

# Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

## 11. Campaigning and influencing

### 11.16 The role of TSSW in third sector influencing and engagement



#### 1. Context

Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW), the 19 County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and WCVA as the national membership body, provides an infrastructure of support for the third sector across Wales, with a reach to our combined membership of >6000, and many more through our local, regional and national networks.

TSSW's long term shared goal is to:

*Enable the third sector and volunteers across Wales to contribute fully to individual and community well-being, now and for the future.*

We work with citizens, volunteers and third sector groups to identify and address what matters to them. Our core activities to strengthen the third sector and volunteering focus on:

- Enabling and supporting
- Being a catalyst
- Engaging and influencing

The goal for TSSW's influencing and engagement work is for public policies and services to be improved through third sector influencing at local, regional and national levels.

We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Third sector organisations' role in engaging and working with people and communities, including seldom heard groups is recognised;
- Third sector organisations have the skills and capacity to effectively influence and shape policy at all levels;
- Third sector organisations meaningfully engage with each other and co-produce policies and services with public bodies;
- Individuals and groups inform and influence policy development, service planning and delivery;
- Public bodies recognise the value and the current and potential contribution of third sector organisations.

This document provides information about how WCVA and the 19 CVCs work with the third sector in Wales to influence policy and implantation at local, regional and national levels.

## 2. Why should the third sector be involved in influencing?

Wales benefits from the third sector and volunteering in many ways. According to the National Survey for Wales, 28% of people volunteered in 2016-17. With an estimated income of £1.9bn p/a, the third sector accounts for almost 8% of employment in Wales, with 100,000 people employed in third sector organisations, ([Third Sector Data Hub, WCVA](#)) many of whom are involved in delivering or supporting the delivery of public services. We make a significant contribution to the Welsh economy!

The third sector is well placed to make a fundamental contribution to the co-production of service development, delivery and commissioning.

The third sector can:

- Act as a critical friend, able to contribute alternative perspectives;
- Represent and support the views of third sector groups and organisations, the public and service users to influence the design, management and delivery of public services;
- Bring experiences from grass roots level to operational and strategic level;
- Reach groups that public sector organisations cannot reach;
- Bring innovative and creative approaches to service planning;
- Contribute considerable expertise in specialist areas; and
- Design and deliver public services that are citizen centred, needs based and outcomes led.

## 3. How can the third sector be involved in influencing through public sector governance arrangements?

In order to promote an influential voice for the third sector in public sector governance arrangements, that brings together the collective voices and experiences across the sector, TSSW partners will:

- **Provide information** - including regular briefings and circulate minutes and updates of strategic meetings to the relevant networks and representatives;
- **Facilitate networks** - to provide opportunities for information sharing, cross-sector partnership, dialogue, co-production and co-operation and a mechanism to gather feedback and views to feed into external bodies;
- **Connect** - third sector representatives involved in local, regional and national public sector governance arrangements with relevant networks.
- **Report** – on influencing and engagement activities in annual and other reports;
- **Provide a third sector perspective in public sector governance arrangements** - present a strategic perspective of the collective membership or constituency in our role as local or national umbrella body and contribute reports on trends and campaign on shared issues where appropriate.
- **Work with networks to adopt protocols and processes for electing and supporting third sector representatives** who have the skills and experiences relevant to the remit of subject specific groups to provide third sector representation in governance arrangements.

## 4. Third sector influencing channels

TSSW partners make available a range of channels that support the sector to have an influential voice in public policy and services. This includes facilitating third sector networks, which offer opportunities for groups and organisations to share information, collaborate, and coordinate influencing and representation.

By facilitating networks, TSSW partners have regular engagement with our members and a wide range of organisations. Senior CVC and WCVA staff bring this intelligence to share a broad perspective on issues across the sector through involvement in local, regional and national programme boards and partnerships. Third sector networks also provide a forum for elected 'representatives' to engage with a wide network of third sector stakeholders.

### *Local level*

CVCs facilitate a range of thematic networks at local level, which are linked to important areas of third sector activity, such as health and social care, mental health, children and young people. Often these networks link with local and regional public sector governance structures such as Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) and Children and Young People's Partnerships, and provide a mechanism for public bodies and the third sector to communicate and share information.

