

An introduction to the support available for parent carer forums



picture of a group of people linking arms
together



Welcome to this online workshop



Picture of Welcome sign



What to expect from this session

- This session will be recorded and uploaded to the parent participation you tube account. If you don't want to be on the recording please do switch off your camera.
- We have designated some time for questions and answers. However if you need to ask something at another time please do, you can ask by voice or in the chat.
- At the end of the session we'll send you a link to a short feedback survey – please complete it. Your views and ideas are really important to help us improve and develop how we can support.
- Please keep yourself muted if you aren't talking to help us minimise background noises.



What we'll cover today

The role of parent carer forums, the National Network of Parent Carer forums and Contact for families with disabled children.

How the NNPCF and Contact can support/empower forums

Tips from parent carers involved in their forum about what they found helpful when they first started.

A chance to ask questions



Our shared purpose

The best possible opportunities and futures for all children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and their families.



Picture of families playing tug of war



Parent Carer Forums

- A parent carer forum is a group of parents and carers of children and young people with SEND aged 0-25.
- They engage families to learn their views and experiences.
- They work with local authorities, health and other organisations to improve services and opportunities for children and young people with SEND and their families.
- There is one parent carer forum in each local authority area and they receive an annual grant from the Department for Education.



Parent Carer Forums

Forums' focus is on participation and co-production. They are solution focused.

Forums represent the collective voice of parent carers, feeding back their experiences of local services

Forums are independent of the Local Authority. Where they receive funding to support participation by the LA, they do so with this understanding

Forums provide challenge when things need to improve and work with providers to try to find solutions

The Forum's role is not to take on individual cases. They are not advocating on behalf of individuals; this is the role of SENDIASS

Forums are not campaign groups. Forums work with campaign groups and take forward their concerns to strategic meetings.



Parent carer forums make a difference

It's a really challenging time for families with children with SEND – and a difficult environment for forums to develop and stay afloat. That said, forums are still achieving positive changes and making a difference in their local areas.

Take a look at Contact's [success stories page](#), or the [NNPCF annual report](#) for some proud moments from parent carer forums.



WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Blackburn with Darwen Parents in Partnership

We held our Disability Information Day in March 2022. This is an annual event, but this year we pulled out all the stops to make it bigger and better, as we knew that our families had really missed being able to interact with services during the pandemic.

Our NHS Links and DCO were instrumental to the days success, as they put out a “call to arms” message and as a result health services were very well represented at the event.

We also relied heavily on our steering group and volunteers, they worked super hard on the day signing visitors in and serving refreshments.

We had over double the amount of visitors, including groups from days services, special school and college, and we had 65 stands on the day.

The event increased our profile both within the community and also with education, health and social care services.

It was an absolute achievement to be able to present the annual conference with the Local Authority this year after having an absence of 2 years due to the pandemic. North Lincs Parent Forum are very proud to say that they are very much involved in the strategic level of planning with the North Lincs Council. They sit on the SEND Strategy Board and work at the developmental stage of any plans and support the council with parent led consultations to support the feedback for the parental voice.

North Lincs PIP forum

<https://nnpcf.org.uk/>



Success stories



The parent carer forum has grown. Recruitment of 12 parent carer representatives, increase in membership. Our own induction plan based on our core values.

Bedford Borough parent carer forum, the forum in Luton, and the Central Bedfordshire Parent Carer forum worked with many partners to develop a diagnosis support pack for children, young people and their families running up to or following a diagnosis of a neurodiversity such as Autism or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Working in co-production has really enhanced this project. It meant that parent carers and young people worked together as part of the team every step of the way in creating this pack: they planned it, reviewed it, and took equal, shared responsibility in making sure it was fit for purpose and suited to the needs of the people using it.





National Network of Parent Carer Forums
'Our Strength is our Shared Experience'
www.nnpkf.org.uk

The National Network's role is

- Address the big issues
- Champion specific themes
- Identify common priorities with local parent carer forums
- Share information and experiences to influence services nationally
- Members of the National Network represent the views of local parent carer forums nationally



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

The NNPCF is a membership led organisation. Our membership is made up of over 150 local parent carer forums where they are in receipt of the Department for Education 'Parent Carer Participation Grant' which is currently administered by [Contact for families with disabled children](#).

