

Wiltshire Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum

Review date: 30 November 2022

Aim

The aim of the Wiltshire Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum (CFVVSF) is to work as a forum in order to enable the contribution of the voluntary and community sector to the Family and Children's Transformation Board (FACT Board) and newly developing safeguarding sub-groups, thereby promoting the contribution of the voluntary sector in the delivery of quality services. The aim is that through voluntary sector contribution we will improve the lives of children, young people and families living in Wiltshire.

Objectives

- 1) To safeguard the achievements to date of the CFVVSF in attracting and sustaining engaged membership and raising the profile of the voluntary sector.
- 2) To enable CFVVSF representatives to participate fully in the FACT Programme (multi-agency and Wiltshire wide) and to contribute towards effective commissioning of services for children and families in Wiltshire.
- 3) To ensure that forum members' voices are heard at a strategic level across the public sector and that they have an opportunity to influence and challenge decision making and service development.
- 4) To ensure that engagement with the voluntary sector is meaningful, purposeful and impactful.
- 5) To provide a mechanism for forum members to be consulted on key service changes and to continuously drive partnership working.
- 6) To maintain good working practices for the CFVVSF, in consultation with its members, including facilitating targeted and relevant meetings, networking events and training.
- 7) To support children and families organisations in developing their knowledge and understanding of their role in relevant government initiatives and to keep children and young people safe.

Membership

Membership is open to all voluntary and not for profit organisations and social enterprises providing services for children, young people and families in Wiltshire.

Attendance by statutory sector organisations is welcomed to maintain partnership working and to update, inform and consult members on national and local strategic developments and to share information on good practice and service development.

Governance and meeting structure

An executive committee formed of no less than six people and the grant holding organisation. At least 50% of the executive committee should be members of the forum, agreed by a full forum meeting. A minimum of half of the executive committee form the quorum for decision making in executive meetings. The role of the executive group and the continuance of the people performing those roles will be reviewed bi-annually. The chair will also be appointed by and work with the executive committee and will lead the forum.

The executive committee will ensure that a chair is recruited who will be answerable to the CFVSF.

Administrative support for the executive committee meetings will be undertaken by the grant holding organisation.

Role of the executives

1. The executives will ensure a chair is appointed.
2. The CFVSF will elect the executives bi-annually.
3. The executive committee and chair will oversee the work of the CFVSF and ensure that all work is carried out in line with CFVSF governance and working within the Wiltshire Compact in a fair and equitable manner.
4. The executive committee and chair will be responsible for informing the CFVSF on executive actions and decisions.
5. All executives and the chair will work to develop and improve partnership working within the voluntary sector and statutory sector.
6. The executives and the chair will meet two weeks prior to main CFVSF meetings to:
 - Receive updates from the chair.
 - Receive reports from the grant holding organisation in order to inform discussions, proposals and approval of expenditure.
 - Agree expenditure of items over £500. Expenditure of over £250 can be agreed electronically without delay by two executives or one executive and the chair).
 - Agree the agenda for forthcoming CFVSF meetings.

This meeting to be chaired by the chair.

7. The host organisation will hold the grant monies from Wiltshire Council and pay invoices on behalf of the forum.
8. An implementation plan will be agreed by the executive committee and the chair and be monitored and reviewed.
9. The executive committee will act as a link to members, ensuring all relevant information is cascaded to all members.
10. The executives, chair and grant holder organisation appointed officer will attend meetings and networking events promoting the CFVSF where possible.
11. The executive committee will provide support, oversee and assist in the work of the chair to ensure that the CFVSF is managed effectively and efficiently.
12. Members of the executive committee will deputise for the chair when he/she is unavailable.
13. The executive committee will act as a point of contact and maintain visibility.
14. The executive committee will make decisions using a voting system of one vote per executive. Decisions shall be reached by a majority vote of those present with a quorum of 50% of the committee. The chair shall have a casting vote. (In the case of a conflict of interest, the chair and grant holding organisation will take a vote).

Role and responsibilities of grant holding organisation

Below are the performance targets set out in the contract between Wiltshire Council and the host organisation Wessex Community Action.