Local compact arrangements exist between the majority of local authorities in Wales and their local third sector partners, supporting third sector involvement and influence.

There are a number of joint local forums, often facilitated by CVCs, which bring together local groups with local authority officials and Councillors to address issues of shared local importance.

**Public Services Boards:** the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\)](#) is a piece of legislation which cuts across all public sector activities and requires the 44 public bodies in Wales to work together to identify the needs of the population and jointly plan and deliver services to meet the well-being goals. The Act requires a **Public Services Board (PSB)** to be established in each local authority area in Wales to bring together key partners to oversee the drafting and delivery of the Local Wellbeing Plan. CVC Chief Officers are involved in each PSB as an invited member on behalf of the third sector. Their role is to act as an important partner in engaging the third sector in understanding the PSB's work programmes and local service delivery. CVC officers are also involved with public sector partners in the local 'engagement and representation' sub groups of PSBs.

[Find your local Public Services Board](#)

### *Regional level*

#### **Regional Partnership Boards**

The [Social Services & Well-being Act \(Wales\)](#) provides a framework for improving the well-being of adults and children who need care and support, plus their carers, and for transforming the way care and support is provided now and in the future in Wales. Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) have been established to oversee the

implementation of the Act. The Act requires the inclusion of local and national third sector representatives in these governance arrangements. CVC Chief Officers have been invited by RPBs to provide the 'local' representation, and each RPB is responsible for overseeing a process to elect a 'national' third sector representative.

[Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership](#)

[Cwm Taff Morgannwg Well-being and Social Services Partnership Board](#)

[Gwent Regional Partnership Board](#)

[North Wales Collaborative](#)

[Powys Regional Partnership Board](#)

[Western Bay Regional Partnership Board](#)

[West Wales Care Partnership](#)

Other public sector services that organise on a regional level include:

- Regional education consortia
- Regional transport consortia
- Police Forces and the offices of Police and Crime Commissioners

CVCs offer guidance on the appropriate channels for connecting with these bodies.

*National level*

The [Third Sector Scheme \(TSS\)](#) is unique to Wales and is a statutory requirement of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The scheme requires the Welsh Government to set out how it will promote the interests of third sector organisations, and describes how Government and the third sector will work together and communicate with one another. It offers the third sector formal routes for talking to Government and raising the concerns of our members and service users.

The Welsh Government produces an [annual report on progress under the Third Sector Scheme](#). Please see further [information about the Welsh Government and the third sector](#).

Engagement routes under the scheme include:

[\*\*Third Sector Partnership Council \(TSPC\)\*\*](#)

The TSPC is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, with membership comprising elected [representatives of third sector networks](#) working across 25 areas of third sector activity, plus the Chief Executive of WCVA.

The TSPC also has a Funding and Compliance Sub Committee which monitors the [code of practice for funding the third sector](#) and considers any breaches of the code or concerns from the sector regarding funding issues.

[\*\*Cabinet Secretary meetings\*\*](#)

Two [Ministerial meetings](#) take place per year between the sector and each Welsh Government Minister and their officials. This is an important route for the sector to

raise strategic issues, influence policy making and improve service delivery. WCVA organises **Planning Groups** for each Ministerial portfolio; members include TSPC representatives, and national third sector networks and organisations that bring together groups sharing a common interest; individual organisations are asked to act as a champion for interest areas where no network exists.

Planning Groups for each government portfolio are an important mechanism for sharing information and for connecting, co-ordinating and involving third sector organisations in influencing at national level.

Alongside these formal arrangements for dialogue, there are a wide range of public sector strategic groups and partnerships at national level, which involve third sector members.

Information about TSPC and Ministerial meetings is available on [WCVA's website](#) and through a bi-monthly Policy & Public Affairs Digest for WCVA Members.


### **How can I get involved in third sector influencing?**

[Contact CVCs](#) to receive information about local and regional influencing opportunities, meetings and activities and contact [help@wcva.cymru](mailto:help@wcva.cymru) for information about influencing at a national level.

### **Disclaimer**

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

### **For further information contact**

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