



Warrington
Parents & Carers

CONSTITUTION

November 2023

Introduction

Warrington Parents and Carers started as a result of parent participation in the government's 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' initiative. This document aims to build on our progress under this initiative to create a sustainable forum to support disabled children, and their families, for the future.

The main body of this document contains a formal constitution and this is enhanced by appendices which suggest the roles and responsibilities and mission for the forum.

Whilst a lot of children's services are defined as 0 - 19, the forum will adopt the wider definition of 0 – 25 in accordance with developing legislation.

The definition of "disability" is a very difficult one. Many committees have spent many hours discussing this, and have yet to achieve an adequate definition. As a forum, we do not want to exclude any child or family in need of additional support. Nor do we want to label any child as "disabled" if this term is deemed unwelcome. Rather, we would like to support any child / parent in the Warrington area, regardless of their additional need, be that physical, educational, sensory or otherwise.

The Constitution

Warrington Parents and Carers Forum and its money will be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this constitution. Adoption of this constitution is as of the date it is signed. This constitution sets out the rules by which Warrington Parents and Carers Forum will be governed. These are legally binding on the members.

The Name

The name of the group is Warrington Parents and Carers Forum (WarrPAC).

The Aims and Objectives

Warrington Parents and Carers forum aims are to support parents, carers and families of disabled children and those with additional needs within Warrington. Our objective is to be the strategic consultative body within Warrington representing families of children with disabilities and additional needs, providing a liaison point for Statutory and Voluntary Agencies within Warrington. We will consult with and inform our membership with a view to ensuring that all children in Warrington with disabilities and additional needs have the best possible outcomes. These outcomes may be updated from time to time in the light of changes to Government policy.

To work towards this, we want to ensure that:

- WarrPAC are working co-productively with the services that support our children and young people, getting involved in strategic decisions at the earliest possible opportunity
- Parent's views are being heard and can feed directly into all strategies relating to Education, Health and Social Care for children with disabilities.
- Parents can be consulted about implementation and priorities.
- Parents can share together experiences to assist each other.
- Parents can work alongside other local charities for the benefit of their children.
- Relevant information is shared with parents, including regular mailings and online.
- Training is offered to parents, where needed, to assist their children.

Our vision for the group is outlined in Appendix B which will be reviewed regularly.

Powers

In furtherance of the aims and objectives the group may:

- Employ and remunerate staff.
- Raise funds by any lawful means except permanent trading.
- Accept gifts and donations for the group.
- Do anything else within the law which is necessary for the group to carry out their aims and objectives.

Application of the income

- The Warrington Parents and Carers Forum funds shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the aims and objectives and shall be managed in accordance with the Finance and Remuneration Policy of the group.

- Any member may be given reasonable and proper remuneration for any goods and/or services bought on behalf of or for Warrington Parents and Carers Forum.
- Travel costs, material costs and venue hire, may all be claimed from the funds, when they are for Warrington Parents and Carers Forum.
- Members should give receipts or invoices to the treasurer, for payment.
- A bank account has been opened and ran by the treasurer. Cheques must be signed by any two of the three nominated signatories. The treasurer is currently investigating options for an online bank account.
- Accurate accounts of all income and expenditure must be kept for presentation at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- If Warrington Parents and Carers Forum is dissolved and there are funds in the bank, the law states that it should pass on any remaining assets to another charitable body. The committee members/trustees at the time will vote for the relevant charity whose beneficiaries are children with special and/or additional needs and/or their families.

Membership

- Membership is open to family members and carers of any child or young adult with disabilities and/or additional needs, up to the age of 25 years and who live in or receive services from the borough of Warrington. We seek to involve as wide a membership as possible to ensure that we are representative of our families. Bereaved members are still able to be members for up to 3 years
- Membership is open to individuals over eighteen or organisations that are approved by the Steering Group.
- The Steering Group may only refuse an application for membership if, acting reasonably and properly, they consider it to be in the best interests of the Forum to refuse the application.
- The Steering Group must inform the applicant in writing of the reasons for the refusal within twenty-one days of the decision.
- The Steering Group must consider any written representations the applicant may make about the decision. The Steering Group's decision following any written representations must be notified to the applicant in writing but shall be final.
- There will also be an associate membership for practitioners, both within the Voluntary and Statutory sectors. This membership will have no voting rights, but will be kept up to date with Warrington Parents and Carers Forum's newsletter and will be able to attend Open Meetings.
- Membership is not transferable.
- Steering Group members must keep a register of members, either in a written form or held on computer and will ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Each member is entitled to one vote but if there is an equality of votes the person who is chairing the meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to any vote he or she may have.
- Any member may request to be removed from the list at any time and no longer receive the newsletters.

