



## Supporting the Third Sector Project



### Whole Family Wellbeing Fund Case study 1

### Positive Planning: North Lanarkshire



### Background

This year (2022-23) is the first year of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF), with the £32 million allocation aiming to support Children's Services Planning Partnerships (CSPPs) to:

- Build transformational capacity within each CSPP.
- Test new system approaches to family support in line with strategic plans.
- Scale existing transformative and effective approaches which align with the National Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support, with a view to making the case for their integration into longer term local investment plans.

Both **Part 3 of the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014** and the **Statutory Guidance on Part 3 (Children's Services Planning) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014** highlight the important role that the third sector plays within the local Children's Services Planning process. Multiple roles for the third sector are defined including:

- The preparation of, and consultation on, the Children's Services Plan, to ensure the plan is fully integrated and makes best use of all resources in the area to deliver on local priorities.
- Providing insight on the needs of the local population.
- Joining up with other local partners to agree priorities and actions.
- Identifying all the links and key transition points between services.
- Representing the interests, views, concerns, and wishes of people who use, or are likely to use, any children's or related services.
- Acting as the strategic group responsible for the development and delivery of the plan.
- Ensuring collaboration at every level. (i.e., strategic, operational, frontline).



## Context

**Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire** (VANL) is the Third Sector Interface (TSI) providing support for community and voluntary sector organisations in North Lanarkshire. It hosts a Children, Young People & Families Network, which feeds into and reports to the CSPP.

VANL is a partner organisation of the CSPP and in this role supports third sector engagement and influence through participation on the Board, Officers' Group, and various working groups. During 2022-23, VANL staff supported third sector involvement in developing the new North Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan.

The following description of family support activity in North Lanarkshire, the assessment of what has worked well to date and recommendations for the future, are based on evidence from VANL.



## The view from VANL...

### Family support

In North Lanarkshire the following work has taken place to focus on the policy area of family support:

- Identification of family support as a priority area
- Hosting a Multi-Agency Development Day
- Completion of a Strategic Needs Assessment
- Whole Family Support & Wellbeing Lead now in post.

### Engagement with children, young people and families

The following activities have taken place to enable children, young people and families to contribute to Children's Services Planning:

- A survey of all school pupils using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).
- As part of the CSPP, a Voice group has recently been established to drive the involvement of children and their families in the re-design of services. VANL was approached to ensure there was representation from the sector.
- The Mind of my Own app has been commissioned and promoted in social work practice. This app-based platform engages children and young people to share how they are feeling and express their views and thoughts on their own terms.

- The Promise development workers are leading several activities to learn from the stories and experiences of children and their families, particularly in the areas of conflict with the law, extra familial harm and 'family time' when in care. They are working alongside VANL to identify third sector organisations to include seldom heard children and families.
- Several fun in person events were held to gather the views of children and young people: VANL was involved in the planning of these.

### **Third sector collaboration in WFWF**

The third sector has been involved in meeting the aims of the first year of the WFWF in the following areas:

- Within the CSPP there are several task groups which take forward the actions and priorities of the Children's Services Plan: VANL has representation on all of these.
- VANL is also using other funding streams such as the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to promote whole family approaches to promote and nurture family relationships. For example, as part of the innovative Community Solutions approach led by VANL, in 2021-22, 652 families and more than 1,200 children were supported through local projects co-created between schools, families and the third sector.
- The Promise development workers have worked closely with VANL to support implementation of priorities within The Promise.
- VANL has been involved in a working group using the National Principles of Whole Family Support.

### **Recommendations**

Through the above, VANL has noted the importance of established relationships and structures, commenting that 'we do feel valued as a partner'.

According to the Statutory Guidance on Children's Services Planning, VANL is an equal partner within the CSPP and should be included in planning and implementation.

The Scottish Government should make it part of the condition of the fund that CSPPs work with TSIs, rather than a recommendation.