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If there are issues you'd like to see in future newsletters, contact admin@familyvoice.org.uk or 07535 895748.

Please put these dates are in your 2018 diary!

Family Voice Annual Conference

Saturday 10th March 2018

John Innes Centre, Norwich NR4 7UH

Keynote speech:

Children and Young People's mental health and emotional wellbeing: A vision for Norfolk and Waveney

Book delegate and childcare places from

Monday 15th January 2018

- online at www.familyvoice.org.uk • by phone on 07535 895748
- by email to admin@familyvoice.org.uk • or via links on

 [FamilyVoiceNorfolk](https://www.facebook.com/FamilyVoiceNorfolk)

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Season's Greetings
from all at Family Voice





Rachel Clarke, Ambassadors Lead, reports:

During November, Family Voice ran a series of new-style events called Family Voice, Family Chat in

four locations across Norfolk. We surveyed you, our membership, during the summer months about what subjects you would like to discuss and whereabouts these events needed to be, and discovered that you really needed to talk about SEN Support and the EHC Plan process and identified four popular locations in Attleborough, Great Yarmouth, Swaffham and Sprowston.

We were delighted to partner with Norfolk SEND Partnership (SENDIASS) to bring you these events and would like to thank them for their excellent presentations and explanations of both subjects, and for helping many of you with your questions and current situations.

The feedback from those of you who joined us at our FVFC sessions has been excellent and we are so pleased that you have received them with such enthusiasm and praise. Thank you

family voice
family chat

to all who came along and shared your experiences with us. A report of the events will be written in the New Year, which will be shared with you and the Local Authority.

We plan to arrange more events for the 2018 summer term and would love to see you there.

Finally, huge thanks go to Lynnette and Amy from Norfolk SEND Partnership, to Cheryl from Family Voice who was a superb facilitator for the four events and to Bernadette and the Ambassador Team for all their hard work in making the sessions welcoming and successful.



Consultation: Reducing the need for restraint

The Department of Health and Department of Education have jointly commissioned new guidance reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention **for children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorder and mental health difficulties**. The new guidance applies to all health care commissioned by the NHS, children's homes and special schools and colleges. They are consulting on the draft, which was produced for them by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), until **24 January 2018**.

This guidance replaces:

- Guidance for Restrictive Physical Interventions: How to provide safe services for people with Learning Disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (2002, DfES and DH); and
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (2003, DfES and DH).

The views of parent carers are vital, so if you have time please use the link below to give your opinion **before 24 January 2018**.

Here is a link to the draft guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restraint-and-restrictive-intervention-draft-guidance>

This site then points to a further link where you can participate in the survey: <https://consultations.dh.gov.uk/dementia-and-disabilities/reducing-the-need-for-restraint/>



Lisa Lonergan: My role as a rep



I first heard of Family Voice two years ago and signed up to attend their annual conference. My first impression as I walked through the door was 'wow!' There was a multitude of stands offering advice and support, organisations to support all ages and information on groups. They ran sessions throughout the day that were so useful I wanted to attend them all! I was so impressed by how informative and useful the day was that I came back the following year. I felt empowered for the first time in a long while. The dedication, organisation and passion of the Family Voice team really inspired me and I signed up to become a member to have my voice heard. I was also interested in joining their team as I could see the good work they were doing and I felt so passionate about the difference they could make for our children and young people.

Soon after, Kate the Membership Manager, rang me and we had a friendly chat. I expressed my interest in becoming a parent representative and a chat over a coffee was arranged with Bernadette, the Administration Manager, and Cheryl, the Reps Lead, who explained the role of a Parent Carer Rep – that's when my role started.

So as a Parent Rep, I and the other Reps are sent information on forthcoming meetings that are of interest to Family Voice to contribute parent carers' experiences and to help shape and improve services. Family Voice responds as to whether we can and wish to attend such meetings, drawing on our expertise as parent carers. Then Cheryl and Bernadette decide who would be most suited to attend these meetings and find out if individual reps are available.

