



Annual Review & Financial Report for 2009 – 2010

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Family Voice Norfolk (FVN) was set-up in 2007, is an independent group of parents and carers of children who have special and additional needs.

Their aim is to ensure that the 'Voices' of parents and carers are heard during the planning and decision-making about services for their children in Norfolk.

Where potential for change in services or common issues are identified, the group takes the initiative to make improvements.

FVN believes that parents have the best insight into the support they and their children need.

We have chosen the model of being the voice ourselves, rather than paying someone to speak for us'. Matthew Hall (Chair)

Family Voice Norfolk is a free to join member organisation. Members are encouraged to be involved by becoming a steering group member, representative on various countywide initiatives / steering groups /forums or to take part in consultations.

Membership includes:

- full membership** (free) for parents and close family members of children with special and additional needs.
- associate membership** (free) for others wishing to support our work e.g. practitioners and extended family
- affiliate membership** (free) for groups and organisations wishing to support our work

12 parent /carer members formed FVN's steering group during 2009-10 with 2 additional members being co-opted during the year.

Our challenge is to ensure that our systems and processes are such that anyone can sit on our steering group or be facilitated to sit on a strategy group. The criteria are a passion and vision for how things could be better, not the ability to contribute in a pre-determined way'.

Articulate, organised, professional parents will always find it easier to contribute; we also particularly value the better understanding of the system that those parents bring who study or work in this area'. Matthew Hall (Chair)

Making a difference by ensuring the 'Voice' of parents and carers of children with special and additional needs is communicated and listened to.

During the year 2009 -10 representatives from FVN have been involved in many initiatives, steering groups, forums and strategic boards within Norfolk.

As a result, parents and carers have had influence on the development and review of services provided in Norfolk to their children, ensuring they are appropriate for their needs.

'We will continue to develop towards being a fully inclusive group of parents who facilitate and represent the views of all parents of children with special and additional need across Norfolk'. Matthew Hall (Chair)

Family Voice Norfolk has representatives on the following Steering Groups, forums and strategic boards

Disabled Children's Strategy Group: oversees the Disabled Children's Strategy, the Integrated Teams project, the Short Breaks Pathfinder Programme and involved with the roll out of the aims of Aiming High, the National Service Framework and Norfolk's response to Every Child Matters.

Parental involvement is at the core of this group, driving forward considerable change.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Project Strategy Board: ensures that the recommendations of the SEN Review are implemented, including overseeing the implementation of Complex Needs Schools & Specialist Resource Bases.

FVN taking part in consultations and influencing the way special and additional needs educational provision is provided in Norfolk.

Pupil Specific Funding Group: Set up by the local authority to review how schools are funded for pupils who have special and additional needs and to develop a monitoring scheme.

FVN influencing how information about the revised system is communicated to schools and parents and how the scheme is monitored.

Complex Needs Schools Implementation Group: A small 'task and finish' sub group of the SEN Strategy facilitating the changes from special schools to Complex needs schools in Norfolk and identifying the training needs to encompass the changes that will happen slowly over 10years.

Both FVN representatives on this group are Governors of different Complex Needs Schools.

Carers Council: To achieve tasks quickly Rapid Action Teams (RATs), which report back to the full Carers Council, are formed when needed, to look at various areas. Will become a Commissioning body in the future.

FVN helped to develop a Carers Emergency Plan pack, which Carers have responded to well.

Childcare Sufficiency Task Group: formed to address gaps identified by Norfolk County Council's assessment of childcare 'sufficiency' in the county.

A report, by FVN provided recommendations for: workforce development; information and communication; review of Joint Disabled Children's Register; the Family Information Service and Services Directory; support for parents; provision and flexibility; funding and equipment. This report is integral to the ongoing work of the Early Support Steering Group.

Short Breaks Tracking Project: Norfolk has been chosen as one of four authorities to take part in the Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) tracking exercise to demonstrate the impact of the Government's Aiming High for Disabled Children.

FVN is the local parents forum providing evidence from parents that feeds into an annual progress report. Reports from FVN have led to transport help for Short breaks, more choice for our children and improved assessment processes.

Short Breaks Communication Strategy Group: set up to form a strategy on how to communicate to all sectors about short breaks and the changes that Aiming High should make.

