



Birmingham Parent Carer Forum CLC Representative Induction Pack



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WHAT IS A PARENT CARER FORUM

A Parent Carer Forum is a group of parents and carers of children and young people with Special Educational needs and or disability (often referred to as SEND for short). Their aim is to make sure the services in their area meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families.

They do this by gathering the views of local families and then working in partnership with local authorities, health services and Education and other providers to highlight where local services, processes and commissioners are working well, or indeed to challenge when changes or improvements need to be made.

In England there are parent carer forums in almost all local authority areas.

Forums usually have a steering group or management committee of parents who lead this work and listen to the views of other parents in the local area to make sure they know what is important to them. Parent Carer Forums are keen to hear from as many parent carers as possible.

So who can join a parent carer forum?

Parents or carers of a child or young person from birth to the age of 25 years with any type of additional need or disability are welcome to join. Joining your forum does not mean you have to commit lots of time. In most forums you can join and receive information, and then later decide if you want to get more involved always at your own pace. Whatever time you can give to the forum is valuable.

When parent carer forums work along side service providers this is called co production.

Co-production. Co-production is an important principle in parent carer participation.

Co-production happens when parent carer forums play an integral and equal part in the decision-making process and are fully engaged in shaping, developing, implementing and evaluating services and systems.

Evidence shows that these partnerships often make the best use of people's time and money, whilst also improving outcomes for disabled children and young people. It is important to remember that working in partnership and co production is a legal requirement for local authorities.

There are some fundamental principles, which need to be established in a parent carer forum, and these include, ensuring that all parent carers are welcome, that members feel supported and wherever possible an emphasis on the positive contribution each parent carer makes.

Forums should involve all parent carers in decision-making. They should endeavor to provide the information parent carers need in order to fully participate.

Good communication is very important in any organisation and is a key feature in a forum. Parent's views and involvement should always be sought. Information given in a timely manner and feedback always given.

It is important to remember that within the forum and in work with agencies that everyone is an equal partner. It is true that when we work in genuine partnership it brings out the best in us all working together for the common aim of improving services for children and young people with SEND.

All forums need to have governance in place to ensure that forum is efficient and effective. Parent Carer Forums are often supported by Contact to establish necessary governance and processes, there is help available from the Contact Regional Advisers along with peer support from other forums.

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) works closely with the Department for Education, the Department of Health, and other partner organisations to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families. A local parent carer forum also belongs to a regional forum who meet regularly to provide information and training. The regional forum has a representative who belongs to the **National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF)**.

The NNPCF is made up of all of the parent carer forums from across England. The NNPCF ensures that local parent carer forums are aware of national developments. It promotes opportunities for the voice of parent carers to influence at a national level.

There are almost 110K members of Parent Carer Forums across 9 regions in England, there is an untold wealth of knowledge and resources all willingly shared. The voices of parent carers have been heard in key investigations into SEND and evidence from parents has been shared with the Education select Committee and the National Audit Office Inquiries.

The NNPCF works closely with the Department for Education, the Department of Health, and other partner organisations to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Funding

There is a grant available for a parent carer forum in every local authority area in England from the Department for Education (DfE) to support their development and strategic involvement in local services.

Governance and Legal Structures

Governance – the term used to describe how an organisation operates. It includes what it hopes to achieve, how it will achieve it and how it will be held accountable.

It is important to have written policies and processes agreed so that everyone is clear about how the parent carer forum works. This can be done gradually as your management committee discusses and agrees how the forum will operate.

Having clear information written down helps prevent misunderstandings.

Here are some of the policies we have for Birmingham Parent Carer Forum

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Social Media
- GDPR Data Protection
- Safeguarding
- Complaints

This is not an extensive full list and some of these policies are included in your induction pack.

National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF)

The NNPCF membership is made up of the Parent Carer Forums from across England who are a recipient of the Department for Education's Participation Grant.

We have divided the Parent Carer Forums into a regional structure that allows for each region to come together and collectively support one another. These regional networks each have an NNPCF Steering Group Member allocated to them to champion their collective experience and voice, and to inform and influence national policy and decision making on their behalf using a representative model. Each region operates in a way that suits their needs and purpose best, which is detailed in their regional network pages where appropriate.

1. North East and Cumbria
2. Yorkshire and Humberside
3. North West
4. East Midlands
5. West Midlands
6. East of England
7. London
8. South East
9. South West



NNPCF Regional Network Map



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC ROLE OF A PARENT REPRESENTATIVE

All Birmingham Parent Carer Forum Representatives will receive training in this role.

Co-production is an equal and reciprocal relationship where everyone's knowledge and skills are used to create better outcomes.

Inclusion is a universal human right that is about embracing all people, irrespective of race, gender, disability or other attribute which can be perceived as different.

Co Production

Co production with local authorities may mean that you work with groups of Senior Managers, Commissioning groups, or Health Boards or in sub groups of these sometimes called working groups, task and finish groups etc. These types of sub groups may have a mix of professionals from Health and Local Authority services focussing on one particular service such as transport, short breaks or transition.

You will be an important and **equal** member of the team and your role will be to share:

- common problems and experiences of families with children with a range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and caring situations
- ideas and solutions from forum discussions and surveys
- key plans and topics with the forum for feedback to other parents
- blocks and barriers to the planning group acting on what parents say and share this with the forum and chair to identify strategies and solutions
- be aware of **confidentiality** – not all discussion and ideas can be shared widely at all times – so you will need to be clear with the chair about what can and can't be shared.
- Fill in the feedback forms provided to you by Birmingham Parent Carer Forum for each meeting or group you attend.

Co production working is relatively new and not everyone understands how to involve parents in the decision making or how to run these decision making groups effectively – so it's not always plain sailing. Patience, persistence and asserting parents views however can

bring its own rewards when co production works well – many forums do see positive changes from their time and commitment.

Collecting Parent Carers views and experience

As a Parent Representative with Birmingham Parent Carer Forum you will engage with other parent carers and collect voices and views from families in your local community. Your role will be to

- seek parent carer groups/gatherings in your local area.
- make contact with groups in your local area and ask them to share information with their families about the forum and how to join the forum or contribute to forum work by sharing their experiences or filling in surveys.
- attend local parent carer groups, go along to the groups and share key plans, use surveys and discuss topics to find out the needs and views of local parent carers .
- Fill in the feedback form provided to you by Birmingham Parent Carer Forum and bringing surveys back to the committee or other parent representatives attending strategic meetings.

As a parent representative you will need to be able to both draw on your experience and knowledge of other families needs and circumstances (without sharing personal information without permission that could lead to identifying those parents!). You are representing from a collective position being able to put across the views of a wider range of parents.

There are over 1000 conditions and rare disorders that make up the basic groupings of disabilities such as learning and physical disabilities, sensory and communication needs, long term medical conditions, etc.

There are also a range of caring situations that need to be considered when planning services such as lone parents, low income families, fathers, Black and Minority Ethnic families, working parents, families with more than one disabled child, families caring for other adults/older relatives, disabled parents etc.

There are many ways you can widen your understanding of the needs of other families –

- National research is carried out by a range of organisations such as Contact, Council for Disabled Children, Mencap and Scope.
- Local research and consultations undertaken by Birmingham City Council and other local voluntary organisations.
- Feedback from families about services – whether complaints or compliments
- Number of calls and types of calls to local voluntary organisations such as carers organisations and support groups.
- Being part of a parent group can help widen your knowledge of other families needs.
- Focussing on needs and not disabilities!
- Talking to other parents.
- Asking for views via email and newsletters from other organisations where needed.

You will be encouraged to claim and be reimbursed for any expenses eg travel expenses incurred for attending groups or meetings where you are representing Birmingham Parent Carer Forum, as each forum are provided a grant from the Department for Education and part of this is set aside for Parent Representatives expenses. What's included and how to claim expenses will be explained to you on induction or training.

You will be supported with everything you need to fulfil your role as a Parent Representative.

Shortly after your induction you will receive Parent Representative training and will be assigned a buddy to help and support you in your new role. The Parent Representative training is typically 4 online sessions and 2.5 hours per session.

There will be online huddle meetings once per month where you can discuss anything you wish about your role as a Parent Representative, let us know about any issues or challenges you are facing in your role, feedback any important information and bring any ideas for the future of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum.

You will be provided with an email address to use for forum work and to contact your local parent carer groups.

