

### Associate Skills Profile

Areas of expertise	Associate name:	<a href="#">Barbara Wilson</a>	<a href="#">Carol Foyle</a>	<a href="#">Catherine Ratcliffe</a>	<a href="#">Charlotte Amison</a>	<a href="#">Fazilla Amide</a>	<a href="#">Gail Bedding</a>	<a href="#">Jacqueline Wye</a>	<a href="#">Kate Rowe</a>	<a href="#">Katie Clarke</a>
Starting up a new forum/forum development:	Group development, governance, policies and procedures	√	√	√				√		
	Legal structures		√	√				√		
	Group dynamics and relationship development	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Volunteer and member recruitment	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
	Meeting facilitation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Roles and responsibilities	√	√	√		√		√	√	
	Parent representative development and training	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
	Leadership	√	√	√		√		√	√	√
Organisational development:	Business planning	√	√		√			√		
	Action planning	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	
	Fundraising		√					√		
	Grant and Bids	√	√	√				√		
	Finance and Bookkeeping							√		
	Human Resources			√						
	Employing people	√			√					
	Organisational health check	√	√					√		
Comms and PR	IT and technical							√		
	Communications	√	√	√		√		√		√
	Public Relations	√	√					√		
	Marketing	√		√				√		
	Social media			√				√		√
	Publications	√						√		
	Copy writing	√								
	Editing	√								
Training:	Film making									
	Workshops and training		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Facilitation	Facilitation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	SEND landscape and policy		√	√				√		
SEND landscape:	SEND Law			√						
	Health landscape and structures					√	√			√
	Local authority structure and practice	√	√	√				√		√
	Conflict management and de-escalation	√	√	√				√	√	
Relationships:	Mediation		√	√				√		
	Working with partners	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Co-production	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Solution focused approaches	√	√	√				√		√
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	√		√	√	√		√		√
Investigative:	Fraud awareness and investigation		√	√				√		
	Complaints handling and investigation		√	√				√		
	Appeals process and experience of conducting appeals		√	√						
	Report writing			√				√		

**Associate Skills Profile**

Areas of expertise	Associate name:	<a href="#">Lara O'Connell</a>	<a href="#">Laura Burling</a>	<a href="#">Lucy Smith</a>	<a href="#">Maureen Morris</a>	<a href="#">Melanie Theobald</a>	<a href="#">Paul Harper</a>	<a href="#">Ruth Hobbs</a>	<a href="#">Sharon Smith</a>	<a href="#">Wendy Davey</a>
Starting up a new forum/forum development:	Group development, governance, policies and procedures	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Legal structures							√		√
	Group dynamics and relationship development	√	√	√	√	√				√
	Volunteer and member recruitment		√		√	√		√		√
	Meeting facilitation	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
	Roles and responsibilities	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
	Parent representative development and training	√	√		√	√		√	√	√
	Leadership	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
Organisational development:	Business planning		√	√		√		√		
	Action planning	√	√	√		√	√	√		
	Fundraising									
	Grant and Bids		√			√	√			
	Finance and Bookkeeping							√		
	Human Resources		√			√				
	Employing people					√				
	Organisational health check	√	√			√		√		
IT and technical							√			
Comms and PR	Communications	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√
	Public Relations	√		√	√				√	√
	Marketing			√		√		√	√	√
	Social media	√		√		√			√	√
	Publications			√		√		√	√	√
	Copy writing					√			√	√
	Editing				√				√	√
	Film making									√
Training:	Workshops and training	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Facilitation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
SEND landscape:	SEND landscape and policy	√	√		√	√		√	√	√
	SEND Law	√			√	√		√	√	
	Health landscape and structures	√	√		√	√		√		√
	Local authority structure and practice	√	√		√	√		√		√
Relationships:	Conflict management and de-escalation	√	√		√	√	√			√
	Mediation	√	√		√	√				√
	Working with partners	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√
	Co-production	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
	Solution focused approaches	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Diversity:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	√	√	√		√				√
Investigative:	Fraud awareness and investigation			√				√		
	Complaints handling and investigation	√			√			√	√	
	Appeals process and experience of conducting appeals					√			√	
	Report writing				√	√	√	√	√	√

