

Constitution for Sutton Parent Carer Forum

Aim

The aim of the forum shall be:

- To give a voice to parents and carers of disabled children and young people in Sutton and, as appropriate, the surrounding areas
- To work together in partnership to influence and contribute to the development of services
- To use the grant from Department for Education and LA effectively to grow and strengthen participation in Sutton
- To be the contact point for Local Authority requests for consultation, parental involvement or participation in any work streams
- To consider new opportunities, to support families and develop service provision, as they arise
- To hold regular events and coffee mornings where parent/carers will have an opportunity to share views and gain information, advice and support

Membership

- Full membership of the forum shall be open to any individual parent or carer without regard to disability, political or religious affiliation, race, culture, socio-economic status, sex or sexual orientation
- The Forum shall be managed by a Steering Group of no fewer than 6 and no more than 8 members with advice/input from trusted strategic partners
- The officers of the Steering Group shall consist of a chair, secretary and treasurer; there is no fixed term of position
- The Steering Group may co-opt onto the committee individuals in an advisory and non-voting capacity who it feels will help to fulfil the aims of the Forum
- The Steering Group shall meet half termly but more frequently as and when required, with weekly working parties during term time
- At least 4 Steering Group members including the chair and treasurer must be present for a Steering Group meeting to be quorate
- Voting at meetings will normally be by show of hands but other alternatives can take place by agreement and the majority vote rules
- Meetings are to be held during the school day but with plenty of notice to allow parents who work or attend college to make necessary arrangements
- Should any conflict arise between the Steering Group, an independent arbitrator can be invited in possibly with the Local Authority and other agencies and strategic partners
- Steering Group Members need to give 4 weeks notice in writing
- Besides the day to day activities of the Forum, Sutton Parents Forum Steering Group has the authority to generate new funds by agreed fundraising activities

Duties of the Officers

Chair:

- Chair all the Steering Group meetings
- Ensure that minutes are taken and distributed prior to meetings
- Ensure that decisions taken are with the majority agreement
- To act as the key link from the forum with the Local Authority unless otherwise agreed by Steering Group
- To represent the forum views
- To arrange meetings and all necessary papers prior to the meeting
- To send out information to forum members as agreed by the steering group
- To ensure dates for meetings are set well in advance at end of meeting
- Apply for DfE grants via Contact a Family
- Consider and plan development of the forum and apply for additional funding streams where appropriate

Duties of Committee Members:

- Attend meetings and cafés
- Carry out work as directed
- Consider and plan development of the forum and apply for additional funding streams where appropriate

Co-Secretaries or Secretary:

- To take minutes at each meeting, ways of sharing to be determined by secretaries

Finance Officers:

- Apply for DfE grants via Contact a Family
- To keep accurate account of expenditure
- Produce financial statements to share with the steering group about expenditure
- Consider and plan development of the forum and apply for additional funding streams
- Ensure that accounts are independently examined by an approved, qualified Auditor

Code of Conduct for Steering Group Members at meetings:

- To remember that members are representing the forum for all parent/carers of disabled children and young people
- Members will complete safeguarding training and be DBS checked to ensure they can demonstrate an understanding of guidelines and confidentiality
- Steering Group members should not refer to or seek to promote their own child

or young people, personal aims, or own organisation when representing the forum

- Listen, respect others opinions and ensure a shared decision
- Give everyone a chance to speak to ensure quiet members are not ignored but encouraged to participate,
- Use opinion sheets to give everyone a chance to write it down if necessary or preferred
- Respect members' cultures
- Okay to bring children if absolutely necessary and with prior agreement of the SG
- Be punctual. The meeting will start on time. Apologies for not attending steering group need to be given
- Apologies need to be given as soon as possible if not attending other meetings so an alternative representative can be found
- Find what works for all of the group re-dates and times of meeting
- Ensure personal experience is only used to appropriately inform parent forum feedback
- Develop a culture of Democracy within the group
- Ensure fairness and equity of representation to ensure forum is represented in the best way by the most appropriate forum member. Develop a criteria to determine the best representative
- Communication from the forum to the Local Authority will come via the chair following agreement from the steering group
- Minutes from the steering group will go to all the steering group members
- Members representing the forum at any external meeting are to be respectful and professional at all times even if disagreeing with information at the meetings
- Two parents should ,where possible, attend meetings to support each other and ensure that all information is understood
- Information from any meeting is to be reported back to the steering group in written/electronic format
- When making any challenges to the LA or any other organisation, members are to be clear they have all the necessary information and evidence necessary prior to any challenge
- Steering Group members should adhere to Chatham House Rules – keep information that is deemed confidential within the group and agree what is shared by a wider audience
- Any conflict between individual steering group members should be addressed initially via the chair
- Any group members not adhering to the code of conduct can be asked to leave the steering group by a majority vote

Criteria for Representing the Forum

- Willing and confident to represent the wider forum

- Commitment to attend Steering Group and cafés regularly
- Has knowledge and understanding of the agenda
- Willing to gather information about topic from others
- Able to feed back to the group
- Shadows another SG member for first 3 Boards

Dissolution

If a meeting by simple majority decides that it is necessary to close down the Forum, it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the Forum.

If it is agreed to dissolve the Forum, all remaining money and other assets once outstanding debts have been paid will be returned to the appropriate funding bodies.

Any other funds raised by means of the Forum's activities will be donated to a charity of unanimous choice.

This constitution was agreed at the Forum Group Meeting in September 2018

Name and position in Forum

Signature

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Signature

To be revised March 2017