You will be invited to join the Parent Representative google space (a communication chat group with other representatives and some committee members) to keep up to date with continuing projects at Birmingham Parent Carer Forum.

You will be provided with access to the Parent Representative online portal.

More information on how BPCF will support your role is available further on in this Induction Pack.



WHO IS 'BIRMINGHAM' PARENT CARER FORUM

We are a group of **independent parents carers** who have children and young people with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**.

We work with organisations that provide services for our families. We are **completely independent** of the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and The Children's Trust which enables us to **share the experiences and ideas of parent carers**, giving them a voice to make positive change.

We welcome **any** parent, grandparent or foster parent with a child or young person regardless of their disabilities. Any parent carer of a child or young person with a disability or additional needs, **residing in Birmingham or accessing Birmingham services** can become a member. We are committed to being **inclusive of all families from diverse backgrounds and disabilities**. These may range from complex medical needs to challenging behaviour, neurodevelopmental, learning and/or physical difficulties.

Whilst the forum is not a support group, we actively seek to **work in collaboration** with all parent carers, parent support groups, community groups, schools, voluntary and grassroots organisations **to gather voices and experiences** to influence change and service design.

We share the **diverse experiences of all our members** and their **unique challenges** with service providers. We want to ensure the concerns and voices of parent carers are **heard, listened to, valued and used to make change**. We will hold the statutory services to account and **challenge decisions** when families are telling us it's not working. Our goal is to **improve outcomes for all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**.



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC PARENT REPRESENTATIVE AGREEMENT

The Role of the Representative is to:

- To provide representation for families of children with special or additional needs and disability by providing a liaison point for Statutory and Voluntary Agencies within Birmingham.
- To consult with and inform our membership of outcomes and updates of our representational work.

Parental Representative Agreement

I have read and understood the 'Role of a Representative' document (included in the Parent Representative Induction Pack).

I agree to a voluntary position at BPCF as a Parental Representative.

I agree to represent BPCF in a courteous manner at all times.

I agree to BPCF Confidentiality and GDPR policies and the importance of not sharing information outside of the Committee.

I agree to abide by the aims of BPCF and represent families of Birmingham and adhere to BPCF policies (copies of which are included in my representative induction pack).

I will give consideration to what I post on Social Media and its impact upon the forum.

I agree to adhere to the BPCF code of conduct and meeting Ground Rules (copies of which are included in my induction pack).

I agree to fill in the feedback forms provided and submit them to the Committee after any meetings I attend on behalf of BPCF.

I agree to only use the "myname"bpcf@gmail.com email address in order to carry out forum work and agree to delete this upon termination of my voluntary position as Parental Representative.

Parent Representative Agreeing to the Terms above:

*Print Name*_____

*Signature*_____

*Date*_____

Witness Committee member

*Print name*_____

*Signature*_____

*Date*_____



Birmingham Parent Carer Forum CIC Useful Forms



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC MEETING/ ACTIVITY/EVENT FEEDBACK FORM

Name of Meeting/Event/Activity:

Date:

Venue:

BPCF Attendees:

Other Attendees:

Purpose of Meeting/Event/Activity:

Background:

Key issues arising:

Key issues raised by BPCF Rep

Meeting outcomes / decision:

Actions agreed by representative(s):

Further information available: (e.g. presentations / links to minutes etc)

**Further input required from (Name)?
Yes / No (Please specify)**

Confidential Information for BPCF Management Committee

Signed..... Date.....

Signed..... Date.....

Please attach any relevant minutes



EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

Name	
Date	
TOTAL AMOUNT CLAIMED	

Account holder name	
Sort code	
Account number	

Signed by claimant Date

Authorised by Date.....

Mileage, Travel Fares and Car Parking Fees (please attach all relevant receipts)

Date	To	From	Reason	Miles	x £0.45 = total £	Fares/Fees	Description of Fare/Fee
24/05/23	B11 9PP	B00 1ZZ	example	2.8	1.26		
24/05/23	B00 1ZZ	B11 9PP	example	2.8	1.26	3.90	Parking
Total mileage/fares							Grand Total (all travel only)

Photocopying Fees

Date	Number of Copies	Reason	x 0.05 = £
Total (photocopying only)			£

Printing Fees

Date	Number of Copies	Reason	x 0.20 = £
Total (printing only)			£

Other Expenses (childcare, lunch, etc) please attach relevant receipts

Date	Description	Reason	Amount
Total (photocopying only)			£

Total (other only)

Please send your completed form and receipts to Chelle Emery or treasurer@birminghampcf.org.



**BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC
PRE AUTHORISATION FOR REMUNERATION**

Today's date:

Name:

Full postal address:

Telephone number:

Email address of claimant:

Date of activity:

Details of activity, including purpose:

Venue:

Signature of the person claiming to confirm that the activity was on behalf of the forum:

Date:

Signature of the forum officer approving the claim/Managing your PCF grant:

Date:

Incident report form

This form will be used by members of staff or volunteers to record disclosures or suspicions of abuse. The completed form should be sent to the manager dealing with the allegations.

Your name	Your position
Place of work	Contact phone number
The child's details	
Name	
Address/phone number	
Date of birth	
Other relevant details about the child: <i>Eg family circumstances, physical and mental health, any communication difficulties.</i>	
Parent/guardian/carers details	
Details of the allegations/suspicions	
Are you recording: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure made directly to you by the child? • Disclosure or suspicions from a third party? • Your suspicions or concerns? 	
Date and time of disclosure	
Date and time of incident	
Details of the allegation/suspicions. <i>State exactly what you were told/observed and what was said. Use the persons own words as much as possible</i>	
Action taken so far:	
Signed	Date



Birmingham Parent Carer Forum CIC How BPCF Support Parent Representatives



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC TOP TIPS FOR PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Don't feel obliged to say anything at your first few meetings
- Be prepared: do your homework, read the papers, get ideas from other parents
- Feel confident in your own knowledge: adopt a positive appearance, attitude and body language
- Be on time or early – it gives you a chance to meet people beforehand, introduce yourself, network
- Be polite but assertive
- Make sure your views are heard and minuted
- Be open to new ideas
- Be clear whether you are speaking from personal experience, or
- presenting views you have gathered from other parents
- Remember **confidentiality**: do not mention another parent by name but if they want something raised, raise it as a general issue: remember to respect your own child's and family's confidentiality when speaking from your own experience
- Be prepared to give feedback to your parents forum about what happened in the meeting – any outcomes of your involvement and decisions taken. You will be asked to complete a feedback sheet
- Take time after the meeting to reflect on how you think it went – are you being taken seriously, are you able to have an impact, do you need to gather more information or ask more questions.
- It's ok to ask to meet with someone beforehand to go through the purpose of the meeting, who else will be going, how the meeting is run and the process of making decisions.
- Look after yourself and see if you can have another parent representative at the meeting – two heads are often better than one!
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification especially if acronyms are being used throughout the meeting.



HOW WILL BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM SUPPORT YOU AS A PARENT REPRESENTATIVE

Training - Shortly after your induction you will receive a second information pack and Parent Representative Training delivered by Contact which is delivered virtually/online in 4 sessions (2.5 hours per session). Information about the first 2 sessions is included on the following page.

Resilience training - one day course delivered online. (this is not compulsory).

Any other training needed or requested relating to your role as a parent representative can be considered.

Paid Expenses - travel: whether by bus, train or car including miles at £0.45per mile and parking for the length of any meeting you attend on behalf of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum.

Where a meeting lasts for more than 4 hours you can claim expenses for lunch up to the value of £4.00.

Childcare - by pre arrangement and by an Ofsted Registered Childcare Provider – please speak to BPCF treasurer if you will need to claim for childcare.

Please see the BPCF Financial Policy for details of how to claim expenses.

Coffee Mornings - We are hoping to set up face to face meetings regularly for reps to chat and share any challenges and new ideas. This will be set up later in the year with reps to suit reps availability and local area.

Group Huddles online every half term - Starting in February 2024 there are virtual Rep meetings/group huddles set up via teams at the beginning of every half term. These are quite informal meetings however there will be some formal notes taken during the first 20 minutes where we will discuss anything formal. The other 90 minutes of these meetings will be for general catching up with whats happening in the forum, any challenges being faced, any events to be set up and to share new ideas for the future.

