

NNPCF



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2019-20**

Welcome to the 2019-20 Annual Report from the National Network of Parent Carer Forums

What a year!

As parent-carers of children and young people with SEND, we are famous for our resilience – for being able to take whatever life throws at us and making it work. Parent carer forums are no different but we had little idea of what this year would hold.

It is now hard to remember what the world looked like before the Covid 19 pandemic that has impacted our families so much, but even before this, 2019-20 was a tumultuous year.

The year saw an optimistic start with an extra £700m allocated to SEND in the Autumn budget, the announcement of the SEND review and a launch of work on the NHS Long Term Plan. However, our initial optimism was soon overtaken by events as the general election and then coronavirus overwhelmed all of our plans. However, through this all, government and the NHS has continued to hear the voice of parent carers loud and clear because of your work.

During the year, although we have had four Children and Families Ministers (Nadhim Zahawi, Kemi Badenoch, Michelle Donelan and Vicky Ford), the NNPCF has met with three of them. We were only prevented from meeting with Michelle Donelan by purdah restrictions (although she did send a very warm letter to conference).

Many of you attended the conference in Chester in November – two days not easily forgotten. Despite the restrictions of purdah and flash flooding, the event was a huge success and ended with the delegates giving the SEND review team seven clear messages about what needed to change in the SEND system. Typical of the work of parent carer forums – not shying away from the dire reality of the situation for so many families but having the passion, knowledge and experience to make real suggestions about how to make things better.

The year also saw changes for the NNPCF. We set up as a Community Interest Company although the logistical challenges of Covid have prevented us from transferring our operations to the new company. We also welcomed several new steering group members and said goodbye to some who have served their terms

of office. Our thanks to all those moving on but especially, Maureen Morris, co-chair and North East Steering Group member who will be sorely missed by the whole movement.

The next few months will be difficult. We have not yet felt or understood the true impact of Covid 19 on our communities. However, work with key government departments and the NHS continues and they are increasingly recognising the strength of participation and co-production in new ways, where more forums than ever before are recognised as strategic partners.

No-one can be sure of what the future holds. We approach it with caution, not knowing fully how we as a country will recover from COVID-19, but we are sure that by working together as we have done, we will be there at the tables throughout the land representing the voices of parent carers and their families.



Tina Emery

and

Mrunal Sisodia

NNPCF Co-chairs
September 2020

A snapshot of the year



Some of the partners we have worked with this year:

Department for Education
 Department for Work and Pensions
 Department of Health and Social Care
 NHS England
 Ofsted
 British Academy of Childhood Disability
 Contact (previously known as Contact a Family)
 Delivering Better Outcomes Together
 Independent Supporters
 Local Authority
 Mott McDonald
 National Development Team for Inclusion

Special Education Consortium
 London Strategic Managers Network
 Local Government Association
 Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
 Physical Disability Network
 NASEN
 IPSEA
 The National SEND Forum
 ADCS
 Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership
 Council of Disabled Children

Introduction to the NNPCF

Our vision and mission

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) is the independent national voice of Parent Carer Forums.

Our mission is to deliver better outcomes for families living with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We aim to:

- create a culture of participation and co-production across the education, health, social care and the voluntary sectors. This means that we are involved in all aspects of designing, commissioning, delivering and reviewing services as an equal partner.
- empower our members to ensure that their voices are heard at a local, regional and national level
- inspire our partners by sharing good practice and knowledge.

Our vision is for the best possible opportunities and futures for all children and young people with SEND and their families.

Who are we?

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) is a parent carer led organisation, which has a network of 151 local Parent Carer Forums (PCFs) nationwide. Our role is to champion strategic parent participation at a local, regional and national level.

Each of the local Parent Carer Forums work within their region, and each region is represented by their National Steering Group member(s). The Steering Group is made up of ten members who are recruited with the support of their region; they represent the nine regional areas in England (with two based in London) to ensure that the collective voices of members of local Parent Carer Forums are heard at a national level by working together.

“Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families”

Para 1.13 SEND Code of Practice 2015

Meet the Steering Group



During the year, several of the NNPCF steering group stepped back from their roles after serving their terms of office and were replaced by new members from their regions to carry on their essential work.

Kay Moore completed her term as one of the London representatives and was replaced by Ros Luff who has been involved with the NNPCF as a national representative for many years. Kay remains heavily involved in the NNPCF in her role as Policy and Consultations lead.