FVN has been actively involved with the development of a strategy to communicate the work and progress of the short breaks pathfinder to parents, carers, providers and professionals.

Paediatric Network: overarching paediatric group looking at acute & community care for all children, to find local solutions to service change, development and service redesign. Reports to the Women and Children's Programme Board of NHS Norfolk.

All three FVN parent's representatives on this group are frequent users of the services of both the Acute and Community Health Trusts and have children with Complex Health Needs.

Short Breaks (Pathfinder) POG (Programme Operational Group): oversees the delivery of the full service offer of Short Breaks by reviewing and transforming existing provision and developing new short break provision for children and young people with disabilities.

Parents at the heart of the process, providing input into how the Short Breaks funding in Norfolk is spent and assisting with interviews for the Short Breaks team.

Recently FVN asked to provide representatives to sit on the commissioning group for Short Breaks, which will increase the level of parent input in this area.

The Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Steering Group: sharing information and good practice and working collaboratively on relevant projects. A stakeholder reference group for ASD related proposals within the SEN Strategy.

This steering group has the status of a subgroup of the County Strategic Partnership (the only disability forum in Norfolk to have this status).

**Four parents, who are members of FVN, regularly attend this Steering Group.
The Chair of this group is a member of FVN's steering group.**

Positive Handling Group: looking at policies and training for proactive approaches to behaviour that prevent the inappropriate use of restraint and maintain the respect and dignity of the child/young person involved.

FVN actively involved in identifying gaps / difficulties in service provision & resources. Consulted on recommendations and influence decision-making and planning. Involved in the development and rollout of a free pilot scheme for parents and carers in the use of behaviour de-escalation techniques.

LDD (Learning Difficulties and Disabilities) Programme Board: established to improve the co-ordination of strategies and areas of LDD work in Norfolk.

From April 2010 a parent from FVN will take the role of co-chair ensuring that parent's views are at the very heart of the larger decisions in our county.

Parent Partnership Steering Group: supporting, promoting and developing the impartial Norfolk Parent Partnership Service.

As parents, FVN has begun to learn more about the way parent partnership operates and our contribution is now becoming more effective as a 'critical friend'.

Norfolk Transition Strategy Group (TSG): discusses and oversees the development of systems, structures and strategies around transition to adulthood including person centred planning.

As a result of FVN involvement, Connexions agreed to include Autistic Spectrum Conditions awareness in Professional Practise Day for PA's.

Other FVN Representation and Involvement

Contenance: **taken up on behalf of members to raise** the issues surrounding Norfolk's changes in continence services and supplies.

Disability Joint Register:

Residential Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision: Looking at development of boarding facility for a new complex needs school in King's Lynn, Norfolk that will be used as a respite facility during weekends and school holidays.

Nelson Lodge Forum: looking at additional uses of this facility including use by those home educating their child(ren).

Integrated Services project (ITCHY): Joint health and social care project looking at having integrated teams for children with disabilities.

Norfolk County Council Children's Services recruitment: **FVN representatives on interview panel** for new SEN tribunals officer for Norfolk.

SEN Provision: **Contributing** to the consultations related to this the review of SEN provision in Norfolk. **Involved** in discussions and various working groups.

Short Breaks website: **FVN advised** on the development and creation of this tool that is used by parents and carers.

'Transition to Adulthood': **meetings** held across the County so that **parents and carers learnt about** Norfolk's plans and **enabled to voice their views. Report commissioned** following these meetings, which will **be fed into the TSG in July 2010.**

'A Positive Way of Removing Barriers to Achievement – what is working well in Norfolk schools and what could be better?': **meetings** held across the County so that **parents and carers enabled to voice their views. Report commissioned** following these meetings, which will **be feedback to the Local Authority.**

Family Voice Website

Through successfully obtaining Awards for All funding from the lottery fund we have been able to develop a website that reaches out to and engages with parents/carers of children special and additional needs, explaining why Family Voice exists, what we do and for parents to give feedback to current topics of interest. It is there to inform and enable participation.

New leaflets were designed and these formed the basis for our web design. The website incorporates quotes from relevant government guidance that promotes parents working together with service providers, to improve services they receive.

Our website will always be work in progress, as services change so will the needs of our members. As we have retained total control of the site, we will be able to evolve to meet the needs of our members as they arise.

