



Data taken from the 2014/15 DfE Parent Carer Participation Grant Monitoring forms

This collation of achievements and challenges is compiled directly from the information parent carer forums submitted in their 2014/15 Department for Education, grant monitoring forms and is in their own words. The information is extremely helpful in understanding the changeable and challenging experiences of parent carer forums across England and informs planning for all partners involved in the support and development of parent carer participation.

Area	Achievements
East Midlands	
Leicestershire	<p>Influencing Epilepsy Care. A new form of Midazolam was introduced and school staff/transport staff were not taught how to use it and children were being told that they couldn't go to school in case they had a seizure which could not be treated. Also, simply surviving as a Forum – it has been an awful year and the fact that we are still together and that parents have started returning to meetings again, is fantastic.</p>
Lincolnshire	<p>Working in partnership with all stakeholders in meeting all the grant outcomes and providing support and information for parents and carers of CWD & SEND.</p> <p>Being influential in the SEND reforms.</p> <p>All grant outcomes met, participation remit met, charity framework adhered to, and an information, signposting and support service provided to over 2276 parents and carers on our network as well as parents who access our website but are not registered on our database.</p> <p>We received positive feedback from the DfE regarding our co-production with the Local Authority and other stakeholders when they came to visit the county.</p> <p>Representing parents' views at the numerous SEND meetings at all levels whilst juggling life as parents too!</p> <p>Adding additional features to our website therefore making our information accessible to all.</p> <p>Empowering parents to improve their families' lives through our SEND workshops, events and coffee mornings.</p> <p>Increasing our network through the 58 coffee mornings we have held reaching a total of 329 parents and carers this year.</p> <p>Being mentioned on pages 18 & 42 of the Joint commissioning strategy of the LA.</p> <p>The commitment of our volunteers to participate in co-producing the reforms.</p> <p>Effective communication throughout our group thanks to the strengths of our representatives being a cohesive group that represent and feedback so everyone remains informed.</p> <p>Parents on our network tell us how much they value our existence and our work, often describing us as their 'lifeline'.</p> <p>Professionals telling us how they value our work and due to this we are often in demand from various arms of the Local Authority including Public Health, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, and Education.</p>
Northamptonshire	<p>Our Solutions Events were our greatest achievements in 2014/15 and this has already been shared in the January 2015 "Good Practise Bulletin".</p>



Rutland	Our greatest achievement was surviving another year. This past year has been difficult for various reasons but we have managed to get through the dark times and are moving forward. The Parent Participation events were very successful not only from our point of view but from other agencies and the local authority's. Getting parents and carers to engage with anything is really hard due to the pressures of daily living but with this event several agencies were able to conduct a survey. We held our 3rd Christmas Card competition where any child or young person could design a Christmas card that we could use to send out to not only parents and carers but also schools/colleges and any professionals that we may have worked with or hoping to work with in the future. We changed the way we produced our weekly e-bulletin and this has proven to be a great success not only with parents and carers but with professionals as well. However our most significant achievement is with the social media. At present we have 211 'likes' on Facebook, 358 'followers' on Twitter and 3343 visitors to our website. These figures may not seem very big but Rutland is a small county. Also the figures only gives an idea of who is 'actively' following us it does not show those parents, carers and professionals who are interested in our pages.
Nottingham, City of	Getting our Overview and Scrutiny Board to accept the review topic that I put forward. This was in light of months of trying to pass on issues form 6 families who were not getting the support they needed. This included contacting portfolio holders, directors and officers without success. As one councillor form O&S said "We only hear from LA officers and we take what they say as accurate", this is true and does not allow for scrutiny and accountability.
Derby, City of	Increased membership Increased profile of strategic group Structured future plans
Derbyshire	Our greatest achievement is becoming a constituted group, we have worked together as a management team to create the document and clear vison that was required in order to be successful both in constituting and the future. The management group are clear about the aim for the forum and how we are going to carry this out that will enable us to move forward positively.
Nottinghamshire	Recruiting 12 parent carer reps to the steering group board and establishing 4x Sub Hub Co-ordinator roles as the local link for parents and carers to go to who then feed into the main group. Finally, we were able to replace our Chair who had to step down with a parent carer who is supported by someone from a local, nationally recognised, specialist college. We also co-produced a detailed action plan of what the forum wanted to achieve over the next 12 months. Each step has helped move the forum closer to becoming fully parent carer led.
Peterborough, City of	Securing funding which will lead to ongoing sustainability of the forum including staffing and a secure office base. We have had such an impact in some areas of the LA that FVP are automatically thought of from the start in any new work streams.



Cambridgeshire	Greatest achievements for 2014/15 include becoming an independent Charitable Incorporated Organisation, being mentioned in a Parliamentary Debate in relation to raising issues around CAMHS, getting the children's continence service budget separated from adult's, engaging the commissioner and provider of the wheelchair service to work towards service improvement, successfully running our conference for 160 attendees, increasing our social media profile, setting up our service ratings system on our website, getting anti-bullying onto the County Council agenda, and improving access to activities for children.
Central Bedfordshire	Our greatest achievement has been increasing the forums profile both with parent carers and service providers, but especially within our educational settings locally. We now have employed staff that provide real stability and support to our Parent Reps. Our Parent Engagement Officer is contacting all SENCos locally and is breaking down barriers where people do not understand that we want to work positively together to improve the lives of SEND families. Our contact with families has increased immensely and is reflected in our membership numbers and Facebook presence. We have also hugely increased the number of Parent Reps that are directly involved with the forum, and provide our own in-house training which is well received and praised by those who attend.
Hertfordshire	Getting full parental involvement in the All Age Autism Strategy group. Improving our working relationship and profile with Health. Developing a positive working relationship with Public Health.
Luton	Our biggest achievement has been to remain intact and grow. The pressure to always be quorum when you are a small group of five has been immense. We are now a group of eight and feel more secure. It was struggling, but we have established a firm foot hold on the SEND landscape for children and young people in Luton. We receive feedback from families and professional alike informing us how valued we are for the work we do and the contributions we have made. Such comments makes the struggles all worthwhile.
Essex	FACE has maintained a high level of engagement with Essex County Council following implementation of the reforms but during 2014/15 has focused upon being more responsive to the families of Essex introducing an extensive program of continuous consultation. This 'My Say' program works by collating all the feedback via the various communication channels and enables FACE to speak with confidence that it is representing the views of the families of Essex.



Thurrock	<p>Developing the forum and increasing membership hugely across the year. Developing the steering group who have worked hard to raise the profile of the forum locally and work alongside parent carers, and electing a Chair and Vice Chair. Signing a MOU with Scope and Independent Support, and also with the Eastern Region Parent Carer Forum. Developing the partnership agreement with Thurrock Council. Working alongside local peer organisations and support groups. Compiling and submitting the first grant application and monitoring form last year. Holding the forum's first AGM. Presenting the forum's first Training Day for all parent carers, professionals and SENCOs to train together. Developing outreach with local schools and supporting the development of support groups within them.</p> <p>We feel that we have successfully launched the parent carer forum across Thurrock this year and now need to work on strengthening our position and promoting co-production to all parents, carers and professionals.</p>
Norfolk	<p>Our pivotal role within the SEND Reforms that has been recognised by all local partners and the DfE, and our role in sharing this information with so many families in our roadshows, communications and at our conference.</p>
Southend on Sea	<p>We think our Communications have improved a great deal: newsletters launched and a new Leaflet designed and printed and Steering Group members talking to other Parent Groups. We also think the workload is more evenly distributed amongst Steering Group members.</p>
Suffolk	<p>We are proud of the work we have done on planning for the SEND reforms, and representing parents views in this process. This work continues as we monitor how well the reforms are actually implemented.</p> <p>We are really pleased to have developed stronger links with Health, and the Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group in particular. The Suffolk PCN has been invited to join the CCG Task & Finish Groups so that we can achieve real co-production of health services, and our first involvement will be the T&F Group for 'Complex Child'.</p>
London	
Richmond upon Thames	<p>We very effectively engaged with the local authority to voice parental concerns about muted changes in the local SEN transport provision. We organised and held a very well attended (50 people) meeting with the local authority leadership member responsible for transportation and very clearly voiced parental concerns regarding the ongoing need for medically trained escorts and our concerns about a transport provider</p>
Kensington & Chelsea	<p>Enter your comments here: Our greatest Achievements this year has been our work with Health which has included the development of a flagging system at Chelsea Westminster Hospital.</p> <p>Disability Hate Crime: One of the pieces of work we did this year was to raise with our local Councillors incidents of disability hate crime faced by our parents, children, young people and staff. This work was taken up by the Deputy Mayor of London, Victoria Borwick. Full of Life worked in partnership with the Mayors Office (along with other organisations) which produced a report 'Hidden Hate'. This report has led to an increase funding available to Victim Support and MOPAC to support victims of hate crime and to train Police in relation to</p>



	<p>Disability Hate Crime. We have also addressed this within our forums and helped parents understand what Disability Hate Crime is and what they can do about it.</p>
Havering	<p>Getting Health providers and the CCG to attend our quarterly meetings where parents are able to express their views, share their experiences and suggest changes that could be made to provide better services. The meetings are chaired and minutes taken by Healthwatch and an action plan is drawn up and circulated to all members. While many parents have had individual issues resolved we take an overall view and work to get them resolved for all families.</p> <hr/> <p>Our Chair winning the CCG Unsung Hero award “Karen has won this award for her work to ensure that the voices of parents of children with disabilities are heard. She is a dedicated, proactive and passionate advocate for parents of disabled children. She constantly lobbies both the Council and CCG for better services, information and engagement for children with disabilities and their parents. Karen is an unassuming, seamlessly tireless ‘unsung hero’ for her massive contribution to improve the lives of parents with disabilities and their children”</p> <hr/> <p>The success of our bike scheme and hearing how much the families and children themselves have enjoyed using them.</p> <hr/> <p>The employment of a Children’s Learning Disability Nurse covering both of the boroughs hospitals.</p>
Sutton	<p>Our first Summer Newsletter “A really good read” Toby Price, Head of Service Improved working relationship with SEN team through SEN Reforms and Independent Support project Setting up CAMHS Focus Groups with Sutton CAMHS Ops Manager; meet monthly with 12 parent/carers Better working relationship with ASSHH, particularly around Care Act Independent Support Project</p>
Haringey	<p>The development of our Steering Group has been a great achievement this year. By developing clearer roles and responsibilities we able to function more efficiently and coordinate projects effectively. Participation at our events continues to be high. This year the attendance figures across all our events was over 200 people, accounting for over 100 different people. Our membership has also grown beyond our forecast, with 78 new people joining this year. We have developed stronger working relationships with SENCOs through our coffee morning events and feel this has helped raise further awareness of participation in these schools.</p>