Dave Nutting similarly completed his term of office and was replaced by Anna Norris who has been a leading light in the East Midlands for several years.

Sarah Clarke was appointed to replace Lara Roberts as our South East steering group representative. Lara continues in her role as NNPCF participation lead.

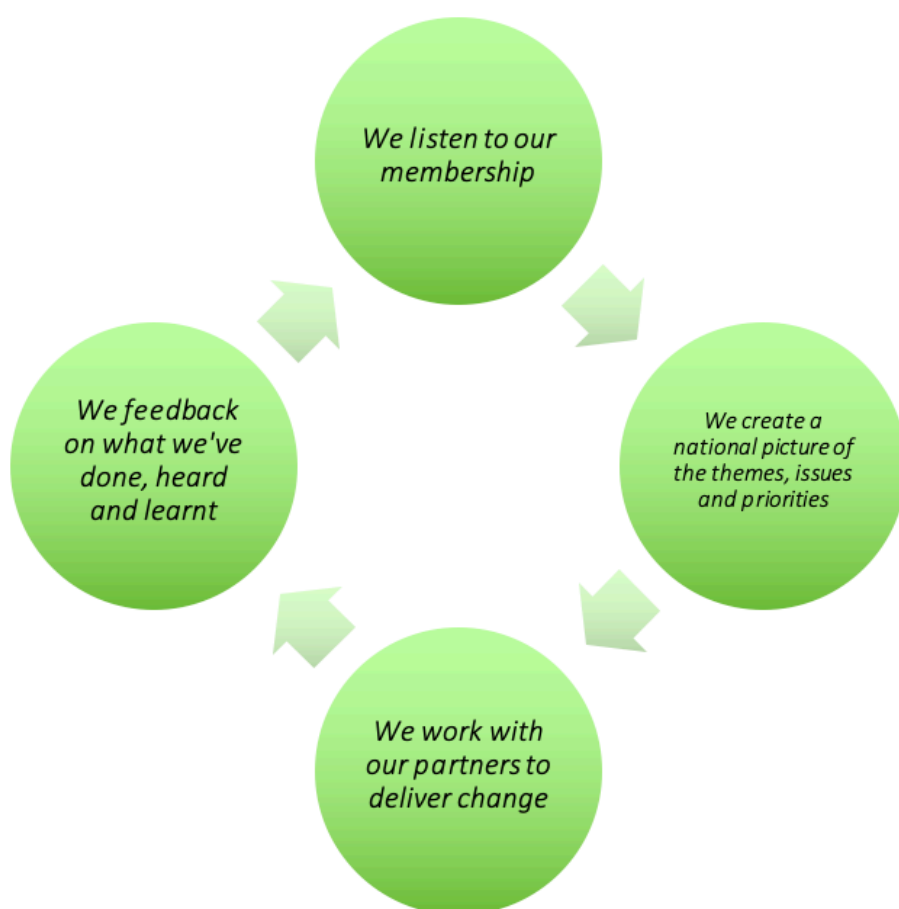
Zara Bowden and Kath Bromfield were re-appointed to their steering group roles as West Midlands and North West representatives respectively.

And finally, Maureen Morris stepped down from her role as North East regional steering group member and was replaced by Jo Gilliland. Tina Emery was elected to replace Maureen as NNPCF cochair.

You can find full profiles of our steering group members on the NNPCF website
<http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/about-the-nnpf/steering-group-members/>

What we do

We think about our work in four simple stages



Listening to our membership

The lived experiences of our members form the basis of everything we do. We use a variety of means to listen to our membership.



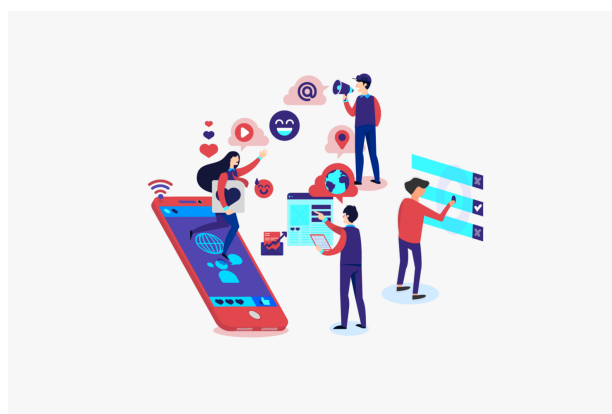
Over the course of the year the steering group and national representatives have:

- Attended 200 regional meetings, events and activities,
- conducted three member surveys,
- sought feedback on 7 consultations and calls for evidence,
- learnt from 45,000 discussions on our closed social media group,
- held a two-day national conference attended by 200 representative delegates,
- As well as talking, face to face, with thousands of parent carers.

