

## OUR VOICE (ENFIELD PARENTS' FORUM)

### CONSTITUTION

#### Status of the document

This document is the constitution of Our Voice (Enfield Parents' Forum). It has been discussed and agreed by the Our Voice management committee and published to Our Voice members.

#### Name

The Parents' Forum for Enfield is called 'Our Voice (Enfield Parents' Forum)', hereafter referred to as 'Our Voice'.

#### Mission Statement

As the borough's recognised Parent Forum, we aim to support families with children and young people who have Special Educational needs and/or disabilities, to maximise their life choices. We plan to do this by not only working closely with families in Enfield but also all our key partners in the voluntary sector, and the local area, in the spirit of co-production.

As well as working locally we also contribute to discussions nationally as part of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) and regionally as part of the NNPCF London Region.

#### Aims

Our Voice aims to:

- Work to shape and influence and contribute to the decision-making process for the designing of services in Enfield for children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs (hereafter referred to as SEND), and their families.
- provide a network of support for families of children and young people with SEND.
- make the local community more inclusive.
- give confidence and opportunity to those who want it through providing relevant information.
- give a voice to those who have lost theirs or don't have one.
- support families to develop the right skills to:
  - improve the quality of life of their children and young people,
  - get the support and services they need for their children and young people, and, where appropriate, to challenge service providers in a constructive way,
  - champion the cause of disability rights.

#### Membership

Membership of Our Voice is open to parents/carers and families of children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 years living within the London Borough of Enfield including bereaved parents within 3 years of their bereavement and to support relevant groups and professionals in the area.

#### Code of conduct

Members of Our Voice (Enfield Parents' Forum) are expected to:

- listen, and respect the views of others at meetings of Our Voice and in all media including digital formats and social media,
- allow other members of the forum to express their views in meetings without interruption,
- seek positive and constructive resolution to any issues where differences of opinion exist,
- respect the office of the Executive Officer to ensure the orderly conduct of meetings,
- have read and be willing to abide by Our Voice's safeguarding policy,
- respect diversity and different cultures and values.
- abide by the National Network of Parent Carer Forums' Code of Conduct.

Members of the Our Voice Management Committee agree to abide by the above and in addition to:

- draw on their experience but not advocate for their own child/young person when representing Our Voice,
- treat all stakeholders with courtesy and respect when representing Our Voice,
- never share information about children/young people or families with anyone outside the management committee without the consent of those families,

- declare any issues that might create conflicts of interest when representing Our Voice and ensure that they do not influence judgement or practice
- be reliable and dependable, or provide clear information to the Executive Officer if they are experiencing challenges that may prevent them being so.

### **Decisions of the Management Committee**

Decisions of the management committee are made by consensus wherever possible. For a meeting to be considered quorate, and able to make binding decisions, at least 3 members of the management committee must be present.

Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions must be agreed by at least 60% of those present at the meeting.

If a committee member has a conflict of interest, they must declare this and should be disregarded for the purposes of voting on that issue.

Decisions are made by the Management Committee of Our Voice regarding:

- the strategic objectives of Our Voice, and the strategic plan,
- election of committee members,
- changes to the constitution of Our Voice,
- changes to the terms of reference of the management committee.

Where appropriate, members' views will be sought by the Management Committee at meetings and/or online.

### **Accountability**

Our Voice is established as a voluntary group with a constitution that governs how it operates. Our Voice is accountable to external funders through its management committee as required by the funders.

The Management Committee of Our Voice is accountable to the members of Our Voice and reports on its work using appropriate mechanisms.

### **Management of Our Voice**

Our Voice is administered and managed by a committee of volunteers drawn from the membership of Our Voice, or paid contractors chosen by the Management Committee.

The committee has at least five, and a maximum of twelve members, of whom at least 80% must be parents /carers of a child or young person with SEND. New members will be appointed following an appropriate recruitment process and agreed by the Management Committee. Not all members are eligible to become members of the Management Committee – see the Terms of Reference for details.

(There are separate Terms of Reference for the Committee.)

### **Duties of the Management Committee**

The duties of the Management Committee of Our Voice are to:

- act together to bring about the intended outcomes of the forum i.e. to create a forum through which parents/carers of disabled children and young people, and those with a special educational need can:
  - share experiences and ideas,
  - receive support and where appropriate gain confidence,
  - be informed and consulted by, and co-produce with, the local authority and health services to help shape services,
  - take part in events.
- develop and coordinate a strategic plan which set out how these objectives will be achieved,
- develop a finance plan and annual budget for Our Voice,
- administer and manage the forum in an open and honest way, promoting the active involvement in its work of all parents/carers of children and young people with SEND,
- network and build effective relationships with other relevant organisations, locally, regionally and nationally,
- identify and share best practice,
- represent the views of Enfield parents to the local authority and other statutory agencies.

### **Powers of the management committee**

In order to achieve the aims of Our Voice, the management committee may:

- make operational decisions that support the strategic plan and the annual work plan,
- raise money,

- spend money in line with the financial plan and annual budget,
- open and manage bank accounts,
- take out insurance,
- organise training events and courses and other events,
- work with similar groups and exchange information and advice with such groups,
- represent the collated views of parents at meetings with partners e.g. the local authority, local health services,
- delegate tasks as appropriate to paid contractors (e.g. administrators and co-ordinators),
- Raise funds by any lawful means except permanent trading,
- Accept gifts and donations for the group,
- Campaign and/or contribute to campaigns on a local or national level as appropriate.
- do anything that is lawful which will help Our Voice achieve its aims.

### **Finance**

Officers of the Management Committee include a Treasurer. The Treasurer shall ensure that the day-to-day financial management of Our Voice is in line with the financial plan agreed as part of the strategic plan.

The committee has the power to authorise reallocation of any budget heading to another heading, with the permission of the Treasurer and Executive officer. Further information is contained in the Our Voice Finance Policy.

### **Other policies**

The Our Voice Management Team will abide by any additional Our Voice policies including, but not limited to, the Complaints policy, the Whistleblowing policy, the Equal opportunities and Diversity policy and the Safeguarding policy.

### **Management committee Meetings**

Management committee Meetings are held at least 10 times a year, as set out in the Management Committee Terms of Reference. Meetings may be held either in person or online.

### **Alterations to the Constitution**

Any changes to this Constitution are made only with the agreement of the Management Committee of Our Voice.

### **Dissolution**

The Forum may be wound up at any time:

- if agreed by two-thirds of the management committee at an extraordinary meeting held for that purpose
- in the absence of a viable committee.

In the event of winding up, any assets remaining after all debts have been paid shall be given to another group with a similar aim.



Signed Seema Islam  
Chair, Our Voice  
May 22