## Associate Pen Pictures



**Associate Name: Barbara Wilson**

**Home region:** London

**Travel Range:** 3 hours round trip

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** My early career was as a front-line Social Worker in inner London and then I held a variety of managerial posts in the same Local Authority covering operations (managing a Day Centre, a residential care home and the OT equipment Store,) commissioning of services and policy making especially in disability. I have been working freelance for the last 25 years across the whole social care sector with the last 10 years specialising in parent participation. I am an effective facilitator, helping everyone keep focus, keep to time, and engage. I have good listening and organisational skills and am understanding, responsive and supportive. My approach is to be honest and kind - each individual and each forum is unique. I can be direct if needed. It is important to me that I encourage, advise, and empower people to develop self-reliance, confidence and independence. And that each forum creates a team approach with fairness and transparency at the core. Collaboration and Co-productive working is essential to effective partnership working and making the much needed changes and improvements. I have worked with many forums over the last decade, so have seen a wide variety of models, structures, and approaches. I have helped with strategic planning and analysis of feedback, evidence, data & reports. I am very aware of the challenges facing forums to be able to truly represent families in their areas across all disability and with the whole 0-25 age range, to respond to all the requests and demands that come in daily - which includes those expectations from the regions and NNPCF too. It is a very big ask and I consider myself to be a true ally in making a real difference.

**Associate Name: Carol Susan Foyle**

**Home region:** South East London

**Travel Range:** Happy to travel via public transport

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** Carol has 46 years professional experience of working with children, young people and adults with SEND and disabilities and their families. She has worked with in all sectors latterly spending 22 years as the strategic leader for a number of complex services for children and young people with disabilities and their families. Carol has always been passionate about the work she does. The ability to be flexible and effect change in a way that empowers individuals' families and teams to realise potential and achieve outstanding outcomes is key to the approach she applies to her work. Carol has extensive experience of leading and facilitating teams, listening, consulting, and networking with people in all settings and backgrounds. She has a particular interest in working with

families, change management, from an organisational, personal and family perspective. Carol can look at a situation and think about solutions, often through creative thinking to solve a problem in an innovative way. Carol is trained in systemic therapy change for organisations and individuals along with being a trainer mediator. Carol's personal situations and experiences have informed her ability to know what to ask and why but only in that her experience is her own lived experience! There remains the need to ensure we can gain further insight, understanding and feedback from people from all backgrounds and in all situations. No one size fits all and we need to be creative and flexible when thinking about engaging with and involving people. Carol has many years' experience of being on various management committees and Boards within the NHS and the voluntary sector and as a Chair of Governors for a Queens Park Federation in Westminster within the maintained sector. Carol is a trained mediator and has experience of setting up services from early years to adults and for families. She has been responsible for CQC and Ofsted registered settings along developing volunteer schemes with parent champions, providing training and workshops in various areas over the years. Since retiring Carol has spent much of her time supporting Parent Forums to refresh and set up again and providing support to Local Authorities and Health organisations to understand and engage with the true meaning of Co-Production and what effective partnerships look like.

**Associate Name: Catherine Ratcliffe**

**Home region:** Yorkshire

**Travel Range:** 100 miles

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I have 37 years' experience of working in local government working with children and families. For a number of years that involved managing the SEND team and developing parenting services. I have extensive experience of chairing meetings both in a work and voluntary capacity. I have established over 25 parent carer forums across the country since embarking on the role of an Associate. I am a trustee of my local parent carer forum, continually inspired by the commitment, hard work and creativity that exists. As a director of Genuine partnerships, I am a fierce advocate of co production, it is a privilege to share the four cornerstones of co production in training sessions. My training style has been said to be interesting, accessible, and fun!



**Associate Name: Charlotte Amison**

**Home region:** South East

**Travel Range:** Dependent on time of day due to childcare/school runs - preference for virtual support

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I have supported families with disabled children for the past 19 years. I worked for Contact for 9 years as a Family Worker, Project Manager for a London Borough and as the Regional Training and Delivery Project Manager. Prior to working at Contact I've worked in special schools and was the Director of a charity providing respite care to children with severe learning disabilities.

I have experience in: parent carer forum facilitation; how to set up and run steering groups; running events; I have been writing and delivering workshops for the past 14 years on a range of subjects including Autism, anxiety, ADHD, understanding behaviour, toilet training, growing up, sex and relationships, equality and diversity, how to reach seldom heard groups, engagement and coproduction and how to support families with disabled children; I can support with managing projects; recruiting and managing volunteers; recruiting and managing freelancers; safeguarding; monitoring and evaluation; working with local authorities; writing reports; project planning and grant applications.