The contract objectives are:

- To maintain and develop the membership of the Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum, engaging pre-existing members and attracting new members.
- To ensure engagement at all levels of CFVSF membership and to ensure smaller organisations are provided with opportunities and feel empowered to be involved.
- To work across the membership of the CFVSF to offer regular meetings, networking events and relevant training relating to identified need within the VCS.
- To maintain and continue to improve the CFVSF website.
- To maintain and expand the CFVSF directory.
- To help raise the profile of the voluntary sector within Wiltshire Council.
- To work collaboratively with Wiltshire Council to foster links between the council and members of the CFVSF.
- To ensure Wiltshire Council is kept up-to-date with the landscape of the VCS within Wiltshire, the existence of VCS organisations, their work and the locations in which they operate. Largely these will be organisations working specifically for Children and Families but would also include those with a broader remit whose work will impact on children and families across Wiltshire.
- To facilitate the CFVSF to meaningfully participate in the Families and Children's Transformation Program (multi-agency and Wiltshire wide), identifying relevant workstreams, staying up-to-date with progress and feeding back to members of the CFVSF on opportunities to input.

- To facilitate and support a relationship between the CFVSF and commissioning within Wiltshire Council.
- To achieve objectives and engage with members within the constraints of COVID-19 offering alternatives to face-to-face meetings and developing the offer for virtual engagement.

Role and responsibilities of chair

This crucial role will require someone with the skills and ability to be an effective and efficient independent chair. They will have excellent leadership, good communication and interpersonal skills and experience of operating at a strategic level. Experience of partnership working, a good knowledge of children, young people and family issues and a clear understanding of the environment in which voluntary and community sector is working within Wiltshire are essential. Experience of working in the sector as a volunteer or paid employee would be beneficial. His/her responsibilities include:

1. Making decisions on behalf of the CFVSF as an independent and impartial chair when it is impossible for the executive committee to take a decision due to conflict of interest or lack of objectivity.
2. Work with the executive committee in the areas specifically mentioned above.
3. Proactively seek opportunities to promote and advance the vision and aspirations of the CFVSF.
4. Providing leadership of the CFVSF in Wiltshire.
5. Chairing of CFVSF and executive committee meetings.
6. Regularly meeting with the grant holding organisation and their appointed administrative officer.
7. Proactively seeking new opportunities to promote the CFVSF and to grow its membership and influence.
8. Representing the CFVSF and its views, networking and attending appropriate meetings/events.
9. Representing the CFVSF at the FACT Board.
10. Work with the executive to ensure representation on each of the FACT work streams, or equivalent where practicable. The representative accepting this role (who may be any member of the forum) will be responsible for maintaining awareness of the work stream's progress through agreed systems, feeding back to the forum on activity and, where appropriate, feeding in the views of the sector. Where capacity to attend face to face meetings is limited, especially as regard sub-groups, prioritisation will be by agreement with the chair/executive committee and relevant FACT work stream leads or equivalent stakeholder.
11. Ensuring the CFVSF works within and as a signed up partnership member of the Compact.

The CFVSF members' and executive committee's other responsibilities

CFVSF members will work for voluntary or community, not for profit organisations, working with children, young people or families in Wiltshire and will attend CFVSF meetings representing their own organisations.

1. Members will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest.
2. Each CFVSF member organisation will have one vote and decisions will be reached by a majority vote. The chair shall have a casting vote.
3. Executive committee members will be elected by the membership and serve for a period of two years. The same members can be re-elected.
4. Meetings of the CFVSF will be held bi-monthly.
5. Agenda and supporting documents will be agreed by the executive committee and issued at least four working days in advance of a forum meeting by the grant holding organisation's administrative officer. Minutes of meetings will be issued within ten days of the meeting.
6. CFVSF members may become representatives of the CFVSF at Wiltshire Council FACT Board meetings and its sub-groups. Representatives of the CFVSF who fulfil this function will be elected/agreed as necessary by the CFVSF. Individuals will be expected to attend meetings as a CFVSF representative, not as a representative of their own organisation. They will need to attend CFVSF meetings in order to obtain the briefing of the CFVSF members before attending meetings. Individuals will report back to subsequent CFVSF meetings.
7. Representatives of the CFVSF who miss these council hosted meetings more than three times may be asked to stand down.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference will be reviewed annually.

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