



Welcome to the March edition of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) and Contact participation newsletter. In this edition we have a great example from the Essex Family Forum, news about part 2 of the participation conference, an update on the Department for Education grant, a warm welcome to some newcomers to the NNPCF and more . .

[Booking is now open for the second part of our Annual Joint Participation Conference](#)

We're really pleased to let you know that the 2 day schedule of events for **Part 2 of the Virtual National Parent Carer Forums' conference** is now **LIVE** and is available for you to register attendance at your chosen sessions.

We have a variety of sessions including an update on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Review and Green Paper with Minister Quince, update from the NHSEI Learning Disability and Autism team, Enabling a culture of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and SEND Green Paper - NNPCF response. To see the full list of sessions and book your place please go to the conference page of our [website](#).

News from the NNPCF

As always getting your views is really important to us.

The NNPCF Steering Group would like to gather details of forums' priorities to inform the NNPCF Strategic priorities for 2022-23. The information received will also provide evidence on the current issues facing SEND families which can be shared at regional and national meetings.

This survey should only take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Please complete one survey for each forum.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/XSQQDCN>

We would like to welcome Elaine Lambe as the new West Midlands Steering group member.

We have two new appointments on our growing Management team. Our first is Sue Cawkwell as our new Administration Lead. Melissa Chesman becomes our new Comms lead, taking over from Richard Hobbs, who is now moving into the second new post of IT lead. We would like to wish all of them the best in their new roles.

Department for Education (DfE) Grant

It is that time of year again to be thinking about the year ahead, and of reporting back on the work carried out this year, and on your forum's outcomes. The grant forms will be available before 1st April, and we will email all forums to let you know when they are released.

We urge forums to get their applications in early so that there is not a big gap between funding. We will aim to process and approve applications as soon as possible so that they are paid promptly. The deadline for applications will be Monday 6th June. Remember, that you do not need to submit this year's monitoring before you can claim the first half of the 2022-23 grant.

Grant monitoring forms will need to be submitted by Friday 29th April. We recently contacted those forums that will be required to send in proof of expenditure for the 2021/22 grant monitoring, those that haven't been contacted please be aware that it is still a condition of the grant to keep accurate records of expenditure and additional information, including proof of expenditure, may be requested at any time.

All forms, guidance and other supporting documents will be published on the grants page of our website once the forms are released. We would encourage

all forums to read the 'managing your grant' document, an updated version of which will be sent once applications are approved.

Although there will be some changes to the forms this year, last year's forms will give a good idea of what to include if your forum wants to start jotting down ideas for your applications or monitoring – we will also have a document to explain all changes for this year, and why they have been necessary.

If you are unsure of any aspect of the process, your advisor, or the grants team will be happy to help or to explain anything to you. If your forum will have any difficulty in meeting the form deadlines, please let Ben Bennett know as soon as possible.

Essex Family Forum develops a neurodevelopmental resource for families "Supporting Your Neurodiverse Child"

Essex Family Forum worked with local groups to develop a neurodevelopmental resource for families across Essex.

There was very little information given to families up to and at the point of diagnosis and a heavy reliance upon support from other families and support groups. Comprehensive support packs of useful information are produced for other disabilities in the area, e.g. diabetes, but not for neurodiversity leaving families feeling isolated up to the time of diagnosis.

Two local support groups came to Essex Family Forum to work together to produce this pack. Essex Family Forum identified this as a need Essex wide so we took it to the Joint Commissioning Board as a proposal. As well as co-writing the packs, Essex Family Forum managed the project from start to finish involving parent carers and children from across Essex, local support groups and professionals across Education, Health and Social Care. The Forum pushed for agreement from the Joint Commissioning Board for availability of printed copies for all parent carers in the area that wanted them. Essex Family Forum managed the funding and printing and distribution process. As it was an Essex wide resource the Forum involved two neighbouring forums within the county of Essex.

The forum produced 5000 printed Resources for families in Essex with an option for professionals to pay print & postage costs.

There has been some great feedback from families so far including:

- 'I have been a SEND parent for 12 years, have hundreds of books on neurodiversity and have never seen anything of the depth and quality of this resource'
- 'This is answering questions that I didn't even know I needed to ask'
- 'You are going to make the journey that you went through so much easier for other parents'
- 'I want everyone I know to read this so they can understand my son better'
- 'Wow, this is what I have been looking for'
- From a ND adult /parent carer 'can't help but think how different my life would have been if people had the knowledge and understanding that you are getting out there.'

The impact has been decreased isolation felt by families up to the time of diagnosis, improved access to information resulting in increased confidence, empowerment and ability to engage with SEND professionals. Parents can be more self-reliant and feel more confidence in their ability to ensure that their Children and young People with SEND can get the best possible support.

This joint working helped aid conversations between professionals where there were different understandings between Health, Education and Social Care.

There is interest from other parts of the country in having a version of the resource where local information can be replaced and the Forum are looking at how to make that possible.

For more information about Essex Family Forum and the Resource go to [Resources for Families - Essex Family Forum](#)

Has your forum worked on something recently that has made a positive difference? We'd love to hear from you at parent.participation.org.uk

Bristol Parent Carers former Chair to be honoured at the palace of Westminster in the Peoples Honours

Caroline Temple-Bird is to be recognised at the Palace of Westminster with the prestigious British Citizen Award in recognition of her time as former Chair for Bristol Parent Carer forum from 2009 - 2019.

Caroline served as Chair of Bristol Parent Carers for ten years, working hard to preserve the rights of children with SEND and their parent carers. Like many parent carer forum leaders, representatives and volunteers she dedicated her spare time to providing a voice for children with SEND and their parent carers.

Contact has turned green!

We know that environmental sustainability is important to our forums, families, staff and supporters. So we are delighted to let you know that [Contact is now Green Small Business Certified](#)! The certification recognises our new environmental policy and action plan and our overall commitment to improving the management of our environmental impact.

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