



FATHERS IN THE WORKPLACE TOOLKIT

Terms of Reference for a Parenting Group

This Terms of Reference document sets out the working arrangements for a parenting group and lists vital information about the group, such as its purpose, facilitators and membership, meeting schedule, level of administrative support, and any additional processes.

You are encouraged to review this template and amend it as appropriate for your own organisation, ensuring that members agree the terms. Wherever possible, the terms of the group should be discussed and agreed with members at the first meeting and reviewed regularly.

Aims and purpose of the parenting group

The role of the parenting group is to provide an opportunity and a space for would-be parents and current parents to share their feelings, problems and ideas with others in a similar situation and to be listened to without feeling judged. These discussions help to lessen parents' feelings of isolation and may also help to promote feelings of empowerment and stronger parent-child relationships.

All parents and carers, mothers and fathers are very welcome.

Roles and responsibilities of participants

To be discussed with the parent group and some examples may include:

Everyone should contribute if they can. Every parent's experience is unique and valid, and the group will work best when everyone participates and feels able to do so. This is not to say that people should feel compelled to take part, and if people don't want to add anything then of course they shouldn't feel under any pressure to do so.

It is important that all employees feel able to contribute so no individual should dominate any discussion. Members who feel nervous about contributing should not feel compelled to do so, but should be supported with encouragement and a sense that they are listened to.



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Parenting is an area where there are lots of different points of view, experiences and beliefs. It is also an arena where people can feel anxious about being judged. The group setting will be one where everyone's point of view will be respected and taken seriously.

Strive for open and honest discussions about life as new parents, listen to different points of view and explore various options and solutions.

All members should be on time for each meeting and ensure that confidentiality of all information in meetings is guaranteed and not shared outside of the group without the agreement of the group. The group should agree on the level of confidentiality they are most comfortable with.

The group will be consulted on a three monthly-basis about how they feel the group is going, and whether these Terms of Reference need to be reviewed.

If managers or human resource officers are to be in the parenting group, participants of the parenting group should be made aware that Human Resource managers are participating in the discussion and may seek feedback on behalf of the organisation. Any feedback provided by a participant should be treated as anonymous by the Manager or Human Resource officer.

Roles and responsibilities of facilitator

The facilitator should make clear what the expectations of the parenting group are for new members and in particular, what the expectations are with reference to topics of discussion so that parents participating are aware of how to contribute.

For face to face meetings, the facilitator should make sure that only one person speaks at the same time and prevent "side conversations" breaking out. If necessary, use techniques such as a "speaking token" where only the person holding the token is to speak at any given moment.

The facilitator should monitor who is speaking and make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute.

The facilitator will monitor discussion and ensure that all participants are participating in a respectful manner.



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Membership

This parenting group is inclusive to all employees at all pay grades: to include both mums and dads, step-parents, prospective parents, single parents, adoptive parents etc.

Face-to-face meetings

The parenting group will be held *[how often]* for *[specify time]* at *[specify location]*.

If the support is available, these meetings may also be streamed on the organisational online group platform for those unable to attend. Each meeting of the group is led by *[number]* Facilitator(s), which should rotate each session.

Content

Where appropriate, if written materials regarding presenters or any point of discussion are available, these will be circulated in advance. The subjects discussed will be largely driven by the members, who will present topics to the facilitator at least 2 weeks before the next meeting.

As well as formal discussions, there will be the opportunity to raise topics during the meeting, and no subject shall be regarded as too small or "trivial".

Written documents will have any jargon or abbreviations explained and be written in inclusive language that recognises that all families are different, and reflect single parents, LGBT parents and so on.

Speakers, either internal or external, will be invited to attend parenting group meetings as appropriate. The parenting group will provide feedback to its membership through regular email updates collated by the facilitator.

Amendment, modification or variation

This Terms of Reference document may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the parenting group members.

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