Access to Contact CIC Wellbeing Scheme - All Parent Reps have free online access to Contacts wellbeing scheme, reps can access monthly wellbeing webinars, and wellbeing guides on topics such as stress, insomnia, preventing burnout, relaxation techniques. They also provide short courses on listening skills, nutrition for wellbeing, coping with uncertainty.

Access to Google Spaces Parent Rep discussion - Google spaces is an online chat space similar to whatsapp where reps will be able to keep in touch with each other and the Forum committee to discuss and keep up to date with what's happening within BPCF.

Gmail address - you will be invited to set up a Gmail account which will look like 'yourname'bpcf@gmail.com - you can use this email address for forum related work and therefore keep these emails separate from your own personal emails.

PROPOSAL FOR REP TRAINING AND CO PRODUCTION TRAINING FOR BIRMINGHAM FORUM V2

Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role and function of the parent carer forum both nationally and locally.• How it works in practice.• Representation of parent voice through the role of a strategic partner.• What knowledge and skills do you need in order to be a forum rep (Use the role of the rep guidance)• Governance• The requirement to work co productively
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lets explore the skills/temperament needed to take on this role.• What additional training do you feel that you need• How can you extend your knowledge beyond that of a parent by experience• How can other services support the forum and its reps

These sessions are 2.5 hours per session and delivered by two trainers via Zoom.



Birmingham Parent Carer Forum CIC Policies



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC MEETING GROUND RULES

The ground rules are for everyone to use and any person in a meeting may remind others of a particular ground rule at any time during a meeting.

We will show respect

- for the agreed processes of the meeting e.g. the agenda
- for the facilitator e.g. the Chair
- for each other
- for other people's opinions, even if they are different from our own

We will listen and

- try not to talk too much, or talk too little
- try not to repeat ourselves
- use encouraging body language
- try not to interrupt others

We will maintain confidentiality and

- have useful discussions without sharing personal details or anecdotes
- learn from each other without divulging personal details or anecdotes
- always breach confidentiality if someone is at risk of being harmed

We will behave respectfully and

- encourage healthy challenge from others
- be specific about the behaviour we are challenging
- always challenge bullying or offensive behaviour
- use 'I' statements so that the other person knows how we feel
- leave our phones in silent mode, taking urgent calls outside the room



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC CODE OF CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

The BPCF Management Committee is responsible for all actions carried out by Management Committee members and any other individual parents or carers who are acting on behalf of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum. We have drawn up this **Code of Conduct** in order that the membership, partners and funders have confidence in our work. We ensure that our actions and behaviour are safe, professional and inclusive for all who take part in our activities.

COMMUNICATION

We understand that how we communicate with each other, with the Forum membership and with all our strategic partners, is the key to our successful leadership. We:

- use **assertive communication skills**: we ensure that what we say to each other and to our members is clear, accurate, appropriate and always in the interests of the safe, smooth running of the Forum
- use **ground rules** for our meetings: we expect everyone present to agree and abide by these ground rules
- are **reliable and dependable**: we provide clear information to the membership, and explain when this has not been possible
- respect **confidentiality**: we do not share any confidential information outside of the Management Committee, unless we believe that a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed or is at risk of harm in which case we follow the *BPCF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures*
- are **honest** with each other when our private lives may affect our ability to carry out our responsibilities appropriately
- **acknowledge** our professional and personal boundaries so that we can be useful to the membership
- **share** leaderships tasks so that no individual at any time feels over-burdened by their role or responsibility
- allocate roles and tasks amongst ourselves to utilise individuals' **skills** and **strengths**
- are prepared to take up **learning** and development opportunities
- actively seek **support** when we face challenging situations
- adhere to the *BPCF Social Media Policy* to ensure **appropriate** communication
- during virtual meetings be mindful of our surroundings and ensure that our usual confidentiality expectations are not compromised.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

BPCF is committed to respecting and representing our members fairly and we aim to represent all parent carers in Birmingham equally. We respect those with **cultures** and **values** different to our own. Whilst personal experience may inform this, we do not rely entirely on own experiences, views and judgements. We represent our members by listening to a diverse range of **opinions** and **experiences**. This reflects the *BPCF Equality and Diversity Policy*.

PRINCIPLES

We are guided by the **Seven Principles of Public Life** identified by the Nolan Committee:

1. **Selflessness:** we take decisions for the good of all our members, and not only to gain individual financial or material benefits for ourselves, our family or friends
2. **Integrity:** we uphold our professional boundaries and do not place ourselves under obligations to individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties.
3. **Objectivity:** we, at all times, ensure that we represent a range of: disability, Special Educational Needs, cultures, social backgrounds and geographical areas.
4. **Accountability:** we are accountable for our decisions and actions to the wider Group membership, funders and other stakeholders, and invite appropriate challenge.
5. **Openness:** we are open about decisions and actions that we take and we are able to give reasons for our decisions.
6. **Honesty:** we declare private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects the reputation of the Group
7. **Leadership:** we promote and support the above principles with effective leadership and by personal example.

DISCLOSURE OF ALLEGATIONS

We disclose to the Management Committee's elected Officers any **allegation** that we may have committed, or that we are being investigated in relation to having committed, a **crime**. In these situations, it is standard practice for the Management Committee member to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non-judgemental position, designed to protect BPCF and the individual, and to ensure the individual involved is able to focus all of their attention on the issue at hand.

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

This covers circumstances where an individual (or their close relative) could in theory receive a personal or business benefit as a consequence of BPCF activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur and both must be disclosed:

1. A **Duality of Interest:** Where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain
2. A **Conflict of Interest:** Where a BPCF interest and a personal/business/other Voluntary Sector interest occurs over the same matter

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

BPCF's work may take it into the political arena but we must ensure that we demonstrate our non-political nature, and are impartial about **party politics**. When making any representation, the Management Committee must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of BPCF's purpose and aims. Management Committee members can engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, as long as it is legal to do so. However, participation will be entirely personal and their political opinions will not represent BPCF's position.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW CODE OF CONDUCT

We recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may **damage BPCF** and the Management Committee will take the following steps to address individual behaviours:

Step 1: If any member feels that communication between the Management Committee and any other party, or between members themselves, does not meet the Communication aspirations or the Nolan principles (above) they may call upon the Management Committee to review the Code of Conduct in order to call individuals to account for their behaviour. Any review process of this kind will be open, transparent and timely e.g. on the meeting agenda, noted, and the impact on BPCF leadership evaluated at the next meeting.

Step 2: In the event of disagreement amongst the Management Committee which cannot be reconciled by reviewing the Code of Conduct, the Management Committee will seek outside support e.g. advice or impartial meeting facilitation (for the whole team) or mediation (between individuals).

Step 3: In the event that an individual's behaviour is alleged to fall short of the above standards, and a review of the Communications aspirations and Nolan Principles has not improved BPCF leadership, they will be asked by other members of the Management Committee to step down from their duties for up to 8 weeks while an investigation takes place. The individual will be supported by a 'buddy' during this time and they will be regularly informed of the progress of the investigation. The Complaints Procedure Stage 2 will be used to conduct the investigation.

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Position:



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) recognises that all parents and carers of a child or young person with Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND) living in or receiving services in Birmingham area has an equal right of access to become a member of the forum.

BPCF will adhere to the legislative framework complying with the Equality Act 2010 (See Annex 1.1 and 1.2), the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality and Human Rights Commission Codes of Practice (See Annex 1.3); we will ensure our practices adhere to the principles of all relevant equality legislation and pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty actively working to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups of people and the communities we work with

The way we work is not only governed by the legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality, but also wholly encompasses the core values of the organisation. BPCF works in a way that recognises the importance of inclusion, bringing opportunities and access to all individuals.

We are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, ensuring accessibility, and respecting human rights. Our mission is: to influence social change to create a fairer and safer society.

BPCF will:

1. Take pro-active steps to address discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimisation in all its forms in membership management, volunteer management, employment practices and in all areas of our work.
2. Ensure that everyone directly associated with our organisation – members, volunteers, staff, contractors, local strategic partners, associates, and visitors are aware of our commitment in these areas and how this policy affects them.
3. Identify, and take positive and practical steps, to remove any barriers to the participation of people who are currently underrepresented as members, volunteers, staff, local service users or associates.
4. Seek to develop and maintain a (voluntary and or paid) workforce that reflects the community within which we serve.
5. Ensure that there are clear procedures to ensure compliance with relevant legal requirements (e.g., recruitment) and that members, volunteers, staff, and associates are offered training to put these procedures into practice.

