



Delegates at our Contextual Safeguarding Forum in November 2019

"A really great engaging and full afternoon. A lot of good work was applauded and affirmed"
"very heartfelt and enjoyable and empowering"

VOCypf Who We Are

Voluntary Organisations for Children, Young People and Families (VOCypf) is a network of voluntary and community organisations who work with children, young people and families in Bedfordshire. We exist to champion the voluntary and community sector in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

VOCypf Our Aims

- To **identify** the needs of children, young people and families in the local community
- To **assist** local voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families to work effectively and deliver quality services
- To **facilitate** effective communication, networking and collaboration within the sector and with other sectors
- To **inform** voluntary and community organisations by disseminating information on sector developments and opportunities for funding and training
- To **advocate** on behalf of the sector and enhance its role as an integral part of local planning, policy making, commissioning and service delivery
- To **encourage engagement** between local voluntary and community organisations and statutory partners

Report from the Chair 2019/20

This year the new representation structure for VOCypf has successfully bedded down, ensuring that the voluntary sector voice has been an intrinsic part of strategic and locality based discussions across Bedford Borough & Central Bedfordshire. We have recruited new members to our Executive team enhancing the expertise and knowledge of this core group.

Our Contextual Safeguarding Forum in November 2019 was the best ever attended forum and feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.

We have worked together with the CEOs of SEND charities and parent partnerships for both local authority areas to develop and improve the SEND local offer, laying the groundwork towards the establishment of a new representative forum to maintain improved communications.

We have extended our reach into the voluntary sector and strengthened our partnerships with statutory organisations. Feedback on the content and quality of the fortnightly newsletter has been good with the audience growing by over 10%.

As we move through 2020, the impact of the global pandemic is striking the sector hard and we have been working cohesively with organisations to support them through challenging times.

Michele Flynn

We are funded and supported by:



Looking back: Key achievements against 2019/20 priorities

- ◆ **Mental Health & Wellbeing** – active representation of the sector at Bedford Borough Childrens' Mental Health Partnership and Pan Bedfordshire Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Strategic Group. Strengthened joint working with CAMH/ Counselling Collective. Participated in several task and finish groups chaired by the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure the sector is included in service developments and local communications.
- ◆ **The prevention of child sexual exploitation and gang related crimes** – developed partnership relationships with the Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner and Head of Violence Exploitation Reduction Unit to engage the voluntary sector in contributing to the reduction of crime and supporting young people affected by gangs and violence across Bedfordshire. Several voluntary sector projects have received funding to deliver innovative new local services.
- ◆ **Supporting the needs of young unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees** – the pioneering Bedfordshire UASC Multi Agency Forum met three times during 2019/20. Outcomes included the establishment of specialist housing by Kings Arms Project and a wellbeing and creative arts retreat for young people at Chellington Centre. This forum has been cited as an example of best practice regionally by the local government agency.
- ◆ **The impact of poverty and the housing crisis on children and young people** - active participation in homelessness forums across all 3 authorities and insight into impacts via several YMCAB services, informing future priorities in the local councils & wider sector.
- ◆ **Safeguarding children and young people** – in November 2019 VOCypf held a forum focused on Contextual Safeguarding with 79 participants. A summary report with actions and recommendations was presented to both Local Safeguarding Boards to feed into the ongoing development of contextual safeguarding across the county.

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Looking forward: Priorities for VOCypf 2020/21

VOCypf will continue to connect with existing groups and represent the sector at a strategic level, disseminating information and consulting local organisations. We recognise the impact of COVID-19 and as a result the VOCypf Executive Committee has agreed the following priority areas:

- ◆ Domestic Abuse & Safeguarding
- ◆ Mental Health & Wellbeing of children and young people
- ◆ Supporting organisations following the impact of COVID-19
- ◆ Engaging strategically with local authorities to ensure the continued viability and strengthening of voluntary sector providers as part of the tapestry of local provision
- ◆ Engaging with smaller local organisations within the sector through our regular newsletter
- ◆ Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are represented

7 FACTS ABOUT VOCYPF 2019/2020

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

424 people received our regular newsletter, (10 % > than last year)

208 voluntary sector organisations hearing from us (8 % more than last year)

236 social media posts (facebook new this year)

40,406 social media impressions and reaches



SUPPORTING YOU

97 local voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations engaged with VOC led conversations.

79 individuals participated in our VOCypf Safeguarding Forum



REPRESENTING YOU

46 meetings attended to represent the sector



JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON TWITTER & FACEBOOK @VOCYPF #TALKINGVOCYPF



VOCypf Executive Group Members 2020:

Julie Bowes (Sorted)

Michele Flynn (Independent Chair & Bedford Open Door)

Wendie Harvey (FACES)

Diana Hedley (Groundwork)

Michael Howe (Families First Bedfordshire)

Rebecca Ireland (YMCA Bedfordshire)

Linda Johnson (Home-Start Central Bedfordshire)

Rose McHugh (BDCPS)

Martin Trinder (CVS Bedfordshire)

Supported by:

Tara Charlton (VOCypf Administrator)

Helen Hall (VOCypf Communications Officer)