

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE EARLY YEARS PROVIDERS REFERENCE GROUP – September 2024

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.1 The Early Years Providers Reference Group (the Group) will be required to consider issues related to:
- The on-going review of the Early Years funding formula for the provision of Early Years Education to nine-months to four-years old, and the financial effect of any such change, and shall make recommendations to the Schools Forum.
 - Specific funding issues relating to the funding of two-year-olds at risk of disadvantage in Cambridgeshire and an on-going review of any such offer.
 - Any other Early Years Funding Issues that Cambridgeshire County Council (the Council) may see fit to refer to them.
- 1.2 The Group brings together key partners in the provision of early years education representing the Council, Maintained and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sectors in Cambridgeshire.
- 1.3 The Group is required to:
- Inform, comment on, and review changes to any funding formula for early years education related to nine-months to four-year-olds.
 - Advise and contribute to any consultation process to ensure engagement with all stakeholders; and
 - Contribute to the development of guidance on other funding issues relating to early years education such as; Changes in Government policy affecting the early years funding offer.
 - Sufficiency of early years and childcare places, for two-, three- and four-year-olds in particular, across the county.
 - Increasing the take up of early years funded places.

2. CONSTITUTION

- 2.1 The voting Membership of the Group shall be as follows:

Membership	Number from September 2024
Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI)	
Pre-School	2
Day Nurseries	2
Childminders (rep)	1
Independent School	1
Voluntary Sector	1
Other	1
Maintained	
Nursery School	1
Nursery Class	1

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3. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Group to appoint their own Maintained, Private, Voluntary and Independent (MPVI) sector members by democratic process. The advisory members (Officers) of the Group shall be appointed by the Council.
- 3.2 The Group shall appoint voting members following a nomination and, if required, an election process. Any process shall be decided upon by the Group and shall be administered by the Group's Lead Officer.

4. CONDUCT AND TERMS OF OFFICE

- 4.1 The term of office for Group members will be a maximum of four years from the date of appointment, subject to their remaining eligible.
- 4.2 A member may resign from membership of the Group and will also cease to be a member if he or she is no longer eligible to be a member.
- 4.3 Any Group member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings, even where a substitute attended on his or her behalf, may have their membership terminated on a majority vote of the other members.
- 4.4 After their term of appointment comes to an end, individuals may choose to stand down, however, there is no limit on the number of consecutive terms of office an individual may serve on the Group if they are re-elected.
- 4.5 Members shall be permitted to nominate a substitute on the basis that such substitute replaces the member for the whole of that meeting and must be nominated not later than 12 midday the previous day of the meeting.

5. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

- 5.1 The Group shall appoint from within its membership a Chair and Vice-Chair, elected (if necessary) by a majority of votes cast. These posts may only be held by an employee of the Council:
- if there is no member of the Group willing and able to so act
- AND
- it is necessary to conduct business to regularize the structure of the Group or wind the Group up.
- 5.2 A Chair or Vice-Chair shall cease to hold office if he or she resigns by giving written notice to the Lead Officer of the Group, or if he or she ceases to be a member of the Group.

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- 5.3 Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected at the first meeting of the calendar year. A Chair or Vice-Chair may stand for re-election in further successive years.
- 5.4 The Chair's responsibilities include chairing meetings and overseeing the preparation of the record of the meeting in the absence of the Chair the Vice-Chair shall fulfil these roles. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Chair shall delegate the responsibility to any relevant member of the Group.
- 5.5 If in any circumstances, it is necessary that a view be given on behalf of the Group and it is impossible to convene an urgent meeting in accordance with 7.2, the Chair shall be entitled to express a view on behalf of the Group. The Chair shall inform the members of the Group, informally, as soon as possible, but shall nonetheless report that view and the circumstances behind the need to give that view to the next meeting of the Group.
- 5.6 The Group shall select one of its members to preside over a meeting if both the Chair and Vice-Chair are unable to attend.
- 5.7 The Chair can be removed from office between annual elections only if the Group passes a resolution on a majority of votes cast to remove him or her; and
- a) fourteen working days' notice of such a meeting is given; AND
 - b) removing the Chair is a specific item on the agenda for such a meeting; AND
 - c) before the vote at the meeting, those proposing that the Chair be removed state reasons for the proposal, and the Chair is given an opportunity to make a statement in reply.
- 5.8 The group will elect a member to represent the group on the Schools' Forum. This should be a member of the PVI sector. Additional members can be nominated to represent the wider Early Years sector if the group wishes, to a maximum of three.

