

Third Sector Forum: Children and Families

Tuesday November 11<sup>th</sup> 1pm

**Present:** Caroline Millar, Zoe Brown (NSPCC), Angela Douglas (Play Works), Fiona Brown (WLDAS), Collette Moran (School Bank), Christopher Mullen (Project SOL), Sharlene Boyd (West Lothian)

**Apologies:** Gareth Mckenna (BUSC), Elaine Provan (Daisy Drop In), Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco), Victoria Isbister and Tracy Kerr (VSGWL), Angela Moohan (The Larder)

**Agenda**

1. **Welcome and Apologies:** Helen opened the meeting and advised participants that meeting was recorded for minute taking as secretariat is on annual leave.

**2. Agency Presentation: Project SOL: [projectsol@scotland.police.uk](mailto:projectsol@scotland.police.uk)**

- Supported Opportunities for life. Two year funded partnership between police and charity Aid and Abet. Aim to work with young people 10-25yrs at risk of offending or currently involved in justice system to bring about meaningful and positive changes in their lives. Preventive and supportive approach.
- Aims include: Educate and empowering young people, promoting emotional wellbeing and mental health and strengthening community links
- Case study: Man with adverse childhood experiences, got involved in crime at young age, in and out of jail til 28years old. Moved away to Blackpool – got caught up in behaviours, stabbed a man who died of his injuries. Served life sentence of 17yrs. Been on a journey of rehabilitation last 9 years and now using these experiences to benefit the people in the project.
- How do we do it: Listening, understanding and Empathy. Share stories. Build trust. Responsibility and autonomy. 1% gains (small steps, build confidence). Journalling. SOL Community. Staff create safe spaces, validate and respect feelings. Consistent support. Important how engage young people. Building meaningful connections.
- Critical to measure success, gathering data. 17 young people have participated since March, over 60% are neurodiverse. 50% have stopped offending. Changing behaviour and attitudes don't happen quickly. Funding til March 2027, hoping and planning for future as know model works. Feedback received: "Fixing my life, getting my Nat 4", "Turning my back on a life of crime."

**3. Action note from previous meeting 19.08, actions and matters arising.**

Minutes circulated to all members 21.08.25 and attached to calendar invite. Apologies given for email sent week prior to meeting which had Aug and Nov

agenda attached but not 19.08 minutes. October's meeting was rescheduled to November due to availability.

- YGAM Training session at The Gateway - Victoria / Tracy c/f - Helen completed training online and discussed some aspects which she had found useful. Young people don't realise when they are getting intensely into a game - competing, the desire to win - and how it can lead to buying more ad on's and compulsive behaviour which can be risky and concerning for the whole family. Mainstream aspect - how much easier it is now, get round blocks and over 18 websites. Tv advertising. Scratchcards. Safeguarding aspects. [Our training | Ygam](#)

#### 4. WL Children services plan

[West Lothian Childrens Services Plan 2023-2026 b8j448vd8zc2.pdf](#)

Responses by 30<sup>th</sup> of this month. The ask is for people to look at the priorities 2023 - 2026 - are these still correct? A template will get put together if people want to make changes. Engage with as many services and partners as possible.,

#### 5. In work poverty project: No update

#### 6. Feedback from other meetings

- Children & Families Strategic Planning group meeting - no update
- Alcohol Drug Partnership: Final stages of evaluation. Concerns about what happens after March 31<sup>st</sup> to established services for the families of WL.
- Community Safety group: Continuing concerns about Ketamine and impacts of cannabis use. Young people don't see cannabis as a concern. Changes in culture - "It's only cannabis". Open smoking of (and smell) of Cannabis noted at West Calder fireworks, which was a family event. WLDAS seeing young people who are smoking 5 or 6 joints a day - this affects family relationships, education, motivation - and people don't identify the cannabis use with their problems. Educating parents. No concerns from Fire service on bonfire night. General concerns from police about size and noise of fireworks, clearly not purchased through main suppliers.
- Food Network: Struggling, lots of groups accessing same funds. Christmas approaches. No funding yet. Meeting soon. Postponed event will happen next year. Remains constant challenge for families, cost of living impact.
- Climate Action Group: Blackburn event with P6/7 children to demonstrate the impact of climate change and what they can do.
- Child Poverty Steering Group: No update

#### 7. The Promise

Held celebration Event and hoping to have one next year. Promise planning group extended invites to particular services and organisations. Recruiting for PIP advocates to develop links with wider community. 2-3 years commitment with access to training and mentoring. Briefing sessions to follow to allow conversations

with orgs - inc social policy, housing, health, education, police and fire. **Action Caroline**

## 8. Mental Health Oversight Group

Helen meeting Helen MacKey, one of the leads, subgroups working hard on various issues including journey mapping. **Action Helen**

## 9. Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

Evaluation completed in line with Scottish Government which determines what projects are getting taken forward. Slight underspend 26/27, tighter parameters to provide additionality. WLYAP in partnership with youth justice gratefully received.

## 10. Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian

- Third Sector Strategy Group: [Third Sector Strategy Group - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](#)

## 11. Members updates

- School bank: Winter jacket and clothing appeal: if you know of anyone who needs anything please get in touch. [Donate Clothing and Kit - SchoolBank](#)
- WLDAS: Working with young people who have complex mental health issues on how they access mental health services. Working in partnership to deal with issues holistically. All parts of service busy.
- Play Works: [Play Works Impact Report 2025 - Flip PDF | FlipBuilder](#) Presented at AGM. Good opportunity to stop and reflect.

## 12. Next meetings:

Jan 20 / Mar 17 / May 19 / July / Sept 21 / Nov 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - hybrid or online only?

[Room Hire - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](#)

[Sign up to our e-bulletin - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](#)

[Home | West Lothian 4 Community](#) (Funding tool)

## Actions

- YGAM Training session at The Gateway - Victoria / Tracy
- Share YGAM Training
- Email PIP advocate recruitment packs - Victoria / Caroline (completed)
- Do members want online only meetings going forward? Victoria / Helen
- Journey mapping link - Helen

## Follow up

Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian  
20-22 King Street, BATHGATE, West Lothian EH48 1AX  
Tel: 01506 650111 Email: [vsg@vsgwl.org](mailto:vsg@vsgwl.org)

Web site: [www.voluntarysectorgateway.org](http://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org)

As discussed at the last Children and Families Forum a PIP ( Promise Informed Person) network has been set to explore how local authorities can uphold the Promise. The recent West Lothian Promise Celebration event was part of this campaign to celebrate and raise awareness. West Lothian hope to host a further event next year to coincide with Care experience week in October 2026. Part of the plan for moving forward is also to establish PIP Advocates - operational staff who are responsible for championing and promoting The Promise within their staff teams and services. We are looking for representatives from all sectors / organisations across West Lothian and will be hosting an online information / briefing session on 14.1.26 . This will explain the recruitment process, ask of PIP advocates, training and support. If you can discuss within your service / organisation and let me know of any notes of interest I will send the link for the briefing session or you can complete the attached application and return to [ThePromise@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ThePromise@westlothian.gov.uk) . Attached is the PIP Advocate Recruitment pack. If you have any questions, please reach out to me.

Thanks  
Caroline