Ealing	<p>Keeping going for another year. Like many other forums we are always at risk of imploding as a result of key active members leaving and not being easily replaced.</p> <p>Developing a closer working relationship with our LA and its officers.</p> <p>Developing and strengthening our Steering Group.</p>
Camden	<p>We ran a very successful Special Parents Feedback Day. We rented a wonderful venue in central Camden, organised the local special needs school to run a bus for 15 parents to attend, worked very hard with partner organisations to publicise the event, put posters up all over Camden and sent invitations out through a variety of diverse routes including social media and text local. We were supported by 8 parent volunteers who helped with the planning, developing and running of the day. We ran workshops throughout the day from 1 page profiles to mindfulness and emotional well being. We provided a halal meal and informal peer led activities. We presented each attendee with an information pack and a copy of the parent produced anthology, 'Here to Stay'. Parents hosted a feedback wall which allowed parents to give feedback confidentially and informally. The feedback received was collated into a report that was shared with the Local Authority. We produced 2 videos for inclusion on the Local Offer website on Short Breaks and the Special Parents Forum which will also be used for awareness building and future publicity. Parents feedback was wonderful, they felt that it was the best thing that happened in Camden in years and was a celebration of parents with disabled children.</p>
Hillingdon	<p>We are incredibly proud of the engagement that we have had with the local authority and feel privileged to say we have successfully co-produced the EHCP.</p>
Lewisham	<p>Our greatest achievements this year was to become independent and to become a registered charity. Also, to have volunteers to be continually involved in the SEND Reform Project Groups. To provide professional training on the new reforms for our parents and carers in Lewisham. To undertake a planning away day so that we can seek out ideas from each other and get ready to prepare a 3 year plan, which has helped towards the next year's grant application. To have engaged with and ensured parent participation for 180 parents throughout the year.</p>
Southwark	<p>The SPCC worked on personal budgets they co-produced guides with the local authority to ensure that the information was much more understandable and parent friendly</p> <p>The SPCC identified additional funding for internships for young people the local authority were not aware of this funding. £32000 has now been awarded to the LA there is evidence that this is the most successful way getting SEND young people into work</p> <p>The SPCC challenged at a strategic level the transport policy, alterations had been made without any real consultation or thought. The policy has been changed and of the recommended changes are to be implemented</p> <p>The SPCC and young people were involved with Headliners and took part in a film which talked about the SEND reforms. This film will be shown to professionals to help them to have a better understanding of young people and parent carers</p> <p>The SPCC have a parent rep. on Healthwatch and are currently in the process of recruiting parent carers to work with Healthwatch we are also in the process of drawing up a working protocol</p>



Barking & Dagenham	Conference was a great success with 120 parents feeling engaged, empowered and energised
Hammersmith & Fulham	Our greatest achievement was to make sure that the Local offer was a standalone website not part of from the Council's website, but we are making sure it is kept updated and have a lot of work to do. We were happy that the CCG formally adopted the health report and have asked us to provide training to GPs. We were also commissioned by the council to provide training to newly inducted council employees and are working towards creating a package for that
Islington	The involvement of new parents and continued support from existing forum members. The attendance at all the various parental groups are all increasing.
Westminster, City of	We are very proud of our increased membership and improved relationships with statutory agencies. We have also strengthened our links with other forums in Triborough area
Barnet	In its first three months the BPCF has established a core of committed members who have attended steering group meetings, developed a website and leaflet. Members have agreed some essential governance documents and begun to develop positive relationships with council officers.
Croydon	<p>After close to 30 years of representing parent carers' views in Croydon and working closely with the Croydon Local Authority and Croydon NHS, we have hereafter drafted and signed the Partnership Agreement between PIP Parent Forum and the Local Authority. The agreement names PIP Parent Forum as the Croydon Parent Forum recognised by the Local Authority, encompasses the ways we strive to co-work and explains the responsibilities of both parties.</p> <p>The current Head of SEN and the manager of the joint commissioning at Croydon NHS have been very transparent and forthcoming in regards to joint working and parent participation. We hope to build on that and further strengthen the relationship.</p> <p>Further to the agreement, the Croydon's SEN department agreed to fund, additionally to PIP's DfE grant, the part-time post of a Parent Forum Development Worker. This is to support the Croydon Forum with reaching the "hard to reach" parent carers and ensuring that our forum has a pool of parent representatives that can support each other and who are able to be representative of various disabilities, children's ages, ethnic origins and backgrounds. Moreover, that the Forum withstands the pressure of participation and has enough trained and confident members to act in the capacity of a critical friend.</p>
Wandsworth	<p>Enter your comments where it states 'Click here to enter text'</p> <p>We have increased numbers on the PPA contact list by 20%</p> <p>We have retained a core group of parent/carer reps willing to take on a significant role in the local implementation of the SEND reforms.</p> <p>We have attracted new members of the PPA steering group.</p> <p>Have made a small link with Health.</p> <p>We have reached parents that we hadn't reached before.</p>
Kingston upon Thames	Our greatest success was the SEND Twickenham conference as the Audience was large and varied. We received positive feedback and invitation to talk at other locations. Plus a great achievement has been the relationship of joint



	work with RSFV
Hounslow	<p>Helping parents to give their views on cuts planned for the Short Breaks Service and having a role in getting the decision overturned.</p> <p>An increase in number of people attending the Parent Carer Forum monthly meetings.</p> <p>A new website. Still in early stages.</p> <p>New mailing list of 377 people.</p>
Harrow	<p>The LA commissioning us with support from Harrow SENDIAS service (formerly Harrow Parent Partnership) to run the SEND Parent Advisory Group for 1 year. As a result of closer working relationship we were able to present a united front in support of the LA's efforts, when the DfE interviewed us separately about our experiences of the SEND implementation in Harrow. After many years of somewhat of a difficult relationship, they started to see us a critical friend and more willing to co-produce on future projects and agreed to consider further funding.</p> <p>Our other achievement is securing permanent premises that is positioned in an environment which is conducive for more partnership working and sustainability. We are learning so much from other more established organisations.</p>
Bexley	<p>Parent Provider workshop – bringing parents together with numerous local providers encouraging joined up working on their part to offer the best possible range of options for parents and their children. A really productive and positive meeting in a time of cut backs etc. It showed that there is willingness by providers in Bexley to collaborate and work together and with parents for better outcomes.</p>
Newham	<p>Successful hand over to the new forum and an AGM with over 100 parents in attendance</p>
North East *	
Cumbria	<p>Organising 5 locality events attended in total by over 300 parent/carers and professionals to look at implications and issues related with the SEND reforms and through that engagement it has resulted in much better dialogue with the local authority and with health professionals.</p>
	<p>It has been encouraging to receive feedback from the LA and health professionals that they feel the forum is more approachable.</p>
North West	
Blackpool	<p>Our SEND local Offer 'Parent Voice' event, please see above for details</p>



Trafford	<p>The forum management team have been committed to strengthening the bond between the forum, parent carers and the local authority. The team have worked tirelessly throughout the year nurturing trust and building mutual respect. We promoted co-production, encouraged and nurtured its ethos with tenacity and professionalism. Our efforts paid off because not only have we co-produced two events, we approached the local authority with the idea of a co-produced 'Co-production Charter' which they have agreed but we have also secured additional funding and have been asked to work with the local authority on an independent project customer journey mapping the first tranche of EHC Transfers Y6 and Y11. The joint view is that this will become a rolling project until the end of the transfers, reviewing processes and assisting in developing and implementing change. The greatest achievement was having it publicly noted at the SEND information day that the local authority now recognise Trafford Parents Forum as the lead parent carer group in Trafford.</p>
Liverpool	<p>Our greatest achievements is in still reconnecting with parent carers that had left the group and that have started to come back. It's great when we have new parents come so that they realise that they are not on their own and they have somewhere safe to talk and vent their frustration and hopefully we can help them get an outcome that helps them and their family.</p>
Sefton	<p>Stopping local cuts to short break services an post 16 transport. Rebuilding a new forum that has established good links and communication with our parent/carers and developed strong links with the LA</p>
Blackburn with Darwen	<p>In a short space of time organising and hosting the forum and information day Turning the decision of the cuts to our short break services and having them reinstated by local authority</p>
Warrington	<p>Employing our development officer has had the greatest impact on our effectiveness this year. Whilst many of us have felt quite jaded by years of parent participation – which can be quite a frustrating experience – our development officer has brought fresh ideas, determination, professionalism and new direction to the team.</p>
Rochdale	<p>We are very proud to have received funding from the LA to provide training to practitioners, families and children and young people with disabilities around the SEND reforms. This is getting excellent feedback and we have already had to add several more sessions to those originally planned as participants are encouraging their colleagues to attend. Sourcing and securing our new community base in a space where parents feel relaxed and comfortable and establishing it as a place to meet and train together.</p>