6. Develop internal working arrangements and structures that will assist in the promotion of anti-discriminatory practices, and the sharing of effective practice to this end.
7. Enable volunteers, staff, associates, and parent carer members to have equal access to relevant training and opportunities for development and ensure that terms, conditions, volunteer, and employment practices do not discriminate against any group.
8. Ensure that forum leaders (committee/officers/directors establish and maintain suitable systems to ensure that BPCF can effectively monitor and evaluate compliance and progress in relation to promoting equality of opportunity.
9. Ensure that the accessibility of our buildings (if applicable), events and information is routinely reviewed and improved, where possible.
10. Ensure that volunteers and staff receive appropriate support, training, and advice to assist them to deal sensitively with challenging equalities issues.

Equal Opportunities and Discrimination

BPCF is committed to equal opportunities. We recognise and embrace our responsibility to promote equality of opportunity for staff, service users and others associated with the organisation. This means that the BPCF Committee will ensure that none of our members, volunteers, paid employees, contractors, strategic partners or organisations with whom we work is unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic' including: age, disability (including: mental health and those with hidden disabilities), gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race (including: colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief (including: political belief and those with no religion or belief), sex and sexual orientation. In addition, we will not discriminate on the grounds of social standing, status, responsibility for dependents, social class, employment status, or unrelated criminal convictions.

BPCF is an anti-discriminatory organisation committed to influencing social change, the promotion of equal opportunity and the elimination all forms of discrimination and harassment covered by the Equality Act 2010 (See Annex 1.1 and 1.2) including:

- Direct Discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Discrimination by Perception
- Discrimination by Association
- Victimisation
- Harassment

We recognise the various types of discrimination related to protected characteristics and what prevents individuals and groups gaining equal access to society's resources and services. We are committed to taking practical steps to address inequality and discrimination by complying with relevant legislation and developing best practice.

It is our policy to redress the balance, as far as is lawful, in favour of all under-represented and disadvantaged groups, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We recognise that "positive action," to meet the needs of specific groups facing discrimination, can make a practical contribution to addressing discrimination and inequalities.

We define “positive action” within the context of the Equality Act 2010: Positive action enables an employer, or an organisation, to increase participation from a wider section of society through opportunities such as training and mentoring schemes. Examples of positive action could include training and mentoring schemes for under-represented groups.

BPCF commits itself to taking positive action to ensure that its activities and provision of services, its recruitment procedures for volunteers, staff and its recruitment of committee members are within the spirit and letter of current legislation and our Equalities Policy.

ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN SERVICES

BPCF recognises the need to ensure that all parent carers* with a child or young person agreed 0 to 25 with SEND in Birmingham can be members and contribute to the development of the forum. BPCF primarily aims to increase its membership and extend its reach amongst underrepresented and disadvantaged groups who face discrimination and inequalities to ensure a representative voice in the Birmingham area.

To achieve this:

- BPCF will seek to develop and implement anti-discriminatory strategies and positive action programmes as part of its work and promote these throughout all the spheres of influence available.
- BPCF will take appropriate steps to ensure it represents a broad and balanced range of views which consider the varying needs of different individuals and groups. We will also take action to identify the needs of people who are underrepresented in our work and will strive to represent their views to the service providers who meet those needs.
- All members, volunteers, staff, contractors, associates, committee/officers/directors must be aware of our commitment to equal opportunities and should be familiar with the contents of this policy document.
- Support will be provided for disabled groups and individuals through the provision of ‘reasonable adjustments’ (See Annex 1.4). We aim to ensure that our services are accessible to people with disabilities by proactively ensuring accessible venues for our events, ensuring that our training events are adjusted where necessary to meet the needs of disabled participants.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

BPCF aims to ensure that all people will receive a positive welcome from their first point of contact with the forum.

We aim to create and sustain a working environment free from oppressive attitudes and surroundings in which people working with us, members, volunteers, staff, contractors, associates, and local strategic partners feel comfortable and are not exposed to any form of harassment (including racial or sexual harassment) or to stereotyped attitudes and beliefs.

BREACHES OF POLICY

All members, volunteers, staff, associates, and partners have a right to make a complaint if they consider this policy has been breached. Complaints should be made under the procedures set out in the Complaints Policy. Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously, investigated, and addressed through the established code of conduct, disciplinary and grievance, and complaints policies and procedures.

Members, volunteers, staff, contractors, associates, local strategic partners, and parent carers have the right to make a complaint if they consider that this policy has been breached.

Disciplinary action will be taken, as appropriate, where allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation are founded.

PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC LIAISON

BPCF will provide information and resource materials which are free from images, language or attitudes which are: ageist, disablist, heterosexist, racist, sexist, or Transphobic.

All external communications, including publicity materials, press releases and advertisements will reflect a commitment to equal opportunities and will promote equality of access to the forum's membership.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PARENT CARER FORUM

The composition of the committee/officers should reflect the diversity and needs of the people who are members of Birmingham, and who experience discrimination and inequalities.

To achieve this:

- BPCF will conduct a regular analysis of the composition of the committee/ steering group/officers/trustees to identify which communities are under-represented.
- The committee/ steering group/officers/trustees/directors will endeavour to take appropriate action to recruit new members to ensure equal representation in the group's decision-making processes.

Recruitment, Employment, Promotion and Development

BPCF will ensure all its recruitment and selection practices are in accordance with principles of fairness and equality of opportunity, and fully in compliance with all relevant legislation.

We aim to recruit volunteers and staff via a process consistent with our Equalities Policy. By setting targets, and monitoring of the recruitment process and the workforce, we will seek to remedy any significant underrepresentation and to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination.

Decisions taken throughout the recruitment process will be recorded in a standard format and this information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the process in ensuring equality of opportunity. Where appropriate, we will also utilise positive action to encourage diversity and to seek to address any significant underrepresentation.

We will ensure that training, promotion, and development opportunities are offered on a basis that can be shown to be non-discriminatory.

We appreciate the skills and value that volunteers and staff with caring responsibilities and dependents bring to the forum, and we are committed to enabling those volunteers and staff to work within the forum. Where this is possible, and consistent with the provision of a high-quality organisation, we will take a flexible and sympathetic approach to the issues faced by these volunteers and staff.

Serious consideration will be given to staff who wish to take Annual Leave on specific days for religious or cultural reasons or who need to make adjustments to their working week for similar reasons. Reasonable adjustments or leave will not be unreasonably refused.

BPCF may choose to make a special effort to encourage volunteers or workers from underrepresented groups to take up roles or posts or at certain levels within the forum. This may include offering customised training and select development opportunities to staff from these groups.

We will collate and monitor statistical information about our volunteer and paid workforce to allow consideration of the profile of the workforce in terms of protected characteristics with the purposes of ensuring that marginalised groups are represented, and the workforce properly reflects the makeup of the wider community within which we operate. This information will be reported regularly to the committee/steering group/officers/trustees/directors.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The committee/officers/directors will have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy and for the development of any further equal opportunities initiatives.

This will involve the collection and analysis of statistical information concerning volunteers, job applicants, committee/officers/director composition and members, to inform future planning.

We will seek to obtain equality and diversity information from volunteer and paid staff, and candidates for the purpose of monitoring and reporting purposes. This will be requested on a voluntary basis, via an employment data monitoring form, and will be used to assess how diverse the forum is and to ensure we are meeting our equality and diversity responsibilities as set out in this policy and in our constitutional objectives.

We will take corrective action where any issues are identified. Equality and diversity information gathered may also be used to support the process of tendering for new business/funding.

Progress against the priorities detailed in the Equality Development Plan will also be used as a measure of how well this policy is being delivered.

BPCF will ensure that its members. Volunteers, staff committee/officers/directors are committed to ensuring that the Equalities Policy is implemented.

Responsibility and Communication

The BPCF expects that all members, staff (employees, volunteers, associates, contractors, and temporary workers), and parent carers, play an active part in promoting this policy. The Chair is responsible, on behalf of the committee/steering group/officers/trustees[/directors], for communicating and promoting the policy. Each volunteer or member of staff, with support from their supervisor/manager, has responsibility for implementing this policy within their area.

The committee/steering group/officers/trustees/directors are responsible for monitoring compliance with this Equalities Policy and the associated procedures. The committee/steering group/officers/trustees/directors are responsible for challenging any areas where underperformance has been identified.

