

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the organisation shall be the **Voluntary Organisations for Children Young People and Families** (hereinafter referred to as VOCyfp).

2. MISSION

To champion the voluntary and community sector working with children, young people and families in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire

3. AIMS OF VOCyfp

1. To **identify the needs** of children, young people and families in the local community to underpin the aims and activities of VOCyfp.
2. To **assist** local voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families to work effectively and deliver quality services
3. To **involve** voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families by facilitating effective communication, networking and collaboration in the sector and with other sectors
4. To **inform** voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families by disseminating information on sector needs, developments, opportunities and threats
5. To **advocate** on behalf of the sector and enhance its role as an integral part of local planning, policy making, commissioning and service delivery
6. To **encourage engagement** between local voluntary and community organisations and statutory partners working with children, young people and families, by working collaboratively and promoting effective working relationships to enable the diverse views of the sector to be represented

4. POWERS OF VOCyfp

VOCyfp **may** exercise the following powers:

- 4.1 Raise funds and invite and receive contributions to further its aims
- 4.2 Set membership fees
- 4.3 Open a bank account and other facilities for banking.
- 4.4 Buy, lease, hire or otherwise acquire any property or equipment to further its aims
- 4.5 Employ, or contract with, on a full or part-time basis, or on a voluntary basis, any persons or organisation whose particular skills, qualifications or knowledge may be of assistance in attaining the aims of VOCyfp.
- 4.6 Enter into contracts of insurance in respect of any matter in which VOCyfp or its members has an insurable interest.
- 4.7 Organise and run activities and events and produce and distribute publicity materials

- 4.8 Represent VOCyph members on other groups / committees / forums.
- 4.9 To set aside income as a reserve against future expenditure in accordance with a written Reserves Policy
- 4.10 Do all such other lawful things that are necessary for the achievement of its aims

5. MEMBERSHIP OF VOCyph

- 5.1 Any VCS organisation working with (or interested in working with) children, young people or families in Bedford Borough or Central Bedfordshire can become a member of VOCyph.
- 5.2 Organisations that provide support to frontline organisations working with children, young people and families can also join VOCyph.
- 5.3 All VOCyph members must be part of the voluntary and community sector.
- 5.4 All VOCyph members are encouraged to have a safeguarding policy and follow good practice in safeguarding.
- 5.5 All VOCyph members are encouraged to have an equality and diversity policy. VOCyph will work to ensure that equalities principles and best practice are applied to ensure that VOCyph's own work and membership services do not discriminate against any individuals or organisations.
- 5.6 All VOCyph members are encouraged to obtain a relevant quality mark at the appropriate level for their work.
- 5.7 A member organisation shall cease to be a member of VOCyph if:
 - It resigns in writing; or
 - It is expelled by a two thirds (rounded up) majority of votes of members present and voting at an AGM or a Special Meeting; or
 - It fails to respond to membership update requests and reminders.
 - It fails to pay any required fees or subscriptions for VOCyph membership

6. VOCyph EXECUTIVE GROUP

- 6.1 The general control and management of the activities of VOCyph shall be vested in an Executive Group that may exercise all such powers of VOCyph and act on behalf of VOCyph.
- 6.2 The VOCyph Executive Group may appoint a Host Agency to administer VOCyph's finances and contractual arrangements. This appointment shall be reviewed annually by the VOCyph Executive Group, or earlier if there are any issues of concern.
- 6.3 If no Host Agency is appointed, for any reason, the VOCyph Executive Group shall determine how VOCyph's finances and contractual arrangements will be organised.
- 6.4 The Executive Group shall produce an Annual Report of VOCyph's activities, which will be publicly available.
- 6.5 The Executive Group shall ensure that VOCyph accounts are independently examined before each AGM.
- 6.6 The Executive Group shall decide on membership applications to VOCyph.

7. MEMBERSHIP OF THE VOCyph EXECUTIVE GROUP

- 7.1 The VOCyph Officer shall sit on the Executive Group and act as the Secretary of VOCyph.
- 7.2 If, for any reason there is no VOCyph Officer, a Secretary shall be elected by VOCyph members, from the VOCyph membership, at each AGM.
- 7.3 A representative from the Host Agency appointed by VOCyph shall sit on the Executive Group and act as the Treasurer of VOCyph.
- 7.4 If, for any reason a Host Agency is not appointed, a Treasurer shall be elected by VOCyph members, from the VOCyph membership, at each AGM.
- 7.5 An Independent Chair, from outside the VOCyph membership, may be appointed by the Executive Group to act as Chair.
- 7.6 If, for any reason, an Independent Chair is not appointed, a Chair shall be elected by VOCyph members, from the VOCyph membership, at each AGM.
- 7.7 The Executive Group shall also have no less than one and no more than five other members. These other members of the Executive Group shall be elected by a majority vote of members of VOCyph at each AGM.
- 7.8 The Executive Group has the power to fill any vacancy which may arise in the period between AGMs being held.
- 7.9 Between AGMs, a person shall cease to be a member of the Executive Group if:
- He/she resigns in writing; or
 - He/she is absent from two consecutive meetings of the Executive Group without reasons being given; or
 - He/she is de-selected by a majority vote of VOCyph members present and voting at a Special Meeting called for that purpose.
 - His/her organisation ceases to be a member of VOCyph, for any reason.