St Helens	<p>Holding our first Information/Networking Day where parents came along and found out about the local statutory, voluntary and community services. There were 35 stands and 73 parents and 50 professionals attended.</p> <p>A significant shift in the relationship with the Local Authority and St. Helens CCG where we moved from information sharing and consultation to participation and co-production. This is shown in Sections 6.1 and 8.3.</p> <p>Parents being invited to sit on Strategic and Operational Working Groups within the LA/CCG. E.g. Neuro Developmental Steering Group, Local Offer Working Group.</p> <p>Increasing the number of parents coming along to our forums by 19%.</p> <p>Increasing the number of parents we send Forum invites to by 24%.</p> <p>Increasing the number of parent carers on our email distribution list by 27%.</p>
Lancashire	<p>That since October we have moved from a LA led forum to an independent forum with a Constituted Steering Group, with governance, financial policies and our own bank account so that we can control our own finances. We have commissioned an LPCF website and new publicity materials and plan to relaunch the forum during the next financial year.</p>
Halton	<p>HBC and the CCG recognising ImPart as a group to consult with ImPart members have produced both leaflets and a booklet (Planning for Meetings) for parent carers</p> <p>Building up the number of committee members as more parents understand what parent participation involves.</p> <p>Being part of the Working Together Newsletter.</p> <p>Moving away from the Powerful Voices label as this was discouraging parents to participate.</p>
North Somerset	<p>Setting up a new forum which includes existing and new members who are committed to developing the work of the forum to ensure that the parent/carers of North Somerset have a strong and proactive forum to represent them and their families.</p>
Oldham	<p>Our restructuring which has secured a bright future for POINT which means we can spread the workload more evenly, retain volunteers and press forward with a focused agenda for parent and carer involvement.</p> <p>Our increased engagement regionally and nationally which has helped us to share best practice from other areas</p> <p>Our Development Portfolio which enables us to identify, upskill and value our volunteers as well as ensuring we are all working together with shared aims and consistency.</p> <p>Cementing our co-production within Oldham and becoming a strategic partner in the SEND Reforms programme.</p> <p>Recognition for the hard work and efforts of our valuable team of volunteers.</p>



Cheshire East	<p>We are very proud of our large increase in membership this year. It has almost tripled which is great and means that we will be more representative of the general views of parent carers. The employment of an admin assistant has been a great achievement for us. We liaised with the Cheshire Carers Centre and they agreed to employ the admin assistant on our behalf which has taken a lot of the worry and responsibility of employing someone off the shoulders of the steering group. Having the admin assistant has meant that the forum is more organised and is presenting a professional and consistent image. We have continued to build on our close working relationship with the Local Authority and have worked closely with them on the Local Offer and introduction of EHCP plans. We are currently working with the Short Breaks commissioner to ensure that short break services are needs led rather than provision led. I feel that we helped a lot of parents through the EHCP transition as many were very worried. They came away from the events feeling more informed and empowered about what was going to happen and how to approach this. We have continued to work with other third sector organisations this year and I feel that the bonds we have built and the way we support one another is a real achievement. Between us all I feel that we deliver a holistic service to parent carers. The forum is helping parents participate and shape services, Cheshire Information Advice and Support (previously parent partnership) are helping individual parents with their issues in education and the Cheshire Carers Centre provide support and relaxation opportunities for parent carers. I also feel that the steering group as a body is a great achievement. We are a close group that all support one another, there is no in-fighting or conflict and we all work together well to move the forum forward.</p>
Wigan	<p>Wigan wanted to stop having a Transition Event, but parent/carers approached them and between us we now hold the Moving On event twice a year once at either end of the borough and it's bigger and better attended than ever.</p> <p>We have also had parents sit on interview panels for new council staff</p>
Bolton	<p>Engaging with Bolton Council of Mosques and reaching seldom heard families. Offering the SEND brochure and BPC leaflets in Urdu and offering translators, so families would feel comfortable to engage in a language of their choice</p>
Salford	<p>Getting a core of parents with the commitment and resilience to keep the Forum going, plan the events/meetings and move it forward into 2015 -16. Thinking of new ways to try and engage with parent carers. (e.g. Eventbrite, facebook, twitter etc)</p>
South East	
Southampton	<p>To continue operating as a Forum due to the lack of engagement from our Local Authority and continuous changes to staff and services.</p>



<p>West Berkshire</p>	<p>The development of the website and Facebook page and getting an individual (herself a parent carer) working locally in West Berkshire.</p> <p>The work we have done on Local Offer Recruitment of 2 reps</p> <p>As commented earlier the delay in getting confirmation of funding and employment of local staff in West Berkshire, has meant we are behind in what we intended to achieve however we are confident that during the next year we will build on what we have started this current year.</p>
<p>Stockport</p>	<p>Website - PIPS felt after that it was crucial that we invested in a new Website as it was very dated and felt that we needed to revamp it. Over a number of months of coming together with our steering group and parent representatives we co-produced a new website very much based around the 0-25 SEND reforms. As this was so vital for parents to find the information they needed in a very fast and accessible way. As we have been very much involved in the reforms locally it has meant we have been able to put documents on there that have been co-produced. We also felt it was really important that the Care Act was on there too as the two acts cross over and there is very little information out there for families. We were really pleased to receive a call from BBC radio 5 the day before the Care Act came out saying that they had researched and ours was one of the best websites they had seen that was easy, accessible and full of information on both acts for families and professionals. We of course are continuing to update this on a monthly basis with the latest information and also with the meetings we have attended so everyone knows what we are doing. Social media expansion - During the design and development of our website we thought it would be a good opportunity to explore other means of media so first of all we joined LinkedIn as a forum which has been hugely beneficial as it is a great way to connect with health and other professionals locally, regionally and nationally. Once this had been established we decided then to set up Pin Interest, which has also been a great way to show our photographs and the different things we do as a forum. New promotional Material – PIPS felt we needed to be able to engage more with the younger parent carers and families so after consulting with them they came up with what they really wanted was wrist bands with PIPS details on this was a great decision and we are continually having to get more it's been the best way to date of promoting the forum. Also we have had a complete re-vamp of PIPS, it was really great to co-produce with our parent reps the pull up's and the leaflets. It has all given us a new fresh look and much needed and something that is time consuming we never thought we would have the time with doing all the SEND reforms but we did and are proud of what we have done. Information day – We had more parents than ever attend this years event, every year gets better and bigger. Membership Pack - PIPS have never had the time or capacity to even think about a membership pack since we started years ago. This really made us think what do families need and want to know. Successful Training Days – We have had the most successful training days this year with a significant number of people attending and so pleased to see so many parents and professionals come together in one room training and working together Working with CCG - We have much more stronger links with the CCG and asked to attend many more meetings and start to embedded the forum in</p>



	<p>health meetings</p> <p>IAS Service - PIPS have built up over the year a strong partnership with the local organisation and we are now signing a co-production agreement and seeing how we can work in complete partnership to make it easier for families in Stockport to be more informed and empowered.</p> <p>Mission/vision – For the first time in five years we found the time to look at our mission and vision which was so out of date and has empowered us to move forward.</p> <p>Complete re-launch of parent forum – Due to issues the forum had it actually gave us the opportunity to completely look at PIPS and spend time coming together with our reps and re design and review what we do as a forum together. It also made us go back to basics as it is really important to remember why we started the forum and our goals/aspiration for the future. Everything now feels fresh and new to us.</p> <p>Co-Production of Policies and Documents – We are so proud to have co-produced Stockport’s EHC Plans, Personal Budget Policy, Joint Commissioning Strategy, EHC Satisfaction Survey, Communications, training and much more. This work has been really important to us as we feel that we have been valued and listened to in shaping these new areas of work locally and we have gained so much more respect from LA professionals and now they really want to involve us.</p>
Hampshire	<p>Short Break cuts prevented and good relationships maintained.</p> <p>Move to CIO and new strategy/direction for the forum to ensure sustainability</p> <p>Very smooth transfer from previous Chair to new Chair, with constant support and advice when needed, excellent communication channels and freedom to start moving HPCN to the next stage of development without criticism or interference</p>
Medway	<p>Despite challenges Medway still has an active forum.</p> <p>Medway Parent Carer Forum is still parent led and independent.</p> <p>The forum had a well-attended AGM, and growing attendance at events.</p> <p>The forum has had a small growth in membership.</p>
Windsor and Maidenhead	<p>Our greatest achievement is getting RBWM to extend the SEND consultation period for parents and carers from December to February and also holding two further Parent Carers consultation meetings. Held two successful extended forums in Windsor and Maidenhead on the Mental Capacity Act where a solicitor presented. The parents and carers feedback was very positive.</p>
Bracknell Forest	<p>Reignite interest from parents, new members with younger children who are willing to take on more responsibility moving forward and who are passionate about parent/carers having a voice.</p>
Buckinghamshire	<p>This has to be our coproduction relationship with the SEND team. The work relating to the SEND reforms brought an opportunity to build on previous work to fully coproduce key elements and in doing so create a foundation for the future where it is clear that coproduction does produce better, more rounded outcomes. This has now been seen by other parties relating to the support of children and young people with SEND and so we were asked to be involved in the re-commissioning of CAMHS where we had a full and active part in the process.</p>



West Sussex	Participative skills and learning for parents in schools, Interacting with College Parents, PACE which goes from strength to strength, Interaction with GP surgery which could be a successful model to replicate.
SLOUGH	We as a forum believe our greatest achievements came from the reforms, co-producing more or less all that came from them with the forum in demand although it was a very busy time almost hectic for most of that time we were involved throughout. Parent/carers from our wider group were consulted almost on a weekly basis and the committee then took this back to that relevant steering group. It was rewarding when it calmed down from 1/9/14 knowing that we did all we could and more to help shape the reforms for all our members and their children & young people, we were listened to, and heard and felt we had made a difference.
Wokingham	Improved working relationship with the Local Authority Running the Children with Additional Needs (CAN) day for the Local Authority. Co-producing the SEND reforms with the Local Authority.
Kent	Being given a seat on the children health and wellbeing sub board chaired by a corporate director. Successfully hosting 2 well attended information days and engaging with a number of hard to reach families who were able to access support and advice at this event.
READING	We obtained a grant from Reading Borough Council to fund a self-employed administrator to set up Facebook, manage our website and do our bookkeeping. We have been involved in co-producing services and are well-supported by local service providers. Service providers have willingly given up their evenings to meet parent carers and parent carers are having a voice in planning services. Have had 3 self-employed contractors but are now in the processing of appointing our first member of staff. We are about to apply for CIO status, with 5 trustees agreed so far and arrangements in place to have a wider membership with voting rights
Brighton and Hove	PaCC's dialogue and involvement in the Council's budget cut proposals has had the effect of reducing the potential hit to frontline respite services. Also PaCC Reps' involvement in the big SEND Review that's taking place locally has been viewed as very helpful and positive. We have been developing some really strong working relationships and engaging in constructive dialogue and challenge with key senior managers for instance the PaCC has input to the local authority's consultation on their new home-school transport policy. The PaCC's research and reporting of parent carer views about CAMHS has directly led to the new CCG commissioner undertaking a new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) looking at the provision of mental health services for children and young people in the city. Finally a greater number of steering group members and parent reps have become more involved with running PaCC subgroups/projects (e.g. planning newsletter content, organising PaCCConnect focus groups, developing the PaCC Calendar, running the PaCC Awards)
Portsmouth	The input we have had throughout the SEND Reform process, and being able to say we were proactively involved each step of the way culminating in the Minister's visit where PPV members were questioned directly about what had happened locally.



