

**GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR
Your Family, Your Voice -
An Alliance of families and practitioners working to transform the system**

The aims of Your Family, Your Voice¹ are to:

1. Influence how parents and carers, whose children are subject to, or at risk of state intervention are perceived and portrayed in wider society.
2. Work in collaboration with families to influence law, policy practice and service design and delivery in child welfare, child mental health, youth justice and the education system.

The Alliance works towards society's structures, systems and services:

- becoming more open and accountable;
- being more respectful of all children and adults' human rights;
- promoting effective human functioning;
- encouraging healthy relationships; and
- enabling individuals and families to have greater control over their own lives.

Our intention is that that any state intervention or service:

- builds upon families' strengths, rather than undermines their ability to identify and implement solutions;
- provides the support *they* need to avert crises developing; and
- promotes the child and their family's wellbeing.

In order to ensure that we are a creative, effective and inclusive alliance, Your Family, Your Voice is committed to developing a small, workable infrastructure consistent with its aims.

Your Family, Your Voice is not currently a legal entity and we don't plan for it to become so, at least not in the short term, given the time and investment that would be required to create such a legal body and to service it. Hence fundraising or legal accountability will be managed through Family Rights Group or another member with a legally constituted organisation.

How the organisation can achieve its aims

Your Family, Your Voice will achieve these aims by formalising a governance structure which enables as wide as possible stakeholder involvement, in particular the involvement of family members who have experienced state intervention, in influencing and contributing to the work of the Alliance. More specifically our priorities over the next three years are:

- **Formalising governance arrangements, developing the membership base** and servicing the Alliance including creating regional groups;
- **Families taking a leading role** in the Alliance, with organisations working collaboratively to achieve this, including supporting the development of the Parents' Panel and also forums for young people and family and friends carers;

¹ Formerly the Struggling Families Alliance and also referred to as the Alliance in this document

- Constructing and implementing a communications strategy to **raise awareness** of the challenges struggling families face and to **change perceptions and attitudes** amongst decision makers, practitioners and the wider public. Central to which will be first-hand accounts of lived experiences;
- **Shaping** policy, practice and legislation, including developing and implementing a strategy to influence national and local government and other agencies;
- Holding a **Knowledge Inquiry** and conducting **empirical research** about the needs of, and responses to, families whose children are subject to state intervention;
- Attracting monies and utilising the knowledge, work streams and imagination of Alliance members, including generating linked projects, to **deliver the Alliance's aims**.

Structure of Your Family, Your Voice

Your Family, Your Voice is a membership organisation which welcomes those who share its objectives. Our membership is diverse - involving families, academics, policy makers and practitioners, all of whom have a stake in how the state intervenes in the lives of families. Through our structure and governance arrangements we aim to provide the opportunity for this wider membership to directly influence what we do.

Family Rights Group

1. Family Rights Group is the lead organisation in initiating the work of Your Family Your Voice and provides a co-ordination and secretariat role to the Alliance, its advisory group, panels and sub groups.
2. Family Rights Group is the main contact point for the Alliance including the communication's role of the Alliance.
3. Family Rights Group is the legal entity with responsibility to funders for the delivery of any monies secured to date for the Alliance's work.
4. Family Rights Group, with the support of the advisory group, manages Your Family Your Voice's work, as set out in agreements with funders.

The development group / advisory group

The interim development group acts in an 'advisory' role to Your Family, Your Voice and as such has no formal powers. The development group will continue as an interim body for six months until the membership structure of Your Family, Your Voice is established. It will then transform into the Alliance's advisory group. The name of the group will be changed to an 'advisory group' when interim arrangements are concluded.

Terms of reference of the advisory group

1. The advisory group's primary objectives are to direct the aims and objectives of the Alliance, its governance structure and oversee implementation.
2. The advisory group will meet four times a year.
3. Information and decisions made by the advisory group will be shared with the wider membership of the Alliance in a timely manner.
4. It will consider any representations made by the wider membership or by the Parents' Panel.
5. It will instigate and delegate tasks to Your Family, Your Voice sub groups in a transparent way.
6. It will agree the outline objectives of Your Family, Your Voice subgroups and

identify and nominate membership and reporting expectations back to the advisory group.

Any changes to the organisational structure of Your Family, Your Voice will be discussed in the advisory group and will be subject to consultation with the wider membership.

Membership of the advisory group

Membership of the advisory group will comprise no less than 10 and no more than 15 members in addition to relevant Family Rights Group staff. Of these:

- There will be two nominated places from the Parents' Panel.
- There will be a representative from LankellyChase Foundation as the key funder.²
- At least a third of the advisory group will be family members with experience of state intervention.
- Nine members of the advisory group would be elected by the Alliance membership.
- Up to three people can be co-opted on to the advisory group.
- That elections would be for a term of two years.
- There will be co-chairs of the Alliance, one of whom will be a family member with experience of state intervention.
- Chairs will be elected by the members of the advisory group and will be subject to re-election after two years.

In addition FRG will have the scope to invite to the advisory group meetings (or parts of it) individuals who are delivering specific aspects of the Alliance's work or have specific expertise to contribute. The advisory group will elect the chairs from amongst its members.

Nomination process to join the advisory group:

- Any member can self nominate and must produce a statement setting out why they wish to join the advisory group and their suitability.
- Those nominated will be subject to a vote by the whole membership³.
- Co-options will be subject to the need for identified skills or knowledge or experience gaps within the advisory group.

Parents' Panel

Terms of Reference

1. The Parents' Panel will meet four times a year and will be facilitated by Family Rights Group.
2. A key aim of the panel is to provide a forum for the voices of parents and to ensure that their experiences are central to Your Family, Your Voice's work.
3. Meetings of the Parents' Panel will be facilitated by staff from Family Rights Group who will have responsibility for managing and supporting the work of the panel and for ensuring that the work is in accordance with the wider

² Any future membership of funders on the advisory group would be decided as and when.

³ voting may be at Alliance meetings or could be through a postal/electronic vote

objectives of Your Family, Your Voice.

4. Where possible the Parents' Panel will use the creative resources available through Your Family, Your Voice to enable their experiences to be communicated effectively.

Membership of the Parents' Panel

1. Nominations for membership of the panel can be made to Family Rights Group, by parents themselves or by other members of Your Family, Your Voice.
2. Any member of the panel will be required to be a member of Your Family, Your Voice and to sign a declaration to uphold its objectives.

Wider Alliance membership

1. The full membership of the Alliance will be invited to meet once every six months.
2. Meetings will be convened and serviced by Family Rights Group.
3. Membership of the Alliance is open to all but prospective members must sign agreement to abide by the terms and conditions of membership.
4. Members of Your Family, Your Voice can contribute and participate as much or as little as they wish. There is no obligation to participate in the work of Your Family, Your Voice.

Sean Haresnape