The NNPCF has direct contact with the Department of Education, the Department for Health and other government organisations such as OFSTED and NHS England. We encourage consultation on policy, and we maintain a good level of communication to influence decisions.



Regional Networks

Forums meet with other forums in their region at **regional network or cluster meetings**.

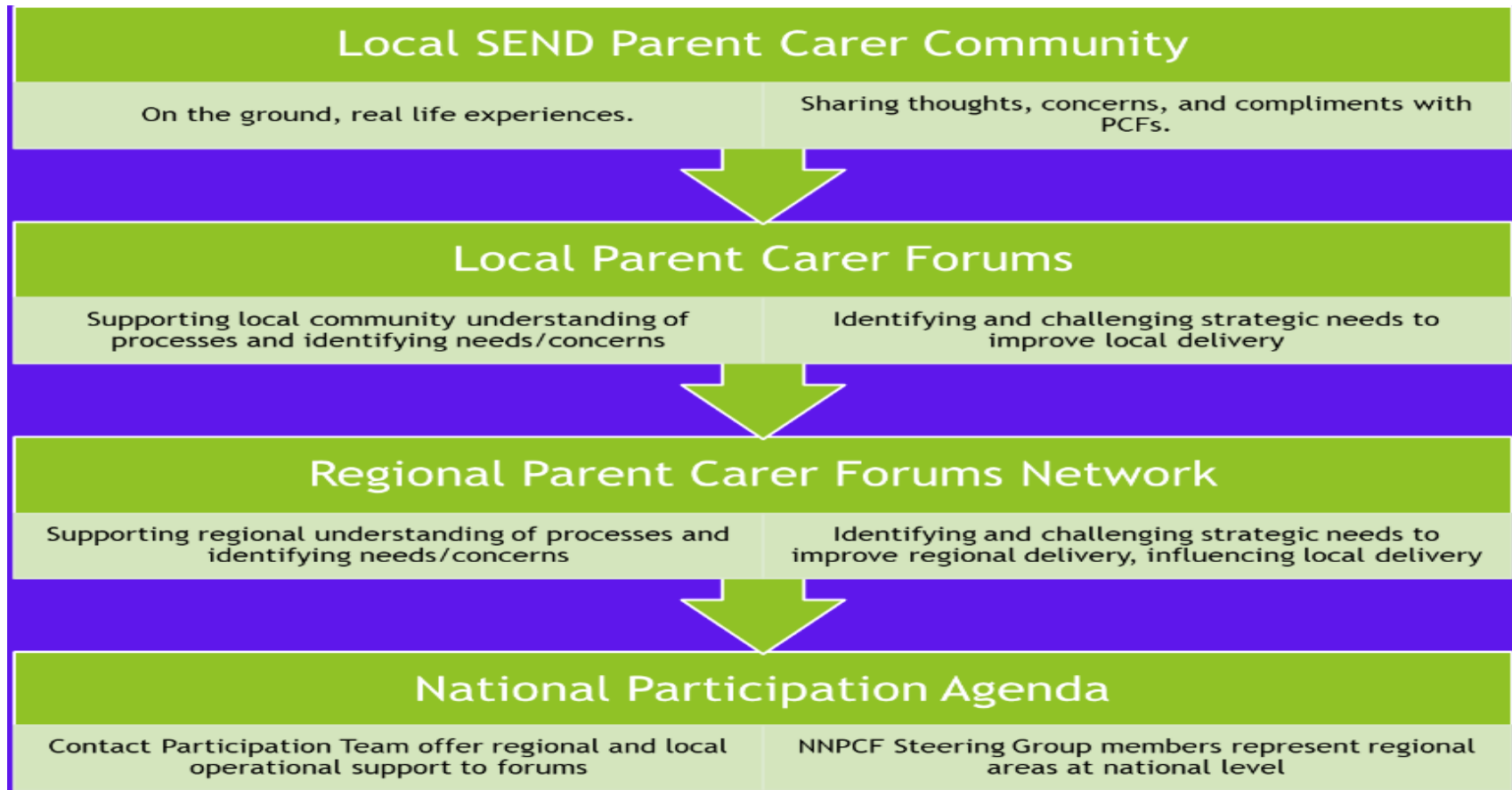
Many forums hold funding to work on specific projects, or have a regional priority grant through Contact to help develop the regional work.