Milton Keynes	<p>We have almost completed the home/school Transport DVD. The opinions of PACA members are continually sought after by decision makers and PACA has a higher profile. Attendance at more information events. Involvement in the SEND reforms and developing the EHC Plan paperwork and processes. Being involved in meetings with DfE and parents opinions sought. Organising the SEND Information Day in collaboration with MK SEND IAS and with help from our colleagues in the Independent Support project. Increased opportunities to have influence: Health representative on the PACA Steering Group, CAMHS Project Board, Carers Partnership Board. Increased membership</p>
East Sussex	<p>Our events programme to increase membership Establishing of Reward and Recognition policy with ESCC and CCG's Continued to develop and improve effective information routes to parents and carers in order to increase parent knowledge, confidence and future participation. Continued to increase participation, consultation and co-production opportunities to enable the parent voice to be strong.</p>
Oxfordshire	<p>Through varied elements of our work over the past two years professionals actively approach us to work together. We have tripled our forum in the last year.</p>
South West	
Isles of Scilly	<p>The first forum meeting had 4 parents! First piece of consultation- school</p>
Swindon	<p>Greatest achievements Housing – resulted in a wider understanding and queries about the future for our disabled young adults. It has raised our awareness and profile with numerous professionals and parent carers. Our housing event is being replicated in the exact same format by Swindon Borough Council for its professionals. SEND event – this was a very well attended event, a Solicitor shared her knowledge about the changes in the law and helping parent carers with their experiences. Making some process to link post 16 housing, independent living, employment, socialising opportunities etc for a wider understanding, smoother transition process for families and more joined up working for the professionals. Asked to run/lead the Participation and Engagement Worksteam, its objectives and deliverables monitored and directly fed into the Strategic Board. Represent parent carers at strategic level on the Strategic Board.</p> <p>New joint working and strong relationship developed with housing providers giving a wider choice for parent carers and their families. Networking has been successful and we'd like to develop this further with others such as Uplands Educational Trust, Sanctuary Housing etc to share parent carers views and aspirations for the area.</p> <p>Successful implementation of new A & E children's unit and an additional off</p>



	<p>site emergency unit have been introduced.</p> <p>Greater awareness of the group in the area parents and professionals are being referred/referring to us for help, information or signposting.</p>
Dorset	<p>Increasing our forums profile by getting into mainstream schools at their request to work with their families for them to then set up their group that we consult on key areas ie Local offer. Being invited by the Director of Children’s Services as recognition of the work we do to be part of the Children’s Trust Board and Lead and Chair the SEND Participation and Engagement Group. We are at present active members of 33 Boards /groups across Children’s and Health Services this also includes Pan Dorset Boards/groups.</p>
Plymouth, City of	<p>We take particular satisfaction from having moved beyond our core activities of the last few years towards becoming more actively involved in raising the awareness and knowledge of parent carer participation not just amongst parents, but especially amongst educators. In this way, we are building a solid foundation for the future, when parent carer participation will become a standard component of good professional practice. Our parent carer training participation events, SENCO training involvement and Post-16 facilitation have contributed greatly to our being perceived as an equal partner when working with practitioners.</p>
Wiltshire	<p>Reaching out to more families via school visits and reaching hard to reach army families; resulted in an increase in registered parent carers.</p> <p>Continued positive feedback from parent carers in response to our recent Satisfaction Survey about our SENDIS and Participation & Consultation work.</p> <p>Continuing to retain same level of funding from the LA for participation and SENDIS in the face of ever increasingly challenging financial times.</p> <p>Commissioning of ASD Youth Clubs in direct response to parent carer feedback through consultation.</p> <p>Appointment of Chair of Participation (paid role), courtesy of sustainability funding from the LA.</p> <p>WPCC having the role to provide information in the Local Offer to families who do have access to the internet.</p> <p>Meeting with Edward Timpson to highlight SEND reforms implementation and the role of parent participation in Wiltshire.</p> <p>Our consultation with parent carers and subsequent report was instrumental in shaping the service spec of a new Domiciliary Care and Sitting Service to be re-commissioned in Wiltshire to meet the needs identified by parent carers.</p> <p>We have liaised with the LA to revise the Wiltshire Short Break Scheme 2015/2016 to reflect parent carer feedback obtained through consultation. This has resulted in young people over 18 being eligible for the scheme for the first time.</p> <p>WPCC produced and distributed the Short Break Scheme 2015/ 2016 leaflet which has been revised in response to parent carer feedback through consultation. See http://www.wiltshireparentcarercouncil.co.uk/images/0/0d/Web_version_SB_Info_Leaflet_App_Form_2015-2016.pdf for an electronic copy of the leaflet.</p> <p>Consistently increasing membership numbers.</p> <p>“Thank you to all the time given by volunteers and those doing their jobs above and beyond - this is what makes difficult life circumstances feel less</p>



	isolating. Belonging to WPCC also helps me feel I am contributing not just to my own son's wellbeing, but to those coming after who are just getting their diagnoses who will now benefit from all the things we parents have lobbied, fought and advocated for". Direct quote from a parent carer responding to our 2015 Satisfaction Survey.
Bath and North East Somerset	We held a two day joint participation seminar with Bath and North East Somerset Council back in January to establish ourselves as the 'go to' parent carers forum in the county. It was attended by a large number of parents and a large number of agencies/support networks from across the region. There was even a representative from 'Wheels for All' who gave a demonstration for parents as to how their youngsters can participate in some form of cycling in the county. A young man gave a very exciting talk about how he has managed (with appropriate levels of support) to achieve far more than he was ever once expected to. He now hopes to gain meaningful employment in a local hospital in the very near future. Representatives from all levels in the Council, including the Strategic Director, People and Communities Banes Council attended, gave a presentation to parent carers and then stayed to listen to their views. The feedback from the two days from all sides, was phenomenal and together with the mutual respect that now exists between ourselves and the local authority we can hopefully go on to promote our service to parents who had not previously been aware of our existence.*
Bournemouth	Making the Forum run as effective and sufficient as possible. Letting parents become aware of the achievements of the BPCF Running Three Seminars around the sen reforms and engaging parents and carers and giving them examples of what is a EHCP, what is a personal budget, What is the Child and Family Act, Also letting parents/professional gain as much information regarding the changes of the SEND Reforms?
Somerset	Proving to our LA, Partners and parents that we are here to stay. I think what really made our day was receiving several really good compliments back from the LA and people we were in meetings with. We received a lovely card from one of the education team for our representative work at SENCO roadshows for our professional and supportive approach. Personally my greatest achievement was attracting willing, dedicated and supportive volunteers that have helped to grow this forum in months. We've gone from basically nothing, to a really good team. With out them our reputation would not have grown in the way it has. Over the year we have made some special connections with the LA, that hopefully will continue to grow and get us shaping services together. Our greatest achievement was to have made it through the year, grown in what we do, communications with our LA have grown. It has been challenging, we have challenged. I have to thank our NNPCF and Contact a family advisor for all the support they have given – without them just being there, we wouldn't have made it to where we are today. Thank you!



Gloucestershire	<p>The Parent Carer Council has built positive relationships with the local authority which has led to excellent outcomes especially regarding the SEN D reforms and the EHC Plans. Parents have been involved in developing a Co-Production Charter which the Directors of Children’s & Adults’ Services and senior politicians have signed up to and agreed should be an underlying principle to all future work. Parent Carers made a DVD funded by the Local Authority on Building Better Lives a new 10 year policy which will integrate services for adults & children across all disabilities. Through our work we have made a real difference in the design and delivery of services for disabled children and their families in Gloucestershire. We have held regular Forum meetings in each of the six localities across the county involving local parents in the planning of the Forums so that local issues could be tackled as well as county concerns. A very successful Forum was held on Carers Rights Day which was attended by over 170 carers. Over 130 new members have joined the Parent Carer Network and many of these have come from groups whose voice is seldom heard. Parents tell us they feel welcomed, supported and valued. We have forged excellent relationships with community leaders in the Eastern European, Asian, Chinese, BME, Romany and Travellers’ communities although we recognise that there is still more work to be done. We have increased our membership of the steering committee, the Parent Carer Council, and we have established an excellent mentoring service. Service providers respect and value parent carer involvement.</p>
Bristol, City of	<p>In this challenging time of financial constraints and sweeping changes to LA/NHS structures, we have managed to maintain our funding levels and representation on decision-making groups.</p> <p>Our profile remains high with both Bristol City Council and Bristol CCG continuing to value our involvement at a senior level</p> <p>We have started to remunerate our parent carer reps for the time they attend strategic meetings.</p>
West Midlands	
Sandwell	<p>Our parent voice steering group members and a small and group of forum members continue to strive for parental involvement in participation despite very little remuneration or reward.</p> <p>We applaud our parent carer representatives. Particularly those who time and time again are willing to be the voice, spreading the word about the forum and encourage others to get involved.</p> <p>We are most proud of the open the relationship we have been able to establish with the ‘establishment’. We are pushing on an open door albeit a ‘creaky’ one under the strain of the SEND Reforms being rolled out at a time of austerity.</p>
Solihull	<p>We are pleased that the Forum still exists and that we have engaged with new parents who have contributed to consultations and attended the meetings we have organised</p>
Staffordshire	<p>Developing the SPAN Transfer Toolkit App, with funding from the Big Lottery, based on feedback from parent and carers. Holding 2 information/participation events, which received very positive feedback from parents and carers. Co-Chairing SEND Reform events.</p>



