



VOCypf Forum Group Exercise, March 2019, Delegate comment:
"very useful visual exercise to remind us of how many organisations/individuals could be involved and how this feels to a young person."

VOCypf Who We Are

Voluntary Organisations for Children, Young People and Families (VOCypf) is a network of voluntary and community organisations who work with children, young people and families in Bedfordshire. We exist to champion the voluntary and community sector in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

Message from Michele Flynn, VOCypf CHAIR

VOCypf has been through a period of change over the past year. After 3 years of service, Gemma, the VOCypf Officer moved on to pastures new presenting us with the opportunity to reconsider our structure and look at how we represent the sector across the two local authority areas. In consultation with both authorities, we re-shaped our representation structure to actively involve more senior officers of voluntary sector organisations, drawing on their knowledge and expertise in delivering local services. We reviewed the key meetings in each authority area and now have a clear structure where every locality area in Central Beds is covered and we are involved in key meetings across Bedford Borough. VOCypf supported the launch of the new pan Bedfordshire Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Multi Agency Forum. We extended our direct connections with organisations through the forums and project work linked to strengthening safeguarding in the sector and newsletter audience has grown by 9%.

I would like to express my thanks to our committed staff and executive committee members who have worked hard through a year of change and challenge. We have emerged stronger, more focused and ready to support the sector in 2019 and beyond.

VOCypf Our Aims

- To **identify** the needs of children, young people and families in the local community
- To **assist** local voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families to work effectively and deliver quality services
- To **facilitate** effective communication, networking and collaboration within the sector and with other sectors
- To **inform** voluntary and community organisations by disseminating information on sector developments and opportunities for funding and training
- To **advocate** on behalf of the sector and enhance its role as an integral part of local planning, policy making, commissioning and service delivery
- To **encourage engagement** between local voluntary and community organisations and statutory partners

We are funded and supported by:



Looking back: Key achievements in 2018/19

- ◆ Contributed to key meetings and events in both LAs including: Central Bedfordshire - Safeguarding Children Boards and sub-groups (CSE Strategic Group and Training & Development Group); Learning & Improvement LSCB Sub-group, PREVENT Group and Partnership Vision for Education Board. Bedford Borough - Child Health & Well-Being Board; Domestic Abuse Delivery Group; and SEND Virtual Team Meeting.
- ◆ Actively engaged with both LAs to provide a VOCyfp perspective on issues affecting children, young people and families.
- ◆ Administered the training Bursary Fund.
- ◆ Contributed to Central Bedfordshire's Locality Hub Project with research on organisations working in each locality.
- ◆ Extended membership of the Counselling Collective, introduced guest speakers and extended remit to include child mental health and well being.
- ◆ Held two half-day Forum Events for organisations in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire with input from the LAs and other partners.
- ◆ Completed a Safeguarding Project - working with selected organisations in Bedford Borough.
- ◆ Continued to produce and circulate fortnightly newsletter.

VOCyfp Executive Group

Members 2018/19:

Paul Chandler (YMCA Bedfordshire)
 Mark Clarke (Walk to Freedom)
 Emma Cook (YMCA Bedfordshire—shared role)
 Michele Flynn (Bedford Open Door)
 Wendie Harvey (FACES)
 Diana Hedley (Groundwork)
 Michael Howe (Families First Bedfordshire)
 Rebecca Ireland (YMCA Bedfordshire—shared role)
 Len Simkins (Independent Chair)
 Martin Trinder (CVS Bedfordshire)
 Gemma Williamson (VOCyfp Officer)

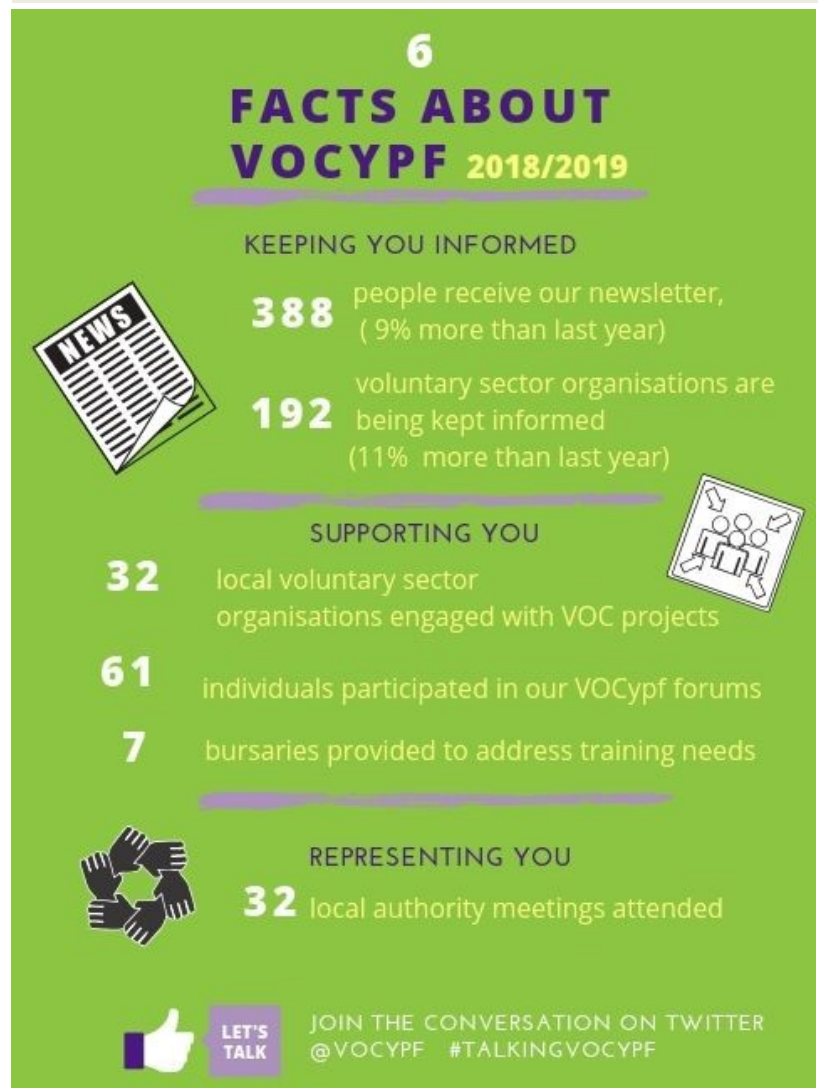
Our thanks to Len Simkins (Independent Chair) and Paul Chandler (YMCA Bedfordshire) for their contributions to the group, before their departure during 2018. We also welcome Julie Bowes (Sorted) who has joined us in 2019/20.

Looking forward: Priorities for VOCyfp 2019/20

The Executive Committee has agreed the following five areas of priority, and will be looking to stimulate interest, connect with existing groups and represent the sector, setting up focus groups where needed on:

- ◆ the prevention of child sexual exploitation and gang related crimes
- ◆ mental health & wellbeing
- ◆ supporting the needs of young unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees
- ◆ the impact of poverty and the housing crisis on children and young people
- ◆ safeguarding children and young people

If you are interested in engaging with us in any of these areas please contact us at info@voc-yfp.org



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