



News from Contact and the NNPCF

We last wrote to you in May when we were all adjusting to the challenges of life in lockdown. Things have been developing quickly since then, and we know that life for so many families with children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) has become even more difficult, with many feeling abandoned as the vital support they received has stopped, or has been negatively impacted due to the pandemic. Many families have shared their experiences through the Disabled Children's Partnership survey 'Left in Lockdown', and Amanda Batten, Contact's CEO, shared an update on the impact this is having nationally [here](#).

We have seen so many inspiring examples of forums doing all they can to respond in this fast paced environment, whether that is linking with families to reduce isolation and/or working with services to try to improve approaches towards support for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Thank you for all you have done, and continue to do, to keep ensuring that families of children and young people with SEND are at the heart of the decisions about the services that they need. We know you are all balancing so many other pressures in addition to your contribution to your forum and we are grateful for whatever you can do.

We know the summer break is not likely to be anything like it has been before. We hope you can find some time to take a break from forum work. We will of course be here and available though, throughout summer, so don't hesitate to get in touch if you need support.

National Co-production Week: Co-production in a changing world.

It was National Co-production week from 6th to the 10th July and we worked with forums to promote the week and share positive examples of the impact of forums. Please see the [success stories page](#) on our website for some of the examples we shared throughout the week. Some parent carer forums also shared their examples on social media using #CoProWeek.

Through our interactions with forums it has been clear that many were keen to do

something fun and not too serious to mark the week and take the pressure off!
There were a good few quizzes and even bingo!

The Yorkshire and Humber region wanted to celebrate some of the great work going on in the region with a view to inspiring others on their co-production journey. They brought forums and their local authority and health partners together for a game of 'co-production bingo'. Each bingo number when called represented a different example of co-production. Some of the examples were:

Sheffield: "The Inclusion Strategy that has been developed and just recently launched. We were involved from the very beginning in developing consultations, holding a co-production event for all stakeholders including parents and heavily involved in using all the evidence to write the strategy from beginning to end".

Wakefield: "Writing and distributing a partnership letter to parents/carers to reassure them of our continued commitment to improve services and experiences within Wakefield. Also "Producing wellbeing bags in partnership with our LA and CCG to promote wellbeing for 250 of our local families."

Thank you to all those that got involved to promote Co-production week and helped to highlight the importance of the work of parent carer forums. Special thanks to Worcestershire Families in Partnership and Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire for working with us on webinars sharing their experiences.

What's new?

The latest edition of 'What's new?,' a regular update on important news and information for families with disabled children is out now, you can sign up to receive future editions [here](#).

NNPCF newsfeed

Keep an eye on the National Network for Parent Carer Forums' newsfeed to keep up to date with developments around Covid-19 and SEND related information. The most recent updates include the announcements about local area SEND inspections and an update on the Co-Chairs' meeting with Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford highlighting the feedback from forums during the pandemic.
www.nnpcf.org.uk

DFE grant - second payment applications

We have been busy processing grant applications and monitoring. Thank you so much for your patience if you were affected by the DfE delays to some payments.

[2nd tranche payment applications](#)

The second tranche application process is now open. The process is slightly different this year due to the carryover of underspend from the 2019-20 grant year. Please read the [FAQs](#) to ensure that you understand any changes. The online claim form is available [here](#).

The deadline for second tranche applications is 23rd November. This is an absolute deadline and we won't be able to process any applications made after this date.

Regional discretionary grant applications

Regions can apply for a regional discretionary grant from today (Friday 17th July). The [FAQs](#) and the online [application form](#) are available on the grants page of our website. We won't be opening the discretionary grants up to individual forums until we are sure that there is some confirmed underspend to pay them. We'll keep you posted on this and let you know as soon as the process is open. If you need some support with the grant, or have any queries, please do contact your participation advisor.

Webinars

Do keep an eye on the [resources for forums section](#) of the participation pages to access our webinars on a range of topics. We have been building some new categories such as the adapting to Covid and co-production sections. In June, we delivered two webinars for forums - 'Building resilience during Covid' and 'Reducing isolation and increasing wellbeing in your parent carer community'. The recordings and slides are now available.

We recently delivered a webinar on the NHS England Learning Disability and Autism Key working pilot. This is available now under the 'working with strategic health leads' section of our [resources page](#). If you have any ideas for webinar topics don't hesitate to get in touch.