Procedural responsibilities under the Equalities Policy are as follows:

The committee/steering group/officers/trustees/directors:

- Are responsible for ensuring that BPCF meets its responsibilities and legal obligations in relation to equality legislation.
- With assistance from the Chair/Director will ensure equality commitments identified in the policy are delivered through the development of an Equality Development Plan (EDP) / Action Plan.
- Will monitor and scrutinise performance, taking responsibility to set improvement targets where a need has been identified.
- Will identify and secure sufficient resources to implement this policy.

Individual committee members/officers/directors or volunteer supervisors:

- Are responsible for working with the full committee/steering group/officers/trustees/directors to ensure that the EDP / Action Plans are developed and the activities in the Action Plans are implemented.
- Will provide a high-profile lead on activities contained in the Action Plans.
- Will be the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion lead with the authority to act on behalf of the organisation
- When aware of harassment, bullying or discrimination will take appropriate action, regardless of whether the alleged victim has raised an official complaint.
- Are responsible for promoting equality of opportunity within their day-to-day practices.
- Must ensure every aspect of service delivery embraces and promotes equality of opportunity.
- Are responsible for making staff and volunteers aware of the contents of the Equalities Policy and discuss equality and diversity issues at team and / or other relevant meetings.

Individual volunteers, staff, or contractors at all levels:

- Are responsible for familiarising themselves with the Equalities Policy.
- Must behave in a way that is supportive of the Equalities Policy.
- Must inform their line manager/supervisor if they suspect that discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation has taken place.

Communication:

- Volunteers or staff joining BPCF will receive this policy as part of the documents contained within their induction pack.
- Current volunteers and staff will be informed of the development of this policy by their supervisor/line manager.
- Contractors will be made aware of this policy by those procuring their services.
- Key stakeholders and partners will be made aware of this policy by those responsible for maintaining partnership links.

Annex 1.1 – The Equality Act 2010, Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 brought together all existing equality legislation and offers protection from discrimination to people with “protected characteristics”. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Annex 1.2 – Discrimination

To understand current equality legislation, the following is an explanation of the types of unfair treatment that can occur:

Direct discrimination - occurs when someone treats another person less favourably because of a protected characteristic, or an assumption about one of the above, e.g., a Black candidate being refused a job, even though they are the best candidate, purely because of the perception that they may not fit in with the rest of the team.

Discrimination by association – discrimination against someone because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic. For example, an employee who is unfairly treated because they have a disabled child - can claim discrimination.

Discrimination by perception – is discrimination against an individual because other people think they possess a protected characteristic, e.g., a heterosexual employee being unfairly treated on the basis that others think they are gay can claim discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination – is when a condition, rule, policy, or practice disadvantages people who have a protected characteristic, e.g., a manager asking that employees work on Friday evenings to meet the demands of high workload may discriminate against Jewish people who wish to commence the Sabbath at sunset. However, indirect discrimination can be objectively justified, e.g., if there is an absolute organisational necessity for staff to be available to work at a certain time.

Harassment - is unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic which is intended to violate another's dignity or to create an offensive hostile, humiliating or degrading environment for that individual. E.g., an employee being continually teased by colleagues about their gender reassignment. This is a subjective test, which means that it is not what you consider to be offensive; but what the person to whom you say or do something considers offensive. If you feel that you are being harassed, you should raise the issue via the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Victimisation - it is a discriminatory act to treat anyone less favourably if they have made (or are suspected of having made) a complaint, or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, about discrimination during either present or previous employment, or they intend to make a complaint, or they have assisted someone else's complaint by giving evidence or corroborating a story.

Annex 1.3 Equality and Human Rights Commission

For more information on the Equality and Human Rights Commission - Equality Act Code of Practice please visit their website <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

Annex 1.4 'Reasonable Adjustments'

A reasonable adjustment is defined by the UK Government here:

<https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers>

For more information on reasonable adjustments please visit the EHRC website:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-are-reasonable-adjustments>



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE:

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) recognise that the use of networking sites is an increasingly popular communication tool now used by many more people. The use of social media provides many opportunities to improve the way we communicate, reach out and engage with people and other community groups.

As we have been developing our Facebook page, our website, X and Instagram accounts, it has been highlighted that, whilst these technologies provide amazing new avenues with which to reach parent carers, carers and professionals, they are also accompanied by dangers and negative consequences, if abused by users.

This policy will provide guidelines for acceptable use, not only for our own Website, Facebook page, X and Instagram accounts, but all online social networking communications as they relate to BPCF.

POLICY:

This policy is intended to help the BPCF committee members, representatives and employees (i.e., anyone who is a representative, has a role or is employed by BPCF) make appropriate decisions about the use of email, conventional mail; social media including (but is not limited to): blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards or comments on web-articles, such as X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, YouTube, etc. This includes the BPCF website and any other relevant social media.

This policy outlines the standards the committee members, representatives and employees must observe when using BPCF social media. BPCF accept that the use of email and all social media is a valuable communication tool. Use of BPCF signatory's, logo, email, conventional mail and all social media formats by the committee, representatives or employees of BPCF are permitted and encouraged where such use supports the goals and objectives of BPCF. However, use of the BPCF signatory, logo must not be used when undertaking personal activity. Misuse of this facility can have a negative impact upon the committee, representatives and employee's morale and the reputation of BPCF and the NNPCF. They should only be used in connection with BPCF regional and national business to do with and including meetings, events or keynote speaking.

Whenever committee members, representatives and employees use BPCF social media, even for personal messages, they do so as BPCF representatives. They must ensure that they:

- comply with current legislation
- do not create unnecessary risk to BPCF by their misuse of the internet
- do not represent personal views as the views of BPCF in an acceptable way

MODERATOR:

All social media, where possible, will be administered by an anonymous BPCF account.

The role of the moderator will be to ensure the above rules and guidelines are followed by all forum members, and the posted rules and guidelines are followed by the wider parent carer community.

To remove spam and abusive/offensive posts/ users who persistently refuse to follow said rules and guidelines.

To promote interaction, build a community feel, and provide help and support to users. Finally, to ensure the forums brand/image is upheld and not damaged through the social media platform.

There will always be at least two BPCF committee members, who have access to the moderator admin, account. Only committee members will have this responsibility.

At the handing over of the responsibilities by those holding the moderator post, a new password must be implemented to make sure that only those who have that role, have access.

The BPCF delegated moderators reserve the right to remove, edit, or otherwise alter content deemed inappropriate for any reason, without notification (also see social media acceptable use guide).

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR:

The following behaviour by a BPCF committee member, representative or employee is considered unacceptable:

- use of BPCF communications systems to set up personal businesses or send chain letters
- forwarding of BPCF confidential messages to external locations
- distributing or storing images, text or materials that might be considered indecent, pornographic, obscene or illegal use of email, conventional Mail and all social media formats in an acceptable way
- distributing or storing images, text or materials that might be considered discriminatory, offensive, abusive, bully or intimidate in that the context is a personal attack, sexist, racist or might be considered as harassment
- accessing copyright information in a way that violates the copyright
- breaking into the BPCF system or unauthorized use of a password/mailbox
- broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, religious or other non-business-related matters
- transmitting unsolicited commercial or advertising material
- undertaking deliberate activities that waste representative's effort or networked resources
- Introducing any form of computer virus or malware into the corporate network

AGREEMENT:

All BPCF committee members, representatives and employees who use BPCF logo on emails, use on-line services, or communicate on behalf of BPCF do so on the understanding they agree to abide by this policy at all times.



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) will fully comply with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and the strict principles stating that information must be:

- Processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed for other purposes incompatible with the initial purposes.
- Adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purpose for which data is processed.
- Accurate and where necessary, kept up to date. Reasonable steps are to be taken to ensure that personal data that is inaccurate, having regard to purposes which they are processed are removed or rectified without delay.
- Kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary, for the purposes which the data is processed. Personal data may be stored for longer periods if the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes, in the interest of the public, scientific or historical research purposes, subject to the implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measure required by GDPR to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals.
- Processed in a way that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum will keep personal information safe and secure, whether it is stored in a paper format or electronically.

Information held will not be disclosed to any other party, unless they have the authority to see it or have specific permission of the individual it relates to.

Any person may request that their personal information is removed from our records at any time.

A person may request a copy of information held about them by Birmingham Parent Carer Forum at any time.

