

Voluntary Sector Children's Forum Guidelines

1.0 Aim

To provide opportunities for Voluntary Sector organisations involved in providing services to and for children to come together to share and exchange experience and information and to provide mutual support.

The Forum will support the development and strengthening of the Voluntary Sector so it can influence statutory policy, practice developments and contribute to and participate in the Community Planning agenda through a variety of methods including, but not limited to, the election of representatives to bodies outside the Forum.

2.0 Objectives

1. To provide a forum where individuals are able to seek support and advice for personal and/or organisational purposes
2. To Provide opportunities to recognise and share existing good practice, knowledge and skills
3. To provide access to current research regarding good practice in children's services
4. To provide access to relevant quality training
5. To provide opportunities to share common interest and concerns about the need to protect children
6. To actively influence policy and practice development re. Children's Services at a local level and on national issues
7. To develop a Voluntary Sector Forum which focuses on issues relating to Children and which could be used as a consultative body by Fife Council and other organisations with an interest in the development of services to children
8. To develop a Voluntary Sector Children's Forum which should be able advocate, campaign on behalf of and give a voice to the users of Voluntary Sector Children's Services in Fife.

3.0 Tasks

1. The Forum will meet a minimum of four times a year
2. The Forum meetings will be open to all people working/volunteering with children's services in the voluntary sector
3. The Forum will seek to participate fully in the Community Planning process as it affects Children and will work towards ensuring the Forum is represented on all appropriate bodies. Where there is 'competition' for the right to represent the Forum, the Forum will determine its representative by a vote.

4. The Forum can decide to set up sub/interest groups as and when it deems necessary. If and when this is the case the Forum will agree the remit for the sub/interest group.
5. Those members of the Forum representing the Forum on any outside body along with the Chair and Secretary of the Forum will be known as the Coordinating Group. The Coordinating Group will meet in between full Forum meetings.
6. The Coordinating Group will provide regular written reports about its activities representing the Forum. The Forum will have an opportunity to consider each report before the Forum meetings.
7. The responsibility for the content of each Forum meeting lies with all members of the Forum. The Coordinating Group will be responsible for the putting together of the agenda for each Forum meeting.
8. The Forum will facilitate opportunities for relevant training out with the main Forum meetings
9. The Forum will facilitate the maintenance of a database of all voluntary sector services to children in Fife
10. Agendas and minutes will be distributed in advance of meetings
11. The Forum will elect a chair and secretary from its membership on an annual basis. This election will take place at the first meeting of the Forum after the summer break.