

Young Lives Leeds Forum Terms of Reference September 2023

Who we are:

Young Lives Leeds Forum is the strategic forum for Third Sector organisations working to improve the lives of children, young people, and their families in Leeds. We work to support the vision for Leeds to be a Child Friendly city the best city for children and young people to grow up in.

Young Lives Leeds aims to give third sector organisations and groups across the city the voice, information and advice they need to support children and young people and their families across Leeds. It gives opportunities for third sector organisations to be part of decisions that help shape policy and keeps members up to date with key developments within services for children and young people across the city.

Young Lives Leeds Forum will:

- Place children and young people at the heart of all developments.
- Use a restorative approach in all the work we do.
- Be inclusive.
- Promote the Children and Young People's plan and other related strategies.
- Promote the "Compact for Leeds".
- Promote best partnership practice.
- Improve citywide third sector communication and engagement around children's issues.

What we do:

- Support the strategic development of third sector organisations / groups working with children, young people and their families. Act as the single point of contact for statutory agencies / partners that are looking to engage with the third sector.
- Improve third sector communication about children's issues using a range of methods.
- Enable the engagement of the third sector in decisions that impact on the lives of children, young people, and their families.
- Provide an effective strategic representation system and accountability for Young Lives Leeds Forum membership.
- Encourage partnership working within the third sector as well as across other sectors to maximise resources and enable new resources.
- Showcase the work the sector does with children, young people and their families and the positive impact this work has on their lives.

How we work:

- The forum has two Co -Chairs.
- The Chair positions will be reviewed every three years.
- Members are groups/organisations that work with children, young people and their families.
- The work of Young Lives Leeds Forum is guided by its members who also advocate for Young Lives Leeds at a strategic level.

- Forum meetings take place every eight weeks.
- Additional workshops and events will also take place to explore new and emerging issues; the frequency of these will be guided by members.
- Voluntary Action Leeds facilitates Young Lives Leeds Forum and provides support to its members and advocates.

Strategic representation:

Strategic representation for Young Lives Leeds is provided through our advocate structure. Young Lives Leeds advocates can represent the views of the sector giving us the opportunity to impact upon local issues and policies that affect children and young people.

Any opportunities to represent Young Lives Leeds at a strategic level will be shared amongst members. All expressions of interest will be returned to the YLL Team, if more than one expression of interest is received the Co-Chairs will consider who is best placed to represent the sector. This decision will be made based on a candidate's knowledge and experience and relevance to the vacancy.

Young Lives Leeds currently has advocates on the following boards:

- Leeds Children's Partnership Board
- Early Help Board
- People's Commissioning Group
- Scrutiny Board – Children & Families
- SEND Board
- 0 – 5 Partnership Board
- 14 – 19 Strategic Partnership Board
- Children's Joint Commissioning
- Best Start Board

There are also opportunities to represent Young Lives Leeds at other subgroups and time limited 'task and finish' groups. The same process as above will be followed to appoint YLL members to these positions.

Advocates will be required to:

- Advocate for Young Lives Leeds at a strategic level to ensure that the voice of the third sector informs policy and decision making.
- Feedback the key points from each meeting to the Young Lives Leeds Team so that this can be shared with the wider membership.
- Attend at least three Forum meetings in person each year to answer any questions from members regarding their feedback.

If an advocate has not attended three consecutive meetings the Forum worker will contact them to discuss the barriers to their attendance, and whether alternative arrangements would remove or lower these barriers.

When this conversation has taken place, if the advocate does not attend for a further two meetings the Co-Chairs and Forum Worker will discuss a course of remedial action which may include asking the advocate to step down from the position.

The Young Lives Leeds team will support the advocates in their role and will attend meetings if the advocate is unavailable (only if the relevant board allows this).

The Young Lives Leeds team will collate response from the membership to support the advocate in their role, distribute feedback from the advocates to the wider membership.

Our values

- Young Lives Leeds takes a restorative approach to its work, providing high support and high challenge to help improve the lives of children, young people, and their families across the city.
- Young Lives Leeds Forum respects and welcomes all participants irrespective of ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other factor.
- Members will respect the views and opinions of other members, guests and speakers at Young Lives Leeds Forum meetings or events.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.