8. EXECUTIVE GROUP MEETINGS

- 8.1 The Executive Group shall hold not less than three meetings a year.
- 8.2 A meeting of the Executive Group can be called by the Secretary or by at least two members of the Executive Group.
- 8.3 The Chair of VOCyph shall be the Chair of the Executive Group. A deputy shall be appointed to chair the Executive Group meeting if the VOCyph Chair is unable to attend a meeting.
- 8.4 Notices and agendas for Executive Group meetings shall be given to members of the Executive Group at least seven days in advance of any meeting. This notice can be waived, if at least 3 members of the Executive Group agree.
- 8.5 At any meeting of the Executive Group, four members, or two thirds (rounded up) of Executive Group members, whichever is the lower number, shall constitute a quorum, provided at least two members are the Chair, Secretary or Treasurer.
- 8.6 Members of the Executive Group must declare in advance if there is any issue to be discussed at an Executive Group meeting which could result in personal, or organisational, financial gain

- 8.7 Matters arising at the meetings shall be decided by a simple majority vote of members of the Executive Group present and voting at the meeting.
- 8.8 Where matters come to a vote, each member of the Executive Group has a single vote. In the event of an equality of votes the Chair shall be entitled to an extra or casting vote.
- 8.9 Any member of VOCypf shall be entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Executive Group but not to vote.
- 8.10 The Executive Group may from time to time appoint one or more Sub-Committees with such composition and power and terms of reference as the Executive Group deem necessary.
- 8.11 The Executive Group shall ensure that minutes are taken of all the proceedings of their meetings and meetings of any Sub-Committee.
- 8.12 Minutes of Executive Group meetings will be distributed to Executive Group members and will be available to all VOCypf members on request.

9. MEETINGS OF VOCypf

- 9.1 Meetings of VOCypf will be held, as and when required, although as a minimum an AGM will be held annually – see Section 10 below.
- 9.2 Notices and agendas for VOCypf meetings will usually be sent out no later than seven days prior to the date set. Items for the agenda should be with the VOCypf Secretary fourteen days before the meeting date.
- 9.3 At any meeting of VOCypf, eight members, or one third (rounded up) of VOCypf members, whichever is the lower number, shall constitute a quorum, provided at least two are members of the Executive Group.
- 9.4 Where a matter comes to a vote, each member organisation has a single vote. In the event of equality of votes, the Chair has a second or casting vote.
- 9.5 The VOCypf Executive Group shall ensure that minutes are taken of all the proceedings of VOCypf meetings. Minutes will be distributed to all VOCypf members.

10. SPECIAL MEETINGS OF VOCypf AND AGMs

- 10.1 A Special Meeting can be called by the Executive Group or by at least 3 members of VOCypf.
- 10.2 At least 14 days notice shall be given, to all members of VOCypf, of a Special Meeting. This notice can be waived if at least one third (rounded up) of members agree.
- 10.3 There will be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year, held within fifteen months of the previous AGM.
- 10.4 At least fourteen days notice shall be given to all members of VOCypf of an AGM.
- 10.5 The notices for Special Meetings and AGMs shall specify the date, place and time of the meeting and the business to be discussed.
- 10.6 Any member of VOCypf shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at Special Meetings and AGMs.

- 10.7 At any Special Meeting or AGM, eight VOCyph members or one third (rounded up) of VOCyph members, whichever is the lower number, shall constitute a quorum, provided at least two are members of the VOCyph Executive Group.
- 10.8 Most matters arising shall be passed by a majority vote of members present and voting at the Special Meeting or AGM.
- 10.9 Some matters arising, as specified in Sections 12 and 13 of this Constitution, shall only be passed if there is a two thirds (rounded up) majority of votes of members present and voting at a quorate Special Meeting or AGM.
- 10.10 The VOCyph Executive Group shall ensure minutes are taken of all the proceedings at Special Meetings and AGMs. Minutes shall be distributed to all VOCyph members.

11. ACCOUNTS

- 11.1 The VOCyph Executive Group shall ensure that proper books of accounts are kept with respect to all:
 - (a) Sums of money received and expended by VOCyph and the matters in respect of which such receipts and expenditure take place; and
 - (b) Sales and purchases by VOCyph; and
 - (c) Assets and liabilities of VOCyph.
- 11.2 The accounts shall be kept at such a place as the Executive Group shall decide and shall be open to inspection by any member of VOCyph and other persons authorised by the Executive Group.
- 11.3 The Executive Group shall ensure that VOCyph accounts are independently examined before each AGM.
- 11.4 At each AGM, the Executive Group shall present full details of the accounts including an Income and Expenditure Account and a Balance Sheet.

12. ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 12.1 This Constitution can only be altered if there is a two thirds (rounded up) majority of votes of VOCyph members present and voting at a quorate AGM or a Special Meeting convened for that purpose.

13. WINDING UP OF VOCyph

- 13.1 VOCyph may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a two thirds (rounded up) majority of votes of members present and voting at a quorate AGM or a Special Meeting convened for that purpose.
- 13.2 On dissolution, having paid any of VOCyph's outstanding debts, any remaining funds of VOCyph shall be given to an organisation, or organisations, with a similar ethos.
- 13.3 The members present and voting at an AGM or a Special Meeting convened for the purpose of dissolving VOCyph shall decide which organisation(s) shall receive any remaining VOCyph funds.