Regional network meetings usually provide an opportunity to:

- Network and get peer support with other parent carer forums in your region
- Share challenges and ideas with your regional NNPCF steering group member so they can use this to help drive the NNPCF's national work
- Receive an update on Contact and NNPCF work and support
- Link in with your Contact Adviser and NNPCF steering group member



How regional parent carer forum networks operate



Individual participation

- Parent Carers meeting with practitioners, sharing *individual experiences* to improve service delivery for their own family
- Individual Parent Carers *responding to consultations* to inform service design and development of processes and pathways to improve outcomes for their children and family.
- Parent Carers having their voice heard about their child and engaging with *services that they use*
- Families *engaging* in person centred processes that improve outcomes for them



Picture of people with note pad and speech bubble



Strategic participation

- Meeting with service leads to share Parent Carers *collective experiences* to improve service delivery for all families
- Forums *working with commissioners* to develop and design services, pathways, and processes to improve outcomes for all children, young people and their families
- Forums shaping and supporting improvement to practices to provide improved Parent Carer engagement *across all services*
- Parent Carer Forums *coproducing* person centred processes to improve outcomes for families.
- Influencing policy and *strategic direction* as part of the Local Area Team



Picture of people with speech bubble



Members of



National Network of Parent Carer Forums
'Our Strength is our Shared Experience'
www.nnpkf.org.uk

The National Picture

- The Local Forum is part of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.
- The national network which has over 150 forums and a national membership totalling over 110,000: they contribute to local, regional and national consultations.
- Each Parent Carer Forum includes parent carers with a range of experiences in Health, Education and Social Care as their children have a range of conditions.



Picture of a map of the UK divided into regions



Contact

We are Contact, the charity for families with disabled children.

We support families with the best possible guidance and information.

We bring families together to support each other.

And we help families to campaign, volunteer and fundraise to improve life for themselves and others.



Picture of Father and Son



Picture of Mother and Son



Contact Website

Contact's **Website** provides advice and information about any concern a parent might have about raising a child with additional needs – from diagnosis, entitlement to services and benefits, to childcare and support when your child is at school or college.

- **Medical Directory**
- **Benefits Calculator and Grants**
- **Listening Ear Service**
- **Family Workshops**
- **Family Events**
- **Helpline – 0808 808 3555**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Parent Carer Participation**
- **Campaigns and Research**



Picture of Mother and Son



Contract with the Department for Education.

contact

*For families
with disabled children*



We are the lead partner in a consortium with KIDS, Council for Disabled Children (CDC), and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) to make sure parent carers, children and young people are involved in the delivery of SEND services and provision in England and have access to information advice and support.



CONTACT

Contact is a national Charity for families of Disabled Children, working directly with parent carers and driven by what they tell us is important

CONTACT administers local grants and provides capacity building support for forums.

Contact provides operational & strategic support to the NNPCF

NNPCF

The National Network is a membership organisation and national voice of Parent Carer Forums in England

Local Forums come together in regional networks, through which a recruitment process selects NNPCF steering group members, who collectively represent the national voice of all forums.

All parties share a strong commitment to embedding co-production at local, regional and national level.

PARENT CARER FORUMS

Parent Carer Forums are volunteer-led groups of parents of children with SEND , working strategically with local partners, to ensure the voice of parent carers is at the heart of decision making.



Contact – Support for Parent Carer Forums

We administer the Department for Education grant for parent carer forums. The purpose of the grant is to help forums develop and enhance parent participation in their local area.

We have a core (free to forums) offer of support that all parent carer forums in receipt of the DfE grant can access. We have an enhanced offer, and some additional paid for options.



Support for Parent Carer Forums

A named [parent carer participation adviser](#) for each forum able to offer telephone and email advice and support, and face to face support if necessary.

