

Appendix B

Kent Children's Centre District Advisory Board Meeting - Terms Of Reference

Vision: To ensure effective Governance

Ofsted Guidance “Good” Governance arrangements are well embedded, provide effective challenge and are demonstrably driving the centre’s continuous improvement.

Ofsted Guidance “Inadequate” Governance arrangements are weak and do not provide sufficient challenge to the Centre (or Group) and/or there is little evidence of shared ambition and priority, resulting in a lack of integrated services that meet the needs and requirements of the range of families within the local area, particularly those in need.

Ref: Ofsted guidance April 2014 on Leadership Management and Governance.

Core Purpose:

The role of the advisory board is to provide support and challenge for a group of Children’s Centres:

- To work with the District Early Help Manager and Children’s Centre Delivery Managers to identify priorities through effective consultation.
- Monitor progress and provide challenge/support.
- Contribute to setting challenging targets through annual conversation process.
- Ensure the services on offer meet the local needs and contribute to improving children’s outcomes, particularly those in need.
- Support the Children’s Centre Delivery Managers in developing a business plan and effective self evaluations procedures and reports (Ofsted SEF).
- Ensure relevant issues are raised with the Director for Early Help and Preventative Services and /or the Head of Service with a strategic lead for 0-5 within KCC.
- To support the development of integrated working
- To ensure families contribute to the centres performance and delivery.

Board Arrangements:

The board needs to be large enough to be representative and not so large that it becomes unwieldy. It is suggested that a board of around 12-18 members is an appropriate and workable size and that there should be equal representation of parents, the statutory sector and the voluntary sector.

The board should have an independent chair, and this cannot be the District Early Help Manager or any other member where a conflict of Interest may be identified. Good practice would highlight the Chair should be a local parent or relevant community member.

The board will meet a minimum 4 times a year.

A minute taker must be provided for the meeting. Agendas and reports for all meetings should be sent one working week prior to the meeting.

Arrangements must be put in place to allow parents to attend board meetings.

The chair should have the casting vote if an issue arises on which the board is unable to reach a decision. The chair will also need to ensure that there are good links at all times between the Children’s Centre Delivery Manager, the local authority and other agencies providing services at the centres.

The advisory board can co-opt members as and when this is required.

Expectations of Board Members:

Representatives must have a strategic role within their organisation/agency at the local level and be of sufficient seniority to enable them to:

- Speak for their agency with authority
- Commit their agency on service development and practice matters
- Influence the development of their agency's practices
- Ensure that children's needs are presented in agency decision-making regarding resources
- Contribute to the development of robust and effective monitoring and performance functions.
- Ensure that the reports, procedures and decisions of the advisory board are disseminated to other parts of the agency/service they are representing
- Attend Advisory Board meetings regularly. If a member is unable to attend /s/he will be expected to arrange for a suitable replacement. Non-attendance at 3 consecutive meetings annually may result with the member being asked to resign;

Members must declare any "vested interest" or "conflict of interest" as appropriate

Core Membership: Membership should be linked to local community, needs and priorities and must be reflective of these. Membership may change in light of changing priorities and considered as part of the annual conversation process.

- Parent/Service Users
- Statutory Sector- this may include:
 - JCP Manager
 - CCG:
 - Health Visiting
 - Midwifery
 - Speech and Language
 - Public Health
 - Social Services District Manager
 - Early Years team
 - Schools/EY settings
 - District Council representative (e.g. Housing)
- Voluntary Sector-: to act as representatives of the sector rather than one agency.

In addition, Kent has adopted the Nolan Committee's principles of public life. It is advised that advisory boards members have regard to these principles in relation to Children's Centre business. These are:

Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.