- If the committee considers that any member's conduct is in any way harmful to the aims and objectives of Warrington Parents and Carers Forum the committee/steering group will reserve the right to terminate membership.

Termination of Membership

Membership is terminated if:

- the member dies or, if it is an organisation, ceases to exist;
- the member resigns by written notice to the Forum unless, after the resignation, there would be less than two members
- any sum due from the member to the Forum is not paid in full within six months of it falling due
- the member is removed from membership by a resolution of the Steering Group that it is in the best interests of the Forum that his or her membership is terminated. A resolution to remove a member from membership may only be passed if:
- the member has been given at least twenty one days' notice in writing of the meeting of the Steering Group at which the resolution will be proposed and the reasons why it is to be proposed;
- the member or, at the option of the member, the member's representative (who need not be a member of the Forum) has been allowed to make representations to the meeting.

Management/Meetings

- Warrington Parents and Carers Forum will be managed by a Steering Group. This will comprise of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 members. This will include a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Other roles within the Steering Group will be appointed as and when required.
- The inaugural Steering Group members and officers shall be those elected at the initial AGM. The Steering Group members will be annually elected from the committee members of Warrington Parents and Carers Forum at the AGM.
- Any Committee Member wishing to be elected as an officer will need to seek nomination by members of the Steering Group at the first meeting following the AGM.
- The Steering Group may appoint sub-committees to carry out specific tasks and delegate specific powers as necessary. Sub-committees must report back to Steering Group for ratification of any decisions.
- The Steering Group may have no more than two co-opted members whom will not be entitled to vote.
- A quorum of one-third of the Steering Group will be needed to hold a meeting.
- Each member has one vote.
- The Steering Group must meet at least six times a year.

- A General Meeting can be called by at least 3 members of the Steering Group when some special or urgent business has to be considered. Such meetings will be called in writing 21 days in advance. A quorum for such meetings shall consist of a minimum of 3 members or 5% of the membership. The same rules shall apply to Annual General Meetings
- We aim to continue with our general monthly forum meetings. These are open to all and will give services the opportunity to communicate developments and receive input / direction. These meetings would be held in the daytime and evening, where possible, to make these accessible to all parents / carers.

Quorum

No business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum is present.
A quorum is one third of the steering group members plus one.

The authorised representative of a member organisation shall be counted in the quorum.
If:

- (a) a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting; or
- (b) during a meeting a quorum ceases to be present, the meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place as the Steering group shall determine.

The Steering Group must re-convene the meeting and must give at least seven clear days' notice of the re-convened meeting stating the date time and place of the meeting. If no quorum is present at the re-convened meeting within fifteen minutes of the time specified for the start of the meeting the members present at that time shall constitute the quorum for that meeting.

Chair

General meetings shall be chaired by the person who has been elected as Chair. If there is no such person or he or she is not present within fifteen minutes of the time appointed for the meeting a Steering Group member nominated by the Steering Group shall chair the meeting. If there is only one Steering Group member present and willing to act, he or she shall chair the meeting.

