



## **CONSTITUTION: JUST SAY PARENT CARER FORUM (JUST SAY)**

### **OUR VISION**

**Barking & Dagenham(B&D) is a borough where parent carers and professionals work together to provide excellent services for all children and young people with disabilities and additional needs.**

We are a well-informed, connected, and empowered community of families, offering informal information & advice to each other and working in partnership with the Local Authority (LA), service providers and commissioners of services to create quality services that meet the needs of all parent carers, and their Children & Young People (C&YP).

### **OUR PURPOSE**

- **To share our knowledge** of our lived experience and work in a positive partnership with professionals (especially in the LA) to improve services for C&YP with disabilities and additional needs aged 0-25.
- **To be a platform** where parent carers and their C&YP stand equally with service providers and to empower parent carers and C&YP for a better future.
- **Break down barriers** between families and the LA by passing information onto parent carers and back to the LA.

### **OUR AIMS**

- ❖ To collect and collate the **views and opinions** of parent carers
- ❖ To be the **voice** that informs commissioners and service providers about the needs of disabled C&YP and their families
- ❖ To offer **constructive challenge** about current services and input to the planning of future service provision
- ❖ To **listen** to the response and feed this back to parent carers

### **PRINCIPLES**

**We will act at all times with integrity, openness, and honesty.** We are guided by the *Seven Principles of Public Life* identified by the Nolan Committee. Please see full details in our Code of Conduct Policy.

**NB All active members of JUST SAY will be expected to sign up to and abide by all agreed policies** –e.g., Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, Financial Control & Payback.



## **POWERS**

**In keeping with our Vision, purpose and aims (but not otherwise) the Steering Group (SG) may exercise the power to:**

- Share information through different media, i.e., website, Meetings, Newsletters and Directories such as the Local Offer and other media commensurate with the needs of the parent carers.
- Produce and print, publish, put on internet, issue, and circulate free (*or for a charge*) such papers, books, periodicals, pamphlets, directories or other documents or films or recordings in any other way as to enable JUST SAY to fulfil its purpose
- Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice, and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- Maintain a database of members who are willing to be consulted about planning, development, design, and procurement of services. This database will be held securely by JUST SAY
- Make agencies and services aware of this database and liaise to facilitate consultation and participation.
- Publicise and promote the work of the forum and organise meetings, training courses, events, and seminars, etc.
- Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate. Apply for, obtain, collect, and receive money and funds from grants, donations, subscriptions, legacies, and any other means.
- Ask a Host organisation to hold monies on our account and advise on all financial matters
- Employ any person on such terms of employment as JUST SAY decides are necessary
- Pay parent carers any out of pocket expenses when carrying out tasks/activities on behalf of JUST SAY and have a clear policy on expenses and remuneration
- Hire or otherwise acquire any property and any rights and privileges necessary to enable JUST SAY to fulfil its purpose.
- Promote, encourage, or undertake research surveys, project work, and publish the results.
- Do all such lawful things as are necessary to enable JUST SAY to achieve its purposes.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- Any parent carer of a C&YP with a disability or special education need (SEND) who is aged between 0-25 years and who lives in Barking & Dagenham can become a member of JUST SAY. This membership is free.
- Where it is considered an individual's membership would be detrimental to the aims and activities of the Group, the SG have the power to refuse membership, or may terminate or suspend membership of any member by a majority resolution passed at a



SG meeting. *Members shall have the right to appeal via an independent adjudicator determined by the SG*

- Any member may resign their membership by providing written notice and their information will be permanently removed from the database

### **LEADERSHIP**

- The business of the forum will be managed by a smaller group of active parent carers who will form a Steering Group (SG). This will be no less than 4 and no more than 10 people and everyone must be at least 18 years of age. The SG is responsible for ensuring that the DfE Parent Participation Grant -and any other income – is managed responsibly and within the conditions of grant. All parent carers are volunteering their time.
- It is expected that individuals will attend at least 50% of SG meetings in any year and give apologies in advance if unable to attend. If there has been nonattendance for three consecutive meetings with no explanations the Co-Chairs will talk to that individual about best course of action – they may be asked to step down.
- We will have scope for two Co-opted places – i.e., not parent carers but allies of the forum. Co Optees will have a year's tenure and can then be reviewed at the meeting, and they will not have voting rights.
- Members of the SG must sign an annual **Declaration of Interests Form** and have responsibility to update at any time in the year.

### **ROLES**

- JUST SAY will have two Co Chairs and the Treasurer function will be fulfilled by the Host Organisation (currently *Sycamore Trust UK*). The length of office for the Co-Chair will be three years (ideally alternating) with scope to be nominated for a further two terms.
- Parent carers can self-nominate to be on the SG by completing a statement that covers their knowledge, skills and commitment and they will be asked to observe one meeting as part of their induction. They will be subject to DBS checks (carried out by the host organisation on the forum's behalf). Nominations will be invited at the Annual Conference if the number on the SG is below 10.
- SG members will be asked to attend strategic meetings to ensure JUST SAY works in co-production and co-design. They will represent wider views of the membership as well as draw on lived experience.

### **MEETINGS**

- We plan to hold **Open Forum Meetings** on a termly basis - topics and speakers to be decided following consultation with members and responding to local need/issues.
- **The SG** will meet at least eight times in the year. It will need a minimum of three



members to be quorate. Any SG member can add items to the agenda, the chairing of each meeting will be rotated, and a record will be made of any actions which will be shared with the whole SG as soon as possible after each meeting. Standing items will be the Budget and Champions feedback.

- JUST SAY will have **an Annual Conference** where there will be presentations on all activities and budget spend as well as planning for the coming year. We will also ask for nominations for joining the SG (if the number is below 10) and will carry out a secret ballot if the numbers interested exceeds 10 places.
- The first meeting of the SG after the Annual Conference will confirm the two Co-Chairs in office.
- SG members will attend and participate in the **London Regional meetings** and the annual **NNPCF** conference (as long as there is capacity)

#### **COMMUNICATION**

We will use social media to inform our members of activities, consultations and ask for feedback and engagement. We will have email, text, FaceBook and newsletters as well as a website.

We have a forum email [justsaybdforum@gmail.com](mailto:justsaybdforum@gmail.com) that is monitored weekly.

#### **REVIEW**

Any changes to this Constitution will be taken to the Annual Conference (for information) if it is held within 3 months of the date of the change or we can call a Special General Meeting (SGM) with 30 days' notice if needed.

Both Annual Conference & SGM meetings will be open to all JUST SAY members and only members can vote.

**Constitution approved by** Donna Lumsden, Jaime Porstendorfer, Emma Coletta, Mumtaz Bagom, Rebecca Tansley & Khadija Akbar.                      Advisory: B.W(Contact Associate).

**Dated: 08.02.23.**

***Next review: February 2025.***