



**Supporting the  
Third Sector Project**



## **Supporting the Third Sector Project 2022-23 Yearly progress report**

### **Introduction**

The Supporting the Third Sector (STTS) project has developed a unique role within the children's sector as a valuable intermediary between policy and practice, and local and national government. The project continues to use this position to strengthen the collaboration between the third sector and Children's Services Planning Partnerships (CSPPs) through our main stakeholder group, Scotland's Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs). The project provides capacity-building opportunities for the third sector to become and continue to be a strong partner within Children's Services Planning.

### **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 the third sector locally, with a line of sight to improving the local TSI and its members' contributions 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 is 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 the increased capacity and capability of TSIs.

### **How do we plan to achieve these outcomes?**

Our work will focus on four key areas of activity:

1. Building the 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 role as facilitators and local forums, and as representatives within local children's partnerships.
3. Developing 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 approaches to embed the involvement of third sector children's and related services in planning and reporting.

### **Key area 1: Building the 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**

#### **Information and communications**

We aim to support the implementation of policy into practice throughout the third sector. This is done by providing accessible communication of complex policy issues to TSIs and local third sector organisations delivering services to children, young people, and families.

The project continues to produce and disseminate a fortnightly news bulletin with 26 editions published this year. The newsletter includes items in relation to national policy consultation and participation opportunities, government guidance, papers, and funding opportunities as well as general news and updates from across the sector. The newsletter has provided a route for Scottish Government guidance and key messages, which are also communicated separately to the TSI Children's Services Network to ensure the information is cascaded in a timely manner.

Appropriate information is shared via the STTS [Twitter](#) account which had a 2,026 strong following at the end of the year. The Twitter account is used to disseminate key information regarding policy developments, to support third sector organisations' communications, and promote training and events.

## Training and Development

### Events: Making Children's Rights Real: UNCRC, GIRFEC and The Promise

- May 2022: [UNCRC Incorporation in Scotland](#), The Alliance
- June 2022: [The Promise](#), Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS)
- August 2022: GIRFEC, Supporting the Third Sector Project.

STTS contributed to hosting a series of events with a UNCRC focus, in collaboration with national third sector partners; Together, The Alliance, Children's Parliament, GCVS and Scottish Child Law Centre. These events highlighted alignment of specific policy areas: The Promise, GIRFEC and UNCRC.

In August 2022, the STTS project hosted its **Making Rights Real Event** themed around the **GIRFEC guidance refresh**. This event proved to be hugely popular with more than 400 registrations and a final count of **220 attendees** on the day. The event was hosted online and the Scottish Government GIRFEC team updated the sector on the publication of the GIRFEC refreshed guidance. This was followed by a presentation from the STTS project on how GIRFEC and children's rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Participants came from a variety of statutory, third sector and private organisations with a range of perspectives from front line practice to strategic service planning.

These Making Rights Real events have provided opportunities for local third sector organisations to voice their needs. The national collaborative began to address these by providing accessible information about the above policy areas from national partners, providers, and bodies, including the Scottish Government. However, these events have shown that more resources are needed to equip the workforce with the understanding and good practice to act as effective Children's Rights Defenders.

## **UNCRC Training Sessions**

A survey for the TSI Children's Services Network in 2021 identified a need for more UNCRC training. Additionally, feedback from UNCRC training delivered in 2021 was positive. Four TSI Chief Officers requested more UNCRC training with further requests being made for UNCRC updates from the project. However, in practice we have experienced a low demand from the TSI Children's Services Network. We delivered UNCRC Training in Elgin, Moray and Inverurie, Aberdeenshire but paused the training due to low demand.

## **Children's Services Planning Networking Event**

In November 2022 the STTS project hosted a national third sector Children's Services Planning networking event. A variety of third sector representatives attended from across Scotland to discuss their roles, experiences, and challenges in supporting the Children's Services Planning process. Twenty-three attendees participated in the event including the Scottish Government Strategy unit, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS) and Free Wheel Coaching.

## **Leadership Workshops**

Following the Children's Services Planning networking event in Dundee, the project arranged a series of leadership workshops facilitated by Bobby Jones of Freewheel Coaching and Social Enterprise.

The workshops were hosted on the following dates:

- Friday 27 January 2023: 3 attendees
- Friday 17 February 2023: 8 attendees
- Friday 17 March 2023: 3 attendees.

The workshops brought together children's services planning representatives from the third sector across the country online to discuss their experiences, as well as challenges and opportunities involved in their role.

### **Bairn's Hoose Consultation Event**

Children in Scotland hosted a consultation session for members and Supporting the Third Sector Project stakeholders on 26 October 2022 in partnership with the Care Inspectorate and Children 1st. This enabled 31 attendees to hear from The Care Inspectorate on the details of the draft standards, the work so far and what the draft standards mean for children and young people in Scotland involved in the care, protection, and justice system.

### **Children in Scotland Annual Conference**

The project supported four TSI reps to host a stall providing information about the STTS project and local TSIs, as well as to attend the conference in November 2022.

### **Key area 2: Supporting the TSIs to further develop their roles as facilitators and local forums as representatives within local children's partnerships**

#### **TSI Children's Services Network**

STTS has hosted six network meetings this year and covered the below topics:

- 28 April 2022: Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, Child Poverty Delivery Plan 22-26, and GIRFEC: TSI Involvement
- 23 June 2022: Resources for children's rights and the workforce, improving/establishing local children's services forums, and the GIRFEC guidance refresh consultation analysis.
- 18 August 2022: Whole Family Support, racial equality in policy and practice, and refugee children within Scotland
- 6 October 2022: GIRFEC guidance refresh, cost of living crises, and planning the future of the TSI Children's Services Network
- 2 February 2023: Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, Commissioning Working Group, How Good Is Our Third Sector Participation in Children's Services Planning (HGIO), and TSI representative pathways.
- 30 March 2023: Equity in Grant Making and Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.