Chair's report

This has been a full and active year for Family Voice, we have continued to expand our membership and participation in strategic decision making bodies, also building a sound support base for the future with healthy finances.

We have had a number of key achievements. We have been able to develop a new website with the use of Lottery funding, which will continue to grow and develop.

It has been a difficult year to balance with asking too much of volunteers whilst ensuring everything runs efficiently with limited admin support, however we have emerged in a very strong position with the recent appointment of a part-time coordinating administrator. This has been the result of a long process but we are now in a sound financial position thanks to our various funding streams. We are thankful for the generous donation from a local trust fund, and that the local authority recognise the value of the contribution we make. Funding from central government is restricted in its use but has allowed us to push forward in the important area of increasing our membership. Our systems now in place are allowing us to increase at a faster rate. It is now important that we keep high levels of reserves in order to maintain our security and independence.

At Family Voice we have chosen the model of being the voice ourselves, rather than paying someone to speak for us; and the resources we have been given for administration will facilitate this. Articulate, organised, professional parents will always find it easier to contribute; we also particularly value the better understanding of the system that those parents bring who study or work in this area. Our challenge is to ensure that our systems and processes are such that anyone can sit on our steering group or be facilitated to sit on a strategy group. The criteria are a passion and vision for how things could be better, not the ability to contribute in a pre-determined way. We will continue to develop towards being a fully inclusive group of parents who facilitate and represent the views of all parents of children with special and additional need across Norfolk.

It is with pride in the achievements and passion of so many parents that I now stand down as chair and look forward to Family Voice continuing to seize the opportunities we have, to make such desperately needed improvements for our children and families.

Matthew Hall

Chair March 2010

Treasurer's Report

This year has seen considerable growth in the activity with in Family Voice and the raising of our profile. Much of this has been accomplished on a purely voluntary basis and has called considerably on the good will of many of the Steering Group members.

I am very pleased to say that our financial situation has improved considerably since my report last year, with an agreement from Norfolk County Council to fund us to offer a part time Administrating Coordinator role on a self-employed basis two days per week. This role will be commencing very soon and will make up the bulk of our outgoings beyond all our usual travel claims, membership development and support and our marketing costs.

Our marketing plan has included support from the Lottery Fund for our website and from Together for Disabled Children (TDC) for leaflets to be distributed around the County. The next steps will be to fund professional standard stationary, posters, newsletters and advertising banners for exhibitions.

We have used this year's TDC grant to develop our work with our members, to ensure they have a chance to have their voice heard at several open meetings around the County, on our new website consultations and to encourage more members to join. We are making contact with all the members on our database and are considering how in the future we can ensure that all Norfolk's families where ever they live, can benefit from being members of Family Voice.

We are delighted to announce a very recent and considerable donation of £15,000 from the Jane Durell Charitable Trust and a second small personal donation from the Rev Jane Durell herself. This generosity ensures our security for some time to come in these difficult and uncertain financial times.

Anna Gill

Treasurer March 2010

Statement of financial activities from 20/03/2009-19/03/2010

	Restricted Funds £	Non-Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Incoming Resources			
Funding from Norfolk CC	-	9500.00	9,500.00
Earned income	-	2236.51	2,236.51
Donations	15368.90	-	15,368.90
Payment for consultation work (National Children's Bureau-Tracking Project)	188.80	-	188.80
TDC Grant Phase 1 (Balance)	1,520.83	-	1,520.83
TDC Grant Phase 2	10,000.00	-	10,000.00
Awards for All (Website Award)	3100.00	-	3,100.00
<u>Incoming Resources</u>			<u>41,915.04</u>
Refund received		56.18	
<u>TOTAL</u>			<u>41,971.22</u>
Resources Expended			
Unrestricted Expenditure (Admin/Travel/IT/Recruitment/Marketing)	-	12,560.26	12,560.26
TDC Grant Phase1	1,520.83	-	1,520.83
TDC Grant Phase 2	9,493.03	-	9,493.03
Awards for All	3,100.00	-	3,100.00
<u>Total Resources Expended</u>			<u>26,674.12</u>
<u>Total Funds at 19/03/2009</u>	<u>1,520.83</u>	<u>6,519.97</u>	<u>£8040.80</u>
<u>Total Funds at 19/03/2010</u>	<u>506.97</u>	<u>21,310.10</u>	<u>£21,817.07</u>