**Identifying Common Ground and Differences**

Use the checklist below to identify how each partner works and the similarities and differences between partners. Ideally the checklist should be completed collectively. Start by making a note of the arrangements of the lead partner or partner 1 and then just highlight differences in the other columns. In the final column note down anything that you think is critical i.e. that could affect the success of the partnership.

It will probably take the partnership some time to complete the checklist as partners need to develop trust in each other before they share some of the information. Information that one partner may willingly share may be considered sensitive information to another partner and therefore it is important not to rush this or make people feel their hand is being forced. Remember the greater trust that can be developed, the more partners will reveal about themselves and vice versa.

**Some of the things to think about when completing the checklist**

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| **Area** | **Things to think about** |
| Governance & decision making | Schools have a board of governors, voluntary organisations will have a board of trustees, a local authority will report to elected members and a PVI may have a single or shared owner/director or a board of directors if it is a large company. Consider what decisions can be taken by staff and what decisions need to be taken to the governing body. |
| Information sharing | What systems are used to store and record information? Are records written or electronic? What permissions have families given to share information?  |
| Management | What is the management structure? What autonomy do managers have? How are staff supported and supervised? Are there particular challenges experienced by managers? |
| Staffing | What is the staffing structure? What levels of qualifications do staff have? Are there significant differences in staff contracts and salaries? How are staff recruited? What is staff turnover like? |
| Fees structure and policy | What does each partner charge for additional hours? Are there discounts e.g. for siblings? What is the funding rate received from the local authority? What are the financial pressures affecting each partner by the introduction of the EFE and the reduction of fee income? |
| Safeguarding | How is the safety of children assured? Who has responsibility for safeguarding? How detailed / comprehensive are safeguarding policies?  |
| Health & safety | What are the main health and safety considerations of each partner?  |
| Equality & diversity | What are the main equality and diversity considerations of each partner? Do they have larger numbers of families from particular communities? Is English an additional language for substantial numbers of children? |
| Risk assessment | How does each partner undertake risk assessments – system used, frequency etc. Will the partnership require any new areas of risk to be assessed and if so, how will this be done? |
| Working practices | What ratios does each partner operate and does this differ from EYFS? |
| Language or terms you use | Are there any differences in language or terminology across different providers? This might take some time to come to light but it is important that partners understand any differences. |
| Opening times | What are the opening times? Are there periods of closedown? What notice is given to parents of closedown periods? |
| Premises | Outline the premises used by each partner to deliver provision. Are there any restrictions on when premises can be used? Are there any access benefits or challenges? |
| Marketing and publicity | What marketing and publicity does each partner undertake? Is there scope for a shared approach? Are there any issues around competition? What does marketing and publicity look like to parents? Where are potential points of confusion? |
| Admissions policy (incl. age range) | Are there specific factors that determine admissions? What are the main priorities for each partner – for example maximising transitions to school, maximising fees, reaching out to families from disadvantaged communities etc. |
| Contracts with families | What formal contracts does each provider and/or the local authority have with families? Are there any clauses that might be contradictory? Is there scope for a single contract where the delivery model involves shared provision? |
| Recording children’s progress | How do you record children’s progress? What works and what could be done differently / better? What would a partner be willing to change in terms of recording systems and what would they not be willing to change? |

**Common Grounds and Differences Summary**

| **Area of operation** | **Partner 1 or lead partner** | **Partner 2** | **Partner 3** | **Partner 4**  | **Critical differences** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Governance & decision making |  |  |  |  |  |
| Information sharing |  |  |  |  |  |
| Management |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff recruitment |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fees policy |  |  |  |  |  |
| Health & safety |  |  |  |  |  |
| Equality & diversity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Risk assessment |  |  |  |  |  |
| Working practices |  |  |  |  |  |
| Language or terms you use |  |  |  |  |  |
| Opening times |  |  |  |  |  |
| Premises |  |  |  |  |  |
| Marketing and publicity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Admissions policy (incl. age range) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contracts with families |  |  |  |  |  |
| Recording children’s progress |  |  |  |  |  |