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**The Disability Forum for**

**Suffolk**

**Terms of Reference**

**1. Objectives**

1.1 To provide a Forum in order to give people in Suffolk a strong and collective voice on disability issues to achieve positive outcomes.

1.2 To maintain a network between disability organisations and individuals.

1.3 To provide support and assistance to the locally based Disability Forums in Suffolk in order to respond to and co-ordinate issues arising.

1.4 To bring together disability organisations, disabled people and family carers, in Suffolk.

1.5 To ensure services for disabled people are designed and delivered where possible through co-production and working in partnership.

* 1. To co-operate with and support other organisations with similar purposes.

**2. Membership**

2.1 Membership is open to:

* Organisations that are based in or provide services in Suffolk for disabled people and their family carers, and where decisions are taken or influenced by disabled people;
* Individual disabled people and their family carers living in Suffolk.

2.2 The Forum will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. (Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010).

2.3 The Forum will endeavour to ensure that its membership is representative of the community it serves.

2.4 The Forum may co-opt people with specific expertise to assist them in their work for such period as the Forum shall specify.

**3.** **Annual General Meeting**

* 1. An Annual General Meeting must be held each year, with 21 days notice given to all members, telling them what is on the agenda. Minutes must be kept of the meeting.
  2. There must be at least 5 members present at the Annual General Meeting.
  3. Each member organisation or individual member of the Forum shall have one vote.
  4. Members shall elect at least 5 Management Committee members to manage the Forum on a daily basis for the following year. All elected members of the Management Committee will serve for a two year term, but may stand for re-election.
  5. Co-opted members stand for election at the Annual General Meeting following their co-option.

**4. Management Committee**

* 1. The Management Committee of the Forum will meet not less than four times a year, at a suitable location.

4.2. The Management Committee will elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman and such other officers as required from its membership.

4.3 The Management Committee may co-opt additional members, should the number of members fall below 5.

4.4 Minutes will be taken.

4.5 Meetings and written material will be made accessible to all people.

4.6 Some of its business may be conducted by virtual meetings such as by email or video conferencing when appropriate.

4.7 Sub groups may be set up to undertake specific pieces of work or deal with specific issues. Such sub groups will be required to report back to the Management Committee.

4.8 Management Committee members may send a substitute if they are unable to attend a meeting.

4.9 Members shall be deemed to forfeit their membership if they fail to attend three consecutive meetings without sending apologies.

**5. Finance**

* 1. The Forum may raise funds, receive grants and donations.
  2. The Forum may solely use funds to carry out the work of the Forum.
  3. Forum members cannot receive any payment from the Forum, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses, where funds allow.
  4. Funds must be held within a restricted fund held on behalf of the Forum by a member organisation.

**6. Relationships with locally based Disability Forums in Suffolk**

6.1 The Forum will work in partnership with the locally based Disability Forums in Suffolk in order to strengthen the voice of disabled people.

6.2 The Forum will endeavour to respond to requests for support and assistance from the locally based Disability Forums in Suffolk.

6.3 Each of the locally based Disability Forums in Suffolk will automatically have a seat on the Management Committee of the Forum in order to develop and maintain close working relationships. Normally this would be the Chair of each Disability Forum.

6.4 Each locally based Disability Forum will have the opportunity to report on their meetings, outlining issues and concerns, to the Management Committee of the Forum. If no representative is able to attend meetings in person, a written e-mailed report will be acceptable.

6.5 Each locally based Disability Forum may send a substitute if their named representative is unable to attend a meeting.

**7. Detailed Objectives**

7.1 The Forum will:

* Raise the profile of and progress disability issues in Suffolk;
* Promote a shared and joint vision for disabled people;
* Work to promote a social model of disability;
* Work to influence as wide a range of individual contacts and public bodies as possible including Local Authority Officers, Local Councillors, MPs, Healthwatch Suffolk, the NHS and local commerce and government ministers;
* Work in partnership with a wide range of organisations including Suffolk County Council, local District and Borough Councils, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other organisations to:
* Inform their strategic plans;
* Ensure that disabled people are fully involved in the setting of policies and practices which affect their lives;
* Identify and support efforts and activities to improve the scope and quality of services.
* Campaign for change to ensure all disabled people are fully included in society;
* Share information, expertise and resources where this is beneficial and appropriate, with the membership and with organisations seeking advice and information on disability issues;
* Act as a consultee on disability issues;
* Organise network events for disability organisations in Suffolk with the aim of informing those organisations on relevant issues;
* Review and evaluate the work of the Forum.

**8. Review**

8.1 These Terms of Reference will be subject to regular review by the Forum.

**Approved by the Disability Forum for Suffolk at its meeting on …………………………………….**

**Signed:**

**Date:**