How do we feedback?

We also use these and other activities to feedback to our members, all families with SEND and other stakeholders on the work we are doing:

- At regional meetings
- At our national conference
- Speaking at local regional and national SEND events with our partners such as at the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, the NASEN conference and the National SEND conference
- Through social media (e.g. 81 posts on our facebook page with an average reach of 84,000 per post)
- Through our website with 30 news posts and seven new pages



Our work this year

The year started promisingly

The first half of the year saw some exciting developments in the world of SEND, and the NNPCF approached it with some optimism that many of our key messages were being heard and action was being taken:

- Our messages that the SEND system and schools need more money were heard with an extra £700m for SEND announced by the Chancellor in September.
- We argued that the sector needed more senior, cross governmental leadership and priority. As a result, the SEND system leadership board was set up and a review of the SEND system was announced by the government.
- The NHS Long term plan was launched with much that is good and necessary for children and young people with SEND and their families.
- The new Ofsted school inspection framework placed much greater emphasis on schools being inclusive.
- We have championed co-production with a wider group of partners than ever before. During the year NNPCF representatives worked with organisation such as NASEN, the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists to promote coproduction with families and parent carer forums.

However, events rapidly derailed any meaningful progress

Despite these positive developments, little progress has been made during the year.

Firstly, the snap general election effectively put a halt to meaningful work on the major government initiatives such as the SEND review as civil servants, NHS leaders and inspectors were constrained in their activities during purdah. After the election there was a second period of uncertainty as the new government formed and set about laying out its priorities and programme of work. The simplest way of illustrating this period of flux is to remember that between July 2019 and January 2020 we have had four different Children and Families Ministers.

Just as we emerged from this period of uncertainty, the world was consumed by the Covid 19 pandemic.

For families of children and young people with SEND, it has been even more difficult with many of our children more effected by lockdown and most of the services we rely on simply not available. The inability of many local areas to coproduce with families on EHCP risk assessments and coronavirus act easements and the lack of meaningful respite care during this period has meant that, despite our work, the experience for many families with SEND has been incredibly difficult.

However, the reputation and influence of parent carer forums has grown through this period

The voice of parent carer forums is stronger than ever before. The importance of coproduction is being recognised in more and more areas. And, in particular the unique contribution of parent carer forums is at a premium.

During the year the reports by the Education Select Committee and the influential Public Accounts Committee referenced our work and agreed with the key messages we had shared



Two parliamentary committees agreed with our key messages

The Education select committee called for:

- Adequate funding for SEND services
- Greater accountability across the system
- Higher prioritisation of SEND across Health and Social Care
- Incentives across the system to be more inclusive
- A greater voice for families

In the early stages of the SEND review, parent carer forums met numerous times with the review team, culminating in attending our national conference and hearing seven clear messages



During the Covid 19 pandemic, we have been amazed but not surprised by the dedication and commitment of parent carer forums through this period. You have adapted to the new normal with creativity and agility - you have been running virtual coffee mornings, providing peer support to families and conducting surveys to understand and escalate concerns. Your work has enabled the NNPCF to continue to give clear messages to government and the NHS about the impact of Covid 19 and what they need to do differently.

Your work and its value has been recognised by all concerned, including ministers. During this period, NNPCF representatives have met with six different ministers on nine separate occasions. In addition, the NNPCF has been invited to join key governmental and NHS boards including the Schools Recovery Advisory Group, the Covid 19 Vulnerable Children's Board and the NHS England Children and Young People's Stakeholder Council.

This has meant that we have been able to share your experiences with the highest levels of government.

Our priorities for 2020-21

The overwhelming focus of our work will remain Covid 19 for the foreseeable future. Services are far from back to where they were before the pandemic and the long term impact on our children has not yet been understood or felt.

We will also need to focus on improving the underlying system that was creaking even before the pandemic hit.

Support the recovery from Covid 19

- Ensure that the parental voice is heard and work with government and the NHS to ensure that children with SEND are not further disadvantaged through recovery.

The SEND Review

- Engage in the work of the SEND review to support the DfE to create the far reaching changes we believe are necessary.

