**Children & Families Third Sector Forum (recorded notes)**

**Tuesday 4th May – via Zoom**

**1.30pm – 3pm**

**Welcome:** Helen welcomed everyone to meeting.

**In Attendance:**

Helen Davis (Chair, YAP), Rania Qussasi (WLFSS, Action for Children), Lesley Mount (Signpost), Raymond Branton (FCDWL) Lisa Drinnan (CAB), Dawn Henderson (Families Outside), Joanna van den Berg (Firefly Arts) Rosemary McCabe (Children1st COZ)

**Apologies:**

Simon McGowan (Children 1st), Declan Harrigan (Smile Counselling), Alex Collop (Circle), Tom Heron (The Vennie), Fiona Brown (WLDAS), Wilma Murray (Young Carers WL)

**Notes from Previous Meeting: Apologies, not available - recording error**

Helen will circulate notes from this meeting – recording approved

Helen & Raymond have requested administrative support again as previously agreed from the VSGWL for this group, they have been unable to support this recently due to their heavy commitment to organising volunteers for vaccination centres.

1. **Children & Families Strategic Planning group – Update**

* Copies of the final plan circulated to the group – Final version

Members requested to review the plan, and distribute to colleagues, any feedback would be valuable, it is a working document, members to forward any comments to Helen.

* Positive involvement of the 3rd sector in this plan, this needs to be sustained.
* There is a direct and recognised link to this group, the TSSG and the ADP Young people’s sub group.
* Action Plan – Denise Arbiter is requesting information from the 3rd sector on work streams/ forums that need to be represented within the Action Plan – forward any additions.
* The Mental Health Forum has been highlighted – any others for inclusion please forward to Helen.
* Joanna informed the group of the recently approved funding from Creative Scotland for the formation of West Lothian Ark, a partnership of Cultural organisations putting the arts and culture back into the heart of work with Children, Families and Communities. Firefly Arts are hosting the project, looking to recruit the right person as Coordinator to take the project forward, working strategically with Council, 3rd sector, the private sector and communities. The group acknowledged this excellent achievement, looking forward to future updates and Helen will request this be included in the Action plan.
* Dawn highlighted the concerns around women with children receiving custodial sentences and the need for this to be reflected in the Criminal Justice area of the plan – Training videos are being forwarded to sheriffs etc. raising the awareness of the impact custodial sentencing of mothers has on children. The group acknowledged this concern and Helen will contact Kevin Carter, lead for the Criminal/ Youth Justice to ensure this issue is included within the work plan.

1. **Other Info/ Meeting Updates**

* The previous Inclusion & Wellbeing Service has restructured – Education has now amalgamated with Social Policy CYPT & AIMS teams, Social Policy & Education working together as the Inclusion Service. Very newly established as of 19th April 2021.
* Alcohol & Drug Partnership – has updated the new Terms of Reference – when approved, this will be forwarded to the group.
* Alex Collop, Chair of The ADP Young People’s sub group has requested support of the C&FTS Forum to amend the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the group to now include families. It is widely recognised that unless the wider family inclusion into work around substance use is adopted, longer term impact is reduced. The group approved this inclusion into the TOR.
* Helen updated the group on the weekly Community Safety/ Tasking & Coordination group meetings and the need to link this into the Mental Health forum. Poor mental health is a huge factor relating to incidents of Anti- Social Behaviour etc. to WLC Safer Neighbourhood Team and Police Scotland.

The group supported this link when the Mental Health Forum post is in place.

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1. **Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan**

* Raymond informed the group that the Commissioning plan should be in place for summer 2021, as yet nothing has emerged. Tim Ward has indicated that Sharon Houston will be forming a short life working group, as yet no movement. This is work is essential for the third sector with a workable commissioning process being created. There is a new W.L.C. Procurement Officer in position but still operating under the perceived rules and regulation, putting work out via tenders.
* Raymond has a keen interest and consistent engagement in this area of work; he acknowledged to the group that it directly impacts on his organisation due to the existing commissioning process. The group approved Raymond as the 3rd sector rep, on the short life working group. He will contact Tim Ward directly and hopefully instigate some progress in this area.

1. **Third Sector Mental Health Partnership**

A brief update provided to all members of the proposal made to WLC for the 1 year mental health Scottish Gov. funding to address the access to services for children & families experiencing difficulties, referred to the Well-being Recovery group.

Some members stated problems receiving the update from Simon, Lesley forwarded to those who had not received it. No significant movement, as Simon has future scheduled meetings on behalf of the 3rd sector partnership in coming weeks. Update at next meeting.

1. **The Promise**

Information circulated on key themes of The Promise.

The group approved Louise Henry, lead for The Promise, West Lothian invitation to attend the next meeting, to explain the process and how the third sector can influence the work. This will also link into Corporate Parenting and the roles of the 3rd sector.

1. **Member update/ Questions**

Joanna informed members they are finding it difficult to access COVID -19 testing kits; they had been refused by Raymond’s contact in WLC Social Policy as they do not have a contract with them.

Other partners are accessing via government website – 7 kits per request, also direct request at testing centres.

Education must have huge supplies – members will follow up leads, please share any information.

Lisa shared her concerns about access to facilities for staff as restrictions ease, for example access into the staff office in Blackburn Partnership Centre. All acknowledge the caution required for Health & safety guidance to be adhered to but there appears to be some confusion and delays prior to some of the 3rd sector accessing statutory facilities. This is vital to the welfare of Children, Young people and their families. – Members to share experiences.

1. Request from Salvesen Mindroom to attend a future meeting to inform the group of their work? Lesley informed the group that Salvesen are Edinburgh based but can offer opportunities. Group agreed Helen makes contact with them to invite attendance at a future meeting for further details.
2. Helen to forward up to date funding opportunities

**Meeting schedule:** Tuesdays 8th June - 1.30 – 3pm

10th Aug – 1.30 – 3pm

7th Sept. – 1.30 – 3pm