

Parent carer forums team up to improve health services

Forums often work with health providers in the area, and this story from Family Voice Peterborough and Pinpoint Cambridgeshire is an example of this working well. This blog was written by Louise from Family Voice Peterborough.

In the past, parent carers have reported feeling isolated, emotionally drained and fed up with experiencing difficulties trying to access local services to help their children and young people with their mental health.

Both Family Voice Peterborough and Pinpoint Cambridgeshire have a strong relationship with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and have been working for some time on a joint commissioned piece of work relating to CAMHs Transformation.

As part of this ongoing work, both forums raised what parent carers were saying in meetings and presented their evidence from families through a joint annual report. The information shared at these strategic meetings was of vital importance to parents in terms of accepting the limitations of certain services. We are in a period of austerity and when there is transparency between parties there is more likely to be a good working relationship and more engagement.

Our forums have been actively invited to join key decision making (commissioning) boards and through these had the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of co-production of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Both forums are active members of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Board and the Joint Commissioning Unit SEND Sub-Group. At these boards discussions have taken place about the transforming care group and how this includes children and young people with SEND.

As a result of the involvement of our forums, there is now a separate Children, Young People and Families Transforming Care Board in which both forums are involved and will have the opportunity to shape the work programme, include the Terms of Reference.

Co-production is occurring well at a strategic level in the local authorities and the CCG. There is good joint work with the forums and more parent carers can have their views heard through strong parent representation.

Good working relationships have been developed where professionals and parent representatives take part in open discussions and are willing to listen to one another and look for solutions that meet the needs of children and young people and their families.