**[Insert cluster] Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group**

**Terms of Reference**

**Accountability**

1. The Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group is accountable to the Fostering Recruitment Hub Project Board.

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of the Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group is to drive operational delivery and decision-making to set up a Fostering Recruitment Hub, as part of the Department for Education’s Fostering Recruitment and Retention Programme.
2. The Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group will commence delivery in October 2023 and continue until the end of the programme (March 2025).
3. The Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group will be collectively responsible for ensuring the successful delivery of the overall project goals:
   1. **To set up a regionalise recruitment support hub:** to provide initial and ongoing support to prospective foster carers from initial enquiry through to application
   2. **To work across the cluster to standardise processes:** standardisation for preparation, assessment and approval of foster carers in individual LAs, learning from best practice
   3. **To monitor and track performance of the recruitment hub:** from initial enquiry through to application, gathering data and information on those who do not complete application
   4. **Undertake reporting to DfE:** including the development of a new/existing tool to track initial enquiries through to applications across the LA cluster
   5. **Work towards sustainability:** work towards this model becoming a long-term sustainable and viable ‘front door’ for the LA cluster group

**Membership and attendance**

1. The Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group will compromise of the following members:
   1. Project/programme manager in the cluster supporting implementation [insert name]
   2. Lead local authority finance representative
   3. Lead representative from each local authority in the cluster at Assistant Director or Service Manager level
   4. Lead local authority human resources representative
   5. Lead local authority communications representative
   6. Lead local authority ICT/data representative
   7. Other attendees at invitation of the chair
2. Core members are expected to attend every bi-weekly meeting or send a nominated deputy. All participating local authorities must nominate a deputy at the commencement of the Operational Group.
3. The chair of the Operational Group will be the Project Manager for the cluster, in their absence a nominated chair will be agreed.

**Quorum**

1. A quorum will consist of at least 50% of members from each local authority involved in the project.

**Conduct of Business**

1. Meetings of the Operational Group will be held on a bi-weekly basis.
2. Meetings may be held by video conference or in-person.
3. The agenda will be developed by the Fostering Recruitment Hub Project Manager in consultation with the leads from each working group (HR, ICT, comms). Circulation of the meeting agenda and papers via email will take place at least five working days prior to the meeting, from the Chair.
4. In the event that members wish to add an item to the agenda they must notify the Chair.
5. The minutes and actions from the Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group will be shared within five working days of the meeting.

**Review**

1. These terms of reference will be reviewed at Go Live, in April/May 2024 or more frequently if considered appropriate.

**Reporting**

1. An update report will be provided to the Fostering Recruitment Hub Project Board on a monthly basis, or by exception more frequently as informed by delivery.

**Responsibilities**

1. Key responsibilities of the Fostering Recruitment Hub Operational Group will be:
   1. **Oversight of working groups:** monitoring the progress of working groups across the cluster (ICT, Communications, HR) to support delivery of the recruitment hub
   2. **Project implementation:** ensuring delivery of the project and key decisions aligns to the detailed implementation plan and agreed budget
   3. **Finances:** management of the overall budget for the Fostering Recruitment Hub and sign-off of spend to support the programme, including money to local authorities in the cluster as required
   4. **Sign-off:** final sign-off of day-to-day operational decisions and identification of decisions which need to be progress to the Fostering Recruitment Hub Project Board
   5. **Risks:** identification of risks and possible mitigations
   6. **Escalation:** identification of issues which need to be escalated to the Fostering Recruitment Hub Project Board for resolution

Approved by:

Date approved:

Date of review: