

NATIONAL THIRD SECTOR GIRFEC PROJECT THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE REFERENCE GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

National Third Sector GIRFEC Project (NTSG) was established in 2013 following the launch of the Getting it Right for Every Child policy. Its objective was to support the third sector, to enable it to play a full role in the development of Children's Services planning and delivery of the GIRFEC provisions within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. In April 2018, the Project Advisory Group took an opportunity to strengthen the project's work and further its aims, by transferring the project's management from Barnardo's Scotland to Children in Scotland.

From the start, the NTSG has adopted a collaborative approach and has worked with local partners to support the third sector's participation in local children's services planning processes. Given the core role of the Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) in local landscapes, they have become one of the project's main stakeholder groups.

"Third Sector Interfaces (TSI) play an important role in the third sector landscape. They are a key point of intelligence about local third sector organisations. They understand the local landscape and how it affects the third sector's ability to contribute to local outcomes and national strategies. They are well positioned to identify support needs for the local third sector. TSIs can identify third sector issues and perspectives that can feed into both local and national policies including Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)."

*Source: Third Sector Interface Outcomes Framework September 2018
(co-produced by the Scottish Government Third Sector Unit and the TSI network)*

Following the introduction of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Statutory Guidance on Part 3 (Children's Services Planning) was published in 2016. In the Guidance, there are specific references to the role of TSIs during the children's services planning process and consultation.

To ensure that the NTSG's activities reflect the needs of the TSIs and make a positive impact, a TSI Reference Group was established in June 2016. The group would advise the NTSG and co-develop activities to support TSIs and the wider third sector, in their role in relation to children's services. Following the transfer of the NTSG project to Children in Scotland, membership of the Reference Group was refreshed to reflect the development of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs). The Reference Group currently has members from each of the RICs region. The group has mainly operated through periodic meetings facilitated by NTSG project staff. Agendas have been built around areas of mutual interest.

The NTSG's extension of funding from October 2018, provided an opportunity to formalise Terms of Reference for the Reference Group; these are outlined overleaf.

Aim of the NTSG Reference Group

To inform and influence the NTSG work programme to ensure project events and activities enable Third Sector Interfaces and the wider third sector to collaborate and connect at national and local levels on key national developments linked to GIRFEC.

Through this collaboration, the quality and impact of the Third Sector's contribution to local children's services planning processes will be enhanced and better understood by partners.

Objectives of the NTSG Reference Group

The Reference Group will:

1. Advise on NTSG project activities, with a focus on building the capacity of TSIs and the wider third sector to contribute effectively to children's services planning;
2. Co-design TSI Network¹ meetings by contributing ideas for agenda, identifying discussion themes, suggesting guest speakers, and by volunteering to lead on tasks when suitable;
3. Co-develop other events and knowledge exchange opportunities to support TSIs and wider third sector organisations to build stronger relationships, including with statutory partners;
4. Provide feedback on the impact of NTSG's support delivered to the TSI network;
5. Help promote the role of Third Sector Interfaces and the wider third sector in children's services planning, as described in the Statutory Guidance and beyond;
6. Act as a conduit of information where possible, to other TSIs and the wider third sector, for example through formal or informal regional networks.
7. Provide case studies, reports, etc to support the work of the NTSG, for example on the impact of the sector.

Membership

Members of the Reference Group are openly recruited from the TSI Children's Services Network. Network members are asked to come forward if they would like to join the Reference Group as a volunteer. Ideally, the Reference Group would consist of 6-8 members from different parts of Scotland.

When there is an opening, Network members will be informed and volunteers will be sought to fill the geographical gap.

¹ TSI Network refers to the Third Sector Interface Children's Services Network facilitated by the NTSG Project. The aim is to strengthen TSI's capability to support local third sector's engagement in children's services planning and their confidence to contribute to children's services policies and practice issues. See TSI Network Terms of Reference [insert URL] for details on membership and meetings etc.

Current membership consists of 7 TSIs: EVOC, GCVS, VASLan, Angus/Dundee (share), CVOEA, ACVO, CVS Falkirk.

Members work on this group on a voluntary basis without financial incentive; however, they are entitled to reasonable travel cost reimbursement.

Although the Reference Group presently has members from each Regional Improvement Collaborative area, members on this group are not formal representative of the TSIs in their region.

Meetings

The Reference Group meets quarterly – usually a month prior to the Network meetings.

Meetings usually take place in Edinburgh (Children in Scotland office).

Draft agenda is circulated in advance with opportunity for further input from the Group.

Expectations of the Reference Group Members

Reference Group member is expected to:

- Share their local intelligence and experience around children's services planning;
- Help to cascade information from the Group's meetings
- Contribute at the Ref Group meetings (could be done remotely);
- Read and respond to relevant papers and correspondences before meetings;
- Keep in contact between meetings;
- Give constructive feedback;
- Cascade relevant information to local third sector network;
- Suggest agenda items;
- Undertake actions within the timescale agreed;
- Shape the future of the Group and the wider TSI (children's services) Network.

Support from NTSG Project

NTSG will provide the following support:

- Share relevant information and intelligence at national level;
- Use feedback from the Reference Group to help inform Children in Scotland's policy and strategic influencing work;
- Deliver administrative support to organise the meetings;
- Provide a venue and refreshments;
- Prepare agenda and meeting notes;
- Facilitate meetings;
- Organise wider TSI Network meetings with agenda agreed with the Ref Group.

- Commit to the upholding of [Children in Scotland's values](#) and reflect them in our work with the TSI Reference Group and the TSI Network;
- Challenge behaviours which conflict with these values.