The NHS Long Term Plan

- Represent SEND families in the development and implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan which includes many important changes that will support our children.

Improve accountability in the SEND system

- Work with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to develop the next phase of local area inspections and continue our work on the SEND tribunal single route of redress.

Our National Representatives

Lara Roberts, NNPCF participation lead

Over the last few years, one consistent message we have heard from the National Representatives team is that they want to support the development of the NNPCF and share their expertise.

With this in mind, this year we co-produced a workshop with National Reps, using our 2019 State of Nation document.

(see: <http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/State-of-the-Nation-2019.pdf>)

We broke it down to ensure that all of us felt confident with it and reflected on what the key messages we wanted to share from it were.

Within this workshop we also went through key workstreams that NNPCF are part of and with support of the team narrowed them down to themes that impact on not just NNPCF but also our members. The main themes identified were Health, Education, the SEND Sector, Accountability, Communication, Policy/Influencing, Preparing for Adulthood & Awards. By working through this process we agreed to pilot thematic teams that national reps could sign up to and agreed to meet up three times a year to share expertise and work with leads on ensuring we had representation at all of them.

NNPCF Teams



A good example of this is Health where workload has increased because of the the NHS Long Term plan. This team has enabled more reps to attend more meetings but also to ensure that all our Health work is properly coordinated and sits under same umbrella.

Our Policy and Consultation Work

Kay Moore, NNPCF policy and consultations lead

Responding to national consultations and Calls for Evidence is an important role for the NNPCF. In doing so the Policy Lead and Steering Group draws upon the experiences of parent carers from local forums and regional network meetings to influence national policy and service improvements through co-production.

We prioritise our policy work in line with our own strategic vision and priorities. Where appropriate, we will make parent carers, parent carer forums, and our regional networks aware of any national consultations via email or through our social media platforms as well as posting them on our website.

During the last year we have:

- Responded to 7 national consultations, including Funding for special educational needs and disabilities, and those who need alternative provision; Review of the National Autism Strategy; Home to school travel and transport: statutory guidance review; Removal of the Outstanding exemption and the Ofsted Framework for initial teacher education inspections 2020.
- Provided written evidence to Education Select Committee Inquiry into SEND
- Given oral evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into SEND
- Worked with the SEND Review team to explore solutions to the issues facing the SEND system.

Talking Points – NNPCF Key areas of focus

Our Talking Points documents have been developed to aid our national discussions. They have been collated from experiences, conversations, and information gathered from our member parent carer forums and their parent carer communities.

The Talking Points reflect our strategic priorities and shape our discussions with national partners. The Talking Points are reviewed annually. This year we have updated the EHC Plans, Health Engagement, Preparing for Adulthood and SEN Transport Talking Point.

We have introduced Talking Points for Mental Health and Wellbeing and Employment.

You can find our talking points here:

<http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/about-the-nnpcf/talking-points/>

Policy Briefings

This year we have introduced monthly Policy Briefings to keep parent carer forums informed of national policy developments.

You can find our policy briefings here:

<http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/get-involved/consultations/>



Another casualty of the Covid 19 pandemic has been our progress in setting up as a separate legal entity. In November 2019 we registered a new community interest company but have not yet transferred operations to it. Many administrative tasks such as setting up a new bank account and registering changes in directors have been prohibitively difficult during the pandemic. Our wonderful partners at Contact, continue to host us in this period.

Regional reports

South West

Tina Emery



This is my 3rd year in this tenure, and I have reflected where we have come from, that I realise the magnitude of which as a region we have travelled.

Last year we had just started good discussions with our NHSE colleague, but now they are part of the forum family in our region, giving forums a link to gain better relationships, not just with their CCG's, but where CCG's have joined with others to form an STP or ICS and being funded to carry out this all important co-production work, a massive stride forward from 2017 when I introduced our one and only NHSE regional lead to the region, we now have two.

Written statement of actions are increasing in our region, increasing the forum workload almost ten-fold, but the forums are fully involved and are co-producing. Whilst the workload is extreme, especially as all forums crave more capacity, I am heartened by the level of professionalism and dedication that we have in the south west, even those forums whose LA's have not been inspected or have and didn't get WSOA have been supportive. In the South West we are a fantastic Team.

Somerset organised a short breaks event with their LA, after hearing a plight of a family who was educated over the border and were unable to gain short breaks as the holidays didn't match. They now have a cross border agreement with other LA's.

