

Sector News, Opportunities and Consultations - April 2026



New support to help the VCFSE sector navigate changes in local government

Local government in England is entering one of its most significant periods of transformation in decades. With ongoing devolution and restructuring, new governance and decision-making systems are emerging - systems that will influence how community services are planned, funded and delivered.

To support organisations through this shift, NAVCA and ACRE have introduced a new website that gathers useful tools and guidance in one place. It's designed for voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) groups, as well as local authorities, combined authorities and rural community support organisations, helping them understand and adapt to the changing landscape. Visit

<https://www.navca.org.uk/devolution-lgr> for more information.

The Government has published a policy paper called **Our place to give: a plan for growing place-based philanthropy** which looks at how the government will work in partnership with philanthropists, local government, and civil society to address barriers and strengthen place-based philanthropy. Visit [Our place to give: a plan for growing place-based philanthropy](#) for more information.



The Rural Services Network recently shared [The Connection Project](#) report that explores how the UK's transition to digital services is being experienced.

RSN pointed out that while digital infrastructure continues to improve, the report finds that participation, confidence and trust are not keeping pace. It estimates that between 14 and 22 million people face at least one barrier to using digital services, including connectivity issues, low confidence and reliance on others.

With multiple changes happening at once, from full-fibre rollout to the digitisation of essential services, the report highlights the importance of a coordinated and inclusive approach to ensure everyone can benefit.

Read more 🖱️

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/digital-transition-not-working-for-everyone-new-report-warns>



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Charity Commission recently updated their guidance on Charities and social media. Social media can be a powerful communication tool for charities, to raise awareness and funds and to better engage beneficiaries. It can help charities reach a much wider audience, much more quickly, than traditional methods of communication. To read more, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-social-media/charities-and-social-media>

Identifying and managing conflicts of interest in a charity

The Charity Commission has recently updated their guidance on Identifying and managing conflicts of interest in a charity which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/identifying-and-managing-conflicts-of-interest-in-a-charity-cc29/conflicts-of-interest-a-guide-for-charity-trustees>

Trustees must make decisions based only on what is in their charity's best interests. This is one of their legal duties. A conflict of interest is when what is in the charity's best interests conflicts with, or may conflict with:

- * your personal interests, or
- * the interests of people or organisations connected to you

This guidance explains in more detail what conflicts of interest are and sets out a step by step process to manage them.



Safety Planning eLearning Module

- **Does your role put you in positions where you may speak to people who are overwhelmed, upset or struggling?**
- **Do you sometimes wonder what you should say and worry that you might say the wrong thing?**

This eLearning module may be of interest to you. Please don't be put off by the fact that it is called Safety Planning. This module helps to give you the confidence to have these conversations with people. You don't need to be a medical professional; **you just need to care.**

The module is about **connection, compassion, giving time and active listening** to help someone feel understood and supported. A safety plan is like a *mental health first aid kit* that you can help to create when they are feeling, overwhelmed, anxious or low. It gives them something practical to turn to when things feel tough and helps you to feel confident about supporting them.

This eLearning module takes around 30 minutes and is free of charge. Please hit **Click to Enrol** on the [flyer](#) to sign up.

New website launched for Rural Flood Resilience Partnership

Essential tools, resources and updates to support rural communities to better prepare for periods of severe weather are now available online via the new website of the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership.

The new site can be found at www.ruralfloodresilience.org.uk, and includes updated guidance for rural communities, farmers and landowners, which covers flood preparedness and recovery support.

April 2026



SEND reform: putting children and young people first -

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/send-strategy-division/send-reform-putting-children-and-young-people-first/>

Proposed changes to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including: early, local and fair support, effectively grounded in evidence, and with shared accountabilities across local partners.

Why your views matter

We are consulting on proposals to reform the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.

The consultation document explains the changes we plan to make and asks for comments from everyone with an interest.

The changes aim to improve help and support for children and young people with SEND across the 0 to 25 years system.

