

7.1 Partnership Board Terms of Reference Template

Purpose

- Offering a community perspective on the strategic development of the centre
- Supporting and challenging the centre manager/co-ordinator to help centre services respond effectively to local needs
- Contributing a wide range of views to the self evaluation of the centre and the external quality assessment processes
- Acting as an advisory board for the centre manager/co-ordinator to strengthen the decisions made

Principles

- All members have an equal status
- Not attending 3 meetings in a row without giving apologies will be considered as resignation from the Partnership Board
- The whole board will be involved in advising and supporting the centre manager/co-ordinator
- Once decisions are taken, all members should abide by, and support, the decisions taken by the centre manager/co-ordinator and support their implementation
- The Partnership Board periodically review its own ways of working
- The chair can act as a sounding board for the centre manager/co-ordinator in an emergency, but the rest of the board should be informed at the earliest opportunity
- The board's work will focus on the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, developing strategies to meet the needs of all families in the local community, especially those most in need
- Members will seek to become well-informed about the centre, its service delivery and working practices
- There is no quorum rule for partnership boards as they are advisory bodies and decisions can still be made in the event of a low turnout at a meeting. However, it is desirable to have a minimum representation of the three groups (i.e. parents, practitioners and community reps) in meetings and to keep attendance records so that problems may be addressed.

Tasks

- Attending the meetings of the Partnership Board; and any necessary training courses

- Working as a member of the Partnership Board, not as an individual, in the best interests of the centre
- Working with the centre manager/co-ordinator on developing the delivery plans and completing the annual self-evaluation form
- Offering support to the centre manager/co-ordinator in consulting with the local community about their needs and promoting the work of the centre

Membership

Partnership Boards consist of a minimum of 6, maximum of 15 members. The constitution includes :

- **Parents/carers/users representatives** are elected/nominated by the Parents' Forum. A parent/carer/user perspective will be offered by someone who is not providing a service through the children's centre. The parent/carer/user will be an actual or potential user of the centre. If they provide services under the auspices of the Children's Centre, whether as a paid employee or volunteer, they are eligible to participate in the Practitioner's Forum and can be nominated to serve on the Partnership Board as a provider, not as a parent or user.
- The **definition of a parent** in the Education Acts includes:
 - all natural parents whether they are married or not
 - any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person and
 - any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.
- **Practitioner/provider representatives** include the centre manager and nominee of the third party where applicable. Other places are filled by those practitioner/provider representatives elected/nominated by the Practitioner's Forum, They are people providing services under the auspices of the Children's Centre, either paid or unpaid, under contract or informally. If someone is eligible to join the partnership board under the practitioner/provider category, they will not be eligible to join it in any other capacity.
- Practitioners/providers will need to discuss the commitment they are undertaking in serving on a Partnership Board with their line managers. HCC staff will need to be members in a voluntary capacity. Other practitioners will need to distinguish between the routine conducting of their day-job (not a reason to join a Partnership Board) and the contribution that the Partnership Board does require : the perspective of all providers at a strategic level. This may assist Practitioners when they are considering whether to contribute their time to the Practitioner Forum or to the Partnership Board.

- **The site rep** contributes the view of those responsible for the site where the centre operates. The intention with this role is to have someone who can support and challenge the implications of activities on one part of the site on another part ;raise questions of security etc. This place will not be necessary where the site and the children's centre are directly managed by the same organisation.
- **Third party representative** (where the centre is managed by a third-party, including schools). This does not apply to HCC managed centres. For third party and school managed centres, the representative should be able to contribute an awareness of implications of the activities of the Children's Centre for other work of the organisation. They hold the contract to provide all services to the children's centre and must be invited to have this place on the board.

Community/Voluntary representatives will have no direct interest in the services provided by the centre i.e. not a provider or user of a service) but be able to bring a broader community perspective to the decisions taken. They will include:

- **Representative nominated by the local county councillor**
- Representative from **school governing bodies** (from surrounding schools) – The schools that surround a children's centre should have a rep for all of them in this role. Head teachers are eligible to serve on the Partnership Board except where they will be line managing the centre manager/co-ordinator in , for example, a school managed centre.
- Representatives from other local organisations such as health, job centres, employers, voluntary groups, faith groups or members of the public who simply wish to contribute to their community.

Procedures for Meetings

- Individual member opinions are confidential
- The chairperson will be elected by the Partnership Board
- Agendas will be drawn up by the centre manager/co-ordinator following consultation with the chair and the clerk
- Minutes/Agendas/other papers to be sent out at least one week in advance by the Partnership Board clerk
- Any paperwork sent out is to be read by members before the meeting
- Individual member opinions are confidential
- The clerk will maintain a pecuniary interest register, reviewed annually and amended whenever people's personal circumstances change.

- Anyone with a pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in an agenda item must leave the meeting for that item and take no part in the discussion or decision