



Fairer Fostering Terms of Reference

1. The group shall be known as 'The Fairer Fostering Partnership' (Fairer Fostering)
2. **Membership** of the group shall be limited to IFAs that are registered charities, not-for-profit organisations, co-operatives, social enterprises or Community Interest Companies (CICs) and whose primary, but not necessarily sole, activity is fostering.
3. **Associate Membership** may be granted, by consensus of the Members, to any similar agency or stakeholder organisation with similar, non-competing, interests but who may not be an IFA.
4. **The Objectives of the Group** are as follows:
 - To focus on the needs of vulnerable children and young people;
 - To put children before profit by re-investing any surplus back into the care of children and young people;
 - To share news, trends and other information to ensure that members stay well informed;
 - To undertake activities that will help the group as a whole. This includes:
 - promoting the interests of the group member organisations to local authorities, eg fostering fortnight, statutory or regulatory changes;
 - sharing best practice – where there are learning opportunities, shared training opportunities and common interests in dealing with OFSTED directives;
 - setting and comparing benchmarks.

5. **Meetings:** The groups shall meet quarterly and shall agree to fix dates for at least two meetings in advance.
6. **Conduct of Meetings:** All members have equal standing within the group. There is no quorum (initially) as there is no formal voting activity. Members should normally submit important agenda items (where a decision is required) to the Secretary and Chair 14 days in advance. The agenda will include standing items as follows:

- List of Attendees (including deputies) and their organisation
- Apologies
- Chair
- Secretary
- Matters arising
- Any other business
- Date and venue of next meeting
- Thanks to any guest/visiting speaker.

There will be a standing item on each agenda, which is a five-minute verbal round up from each member sharing current trading/ market activity, problems, opportunities, news etc. There is no need to submit in advance for this agenda item and it will not be recorded except for any action point arising.

7. **Venues:** The current Secretary will arrange and advise as to the venue for each meeting. Lunches and beverages will be arranged by the Secretary but each member shall pay the cost on a rota basis. (Members may decide to set a different policy in line with any decision on membership contributions)
8. **Attendance:** A senior representative of each agency, normally the Director, Registered Manager or a senior professional in social work or management shall be the nominated group member to attend each meeting. A maximum of two people from each agency can attend any one meeting.
9. **Chair:** The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected from the membership on a three yearly basis. The role of the Chair is to ensure that all business on the agenda is dealt with to time and that all members have equal opportunity to contribute. Unless otherwise agreed the Chair would normally be the spokesperson on any matters that arise from the matters discussed on the agenda e.g. for a press release. Neither the Chair nor any other member has the authority to make public statements or comments on the policy or practices of any other group member organisation, nor to represent themselves as an 'officer' of the group.

10. **Sub-Committee:** A sub-committee will be elected from the membership who will act as 'spoke persons' for the group and undertake such work as directed through the Chair.
11. **Secretary:** The role of Secretary will be undertaken by an agreed person from a member agency. The role of the Secretary is to collate agenda items and after the meeting to ensure that action points from the agenda are recorded and that all members have a copy of the action points distributed to them. Action Points should not normally exceed one side of A4 but may include attachments/handouts. These are not formal minutes and are not intended to be verbatim nor to record the comments of members, except where requested by the members or at the direction of the Chair. Members will need to keep their own records of each meeting, as there is, at this stage, no central record.
12. **Subscriptions:** Members will be expected to contribute a limited financial contribution in order that Fairer Fostering can achieve its aims. Contributions will be decided taking into account the size of the agency. All expenditure should be unanimously agreed and minuted by the group before taken forward. An agreed person from a member agency will administer the fund.
13. **Confidentiality:** All discussions at the meetings, and with members outside the meetings, should be assumed to be confidential in order to encourage open debate and trust.