**West Lothian Children and Families Third sector forum**

**Terms of reference**

The Forum aims to improve the effectiveness and maximise the contribution of West Lothian’s Third Sector to the planning and delivery of services and activities for children, young people and families.

The Forum seeks to encourage and enable communication, participation and co-operation between Third Sector organisations and our partners. It intends to identify policy gaps, promote good practice and raise the profile of relevant issues from a Third Sector perspective to proactively inform and contribute to policy development and service provision, both locally and nationally. The Forum is the membership grouping for any voluntary, community and non-profit making organisations working in West Lothian and wishing to promote the aims of the group

VSGWL are members of the forum and will support the group with administration and communication.

The operation of the Network is underpinned by some key principles:

* Openness and inclusivity
* Peer support
* Representatives who are truly representative of the Sector
* Effective and efficient communication

**Network Meetings**

There are opportunities for all forum members to participate in information exchange, consultations and networking at meetings. Information and meeting papers are available on the website: <http://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org>

The Forum represents the Third Sector’s views on a range of key strategic groups and partnerships across West Lothian, and aims to ensure that the Third Sector is represented effectively on key partnership bodies, such as the Children & Families Strategic Planning group. Members of the Forum take on representation roles to take part in these groups and ensure the wide-ranging views and areas of work of the Third Sector are well represented. Forum members represent the whole Sector in these roles, and use the Forum meetings and communications with Forum members to collate views and give feedback to the Sector.