I have an MA in Managerial Studies with distinction and lecture to MBA students about my research in engagement and coproduction in the voluntary sector. I am also a school governor with responsibility for SEND.

I look forward to supporting your forum.

**Associate Name: Fazilla Amide**

**Home region:** London

**Travel Range:** No face to face support

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I've been part of a forum since 2012 and chair for 8 years. I've successfully developed our forum to grow from 4 parents (only 1 active) to 10 active parent carers and successfully succession planned so there was a chair in waiting for me to hand over to. My background is in Human Resources, leadership, and management development training, having delivered training for over 30 years and parent carer training since 2008. I regularly run leadership and parent participation courses as well.

Between 2017 and 2022 I was one of the leads of the London Region of the NNPCF. So, I am fully aware of all the challenges our forums face. I've also worked with LA, Education and Social Care leads as a consultant and was a CEO of a Healthwatch. I am currently working within NHS England so am also familiar with the health care system.

**Associate Name: Gail Bedding**

**Home region:** Isle of Wight/South East

**Travel Range:** Happy to travel anywhere if accommodation is available

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** Involved as CEO of PCF for many years, SE NNPCF Rep and NNPCF Rep I understand how hard it can be making a difference and the importance of relationship building internally and externally. Other areas of knowledge and delivery: Expert Parent Programme Transition into Adulthood for Complex Health YP and other versions Together for Short Lives Family expert The Healthy Parent Carer Programme for Exeter University Contact's Co-Production, Resilience, Health, Parent Rep training workshops and happy to put together anything that might help! Recently was the Project Manager for the DfE funded EYs Project and then Business Development Manager for Contact but going back to Freelance is where my strengths and passion lie. Now that I am an Empty Nester, I'm happy to travel and make a difference wherever I am needed.

**Associate Name: Jacqueline Ann Wye**

**Home region:** Essex/London

**Travel Range:** 2/3 hours when return home same day, but any distance if overnight stay or a longer piece of work that requires intensive support over 2/3 days.

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** Historically a Social Worker, Team Manager and then Service Lead within Family Support, I now work with CONTACT as one of their experienced Associates. Over the past 10 years I have used my skills to support the important and sometimes difficult work that Parent Carer Forums undertake. Working with both emerging and longer standing forums across the country with the challenges they face and supporting them to get the best possible outcomes for SEND families. When working with emerging forums, I have extensive experience in:

- Forming a committed group
- Support with Grant applications
- Initial planning
- Early event planning
- Developing Roles/Responsibilities – what roles, who does what, when, how
- Building parent/carers membership – how to do this and how to make maximum use of networks
- How to harness views/experiences of SEND parent/carers so they have a platform to have their say and you have information needed to inform improvements in SEND service design/delivery
- Working productively with key partners (Local Authority, Health and other SEND groups)

- Getting infrastructure right (Policies/websites/social media/Banking/Financial monitoring/marketing/advertising)
- Team building/training workshops

For Existing Forums, I have extensive experience in:

- Conflict Resolution – Within the management group, from parent/carers members or when working with key partners.
- Grant Applications and financial management
- Conference or large event management
- Regrouping when key members leave or when moving on
- In finding a ‘Support Partner’ or when becoming self-sufficient

I hope I can be of service to your forum.

**Associate Name: Kate Rowe**

**Home region:** South West

**Travel Range:** Preferably there and back in a day, no more than around 2.5 hours travel each way

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** Kate is a facilitator, leader & manager, with over 30 years’ experience of working in community settings, who continues to find creative & positive ways to help people find a voice. Her interest in Parent Carer Forums is rooted in a strong belief that meaningful relationship-based co-production is the key to improving public services. Kate brings her skills as an active listener, a clear communicator, and an enabling facilitator. She knows that groups form and re-form again & again while they try to achieve their aims, and that conflict is a normal, intrinsic aspect of teamwork. She is able to provide support and challenge to groups where conflict has become a barrier to their work. Kate offers her extensive experience of leading teams in outcomes-based work planning and developing straightforward monitoring tools and evaluation methods. Kate has worked for national & local charities, borough councils and neighbourhood renewal companies, as well as delivering training & facilitation services as a self-employed consultant. She has delivered services to adults (e.g. neighbour mediation; learning ambassadors; singing for health and wellbeing,) and children (e.g. family group conferencing; supervised contact; youth information café). Kate has a degree in Peace Studies with Conflict Resolution, PGC in Psychotherapy Theory, Level 6 in Leadership & Management, and a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults.





