**Start Well VCSE Sub Group**

**Terms of Reference**

**Purpose and Objectives**

The Start Well group aims to support the work and development of voluntary community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations that work with children and young people in Barnsley. It’s primary objectives include:

* Championing the work of VCSE organisations in Barnsley
* Fostering partnership work in our sector
* Providing a coherent strategic voice to public and private sector organisations in our field
* Nurturing the development of partner organisations, their work force and volunteers
* Facilitating the communication of ideas, opportunities and good practice, in a spirit of openness, inclusivity and transparency.

**Membership**

The membership of the Start Well group will be drawn from representatives of VCSE organisations delivering services and support to children and young people (from birth to 25 years of age) in Barnsley. Members of the group will be invited by Barnsley CVS, who will also maintain a list of members for the purposes of communication and distribution of papers. There are no additional selection criteria or appointment processes for attendance of the Start Well group and it is our intention that membership should be as open and inclusive as possible.

There is no maximum number of members. Should the number of members on the membership list fall below 5, the Chair of the VCSE Strategy group has the right to dissolve the Start Well group without the need for reference to the remaining members.

The Start Well group will be chaired by a maximum of 3 members per year. This will be on a rotating basis and they will chair 2 or 3 meetings in a row, depending on how many Chair’s have been elected. The first meeting of the group will be chaired by the acting Chair of the VCSE Strategy group, who will preside over the election of a new Start Well Chair/s, to be elected from those attending the first meeting. Start Well Chairs will preside for one year. At the last meeting of their chairmanship, they will oversee the election of the next Chair/s, who will similarly preside for one year from the next meeting. The Chair/s will be expected to lead meetings to facilitate open discussion and safeguard the group’s purposes and objectives in a spirit of inclusivity and transparency.

**Decision-making**

For the making of decisions on behalf of the Start Well group, a minimum of 5 members representing 5 different member organisations must be present.

It is expected that decisions will be made ordinarily by consensus. Where such a consensus is not apparent to the Chair/s, or where any member present contests that no consensus has been reached, the Chair/s will call for a show of hands of members to ascertain a decision. In such situations, each member organisation will have one vote and a simple majority will decide the outcome. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair/s will have the deciding casting vote.

**Meetings**

Start Well group meetings will be scheduled to be held every 2 months. Unless scheduled for any special purpose, meetings will last no longer than 2 hours. The dates and times of meetings will be set by the Chair/s, with reference to the needs of the membership and the availability of the greatest number. Meetings will be scheduled for the forthcoming year at the Chair’s first meeting.

Additional meetings outside of the routine two-monthly schedule can be called by the Chair/s and meetings can be re-scheduled only when members have been given at least 14 days notice.

The Chair/s will ensure that an agenda for each meeting and any appropriate papers have been distributed by email at least 7 days before the meeting is held. They will also ensure the taking of appropriate minutes and the signing of minutes that have been accepted as accurate by the group.

The minutes, decisions and papers for all meetings will be made available to all members, irrespective of whether they have attended the meeting and key decisions and papers may be disseminated by Barnsley CVS as newsletters or through online platforms.

Ordinarily, Start Well group meetings will be held online by video conferencing. From time to time the membership may decide to convene face to face meetings if the purposes of such meetings are better served by members working in person as a group.

In line with the practice of the VCSE Strategy group, the membership may choose to open part of the Start Well group meetings to non-members, (most often representatives of public sector partner organisations), to better facilitate the sharing of information. Every meeting will have a significant proportion of time set aside for member-only discussion.

**Delegated powers**

The Start Well group has the power delegated in it by the VCSE Strategy group to nominate and elect representatives to other groups and bodies whose work and influence affects the wellbeing of children and young people in Barnsley, or the work of VCSE organisations who support them; in such instances, the request for a representative will first be made to the VCSE Strategy group and referred on to the Start Well group.

**Review of these terms of reference**

These terms of reference will be reviewed annually or more frequently at the discretion of the Chair/s.

These terms of reference were reviewed and updated on the 19th September 2024. They will be reviewed again in September 2025.