The membership database may not be emailed under any circumstances and will be held on a system with encrypted access.

The membership database may only be held by named members of the management committee or staff employed by Birmingham Parent Carer Forum.
This Policy will be reviewed annually.



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC FINANCIAL POLICY

Introduction

This financial policy consists of:

- Management of financial records
- Banking arrangements
- Debit cards
- Paypal
- Receipts
- Payments
- Payment documentation
- Expenses
- Remuneration
- Staff
- Other rules

Note: The terms '*Forum*' and '*BPCF*' are used interchangeably in this policy.

Management of financial records

1. This Financial Policy is designed to ensure that all funds are used to deliver the aims of BPCF, that expenditure is properly authorised and that this can be evidenced.
2. Financial records must be kept so that the forum
 - Has proper financial control of the organisation on behalf of its members.
 - Meets its legal and other statutory obligations (if relevant), such as HMRC and common law.
 - Meets the contractual obligations and requirements of funders.
3. The records held must include
 - A petty cash book if cash payments are being made.
 - Records analysing transactions appearing on the bank accounts.
4. Accounts must be drawn up at the end of each financial year and presented to the Management Committee.
5. Prior to the start of each financial year, the forum will approve a budgeted income and expenditure account for the following year.
6. A report comparing actual income and expenditure with the budget should be presented to the Management Committee on a regular basis.

Banking Arrangements

1. The forum will bank with Lloyds Bank on-line and accounts will be held in the name of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum.
2. A bank mandate (the list of people who can sign cheques or authorise on-line transactions on the forum's behalf) will be approved and minuted by the Management Committee, as will any changes to it. There will be three signatories.
3. The forum will require the bank to provide statements every month. These will be reconciled with the records held.
4. The forum will not use any other bank or financial institution, or use overdraft facilities or loan, without the previous agreement of the management committee.

Debit Cards

At times the Forum may need to purchase goods or arrange for services that cannot be paid for by cheque. In order to access these the forum will hold 2 debit cards. The primary method of payment remains invoicing and this shall generally be used in preference to card purchases where such is offered by the supplier.

- Each card shall be stored in Chairs and Treasurers lockable storage cabinet when not in use.
- The PIN number for each card shall be known only by the cardholder and not disclosed to anyone else or written down.
- In the event of loss of the pin number the bank will be able to provide the cardholders only with the information
- Should the card be lost or stolen the loss shall be reported by the cardholder to the issuing bank, the police, and the forum treasurer immediately.
- Should fraud or misuse be suspected, the bank should be informed immediately so that the appropriate action can be taken.
- The debit card may only be used for purchases up to £400 without prior committee consent.
- The debit card transaction should be entered in the accounts as soon as possible with the debit card authorisation number, to ensure the completeness of the accounting records; ready to be reconciled when the bank statement reaches the forum.
- All transactions shall be supported by original receipts authorised by a designated signatory.
- The cards shall not be used for personal expenditure under any circumstances.
- Any monthly contracts taken out against a debit card will be by prior management committee consent and all original documentation will be held by the Forum.
- Cash withdrawals are not permitted.
- All authorised cardholders shall sign to accept that they have personal responsibility for transactions on "their" card which are not conducted with the approval of the Forum in accordance with this policy.
- Cardholders shall also authorise the Forum to recover the cost of any unauthorised transactions and where reimbursement is not received then the Forum may take steps to recover the costs from the cardholder.
- Cardholders shall be made aware of the action to take in the event of a card being lost, stolen or missing.

PAYPAL

- Paypal as a payment method should only be used as a last resort when no other payment method is available. The primary method of payment remains invoicing.
- Treasurer and Chair have authorisation to access to the BPCF Paypal account.
- BPCF Paypal password should never be shared with anyone under any circumstances, nor written down.
- The BPCF Paypal transaction should be recorded in the accounts spreadsheet as soon as possible and receipts filed accordingly.
- Paypal must not be used for any personal expenditure in any circumstances.
- No monthly subscriptions can be taken out using paypal as a payment method.
- Paypal credit must not be used for any expenditure under any circumstances.

Receipts

All monies received by the forum will be recorded on file and banked without delay.

Payments

1. The approved budget provides the cheque signatories with authority to spend up to the budgeted expenditure and not beyond it.
2. There will be one cheque book, held by the Chair. Three card readers, with the Treasurer responsible for holding one and another held by the Chair and the third held by the third signatory, which should be kept in a secure place.
3. Each cheque will be signed, or online transaction will be authorised by at least two people.
4. A cheque must not be signed, and payment must not be authorised or created by the person to whom it is payable. Similarly, an online payment must not be created or authorised by a payee.
5. Blank cheques will never be signed.
6. The relevant payee's name will always be inserted on the cheque before signature, and the cheque stub will always be properly completed.
7. No cheques or online payments should be signed without invoice, receipt or other evidence.

Payment Documentation

1. Every payment out of the forum's bank account must be evidenced by an original invoice, receipt or other evidence. That evidence will be retained and filed. The cheque signatory should ensure that it is referenced with:
 - Cheque number/online reference number
 - Date cheque drawn/date online payment made
 - Amount of cheque/amount of online payment
2. The only exceptions to cheques/online payments not being supported by an original invoice are items such as advanced booking fees for a future course or a deposit for a venue. Here a photocopy of the cheque/printout of the online payment will be kept.

Expenses

1. Expenses are out of pocket costs incurred for example: train tickets; car mileage to travel to an event or meeting, car parking, purchase of stationery or biscuits for a meeting, childcare.
2. Claims for expenses can be made by filling in a BPCF Expenses Claim Form and submitting this digitally to treasurer@birminghampcf.org, or by hand to the treasurer.
3. All expense claims must be accompanied by receipts for public transport, refreshments, parking, or the correctly calculated mileage for each journey claimed and be detailed on the BPCF Expenses Claim Form from postcode to postcode.
4. All expenses due to a meeting must be accompanied by a meeting feedback form.
5. The standard mileage rate that can be claimed by members of the Forum when attending meetings is 45p per mile.
6. Childcare costs claimed must be by invoice evidenced with paperwork signed by the person providing the childcare cover which states that they are responsible for their own tax/benefit liability.
7. BPCF Treasurer's expenses claim forms must be filled in and sent to the BPCF Chair for authorisation.
8. All claims must be submitted monthly to the Treasurer.
9. There will be a monthly budget check. If/when BPCF budget becomes low, an expenses cap will be imposed.
10. No cash payments can be made for expenses claimed.
11. All claims for expenses must be made within 90 days of the date being claimed for.

Remuneration

1. Remuneration is an hourly rate paid for attendance at a meeting, event or activity where you are *representing* the Forum and the BPCF Committee has approved your attendance in advance.
2. Remuneration is not payable for time spent at ordinary Committee Group meetings, meetings of officers or sub-groups.
3. All remuneration claims for work carried out on behalf of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum must be agreed by the BPCF Committee in advance of the work being done using the pre authorisation form to be signed by the chair and the treasurer.
4. All remuneration is dependent on the BCPF remaining budget.
5. The hourly remuneration rate for representing BPCF at meetings is £10.00 per hour of meeting time up to a maximum of 10 hours per month.
6. The hourly rate is classed as earnings therefore it is the responsibility of individuals to declare their earnings where appropriate. Anyone making a remuneration claim is responsible for any impact on their own tax, national insurance or benefits.
7. Parent carers unsure if receiving remuneration will impact on their benefits or tax liabilities can phone the Contact Freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 for personalised advice.
8. All remuneration claims MUST be accompanied by a Parent Participation Meeting Feedback Form and/or minutes for each authorised meeting or event which has been attended on behalf of BPCF. Claims will be authorised and paid only if this documentation accompanies the claim.

Staff

1. Staff contracted by BPCF will be self-employed and therefore responsible for their own tax and national insurance payments – providing their Self-Employed Tax Reference number on all invoices for the records. Payments made to self-employed staff will be made in accordance with all of the procedures above.
2. All changes in hours and payments will need to be authorised by the Management Committee.
3. Staff employed by Birmingham Parent Carer Forum CIC will have a written contract separate to this document.

