Strengthening Parent Carer Participation & Engagement

Partnership working with support groups
Welcome to this Contact Webinar

If there is a technical hitch, please do bear with us

Those of you joining by pc, laptop, tablet or smart phone should now be able to see this introduction slide
Timings and Questions

As there are so many attendees, it is not practical for verbal questions to be taken, therefore you will all remain ‘muted’ throughout.

If at any point you have any questions, please use the question icon on your GoToWebinar tool bar on your screen.

• This will allow you to type your question in to the text box and submit this to the Webinar administrator.

• I will select as many relevant questions to answer as time allows, if similar questions are received I will condense these where possible.
Further relevant questions, not covered in the time allowed, will be answered and posted on the Contact website along with the recording of this Webinar, details of which will be circulated next week.

At the end of the Webinar a short questionnaire will launch, please take the time to complete this as this will assist with future online training events.
Partnership working with Support Groups

An Introduction from Adele Meader, Support Groups Manager at Contact with co-presenters Tina Emery and Ruth Hobbs, Directors of Somerset Parent Carer Forum
Somerset’s story

- The Forum was struggling
- Low membership of parents with 260 parent carers
- Over a 1000 statements and approx 12,000 children with SEND
- Missing crucial feedback into services
- Time and resource management needed
- Worked on what already existed and built on from there
Agenda for this webinar:

1. An overview of parent support groups
2. Working together – co-production
3. ‘Finding Your Way’
4. Your Satellite of groups - Reaching out
5. Affiliations and memberships
6. Re-group workshops
What is a parent Support Group?

The strengths:

» Friendship
» Opportunities to socialise
» Information and advice
» Emotional and moral support
» A listening ear.
» A regular meeting place
» Activities such as a crèche for siblings or family days out
» Local groups vary in terms of the type of service they offer and can be open to parents and carers of children with any disability. Others are for parents whose children have the same condition.
» Campaign
What is a parent Support Group?

The Challenges

» Having no aim or objective
» Poor publicity
» Lack of take-up
» Not meeting the needs
» Hard to reach
» Only one person doing all the work
» One person doing all the work!
» Managing personalities
» No funds
Parent Carer Forums

What it is

• Collective of parent carers working in partnership with local statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure services meet the needs of families
• Covers all disabilities 0-25
• Wide membership of parent carers, links to support groups and other parent carer networks
• Led by a committee, steering group or directors – usually all parent carers
• Parent Representatives on strategic groups
• Listening to the range of views, ideas and experiences from all parents
• Representing parents views to the local authorities and working with them to bring about change –
• Building up two way communication with individuals within a variety of organisations

What it is not

• 1:1 Support
• Listening ear
• Campaign group
• SENDIAS service
The Commonalities of Forums and Support Groups

✓ Same aims and purpose
✓ Parent led (though some have paid workers)
✓ Parent committees
✓ Work and network with a range of stakeholders
✓ A wealth of shared expertise
× Need for active members
× Finding parents
× Lack of clear information

➢ A Forum: ‘a meeting ....where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged’
➢ A Support Group: ‘a group of people with common experiences or concerns who provide each other with encouragement, comfort, and advice’
Co-Production: ‘Co-production is about trust’, (parent carer) and builds upon transparency, open communication and equal value being given to each participant’s contribution...

 .......... It is an approach which builds upon meaningful participation and assumes effective consultation and information sharing. ......

Parent carers are not there just to illustrate the experiences of service-users but rather to take responsibility to help shape future experiences and be an active part of delivering the solutions.
What stops groups engaging with their forums?

» The Style and approach of forum leaders is vital to the inclusive development of the forum

» You need to create a trusting and nurturing forum that people want to be part of

» How do other people perceive your forum – what unconscious messages do people pick up on and how does this impact on public perception of the forum

» Not understanding about the role of the forum
Support groups might not be interested by headlines such as:

X Help us Shape and Influence services
X Parent Participation- come have your voice heard
X Join a Strategic committee – get involved

They are more likely to respond to phrases that appeal to them personally, such as:

✓ does your child have additional needs
✓ are you getting the support and help you need?
✓ help us to make a difference
✓ Meet other parents
✓ Develop new skills and increase your job chances
✓ Learn about services and support available
Forums and Finding your groups

