

It's Volunteers Week!

This National Volunteers Week we want to say thank you to all the volunteers out there running and supporting parent carer forums!

Forum volunteers carry out such a wide range of activities. Whether it's representing parent experiences at local authority or health provider meetings, running events or offering a warm welcome to new members, the unpaid work they do is core to helping forums reach out to their communities and reduce isolation while pushing for service improvements for families of children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND).

We asked parent carers what they like best about volunteering for their parent carer forum and here are some of the lovely comments we received:

"I feel like putting my energy into changing things for the future helped me deal with the present. I learnt so many strategies that helped at the time, and still do."

"What I like most about volunteering is meeting other parents/carers and feeling like I've made their day just that bit easier by listening to them and letting them know they aren't alone and pointing them in the right direction to find the support they need."

"I chose to become a committee member, first and foremost I think it's important that all SEND parents and carers are informed of all the help and support that is available to them. I also believe that as a collective voice we have a much greater chance of making real changes to improve ours and future children's lives for the better."

"I became a member as I want to make a difference in my area and how SEND is done in my area to the best of my knowledge, and get what's right for parents and young people."

Here at Contact we want to do more than celebrate volunteers contributions we want to support you too! Here's what we can offer parent carer forum volunteers:

- Opportunities to join 3 training programmes this year on topics such as being a Parent Representative, DARE resilience, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Leading your Forum, and Compassionate Communication. If you're part of a forum please tell us which topics are most important to you by completing this [short survey](#). It should take only 5 minutes to complete, and the will close on June 13th at 12:00 noon. Keep an eye on your forum's inbox as we'll email you with any updates on training.
- A revamp of the forum handbook so you have an easy read guide all about forums, for when you first start out, or for coming back to as a reference as and when needed.
- Make use of the CIC assistance programme – you can log into their website for lots of helpful info on wellbeing, and the subscription also includes a legal helpline and access to counselling for up to 8 parent carers. It's not SEND specific – it can be used for any issue personal or forum related.
- Access your forum's Community Matters Yorkshire's Knowledgebank subscription to get advice, information and support with governance and legal issues.
- At least 8 online learning sessions on topics of most interest to forums.
- Plenty of information sessions online on our [PCF YouTube channel](#). Relevant for this week it does include a session on [good practice in volunteer management](#).

Have you got ideas about how we can better support parent carer volunteers and forums? We love to hear from you, and we can't get it right without you, so as always don't hesitate to [get in touch](#).

Check out our website for the full information of [how we support parent carer forums](#).

Supporting parent carer forum volunteers in your area.

We know our newsletter audience includes a range of people who are interested in participation and forums. We especially appreciate those of you who work for local authorities or health services who are striving to develop great participation in your area. Volunteers week is a good

opportunity to ask your forum how things are going and what they might need to help them look after and support their volunteers.

Contact can offer a range of professional development courses, consultancy and co-production training, and you can take a look at the [support for professionals page](#) of our website to find out more.

NNPCF News

We know so well that parent carers involved in forums are passionate about improving things for families with children with SEND. Make sure you have your say by completing the NNPCF [survey on the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper](#) and share it as widely as you can with any parent carers you know! The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete and will remain open until the 30th June.

Visit our [news page](#) for regular updates:

- [NNPCF gives evidence to the Education Select Committee](#)
- [Attendance, behaviour and exclusions](#)
- [SEND Green Paper - response from the NNPCF](#)
- [Initial NNPCF response to the Schools White Paper](#)
- [Lords concludes examination of Health and Care Bill](#)
- [NNPCF concerns about the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan](#)
- [Down Syndrome Bill update April 2022](#)
- [Proposed changes to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice and implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards](#)
- [The latest policy briefing update NNPCF-Policy-Briefing-April-2022 -1.doc-1](#)

[Sign up for the parent carer participation joint newsletter.](#)