



Annual General Meeting

11 May 2016 at 18.00

Ayton House
11 Ayton Rd
Wymondham
NR18 0QQ

Report from the Chair	2
Report from Representatives and Ambassadors Lead	3
Family Voice events	
Parent carer participation events	4
Family Voice Norfolk Conference	5
Family Voice Representation	
Family Voice Representation on groups	7
EHCP family experience survey	8
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) revision	9
Report from Treasurer	10
Family Voice Norfolk financial report	11



Report from the Chair

My mum often says that time goes more quickly as you get older; well, judging by the way this past year has flown by, I'm definitely getting older!

We had a very successful year despite the challenges that the reforms continue to pose. In the middle of the year, we tried a different way of working as a Steering Group and this proved a step too far, with meetings poorly attended. We took steps to fix this and now have a healthy number of members on the Steering Group.

At the same time, we have continued to build the numbers of Representatives and Ambassadors. Both teams have proved very good in their roles, which they carry out with great professionalism. The Ambassadors in particular have been instrumental in increasing attendance at the Family Voice Conference from 127 last year to 175 this time. The feedback received from families who attended has been fantastic – please see our Conference report at [Conference Report 2016](#) and [Conference Report Appendix 2016](#).

At our eight parent carer participation events, we were able to make contact with parent carers who are typically hard to reach.

I would like to offer my thanks to the Steering Group members who have decided not to stand this year. I'd also like to thank the staff, officers, remaining Steering Group members and, of course, all our Family Voice members for their hard work.

I look forward to working with everyone over the coming year to improve services for children in Norfolk

Tracey Sismey
Chair, Family Voice Norfolk
May 2016



Report from Representatives and Ambassadors Lead

As part of the Steering Group reorganisation referred to in the report from our Chair, I was asked to lead the Representative and Ambassador teams. I was delighted to accept the challenge as I believe that these roles are at the very core of what we do and if we are effective in these roles, we will meet our goals as an organisation. It was great to have a small but perfectly formed team already in place to build from, but both teams were stretched and in need of some reinforcement if we were to have the capacity to use our influence at all the opportunities that are available to us.

We started the year with an open meeting for each team and invited interested members to join us to find out more about the role and what we would be putting in place to support each team. These days were incredibly successful. We had some really strong candidates coming forward to get involved, and I am delighted to say that they are now highly valued and effective team members.

We have started to implement a programme of training and development for each team and a series of regular team meetings. We have a vibrant Facebook page for the teams to share information and experiences and to offer support within our roles.

The outcome has been that we have been able to accept more opportunities for parent carers' voices to be heard, with the added bonus of a much wider range of faces to represent the views of Norfolk families. However, these teams would not function without the excellent support and organisational skills of Marianne Purdy, our Administration Manager, and she has made my role so much easier than it might have been!

Each member of the teams has a unique contribution to make, which is sincerely valued by both our partners and the Steering Group. I look forward to welcoming more members to the teams this year. We can never have too many voices and faces!

Karen Wooddissee
Family Voice Norfolk
Lead: Representatives and Ambassadors
May 2016



Karen (at far left) with a group of Representatives, Ambassadors (in sashes), Steering Group members, Membership Secretary Kate (purple hair) and Admin Manager Marianne (purple scarf) after this year's Family Voice Conference.



Parent carer participation events

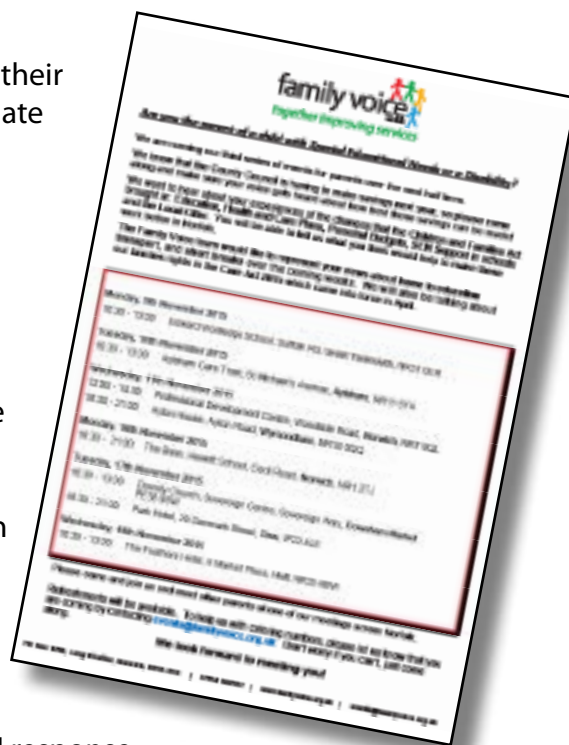
We held a series of listening events across our county, visiting places where parent carers rarely have the opportunity to have their voices heard – Downham Market, Holt, Aylsham, Diss, Norwich (two venues), Wymondham and Great Yarmouth.

