

Early Years and Extended Services

DRAFT CONSTITUTION FOR THE HEREFORDSHIRE EARLY YEARS AND EXTENDED SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

Function:

1. The members of the EYES Partnership's main function is to promote develop, maintain good quality, accessible, affordable childcare and early years education and review early years and extended schools provision within the Herefordshire Council's policies for the Children's and Young Peoples' Service, and within relevant national policies.

Aims:

2. To achieve this the Partnership will: -
- Recognise the importance of all sectors and the role they play
 - Promote and respect the diversity of provision
 - Work together to develop high quality services
 - Support the development of integrated services for children aged 0-5 years by partnership working with colleagues in health education and family support services
 - Respond to the aspirations and needs of local communities
 - Make the best use of available resources
 - Promote the best interests of children and improve their life chances
 - Value the importance of play and consistency of care
 - Celebrate success and share good practice
 - Emphasise training and encourage, develop and maintain good communication between Partners and the wider community

Principal Objectives:

3. The Partnership will: -
- Share information
 - Debate issues
 - Consult with key partners and agencies
 - Receive reports from working groups or sub groups of the Partnership
 - Report issues to the Children and Young People Partnership, and consider issues referred from it
 - Help to shape childcare and extended schools services for all children and young people
 - Meet the diverse needs and aspirations of children locally, and of their parents
 - Address diversity issues
 - Bring together the maintained, private and voluntary sectors in a spirit of co-operation and partnership, based on existing good practice

Membership:

4. Membership of the Partnership will include the following: -
 - A representative of Herefordshire Council
 - Representatives of providers and parents in early years provider groups
 - Representatives of Children's Centre Services areas
 - Representatives of Herefordshire schools
 - Representatives of the National Health Service in Herefordshire
 - Representatives of relevant local and national agencies and bodies involved with early years and extended schools provision in Herefordshire
5. Officers of the Herefordshire administration of early years and extended schools provision will be attending in supporting roles
6. The membership of the Partnership will normally not exceed 30. The Partnership has powers to co-opt.

Tenure of Office:

7. It is for each nominated body to decide who should represent them at the Partnership, and the period of time each such member should serve. Each nominated body should notify the Democratic Services Officer accordingly. If requests are received to become a nominated body by an organisation that carries out services compatible with the partnerships functions this should be put in writing and considered at the meeting of the partnership following receipt.
8. Membership of the Partnership shall cease if the nominated body: -
 - resigns in writing
 - if the representative of a nominated body fails to attend for three consecutive meetings then that nominated body will be notified by the Head of Legal and Democratic services in writing seeking an explanation or request the nomination of an alternative representative. Such nominations shall be approved by the Partnership.

Substitutes:

9. Each nominated body may arrange for a substitute to attend when its formal representative cannot do so. That arrangement is designed to ensure that a nominated body can always be represented, though it is important for there to be as much continuity as possible from one meeting to the next.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman:

10. At its first meeting at the beginning of each municipal year, usually the meeting following the 1st April in any year, the Partnership will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
11. If both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are absent from the meeting the Partnership will elect from its number a Chairman for the meeting.
12. If the Chairman and Vice Chairman resign then the Partnership will elect from the meeting following such resignation a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman until the following 1st April.

Calendar of meetings:

13. The Partnership will meet at least once a term and will determine the dates of meetings as far as possible on an annual basis.
14. Extraordinary meetings may be convened at the request of 3 members of the Partnership. In such cases, the timing and date of the meeting will be determined following consultation with the Chairman.

Timing of meetings:

15. Meetings will start at times acceptable to the Partnership, and will normally be limited to two hours duration.

Quorum:

16. The Quorum for the Partnership will be one third minimum number of members of the approved membership.

Convening and notice of the meetings:

17. All meetings will be convened by Herefordshire Council Democratic Services officer or a delegated alternative at the request of the Chairman or in accordance with the approved programme of meetings agreed from time to time.

18. Written notice of meetings and the agenda will be sent to members of the Partnership 7 clear days before the meeting (or 3 clear days in the case of an Extraordinary meeting).

19. Non Receipt by any members of notice of a meeting will not invalidate the meeting.

Agenda:

20. The Agenda will be prepared by Herefordshire Council's Democratic Services officer or a delegated alternative in consultation with the Chairman.

21. Items may be placed on the agenda by any member of the Partnership in consultation with the Chairman by notice in writing to Herefordshire Council's Democratic Services officer.

22. Papers relating to the agenda items will be sent to members with the agenda. The Chairman may agree that papers should also be tabled at the meeting.

Late items/Any other business:

23. Immediately before the minutes of the previous meeting have been approved, Members should inform the meeting of any item they wish to raise under any other business. The meeting will decide whether any items so identified may be raised under any other business or whether it should be deferred to a subsequent meeting.

Minutes of meeting

24. Minutes of meetings, including a record of persons attending, will be drafted by Herefordshire Council's Democratic Services officer or a delegated alternative.

25. The draft minutes of the meeting will be considered for approval or amendment at the start of the following meeting. Any agreed amendments or dissenting view will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, if that is the wish of the majority of members present.

Conduct of Members:

26. Members of the Partnership should have regard to the following principles: -

- To serve the interests of Herefordshire residents
- To deal with issues on their merits
- To be open and prepared to give reasons
- To respect and take account of others' views
- To promote equality and diversity by not discriminating against any person and by treating people with respect, regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability
- To respect the impartiality of employees of Herefordshire Council and of service providers
- To act in a way that engenders public confidence in the way the Partnership operate

Decision Making:

27. Decisions should normally be made through consensus.

28. In the event of an item receiving two separate motions, the matter would be resolved by simple majority voting with each representative entitled to one vote. The Chairman will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

29. The Constitution of the Partnership can be amended or altered by agreement by way of resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at the meeting provided that such amendments comply with any legal requirements or changes in the nature of the Partnership. Any proposed change in the Constitution shall be set out in writing at least two weeks before the meeting at which such amendments are to be discussed.

Working Groups:

30. The Partnership may establish working groups to gather information and/or make recommendations to a full meeting of the Partnership each working group shall elect a chair and/or a vice chair.

31. When establishing working groups, the Partnership will -

- Ensure that at least 3 members of the Partnership are members
- Establish terms of reference
- Determine procedures for reporting back to the Partnership
- Minutes shall be taken of such meetings and will include action and recommendation points to be reported to the Partnership

32. The Partnership may co-opt non-members to working groups, but such non-members may not vote on any matter.

Rights of press and public to attend meetings

33. The press and public will be entitled to attend meetings of the Partnership but may be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items containing information capable of being treated as exempt information if meetings of the Partnership were meetings of a local authority.

34. At the beginning of each meeting, for up to a quarter an hour, members of the public will have an opportunity to receive answers to any pre-received written questions they have submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. Such questions should be received at least 5 working days before the date of the relevant meeting. If the question is not answered for whatever reason an answer can be sent in writing following the meeting and copied to the Chairman.

35. A Herefordshire Council Democratic Services officer or a delegated alternative will arrange for a public announcement of meetings of the Partnership, and will also arrange for minutes and papers relating to the Partnership meetings to be available for inspection in Council Offices and Public Libraries after the draft minutes have been approved by the Partnership.

October 2007