**Bradford Early Years Partnership**

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**Bradford Early Years’ Service March 2017 **

**Bradford Early Years Partnership- what does this really mean and why have one?**

**What is it?**

The initial aim of the Bradford partnership model is to have clear pathways for parents when choosing where they take up their free funded place and to ensure there are sufficient places on offer in the area to meet parental needs. This is where providers come together to look at what each of the partners can offer, if there are any gaps for working parents and how they can communicated this to parents. In early childhood settings this can involve teams from different disciplines such as education and the private and voluntary sector and children centres

For working in partnership to be successful it has to be on the basis that the contributions of each person or organisation are as valued and valuable as each other. The best partnerships are those where each partner is valued equally and has as much power as each of the other partners. Partnership working can be for single events, or on a more long term basis such as working together to benefit children and families who attend more than one setting.

How partners work together is defined by the agreements reached about how the partnership will work. This will vary from area to area dependant on that partnership needs.

**There is a partnership checklist for the initial meeting and a model memorandum of understanding in this pack to help facilitate initial thinking**.

**Why have a Bradford Early years partnership?**

Working families have many requirements, work patterns and family commitments so a one size fits all approach to offering funded places is not viable. Providers of all types have different hours of opening, business model’s, space available and staffing requirements and not every provider can offer flexible funded places to parents. But if parents are to take up their places to suit with their working life a Bradford partnership model will help parents see what is available to suit their needs. This is where a blended model approach works really well.

The benefits of working in partnership are enormous allowing all families to have clear pathways and information on the types of provision on offer, vacancies and how they can access their free entitlement in the area they live. This will provide an opportunity for consistency of approach, advice and support.

The partnerships can grow to cover other aspects such as settings acting as critical friends for each other and can provide opportunities for focussing on children’s needs in a particular area and sharing ideas.

Other Local authorities operating partnership approaches have seen them grow over the years and the benefits to children and families are always a positive aspect of their Ofsted inspections. York’s shared foundation partnership members mentioned the following as the main benefits

Benefits of partnership working- York

We recently asked our providers what was in it for them by working as part of a Shared Foundation Partnership. We received lots of very positive responses with the key benefits identified as follows:

Improved communication

Peer support

Ofsted

Trust

Professional development

Shared good practice

Community events

Wraparound care

Shared resources

Improved transitions



Shared training

Improved links between settings and schools



LA support

Networking

Shared experiences & problems

Better support for children with SEND and vulnerable children

Joint moderation

Respect

**How could a Bradford early years partnership work?**

We realise that all providers (be it an academy, independent, maintained primary school, nursery school, childminder, day nursery ,pre-school or out of school) want to fill the spaces they have. Partnership isn’t about recommending, or filling up a certain type of provider over another. It’s about being aware and appreciating the diverse needs of parents and how as providers you can meet these needs with a partnership approach.

There are many ways a partnership could work, it may not necessarily mean lots of meetings, but an initial meeting will be of benefit. This will help all partners, in a defined area; know what the issues are when it comes to the delivery of free funded places. The partnership should have a way of information sharing on vacancies, what different models of delivery are available and the state of the childcare market (are there too many places, is there a gap in the market, such as holiday care etc.) and an agreed way of how you will communicate this to parents.

For example: Setting up a joint webpage/ having joint information leaflet you can give to parents who make enquiries in the area/ having a link to FIS an Childcare Choices on your individual websites

In this pack there is an initial Bradford Early Years Partnership Checklist to use as a tool. As early years providers you can undertake this yourselves or ask for support from the local authority by e-mailing sufficiency@bradford.gov.uk

Then if you feel the partnership approach is for you there is a memorandum of understanding template you can use to assist in the formalisation of your partnership.

For further information the Family and Child Care Trust have produced a [toolkit](https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/dfes-30-hour-mixed-model-partnership-toolkit) for partnerships and lots of case studies of how this has worked in other areas.

**Initial Bradford Early Years Partnership Checklist**

This checklist is to help a local authority officer or early years provider determine why a partnership approach would work, who should be in the partnership, how it might work and what would be the benefits and risks. It can be used by a potential lead partner before an initial partnership meeting or to structure an initial partnership meeting.

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| **Area for consideration** | **Initial thoughts** |
| **Purpose of the partnership**What would the partnership help to achieve? |  |
| **Potential partners**What individuals and organisations might be invited? Do you have contact details for them? Do they need to be contacted informally first? |  |
| **Partnership leadership and management**Who will take notes, chair, convene future meetings etc?  |  |
| **Potential benefits**For example to partners, to an external partner or to existing or potential children and families. |  |
| **Potential risks**What could go wrong? Why might partners not wish to be involved? Any unexpected consequences? |  |
| **The agenda for the first meeting**For example agreeing the purpose of the partnership, how often it will meet, membership, next meeting. |  |

**Model Bradford Early Years Partnership memorandum of understanding (MOU):**

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| Name of the partnership | **e.g Strong Close cluster partnership**  |
| Date Partnership formed |  |
| Date MOU to be reviewed |  |
| **Partnership Members Full Name** | **Name of setting/ school/ provision** | **E-mail contact details** | **Telephone** |
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**Agreed facilitating of the partnership**

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| How often will the partnership meet?  |  | Who will chair any meetings? |  |
| Where will the partnership meet? |  | Who will take minutes? |  |
| Who will set the agenda? |  | Who will be responsible for sending minutes/ agenda’s  |  |
| How will information be shared between members? | (e.g. communications will be via e-mail and we will share vacancies and capacity information) |
| How will information shared for parents about the partnership | (e.g. the partnership will form a web page which will link to the Childcare Choices website Bradford FIS and each partners website/ e-mail parents asking for childcare we cannot accommodate will be directed to this)  |
| What information members will not share with parents | (e.g. we will not recommend one particular provider over another but direct to website, confidential information will never be share without permission) |

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|  | Agreed main objectives of the partnership (e.g. to work together to deliver a flexible and extended 30 hours offer to working parents and their children) |
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|  | Agreed what is going to be delivered by the partnership (be specific about what is to be delivered e.g. annual parental demand survey; hours a week on offer; what the 30 hours looks like when using 2 providers or more; admission arrangements) |
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Partnership agreement: by being part of the partnership I am agreeing to the following: (be specific what you want all members to contribute e.g. to take part in annual parental survey, update vacancies, take part in a minimum of 1 partnership meeting per annum keep contact details up to date etc)

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The signatories agree on behalf of their organisations to the commitments as set out in this Memorandum of Understanding

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of signatory | Organisation | Signature | Date  |
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