

Parent Champion

The purpose of the Parent Champion's role is to work with families and staff of 'Schools Causing Concern' or 'under Ofsted measures', either 'Notice to Improve' or 'Special Measures'. Working impartially and at 'arms length', the Parent Champion will support and assist with opening and establishing communication channels between both parties in order that the Government's directive to consult and ascertain parental views regarding proposed improvement plans is met. They will also encourage parental participation in, and involvement with the school. This role has been placed within the Parent Partnership Service to ensure 'arms length', impartiality and that strict confidentiality guidelines and policies are adhered to.

The Parent Champion will work closely with appropriate professionals, School Improvement teams, school staff of both Primary and Secondary sectors and 'families of identified schools' across Leeds in order that parents/carers have a clearer understanding of planned improvements, are consulted about them, kept informed and offered the opportunity to be involved in the schools' future development.

As well as working within the school environment, the Parent Champion will offer to hold information sessions at local venues in order to provide a neutral setting for those involved. These sessions will be held in order to inform parents/carers of their rights and responsibilities relating to their child/children's statutory education and in order to consult and ascertain their views about proposed improvement plans.

Referral Process

As the Parent Champion is a city-wide role, schools can be referred from appropriate professionals, for example, the School Improvements teams. Once a request or referral is made the Parent Champion is responsible for contacting the Head of the identified school to explain the role and offering support and assistance to the school at this time in order to make contact with, and consult, parents/carers, particularly those who are disengaged. Every contact or attempted contact will be entered onto an initial contact form PC1, with details of each action, any agreed meetings and notes on discussions that take place.

If the Head Teacher decides that the services of the Parent Champion are required, an initial appointment will be made to discuss the needs of the school, appropriate mechanisms to be used in the consultation process, and methods of contacting the parents/carers who are hardest to reach. Details of

these will be entered onto the Schools Meeting form PC2, including identified, agreed actions and timescales, as well as the responsible officers.

If the Head Teacher declines the services of the Parent Champion, a short report will be produced outlining the actions taken to engage the school, any communications that occurred and the outcomes. An evaluation form PC5, will be given to the Head Teacher in order to monitor customer service perceptions of the initial contact and reason/s for declining the services of the Parent Champion.

As well as a request or referral to contact an identified school, the Parent Champion can, after discussion with line management, contact schools operating under the 'Focused Partner' schemes in order to offer the services of the Parent Champion. This will be done using a standard letter PC6. Schools thus contacted will then follow the above procedures.

Consultation Process

This will be decided at the initial meeting with the Head Teacher. Consultations can occur in groups (small or large) or individually. These can take place on or off school premises as agreed prior to the event/s. If the decision is taken to use a questionnaire as all or as part of the consultation process, the Parent Champion will offer to tailor this to the school's individual requirements. However, a standard form PC7 will be provided to initiate discussion. All consultations, unless identified to the school and parents/carers as been open to everyone, will be anonymous and treated within the confidentiality policies adhered to by the Parent Partnership Service.

The opportunity will be offered to parents/carers to comment on individual issues on a standard form PC8. This should be completed by the parent/carer. For those unable to complete the form for any reason, the Parent Champion can write the comments but must ensure that the signature or mark of the parent/carer is entered on the form. The Parent Champion will be responsible for informing those completing the comments form that the information from these will be given to the school in order that specific concerns are dealt with by appropriate professionals unless otherwise requested.

As well as consultation regarding views on the proposed improvement plans, parents/carers will be asked about participation with the school, given the choices of parent's group, forum or as a Volunteer Parent Champion.

During the consultation process any communications/meetings held with professionals should adhere to the policies of impartiality, confidentiality and 'arms length' service.

All contact with any of the individuals involved will respect these policies and at all times the Parent Champion will remain impartial. Any communication taking place with individuals or groups, either parents/carers or professionals, will be entered onto a contact continuation form.

All paperwork will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Post Consultation Period

The Parent Champion will be responsible for analysing data from any information-gathering event and for presenting this, in report format, to professionals as well as making it available to parents/carers. This will be done within agreed timescales. Original forms – other than identified comments forms – will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. No information, other than the analysed data, will be available to individuals or groups unless prior permission is given.

The data, in report form, should be presented contemporaneously to all identified parties.

Details of parents/carers who have expressed a desire to participate in either a group or forum will be given to the school to take forward. Any expressing an interest in becoming a Volunteer Parent Champion will be invited to discuss this opportunity in either a small group or on an individual basis, as response demands.

Post Consultation Support/Completion of Casework

The timescales for support will have already been agreed at the initial meeting with Head Teacher and other stakeholders. This can vary from no further support necessary to a phased withdrawal. However, if further input is needed from the Parent Champion than has previously been agreed then the timescales can be re-negotiated.

Volunteer Parent Champions will continue to be supported by the Parent Champion on an individual basis.

All paperwork, information and associated data will be stored in accordance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act for a period of five years.

Evaluation and Monitoring of the Parent Champion Role

At the end of each visit or intervention an evaluation form will be given to professionals in order to ascertain the attitude and approach, knowledge, speed/reliability of response, the flexibility of the service, and if appropriate, the quality of information provided. The generic PPS 8 Evaluation sheet will be used.

Individual parents/carers will also be given opportunity to comment on the service/s offered by the Parent Champion. This will be done on the generic PPS 6 Evaluation sheet.

When the period of support offered to the school by the Parent Champion is completed, an exit/impact questionnaire will be given to the Head Teacher in order to ascertain the impact of the Parent Champion role.

All data generated from these evaluations will be kept to inform the services offered and contribute to the Parent Partnership team planning process.