



April 2021 – March 2022

Project Report

This report covers the period from 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022. This year has brought some practical challenges to the Supporting the Third Sector project. The ongoing pandemic and the nature of uncertainty this has brought to the sector has set the context over the last two years. In addition, the change of Project Manager halfway through the year meant time was

needed to allow for the new Manager to become initiated with the outcomes and build the relationships which are so vital to the success of this project. This report highlights the level of activity of the STTS project in the face of such challenges and provides a platform for the work to continue into 2022-23.



What do we aim to achieve?

- a. Increased local third sector engagement in planning, development, budgeting, and delivery of services through children's services planning arrangements.
- b. Strengthened local support structures and clear paths for effective engagement with third sector locally, with a line of sight to improving the local TSI and their members' contribution to relevant national policies and priorities.
- c. Local and community-based third sector voices are included within national policy and practice development.
- d. The third sector's impact on children, young people and families' wellbeing are evidenced within local/national planning and reporting, including data to demonstrate improved outcomes.
- e. Strengthened impact of the third sector across all areas of national and local policy and practice development as a result of increased capacity and capability of TSIs.

How do we plan to achieve these outcomes?

Our work will focus on four key areas of activities:

1. Building capacity and capability of the local third sector workforce, including TSIs, to influence and engage in strategic planning processes through training and development, information, and sharing good practice.
2. Supporting the TSIs to further develop their roles as facilitators and local forums as representatives within local children's partnerships.
3. Develop effective mechanisms for a range of national policies and practice to be informed by the voices and experiences of the local third sector organisations and grassroots community groups.
4. Supporting local partnerships in developing processes which include third sector evidence during planning and reporting.

Key area 1:

Building the capacity and capability of local third sector workforce, including TSIs, to influence and engage in strategic planning processes through training and development, information, and sharing good practice

Information and Communications

The project provides relevant information around national policies and strategies, guidance, consultation, funding and COVID recovery which were disseminated via newsletter and/or TSI update emails within 2 weeks of release. The bimonthly TSI Network meetings provide an opportunity to share further information on specific topics the network chooses to focus on.

The project produces and disseminates a fortnightly newsletter (26 bulletins) which is sent out to over 200 subscribers from a mixture of third sector, local authority, government and individual stakeholders. The newsletter covers a wider range of topics for information from STTS events to government guidance to resources and funding.

STTS Newsletter Stats Q4

Date	Subscribers	Opens	Clicks (% & total)
14 Jan	195	24.4% (47)	8.3% (16)
28 Jan	195	21.4% (41)	3.1% (6)
11 Feb	195	27.1% (52)	8.9% (17)
25 Feb	193	26.2% (50)	7.3% (14)
11 March	198	26.5% (52)	7.1% (14)
25 March	199	20.1% (40)	2.5% (5)
Total / Average	+4	24.2% (47)	6.2% (12)

The **STTS twitter** page is also an active platform which promotes positive messages, information and supports partner pages such as TSI, national and local stakeholders' pages.

STTS Twitter Activity Q4

Month	Tweets	Views	Total followers	New followers	Profile visits	Mentions
January	11	1,760	1,915	-3	487	3
February	14	2,535	1,915	+0	1,080	5
March	27	8,761	1,924	+29	1,537	13
Quarter	52	13,056	1,953	+38	3,104	21

We provide policy briefings when necessary for example the GIRFEC guidance refresh and the National Care Service.

Training

Throughout the summer of 2021, the STTS project delivered a training package through the TSI network to prepare the third sector workforce for the implementation of UNCRC incorporation. This training comprised of an e-module developed by the STTS project and two interactive workshops to 16 different localities. There were no additional costs to local organisations as the costs were covered by the STTS underspend from 2020/21 as agreed with the Scottish Government Third Sector Unit.

The training was positively received with 99% of participants rating the training 4 or 5 out of 5. The TSIs continue to use the materials to facilitate discussions around children's rights and children's services planning and delivery.

"Really beneficial and will make a difference to help us raise awareness and integrate into changes in working for the organisation"

"It provided me with the space to learn more about the UNCRC and to consider next steps and how to review what is current practice and consider reviewing/making changes to help imbed UNCRC into practice more. Thanks for a great session!"

"A lot to think about but even having a greater awareness of the articles will go along way in thinking about how we can do things better."

"My TSI members really enjoyed the UNCRC training and I felt really pleased I could support them with this through the network"

The STTS project and Children in Scotland have gained a reputation for delivering high quality UNCRC training and the project continues to receive enquiries for more training including an input to the TSI Chief Officers Network in October 2021. The impact of the training was significant across the

Events

Throughout the year, the project hosted three events:

UNCRC Event

27 May 2021

131 participants

Hosted by STTS with workshops facilitated by Together, Childrens Parliament, Lickity Spit, Childrens Hearing Scotland, Aberlour, Fife Young Carers, Includem, Whale Arts, Royal Caledonian Education Trust and The Alliance.