6. LEAD OFFICER OF THE EARLY YEARS REFERENCE GROUP

- 6.1 The Council shall appoint a Lead Officer. The responsibilities of the Lead Officer include keeping a record of each meeting and ensuring members of the Group have all relevant information to make a reasoned decision.

7. MEETINGS OF THE EARLY YEARS REFERENCE GROUP

- 7.1 The Lead Officer shall convene the meetings of the Group, giving a minimum notice of seven working days, with a full agenda.

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- 7.2 In cases of urgency, the Lead Officer shall convene a meeting of the Group on the direction of the Chair, or in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair.
- 7.3 The Group shall meet at least once a year in sufficient time to allow its views to be properly considered in the determination of the Council's Early Years' funding formula before the beginning of the financial year.

8. RECORD OF MEETINGS

- 8.1 The names of the members present at a Group meeting must be recorded with the minutes of the meeting. A note of the key points of the meeting shall be circulated within 10 working days of the meeting, followed by full minutes within three weeks of the meeting.
- 8.2 The Group minutes must be agreed at the following Group meeting.
- 8.3 The Council should make available the agenda, papers and approved minutes for each meeting. The only exception will be for items that the Group has decided should be confidential.
- 8.4 Confidential items shall include those which fall within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The Chair or Vice-Chair when agreeing the agenda for each meeting shall determine items to be considered in private session and shall have regard to Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 8.5 The minutes of any part of a meeting that are confidential should be kept separate and not available for inspection.
- 8.6 The outcomes from meetings of the Group will be reported through to the Schools Forum and published as a part of the Forum's minutes and agendas; issues around confidentiality will apply.
- 8.7 Members of the Group shall respect the confidentiality of items of business which the Committee decide are confidential.

9. VOTING

- 9.1 Voting shall be by individual member votes cast.
- 9.2 As the role of the Group is consultative there shall be no bar upon members abstaining nor any need for a Chair's casting vote except in limited situations set out in 9.3.
- 9.3 In the event of a tied vote the Chair shall have a casting vote.

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10. PROCEEDINGS

- 10.1 The quorum shall be five members, three of which must come from the table at 2.1.
- 10.2 It is expected the Group may invite the attendance of people with expertise, who might have opportunities to speak at meetings, but not to vote.
- 10.3 The Group may decide to see a delegation about a particular issue, but it shall not so decide unless a majority of votes are cast in favour of meeting the delegation.
- 10.4 Meetings of the Group shall be held in private.
- 10.5 The Group may establish working groups to focus on specific issues. If a view of the Group is required related to the work of a working group, then the working group shall present a report and/or recommendation to the Group. Working groups may include other providers and relevant professionals by invitation.
- 10.6 The Group shall have regard to the requirements placed on Local Authority's (LA) and school governing bodies by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 10.7 The Group will be considered as a 'public authority' for the purpose of the Human Rights Act 1998. The Group must act in a way which is compatible with the rights and freedoms in the European Convention on Human Rights.
- 10.8 Any complaints about the operation of the Group shall in the first instance be addressed to the Lead Officer of the Group. The Lead Officer and the Chair of the Group should seek to resolve problems quickly. The action taken to resolve a complaint must be reported to the next meeting of the Group.
- 10.9 The Council will be invited as necessary to the meetings of the Group to provide advice and professional support.

11. INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO NEW GROUP MEMBERS

- 11.1 When a new member is appointed, he or she should receive background information from the Lead Officer of the Group and an induction, including:
 - a copy of the Terms of Reference
 - the procedures for meetings
 - recent minutes of meetings

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12. CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT

- 12.1 The Early Years Reference Group may review the Terms of Reference as necessary and request changes to be made by the Council. The Council shall not unreasonably refuse to make such changes.
- 12.2 The Council may revise these Terms of Reference as necessary to reflect either the proportions referred to in clause 3, new guidance from the DfE or new statutory requirements.

September 2024