

Practice Type: Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sectors (VCS) to safeguard children, Worcestershire

Name of Organisation: Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (WCVYS)

What is it?

WCVYS has been working since 2006, supported by funding from CWDC, to ensure that the voluntary and community sectors are operating best practice in relation to the safeguarding needs of children and young people.

Other priorities have been engagement of the sector in the Integrated Work Programme, including the Common Assessment Framework, and enabling the sector to contribute to the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for children and young people in line with the Children's and Young Peoples Plan for Worcestershire.

Who does it, when and where?

Work has been overseen by a steering group which meets on a regular basis to include representation from VCS, LSCB, Children's Services and Chamber of Commerce.

The provision of information for agencies about safeguarding and child protection has been successful, in part due to materials being marketed through the newsletter, website and bulletins and in part due to the extensive networks across which WCVYS has links.

WCVYS provides an effective gateway into the VCS for partner agencies and its staff and Chair are linked to many strategic groups and cross sector networks. This enables them on behalf of the VCS to both feed into and take information from the agendas for the emerging Children's Trust and the LSCB.

What difference has it made?

- Publication of a guidance document, 'Safeguarding Children and Young People - guidance for the voluntary and community sectors'. This is provided to groups free of charge and has been extremely well received and has gained great credibility. This is a comprehensive but accessible document targeted for and extremely relevant to the VCS, endorsed and promoted by the LSCB.
- Publication of a family of leaflets providing information in respect of CAF, managing allegations against staff, and the responsibilities of trustees and management committees (to include translations into other languages).
- Production of wallet size cards giving advice about what to do if you have concerns about children and young people and relevant phone numbers.
- Regular newsletters and bulletins which include a section on safeguarding issues and training.
- Convening conferences and workshops for agencies on safeguarding children and young people, safe recruitment and the management of allegations against staff.
- Support for organisations in developing safeguarding and safe recruitment policies.
- Work is ongoing in relation to the development of a safeguarding accreditation scheme for agencies in Worcestershire.

It is clear that WCVYS has succeeded in delivering the safeguarding message across VCS. A survey of organisations indicated that 55% of respondents considered themselves 'well informed' on safeguarding issues and a further 45% considered themselves 'informed'. 90% of respondents were familiar with the guidance document and 55% of respondents had staff who had attended core safeguarding training provided by LSCB.

In summary, WCVYS continues to demonstrate that it has credibility with strategic partners and is also trusted by VCS organisations themselves. It is ideally positioned to support and challenge as appropriate and demonstrates an example of very strong partnership working within Worcestershire.

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