Other Rules

1. The forum does not accept liability for any financial commitment unless properly authorised. Any orders placed or undertakings given which are likely to cost the forum in excess of £400 must be authorised and minuted by the Management Committee and listed on the treasurer's report.
2. In exceptional circumstances, such undertakings can be made with the Chair's approval who will then provide full details to the next meeting of the Management Committee.
3. The forum will adhere to good practice in relation to its finances at all times. This will include a fixed asset register stating the date of purchase, cost, serial numbers, normal location of assets and an appropriate record of their use. Any assets should be returned to the forum within 7 days if individual members stand down or discontinue to be members of the Forum.
4. Purchases of goods or services will be subject to obtaining at least two quotes, and the subsequent decision based on value for money by the Management Committee.
5. Any member of the Management Committee who has a personal interest in, or connection to an organisation, or connection to an individual who is already being paid by the forum (or intends to quote for work being commissioned by the forum) must declare this interest and have it minuted by the Management Committee and not be party to the decision making on accepting that quote for work.



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide members of the Birmingham Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) Management Committee with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children, and to provide information for parents and carers about the safeguarding measures that BPCF employs to ensure that it meets its responsibilities to promote the welfare of, and safeguard children and young people.

The BPCF Steering Committee does not have direct contact with children and young people, however by the nature of the organisation we work directly with parent carers of disabled children and young people. Therefore, it is essential that we have robust policies and procedures.

All BPCF Committee members are expected to be familiar with, and comply with this policy and procedures.

Legislation and guidance that underpins this policy

This Policy and Procedures have been developed in line with the principles of The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010.

Policy

Parent carers of children who are members of BPCF need to be aware that any concerns that a child or vulnerable adult may be or has been experiencing harm, and comes to the attention of Management Committee may be referred to the local authority safeguarding team.

Whilst recognising that the BPCF Management Committee will have no direct unsupervised contact with children and young people, its work with parent carers means that they may indirectly have contact with children and young people, and certainly have contact with parent carers who often live in particularly challenging situations.

Safeguarding disabled children and young people

There is clear evidence that disabled children and young people have an increased vulnerability to being abused, and that the presence of multiple impairments further increases their vulnerability. There are many reasons for this, and it is important that all those who work with disabled children and young people have some understanding of these reasons, and ensure that they offer appropriate support to any child or young person who discloses abuse.

Should we tell parent / carers if we are going to make a referral?

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parent carers about any concerns and if you need to make a referral to social care, you should normally discuss this with the parent carer before you do. However, inability to inform parent carers should not prevent a referral being made.

Reporting Procedures – DO NOT DELAY

Emergency Situations

If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via their powers to use Police Protection

Other situations

It is vitally important that any disclosure made in confidence is recorded factually as soon as possible; this is whether or not the matter is taken to another authority.

An accurate account should be made of:

- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
- Names of people who were involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any action taken by the group to gather information and refer on
- Any further action, e.g. suspension of a worker or volunteer
- Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency
- Names of person reporting and to whom reported.



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC USE OF FORUM EQUIPMENT AND IT

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and standards for the appropriate and responsible use of IT equipment within Birmingham Parent Carer Forum. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps and any individual who has access to or is provided with IT equipment by the Birmingham Parent Carer Forum. Adherence to this policy ensures the protection of the Forum resources, data security, and efficient operation of IT equipment.

Scope

This policy applies to all IT equipment, including but not limited to computers, laptops, tablet, mobile devices, servers, networking equipment, peripherals and any associated software or hardware provided to individuals by Birmingham Parent Carer Forum.

Authorised Use

IT equipment shall be used solely for the purpose of forum business and related to the forum operations.

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps and any individual who has access to or is provided with Forum IT equipment are responsible for ensuring that their use of forum equipment is consistent with the job responsibilities and does not violate any applicable laws, or contractual agreements.

All equipment shall remain the property of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum and shall be returned to Birmingham Parent Carer Forum upon termination of employment or upon termination of a voluntary role.

Protection and Security

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps must take reasonable precautions to protect IT equipment from theft, loss, damage or any unauthorised access. This includes ensuring that devices are securely stored, not left unattended, and are protected by password or other security measures as specified by the Forum Management Committee. Passwords for laptops and tablets will be provided to the user and is not permitted to be changed without authorisation of two officers, any changes to passwords or access codes need to be reported to an officer immediately.

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps shall not install unauthorised software, remove security controls, or modify the configuration of IT equipment without authorisation.

Keepers of Forum equipment must promptly report any suspected security breach, loss, theft or damage of IT equipment to the appropriate person within the forum.

Software and licensing

Only licensed software approved by the forum may be installed and used on the forum own or provided IT equipment.

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps shall not engage in unauthorised copying, distribution, or use of copyrighted material, including software, without the necessary permissions or licenses.

Data Privacy and Confidentiality

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps must respect and maintain the confidentiality and privacy of sensitive data stored or accessed through IT equipment, following applicable privacy laws and forum policies.

It is prohibited to access, retrieve, or disseminate personal or confidential information unless required for legitimate reasons authorised by the management committee.

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps must adhere to the forum GDPR policies when handling and storing data on IT equipment.

Personal Use

IT equipment shall be used solely for the purpose of forum business and related to the forum operations and personal use is not permitted.

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps must understand that any personal use of IT equipment is not private, and the organisation reserves the right to monitor or access personal activities on Forum own or provider devices.

Compliance

Violation on this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or being asked to leave the forum and could also lead to legal consequence or civil liabilities.

Employees, volunteers, committee members, community reps, parent reps are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this policy and seeking clarification and guidance.

The Forum will periodically review and update this policy to reflect changes in technology, legal requirements, or business needs.

By signing below, employees and volunteers acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to comply with the use of equipment policy

Signed

Date



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) seeks to be a transparent organisation that is open to improving and developing its capabilities, whilst sharing its learning and knowledge with others. We are a Community Interest Company (CIC) that is committed to providing a quality service in a way that builds the trust and respect of the whole community of Birmingham. Our aim is to continue to improve its service by listening and responding to the views of community members, by responding positively to complaints and by putting any mistakes right.

We regard how we deal with feedback, both positive and negative, as being of vital importance in helping us understand not only how to further develop our strengths, but also how to address any areas of concern. This document details how we as an organisation handle such feedback.

Internal and external complaints are dealt with in the same way.

BPCF Complaints Policy and Procedure has the following goals:

- Treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with its service which calls for an immediate response.
- Deal with complaints promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- Respond by resolving the complaint in the right way. This could include an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken.
- Learn from complaints, uses them to improve its service, and reviews annually its complaints policy and procedures.

BPCF will deal with any complaint as soon as possible. BPCF will record every complaint in the complaints logbook whether it has been resolved formally or informally. In all cases, a complaint will be given full and fair consideration. If a criminal offence is alleged, then the police will be informed.

How to submit information

We achieve success through working together and by regularly collaborating with other organisations. As we are a small organisation, we ask that any feedback is submitted via email to Info@birminghampcf.org This also ensures that a designated colleague can deal with issues in the event of sickness or holidays of a main contact.

General comments

Any individual or organisation can contact us using the email address Info@birminghampcf.org We respond to all general comments within 10 working days.

Compliments

Much of our work requires us to collect qualitative evidence of improvement made, and therefore compliments from those who have used our services are actively encouraged. If people want to send a compliment but do not want it to be used as supporting evidence on current or future projects, we ask that they identify this at the time of submission. We acknowledge any compliments received.

Concerns

We classify concerns as something that an individual or organisation wishes to raise about our work, but which is not involved with actual service delivery. This might be issues such as, but not limited to:

- Something on our website or social media page(s)
- Our views on a particular issue
- Our links with other organisations/events/activities

We will answer such concerns as fully as possible, where answering such concerns would not breach the confidentiality of a third party. We acknowledge any concerns raised upon receipt and aim to respond to them within 10 working days.

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by anyone using our services whether justified or not, as a company and/or to an individual member, and that requires a formal response. Any individual or organisation can make a complaint if they feel the BPCF have:

- Failed to provide a service or adequate standard of service.
- Delayed in providing a service.
- Made a mistake.
- Provided an unfair service.
- Failed to act in a proper way.

Many complaints can be resolved informally. In the first instance the Complainant is invited to meet with Chair and/or Vice Chair and/or Secretary of the Management Committee and is offered support, i.e. a buddy, to make their complaint confidently and clearly in person.

If the complaint directly relates to one of the Officers, the Complainant will be supported to speak to them directly. Otherwise, the other Officers will hear their complaint. The Officers may then lead a review of The Code of Conduct at the next meeting to improve the BPCF leadership. The results of the review will be recorded and reported back to the Complainant. (see Failure to Follow Code of Conduct, Page 3 of CoC).

