in 2018, Wales - areas identified by the Foundation as benefitting the least from strategic support organisations such as Pilotlight.  
[www.westoncharityawards.org](http://www.westoncharityawards.org)

4. **About the Garfield Weston Foundation:**  
Established over 60 years ago in 1958, the Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded, grant-making charity which supports causes across the UK and, in the most recent financial year, gave over £99million. Since it was established, it has exceeded donations of more than £1billion, of which well over half has been given in the past ten years.

One of the most respected charitable institutions in the UK, the Weston Family Trustees are descendants of the founder and they take a highly active and hands-on approach. The Foundation's funding comes from an endowment of shares in the family business which includes Twinings, Primark, Kingsmill (all part of Associated British Foods Plc) and Fortnum & Mason, amongst others – a successful model that still endures today; as the businesses have grown, so too have the charitable donations.

Known for its transparency, flexibility and straightforward approach, the Foundation supports a broad range of charities from small community organisations to large national institutions. Around 2,000 charities across the UK benefit each year from the Foundation's grants. <https://garfieldweston.org/>

#### **5. About Pilotlight:**

Pilotlight is a charitable social enterprise that curates pro bono volunteering programmes in support of charities across the UK, drawing in over six hundred senior volunteers each year from a variety of sectors (known as 'Pilotlighters') and using their skills to provide organisational development and support for free to small charities.

[www.pilotlight.org.uk](http://www.pilotlight.org.uk)

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<sup>i</sup> The Small Charity Leaders Insight Report is based on a poll of over 250 leaders of small and medium sized charities commissioned by business skills charity Pilotlight in partnership with the Garfield Weston Foundation <https://www.pilotlight.org.uk/static/assets/misc/Weston-Charity-Awards-Small-Charity-Leaders-Insight-Report-2020.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Populus conducted a survey for the charity Pilotlight in August 2020 of 2,144 UK adults. Of those, 1,285 were currently working or looking for work, with 1,197 of those currently in work. While there has been helpful prior academic work on employer supported volunteering more widely, this survey is the first all-employee survey we are aware of in the UK to examine the specific field of pro bono work, or professional skills based volunteering across the economy. While the term pro bono is often associated with the legal profession, most leading business sectors now have access to some form of programme designed to match charity needs with professional skills.