At my first meeting I was so nervous. Would I know what to do and say? Would everyone there be more experienced than me? Would I be able to bring anything useful to the table? What had I let myself in for?! Cheryl came along to my first meeting to show me the ropes. I watched Cheryl as she professionally shared our parent carers' views and pointed out gaps in provision that needed addressing. I found the whole experience extremely interesting and positive, as Family Voice was making a difference. I was still a little anxious if I would be able to contribute at meetings and be able to speak up, but actually I found it very easy, once I start sharing our experiences. I find I'm so passionate about getting our voice heard that I can talk quite easily. So far all the meetings I've attended have been very positive and everyone has been so nice and welcoming and genuinely interested in what we have to share.

At every new event I attend or sign up to I remember that first meeting and the feeling I had that Family Voice is making a difference to our children and young people. Although I know sometimes progress and change can be slow and seem as though it will never happen, I believe it will with us driving it. It's quite simple for me, I have to do something that makes a change for our children now and in the future, services have to improve and the future has to look bright, inclusive and positive and I feel as a Rep I'm doing my small bit to help this happen. The team I work with are lovely, parents just like me who want to make a difference for our children, young people and families. I'm so happy I joined them and became part of a team that is making a difference and having a positive impact on the future.

Remember...

If you have news or views to share with us, you can contact our Membership manager Kate on 07950 302937 or email her at: membership@familyvoice.org.uk or contact us on:



www.familyvoice.org.uk



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Local Offer Peer Review workshop



Nicola Baxter, Communications Lead, reports:

At the end of November, I took part in a Local Offer Peer Review Workshop in Stevenage on behalf of Family Voice Norfolk. It was held to give local authorities from the east of England the opportunity to review each other's Local Offer, receive feedback on their own and benefit from examples of good practice elsewhere.

I was glad to have the opportunity to attend for several reasons. Before the workshop, I was asked to review another authority's Local Offer, which was in itself an interesting exercise. As a frequent user of Norfolk's Local Offer – the one-stop shop for information about all matters to do with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – I know parts of it well, but in reviewing the Luton Local Offer website, I was in the position of any parent trying to find information for the first time and I was reminded of how important it is that we all use clear and straightforward language.

At the workshop itself, I was one of only two parent carer representatives present, although all local authorities had been encouraged to involve parent carers. Local authorities really

need parent carer voices to help shape the way information is given and the kind of services available. Also attending from Norfolk was Wayne Doman, Local Offer Officer for NCC, who is himself a parent carer, so we were well represented from Norfolk. The Local Offer covers a huge range of topics to do with SEND, so there was a focus at this workshop on information to do with Preparing for Adulthood.

The Norfolk Local Offer was reviewed by Suffolk and was very well received. We were complimented on most of the features being reviewed and later were able to help other authorities to think differently about their own Local Offer.

One important feature of our Local Offer is that it is constantly being updated. I was aware of this because Family Voice Norfolk and other organisations are often asked to take part in the revision of different sections of the LO. I would encourage any user of the Local Offer to use the Feedback button at the bottom right of every page to let the local authority know what works well on the Local Offer and where changes are needed. It is quick and easy to do and will mean that our Local Offer continues to grow and improve.

SEND e-Newsletter

If you do not already subscribe to Norfolk's SEND e-Newsletter, you can do so easily on the Local Offer website (www.norfolk.gov.uk/send).

The newsletter is full of information about events and services in Norfolk that may be of interest to you and your family.



Family Voice Norfolk newsletter deadlines

The first newsletter for 2018 will appear at the end of January. If there are issues that you would like to see covered, please contact Bernadette at admin@familyvoice.org.uk or leave a message on 07535 895748 before 24 January 2017. Your views and news are always welcome.



Consultation: Families' experiences of Health & Social Care and ASD diagnosis services in Norfolk

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent consumer champion for anyone in Norfolk who uses health and social care services. As a registered charity, its role is to help you have your say about the way that health and social care services are planned and delivered in Norfolk. Your feedback is really important to help Healthwatch Norfolk improve local services across Norfolk. For more information, please visit: www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

Autism represents one of the three key priorities for Healthwatch Norfolk's work this year. They say:

We are looking to understand more about families' experiences of health and social care services supporting their child's needs. We also want to hear of families' journey through the local Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis services across Norfolk. We know that ASD can affect many individuals and families, which can often define what services

both they and their child may need and come into contact with. We also know that having access to the right help and support at the right time can really make a difference to families.