Worcestershire	Actively raising awareness of changes to national legislation regarding the SEND reforms and supporting better understanding for parent carers. Raising awareness of the importance of parent participation. Maintaining an active and competent core group, in the face of significant challenges. Involvement in development and monitoring of Independent Support process in Worcestershire and co-production with Local Authority around SEND reforms.
Walsall	Parents information day at Bescot stadium with guest speaker Polly Sweeny, this had a good attendance and the attendees all took something away from the event.
Shropshire	PACC's relationship with Shropshire Council has been very positive in the last 12 months. The opportunity provided by the SEND reforms has enabled the relationship to grow and mature and the positive experience of working in partnership has established PACC as a key strategic voice in the eyes of the Council. Through working together we have learnt to trust each other and been able to have open and honest dialogue that has benefited everyone. Shropshire Council has been a key advocate of working in partnership with parent carers when discussing the SEND Reforms with other partner organisations. The development of this relationship has enabled PACC and Shropshire Council to work together on other areas of challenge such as the lack of transparency around social care decision making.
Warwickshire	Achieved Representation on all 11 Work streams working on Co-Production with WCC and partners.
Yorkshire & Humber	
North Lincolnshire	Our annual conference is always a great achievement, we had our highest number of parent/carers attending & feedback from the day was very positive with over 80 parent/carers attending the event, feedback from the Local Authority was also very positive with much praise & offers of joint events for the future. Our conference involved presentations from a variety of professionals covering all areas of SEND & a market place for further information. Invitation flyer enclosed with report. Our conference also gave us 4 parent/carers wishing to join our steering group. A great day was has by all. A great achievement is also our challenge, our steering group numbers are low yet we have continued to run & represent parents/carers views. The forum have turned round their relationship with the LA with increased professionalism & have an active presence & participation role within the LA framework.
North Yorkshire	Greatest achievement has been increasing the membership of parent carers from 236 to 755 by securing funding from NYCC to fund the Max card. This has raised our profile with parent carers across the county. Our parent carers have access to over 700+ UK attractions and receive regular information from us, a quarterly newsletter, details of consultations e.g. Short Breaks, invitations to take part in parent focus groups with the county council e.g. an accessible Local Offer. Also the LA agreeing to implement a Disability Register after we had raised this as an issue; we will work with them on this.
BRADFORD	Learning from our mistakes as an organisation and being patient in co-production.



<p>North East Lincolnshire</p>	<p>1/ The SEN Newsletter, has been a great accomplishment, where the Forum was involved from the start, including the following aspects;- -discussions with head of the LEA /SERCO, to sell the idea -researching other areas/regions newsletter -establishing whom should be involved, then influencing them! -persuading the L/A to fund it out of the SEN STRATEGY GRANT FUND -obtaining articles from other organisations -setting up an Editorial Team -building solid relationship with the SENDIASS team whom co-produce and assist us with the administration and co-ordination of it all, as well as distribution. 2/ Establishing, and Chairing the Children’s Autism Board. The Forum was the leading partner to co-ordinate establishing the Children’s Autism Board . This was done with full support and guidance from the Health Lead CCG nurse and the DCO. We invited the CCG Lead , from Doncaster, whom was responsible for commissioning and launching the New National Autism Strategy Pathfinder to give a presentation to our colleagues. This has been crucial in enabling us to start identifying the foundations of a pathway here in Ne Lincs, in which the Forum are fundamental in developing. The Forum has extensively approached all areas from education health and care 0-25. To be recognised as experts of our children, their needs and that our opinions count and are acted upon is rewarding within itself.</p>
<p>Rotherham</p>	<p>Move into our own offices, Service Level Agreements negotiated with CCG and RMBC which have significantly increased our income for this year and the highlight of the year was our very successful Health Conference which has received very positive feedback from all who attended. All of this has resulted in more families experiencing better outcomes</p>
<p>East Riding Of Yorkshire</p>	<p>Reaching more parents in rurally isolated and socially deprived areas. Securing funding for a Participation Worker. Having ERVIP reps on all the main SEND task groups.</p>
<p>Kirklees</p>	<p>Our greatest achievements have been: Getting onto the Disabled Children’s Strategy Group – a very important strategic group in Kirklees. The excellent working relationships that have been built with senior managers in education and social care – PCAN representatives have been seen as true partners and are fully included. PCAN’s input into the Carer’s Strategy Group – raising awareness about parent carers for whom there is currently no service – this is now under review. The way that parents’ views have been welcomed by all the managers we are working with</p>
<p>Wakefield</p>	<p>The forums greatest achievements this year are we successfully held and funded a second market place event which had grown in attendance from the previous year, meaning we had more contact with local families. We have successfully developed the Wakefield people’s charter embedding valuing parents and working together. There is currently a planned launch of the charter with the lord mayor of Wakefield. The forums parent course a day in my shoes course has been our greatest achievement and parents have become more engaged and more resilient.</p>



Sheffield	<p>Published a report about our survey of 320 parent carers</p> <p>Provided information about the SEND reforms to a large number of parents, through our conference, Code of Practice information sessions, Parents' Code of Practice booklets, and our own guide "What parents need to know about the SEN and disability reforms"</p> <p>Reached an important milestone by signing up our 1,000th member</p>
Kingston upon Hull, City of	<p>The forum has had a very busy and active year. Parents have remained engaged and attendance at forum meetings has been very consistent.</p> <p>Parents have also been willing to engage with a number of focus groups and consultations and have shared their views to practitioners across health, education and social care as part of a staff training programme for the SEND reforms</p>



Area	Challenges
East Midlands	
Leicestershire	Internal difficulties.
Lincolnshire	<p>One of our greatest challenges we have faced during the year was trying to change people’s attitudes and their way of working to bring about co production that is not just tokenistic.</p> <p>The huge amount of meetings meant a drain on our capacity as a forum and a challenge to volunteers to balance the meetings with their own family caring issues.</p> <p>Challenges surrounding the timing of meetings. We would not have been able to fund the extra parent carer expenses to attend the additional meetings if we had not been successful in securing the Discretionary Grant. The Local Authority gave us no additional funding from their extra SEN money even when we asked specifically about this.</p> <p>Challenges surrounding the LA’s lack of engagement of children and young people.</p> <p>The challenges of living in a rural community e.g transport issues, deprivation etc</p> <p>Being told that our LA funding was going to be cut half way through next year.</p>
Northamptonshire	<p>Sustainability – parent carers had to step back when their children’s health deteriorated. This left a few core members to cover a vast amount of work stream meetings as well as the administration of the group. On top of this was the workload of organising the NPFGE events.</p> <p>Website – we had to face technical challenges when our email was hacked and our website hosting company was uncooperative.</p> <p>It seems our biggest success is now our biggest challenge – the demand for participation has increased and the availability of NPFGE reps has decreased.</p>
Rutland	<p>Keeping abreast of all the changes that was going on e.g. SEND Reform & Care Act, keeping up with all the emails received, recruiting new Steering Group members that have young children and delegating the work load. But the hardest was making the decision to let our admin assistant go as we were unable to find suitable work that she could do independently</p>
Nottingham, City of	<p>Finding the time as parent carers to complete and submit the Big Lottery Reaching Communities and run a forum on a shoe string was a massive challenge and I do not understand why the DfE £15,0000 grant is deemed sufficient. It adds insult to injury.</p>
Derby, City of	<p>Recruitment of volunteers</p> <p>Loss of direction</p> <p>Administration support and management</p>
Derbyshire	<p>Our greatest challenge has been the commitment of parents, who are often under stress and busy, being able to arrange meetings that are suitable, for parents to attend both as a management group and across Derbyshire.</p> <p>Engaging parents in the Derbyshire geography can be difficult as there are no central places that all parents find easy to access, the often means running 15 meeting across the county on the same issues to ensure everyone can participate. The demands on the coordinator are high.</p>



Nottinghamshire	Recruiting a new Chair. Losing ½ of the NPH Co-ordinators at APTCOO. This impacted on the ability of the forum to deliver some of its outputs, in particular, training and development, and a celebration event. Both of which are something which the forum still aspires to achieve but time and capacity to plan and deliver were stretched due to other commitments. Managing parent carer expectations when it came to expenses and being very clear about what can/cannot be claimed.
Peterborough, City of	A flip side of the success of the forum is that the increase in demand on FVP to be involved in new and emerging work in LA and Health sector.
Cambridgeshire	Our greatest challenges in 2014/15 were getting set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with our own bank account, policies, etc., losing and appointing a new Chief Executive Officer, being understaffed for a few months, getting a response to parents' issues on bullying, challenging local services on CAMHS by going directly to MP's and continuing to keep parents engaged when services are slow to change e.g. continence
Central Bedfordshire	Our greatest challenge continues to be engaging with Health providers. Our level of engagement with our local CCG and Health professionals does not match our engagement with the Local Authority.
Hertfordshire	Getting the LA to acknowledge the issues for children and families around the way that the Conversion process for EHCPs is being done. 2. Coping with the level of demand for parent rep time placed on the forum.
Luton	Greatest challenge has been to coproduce the Personal Budgets information for parents; it is something we are still pushing the LA to complete. We fear that the work around converting statements to EHC-plans has placed this work stream on the back burner. We will keep pushing for this to happen.
Essex	FACE has enjoyed a relatively benign and supportive relationship with the Short Breaks team for over 5 years since the inception of Aiming High. Over the last 12 months this team has changed in personnel and a different approach has been adopted. This has led to various challenges from our views being sort and then ignored, a threat to FACE funding, ongoing difficulties with the FACE involvement with Short Breaks recommissioning and various other complications. These matters are not fully resolved and we move into 2015/16 with work to be done with this critical relationship.
Thurrock	Overcoming initial parent carer scepticism of joining the forum especially as there had been a number of previous attempts at parent carer participation in Thurrock. Developing the steering group whilst faced with a number of passionate and different personalities and learning to work together.
Norfolk	The key challenge has been in attempting to bring about real co-production, especially hampered by the ever changing workforce and the 'decision blight' that has been caused by yet another LA reorganisation.
Southend on Sea	Because our Monitoring was late and the resulting argument over whether we were going to be allowed to continue or not, the Grant finally arriving in December, we could not really plan ahead. So to have achieved anything is amazing, mainly due to the determination of the Steering Group to keep the forums respect by the LA and service providers intact.
Suffolk	The SEND reforms have been a massive piece of work for our small network and we have struggled with our capacity to manage this.



