

This is me

Fiona Castle, VCSE sector advocate on the Bristol Children and Families Partnership Board

Fiona works for Imayla CIC, which offers learning opportunities for young people, families and groups, combining creative arts and environmental activities. With a background in both statutory and voluntary sectors, she became an Advocate to support local development at a policy and service delivery level on behalf of the sector.



What propelled you to become a VCSE sector Advocate?

I believe in the value of an informed and trained sector with a collective voice and have benefited from Voscur's support.

What are the top things that the Board has been working on that are relevant to the VCSE sector?

Increasing Early Intervention work across the city and improving partnership, synergy and communication between the agencies, organisations and sectors.

If you could wish one thing for the voluntary sector in Bristol, what would it be?

That the sector was seen as a skilled and equal-delivery partner across the city.

What would make the biggest difference to improving equality in society?

We're in difficult times – fairer income distribution, more culturally sensitive and diverse service delivery, moral news and food industries, broader and more inviting learning environments.

In Bristol in particular: listening

to people and communities in need and acting on those voices. There's more than one way to peel an egg!

What do you think is the secret to being influential?

I could say I wish I knew or it's a secret! Listening well, offering rather than shouting ideas and opinions, and believing in the good of people to bring out the best in them.

If you could pick one example of seeing, with your own eyes, lives changed by the voluntary sector in Bristol, what would it be?

I can't pick one, my mind doesn't work that way! I hear and see so many times the results of the energy, commitment and skill across the sector working for better conditions for individuals, families and communities across our city. So many people going the extra mile – sometimes when they're really tired!

What is your favourite spot in Bristol and why?

Here's two! City based: cycling through Castle Park at night towards Bristol Bridge. Out into

nature – walking along the Frome Valley from Eastville Park, up through Oldbury Court past the playground (every community should have one!) and on to a coffee shop in Fishponds.

What was the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

If you have to make a decision and it's a really hard choice, either option will probably work for you. :)

What makes you happy?

The natural environment, cooperation and sensibility. Coffee and a quality piece of cake.

Tell us one thing about you that people would never guess.

I survived a tree falling on my tent last year; I feel I might have used one of my lives. I wonder how many I've got!

For more information about our VCSE sector Advocates,



video updates and to get in touch with them, visit: www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk/advocates