GIRFEC Consultation Event

24 November 2021

63 participants

Hosted in partnership with GCVS, Everyone's Children to provide the wider third sector with the opportunity to feed into the GIRFEC refresh **consultation response** on behalf of the TSI network.

sector, for example the Salvesen Mindroom subsequently produced a UNCRC resource – **Respecting and Promoting Childrens Rights** and have set up at **Youth Stakeholders Group** as a result of the conversations the UNCRC training initiated within the organisation.

The Promise Event

31 March 2022

39 participants

Hosted in partnership with The Promise Team, Clackmannanshire Alliance and Who Cares?

These events provided the opportunity for the wider third sector to share information and good practice, improve third sector network to include public sector CSPPs members and contribute to and engage with national policy.



Self-Evaluation

Following on from a survey 2 years ago, the STTS project led work to support the TSI, local third sector and statutory partners in a self-evaluation exercise and produced the “How Good Is Our Third Sector Participation in Children Services Planning” tool. The Strategic Leads Network supported the development of the “How Good Is Our Third Sector Participation in Children Services Planning” tool and feedback throughout the year. The tool is in draft form and has been tested in two test sites: South Ayrshire and Inverclyde with other areas committing their interest to using the tool in the future. The results from the use of this tool will be used to identify further development needs and plan additional learning opportunities for future STTS focus.

South Ayrshire have used the tool in a small working group with the Head of Children’s Services, TSI rep and STTS PM. The initial meeting identified areas of focus and specific indicators for discussion. The working group shared the tool with the CSPP and local third sector children’s services forum. STTS met with the strategic leads in South Ayrshire on 3 occasions and an improvement plan was identified to allow for more links between the CSPP and third sector forum. The plan placed an importance on the need to improve data collection, particularly from smaller third sector organisations working with the most seldom heard groups in the community.

“The process was as useful as the outputs. Taking time out to discuss experiences and perceptions with our third sector lead was really valuable.” Claire Monaghan, Children’s Services Lead

“All in all, it brought positive impact across CSP with third sector and will now be used as a baseline to further improve participation, engagement and relationships moving forward.”
Linda West, Representation and Strategic Lead, TSI

Inverclyde have agreed to use the tool despite concerns the tool could add a layer of bureaucracy. The chair of the CSPP has agreed to meet with TSI rep to work through the tool.

Dumfries and Galloway have advised of their willingness to use the tool for the next phase of the planning cycle and the links between the third sector childrens services forum and the CSPP have been established.

East Ayrshire and **Aberdeenshire** CPPs have requested an input at future partnership meetings to learn more about the content of the tool.

The tool was presented to the TSI Network in January and was positively received. The presentation generated useful discussion around variances throughout the network of how genuinely the Third Sector was engaged with children’s services planning locally.

Considering the stage this work is at, it has been proposed that the timeline for a report analysing the efficacy of the “How Good” tool is extended to be included in the early 2022/23 project plan.



Key area 2:

Supporting the TSIs to further develop their roles as facilitators and local forums as representatives within local children's partnerships.

National TSI Children's Services Network

The STTS project chairs an active TSI children's services network which:

- Provides peer support
- Discusses issues in relation to project aims
- Engages with relevant partners
- Agrees and take collective actions.

Over this year the project chaired five meetings for an average of 15 TSIs representatives. Themes for the meetings, at the request of the network included Children's Services Planning, GIRFEC, Year of Childhood, Equalities, Wellbeing Outcomes and national funding streams.

"This network is of huge value, it's the one place that TSI colleagues can meet and collaborate in a likeminded and supportive environment. Of equal importance is the how information is shared from a national perspective with key learning from SG and other national orgs. Communications and offerings are always of a high standard, it is one of the meetings I try not to miss." TSI Representative

The project facilitates networking opportunities for TSIs, chairs and representatives of local third sector children's services forums and one meeting was held this year which covered themes including children and young people's mental health, commissioning, and child poverty. The project would like to

have facilitated more in-person networking opportunities across this year, however COVID restrictions made this challenging.

Commissioning has been a strong theme within the TSI Network and the STTS project supported the network to establish a Commissioning subgroup, chaired by a senior development worker from Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council. The TSI representatives involved have a specific interest in improving their understanding of commissioning of services. The groups aim is to collectively build a better understanding of the principles of commissioning and purchasing policy and collaborative commissioning processes involving children and families. The group meet every 8 weeks and have positive working relationships with CCPS and are linked into the Family Support Advisory Group, Commissioning and Procurement subgroup.

Local TSI Forum Support

Based on the themes from the self-evaluation tool, the project aims to deliver tailored support to the local third sector children's services forums to improve the effectiveness of their engagement with and representation at local strategic planning structure.

