



Wiltshire Children & Families Voluntary Sector Forum

Minutes

Date	Tuesday 27 January 2026	Time	10am	Venue	Online / Teams
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Organisation	Attendee(s)	
Spurgeons	Russell Martin	RM
Wessex Community Action	Neil Cotton	NC
Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation	Margaret Firth	MF
Barnardo's	Liz James	LJ
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Damian Haasjes (Chair)	DH
Wiltshire Council	Lauren Flack	LF
Wiltshire Parent Carer Council	Natasha Canales	NCa
Wiltshire Parent Carer Council	Trudy Srawley	TS
DHI	Natalie Huggins	NH
Home Start North Wiltshire	Sally Green	SG
Wiltshire Portage	Philip Tansley	PT
Wiltshire Council	Kai Muxlow	KM
NSPCC Wiltshire, Swindon, B&NES	Sarah Smith	SS
Spurgeons	Nicola Harris	NH
Daybreak	Claire Cooper	CC
Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living	Tanesha Miller	TM
Cooperative Group	Sherry Tolson	ST

National Energy Action	Jenny Crossley	JC
Wiltshire Council	Katie Davies	KD

Item	Content	Action by
1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>DH welcomed attendees and opened the meeting. Members were invited to introduce themselves</p>	
2	<p>CFVSF contract and governance update</p> <p>NC updated that the agreement between Wiltshire Council and Wessex Community Action to support the forum for the next three years has been drafted and is at the signature stage. NC feels that this is an incredibly positive step which puts the forum on a firm footing for the future.</p> <p>NC also updated on the recruitment of a forum Chair. This is a position which has been vacant since early 2024. Repeated calls have been made for expressions of interest in the role at forum meetings however, the position has remained unfilled. NC was therefore very pleased to announce that following an expression of interest from DH the executive met and after reviewing against the criteria set out for the role offered DH the position of forum chair. NC added that this is again, an incredibly positive development for the future of the forum and welcomed DH to the role.</p> <p>DH provided an overview of his background working with children and families and spoke of key areas coming up where the forum areas need a voice at including the development of the Wiltshire Council/ Voluntary and Community Sector strategy and youth work network with Margaret. DH stressed that as chair his door was always open and invited members to get in touch. DS added that the executive group want to know what issues and areas of work members wish to pursue.</p>	
3	<p>Wiltshire Council Commissioning Update and Q&A</p> <p>KM advised that his update would cover four key areas:</p> <p><u>Tidworth district specialist centre.</u></p> <p>Early years settings support children with additional needs and it was recognised there was a gap in the east of county alongside high levels of need. This meant children had to travel to Devizes, or Salisbury. The Tidworth centre has been created to address this and officially opens on 28 January.</p> <p>All district centres are run as stand-alone charities and the Tidworth centre is run by Dingley's Promise. They will work with early years settings in their areas, promoting inclusive practice. Typically, children will spend some time in centre and some time in other settings. Working together they will ensure all young people have the support to flourish.</p>	

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	<p><u>Children and young people’s mental health services</u></p> <p>A redesign of services is due to take place and KM will be reaching out to the VCSE as part of this. The redesign will include CAMHS which Wiltshire Council co-commission with the NHS and the emotional wellbeing service which Wiltshire Council commission with health funding.</p> <p>This will be looking into medium term. A full needs assessment has not been completed since 2019 and KM stressed that there has been lots of change since then. Currently a bi-annual survey of wellbeing in schools takes place, but aspiration is to reach further. KM wants to hear from services about what they are seeing in terms of impact on children and young people’s mental health. This is a two year project, ready for 2028.</p> <p>KM added that co-production is a key to success. KM will also be emphasising looking at the relationship and ways of working between Wiltshire Council and health, ensuring real clarity on what the local authority is delivering and what health is delivering. KM recommended forum members ‘watch this space’ as he feels this will be a critical opportunity to make a real difference.</p> <p><u>Best start in life</u></p> <p>The Government has provided grant funding to support initiatives which will centre around family hubs. A key measure of success is the level of learning and development achieved for disadvantaged children. KM advised the Wiltshire approach is to focus on early help where good support can reduce statutory demand. The next step will be to return to Government with details of plans to get agreement. Once agreed work will begin on delivering outcomes, anticipated to be April. KM desires to work with forum member to Improve good level of development (GLD) for disadvantaged children. KM added that he is aware there has been a challenge in Wiltshire for disadvantaged learners.</p> <p><u>Short breaks</u></p> <p>Short breaks have been in place since 2010 with a combination of direct payments and activity hours delivered by Barnardo’s. KM advised that there will be a more substantial update on changes to this following a review is pending.</p> <p>KM advised that overall the review took an evolutionary approach looking at how to build upon the current offer making it more inclusive and how to make sure services are available whether a young person has an EHCP or not.</p> <p>In reviewing these Wiltshire Council have worked with both the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council and Wiltshire CIL to understand how to create offer people need which can also evolve over time.</p> <p>The new offer will take a layered approach with a transparent eligibility system based on need, available to children with SEND without an EHCP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new short breaks schemes. Community activities – signposting to groups, activities and attractions – through local offer • Retaining direct payments • Activity Plus – delivered by leisure, culture and communities team. • Activity extra – commissioned service, for children more complex needs. 	