**Associate Name: Katie Clarke**

**Home region:** Calderdale

**Travel Range:** Up to 2 hours' drive 4 hrs train journey

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** As the founder of the one of the first parent forums in the country and one of the co-founders of the NNPCF I have over 20 years of experience of working in the field of co-production and participation. I have been an Associate and trainer/facilitator for Contact for 11 years. I have a wealth of experience from meeting and working across the country with 100s of parents to share with forums on what works, what doesn't and what we can do together to improve our practice. I work in a participative, friendly, fun,

welcoming and inclusive way. Looking forward to working with you and learning together.



**Associate Name: Lara O'Connell**

**Home region:** South East

**Travel Range:** 7 hours maximum

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I am a parent carer who has volunteered and worked in parent carer participation since 2010 starting in my local area, then becoming the South East Rep and Participation Lead for NNPCF. I have been a Contact Associate since 2018 and have work in a NHS Mental Health Trust where I have continued to develop person centred approaches. Areas and skills I bring to my role are:

- Developing structures to support working in partnerships
- Impact and Evaluation reports
- Setting up governance of forums, supporting Visions and Aims
- Supporting frameworks around co production
- Co production training for local areas
- Understanding the wider voices of families
- Understanding the role of Equity for parent carer forums
- Facilitating relationships building
- Co-developing and Co-delivering Leadership Training
- Solution Focused Therapy/ Coaching
- My values are: being open, honest and transparency.





**Associate Name: Laura Burling**

**Home region:** North West

**Travel Range:** 3 hours maximum

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I have over 20 years' experience, knowledge and understanding of voice, influence and co-production work, specifically in public services, the voluntary, community, charity and healthcare sector. I am a warm connector, skilled communicator, facilitator, trainer and health coach.

My lived and learnt experiences have given me an affinity to relationship centred practice and evidence-based improvement work. Empowering people and communities to co-produce and facilitate change across services and systems is something I am passionate about.

I had the privilege of being involved in the work of the parent carer participation team at Contact from 2011 to 2018 as a regional adviser and as an associate since 2020. I bring a wealth of skills and experience to parent carer forums, their membership, and wider partners. I deliver bespoke packages of support that assist forums and stakeholders to explore areas of work, including – governance and structures, policies, grant funding, financial management, navigating challenging relationships, stakeholder mapping, communication and engagement strategies, partnership working, volunteer management, future planning, sustainability and much more. I do this through an offer of: Training, Facilitation, Mediation, Coaching, Advice and Consultancy.



**Associate Name: Lucy Smith**

**Home region:** South Gloucestershire

**Travel Range:** Nationwide

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I have been a social entrepreneur for over 15 years and have created and led multiple CiC's (community interest company) and volunteer organisations. I specialise in managing change and supporting organisations to develop as a team and work together effectively. I have worked across many industries and sectors in roles as an employee, leader, change manager and project manager. I had a long and exciting career in law enforcement as an investigator and intelligence officer which then led into working as a change manager in

transformational change in the Home Office and later in Higher Education. I am a coach and mentor and am recognised as an expert in neurodiversity in the workplace and raising awareness of digital wellbeing and mental health for young people. I am a parent of two incredible autistic teenagers and have lived experience of EHCPs and CAMHS. I run an award winning social enterprise (inclusive change at work cic) that is focussed on improving employment outcomes for neurodivergent adults which includes a support agency for employed and self employed people.

**Associate Name: Maureen Morris**

**Home region:** North East

**Travel Range:** Travel up to 3 hours but can stay overnight if further is required.

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I have worked with a number of forums on a range of issues from setting up new forums, working with strategic partners and training. I have worked extensively on the Autism in Schools programme. I have a wide knowledge of forum life through my time with the NNPCF. I have been involved with my own forum for 15 years, lately being chair until my retirement in 2019 but I still volunteer for them. I have worked with a number of forums on a range of issues from setting up new forums, helping forums reset their working relationship with strategic partners and also leading training. I have worked extensively on the Autism in Schools programme. I have also worked directly with LA's and Health bodies. I have a wide knowledge of forum life through my time with the NNPCF where I was the regional rep for the North East and Cumbria and also Co-chair.