- Firstly use and seek what is already out there: eg, The Local Offer, Carers centres, Contact and those all important existing members
- Have a variety of ways for groups to communicate with you, such as:
  - Face to face – no better way to align yourselves than face to face
  - Can you visit groups and Schools – both mainstream and special – can you get along to parents evenings to showcase your service?
  - Create an event to invite speakers particularly speakers who have something topical for the parents you represent for example ‘challenging behaviours’
  - Workshops - maybe you could offer Participation training to empower your families
  - When/dates/times do you meet as a forum? This can have a bearing on parents who work
  - Publicity – how do you advertise and get the word out - something we have covered about marketing yourself
  - Word of mouth- our best resource – tell everyone!
  - Using the professionals to help you promote your forum as they are in contact with many parents and indeed may run their own groups(health/social care and schools)
- Social media
- Find out what other forums are doing and how they promote themselves and their activities
- And lastly, there is nothing better than the offer of a slice of lemon drizzle cake!
First steps

» Scoping - Parents knowledge, local offer, Contact
» Discretionary grant
» Not the only ones struggling with capacity pressures
» Groups were struggling with insurance, funding and marketing
» Groups were going to close, because of insurance costs
» Support group Forum evolved
 meetings every 6 months
 Eventbrite for simplicity of booking
 Publicize with flyer well in advance
 Food is a hook!
 two-way system of gaining information

Support Group Forum
Somerset Parent Carers would like to invite you to their first Support Group Forum.
An opportunity for group leaders to discuss the realities of running a Parent Carers Support Group.
Exploring some of the common issues our parents are experiencing. And an opportunity to share information resources.

Wednesday 20th January 2016
10-2 pm
The Town Hall, Langport TA10 9ER
Refreshments & light lunch will be provided
RSVP to calendar.spcf@outlook.com or,
call Joanna on 07543 680365.

www.somersetpcf.org.uk
’Finding Your Way’. 
Umbrella groups and affiliated groups

- Helps us to cover a large geographical area
- Groups can benefit from insurance, support finding venues and help advertising their groups
- The forum gets feedback on families experience of services in Somerset
- The feedback enables the forum to be more reflective of what is happening in Somerset at a strategic level locally, regionally and nationally
Gathering voices and opinions
- Affiliate – independent, free training and shared publicity
- Support Group Forum
- Umbrella – insurance, marketing support, attend one of the 2 support group forum, involved in consultations for feedback
- Finding your Way – Support groups run by committee members of the Forum and online group
“Working together bonds people together more than any other force”

M Ghandi
Re Group Workshops

Re:Group is a one-day, facilitated workshop aimed at helping you to develop meaningful relationships with the support groups and agencies in your local area. Whether your Forum is very new, well-established or somewhere in-between, this workshop can be used as a platform to reconnect with existing members known to you, forge new alliances, increase your membership and expand your circles of influence.
Resources from Contact

Group Action pack
Developing your group
Attracting Members
Starting a support group
Hosting a Family Day
Legal Structures
Publicity
Fundraising
Social Media

https://contact.org.uk/search-results/?s=group+action+pack
Parent support groups

Parent support groups are a great way to meet other parents for practical and emotional support. Most groups are set up and run by parents and carers of children with additional needs. Some professionals and organisations, particularly children centres, run their own groups.

LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Local groups cater for parents who live in the same area whose children might have a variety of different disabilities or the same condition.

Use the links below to find out how you can get involved in a local parent support group:

- Why join a local support group?
- Find a local support group
- How we support local groups

NATIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS

National support groups are usually for parents of children with specific conditions. National groups offer help in a range of ways, which might include:
We believe that support groups are a really good way to meet other parents to gain practical and emotional support and to share information and experiences.
Tell me and I forget
Teach me and I may remember
Involve me and I learn

- Benjamin Franklin -
Q & A
Thank you for attending with us today

A short questionnaire will launch at the end of this webinar

Please take the time to complete this it will help us plan future online training events including other topics you would like to see

The recording of this Webinar, presentation and questions will be on the parent participation Resources page of Contact’s website next week – an email confirming this will be sent to you once this is available