Where the BPCF are unable to satisfactorily resolve a complaint informally, then they will direct the Complainant to the formal complaint procedure.

Formal Complaints

Should the Complainant feel that they wish to make a formal complaint, they should do so, in writing marked private and confidential, for the Chair's attention and sent to the email address Info@birminghampcf.org

Please ensure you include your name, address, telephone number and email and if appropriate, the organisation you represent. We cannot accept anonymous complaints. Please give as much detail as possible.

Please note we will only investigate complaints about our current services, or incidents occurring in the six months prior to the date of the complaint.

In their letter, the Complainant should set out the details of their complaint, the consequences for them as a result, and the remedy they are seeking. If their complaint concerns a Committee Member or member, they should state the name of the individual concerned.

Responsibilities

The BPCF intends that the formal complaints procedure ensures that it handles all complaints fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, resolved to the Complainant's satisfaction. As such, we will:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing or via email directly to the Complainant.
- Respond within a stated period.
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- Act where appropriate.

We will acknowledge all complaints upon receipt and aim to respond to them within 10 working days. This acknowledgement will outline who is dealing with the complaint and when the Complainant can expect a response.

Ideally, the Complainant should receive a response to their complaint within 20 working days of receipt. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, the Complainant will receive an interim response describing what the BPCF is doing to deal with the matter, when the Complainant can expect a full reply and from whom.

On receiving the complaint, the Chair records it in the complaint logbook. They will then delegate an appropriate person to investigate the complaint and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific Committee Member or member, that Committee Member or member should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Appeals

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can request a review by emailing Info@birminghampcf.org marking it private and confidential. You must do this within 28 days of the written response.

The Chair will normally respond within 15 working days to inform the Complainant of the action which will be taken to investigate the complaint, and when they can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation. The appeal review will be carried out by two other BPCF members not involved in the previous investigation. The purpose of the appeal panel is to ensure your complaint was dealt with properly and fairly and whether an appropriate decision has been reached, not to reinvestigate the complaint.

Within 28 working days, the investigating individuals will make a decision, which is final, and no further correspondence will be entered into. We will write to you to tell you of our decision and our reasons for making it.

At any stage, the Complainant may be assisted and/or accompanied by another person.

If a complaint is made about an individual member of the BPCF they will be supported throughout this process by another member or independent person.

The outcome of the investigation will represent the BPCF's final response.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The BPCF may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. For example, in the event of a complaint about the Chair as an individual, it would be inappropriate for the Chair to investigate or review the complaint.

Outside agencies

There may be occasions when the BPCF is required by law to report the complaint to law enforcement or other legal bodies such as safeguarding. At all times legal, statutory, and professional investigations will overrule this complaints procedure. BPCF will not undertake any actions that may compromise these investigations.

- The BPCF may take action to protect the BPCF and its members by suspending the member until investigations are complete.
- It will complete all immediate actions but then suspend the complaints process until external investigations are complete.
- Full and accurate records of all actions will be kept.

Data Protection

BPCF will keep all data related to the complaint secure and confidential. The identity of the person making the complaint will be known only to those who are investigating the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. There may be exceptions to this confidentiality where legislation is involved, or allegations have been made regarding the conduct of a third party.

BPCF will normally destroy its complaints, comments, and compliments file after 5 years.

External Stage: Complaints to the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the BPCF's final response, and if they are an eligible Complainant, as defined by the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (RCIC), they can refer their complaint to the RCIC, free of charge.

For more information, please contact the RCIC at:

The Regulator of Community Interest Companies

2nd floor

Companies House

Crown Way

Cardiff

CF14 3UZ

Tel: 029 2034 6228. This is a 24-hour voicemail service.

E-mails should be sent to: cicregulator@companieshouse.gov.uk

Confidentiality:

Except in exceptional circumstances, the BPCF and the Complainant should make every attempt to maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit).

Should this be the case, the BPCF will explain such a situation to the Complainant.



BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM CIC VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum Management Committee deal with specific complaints as part of their management of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum C.I.C in accordance with Birmingham Parent Carer Forum Complaints Procedure, and other relevant policies.

Complaints are small in number, and majority are handled informally wherever possible or formally using the complaints procedure. Most are resolved quickly and sensitively with an outcome acceptable to both parties.

However, there are occasions when complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/or pursuing concerns. The consequences are the actions of the complainants begin to impact negatively on the day-to-day running of the forum and directly or indirectly the overall well-being of the members of the forum. In these exceptional circumstances Birmingham Parent Carer Forum may take action in accordance with this policy.

Aims of Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Uphold the standards of courtesy, language and reasonableness that should characterise all communication between the organisations and person who wish to express a concern or pursue a complaint.
- Support the well-being of all Directors, Committee Members, Employees, Representatives and Volunteers and everyone else who has legitimate interest in the work of the forum.
- Deal fairly, honestly, openly and transparently with those who make persistent or vexatious complaints, and those who harass, threaten or use inappropriate language towards or concerning Birmingham Parent Carer Forum Directors, Committee Members, Employees, Representatives or volunteers while ensuring that other stakeholders suffer no detriment.

Who is a Persistent Complainant?

For the purpose of this policy, a persistent complainant is a parent/carer or member of the public who complains repeatedly about issues, either formally or informally, or frequently raises issues that the complainant considers to be within the remit of the forum, and whose behaviour is unreasonable.

Such behaviour may be characterised by:

- Actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious.
- Prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail, posts on social media or telephone contact about a concern or complaint, including negative online reviews of the forum.
- Repeated GDPR subject access requests for their data.
- An insistence upon pursuing unsubstantiated complaints and/or having unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes.
- An insistence upon pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner, including the use of inappropriate language.
- An insistence on only dealing with the chair on all occasion irrespective of the issue and the level of delegation in the forum to deal with such matters.
- An insistence upon repeatedly pursuing a complaint when the outcome is not satisfactory to the complainant but cannot be changed, for example of the desired outcome is beyond the remit of the organisations because it is unlawful.

For the purpose of this policy, harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of such actions as above in such a way that they:

- Appear to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of the organisations.
- Cause on-going distress to individual member (s) of the organisations and/or
- Are pursued in a manner which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive by the recipient. This could include situations where persistent demands and criticisms, whilst not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, have a cumulative effect over time of undermining confidence, well-being and health.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum Actions in Cases of Persistent or Vexatious Complaints or Harassment.

Initially the Chair will verbally inform the complainant that his/her behaviour is considered to be becoming unreasonable / unacceptable and, if it is not modified, action may be taken in accordance with this policy.

This will be confirmed in writing. The chair also reserves the right to deal with the complainant under the bullying and harassment policy.

If the behaviour is not modified the Chair, in consultation with the regional adviser for Contact, will take some or all of the following actions as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the organisations:

- a) inform the complainant in writing that his/her behaviour is now considered by the forum to be unreasonable/unacceptable and, therefore, to fall under the terms of this policy
- b) inform the complainant that all meetings with a member of the Management Committee will be conducted with a second person present and that notes of meetings may be taken in the interests of all parties.
- c) inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, all routine communication with the complainant to the organisations should be by letter only.
- d) (in the case of physical, or verbal aggression) take advice from a Legal adviser and consider warning the complainant about being banned from the forum; or proceed straight to a temporary ban.

- e) consider taking advice regarding pursuing a case under Anti-Harassment legislation.
- f) put in place a single point of contact for the complainant through which all correspondence must go through.
- g) take legal advice regarding putting in place a specific procedure for dealing with complaints from the complainant, i.e., the complainant will not be able to deal directly with the Chair but only with a third party to be identified by the Management Committee of the forum, who will investigate, determine whether or not the concern/ complaint is reasonable or vexatious and then advise the Chair accordingly.

New complaints raised by the vexatious complainant that have already been investigated by the organisations will not be reinvestigated.

New complaints that have not in the Chair's view, already been considered under the organisations Complaints Policy will proceed straight to appropriate level within the complaints procedure.

If a complainant's persistent complaining harassing behaviour is modified and is then resumed at a later date within a reasonable period of time, the Chair will resume the process identified above at an appropriate level. In these circumstances advice will be sought from the Legal advisers.



Birmingham Parent Carer Forum CLC Representative Induction Pack