The aims for this year's events were:

- To explore and collect evidence of the experiences of families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in Norfolk across the full breadth of services provided or commissioned by the Local Authority, Commissioned Health Services, Early Years, Schools and Further Education Providers.
- To give the Steering Group of Family Voice Norfolk some clear priorities to inform the work plan.
- To use this evidence to continue our representational work with local partners to improve services for children and young people with SEND in Norfolk.
- To increase the membership of Family Voice and encourage more parent carers to get involved.

We listened to what parent carers told us about their experiences and captured them in a report. To date we have had some strong outcomes from this. Services have been very willing to work with us to address some of the issues, such as:

- Discussions with TITAN to make sure that the right action is taken to address parents' concerns.
- Family Voice leading on the work to produce a family satisfaction questionnaire for NCC to gather information to improve family experiences of Education, Health & Care Plan processes.
- Conversations opened with the Transport Department with the aim of improving service.
- The CCGs and NHS England have made a full response.



The full report and response from Health Services can be found at www.familyvoice.org.uk/images/FV%20SEND%20Report%202015%20Final.pdf

Karen Wooddissee
 Family Voice Norfolk
 Parent carer participation events



Family Voice Norfolk Conference

Family Voice Norfolk held its sixth annual Conference for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities at the John Innes Centre on 5 March 2016. With more than 250 people attending – that’s a whopping 40% increase in attendance – this year was a bigger and better event than ever before. There were also 33 stands for SEND professionals, providers and charities – 25% more than in previous years. The keynote speaker was Councillor Tom Garrod, who talked about how things had improved since he was a teenager and especially since the Children and Families Act and the Care Act both came into force in 2014.



I have learnt more in the last 15 minutes than in the last 5 years.

Following Tom’s presentation, the first four workshop sessions were held – on Short Breaks, Preparing for Adulthood (Transition), the ASD pathway and one interestingly called Tweet and Meet. Each was co-hosted by a representative from the Local Authority and a member of Family Voice, except for the last one. This was in a new

format and was hosted by Tom Garrod and Joan Latta, one of last year’s guest speakers. In the afternoon, a further set of four workshops was run on the Care Act and Carer Assessments, Transport, the Local Offer and Education, Health and Care Plans.

Keep up good work.

Here are some highlights from the workshops:

- The ASD Pathway was packed to the gunnels, with members and practitioners even standing at the back. Everyone participated and there was so little time for all the parent-carer questions that some practitioners stayed on afterwards to answer them all.
- Tweet and Meet was an innovative workshop where people could raise a SEND issue or report an experience using a 140-character statement (as if using Twitter) and then others could ‘follow’ it. The statements were put on a board together with the follow up. Then the tweeting went live and everyone joined in by taking part in a discussion with a group of people interested in the topic.
- The Care Act and Carer Assessments had a guest speaker, Sharon Brooks, from the Carers Council. Participants were asked a question to start the ball rolling: how long does it take to get out of the house in the morning? They were also informed that as carers they were entitled to an assessment of their needs, which was also touched on in the Transition workshop.
- The whole process around Education, Health and Care Plans, was outlined by the Local Authority, and many parents expressed concern about the length of the process. The biggest concern of parents, however, seemed to be less about the timing issues and more about the need for schools, parent carers and the Local Authority all to play their parts and interact positively in order that children and young people are properly supported.



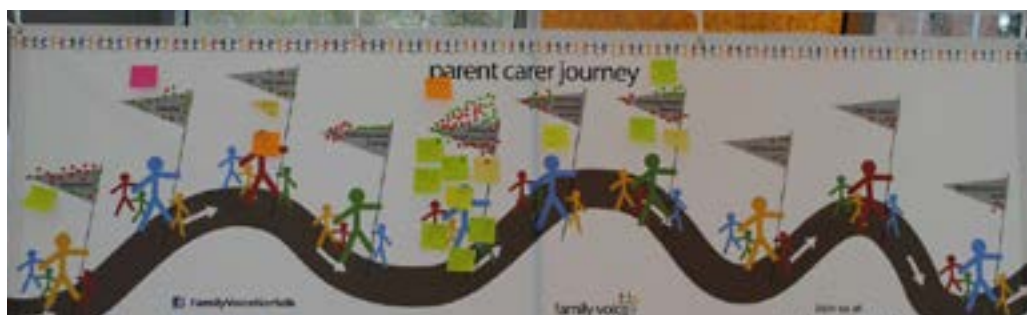
More than 30 organisations were represented by the displays present this year. There were sports charities, many local and national SEND charities, healthcare organisations, services from the local authority, educational organisations, care homes and many others. The room was abuzz with conversation and discussions for most of the day.



