

## **Family Voice Peterborough – listening to and reaching out to different communities to create a strong representative forum**

Peterborough is a diverse, multicultural area and the parent carer forum, Family Voice Peterborough (FVP), has worked hard to make sure they represent and listen to the different communities they serve.

FVP representatives help spread the word about the forum, listen to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) about what is and isn't working for them, and find out what they need. They actively support parent carers to provide feedback through surveys and gather their ideas, which shape future events based on community needs. For example, wellbeing was identified as priority and the forum ran a wellbeing event for Muslim women.

The forum promotes open events on social media, like their SEND Parent Carers coffee morning and a community café. They invite guest speakers discussing topics like NHS Vaccines, wellbeing, and Financial advice as they find these (rather than events with a SEND focus) lead to increased engagement from underrepresented communities. They also link with parent carers at coffee mornings, visit schools, and other local groups.

FVP were successful in securing a National Lottery grant which supports a Community Development Worker from the Gambian community. He networks with other community leaders, disseminates information to community spaces (like community centres, food banks, places of worship, libraries), doctor's surgeries and libraries.

This work has increased the diversity of the forum's membership, with 30% now identifying as 'non-white British'. Underrepresented community members now participate in events they might previously have overlooked and FVP has successfully established a space where individuals from all backgrounds feel included and embraced.

You can hear more about the work of the forum from Ramou Ndow. She joined Family Voice Peterborough when her daughter was diagnosed with autism in 2009, attending training on the Expert Parent Programme and Behaviour that Challenges. She went on to become a parent representative (representing parent carers at strategic meetings) and is now the forum's Office Manager. [A conversation with Ramou from Peterborough Family Voice - The helpful podcast for families with disabled children | Acast](#)

<https://youtu.be/biHW1yKS1qg>



