

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) - Introducing yourself

First Steps

1. Find their contact details

Most local authority areas only have one clinical commissioning group but larger, rural areas and cities might have more. You can find details of clinical commissioning groups on the NHS changes section of the Contact a family website at www.cafamily.org.uk/parentcarerparticipation or alternatively search online using Google.

2. Find how you can get involved

On the clinical commissioning group's website, look for the section on user involvement. This section is often called 'Get involved' or 'Have your say'. It will contain details of how people can get involved and you might also be able to download their patient engagement strategy report.

3. Think about how your forum might fit in with their strategy for user involvement

Read their web contents and make a note of phrases they use which fit in with how your forum would like to work with them.

4. Explain how you can help them, using their language

Write a letter or email to describe how your forum can help them with patient involvement using their language (you can find an explanation of this overleaf). Assume the people you are writing to have no knowledge of disability or the services disabled children use. Mention how your forum can provide feedback from many families of disabled children who between them access a range of different services.

5. Ask to work direct with the Clinical Commissioning Group

All GP practices have patient participation boards which CCGs might suggest parents feed in their experiences to. This might be useful in gathering feedback on access to GP practices for disabled children. It will not be helpful, though, for gathering the views of families of disabled children on accessing hospital and community services, as each GP practice will only have a few disabled children registered with them.

6. Do not write lots, or ask for lots to begin with

Keep the letter brief. Ask for something that is easy for the CCG to provide, such as a short follow up meeting to explore how you might work together in the future.

7. Make use of the Contact a Family's GP practice guides

Contact a Family's GP practice guides have been developed to help GPs and CCGs understand what services disabled children use and the problems families face in taking disabled children to appointments. You could include a link to the Contact a Family GP guides at www.cafamily.org.uk/healthprofessionals. It will help to mention they have been approved by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. Ask the CCG to help you disseminate them to GPs in the area they cover.

Email: Sheila.Davies@cafamily.org.uk for printed copies of the GP practice guides.

When you get to meet the CCG, remember:

- make sure they understand you are feeding back the experiences of many families, not just your own
- simply hearing families experiences is likely to motivate them to want to bring about change
- clinical commissioning groups have only just become established and are still finding their feet
- bringing about change takes time – start with small steps that are manageable – for the forum as well as the clinical commissioning group.

Use the language of the Clinical Commissioning group

The clinical commissioning group is more likely to want to work with you if they understand how you can help them. One parent forum wrote introducing themselves using phrases taken from the CCG strategy report. The CCG replied within two days asking to meet with them. The examples below are taken from this letter:

The Clinical Commissioning group's strategy report used the following phrases:

- carry out engagement and consultation activities designed to find out **the experience and views of patients**
- to ensure **the services we commission are responsive and comprehensive, integrated** and innovative
- to **make effective use of the resources available** to us



The forum wrote:

'We would welcome the opportunity to work with you to identify and **feedback experiences and views of families with disabled children**, to help you **commission services** that are **responsive, integrated** and **make effective use of the resources available**.'

The Clinical Commissioning group's strategy report used the following phrases:

- this includes **engagement and consultation events, structured discussions (e.g. focus groups, interviews), surveys** and long-term advisory groups of patients or carers
- we recognise that **'soft' patient experience** information is often more powerful than 'hard' data.



The forum wrote:

'We would like to discuss how we could work with you as a **long-term advisory group of parent carers** to feed into the decision-making process around services for disabled children. This could be through helping you gather **'soft' patient experience, engagement and consultation events, structured discussions (e.g. focus groups, interviews) and surveys**.

Email Sheila.davies@cafamily.org.uk if you want help with this.