Carers in Norfolk save the authorities £60 a second!

During the lunch break the ever popular and always oversubscribed event of 'speed dating' with a practitioner was held. This allowed individual carers to book a one-to-one session with a professional. There was also a workshop at this time for people to come and learn about Family Voice Norfolk.

We also tried to gauge from our members how the parent carer journey had fared for them. The journey was divided into 10 milestones displayed along a banner. Each member was allowed one vote for the best (green) and one vote for the worst (red) part of their journey. A third of the total votes went to one milestone, 'Getting the Right Education'. Interestingly, the vote for whether it was the best or worst was just in favour of it being the best part of the journey. The second in line (but way behind) was 'Assessment'. This was not evenly spread, however, with two-thirds of respondents saying it was their worst experience.



Children were kept happy during the day in their own separate area, where there were specific activities available to entertain them, but we're sorry that we never have enough space for everyone who wants to attend.

Fantastic event! Will definitely come again next year.

As always, we invited feedback from every participant, whether parent carer or practitioner, who attended. We had 138 responses and their comments are featured here.

They provided feedback on what they found most useful about the event, what could have been better, and many other issues. We were given 9 out of 10 for the overall satisfaction of those who responded. Thanks to all who attended for making it such a successful day.

The full details of workshop content and all the feedback from families and practitioners can be found at [Conference Report Appendix 2016](#) or please email admin@familyvoice.org.uk or write to Family Voice at Family Voice Norfolk, PO Box 1290, Long Stratton, Norwich NR15 2HD.



Some of the groups Family Voice Norfolk Representatives have been involved with this year

Education, Health and Care Plan Survey ★	Autistic Spectrum Disorder Steering Group	Child Health and Maternity Commissioning Network
Continence	Communicative Technology Steering Group	Children with Disabilities Project Board
Eastern Region Parent Carer Forum	Family Forum	Health Short Breaks
Inclusion Barometer	Local Offer Forum	Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
UEA Student Nurse Intake Interviews	Palliative Care	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Action Group
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities e-Newsletter	Norfolk Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Partnership Steering Group	Voluntary Sector Forums
Interview panels	Autistic Spectrum Disorder Pathway	Education, Health and Care Plan Revision ★

Read more about starred groups in reports by Representatives overleaf.



EHCP family experience survey

Background:

With Norfolk County Council (NCC), Family Voice Norfolk identified a need for an effective and suitable way for families to feed back their experience of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment process. This need was identified after consultation with families at various events and from parent participation within our forum, as well as NCC's wish to understand the experiences of families in order to continue to improve the process. As a result, a Family Voice working group compiled a draft questionnaire based on families' true experiences. Subsequently, a wider working group has been set up to implement a new EHCP family survey questionnaire.

Objective:

To implement a family experience survey for families who are experiencing the 20-week EHCP needs assessment process.

Partners:

Family Voice Norfolk, and the Norfolk County Council Children's Services' Education Inclusion Service.

Considerations:

The working group will meet on 20 May 2016 at County Hall to consider the following tasks:

- WHEN will the survey be communicated to families for their completion? (To include all families who experience the process regardless of their 'exit point' – week 6, 16 or 20.)
- HOW do we ask families to contribute? (Means of communication.)
- HOW do we create an electronic survey that can also be completed by other means (paper, telephone, in person)?
- HOW will we collate, aggregate and make sense of the findings?

Outcome:

A fully inclusive survey, co-produced by Family Voice Norfolk and Norfolk County Council, which provides reliable information based on families' true experiences of the EHCP needs assessment process. This will be created using Children's Services' technical processes and expertise to produce an easily accessible, user-friendly document.

Cheryl Bould
Emma Parncutt
Representatives
Family Voice Norfolk
May 2016



Cheryl (left) and Emma (right) also wrote the piece on the EHCP revision on page 9.



Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) revision

Background:

Family Voice Norfolk Parent Carer Participation Events and monthly feedback from our membership highlighted ongoing issues and concerns with the EHC process and the plan itself. Concerns were varied but included the provision in the plan not being adhered to and plans not being SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound). In line with this, a recent national study of families' experiences of the EHCP process, which included Norfolk, revealed how varied the journey could be. Norfolk County Council Education Health & Plan Co-ordinators were also experiencing challenges with the new paperwork and systems. We discussed this together and a working group was set up to address the difficulties surrounding the EHC Plan in Norfolk and how it could be reviewed in the light of experience to enable better outcomes.