Both Swindon and Dorset are part of Mental Health trailblazer project.

I would like to thank Sue Mennear from Contact, Ruth Hobbs in Somerset for being our regional admin and Kay Henry from Cornwall for looking after our regional Facebook group, and of course all 15 forums -

I couldn't do it without you all!



South East

South East region steering committee

This year has seen the region go through a period of great flux even before anyone could spell “Coronavirus”. There have been some notable forum changes – people; entities and structures – and we had to cope without an NNPCF regional rep as the inspirational Lara Roberts stepped down last Spring.

We thank her for her enthusiasm for the region and for her sign language lessons. The task of finding her replacement proved challenging and it was not until January that Sarah Clarke (Wokingham) assumed the role. We have also been without admin support for much of the year, as our administrator had to step away for personal reasons, which was another loss.

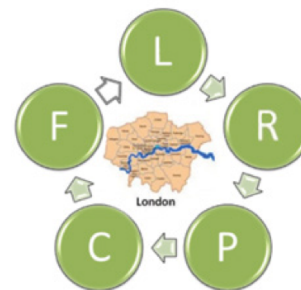
However, these changes allowed us to think again about our role as a region which has to cope with big geographical barriers. Even before lockdown we had decided to restrict our face to face gatherings to twice a year – once in the Spring and once around the National Conference. At other times, we would meet virtually; we would have a Steering Group, a Chair and an Administrator; and any training sessions would be held in multiple locations to give all forums the chance to attend.

The work around Ofsted/CQC inspections and/or subsequent WSoAs dominates most forums but as a result there has been an increase in coproduction stories, though the story is far from perfect and social care is often still allusive. We remain active within the SE19 Local Area forums and working virtually is bringing us closer as a region.

We are grateful to Sarah Clarke for becoming our Rep and in turn she is grateful for the warm welcome and the support she has received from the forums. We have found the COVID era to have been a time of growth for the region even with the extra demands being placed on forums and we look ahead with optimism.

London

Fazilla Amide and Ros Luff



Our forums continued to work hard ensuring engagement with a wide representation of their parent/carers membership, whilst also ensuring service providers were taking on board the views of those same parents when designing or changing SEND services.

In terms of some of the approaches being used, Tower Hamlets and Havering, for example, developed SEND Ambassadors and Parent Champions respectively, where parent/carers represent the forum in the school their child attends. Equally, Harrow had developed a similar approach to engage those groups who are seldom heard, for example, having Parent champions in the Somali, Gujarati, Romanian and Early Years groups. Brent provided Parent Champion training, to some of their parent reps. Other forums have been involved in partnering and providing feedback on their Local Area SEND strategies, for example, Enfield and Croydon. In addition, Enfield and Waltham Forest forum worked more closely with Health and were invited to sit on their Children and Young People's mental Health/CAMHs boards.

Forums were also engaged in their SEND Local Area inspections and re-visits, ensuring the parent/carers views were represented.

In December, forums from the South Cluster met with representatives from the newly formed South East London Integrated Care Network to inform their vision for children, young people and adult's mental health. In January 2020, Ros and Kay jointly presented at a CAMHS Complex case workshop facilitated by the South London Mental Health and Community Partnership.

The last year was also a period of change. New Forums were re-established for example, Redbridge who had a successful re-launch in the autumn of 2019. Other forums have seen a change in steering group members and their wider membership.

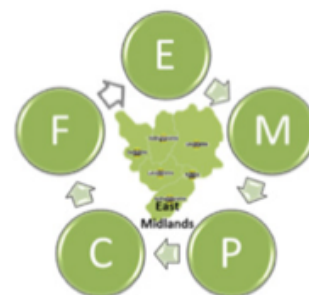
In addition, Kay Moore's term came to an end. We were sad to see her leave, however, we have a great replacement in Ros Luff and are continuing to support and attend the London Strategic Manager's meetings, which provide an excellent opportunity for all stakeholders to engage and share best practice across London. Parent involvement continues to be very positively received at a regional level.

We also focused on training and development offering Contact's Resilience, as well as Leadership training, to help support the wellbeing and effective development of our forums.

Progress sometimes can still feel slow, but we want to thank every member of every forum in the London region for their hard work and commitment during the past year. You are making a real difference!