There is a [SEND Webinar on the legal rights of children and young people with SEND returning to school](#) in September featuring Steve Broach on 23rd July, between 13:30 and 14:45.

CiC forum assistance programme

Just a reminder that as part of our core offer to forums this year, we have arranged for up to 8 members of each forum's core group committee or steering group members, directors and possibly some parent reps, to benefit from an "Employee" Assistance Programme via a company called CiC. This support includes access to counselling, legal and family care helplines, online resources through a wellbeing portal, specialist advice, managerial support, guidance on HR/policies and procedures and whistle blowing support. There are additional paid for services outside of the offer from Contact such as additional counselling sessions.

All forums have been sent an email about this support, with details on how to access it, but please do let us know if you need a reminder, or have any queries. We encourage forum members to access this service as there are many benefits including regular communications and access to resources and webinars. www.well-online.co.uk

Parent carer forum work shortlisted for prestigious award

You may have already seen in our latest news that the Accelerator School Project has been shortlisted for a Royal College for Nursing (RCN) award in the Commitment to Carers category. Last year, Parent Carer Forums supported by Contact, played a key role working with the NHS in North Cumbria and the North East to reduce inappropriate hospital admissions and exclusion from education for children and young people with learning disabilities, autism spectrum conditions (ASCs) and/or challenging behaviour. Being nominated for the RCN award is such wonderful news for all the families involved. Read the full story [on our website](#).

Contact Support for families

We know as forums you may be contacted by families in your area who have been quite understandably overwhelmed, confused or exhausted during the Covid-19 crisis and simply don't know where else to turn.



Below we share some information you may be able to signpost to in order to support those families.

New 'Listening Ear' service for parents

Contact is delighted to be able to offer 1-1 confidential phone appointments with our family support advisers for parents looking for a listening ear, reassurance and practical and emotional support at this time.

They can also provide strategies for improving your child's sleep or reducing their anxiety or challenging behaviour. Further information on [how to access the service](#) is available on our website. Please do share with the families in your area if/when you feel it might be helpful.

Free virtual parent workshops

We're now running our programme of popular, free parent workshops virtually! Topics include: Money matters, Encouraging Positive Behaviour, Wellbeing for you and Managing your child's sleep. Please signpost families to us when you think it would be useful so that they can [book themselves a place](#).

Get your free copy of the Helpful Guide sent to your letter box.

Contact is delighted to announce that we are able to resume normal service and post out free copies of The Helpful Guide for Families with Disabled children straight to your letter box. Families can [order their own free copy](#) or, you can email info@contact.org.uk for a quote to order multiple copies.

British institute of learning disabilities (BILD)

Contact have had links with BILD and their Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) programme for a few years. BILD has received funding to be able to offer a telephone support service provided by their Positive Behaviour Support consultants (England Only). BILD's qualified and experienced PBS consultants can provide targeted practical suggestions and strategies to help get through this next phase through PBS approaches. They will be providing phone support, both 1:1 and in small groups. BILD can:

- help with specific strategies and suggest targeted interventions to help reduce the impact of behaviours
- check if there are specific skills or techniques that would help family members with their challenges and help them to develop these
- offer follow up calls to assess if interventions and strategies are effective and to adapt as needed.

You may wish to signpost parent carers to this support and they can [book an initial half hour call](#) if they are interested.

Working to reduce inequalities

Public Health England's report published in June brought into sharp focus the health inequalities faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The report follows [research published by the Quality Care Commission](#) which showed that the deaths of people with learning disabilities in England had increased by 134% during the coronavirus pandemic. We know from our own work with BAME families with disabled children they often face a double disadvantage when trying to access services. Over the summer, as part of Contact's support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, we wanted to [highlight the experiences of BAME families](#) with disabled children. You can also read [Contact's response to the findings](#).

We know that forums have a lot on their plate, and working to reduce inequalities by reaching as many parent carers as possible is a big challenge. A Contact Associate is supporting the development of the Seldom Heard Toolkit that was begun in 2019. A number of parent and carer forums are testing the toolkit this year and providing feedback to help us to make it more forum friendly. If any other forum would like to be involved, they can get in touch with Sarah Lee at sarah.lee@contact.org.uk

Please sign up and share!

Please do forward on this newsletter to any of your contacts who are interested in keeping up to date with Contact and NNPCF parent participation news. If you've received this newsletter as a forward you can sign up to receive it directly [here](#).

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