London	
Kensington & Chelsea	<p>The timescales of the implementation of the Children and Families Act and the level of work expected from forums is irrational.</p> <p>The lack of understanding of what it actually takes to implement the Act on the ground in terms of staffing, training etc is irrational.</p> <p>Despite the Parent Participation Agenda instigated by the DFE it appears there is a lack of knowledge of what it actually takes to develop and manage a parent forum.</p>
Havering	<p>Parents not wanting to get involved in the work of the forum. It is very hard to get parents to join our committee or attend meetings even when the issues affect them – they seem happy to moan about services but don't want to do something to actually make changes.</p> <p>Parents are happy to leave the existing committee to get on with it which is leading to extremely tired demoralised parents running the group.</p> <p>The workload associated with the SEND Reforms and needing to be informed about the changes so that the information can be related back to parents. The time taken has not allowed the forum to do half of the activities that we would have liked to do and another group has formed within the borough which may make getting parents involved with us more difficult.</p>
Sutton	<p>Impact of Central Government continuing funding cuts on staff; restructuring of services to save more money and staff leaving or being made redundant.</p> <p>Impact of these cuts on services for disabled cyp . Continuing problem with Sutton IASS re referrals to us for IS and timing of their meetings to allow parent participation from the PCF</p>
Haringey	<p>It remains a challenge to keep a strong Steering Group running well as we face additional pressures and commitments as carers and workers. Balancing these commitments is sometimes very challenging and in some cases members have left the group which creates a demand for further recruitment and induction of new members. The level of consultation and meaningful co-production from the Local Authority has been minimal. We want to see an increase in the amount we are involved in decision making and policy development.</p>
Ealing	<p>Keeping going for another year. Like many other forums we are always at risk of imploding as a result of key active members leaving and not being easily replaced.</p> <p>Increasing the number of our members and developing more “active members”.</p> <p>The difficulty of planning events in advance and responding to the very short notice requests for meetings/workshops by our LA.</p>
Camden	<p>There continues to be a great deal of frustration that parents are constantly being asked for feedback but find it difficult to see this feedback being used in a positive way to affect change in the Local authority. This is further exacerbated by the financial challenge that Camden is facing.</p>
Hillingdon	<p>The greatest challenges were finding enough people to cover the hours needed at the local authority on all the different working streams. We found it incredibly hard to carry out the time consuming plans of the events expected to run. We have also found the budget a challenge as with the increased amount of participation needed from parents our admin costs had grown.</p>



Lewisham	Preparing to become a charity, getting feedback from parents and carers for the Local Offer in Lewisham, frustration in waiting for the local authority to get going on the Local Offer. Thinking about future funding.
Southwark	The SEND workstreams did not utilise parents as much as they could have, many parents did not attend one workstream meeting. Those that did have the opportunity to get involved some meetings were set at times that were not good for parents and meetings were cancelled without parents knowledge, there was a general lack of communication.
Barking & Dagenham	Trying to engage health service providers
Hammersmith & Fulham	The funding for the Coordinator post was the greatest challenge, the coordinator was funded through the Third Sector Investment Fund, but thanks to the intervention of parents, councillors and the local authority, the funding was partly restored through the Third Sector. We are working towards a more sustainable model of funding for the forum with the local authority as the current structure of working within HF Mencap but being independent in expressing views of parents has worked very well so far
Islington	To ensure that the voices of all parents who attend the various forums are heard.
Westminster, City of	Our greatest challenge this year has been the high workload of meetings for particularly our Chair but also our Vice Chair due to all the meetings regarding the EHC plans and local offer. For example at times our Chair was required to attend 2-3 meetings with professionals per week plus supporting WPPG meetings. Our new structure (with more role sharing between Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary) should resolve this challenge in 2015 / 2016. We are still finding it challenging to reach parents (particularly women) from diverse BME backgrounds and will be focuses on this in 2015 / 2016.
Barnet	<i>The BPCF is keen to engage with a wide range of parents but has not been able to do that until some essential infrastructure is in place.</i>
Croydon	The biggest challenge for PIP in the last year was to sustain the number of forum members and revive the forum with new parents willing to take on the representative role. We became concerned when half through the year, amidst the challenges of implementing the Children's and Families Act in Croydon, the number of parent reps had suddenly started to dwindle. This might have been partly due to a number of organisational changes at PIP, which resulted in the forum meetings being suspended for a few months, and partly due to the changes within individual family circumstances of our reps. We had to re-think our strategy and put a plan that could help us not only grow the forum membership, but sustain it in the future. With the encouragement from the CaF Advisor, we put a proposal to Croydon Council SEN department for additional funding for our forum with planned open day re-launch of the forum in October 2014. We proposed a number of various events and training opportunities to encourage Croydon parent carers to get involved and described pathways that we felt would be necessary to re-create a strong forum. Our proposal was met with approval and a new, part-time post of the Parent Forum Development Worker has now been created. We are truly happy to have been able to offer employment to a local parent carer.



	<p>The other challenge is to ensure that the parent participation in Croydon is meaningful and effective and that parent carers do not become disheartened by the slow progress of changes. This is an ongoing worry and we hope that the government's drive towards co-production and its tangible results will positively alter the culture and expectations across the board. This is, however, to be seen, so far our perception is that most of the positive impact has come to a halt.</p>
Wandsworth	<p>Having to respond to the demands that the SEND reforms have put on the forum and the associated effects e.g. increase in parents leaving the steering group, lack of capacity to focus on non- SEND reform issues and forum business. Understanding all of the implications of the reforms.</p>
Kingston upon Thames	<p>The merger of Kingston and Richmond local services through the formation of a new legal entity Achieving for children' continues to colour the nature of the forums activity. Considerable effort has gone in to working alongside the new organisation to ensure that parents views are reflected - with variable success. In order to mirror the new organisation that we must work with, LEAD has forged stronger links with parents from the Richmond area. Here too there are challenges as there are multiple forums and stakeholder groups within Richmond.</p>
Hounslow	<p>Getting more people involved in managing the forum. Finding times when we can all get together because we are all involved with other activities. Running the HPCF – It would have helped to have been handed a booklet to read right from the beginning. I didn't know it existed for the first few months.</p>
Harrow	<p>Unfortunately, the intensive nature of the implementation of the SEND Reforms has been a major burden on the majority of the steering group members. We did not have time to really capitalise on the momentum we had worked towards in attracting new members. Without time to nurture, transfer skills and experiences, valuable knowledge of the participation work is lost. We had begun to fill the necessary skill sets we needed to becoming a stronger forum. What became even clearer this year is the need for a pan disability, parent led, support group in Harrow. ADHD and Autism has a dedicated group in Harrow. The support needs has hindered our ability to recruit parents to concentrate on participation. We are concerned that the continuing cuts in various support services and benefits will further burden the progress of the forum.</p>
Bexley	<p>Managing Workloads – we are a very small team and as such have been under considerable pressure to maintain the high standard of output that we have achieved to date. The Committee has decided that the forum needs two part time paid staff in 2015/6 to ensure that the essential work is completed by deadlines and strategic meetings are attended.</p>
Newham	<p>Having to end our forum so the local authority gets it's act together and support parents who play key roles on the forum</p>
North East*	



Cumbria	Cumbria is a very large county it can take 3 hours to travel end to end and trying to bring together a countywide steering group has not been without it's challenges and we are yet to get locality representation from every locality on the steering group despite increasing the number of individuals engaged with the work of the forum.
North West	
Blackpool	Introducing new parents to the principles and purpose of the forum.
Trafford	Greatest challenges for the forum would have to be personal barriers, attitude, perception and the unpredictability of forced changes out of our control i.e. budget cuts. All of which we have hit head on and dealt with resourcefulness, courage, open-mindedness, and above all conviction.
Liverpool	The greatest challenges that we had this year was getting parents to not just come and share experiences and have a coffee, but to get them involved as part of the Steering Group and gaining more knowledge for the forum
Sefton	Budget cuts/ new forum/ past reputation re building relationships and confidence between ourselves and the LA Finding other mediums of communication with parents to widen our reach
Blackburn with Darwen	Engaging with the local authority Gaining parents trust
Warrington	To get beyond participation as a "tick box" exercise – for example the Local Authority showing us a 'completed' document before publication, then considering that this means that they have actually consulted with parents and carers. We are working hard to instil the culture of co-operation that is needed for effective participation and have had a number of really positive conversations with strategic leads in recent weeks.
Rochdale	Our chairperson and very active member of the Forum left us in order to persue a career in politics, meaning she was unable to be involved with us at all due to a conflict of interest. This stretched our limited capacity to breaking point. The growing reputation of the Forum has led to a significant numbers of requests for input on policy development but most of our parent volunteers do not yet feel able to represent the Forum in this way. The short break tendering process left many families very unhappy this year due to a new procurement process which led to families views not being an integral part of the scoring, with the result that some of the most valued provisions were not successful in securing funding. This has led to parents feeling their views are not listened to or valued in any way and they are now unwilling to take part in further consultation or co-production opportunities.
St Helens	Listen 4 Change struggled in the early part of the year to move the relationship with the Local Authority from information sharing and consultation to participation. The Steering Group attempts to get parents involved at a strategic level



Lancashire	Moving to full independence at a time when the expectations on the forum were greater than ever. We have virtually started from scratch as a new forum when drastic cuts to the LA budget have led to proposals that will cut and alter the services available to our families. At the same time the LA is undergoing radical transformation and key people with whom we have had strong working relationships have left or are proposing to leave within the coming year. We are having to develop new relationships whilst at the same time challenge the LA about their budget proposals through these new personnel.
Halton	All 3 co-ordinators within the year felt that the number of hours allocated weekly (7) was not enough to complete the tasks involved in developing the group, we will need to look at increasing the number of hours weekly to resolve this.
North Somerset	Finding the right people who were committed to the aim of the forum in order to take in forward into the future. Also ensuring that we had a good and balance relationship with the Local Authority that will be supportive of the work of the forum in the future. This has had to be fully discussed and renegotiated in order to ensure that OVC are seen as an equal and important partner in the future.
Oldham	As a large and growing forum, our biggest challenge remains resources, both in terms of capacity and financing. Whilst recognised for the great work we do, there are so many untapped opportunities to seek parent participation locally and we need the continuity of funds to enable us to plan forward. The yearly gap between year-end and new year funding means we are unable to retain our administrator, which provides inconsistency as we have no other funding stream to enable this. We need to think longer term. Also as needs change we really need greater flexibility in moving grant spend to meet needs and not being prescriptively tied to a plan from 12 months previously.
Cheshire East	Although we have had a large increase of members this year there are still not enough parents who are willing to be involved at a higher level. This means that the officer roles and attending strategic meetings are still falling on the same small number of parents which can lead to them feel overwhelmed and burnt out. We have not had a presence on many of the strategic boards in the area purely because there are not enough members willing to do this. We are aware of this weakness and increasing our input on these boards will be a goal for the coming year. Again our lack of members willing participate at a higher level means that we have been unable to attend the regional and national forum events which would have been useful for us. This coupled with the distance and our caring responsibilities has meant we have not been as involved here as we would like to be. Finally although we have started to reach out to harder to reach parent carers this is still an area in which we need to develop. We are hopeful that the new membership secretary will develop this area for us going forward.
Wigan	The main challenge faced by the Participation Group has been around engaging with new council staff because of structural changes within the Council Every time there are changes we have to build new relationships especially at service manager level.