East Midlands

Anna Norris



The East Midlands Reginal Network consists of the following 9 Parent Carer Forums:

Derby City, Derbyshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire and Rutland.

As a region we have developed good links with our EM Regional SEND Lead Pat Bullen and we feel informed and valued.

This year we benefited from valuable guidance from Lynn Hoppenbrouwers, Strategic Health Lead for Contact as we would like to develop closer regional links with Health and contribute to the NHS Long Term Plan.

We explored additional support for newly formed Parent Carer Forums as well as to those areas who received a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) following their Area SEND Inspections by CQC & Ofsted as the amount of work expected from Parent Carer Forums in these areas have increased significantly.

Capacity continues to be an issue for all forums. Derby City is operating now as a CIC company, which enabled them to widen their community reach.

Our focus this year has been to develop a regional / national online training module for Parent Participation Training. An EM Discretionary Grant enabled us to come together as a region in February 2020 for a weekend get-away in Kegworth. Colleagues from the 9 areas enjoyed the time away from family commitment to recharge and we had a productive time to develop the structure and detailed action plan to finalise this project – watch this space! It was really nice to get to know members of the EMRN better and we discovered many talents among the team.

In October 2019 we said fare well to Dave Nutting, who has been our National Network Representative for the past 8 years.

West Midlands

Zara Bowden



2019-2020 has been a year of change for the West Midlands Regional Network.

We have seen some forums change as they have grown, evolved, and responded to their local area's needs. We were really proud to see Wolverhampton forum has completed their move to becoming an independent group taking on their own grant responsibilities and establishing themselves as a successful representative organisation within their community.

Our regional partners have also evolved with a change of leadership within our SEND leads network leading to some really positive discussions, explorations of future joint working, and a renewed enthusiasm for coproduction in the region. We have also seen the impact of the regional Directors of Children's Services network taking a stronger leadership role driving forward the work identified within the SEND Leads network.

Following last year's health training sessions, this year we have established a stronger link within the regional Learning Disabilities and Autism team which has started to prove fruitful. It has provided plenty of opportunity to shape the future of regional engagement with health and has paved the way for a really healthy relationship with our LDA team colleagues.

Post 16 has continued to be an area of concern this year with the Preparing for Adulthood team developing a regional employment forum that forums have attended. This forum has brought together regional networks, employers, education leads, and local partners to look at and discuss the future of SEND employment pathways across the West Midlands. We are now looking forward to taking this conversation further and exploring the role Parent Carer Forums can play in the development of local opportunities and offers.

Moving into next year we want to continue to develop our regional support and training offer to forums but have identified the following priorities:

- Regional Coproduction – across all partnerships
- Regional Joint Working – across all partnerships
- LDA regional team engagement work
- Post 16 network development
- SEN Support

We are really looking forward to the opportunities the next 12 months will bring for regional Parent Carer Forums.

East of England

Mrunal Sisodia

The simplest way to highlight the challenges faced by the Eastern region is to state that Ofsted and CQC have completed their local area inspections in the region and all but two of the areas have received a written statement of action. Parent carer forums have had their work cut out responding to and supporting the region to try and fix what is too often a dire situation for many families.

Another major theme for the year has been the pressure that forums themselves have come under from campaign groups who do not always understand or agree with our approach. The hostility faced by forums and individuals has been gruelling.

It was into this environment that the devastation of the covid 19 pandemic arrived late in the year and since March, all of our efforts have been devoted to reaching out to families, supporting and representing them through unprecedented times when most of the services that we rely on are simply not available.

However, the region has responded with incredible resilience. During the year we have held lively and informative meetings with guests including representatives from the single route of redress team, Daisy Russell from the CDC IASP team and Suzanne Lunn from the Department for Education. Our sense of teamwork has shone through in a series of peer support and training events including a legal workshop from IPSEA and campaigning and outcomes sessions run by forums.

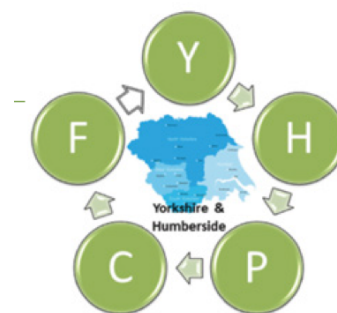
Finally, I would like to thank the fantastic regional team that I have the pleasure of working with: our national representatives Jo, Sarah, Carol and Sylvia who also organises us all as our regional secretary, Karen our vice-chair, Kulwinder who chairs with such grace and finally Louise who stepped down as a national representative after many years of invaluable service.