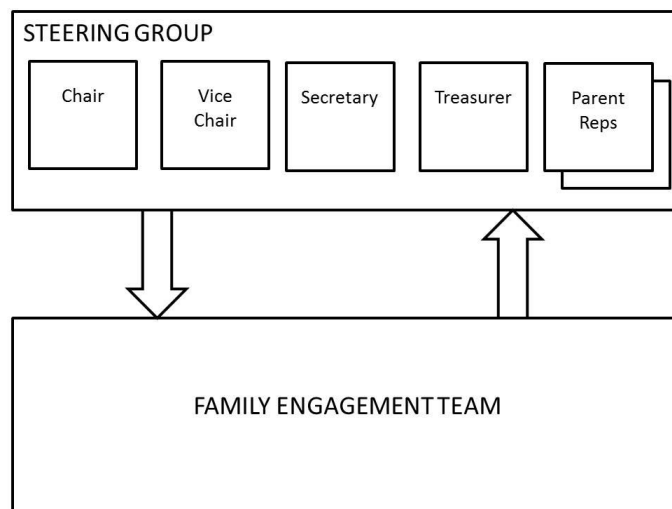
If no Steering Group member is present and willing to chair the meeting within fifteen minutes after the time appointed for holding it, the members present and entitled to vote must choose one of their number to chair the meeting.

13.Communication

It is our aim to reach as wide an audience as possible. To reduce costs, however, most communication will be via email (warrpac@gmail.com and devofficer@warrpac.org) and our website at <http://warrpac.org/> We recognise, however, that not all families will have access to the internet, so we hope to continue to offer our help line 07581 302172 and paper newsletters.

Appendix A - Roles and Responsibilities

The following diagram illustrates the roles of Warrington Parents and Carers:



A description of these roles and their responsibilities is given below.

All members of the steering group and family engagement team would be expected to act within the Code of Conduct and be aware of the organisations policies and procedures.

The role of Steering Group Member

The constitution of Warrington Parents and Carers Forum states that the group will be managed by a Steering Group. The constitution requires that this Steering Group will include a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and also states that other roles within the Steering Group may be appointed as and when required.

The inaugural Steering Group members and officers shall be those elected at the initial AGM. The Steering Group members will be annually elected from the full membership of Warrington Parents and Carers Forum at the AGM. Any Committee Member wishing to be elected as an officer will need to seek nomination by members of the Steering Group at the first meeting following the AGM.

As a representative of parent carers across Warrington, the Steering Group Member Role has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct. Any member who represents the Warrington Parents and Carers Forum must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership and working partners.

WarrPAC welcomes parents and carers who would like to become more involved in their work. Further information can be found at <https://warrpac.org/get-involved/vacancies/>

The role of Chair

- Leads the Steering Group ensuring it fulfils its responsibilities in line with the constitution of Warrington Parents and Carers Forum
- Sets the agenda and chairs the Steering Group meetings
- Acts as a figurehead for the group at functions, meetings, events and for publicity purposes
- If the Warrington Parents and Carers Forum have paid staff it will be the chair's role, in conjunction with other Steering Group members to supervise the staff.

The role of Vice-Chair

- To support the Chair in all of the areas listed above
- To provide cover should the chair be unavailable, making decisions as necessary in their absence

The role of Secretary

- To carry out the secretarial functions necessary to support the work of the Steering Group
- To liaise with the chair to put together the agenda for meetings
- Takes accurate minutes of the meetings which form the legal record of the decisions taken by the organisation
- Send out copies of the minutes and agenda to other Steering Group members
- Deals with any written correspondence as requested by Steering Group members
- Passes on relevant written enquiries to the appropriate group member
- Prepares papers and carries out the administration of the Annual General Meeting(AGM)

The role of Treasurer

- To prepare and present regular financial reports to the Steering Group
- To maintain the financial records in accordance with the Financial and Expenses Remuneration Policy
- To prepare financial records to support applications for funding
- To ensure payment of expenses and act as signatory for cheques

The role of Family Engagement Team Member

The family engagement team is an essential part of the communication process for Warrington Parents and Carers. Each team member would cover specific areas of interest and liaise with parent / carers in their contact group e.g. Early Years, Working Parents, PMLD issues. The member would be linked to one of the steering group for support and to report back issues.

Responsibilities:

- Talking to people – gathering opinions, whether face to face, over social media or other methods
- Record and feedback opinions – collecting the information received and passing it back on to the steering group
- Disseminate information – relay back to contacts progress on issues and any updates from services



Warrington Parents and Carers Forum

Vision

