



# Wiltshire Children & Families Voluntary Sector Forum

## Minutes

Date: 24/01/2023  
 Time: 9.30 am  
 Venue: Virtual forum via Zoom

Attendees	Apologies
Angela Brennan (Chair) Liz James – Barnardos Dawn Whiting – Youth Action Wiltshire/Community First Damian Haasjes – Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Margaret Firth – Wiltshire Community Foundation Russ Martin – Spurgeons Linda Cantillon-Guyatt – Wessex Community Action Denise Coates– Healthwatch Wiltshire Trudy Srawley – Wiltshire Parent Carer Council Dave Reeves Health and wellbeing Warminster Sarah Hawkins - Jen Salter – Wiltshire Council	Dom Jones- Spurgeons Nicki Harris -Spurgeons Patricia Podger – Elizabeth House Vicky Harker - Moira Parker – Read Easy Kirsty - SW Refuge Tania Rackham -Home-start North Wilts Petra Birkett – Early Help Rachel Hamblin-CSW Sarah Smith -NSPCC Alice Lyons- Wellbeing practitioner Becky Home-Start South Wiltshire Natalie – MoTi8 Judy Bullis- National Lottery

Item	Who
<b>1. Welcome</b> No conflicts of interest raised.	Chair
<b>2.</b> Angela opened the meeting welcoming all. Attendees were put into groups of 4 to discuss ; What is working well for your organisation at the moment and what are the challenges.	All
<b>3.</b> <b>Feedback from groups included;</b> <b>Positives</b> Good will amongst staff wanting to deliver quality services Support from Trustee boards and other people. Increased partnership working, more joined up approach, linking/ networking of services. Schools reaching out for support identifying needs of families. Area boards reducing matched funding levels. Successful work in the friary -Salisbury Area boards being very supportive in some areas New charity started in South Wilts - Read Easy Appetite for face-to-face meetings Funding for some new position in Motv8	All

	<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <p>Families coming with social issues but then once confidence is gained open-up with lots of other problems.</p> <p>Increased waiting lists and referral times in the sector</p> <p>Loss of Volunteers</p> <p>Recruitment and retention of staff particularly as supermarkets often pay more</p> <p>Financial issues for organisation's dipping into reserves.</p> <p>Limited resources</p> <p>Access issues due to rural location of families and services -cost of fuel.</p> <p>Issues with retaining volunteers</p> <p>Being on benefits an issue when wanting to volunteer.</p> <p>Reaching capacity</p> <p>Lack of a voice for the Voluntary Sector nationally there is no union for sector</p> <p>Where to go when times are tough</p> <p>Staff recruitment a real issue</p> <p>Issues with English and as second langue parents and children</p> <p>SEND support in schools - some discrimination</p> <p>Contract changes not being shared</p> <p>Lack of info from commissioners about new services</p> <p>Gaps in long term support</p> <p>Lack of activities for YP especially in garrison areas</p> <p>Uncertainty of service delivery when contracts change</p>	
4.	<p><b>Jan Salter</b> – Interim Director – Children and Families Jan has been in the council for 17 years and is very committed to addressing some the challenges raised in the groups. She is very keen to promote the forum to increase engagement much better and differently.</p> <p>WC are seeing a significant need in the early help arena – also a huge issue with placement of children in care both nationally and locally. Care leaves need support more than ever before.</p> <p>Another area is Mental Health and Wellbeing as a priority, especially parents and SEND.</p> <p>Q relationship – feels a lot more to be done to increase understanding of the sector feels a bit fragmented. Some areas of the council are interacting more than others. Wants to make things clearer increase conversations together. Building over time together. WC do see the VCS as key players and sharing the passion of meeting the need of families.</p> <p>Jan mentioned the children’s transformation strategy and the family help pilot next meeting 31<sup>st</sup> January 23. Angela sits on the board representing the Forum.</p> <p>WC know they need to do things differently and are looking to streamline and become more effective as a coordinated approach as the county is so big so starting in Warminster/ Westbury.</p> <p>Angela did ask the groups if they know of commissioning opportunities</p> <p>Forum is massively underused as an interface.</p> <p>Comments were made about how the sector does get involved but then things in the council change and some groups feel dumped and only communicated when the council need. The sector raised the issue of participating but without resources it is only the large ones who have enough staff to release.</p> <p>Jan wants to find a simple way to communicate with the forum. Jan would like to thank with the forum members.</p>	
5.	<p>Judy Bullis – National Lottery- gave a presentation to support increased application from Wiltshire. See attached presentation for more details</p> <p>Judy is very happy to answer questions and queries.</p>	

<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Updates from members</b></p> <p>Update from WCA – Wiltshire Together – has received funding from the Fact board to develop it further.</p> <p>Energy and fuel – Rural Communities Network anyone can join and access useful hints and tips which might be of value</p> <p>Funded Benefits training for non benefits advisor training for small organisations from Wiltshire Money.</p> <p>Volunteer managers forum hosted by WCA 2<sup>nd</sup> February info in their newsletter.</p> <p>Surgeons in partnership with AWS team have a youth club running with 27 young people attending</p> <p>Damian gave some feedback from a meeting where AWP Mental Health strategy tier 2 was launched. He suggested everyone be aware of the health and wellbeing strategy as it has little about the VCS in it, Sarah Cardy from Age UK Wiltshire is lobbying for a wider consultation.</p> <p>24<sup>th</sup> February Parent Carers Event in Trowbridge for parent and carers not a lot of space for displays but people are welcome to attend.</p> <p>22<sup>nd</sup> April Health and Wellbeing Event in Warminster</p> <p>Devizes museum is launching an after-school club for 6-11yrs olds</p> <p>Read Easy want to be promoted – although they work with adults with literacy issues many are parents who want to support their children.</p>	
<b>7</b>	The Chair thanked everyone for attending and promoted the next forum meeting in March which will be face to face in Potters places are limited to 40. Lunch will be provided. Further info to follow.	
	<b>Close</b>	<b>11.30am</b>