**Associate Name: Melanie Theobald**

**Home region:** North West & North Wales

**Travel Range:** Where needed

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** Melanie Theobald has worked across the private, voluntary and statutory sector working for Contact as an associate and Northern Area Manager. Melanie worked for Cheshire West and Chester Council Commissioning disabled children's services and also as the Aiming High for Disabled Children Project Manager. She is enthusiastic and self-motivated with extensive experience of working with disabled children and their families. She is creative, can problem solve and has excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Melanie has experience of managing teams, strategic development, project and business development including grant applications and fund raising. She is a qualified trainer and has significant experience of working with parent carer groups providing information and support to parents, carers, staff and volunteers. Melanie volunteered for her local Parent Carer Forum steering group and facilitated a Disabled Children's Schools Champions group. Since leaving Contact, Melanie has worked as a freelance trainer and consultant. She has worked with Parent Carer Forums across the country developing and delivering training courses including, Health Commissioning, Confidence building, Communications and Co-production. She has also developed and written policies and procedures for forums, provided on going HR and business support, interviewed, and completed grant applications. Areas of expertise/experience: Children's Services including SEND policy and law, Participation and involvement of parents and young people including understanding young peoples' and parent carers' rights, Creativity and problem-solving, Persuading and influence people, partnership working and co-production. Commissioning, bid writing, tender processes, identify and evidencing impact. Training. HR support and policy writing.

**Associate Name: Paul Harper**

**Home region:** North West

**Travel Range:** Across the whole region - but dependent on public transport

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I am an experienced teacher and trainer with a career history of leadership in secondary education and central government. I spent over 20 years teaching in secondary schools in the northwest of England in a range of management roles. I then worked in a central government department for 16 years, leading among other things on youth workforce issues; accelerated initial training of children's social workers; and support and challenge to local authorities following an "inadequate" Ofsted judgment of their children's social care services. In my spare time I spent around ten years leading a local parent/carer forum and partnering with local authority and health services, including a period when the local authority received a Written Statement of Action. Personally, I've spent over 25 years advocating for one of our children with additional needs, through health, social care and education, from early years to higher education. I am passionate about ensuring that young people with additional needs are accepted and play a full part in their community, including in gainful occupation. Since retirement I have written a booklet on transitions to adulthood for parent/carers of young people with complex needs. I've also developed and run workshops on transitions to adulthood for parent/carers and professionals both locally and across the country. I received an MBE in 2017 for my professional and voluntary work. I can offer a range of experience covering:

- secondary education and the young people's workforce
- preparation for and transition into adulthood
- parent carer forum leadership and issues
- support in improving SEND services following Ofsted/CQC inspection
- working with local partners

**Associate Name: Ruth Hobbs**

**Home region:** South West

**Travel Range:** Anywhere within England

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** During my work with parent carer forums, I have established new forums, and helped forums to develop and grow including getting additional funding. Having run a PCF, myself for over 9 years I have learnt a lot about the day to day running and management of forums. I have worked with a lot of forums to help develop their governance and structures. I have knowledge on how you can effectively use IT solutions to improve the functionality of your forum and reduce workloads. I have experience of running workshops for areas to develop their understanding of coproduction and working in partnership.

**Associate Name: Sharon Smith**

**Home region:** Hampshire

**Travel Range:** 2hrs. More if overnight stay is funded

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** Previously a Chair of a PCF, I have been an Associate and trainer for Contact since 2014. I also have a professional background in marketing and communications, including online/social media. I have supported the start-up of several forums and have also supported forums through a range of tricky situations (either internally or external relationships). I also regularly deliver participation/parent rep training for Contact or regional forums.

**Associate Name: Wendy Davey**

**Home region:** Hampshire (England South)

**Travel Range:** Maximum 2 hour driving radius of North East Hampshire.

**Brief precis of Associate experience:** I am a freelance Consultant skilled in supporting parent carer forums with their communications, membership, governance and training. I have robust experience working in areas where forums need to be grown or re-established, and this can sometimes involve mediation. I know every child, family, forum, and local area is different, and I always approach projects prepared to listen. Having previously worked in media communications and training, I joined Hampshire Parent Carer Network in 2010 and contributed for eight years in various roles including as a parent carer representative, a communications officer, a member of the senior team shaping policy and strategy, and as a trustee. Across the past five years, I've shifted to deliver freelance communications support and content writing for non-profits, alongside delivering a broader base of support to parent carer forums in my role as a Contact Associate. My lived experience liaising with education, health, social care and NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) to access provisions for my own disabled child means that I have a personal understanding of what life is really like for parent carers on the ground. I also work as a Family Support Consultant for Contact, providing support with training for families and other projects.