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	<p>Local Offer is a community platform. KM would like to work with providers to maximise access and will be investing in the Local Offer website, providing training and a single place online to be able to find info on what is happening across Wiltshire.</p> <p>Final comms will be ready at end of next week. KM will ensure the group will receive info.</p> <p><u>Q&A</u></p> <p>TS reflected that from a WPCC perspective the partnership working with Wiltshire Council had been positive with an approach where time was taken to get things right. TS added that they had had good conversations with parent carers as part of the review.</p> <p>LJ asked KM for an update on the commissioning team. KM advised he will send through a brief paper with an update. There have been a number of changes, the biggest being a new Director of Commissioning who will be starting on the 16 February and who KM advised has a strong background in children's commissioning.</p> <p>Looking at CYP Mental Health services DH stated that the impact of covid is still playing through. DH added that he would be interested to know when the consultation begins and when KM would like the forum involved in the consultation. DH offered to sit on any group to represent the forum as chair.</p> <p>KM replied that a kick-off meeting had been held yesterday amongst internal stakeholders at Wiltshire Council. Anticipated timeframe is for stakeholder engagement by March/April. This will involve talking to parents, carers, CYP and providers about what they have seen in this space. KM feels it would be beneficial to involve the CFVSF. DH observed that in the meeting today six, or seven organisations present are working with children who are experiencing poor mental health.</p> <p>TS added she is looking forward to working with Wiltshire council on this and welcomed that again time is being taken to get things right with true coproduction. KM reflected the need to do a thorough piece of work which is adaptable over time.</p> <p>MF highlighted that the Youth Partnership and Youth Network would be keen to be involved in the mental health work as youth work is early intervention mental health work. Offered to collaborate on a dedicated engagement session through youth work network.</p> <p>MF questioned how the planned work links in with CYP emotional health strategy led by health and avoids any risk of duplication. KM acutely aware of other elements around this and therefore felt it is important we get all elements in one place. KM will be taking an incremental approach to bring everything in.</p> <p>DH concluded that the review of CYP mental health services is the kind of area where we want to have our influence as a forum and he is looking at how we can be involved in these areas of work from the outset.</p>	
4	<p>Oral Health</p> <p>LF introduced herself as a public health practitioner at Wiltshire Council, working on oral health promotional programmes.</p>	

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	<p>LF set out why oral health is a priority for CYP. Oral health can affect ability to sleep, eat, smile, play and socialise with other children. Poor oral health can lead to school absences and missing out on socialisation.</p> <p>Data shows people living in the most deprived areas have higher tooth decay prevalence. In Wiltshire the 5–11-year-old age group has a high level of extractions and LF shared that the prevalence of tooth decay for 5 year old children in Wiltshire in 2024 was 11.4%. This was a decline from 15.5% which may possibly be the result of focus on this area.</p> <p>Poor oral health is preventable. The aim at public health is to improve oral health outcomes through prevention and addressing barriers to dental access. Work undertaken has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervised toothbrushing programme – this programme has been expanded to include childminders. Oral health education and packs where supervisor toothbrushing not available as well as webinars for home educating families. • Increasing workforce knowledge on oral health • Voice It Hear It survey - Building evidence to understand unmet oral health and dental access needs • Integrating oral health into clinical pathways • Oral health promotional programmes • Scoping future work with family hubs • Targeted provision for advice for children with the highest needs <p>LF discussed ways in which forum members could promote oral health in their work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFVFSF forum members are all welcome to attend workforce training. • Distribute oral hygiene packs. • Provide insights to assist with scoping future work and tailor programmes. • Make suggestions of any locations, or groups forum members feel would benefit from outreach work such as that undertaken at Thingley caravan site with the traveller community. <p>To discuss further please contact Lauren.Flack@wiltshire.gov.uk Requests for tailored workforce training can be made to Clare Foster claref@homedental.org and training dates can be found at Register – Oral Health Training – At Home Dental</p> <p>DH asked about length of training sessions and what commitment is required. LF advised that general sessions are about 45 minutes to one hour and the training provider is happy to provide tailored training to fit in around work, team meetings, or forums.</p> <p>JC asked about issue of availability of dentists. KD advised this is part of a bigger conversation around the role of public health and the role of the Integrated Care Board (ICB). There is lots of work going on with the ICB in terms of plugging the gap. Lots of pathways and programmes around making access easier such as pathways with health visiting.</p> <p>SG asked if there are any criteria over which groups supervised toothbrushing would come to as this has been limited in the past. LF advised original provision was school and nursery settings however, they have been recently trying to expand further to childminding settings and get more out in community. LF happy to discuss further if any groups are interested. KD added that the previous provider had an offer which was quite prescriptive. They have now taken a wider approach for ad hoc sessions. KD would welcome conversations with groups</p>	

