

Community Action Network Officer



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Introduction

People thrive in community with one another. Communities, if they are to flourish, require a thriving voluntary community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector. That sector, in turn, requires supportive, bridging, infrastructure. Our strapline – ‘supporting you to support your communities’ – may be new, but LDCVS has been providing that infrastructure for 50 years.

We, at LDCVS, help our members to flourish and overcome some critical challenges that the VCFSE Sector faces. The **first** is around funding – we help to facilitate the right amount of funding for the right activities, distributed in a way that supports VCFSE organisations and our local communities.

The **second** is around volunteering – we help our members to attract, develop and retain high quality, dedicated volunteers who, through citizen participation, make a difference in communities.

The **third** is around how the VCFSE Sector is perceived and perceives itself – we help to enhance the reputation, professionalism, capacity and independence of our members.

The **fourth** is around how the VCFSE Sector communicates, both internally and externally – we help our members to talk to each other, share knowledge, debate sometimes contentious issues and work together to create positive impact for communities.

Working closely with our partners, we raise the profile and amplify the voices of local community and voluntary organisations, ensuring that they are valued, understood by commissioners and properly resourced to tackle pressing social challenges. In summary, we are an organisation that applies our skills and experience to enable others in our sector to maximise their social impact and to better attain their goals and aspirations.

The context for this post

The Ryelands Estate, just north of Lancaster’s city centre, is one of the district’s most underserved neighbourhoods. Home to over 350 council tenancies with long-term residents and deep community ties, construction started in the 1930s on land once owned by linoleum magnate Lord Ashton. Today, Ryelands is a community with huge potential but facing challenges.

The estate sits within Skerton West, ranked the 5th worst ward in the district for income deprivation and child poverty. Health outcomes are significantly below the national average: children under five are 67% more likely to be admitted to hospital with respiratory infections, while young people suffer higher-than-average injury admissions. Adults face high rates of emergency treatment for COPD, heart disease, alcohol-related harm and self-harm, and life expectancy has fallen sharply since 2017.

In response, residents and local agencies have come together to form the Ryelands Community Action Network (CAN). Since 2018, the CAN has created a Community Plan, established a residents’ association, and built a strong platform for collaboration. Those involved include the local headteacher, practice nurse, public health leaders, adult social care professionals, community officers, faith leaders, foodbank trustees, neighbourhood police, and most importantly, local residents determined to make change. In this video, you can see the

community in action on the Ryelands estate and hear directly from those involved: [Ryelands Community Unity, The Power of Working Together](#).

The CAN's vision is to strengthen social infrastructure by investing in local leadership, capacity, and connection. It tackles issues such as poor housing, social isolation, and lack of opportunity, while giving residents real ownership of solutions.

The Community Action Network Officer will be central to this work. You will:

- Bring residents together through community conversations.
- Explore and understand the inequalities that matter most locally.
- Help co-design and commission activities and services that respond directly to community needs—for example, free fitness classes, or joint housing and health initiatives.

This is an opportunity to be at the heart of change, helping a proud community unite to create a brighter, healthier future.

For an informal chat about this role, get in touch with Yak Patel by email at yakpatel@lancastercvs.org.uk or call 01524 555900.

Job Description

Job Title	Community Action Network Officer (CAN)
Term	One-year, fixed-term
Job Purpose	The CAN Officer will play a central role in supporting residents of the Ryelands Estate to come together, set priorities, and take action on the issues that matter most to them. Working alongside local people, grassroots groups, and key partners, the postholder will help strengthen social infrastructure, tackle health and wellbeing inequalities, and build local leadership and capacity.
Location	Based in offices in Lancaster City Centre and working remotely on the Ryelands Estate and from home by agreement.
Accountable to	Chief Executive Officer
Accountable for	N/A
Salary	£30,422
Hours	35 hours per week. Office hours, with willingness to be flexible for occasional evening and weekend events
Relationships (Internal)	LDCVS team
Relationships (External)	Voluntary Community Faith & Social Enterprise organisations (VCFSE), Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, Lancaster Medical Practice, Lancaster & Morecambe College, Ryelands Primary School, Ryelands Residents Association, St Chad's Church,
Key tasks:	• Support the Ryelands Community Action Network to bring residents together, hold community conversations, and agree local priorities. • Facilitate community-led activities and commission activities that address shared challenges such as health inequalities, poor housing, and lack of opportunity. • Build strong relationships with residents, grassroots groups, and partner organisations, ensuring collaboration and inclusivity. • Promote local leadership and empower residents to take an active role in shaping solutions for their community. • Capture learning from activities and contribute to ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the programme. • Support communications, including social media, newsletters, and outreach, to raise awareness of opportunities and successes within the community.