Additionally, each meeting included core business, with representatives from the network feeding back from Scottish Government and national children's sector strategic groups they participate in on behalf of the TSI Children's Services

Network. The TSI representatives have benefitted from peer support and sharing good practice. The meetings have given an opportunity to share information and updates at a national level and provide a discussion on how these are impacting locally.

### TSI Commissioning Working Group

A working group within the TSI Children's Services Network has been established and is chaired by Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC). The STTS project has supported this group by developing its terms of reference, aims and outputs. The role of the STTS project is to provide policy and funding updates from a national perspective and also to provide the secretariat for the group. There are **eight members** from **Edinburgh, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Falkirk, and Angus** who provide local updates to highlight **best practice** in third sector **collaborative commissioning**. The group has met five times this year.

### TSI Network Reference Group

This group has six members from a range of TSIs in different areas of Scotland. The aim of this group is to inform and influence the STTS work programme to ensure project events and activities enable TSIs and the wider third sector to collaborate and connect at national and local levels on key national developments related to children's services planning. 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.

### Locality Support

Throughout this year, the engagement from a variety of localities has grown. TSI Network representatives have also requested more locality support. This year STTS has provided locality support to the following TSIs:

- Inverclyde
- Aberdeenshire
- East Renfrewshire
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Argyle and Bute
- Highland.

### **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**

#### **Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF)**

The STTS project has been an intermediary between the TSI Network and the Scottish Government Family Support Unit, facilitating stronger connections and contacts between the two. The STTS project manager and a TSI representative continue to be members of the Family Support Advisory Group which provides a strong mechanism for the third sector to be involved at this national and strategic level.

Through the TSI commissioning group the project gathered data regarding third sector engagement in the WFWF spending proposals. The report from this process has been provided to Scottish Government and other key stakeholders and has been used to provide a national overview of third sector participation in Tranche 1 of the fund.

#### **GIRFEC Guidance Refresh**

The project ensured the guidance refresh documents were cascaded via social media, our mailing list and included in the STTS newsletter. A representative of the TSI Network is a member of the GIRFEC Stakeholder Engagement Group and delivered a presentation to the network on key changes within the guidance. The project has also been involved in a good practice example working group and has linked small third sector organisations to provide positive practice examples of their role using the National Practice Model as Lead Professionals.

#### **Wider Inclusion of local third sector within national developments**

The TSI Network continues to have representation at a national level on:

- Strategic Leads Network
- Family Support Advisory Group
- GIRFEC Stakeholders Engagement Group
- Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum.

## Key area 4: Supporting local partnerships in developing approaches to embed third sector children's and related services' involvement in planning and reporting

### HGIO Tool

The STTS project has developed a self-evaluation tool based on the How Good framework. This framework was used as most CSPPs will be familiar with the framework, and we wanted to create a useful and easily useable tool. The tool uses the legislation and statutory guidance for Children's Services Planning to form the themes, quality indicators, challenge questions and features of highly effective practice.

This tool has been under development for a few years now and we have used the Strategic Leads Network as a sense checker and worked closely with members of the network to ensure the tool is appropriate, useable and helpful for CSPPs.

STTS supported the trial of the tool in two pilot areas, Inverclyde and South Ayrshire, where the tool was used by CSPPs alongside local third sector forums hosted by third sector.

### Summary

This report demonstrates the excellent progress made across the four key areas to enable Scotland's third sector to work as strong planning partners within children's services both locally and nationally. The project continues to build good working relationships across the third and public sectors to enhance the strategic role of the third sector in Children's Services Planning.

The STTS project has played a significant role in building the capacity of TSIs and representatives from the wider third sector in the past year. The TSI Children's Services Network, which is managed and supported by the project, has established a strong identity nationally, influencing and contributing to decision-making. It is a member of the following key strategic groups: Children and Families National Leadership Group, Children's Sector Strategic Forum, National GIRFEC Stakeholders Group and Children's Services Planning Strategic Leads Network.

However, despite this progress, evidence from the Network indicates that there continue to be significant areas of work where improvements are needed regarding the role and value of the third sector as a robust national and local partner



at a strategic, operational, and frontline practice level. Challenges with resourcing, gathering data and variable connections with CSPPs continue to impede the third sector's ability to be an equitable partner in Children's Services Planning.

The project aims for 2023-24 include building clear links and shared dialogue between the TSI Network and other key stakeholder groups. This will improve awareness of the value and contribution of the TSIs and wider third sector organisations within CSPPs, raising their profile, working collaboratively at a national and local level to find solutions, and overcome identified barriers through constructive dialogue and improvement.

Within Children's Services Planning, the third sector has an important role to play on specific policy areas, for example Holistic Whole Family Support including the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, supporting incorporation of the UNCRC, and realising its responsibilities as duty bearers, and ensuring the sector is contributing to Scotland's commitment to Keep the Promise. The STTS project has a vital role to play to ensure that TSIs and their third sector members are knowledgeable about these national policy drivers, understand the contribution they can make and are well connected nationally and locally to enable full participation of the third sector.

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