Yorkshire and Humber

Julie Bruce

The past year has been a mixed bag for Yorkshire and Humber forums, many continue to grow their forum and strengthen their relationships with their local authority and health partners but sadly, for a couple of forums they continue to struggle in getting a seat at the decision-making table. However, the message of co-production is growing especially across health and social care partners. Invitations for forums to introduce the work they do have increased and stronger links are developing to strengthen the voice of parent/carers.



We are able to meet regularly to share good practice and support each other. We also have benefited from guests who have regional and national roles in health which has helped in specialist pieces of work and this has been rolled out across other regions.

Yorkshire and Humber was visited by the national SEND review team. We shared our concerns with the system and what was going well. In preparation for this, our forums reached out to members and over 800 parent carers responded with their thoughts.

Although improvements were made in engaging with Health, there remain difficulties shared by most forums, including provision and planning for young people in transition and quality and monitoring of EHCP's. We highlighted these areas through the Yorkshire & Humber SEND regional meeting which I attend and feedback to our forum's.

We also provided mentoring support to help strengthen forums and this year in particular engaged with a number of health projects which has helped improve working relationships and coproduction. Although we have our strengths as a region, we continue to focus on improving and building on good governance and structures as a regional group and working on our action plan.

I don't think anyone would have imagined the year ending as it has and with such an impact on our families. We are certainly in a strange place and as a region the normal 'day to day' job will be different and challenging but we will aim to continue working and co-producing whatever happens next.

North West

Kath Bromfield

We've been busy in the North West throughout 2019-2020. Little did we know how the year would end and the flexibility and resilience forums would show to enable their membership in difficult times.



To put us in some context we are a region with 22 localities and 21 of these have forums who claim the DfE grant. Our forums have a reach in excess of 38,000 parent/carers. We have varied landscapes, communities and cultures and have within the region different structures and identities.

We started by evaluating the current regional structure, reviewing this at a steering group meeting and then at our regional network meeting with the support of an independent facilitator. The proposals that were formed in these sessions went out to all the forums to vote on. It was conclusive that the North West region wanted to work in clusters and that work will resume this year.

We met as a whole numerous times, for training and meetings. From all our gatherings we have representation from 20 out of 21 DfE funded forums which was great considering the demands on people's time. Success of regional training events led to the region having a voluntary contribution to a regional fund to help facilitate our needs as a region which has already proved helpful to meet the regions needs quickly.

Whilst we only became fully aware of some of the implications of lockdown in March, the month seemed to last forever. As a region we moved fast and bought a virtual meeting tool and set up a regional catch up every Thursday in the afternoon and another session in the evening. These proved an invaluable peer support for forum leaders. We shed tears, laughter and wine and the support they gave each other was immense. Whatever this next year throws at us I know the North West PCF's have each other backs and are ready to do what we do, to ensure our young people and their families, the professionals they work with and forums themselves are in the best place to be a clear voice.

North East



Jo Gilliland

The past year has been exceptionally busy for the North East & Cumbria and has brought big changes. The Regional steering group saw a vast adjustment, with a new cohort of Co-chairs and then, with my taking over the role of NNPCF steering group member in February. We continue to work together closely as a region, sharing good practice and learning.

The Schools forum project which was part of the larger regional Transforming Care project was brought to a close at the end of the financial year, and the evaluation is currently being produced. It has been a large piece of learning for all involved and the culmination of this project brings with it the exciting prospect of a new project for the region; working in co-production with our colleagues in the NHS to improve access to information and training to parent/carers across the entire region.

As a region we have agreed how we will work in the future, how the regional finances should be managed and most importantly, what the forums want to see from the Co-chairs, making a move toward more frequent training and workshop sessions and away from holding larger stand-alone events.

The end of the financial year brought with it some unique challenges, with the arrival of Covid -19 and the subsequent lock down. It has however brought with it a somewhat unexpected silver lining, as we now hold more regular online sessions for forum steering groups. Covid-19 has also meant that the three remaining areas in the region that were yet to have their Local Area Inspection still await these, with one being arranged but then cancelled at the last moment. We have one area who has had a revisit this year.

I look forward to being involved in building an even stronger regional network with all N.E & C regional PCF's. I thank the region for the support they have shown, not only to myself but also the regional Co-chairs, I am proud to be part of the work we do.