

Questions from Contact a Family webinar '*First steps towards understanding and working with the health system*' with Anna Gill, Contact a Family associate, and Rachel Trueman from South Glos Parents and Carers

**Who would normally sit on a Health and Wellbeing Board locally? Could a forum have a representative there?**

Health and Wellbeing Boards were set up under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. They are quite prescriptive about who must be there, so there has to be a CCG representative, a director of children's services, the lead officer from your council for children, and Healthwatch. It is very rare for a forum to sit on a Health and Wellbeing Board, though if there are any it would be helpful to let Contact a Family know so they can write up about it for the website. However, sitting below the Health and Wellbeing Board is usually the Strategic Board for Children and Young People with SEND and forums should most definitely be at the table there. South Glos Parents and Carers work with Healthwatch South Gloucestershire, so if they had any concerns they would feed that through them.

**What are the local area inspections that were referred to during the webinar?**

Local area inspections are the SEND local area inspections, which are where the local authority and Health and all relevant partners are inspected within the area, so say that you live in South Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire area would be inspected by Ofsted and CQC. After the inspection there is a letter sent to the local area with good practice and suggestions or requirements for improvement. They're not graded in the same way that a school would be, but you will pick up a lot of information from looking at these first initial letters. They are worth taking note of because you could take them to local partners and explain that this is the sort of thing inspectors are looking at in other areas, and ask if partners are ready or if there is any way you can help them become ready (see link below)

**Did South Gloucestershire Local Authority or CCG share their draft service specification with the forum?**

The forum didn't see the draft service specification in the depth they would have liked. It is understandable that once you have put all the work in you would like to see what the specification looks like after it has been consulted on. What did happen was that the forum met with the CCG, and asked how they could know that their views had been kept in there, and the CCG did go through all the lists and the comments that they gathered from the evidence or engagement session they had run, then took the draft consultation back to make sure the comments were still a part of it. It wasn't maybe as much as the forum wanted, but it is the small steps that are important. The forum then did take part in the procurement process and did see some of the specification as they were on the panel – it was much more outcomes focused which is what the forum wanted to see.

**Would you encourage forums to ally with Healthwatch?**

Most definitely, because they do have that mandatory seat at the Health and Wellbeing Board. While some Healthwatch are very proactive about looking at children, others are not, and in some areas they have a good relationship with the forum where they say 'you concentrate more on children and we'll concentrate more on adults'. It is important to have a relationship with them due to their statutory role.

**You mentioned a health tool kit. How would we go about getting one of those?**

The Contact a Family toolkit for forums is available on the [Contact a Family website](#), and the CDC audit toolkit for CCGs is available on the [CDC website](#).

**You talk about involvement with ‘providers’ - what examples can you give of providers? (For example, would it include dentists, continence service, orthotics departments?)**

Providers are anybody who works with our young people and with us. This includes paediatricians, CAMHS, and all the different teams such as speech and language (and all those mentioned above). While South Glos Parents and Carers had good relationships with the teams, it was their commissioners or whoever was running that service that the forum struggled to engage with.

**How do we overcome the CCG lack of priority for children? We recently met with a CCG lead and were told children are not a priority due to having an ageing population.**

This is a common problem. Most CCGs aren't so blunt, or perhaps quite so honest. This is a huge issue and there are concerns nationally because children are not mentioned in the Mandate, and they are not listed specifically within the national commissioning priorities. One suggestion would be to go back and look at those ten commissioning priorities that we mentioned in the webinar, have a look at the links to those on the Kings Fund website and try and match where our children fit on what the priorities are.

<http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/articles/transforming-our-health-care-system-ten-priorities-commissioners>

**Transforming Care** isn't on the list but is of course a very important issue and a cause of great concern for the families of the young people involved. Many forums are involved with their local Transforming Care Board and are helping to get parent's voices heard. (Also the NNPCF has a representative on the national Transforming Care Delivery Board at NHS England)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/care/>

**In our local area, we have two health trusts. They have a tendency to offer ‘membership’ to specific individuals (rather than groups) to attend consultation events. One example we have received today is that they are offering training to individuals to be involved and you have to attend both sessions. Is there a way to get them to recognise forums, or any ideas of good practice examples?**

I think the problem is typical of the challenges we find in early stages of participation with new partners, and that is being taken seriously. To my mind the tips we mentioned about selling your forum in a more formal report or briefing paper as South Gloucestershire did has paid off well. Keep reminding everyone that you are government funded/strategic voice and partner /collective and pan-disability, and if all else fails wave the SEND Local Area Inspections at them as all NHS Trusts **must** have regard to the SEND Code of Practice and are part of the service delivery aspect that is inspected. Maybe this link to the inspection letters will give you some pointers as to how the inspections are being carried out:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-outcome-letters>