Support was provided to **Dumfries & Galloway** alongside the Head of Children's Services. We worked collaboratively to provide an overview of current national developments such as UNCRC, The Promise and GIRFEC. During the meeting with local third sector organisations, we explored how STTS project could support links to the CSPP with specific reference to the How Good Is Our Third Sector Participation tool. STTS subsequently presented to the CSPP with the self-evaluation tool and specific members were keen to link in with the local forum. This work is ongoing.

The local forum in **Highland** has identified a need to develop stronger links to the CSPP. They would like more involvement and have expressed an interest in using the self-evaluation tool to structure conversations around how the local forum could provide useful data and experiences of the issues facing local children and families.

Presenting the self-evaluation tool to the CSPP in **Inverclyde** alongside the TSI rep has provided the TSI with a valuable link to the CSPP which it has not previously had. The TSI has extended an offer of the local forum to be used as a platform for the CSPP to look at improving participation across the breadth of the local third sector.



Key area 3:

Develop effective mechanisms for a range of national policies and practice to be informed by the voices and experiences of the local third sector organisations and grassroots community groups

This outcome has involved building on the TSI network and local structures to co-ordinate input when appropriate from the local third sector:

GIRFEC Guidance Refresh

Two TSI reps attend alongside STTS at the stakeholder's engagement group. Reps were also involved in the Lead Professional and the Wellbeing Assessment subgroups. The

project supported the TSI Network to host and respond to the subsequent GIRFEC consultation response to the **stakeholder** and **public consultation**.

Strategic Leads Network & Deep dive events

Two TSI reps are now attending along with STTS at network meetings.

Family Support Advisory Group & subgroups

One TSI rep is attending along with STTS and acts as two of the four links to the Childrens Sector Strategic and Policy Forum. One TSI representative plus STTS is a member of the Family Support Framework working group and another representative

is a member of the Commissioning and Procurement subgroup. This representative links into the TSI commissioning subgroup as well as the wider TSI Childrens Services Network.

CYP&F outcomes

STTS project is a member of the working group and this link to the TSI Network provides a platform for the TSI's to be consulted and updated on the progress of this work. This

supported active contributions from the network to the deep dive sessions at the Strategic Leads Network and Strategic Forum.

UNCRC Incorporation

The project supported the Scottish Government Bill Team to connect to certain groups in the communities such as BAME families through partnership work with Lickity Spit Theatre Company. The capacity building UNCRC training that the

project rolled out, prepared the workforce, and improved the wider third sector understanding of how policy incorporation impacts practice at a local level.

Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum

One TSI representative attends the CSSPF which strengthens communications between the TSI Network and the Forum, improving the contribution of the Third Sector on a national scale.

The Promise

Facilitated direct engagement between the Promise team and the TSI network and hosted a networking event in March to share information and learning from the Promise, two years on.



CYP&F Mental Health Group

The STTS project represented the TSI network at the Community Task & Finish Group and contributed to the draft of the best practice publication.

Attainment Challenge

The project co-facilitated the TSIs' input to the Scottish Attainment Challenge review with the Scottish Government team and fed into the Attainment Advisors group.



Key area 4:

Supporting local partnerships in developing processes which include third sector evidence during planning and reporting

This report has described various mechanisms for members of TSIs local forums and their reps to share data and experiences of the third sector with local and national government. Additionally, we have collected data from TSIs and their networks through specific surveys. Our most recent survey explored specialist capacity within TSIs. It highlighted that out of **14 responses**, only **two** TSI's had dedicated children's services officers and five had a dedicated Childrens Services local forum. This provides a basic understanding of the challenges both TSIs and CSPPs face when collecting data from the breadth of the third sector during children's services planning.

The pilot of the self-evaluation tool in South Ayrshire highlighted specific community projects whose data was not being presented to the TSI's due to lack of capacity and understanding of what the data was needed for. This allowed the TSI rep to provide support to the projects to capture the data and feed this back to the CSPP. Work is ongoing to use this example and develop resources for smaller projects to access.

Formal links have been made between the TSI Network commissioning group and the FSAG Commissioning and Procurement subgroup which strengthens the wider third sectors understanding of the role of commissioning in service planning and delivery.

This report has demonstrated the variety, breadth, and volume of work the STTS project has been involved in throughout 2021-22. The TSI Childrens Services Network has become more active within national policy areas such as the UNCRC implementation and the GIRFEC Refresh. The STTS project has been fundamental in providing a bridge for the network into national groups to allow local third sector to be represented within the national agenda. This work has supported the role of the third sector in local planning of children's services indirectly through capacity building and directly through the "How Good" tool and targeted support to local TSI children's services forums. The work of the STTS project into 2022-23 will ensure this work continues by responding to emerging needs and national policy.