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## SHARING KNOWLEDGE

# How to set up a network

Setting up an early years network is a great way to share expertise, practice and knowledge. When I joined the Staffordshire Early Years Professional Network (SEYPN) in 2015, it gave me access to high-level training events, a private Facebook group to share queries and articles of interest, as well as access to low-cost conferences. In 2016 I attended the SEYPN conference, which included Helen Moylett and Anna Ephgrave as speakers.

I am now a member of the SEYPN committee. We have some really exciting training coming up which is created by the members (as we are lucky enough to have university lecturers, consultants and therapists as part of our network) for the members. This means we're providing high-quality training at a low cost. Training, however, is not the only

volunteer their premises and resources. A small membership fee will allow the network to pay guest speakers, buy books to share between members and access online membership services as a group.

If you are planning on charging a small membership fee, then it is best to set up a constitution. A constitution is simply the aims and rules that the committee will follow when running the network – it sets out rules, procedures and how often meetings will be held, including the annual general meeting. Roles include chairman, treasurer and secretary; you may want to consider other roles as the network

your committee members have been selected include how to share and communicate effectively. Setting up a Google Drive account allows all committee members to access network documents, and a shared email account is a good idea. However, it's best practice to select one or two committee members to be responsible for this to avoid confusion. You should also consider social media, which can be used in a number of ways – to share best practice, to advertise the network and to allow members to connect.

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter all have great potential to reach a wider audience.

***You will need a team of passionate and dedicated committee members.***

benefit of being part of an early years network. At every session we allow members to share queries and issues. This allows them to draw on the diverse knowledge and expertise of other network members, who include Ofsted inspectors, early years advisers, early years consultants, university lecturers, music specialists, family support workers and many more. It's a great way to feel supported by like-minded people whose advice and guidance you trust.

### ***Set up a network***

If you are setting up a free network the only thing you will need is a team of passionate and dedicated committee members, each willing to take on roles within the network. It's important to set out rules, roles and, as it's an unpaid committee, settings will need to

expand and the workload becomes heavier. It is vital that each person understands their role and that the committee meets regularly to discuss arrangements such as what will be put on throughout the year, membership pricing and rules with regard to who can join and how to join. The constitution will be a handy reference point in the future to ensure the network runs smoothly. There is lots of information online about creating a constitution and other details when running a network.

### ***Sharing resources***

Practical points to consider once



If you live in Staffordshire or the surrounding areas, please get in touch with SEYPN via the Facebook page 'Staffordshire Early Years Professional Network', Twitter @seypn or email staffseypn@gmail.com. The network is for anyone with a foundation degree or above. We welcome members currently studying, and a small membership fee of £25 is payable to access three training sessions per year, our library of books and the Learning through Landscapes website.