	• Act as a positive ambassador for the Ryelands CAN, representing the project at meetings, events and networking opportunities. • Undertake any other duties appropriate to the nature of the post as required by the line manager.
Specific requirements	• Some evening and weekend work may be required
General requirements	• Be proficient in IT systems including Microsoft Office, Microsoft Teams and in the use of social media. • Contribute to monitoring and evaluation information. • Act as a positive ambassador for the program. • Work in accordance with best practice in both internal and external communications. • Attend and actively participate in team meetings. • Participate in supervision.

Person Specification

Aspect	Essential	Desirable
Personal Qualities	• Kind, reflective, and self-aware; recognises what matters to people rather than what's the matter with them. • Starts with what is working well and takes an asset-based approach (able to work from strengths) • Friendly and professional manner. • Excellent organisational skills. • Commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. • Resilient, patient, and adaptable in the face of challenges. • Positive ambassador for community-led change.	• Knowledge of the Lancaster district and the Ryelands estate.
Skills	• Ability to communicate and work effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds. • Ability to build strong and trusting relationships with residents, partners and agencies. • Strong facilitation skills. • Skilled in active and reflective listening, able to build trust and rapport quickly. • Ability to work independently, manage time and prioritise tasks effectively. • Proficient in IT systems (Microsoft Office, Teams) and confident in using social media to engage the community.	• Ability to gather, interpret and present data to support decision-making.
Experience and Knowledge	• Experience of engaging and supporting residents,	• Experience of working in a multi-agency or

	grassroots groups, or community organisations. • Experience of organising meetings, events, or activities to bring people together around shared issues. • Experience in monitoring and evaluating projects. • Understanding of the challenges facing communities in deprived areas, particularly around health, housing and social inequality. • Awareness of the role and value of the VCFSE sector.	multidisciplinary environment. • Experience of co-producing or co-designing services or activities with local people. • Knowledge of health inequalities and the wider determinants of health.
Other	• Willingness to work flexibly, including occasional evenings and weekends. • Commitment to supervision, reflective practice, and ongoing learning. • Meets Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) standards and criminal record checks.	

How to apply

In this pack you will find a job description and person specification for the role.

The job description outlines the duties and responsibilities of the post. The person specification describes the range of skills, knowledge and experience required of the post holder. The essential criteria are the minimum requirements that you will need to carry out the role effectively.

The desirable criteria will aid you to undertake the full duties and responsibilities of the post more quickly. You are not required to have them at the appointment stage. However, where there are many candidates for a vacancy, desirable criteria may assist us in the shortlisting process.

Apply by emailing your CV and a covering letter or video to hello@lancastercvs.org.uk, stating "Community Action Network Officer" in the subject line, by 5pm on Wednesday 24th September.

Your CV must include at least two nominated referees, including your current or most recent employer.

Your covering letter or video must explain why you have applied for this role and how you meet the person specification.

If you choose to submit a video instead of a covering letter it should be no longer than five minutes. Supply your video as an attachment (up to 150 MB) or as a link which will allow us to download it.

We will acknowledge receipt of your emailed application.

Equality and Diversity

We are fully committed to diversity and equality of opportunity in everything that we do. By completing the [Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form](#) you will assist us to monitor our practices. The information you provide to us is strictly confidential. This form will be separated from your application prior to short-listing, will be seen by the Chief Executive Officer only, and will not be made available to the selection panel.

We are committed to ensuring all disabled people are not disadvantaged either during the recruitment and selection process or during the course of their employment. At LDCVS our building is fully accessible for wheelchair users. We are also committed to making other reasonable adjustments to our employment practices and premises, wherever possible, to ensure disabled people are not substantially disadvantaged.

Interviews

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 1 October 2025.

Offers of Employment

Once a recruitment decision has been made we will issue a conditional offer of employment. Full confirmation of an offer of employment is subject to the satisfactory completion of the following employment checks:

- Two satisfactory references (one must be from your current or most recent employer);
- Evidence of eligibility to work in the UK in accordance with the requirements of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006;
- Identity Check;
- Proof of qualifications held;
- DBS Disclosure clearance (if applicable). In addition, applicants who have lived or worked overseas may be asked to obtain a certificate of good conduct to demonstrate their suitability for employment.

All new employees are subject to a probationary period of six months.