

Voluntary Sector Children's Services Forum (VSCSF)

"Working together, sharing our knowledge skills and resources to support children, families and communities to reach their full potential."

Wednesday 11 June 2025

10am – 12pm

Via MS Teams

Present:

Eloise Wilson (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk & District
Laura Jamieson (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk & District
Beverley Isdale	First 4 Kids
Debbie Hamilton	One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS)
Diane Cairns	Transform Forth Valley (Time 4 Us)
Donna	Committed to Ending Abuse (CEA)
Elaine Lambie	Barnardos Forth Valley
Jacinta Jaylo Barker	RISE Forth Valley
Sharon Frederiksen	Home-Start Falkirk
Tanya Richards	Wellbeing Scotland

Apologies:

None

Guest Speaker:

Hannah Priest	Children in Scotland (Supporting The Third Sector (STTS))
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1. Welcome and Introductions

Eloise introduced herself, welcomed all attendees to the meeting and introduced Hannah from the Supporting The Third Sector (STTS) project at Children in Scotland.

2. Minutes of Previous Minutes and Action Tracker

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 24 March 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the training session from Ygam.

3. Exploring the Role of the Third Sector in Children's Services Planning: Survey Results and Recommendations

Hannah provided an overview of both Children in Scotland, and the STTS project, which is funded by Scottish Government and hosted by Children in Scotland, before detailing the background on the survey, and its findings. Key points are noted below:

- STTS acknowledges the low response rate to the survey, with just 67 responses in total (48 completed fully); the team has reflected on this, and believe that the responses submitted still provide valuable insight.
- The 4 main findings and conclusions:

- The importance of a strong, well-funded TSI, including having a dedicated role for children's services, in the quality and scope of work that can be achieved.
- Building and maintaining relationships across the children's sector including between TSIs, the wider third sector and statutory partners is essential to positive and meaningful collaborative working.
- Local commissioning arrangements continue to present barriers to local collaboration between partners in CSP and delivery, with complex processes, respondents concern about exclusion of third sector partners in discussions and mistrust between the third sector and statutory partners as key issues.
- Data collection and sharing continues to be a challenge across localities resulting in valuable evidence and experience from the third sector not being recorded and included in strategic decisions.
- Hannah also acknowledged that many areas do not have dedicated children's services funding (with very few TSIs having a dedicated children's services worker), and those that do, while having had a demonstrable impact, are coming to the end of their funding, which has led to uncertainty and concerns about the loss of connections and relationships with partners.
- They have identified a move away from quantitative data and sharing, in favour of case studies and qualitative data.
- Hannah also spoke about the new Locality Work and Report, which aims to provide Intensive support to implement STTS' "How good is our third sector participation in Children's Services planning" self-evaluation tool.
 - As this is a self-evaluation tool, it requires buy-in from the third sector and partners; attendees were encouraged to consider the following questions:
 1. How do they think the survey report findings relate to third sector participation in children's services planning in Falkirk District?
 - a) Did any of the recommendations stand out as particularly relevant?
 2. How can the third sector begin the process of addressing some of the challenges in Falkirk District?
 3. What would they consider good practice?

Members then discussed these questions. Eloise highlighted that today's meeting is an opportunity for the forum to begin deciding on its role, as the Children's Services Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) will soon be deciding on its priorities for the next 3 years, with the possibility of third sector representatives on some working groups. There was also discussion around the importance of small, local organisations being involved at levels such as the SLG, as well as national organisations.

Hannah's presentation is available to view or download from the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website (linked for your convenience).

4. Falkirk's "The Promise" Multiagency Event

Eloise updated members on the possibility of multiagency events (including third sector) looking at how The Promise has been kept across the Falkirk District. Eloise is part of the planning group, and is keen to hear from forum members about what would suit their needs, and what they would like to see from the event. She highlighted that lived experience (in the form of input from Falkirk Champs) has already been discussed, along with group work and scenario planning.

Members discussed the importance of Falkirk Champs (or at least their input) leading the event, and that they would like opportunities for information sharing and discussing consent when a child or young person is referred.

5. AOCB

- Home-Start Falkirk and OPFS: hosting a providers event for parents and families in Grangemouth, taking place next Wednesday 18 June 2025, 10am – 2:30pm, at the Sealock Centre, Montgomery Street, Grangemouth, FK3 8QR. All details are available on the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website (linked for your convenience).
- RISE Forth Valley: new team started, and new Carers Group event taking place this week.
- Wellbeing Scotland: new children and families service launched around 6 months ago for those who have experienced child abuse (aged 5 – 16 years old), as an emotional support pathway with counselling. There is also educational sessions for parents and families. There is currently no waitlist, and Tanya is happy to speak with groups and organisations. The service is Forth Valley based, and operates across Falkirk District, with a child-focused assessment (which can be adapted for those with additional support needs), working with and through appropriate places such as schools and GPs.

Members also discussed challenges their groups are facing, with Eloise and Laura offering support from the CVS Falkirk & District team.

**Date of Next Meetings: Wednesday 17 September 2025,
10am – 12pm, via MS Teams
Wednesday 17 December 2025,
10am – 12pm, via MS Teams**