



**One West Lancs Forum & West Lancashire Showcase**  
**Wednesday 13 May 2015**  
**Edge Hill University**

**Introduction**

One West Lancs (OWL) is a partnership which aims to improve the quality of life for everyone in West Lancashire. It was set up in April 2013 and incorporates the local voluntary, public and business sectors.

Its key aims are to reduce health inequalities across West Lancashire, improve educational attainment, develop and deliver an action plan for transport across the area, promote energy efficiency and sustainable living as well as tackling fuel and food poverty. It also promotes local services tailored to local priorities and aspires to stand up for communities, listen to what they say and take appropriate action as well as support and work towards the priorities of the West Lancs Sustainable Community Strategy. This is the second OWL showcase event.

126 people from 60 organisations attended the event, including representatives from the public, private and voluntary sector. There were information stands for delegates to browse and plenty of opportunities for networking. Local voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) organisations were given the opportunity to showcase their work through either a static display or a short film.

The Mayor of West Lancashire, Councillor Doreen Stephenson, formally opened the event, and was followed by Greg Mitten, the Chair of the One West Lancs Board and Chief Officer for West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service who talked about the theme of the event - 'Tackling Poverty and Inequality by creating opportunities for all'.

There were several presentations, the first of which was given by Professor John Diamond, Director of Institute for Public Policy and Professional Practice at Edge Hill University (I4P). He looked at the challenge faced by all sectors working to reduce inequalities in such an unpredictable and uncertain context and about how change and instability can lead to organisations competing for funding etc and striving to maintain what they have rather than cooperating and working together. He said that with the impact of the public spending cuts as well as other issues such as zero hours contracts, it is very difficult to plan for the next five years.

He concluded with a challenge - what are we prepared to share and how can OWL facilitate this?

The second speaker was Hugh Evans, Deputy Chief Executive, Chamber of Commerce, who gave an interesting presentation on the West Lancs Economy by scoring West Lancs using the tool "Good Growth for Cities" which measures ten key elements of economic wellbeing. These measures are:

- Secure jobs
- Adequate income levels
- Good health (to be able to work and earn a living)
- Time with family / work life balance
- Affordable housing
- Sectoral balance of the economy
- Affordable and good quality transport
- Providing for the future (work potential)
- Protecting the environment
- Fair distribution of income and wealth

Overall Hugh gave West Lancashire a score of 61/100.

The final presentation focused on Health Inequalities in West Lancs and Karen Thompson, Consultant in Public Health, Lancashire County Council, agreed to give this presentation on behalf of West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Karen gave an overview of the West Lancs CCG's Forward Plan 2015-16 which sees a greater emphasis on prevention and tackling health inequalities with better targeting and tailoring of interventions and/or services with a particular focus on Skelmersdale.

Karen highlighted that according to the Public Health England's local health tool, Skelmersdale wards are significantly worse than the England average against a number of health indicators. She stated that work is being undertaken with local communities to better understand the barriers and missed opportunities for improving health and wellbeing.

As well as the presentations, a number of short films were shown highlighting the excellent work of the VCF sector in West Lancs of the following organisations:

- West Lancashire Dial A Ride
- Resolve International
- Graduate Placement Programme
- Ormskirk Parkrun
- Lathom Park Chapel
- Home Start Central Lancashire

- Divine Days
- Cast North West



This year the CVS wanted to present a small number of special awards to recognise the dedication of local volunteers and CVS members were asked to nominate volunteers that they felt deserved a special award for Outstanding Service to Volunteering.

Peter Cousins from Brighter Futures Workshop presented the following volunteers with an award:

Michael Vella from Skem Athletic,  
Ellie Nesbit from S.A.Y.  
and Elaine Roberts from SCFI.

Peter Cousins, Jackie Tittle from Brighter Future Workshop and the award winners with their awards

All the presentations and links to the films will be available to view on the One West Lancs website – <http://www.onewestlancs.org/>

## Feedback

The event received some very positive feedback which included:

“An excellent networking event for our new staff and a great way to see the strength of the work done across West Lancs”.

“This event covered topics which are currently relevant to the VCFS sector. Very useful and enjoyable”.

“Great day to network with other organisations whom I had not met or dealt with before. Presentations and videos were both interesting and informative. Thank you”.

Suggestions for future events included opening up this type of event to the general public and including small group workshops.