Partners:

Family Voice Norfolk and NCC Children's Services Education Inclusion Service, Norfolk SEND Partnership, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust.

Objectives:

To co-produce a revised Norfolk EHC Plan. This will respond to the issues and concerns expressed about the current one.

Considerations:

- Ease of use for all (parent carers, professionals)
- Producing a guide for parents about the Plan's purpose/how to fill it in/the process/who to speak to if unhappy
- Ensuring provision is put into practice by clearer accountability in the Plan
- How best to phrase the aspirations section
- SMART plans
- NNPCF priority – raising awareness about the need for support for families with children who have life-limiting or very complex health conditions

Tasks:

1. Each partner reports issues and concerns with the Plan – these are discussed and agreed.
2. Restructure each section of the Plan together, with guidance from the code informing decisions.
3. Several versions of the new Norfolk plan are produced.
4. The versions are presented to a working group (probably SEND Action Group) for a decision on an agreed final version.
5. New version of Plan implemented.

Outcome:

A new Norfolk EHC Plan that is easier to use and ensures better, more relevant provision and better outcomes. During and after the process, parents are empowered and informed, with clear channels to raise concerns.



Report from the Treasurer

Family Voice has two main sources of funding. The work of our Representatives, Ambassadors and self-employed admin staff is funded by Norfolk County Council. Our other main source of income is an annual Department for Education grant, which pays for our Conference and other specific events and expenses.

Following a successful meeting with Norfolk County Council during the spring of 2015, there was a change to the way we receive funding from them. While in the past we have been paid in arrears, from 2015 and in future we will be paid in advance. Therefore in July 2015 we received the arrears for 2014/15 of £47,271.29 and also £40,000 for the 2015/16 financial year. The figure of £40,000 was to cover £20,000 for our two admin staff (this money is restricted) and £20,000 for other expenses, such as Representatives' and Ambassadors' hours and mileage and our other running expenses (unrestricted).

Our meeting with NCC in April 2016 resulted in an agreement that we will receive £63,000 for this financial year. This amount is to cover our annual running expenses plus money for projects that the Steering Group wishes to develop during the year.

All Parent Carer Forums, regardless of size, receive an annual grant of £15,000 from DfE. When we apply for the grant, we have to document how we intend to spend it. Last year we stated that we would be using the grant:

- to put on our annual Conference
- to put on parent carer participation events
- for admin communication
- for a Representatives' training day.

We actually spent £19,196.32, of which £14,311.57 was spent on producing a brilliant Conference. In addition to this grant, we were also successful in securing two additional grants from DfE worth in total £6,437.30. These discretionary grants are made available when individual Parent Carer Forums are unable to spend their full grant, so money is returned to the centre and offered to other Parent Carer Forums, if they can show that they could use the money. We spent these additional grants to increase our number of banners and roller bags (needed for our increased number of Ambassadors), promotional items (bags, pens and pads) and further training.

We continue to hold reserves given to us by a charitable foundation. These and the NCC funding changes have left us with a healthy balance.

In the near future, we intend to change our bank account to allow us to make use of BACS payments.

Alison Furniss
Treasurer, Family Voice Norfolk
May 2016



Family Voice Norfolk financial report

Financial year ending 31.03.2016

	Financial year 2015/16	Financial year 2014/15
Balance brought forward	£11,249.49	
INCOME		
Restricted	£41,437.00	£38,102.00
Unrestricted	£67,271.29	£23,100.00
TOTAL INCOME	£108,708.29	£61,202.00
EXPENDITURE		
Restricted	£43,507.99	£38,883.72
Unrestricted	£20,157.92	£30,170.35
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£63,665.91	£69,054.07
Balance carried forward	£56,291.87	

INCOME		
Restricted		
DfE Grant	£21,437.00	£18,352.00
NCC staff	£20,000.00	£17,000.00
Local Offer support		£2,750.00
Total restricted income	£41,437.00	£38,102.00
Unrestricted		
NCC participation	£20,000.00	£23,000.00
Previous year payment	£47,271.29	£100.00
Total unrestricted income	£67,271.29	£23,100.00
TOTAL INCOME	£108,708.29	£61,202.00

EXPENDITURE		
Restricted		
DfE restricted	£24,951.29	£18,271.26
NCC restricted	£18,556.70	£19,846.71
NCC restricted (Local Offer)		£765.75
Total restricted expenditure	£43,507.99	£38,883.72
Unrestricted		
Travel, room hire, claims	£20,157.92	£30,170.35
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£63,665.91	£69,054.07

