

# **Tower Hamlets Children and Family Centre Parents Forum Terms of Reference**

## **Section 1 – Purpose**

1.1 The Parents Forum contributes towards the governance of Children and Family Centres, in running and delivering of its services. The Parents Forum is to represent diverse range of service users and be part of the Locality Partnerships.

1.2 The Parents Forum seeks to realise three main aims:

1. To enable the voice of local parents and carers (of birth to 19 years old and 25 with SEND) to inform the service development and strategic direction of the Children's and Family Centres
2. To empower local parents and carers to participate and lead in the service development and direction of the Children's and Family Centre.
3. To improve the impact of the Children and Family Centre services for families living in the Locality

1.3 The Parents Forum will implement its aims through an agreed development programme that details objectives, activities, and resources.

## **Section 2 – Membership of the Forum**

2.1 Who is eligible to be a member of the Parents Forum

Members of the Forum must have children from 0 to 19 years old (25 SEND), live in the locality and be registered for services with the Children and Family Centres, consequently the Parents Forum will be made up of members who reflect this community.

2.2 Chair of the Parents Forum

The Parents Forum will rotate Chair on termly basis. The Forum will also have a Vice Chair to support the Chair with agenda and minute taking.

## **Section 3 – Meetings of the Parents Forum**

3.1 Frequency of meetings

The Parents Forum will meet every month. Where there are matters of immediate concern or emergencies, the Forum may meet more frequently. Meetings will be agreed by the chair or the vice chair in their absence.

3.2 Supporting the Parents Forum meetings

The Parents Forum will meet at a time and venue that are accessible to members. A crèche, other childcare, and interpreting will be provided where required.

3.3. Length of meetings

The meetings should be between 1.5-2 hours.

3.4 Quorum

The quorum for the meetings will be 3. This is the minimum number of Forum members required to be present to enable the agenda to be discussed, decisions

taken and recommendations to Children and Family Centre Locality Partnership. The representatives need to either be present or made aware of recommendations that are to be made to the Locality Partnership.

#### **Section 4 – Servicing the Forum**

4.1 The Community Engagement Manager will support the work of the Parents Forum through providing administrative resources including photocopying, mailing and communications such as email and forum updates.

#### 4.2 Minute taking

Each meeting will be recorded as written minutes. The minutes will be written up by a member of the Parents Forum and appropriate training will be provided through the Children and Family Centre.

#### 4.3 Agenda setting

The agenda will be agreed by the Parents Forum in advance of the meeting. It may be that the Forum has an agreed set agenda that can be amended depending on current issues for discussion. It will be the overall responsibility of the Chair or Vice Chair to agree the agenda and ensure that it is carried through.

#### **Section 5 – Decision-making power**

5.1 The Parents Forum can present recommendations for action or decision to the Locality Partnership. The Locality Partnership will have a Parents Forum section as a standing item on every agenda (future when developed).

5.2 The Parents Forum will receive the minutes from the Locality Partnership and the agenda with enough time to consider issues and brief the Locality Partnership representatives. It is the responsibility of the whole forum to consider the issues under discussion in the Locality Partnership and to brief the representatives clearly about the views of the Forum.

#### **Section 6 – Resources**

6.1 The Parents Forum is supported by a dedicated member of staff, the Community Engagement Manager. Support and resources will be provided by members of the locality team as required.

#### **Section 7 – Life of Parents Forum**

7.1 The Parents Forum is a key element towards the work of Children and Family Centres and its journey in supporting families.

#### **Section 8 – Governance Code and Standards**

8.1 Parents Forum members are part of the locality Children and Family Centres. In this regard, the Forum shares the responsibility for setting the direction and policy of the locality. In doing this, Forum members must act in the interests of the

organisation as a whole and of children (birth-19, 25 with SEND) and their families living in the specific locality area. As a Parents Forum member, you must not act in your own interest or in the interest of a particular group or section.

8.2 Parents Forum members are jointly accountable to parents and carers living in the specific locality area in giving feedback and consulting on key issues.

8.3 Parents Forum members are encouraged to find out about Children and Family Centres and the Family Hub, its work and area it operates within. You should be aware of changes within and outside of the organisation that might affect how it operates. The Children and Family Centre will provide information and training to support members' understanding of Children and Family Centres and its service delivery.

8.4 Members should understand the service ethos and values, work within them and with the Locality Partnership and staff team to ensure that they are implemented within the work of the locality.

8.5 Members should understand the legal and contractual obligations of the locality as set out by Tower Hamlets Council as the responsible body.

8.6 Members should read the agendas and supporting documentation before meetings and participate as much as they are able to do so. If you cannot attend a meeting you should give apologies in advance.

8.7 Members should ensure that they have the appropriate information for their own decision-making and before making a recommendation to the Locality Partnership for action or decision.

8.8 Forum members should not speak on behalf of the Forum or the Locality unless they are authorised to do so and should ensure that they are expressing the views of the Forum and not simply their own views.

8.9 If Members have a complaint or concern, they should discuss it with the Forum Chair or Community Engagement Manager.