



A VCSE forum facilitated  
by **Salford CVS**

A meeting for voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises (VCSE's) working with children, young people and families in Salford.

## VOCAL - Representation

### 1. Opportunities– how you can benefit from being a VOCAL representative

As a VOCAL representative you can:

- Influence change for the children, young people and families of Salford and the group/organisation that you work with.
- Gain experience and skills in strategic planning.
- Help other partners to have a better understanding of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector and the contribution that we make.
- Help other VCSE organisations to understand Salford's strategic priorities.
- Receive first hand information from decision makers.
- Build relationships with senior members of partner organisations.
- Network with other groups/organisations in the VCSE sector, including other strategic representatives, so that you can share skills and support each other.
- Promote your organisation through the commitment that you show to representation.
- Develop an understanding of governance and leadership both in the VCSE sector and across partnerships.
- Use this experience as part of your professional development.

### 2. Roles and Responsibilities of Representatives

Broadly, your role as a representative is to speak on behalf of the VOCAL CYPF members who elected you and represent the views and perspectives of the VCSE sector. You should ensure that recommendations which benefit the sector, and our service users, are included in discussions and the work of the partnership. It is expected that you act as an advocate for the VCSE sector and in the interests of the common good as opposed to self interest.

As a condition of your appointment you are asked to fulfil the following expectations of your role and responsibilities as a representative:

- You have the **mandate** (the authority and permission) to take on the responsibility of speaking for VOCAL CYPF because you feed back to and consult with members through VOCAL CYPF structures and because you have been elected by VOCAL CYPF members.
- You are **accountable**, for this role, to the members of VOCAL CYPF, so you must ensure that you undertake the role and its associated responsibilities with due commitment.

Your **must not** represent yourself or the views of your group/organisation in isolation or use this position as a forum for forging alliances for your own or your group's/organisation's interests.

You should not feel that you need to be an expert on everything and you are asked to work only within the range of your knowledge and the scope of VOCAL CYPF.

VOCAL CYPF seeks representatives from voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and across areas of work e.g. early years, children and young people.

Representatives are appointed for a 2 year period with an option for the VOCAL CYPF Forum to review appointments after 12 months. The Executive may replace any retiring representatives and in addition co-opt not more than 3 additional representatives in the event of a new representative role arising between VOCAL CYPF Forum meetings. All new representatives shall be confirmed by the next VOCAL CYPF Forum meeting and subject to ballot every 2 years.

In partnership meetings your role is to:

- Promote what the VCSE sector is doing and be positive about the sector and its contribution to work with partner organisations.
- Work as part of your partnership to contribute to strategic decision-making processes on behalf of the VCSE sector – bringing solutions to meetings as well as highlighting challenges faced by the sector.
- Read papers/ prepare contributions in advance of the meeting and adhere to the terms of reference of the partnership meeting.
- Promote joint working across the VCSE sector, as well as with partners
- To keep lines of communication open and feedback to VOCAL CYPF with the support of Salford CVS, you will let others know about decisions that have been made and items discussed at meetings you attend.

VOCAL CYPF representatives are also asked to engage in relevant learning and development opportunities (supported by Salford CVS) including taking part in training to share experiences with other VOCAL reps, become familiar with key strategies and policy initiatives and develop your skills for influence.

### **3. VOCAL Representation Protocol**

To support people in the role of representation and to ensure accountability to and the sustainability of VOCAL, a representation protocol has been agreed by the membership. Elected representatives will be expected to abide by this protocol.

VOCAL representatives cannot represent the views of all organisations but must endeavour at all times to provide the widest representation for the sector. Where the VOCAL representative may gain a financial benefit for their organisation from the subject under discussion, they must declare a conflict of interest.

Representatives will forfeit their position where they fail to attend 3 consecutive meetings without apologies and written feedback to members or where they fail to conduct themselves appropriately as agreed in this document.

**As representative of VOCAL CYPF for the period March 2017 to March 2019**

**I agree to:**

1. Attend and actively participate in all agreed partnership meetings for the period of election.
2. Provide a broad VCSE sector perspective on the issues under discussion and decisions made.
3. Promote better understanding between VCSE and statutory agencies and develop partners' understanding of the needs, strengths and limitations of VCSE organisations.
4. Contribute to discussions on and ensure the appropriate involvement of the VCSE sector in the resourcing, planning, provision and monitoring outcomes of services to children, young people and families.
5. Consult with other sector colleagues using agreed methods of communication to provide a mandate on specific issues and to disseminate information to all members of VOCAL CYPF and the wider VCSE sector with the support of Salford CVS.
6. Take suitable notes to feedback to VOCAL CYPF and to attend or make other arrangements to feedback to all general meetings of VOCAL CYPF (4 per year).
7. Attend and play an active role in the VOCAL CYPF Reps meetings or provide written feedback with any apologies for absence.
8. Inform other VOCAL CYPF representatives and the Salford CVS Deputy Chief Executive (Projects and Partnerships) where you are unable to attend a partnership meeting.
9. Be willing to provide cover for other VOCAL CYPF representatives and work flexibly in your representative role so that VOCAL CYPF can respond to emerging Children's Trust and Salford Safeguarding Children Board structures.
10. Inform VOCAL CYPF where you are no longer able to maintain commitment to the role of representative or where you may experience a potential conflict of interest.
11. Contribute to the mentoring and induction of new VOCAL CYPF representatives.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_