Support and advice to forums in relation to the **grant process** and completion of forms. Please see our [grants and monitoring](#) page for more information.

Online learning sessions on topics most important to forums, including an annual session on the DfE grant.



Support for Parent Carer Forums

Regular news and updates on the issues that matter to forums, including a [joint participation newsletter](#) with the NNPCF.

Support at **regional network meetings**, either face to face or virtual

Website and online resources including our dedicated parent carer forum you tube channel.



Parent carer forum You Tube channel



Parent carer forum online learning from Contact

@parentcarerforumonlinelear3501

50 subscribers

Subscribe

Picture of the Parent carer forum online learning You Tube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfvZIP984m57CgpZwCX0ZnQ/playlists>





Confidential Care

Your Forum Wellbeing Programme



Your independent, free and confidential information, advice and support service including the counselling service.

3 pictures, people sitting, people walking with note pad, hand writing on a note pad.



Support For Parent Carer Forums

Community matters provide advice, information and support with governance and policy issues. You can log into their knowledge bank to access resources such as example policies and procedures.



Community Matters supported our organisation during a difficult time, leaving me feeling that I'm not alone and that support is available



Support for Parent Carer Forums

Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit; the continued development of a peer reviewed self-evaluation toolkit for parent carer forums to help forums to reach out further into their communities.

An **annual event** hosted by Contact and the NNPCF which is open to all parent carer forums. Please see our [dedicated annual event page](#) for details of the virtual and face to face conference.

Annual review on strengthening the parent carer participation movement.



Support for Parent Carer Forums

Training for forums – 3 virtual training opportunities. Equality Diversity and Inclusion and either Leading your Forum, being a parent representative and/or DARE resilience.

An updated forum handbook – to reflect where forums are now and a useful resource for new forums starting out (coming soon).

Support to develop Equality Diversity and Inclusion policies, use the diversity toolkit, and plan for an inclusive future.



Contact's enhanced offer of support for parent carer forums experiencing challenges

Intensive support through our [associate pool](#) or mediators when significant issues arise. Associates can support with a wide range of issues, you can read more about this in our [frequently asked questions about working with Contact Associates](#). Take a look at this [webinar from Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire](#) about how an Associate supported them to embed Co-production in their area.

Intensive or bespoke support from Community Matters on complex governance or policy issues on an Associate basis.

Support to forums' strategic partners including the **local authority** and **health agencies** and **raising the profile of participation and co-production** amongst these partners.



Paid for options

We can provide other support that may be helpful for parent carer forums and their partners which doesn't fall within the resources we have in the participation contract.

- **Support from Community Matters** on policy review, organisational development, finance, GDPR and data, complaints, governance issues, and training on key topics.
- **DARE Resilience and Wellbeing training** to help forum members to balance the challenges of their personal lives and the running of the forum; this course was co-produced with forums and is available for forums/regions to purchase.
- **Leading your Forum training** for forum leaders – forums/regions can buy in individually if they wish to.



What do forums say was most helpful for them when first starting out?

Contacting other PCFs in our area who have shared their ideas and advice with us.

Remember that a committee is a democratic group. No single person makes decisions, we all vote, particularly on how public money is spent.

Make contacts with other organisations locally who work with young people with SEND, we have been able to be involved in some joint projects.

The PCF group needs to be clear on who is doing what and that everyone is aware of this

Always offer a warm welcome for new joiner parents that sign up to the forum.

It's important to realise that setting up groups for coffee mornings etc might not be an instant success – takes time to grow



What do forums say was most helpful for them when first starting out?

I found it really helpful to meet with like minded individuals in the region who had so much knowledge and experience I could draw from. Also, to share any frustrations or excitement with!

Support from regional PCF's and advisors, Going to your neighbours to see what they do

Documentation is key, particularly our Constitution document, as we need to know the rules and boundaries.

I always remember we visited two people running another forum, that conversation was invaluable. Really helped to get our head around our role and what to expect

Approach your Contact advisor whenever necessary. They will offer alternatives to the problem.





Questions?



Thank you



Picture of family on the sofa