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	and will also factor in future commissioning for the next financial year which is fast approaching.	
5	<p>Executive updates</p> <p>DH reported from the Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance Partnership where recent work has been around developing a neighbourhood health framework. This involves a focus on neighbourhood initiatives, health in your area and how this is broader than traditional health services. Childrens centres are a key part as these operate in a neighbourhood. An open meeting on neighbourhood health strategy will be held on Friday 6 February at County Hall which DH will be attending.</p> <p>DH updated that the Youth Justice board is due to draft a new strategy. A key point is where youth services provided by voluntary sector sit as there is no longer a youth service in Wiltshire and lots of voluntary sector organisations work in this space. DH is working to get the board to acknowledge the role of voluntary sector in early intervention.</p>	
6	<p>Member updates</p> <p><u>Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation</u></p> <p>MF provided an update on the Youth Partnership. The partnership is looking at youth work training and capacity, upskilling youth workers and inspiring young leaders and volunteers. MF advised there will shortly be a big announcement.</p> <p>The next youth network meeting is due to take place on 16 March around the theme of gender with a discussion led by Marsha Mars of Mighty Girls CIC.</p> <p>The next connecting people meeting will be on the theme of comms and social media.</p> <p>Two upcoming events about the local insight tool – to reserve a space the links are:</p> <p>18th February 2026, 2pm-3pm – book a space here</p> <p>24th March 2026, 2pm-3pm – book a space here</p> <p><u>Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC)</u></p> <p>SEND info event will be held on Friday 6 Feb for parent carers of young people aged 0-25 and also for professionals who work with CYP with SEND. This will have a mental health theme with a workshop and hints and tips for parent carers.</p> <p><u>Barnardo's</u></p> <p>LJ updated that there are no public comms yet about short breaks which Barnardo's are currently delivering. Barnardo's also deliver youth clubs for young people age 13-18 who have needs which may make it difficult for them to access mainstream youth provision. Kingfisher clubs are social clubs for young people on the autistic spectrum and can be accessed without a formal diagnosis. Please get in touch with LJ for more info: liz.james@barnardos.org.uk</p> <p><u>Home-Start North Wiltshire</u></p> <p>Home-Start South Wiltshire has announced it will shortly be closing however, Home-Start North Wiltshire will still be open.</p>	

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	<p><u>NSPCC</u></p> <p>SS provided a brief overview of her role of School Service Co-ordinator at the NSPCC. This involves working with schools across the area, acting as the first point of contact for schools around safeguarding education, advising on activity going on, projects and what the NSPCC do. SS is increasingly working with alternative provision. Signposts to training and supports educators to develop confidence to use safeguarding programmes, one upcoming meeting is with a group of nursery practitioners/ childminders. Working with secondary schools around healthy relationships – helping schools build whole school approach to healthy relationships. Digital citizenship for schools.</p> <p>SS is currently working with eight volunteers who do fantastic work. These are mostly ex professionals who have worked in safeguarding and who deliver ‘speak out stay safe’ workshops in schools. Please contact SS contact if anything to support. sarah.smith@NSPCC.org.uk</p> <p><u>Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (WCIL)</u></p> <p>Wiltshire CIL have extended their offer to young disabled people, and those with mental health needs, 16-25 (no diagnosis needed) who are ready to make a BIG change in their community. By getting involved as a Pioneer, your young person could share their voice, experiences and future goals to make Wiltshire a better place to live.</p> <p>So, how does it work? As a Pioneer, we will find out what you like, what’s important to you now, and what you want for your future. From there, we work together to help share your story, using what you want to share to change attitudes, improve services and help you reach your goals.</p> <p><u>Spurgeons</u></p> <p>Do pop the Family Hubs on your radar - 24 locations across the county, we are really happy to partner and share the space of the hubs to reach young people and families. Got an idea or a message to share - do have a chat with your nearest Community and Family Navigator nharris@spurgeons.org happy to link you.</p> <p><u>Wiltshire Family Hubs - Supporting families in Wiltshire</u></p> <p><u>National Energy Action</u></p> <p>JC advised National Energy Action are a fuel poverty charity. A number of programmes may be of interest including: training on energy advice, a course for young people looking to move out for first time, a benefits team who can provide advice, access to fuel vouchers, funding to buy small energy efficient items and gas boiler servicing. Details on website. Centre for Sustainable Energy also has a warm and safe service in Wiltshire. For further info please contact jenny.crossley@nea.org.uk</p> <p><u>Co-operative</u></p> <p>ST is a Member Activator at the Co-operative group. The role involves linking members with their communities. ST works with 44 charities including and Barnardo’s and has made many connections with community groups in Wiltshire. ST can support organisations in this forum</p>	

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	by bringing what they do to life such as at festivals and shows, raising awareness with Co-op members. For further information contact sherry.tolson@coop.co.uk	
7	Any other business No other business	
8	Close DH thanked everyone for joining and closed the meeting.	