



Mercian Disability Forum

Tuesday 4 July 2023, 13:00 (GMT+1:00)

Joining details

[Join the meeting](#) [Microsoft Teams]

Meeting ID: 377 650 405 034

Passcode: zR3GsP

Agenda

1. Housekeeping – apologies – welcome to new members
2. [Minutes and actions](#) from last meeting (January 2023)
3. Matters arising
4. Changes to Terms of Reference for Mercian Disability Forum¹ – *Simon Satchwell Giles*
 - a) Proposal 1: Create a Vice Chair role
 - b) Proposal 2: Amend the membership criteria to allow two nominated delegates from member institutions
 - c) Proposal 3: Approve an updated Terms of Reference²

Break

5. Election of MDF leadership for 2023-25³
6. Updates from member institutions⁴ – *MDF representatives (round table discussion)*
7. Making staff training accessible sessions to run in 2023-24 – *Simon Satchwell Giles*
8. Date of next meeting
9. AOB

¹ See appendix 1

² See appendix 2 for proposed draft

³ See appendix 3 for the nomination procedure

⁴ Due to time constraints, this section of the meeting will be briefer than usual.



Appendix 1

Proposal 4a: Create a Vice Chair role

The administration of MDF has always been carried out by the Chair with assistance from the Development Officer (latterly the Executive Officer). The role of the Chair is not expected to be burdensome, but many colleagues attending the Forum have reported that their workloads are increasing and this may impact on their willingness to provide additional labour to an external role.

To ensure that MDF can continue to develop, it is proposed that a new role of Vice Chair is added to the governance structure of the Forum.

A Vice Chair role will provide its holder with experience in committee administration and, it is hoped, encourage participation in Mercian activities from a more diverse cross-section of our members' workforce. It could be an excellent development opportunity for someone at any level. It would be encouraging if the role could also be used as a stepping stone to taking on the role of Chair in the future.

If the proposal is passed, the Vice Chair will assist the Chair in the administration of MDF, aiding with:

- preparation of papers
- liaison with external invitees
- creation and running of events
- submission of group ideas to the Mercian Conference.

The Vice Chair will also deputise for the Chair during meetings as required by the Chair, or at meetings where the Chair is unavailable. The Vice Chair can also deputise for the Chair in other capacities as agreed between them.

Proposal 4b: Amend the membership criteria to allow two nominated members from member institutions

The current Terms of Reference limit institutions to sending one delegate (or a nominated deputy) to MDF meetings. However, some member institutions currently have 2 listed delegates. Colleagues attending MDF have reported an increase in workloads since the Pandemic. Additionally, many members work part time and have expressed regret that their institution misses out on representation if a meeting falls on a non-working day and they cannot arrange a deputy to attend.

By allowing two members from a member institution to attend Forum meetings, this may mitigate some of these issues. Additionally, it will allow member institutions to send delegates from different levels or teams in the Library, and may provide an excellent introduction to partnership working for those in junior or entry-level roles. MDF will benefit from a greater number and diversity of voices at meetings and this can hopefully create many more opportunities for co-operation and development among member institutions.

Proposal 4c: Approve an updated Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for MDF were last updated in 2017 and the operational needs of the group have moved on. Moreover, the current Terms of Reference do not formalise some key governance



structures of the group and how it operates. The draft Terms of Reference in Appendix 2 will benefit MDF by making its role and aims clearer and by introducing more transparency to how the Forum governs itself.

With the preceding proposals passing, these new Terms of Reference will also make MDF more dynamic and productive for its members and attract a wider range of voices and institutions.

The preceding proposals are written in to the draft in Appendix 2, but can be removed and a new draft voted on during the meeting should they not pass.



Appendix 2

MDF Governance and Terms of Reference – July 2023 [DRAFT]⁵

What is the Mercian Disability Forum?

The Mercian Disability Forum (MDF) sits within the wider Mercian Collaboration and is formed by professionals with an interest in, or responsibility for, supporting students with disabilities and additional needs.

What are its aims?

The aims of MDF are aligned with the wider collaboration. It provides a space to work together to explore training and development and to seek efficiencies on behalf of our institutions and the wider community. Its key focus is for members to draw on their own and each other's good practice and ideas, as well as their awareness of relevant ideas and developments from outside the Collaboration.

How will it achieve these?

MDF will meet regularly to enable the group to meet its aims. In addition to providing a safe, supportive and friendly environment in which to exchange knowledge, experience and shared problems, MDF may also undertake other activities, such as:

- Exploring what institutions within the collaboration are doing in the area of disability support, signposting to existing resources and helping members who are less experienced in this area
- Liaising with other Mercian groups to discuss and support them with issues pertaining to disability and additional needs
- Proposing and running events on disability and additional needs support to the Staff Development Group (SDG)
- Contributing to the Mercian Collaboration conference
- Encouraging participation in the wider Mercian Buddy Scheme

Membership of the Mercian Disability Forum

Membership of MDF is open to staff working at Mercian Collaboration member institutions. A member institution can nominate up to two members of staff to be members of MDF. Nomination of staff from diverse backgrounds, professional experience and working areas is highly encouraged.

MDF may be attended by the Executive Officer of the Mercian Collaboration, and MDF's Steering Group sponsor in an ex officio capacity. Guest speakers and representatives from other Mercian Special Interest Groups may be invited by the Chair or Vice Chair.

Governance and oversight

A Chair and a Vice Chair will be elected by members of MDF at least every 2 years. Officers may stand for election more than once. A member of the Mercian Steering Group will act as a Group sponsor, and represent MDF and its interests at Steering Group meetings.

⁵ The current [Terms of Reference](#) (2017) may be found on the Mercian Collaboration website.



If the Chair or Vice Chair steps down before the end of their elected term, or if a Chair or Vice Chair cannot be elected, the group may continue with only one officer until such time as a new officer can be elected. A Chair or Vice Chair elected part way through a term will serve the remainder of that term in the first instance.

The Chair and Vice Chair, in liaison with the Executive Officer of the Mercian Collaboration, will organise and oversee regular and extraordinary meetings, co-ordinate activities and be responsible for producing an annual evaluative report to be sent to the Mercian Steering Group.

Expenses

Any expenses incurred which are over and above those which are deemed reasonable for the host institution to pay will be sought via the Mercian Collaboration Steering Group's additional funding protocols.

Meetings

MDF will meet at least twice a year, usually in the Autumn and Spring. Any member of MDF, including those who attend in an ex officio capacity, may submit papers or agenda items to the Chair or Vice Chair for discussion at meetings.

At least one member from each institution that has nominated delegates should be present at Forum meetings, however, in exceptional circumstances, institutions may send a named substitute or submit a report to the Chair or Vice Chair to be presented at the meeting.

Approval

These Terms of Reference were adopted in a vote of members of the Mercian Disability Forum in the meeting on 4 July 2023 and are subject to approval by the Steering Committee.



Appendix 3

Nomination procedure for the election of Chair and Vice Chair of MDF

1. The opening of nominations will be announced by the current Chair or current Vice Chair ahead of the meeting in which the elections will take place
2. Nominations will remain open until directly before the election takes place in the meeting
3. Nominations may be sent to the Chair or Vice chair ahead of the meeting in which the election takes place, or be made publicly or privately during the meeting
4. Members may nominate themselves as candidates, or nominate another member of MDF
5. If a member nominates another member, the Chair will contact your nominee ahead privately to ask if they wish to proceed as a candidate
6. At any point before the election takes place a nominated candidate may withdraw from the election without giving a reason