<p>STOCKPORT</p>	<p>Changes in key personnel – The Co-Chairs have had to deal with a significant changes to the steering group in a short period of time. This was stressful, time consuming and also had to deal with a fallout of a couple of resignations which created a number of issues that we had to deal with in a professional manner</p> <p>Capacity – Due to the intensity of the Children & Families Act 2014 and the Code of Practice implementation as a forum we have found this has significantly increased our involvement. This has meant that as parent representative’s it is becoming full time roles, without the proper recognition. This is hard to sustain without receiving a significant amount more of funding to be able to support the SEND reforms and true consultations. We have found it difficult to gain new attendees at coffee mornings this has been an impact from our capacity issues, so we are trying something different as of the last couple of months by doing drop ins across Stockport in coffee shops.</p> <p>Mental Capacity & Wellbeing of the Steering Group – Due to the changes and capacity issues highlighted above this has impacted on the parent carer representatives. It has caused the following; stress, tiredness, low self-esteem, working long hours, not feeling valued which had caused impact on other health issues.</p> <p>Dynamics of the Steering Group, inappropriate behaviour of parent reps, understanding the role of being a rep – At the beginning of the year we had new parent representatives who became steering group officers. These representatives created a new direction of the forum which was not participation and due to the capacity issues we had it continued for a while and they created their own personal agendas. This had a major impact on the rest of the Steering Group and also PIPS as a forum in trying to manage the situations. Thankfully after support from Contact a Family and the dedication of our long standing officers we have turned it around now and have a new revamped forum.</p> <p>Engagement of the wider membership – Due to PIPS being heavily involved in the SEND Reforms this has proven difficult to find the time to give quality time to reach a wider membership. We only have time to do this currently via coffee mornings, newsletters, events and social media, no dedicated time to spend on this which is something we need to change next year.</p> <p>Funding – As PIPS is a large parent carer forum we are finding it extremely difficult to run the forum on this amount of funding. Also Local Authority Funding is not being guaranteed for this next year as previous year’s commitment. We are that well established we are getting request for other work and we need to think about how we can sustain this for the next 12 months</p> <p>Sustainability of PIPS Forum – We are very aware of the time limitations on our current funding streams and with having no capacity we have not been able to dedicate significant time to look at models for our future sustainability which is critical to us surviving as a forum in the future</p> <p>Co-production with professionals & Workforce Development – Co-Production with professionals is still very patchy and has taken a significant step back since the 1st September 2014. This is due to the fact professionals believe it is not important anymore and they are just getting on with it in. Also there has been a large number of LA staff that have left or been redeployed. There has been a noticeable area has been the workforce development where the lead will not engage in co-production with the forum. Post 16 – There has been no</p>
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	<p>work stream since June 2014, the report that the consultant Stockport Council employed has said we are 18months behind. We have raised continually our concerns and so have many other services and organisations in Stockport. There has been a lack of cohesive leadership on this workstream.</p> <p>Cuts to Local Authority Services – Stockport have made cuts to Short breaks by 25%, Educational Psychology, Early Years, Speech and Language, Children’s Occupational Therapy, Transport, ASD Services. We are seeing a significant impact on families now in Stockport and we are getting more requests for support in challenging these cuts. Also families hitting crisis that we have to speak to and signpost for the relevant support.</p> <p>SEND Reforms & Care Act – These are the biggest reforms to date and of course have been very challenging to implement and work alongside the local authority. We have a large number of families that now come under the Care Act as well which has not been co-produced locally at all and a lack of information for families which then has impacted on ourselves. Families find it hard to understand why they come under the Care Act when the SEND Reforms are a 0-25 Agenda and there is barely any info on the crossover of the two Acts which worries families and are now contacting us for information as no one else is providing it. This then causes more capacity issues for ourselves</p> <p>Office Accommodation – As PIPS has grown into a well-established organisation it is becoming increasingly difficult to run the parent carer forum from our own individual homes. We urgently need office space to bring us altogether so we can work more effectively, paperwork and records all in one place. Also it will give us an air of more professionalism and we would be able to look at more funding opportunities</p>
Bolton	Starting life as seven groups and growing to 17. Trying to ensure appropriate communication exists between all the Organisations.
Salford	The forum has had a very challenging year, we have moved premises twice (both times at very short notice), lost our admin support, we have struggled to find suitable and affordable venues for our meetings. We have tried to engage with the LA and have struggled at times to get them to respond to our emails and phone calls. When we have given various dates for meetings they have not been able to accommodate us even though they have been given plenty of notice.
South East	
Southampton	Our greatest challenge was to keep our motivation and momentum due to internal re-structuration and staff changes within Southampton City Council.
West Berkshire	Getting a presence and establishing ourselves in a rural location, having a website from a previous parent voice still active whilst we were launching our own. Overcoming apathy from parents in relation to their previous experience with the council in previous consultations which we have had to overcome.



Hampshire	<p>1. Lack of time/committed volunteers to run the forum when still significant workload to be done</p> <p>2. Bringing parents up to speed when joining new workstreams/covering for parents when a lot of work has already taken place.</p> <p>3. Loss of experienced committee members:</p> <p>The above factors put HPCN in to a forced position of being reactive rather than proactive. Much time was spent evaluating where we were and where HPCN needed to go. Whilst it was extremely time consuming, it was imperative this work was done in order to ensure HPCN had a clear strategy going forward, but also, crucially, who was going to be onboard to help with the workload. The time spent on this had a direct impact on our planned deliverables, such as Events and Participation training, hence the significant underspends in these areas.</p> <p>Having a paid Participation co-ordinator in place was crucial to ensuring the parent reps had all the information they needed in order for them to participate effectively in external meetings, whilst also ensuring we obtained their post-meeting feedback as many workstreams overlap to some degree and so information sharing is essential. The Participation Co-ordinator has also been working on devising a training pack and a new members pack so that we can deliver as planned during 2015/16.</p>
Medway	<p>Recruiting /retaining active parents.</p> <p>Motivating parents in continue to sharing their views</p> <p>Personnel changes in local authority.</p> <p>Educating busy parents on the importance of the SEND reforms.</p> <p>Understanding participation across the board with the LA and Health.</p> <p>Influencing a change in thinking towards coproduction</p>
Windsor and Maidenhead	<p>Change in committee members. Getting parent carers to actually join-initial interest is shown and then when the time comes, they do not want to get further involved. Trying to get a real working relationship with health. Finding the time to implement the many ideas that we have.</p>
Bracknell Forest	<p>Persuading existing parents to be more proactive</p>
Buckinghamshire	<p>Whilst the opportunities for coproduction and consultation increase, we have found it difficult to locate individuals willing to be trained and commit sufficient time to participate in these opportunities. We can attract parents to engage in one off activities, information sessions etc but not to longer term roles. We have a core of members who are engaged in this manner but meeting all the opportunities and our own aspirations is a significant challenge necessitating decisions about priorities.</p>
West Sussex	<p>Enrolling, nurturing and sustaining a healthy parent rep population, enrolling parents to the SG, trying to balance parent participation and actively support the local authority ,actively trying to embed SEND reforms, joint working between professional agencies, having enough money to pay people to be actively engaged in our work- financial pressures mean that parents need to find work elsewhere.</p>



SLOUGH	The greatest challenges have been the vast number of changing staff within the Local Authority. Relationships that have been built up over their time in post were really good then they leave and we have to start again. This we do but it takes time for them to get to know us as a Forum and build the trust that goes with it so we can contribute fully.
Wokingham	Not enough people to do all the work we wanted to do Reaching the parents who are not our members and not on the CAN database at the Local Authority No Local Authority CAN officer throughout 2014 Engaging with Health
Kent	Parental pressures meant many could not spare the time. More children out of school, more parents struggling to access services, more parents having to commit to part time work for financial pressure
READING	Volume of work is an issue at times but we have an active and very able steering group to share the workload.
Brighton and Hove	We've really struggled with finding capacity to work on the many significant issues that the parent carer community have raised as concerns; and we are running on a lot of goodwill. We also know we need to try to do more outreach to engage a wider diversity and range of parent carers in the PaCC. We have also had issues with the sustainability and workability of the existing PaCC structure and are looking at options for restructuring of the forum.
Portsmouth	The increased work load and the time constraints we have been working under against a backdrop of reductions in funding from both Social Care and Health to the Parents, children and young people we are working with and for.
Milton Keynes	The forum is busier than ever due to our involvement in the SEND Reforms. Our workload has increased resulting in less time to achieve all we want to, including organising some training events. The forum was unable to recruit parents to take on some additional support and admin roles. The SEND Information Day was a new venture for the forum and required a lot of time to plan and organise. Our original aim was to run this in February but due to circumstances beyond our control this moved to the middle of March. If we run the event again, we shall aim to do this in February next year. The month of March was very busy, we had several events to organise which included the SEND Information Day, and an office move.
East Sussex	Workload and capacity to deliver without appropriate resource of people & time Resource for communications which takes time to develop and undertake in an appropriate and effective manner. Finance: Once again the DfE/CaF grant was paid in two tranches during June & November 2014. The timing of the receipt of the grant continues to present difficulties with regard to managing our cash flow, expenditure and financial controls throughout the required 12 month period, particularly at the start and end of the financial year. Supervision of Associate members
Oxfordshire	a sustainable steering group with good leadership.
South West	
Isles of Scilly	Parent re-engagement and the small island community. Dynamics around this



