

Children and Young People's Steering Group for Kent

VCSE representative body

Terms of Reference

1.0 Core Purpose

The role of this steering group is to ensure the sector is able to:

- Influence statutory strategic planning
- Access information about the commissioning cycle, priorities and processes
- Share information and data that helps to create a more level playing field for all charities
- Be part of a forum where partnerships can be formed and collaboration encouraged

The overall approach will be a positive one that creates a sense of "in it together" between the statutory, non-statutory and VCSE organisations.

2.0 Values

There will be shared values that reflect the way organisations will operate.

These will be based on the following;

- Transparency wherever competitive advantage prevents collaboration
- Honesty
- Excellence in delivery
- A commitment to demonstrating impact
- An instinct to prioritise children over the day to day objectives of our individual organisations

3.0 Out of Scope

- We don't require a shared vision or mission statement as these will vary dramatically between organisations.
- We won't map the capacity of the VCSE as it is an ever-changing picture (unless funding is made available for such a project)
- We will not become a commissioning conduit, this would offer too many conflicts of interest
- We will not be a grievance/complaints process for the sector

4.0 Opportunities

- A coherent VCSE sector with a truly representative body, is advantageous to commissioners as it should aid communication and help develop a rich and diverse marketplace.
- It is advantageous to the sector as it should result in a more powerful voice to influence planning and current commissioning practices for the better
- In time the body will help inform commissioning decision makers about the needs that are being seen from the actual "boots on the ground".
- There will be greater opportunities for creative partnerships, collaboration and fundraising.
- There will be better geographic coordination of services and less doubling up of precious resources.

5.0 Risks

- The most significant risk is the willingness of providers to engage with a representative body. At a time of high competition for limited resources, the body needs to be recognised for its integrity and adding value for organisations.
- There is also a risk that the body could develop 'cosy relationships' with commissioners that were not transparent or advantageous to all.
- To be effective the body needs ongoing commitment of time from the core steering group members. This will be on a voluntary basis, aided by the co-chairs.

6.0 Constitution

- The body will be a relational group based on core priorities and principles rather than a formal industry body. This may change with time but in the short-term, formality would be a restriction.
- The body will be made up of 12 core members who will be self-electing and represent the sub-sets of the children and young people organisations across Kent.
- The body will have an independent chair appointed by the members who is not dependent on commissions from KCC or the NHS and are not involved in the direct delivery of services.

The meeting will be quorate when there are at least 4 members in the meeting.

The Steering Group will have been successful if:

- 1) It is consulted at an early stage in the commissioning cycle.
- 2) When contract length is long enough to provide stability to the VCSE provider and the children and families, they work with.
- 3) When contract extensions take place in good time such that the workforce delivering contracted services in the VCSE feel that their employment is secure.
- 4) When KCC and ICP (Integrated Care Partnership) have a common route to letting contracts for the delivery of services for children and families.
- 5) When commissioners in KCC and the ICP are active in the role in seeking to understand and stimulate the local CVS market.

Current membership:

Josephine McCartney, CE of KCF – Chair

Sarah Whittaker, Service Director, Dandelion Time

Alan Hayes, MD, Therapy Partners

Wendy Checksfield/Julia Hargreaves, Children's Services – Porchlight

Elaine Coia, Interim CE, Rising Sun

Ian Soars, CE, Spurgeons

Sally Williamson, CE, Salus

Katrina Adams, CE, We are Beams

Sarah Mills, Assistant Direct, CXK

Wendy McGeachy, Head of Service for Children and Young People, IMAGO

Stephen Gray, CE, Young Lives Foundation

Cheryl Trice, Rochester Diocese

Jennie Thompson, Canterbury & District Early Years Project

Laura Graham, Dover smArt project

Dawn Foulkes, Dover smArt project

Katy Abson, Head of Children's Services, Involve

Penny Williams, CE Kenward Trust