We would like to hear from everyone who has an interest in the reforms including:

- children, young people and families
- teachers and leaders
- schools, trusts and early years and post-16 providers
- local authorities
- experts and academic organisations
- representative groups

We welcome and will carefully consider comments and representations on all aspects of the consultation paper and subjects related to the proposed reforms, in addition to the specific consultation questions. Further contributions can be made in the text box at Question 39 or in the text box of Question 12 in the Easy Read version.

You can also engage with the consultation by [signing up](#) for consultation events and webinars with Ministers covering the full 0 - 25 system.

You can also respond to this consultation via email at SENDreform.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk, or by post to:

SENDAP Reform, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Closes 18 May 2026



Making public services work for you with your digital identity

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/making-public-services-work-for-you-with-your-digital-identity>

The government intends to introduce a national digital ID (identity document) system. This will sit at the heart of next-generation digital public services in the UK and support innovation in the wider economy. It will help unlock entirely new ways to offer goods and services, and be key to making people's interactions with the state as efficient and useful as those they are accustomed to in the private sector, like online banking.

Background

We propose that three core principles will guide the design of the new digital ID. It must be:

- Useful
- Inclusive
- Trusted

We want people in the UK to shape the system and how it will work to ensure these objectives can be achieved. This is why we are running a wide-reaching and inclusive consultation to gather views and bring people together for discussion and debate, ultimately informing our future design choices.

To deliver the new system in the most cost-effective way possible, we will be expanding on existing government systems which are already successfully proving and verifying people's identities.

We are designing the new digital ID as something people will want to get, rather than something they must have. There will be no legal obligation for people to have or present the digital ID.

What we're consulting on

This consultation is structured as follows:

- Part 1: Our ambition introduces the current landscape before setting out our goals for the new system and the high-level benefits it will bring to people across the UK
- Part 2: Our approach describes how we are intending to build the digital ID system, harnessing the government's existing investments in developing a digital

state. It explains the lifecycle of the digital ID – how it will be issued, where it will be stored and how it can be shared and checked

- Part 3: Useful discusses how the digital ID system has the potential to help us consistently identify people, so we can reduce bureaucracy and build more intuitive, efficient, and responsive public services in the future. It explains how it will be usable in the wider economy, and how we will make use of the digital ID to help tackle illegal working, so that only those with the right to work in the UK can do so. These chapters ask questions about what information should be included on the digital ID and how it could be most useful to you
- Part 4: Inclusive covers the government's plans for an ID and digital inclusion drive, to make the digital ID available and accessible to all. It discusses who will be eligible, including the minimum age for the digital ID. It invites views on what groups may need extra support, what their needs are and what alternative access routes could look like
- Part 5: Trusted includes information on how we will design the new system to ensure that everyone can have confidence that it will protect their data. It includes discussion of technical security measures, data protection standards and how people can exercise greater consent and control when using the digital ID. There is also a chapter on governance and oversight
- Part 6: Wider considerations outlines our early assessment of the potential impacts of the system and the value we believe it could have, from helping us build more intuitive, efficient, and responsive public services to reducing friction in the wider economy

Who we want to hear from

A national digital ID system is vital public infrastructure for the digital age. We want to draw on the expertise and wisdom of a wide range of stakeholders, from businesses to trade unions, technologists and civil society, as well as leaders in the public and private sectors who can use the digital ID to improve services for people in the UK. Key design decisions will only be taken after this consultation, to build the best possible product for everyone. We are grateful to everyone who takes the time to participate.



Permitted development rights for onshore wind turbines in England – Department for Energy Security & Net Zero -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/permitted-development-rights-for-onshore-wind-turbines-in-england>

The government is seeking views on several proposals for permitted development rights (PDRs) for onshore wind in England.

The government is proposing to not change existing domestic PDRs that apply to households or introduce a new PDR for repowering or community energy projects. However, they are seeking further views and feedback on further changes that could support these types of development.

This consultation closes on 10 June 2026.