	and parent carers being so cautious about their private information.
Swindon	<p>Swindon's greatest challenges</p> <p>Significant funding cuts for this year has meant an unexpected and increased workload negotiating and attending numerous planning meetings for the future. This substantial additional workload was challenging to manage alongside our commitment to represent parent carers at SEND meetings and meant PAC's planned work was postponed. This has been on-going for over 5 months, creating a lot of uncertainty for the future of PAC, its core members and the Participation Worker. Delay in releasing funds is stopping the group printing and making progress with work they have in the pipeline. It's also created a problem recruiting new active parent carers to help share the workload.</p> <p>Swindon's slow progress developing their Local Offer, listening to parent carers' feedback or user testing before implementation. SEND reform messaging has been confusing for professionals and is causing delays and progress with the implementation of new processes. Parent's experiences are being fed back to help encourage changes but progress is seems slow to filter out.</p> <p>Appointment of parent carer SEND Champions without consultation, real understanding/ appreciation of PAC and the role we have, duplication of effort.</p> <p>Health and their continued absence and lack of engagement with the SEND reforms and joint working.</p> <p>DfE questionnaire, the short time frames to consider, circulate and collate the parent carer feedback. The wording and format is unfriendly and too detailed for parent carers.</p> <p>Lack of 'active' parents involved to share the workload and protect the succession of the group.</p>
Dorset	<p>Working as successfully with Adult Services as the Care Act implemented because of the alignment of key areas. We are seeing a gradual reference to becoming involved with us as their restructuring moves forwards they are considering a one service team approach 14-25.</p> <p>Getting the voice of the Young Person 18+ to make sure that they are just as involved and have opportunities to participate.</p> <p>Working across the 3 local Authorities and trying to get a joined up approach. Keeping the momentum going as implementation beds in with restructuring of Children's and Adult Services alongside both of the reforms.</p>
Plymouth, City of	<p>We are going through a period of significant growth and professionalisation. As a Steering Group, we became aware that some changes were needed to be able to continue to manage this growth. We reviewed the way our Steering Group worked and have taken steps to make us more effective. In particular, we have revised our policies and practices, defined Steering Group roles more tightly, set clear expectations of members through a revised Code of Conduct, and distributed responsibility more evenly among the members.</p>



Wiltshire	<p>Managing an ever increasing workload and increased pressure to meet deadlines, etc. Ever growing demand for our services Plan, organise and deliver events and consultations while still managing daily demands Fitting in an ever increasing number of face to face consultations Time is always the biggest issue. It can be difficult to find the time to respond to the daily volume of emails etc. while balancing the need to be embedded in strategic meetings as part of everyday practice, AND plan, promote, organise, facilitate consultations/ surveys – and produce reports to effect change</p>
Bath and North East Somerset	<p>*Our greatest challenge is still to actively engage with new parents. We are spreading our wings further across the county and holding our 'drop in' coffee mornings in more obscure places to attract parents who have yet to hear of us. Our facilitator now has more man hours to devote to this due to the massive support we receive from both the Carers Centre and the local authority. Parents are actively signposted to our service from carers assessments but promoting the benefits of being on board with participation is still a challenge. Parents in this situation are usually looking for some level of support and it is difficult to get across to a parent in crisis that having a voice in shaping services can empower you and connect you with parents in similar positions thus providing a 'back handed' way of support. Having more leeway to promote ourselves as a supportive forum will without doubt be beneficial in getting more local parents on board.</p>
Cornwall	<p>WE feel all the work we currently do is an achievement in light of the frustrations with in local authorities. Being recognised in the county for all the work we coproduce with social care, education and actively participating in health work is a reward in itself</p>
Bournemouth	<p>Sencos are understanding more about the Forums. Health providers have more information on who the forum is about.</p> <p>Managing to meet and getting more information out via other organisations websites. Dorset Race Equality are keen to promote the forum to the hard to reach families on our behalf.</p>
Somerset	<p>In April 2014, the forum was close to folding, for the third time since 2013. We were 3 months from starting the children and families act, and had 3 months left to complete, the challenge for the LA was tuff, we had to learn so much about what was already in place and could it be ready for September. Many staff were pessimistic, staff restructuring was taking place. Parent Participation within a short time frame was difficult, we were involved in the SEND reforms and tried where possible to be supportive and challenging. It was great to be involved.</p>



Gloucestershire	The amount of work to do, the number of working parties and steering committees to attend, the infinite number of consultations & surveys to complete, the pace of change in legislation to inform and train parents about. The capacity of parent carers to fully participate whilst dealing with their caring responsibilities. The fact that parents don't get paid for their involvement which means often they will take paid employment once they have increased their skills and experience and the Parent Carer Council has to start training and mentoring new parents. The continued struggle to reach those parents who are marginalised by race, culture, language & lifestyle. The fact that some service providers still claim ignorance of the Co-production policy and only pay lip service to participation as if it is something to be endured rather than valued. The practice of Divide & Rule used by some practitioners. Insufficient funds to pay parents for their participation. Unrealistic expectations, fear of change and inability of some people to share power fairly.
Bristol, City of	Due to the LA/NHS restructuring, contacts made over many years have left and posts have been amalgamated/deleted, meaning that work streams have been postponed and organisational learning has been lost. With success, and expectation of continued improvement, the demands are increasing and parent carer volunteers are tired.
West Midlands	
Sandwell	The greatest challenge is trying to encourage greater parent carer involvement and accountability and maintaining that momentum.
Solihull	Having sufficient time as a Steering Group to set up and run the forum to the best of our abilities, whilst continuing to support our own families and other personal commitments.
Staffordshire	Having enough resources, especially people, to carry out all the tasks that were asked of us or we wanted to be involved in. During the last 12 months, the Chair resigned along with some experienced Board members.
Worcestershire	Capacity, individually and as a group. Losing members due to a change in family circumstances, maintaining a core group and ensuring the wellbeing of its members. Understanding and developing roles within the group identifying the strengths of individuals and matching to suitable roles. Increasing active participation in extended member group. Monitoring and evidencing the impact of our work
Walsall	The constant changing off staff at the authority with the majority of managers being appointed on an interim basis.



Shropshire	Enter your comments where it states 'Click here to enter text' Capacity continues to be a challenge. PACC has considerably increased the opportunities for participation but still struggles to provide reps for all engagement opportunities. There are a number of reasons for this including that while there has been a considerable culture change at a strategic level this is not always the case with front line staff. PACC continues to receive numerous reports from parent carers of poor experiences where families feel disempowered by initial contact with services and received incorrect information and poor advice. This means that engaging parent carers positively continues to be a challenge because they feel that nothing is changing. There needs to be continued investment locally and nationally in workforce development to address the barriers to participation, both on a strategic and individual basis created by a lack of knowledge and understanding of too many front line staff.
Warwickshire	Previous poor relationship with WCC
Dudley	Whilst senior leadership teams from all partnerships are signed up to the involvement of parents in coproducing services there has been some resistance from managers and frontline practitioners. Ongoing work will be done to reduce the resistance through the promotion of the forums success.
Yorkshire & Humber	
North Lincolnshire	As mentioned in our achievements, membership has been a challenge, although this has hopefully turned the corner due to a recent welcome morning with potentially new members about to join. Expanding our active membership is always a challenge, but we will keep developing this. The forum has welcomed the support from a Contact a Family associate. The forum have worked with them to develop protocols & policy's to ensure the longevity of the forum.
North Yorkshire	Engagement with health re. SEND reforms. Lack of Health input at EHC planning meetings. Complications as we work with many CCGs.
BRADFORD	Building relationships with agencies in Health
North East Lincolnshire	Building relationships with the LEA and CCG'S. We spent the last year raising our profile, status and Portfolio to enable us to be respected and viewed as an equal interest amongst our colleagues within the local authority and CCG's. This has been a continual uphill battle of steadily recognising when to push and to ensure we were visible at every key meeting an event throughout the year as well as attending team meetings presenting and raising awareness of the work the Forum did. Our approach and tactics have been successful as we now have representation on every Strategic meeting within the L/A, and meet almost weekly with all our key partners within education, health and social care.
Rotherham	This was definitely dealing with the Aftermath of the Jay Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham which has resulted in a change in Local Authority personnel and the forum having to build new relationships. This news also broke just before the SEND reforms came into effect on 1st September so obviously when the focus should have been on implementing changes around SEND, Rotherham as a town had other areas to look at too.
East Riding Of Yorkshire	Communicating and involvement with the LA, Health and Social Care. Lack of understanding of co production within the LA at all levels. Capacity to meet the needs of the forum. Travel expenses very high when reaching out to isolated



	parents.
Kirklees	Lack of resource to meet the huge expectation from the DfE about parent carer forums' involvement in so many diverse areas – illustrated by the lengthy recent SEND survey. Frustration over the timescales for such a huge reform. Trying to get face to face with meaningful health partners. Volunteers having the time to take part. Getting Trustees to steer the work of PCAN.
Wakefield	The greatest challenges have been capacity of the forum due to the demands of the changes and ensuring all families are informed. Tokenistic gesture from the local authority have been a challenge and getting them to understand the advantages of parent participation has been a challenge. Instances of press before parents have resulted in a negative effect on getting parents involved.
Sheffield	After making good progress with co-production for several years, we now seem to sliding backwards. Most of the strategic boards and workstreams we used to sit on have been discontinued, which means we were less able to influence decisions at an early stage. Although we have continued to provide lots of feedback, this doesn't seem to make any difference on the ground. Our LA appears to want to duplicate the work that we do, by setting up a "Parents' co-production group" and a register of parents willing to get involved in consultations and focus groups. We still don't know whether the LA will continue to fund our forum, which means we are unable to plan ahead.
Kingston upon Hull, City of	Time commitment has been a challenge

Those listed above are from parent carer forums who gave their permission for this information to be shared.

*In this reporting period the North East Forums took part in a pilot monitoring form and permission was not sought from them for the publication of their comments. We will be seeking permission and will update this document in due course.