We want to hear from parents and carers of children/young people (0–18 years old) with ASD or suspected ASD in Norfolk. This includes families who have concerns their child may have ASD, those waiting for a diagnosis and those whose child has a diagnosis. We want to understand your experiences of: general NHS health and social care services, ASD diagnosis services and getting support.

If you have any questions, please contact Steph Tuvey, Healthwatch Norfolk Assistant Project Manager, on: Freephone: 0808 168 9669; email: steph.tuvey@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

The link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/AutismAnglia-ASDservices>

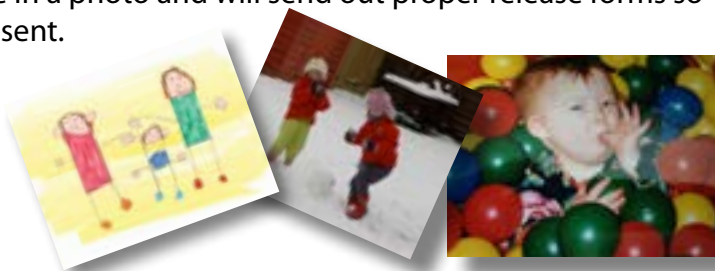
Pictures needed!

One of Family Voice Norfolk's priorities in 2018 is a total revamp of our website. It's well overdue for a facelift and we'd like to add more functions to it to keep pace with the many ways in which we all keep in touch these days.

We would love to feature some happy, smiling faces on the website, and although we could source these from an agency, it would be lovely if we could show real Norfolk families. These could be photos and/or colourful works of art from children and young people, especially showing families and what they love to do together.

I'm sure you'll appreciate that we can't guarantee to use what you send us, but if we do, we will not be wanting to identify anyone in a photo and will send out proper release forms so that we can be sure we have your consent.

Pictures and photos in a digital form would be best, and can be sent to Bernadette at admin@familyvoice.org.uk



NNPCF: Joint Parent Carer Participation Conference

Family Voice Norfolk is part of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF). Tracey Sismey, our Chair, and Trevor Wang, our Treasurer, attended the NNPCF conference in Manchester at the end of November and reported that there was a great feeling of togetherness among representatives of parent carer forums from across the country, as many of us experience the same challenges. For example, transport for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is 'consistently inconsistent' across the forums.

Some highlights from the event are given below, together with a comment on the situation we experience in Norfolk.

- 82,000 parent carers are now connected to 150 parent carer forums (PCFs) across England and membership continues to rise steadily.

However, numbers of members actively involved in the work of PCFs is falling, so the work of representation and running forums is falling on fewer shoulders each year.

In Norfolk, our numbers continue to rise, and we are becoming successful in gaining representation on more and more committees and decision-making bodies in Education, Social Care and Health Services. However, greater representation does require more representatives – we encourage anyone who is interested to make contact. We are all parent carers and understand the demands of family life, so we would never pressure anyone to do more than was comfortable for them. But our motto is 'together we are stronger', so we would always welcome more members to play a greater part.

- 45% of forums operate solely on the grant they receive from the Department for Education. 55% of forums receive some additional funding.

In Norfolk, we receive an additional grant from the Local Authority. We welcome this not only because it enables us to do more to represent



parent carers in our county, but also because it is a sign of the LA's commitment to working in co-production with parent carers and shows that the LA appreciates the benefits we can bring in guiding services so that they truly reflect the needs of families.

- There is a tendency across the country for Education to be the area of most involvement for PCFs, followed by Social Care and finally Health Services. However, engagement with Health Services is showing an upward trend.

We too find that a great deal of our work is with Education partners, but increasingly we are attending meetings about key issues in both Social Care and Health Services. We are keenly aware that for children and young people with SEND, there is often involvement of all three services and the way in which they work together can be critical for our families. As parent carers ourselves, Family Voice Norfolk reps are well placed to see where joint commissioning and working together will be of benefit. Although this is not always easy to bring about, we do see signs of more awareness of the need for services to liaise and co-produce.

Contact the charity for families with disabled children, is the delivery partner of the Department for Education in supporting parent carer participation in England. Working in partnership with the NNPCF, Contact offers a range of support to all parent carer forums in England, including administering a grant to forums on behalf of the Department for Education. More information about how this works (as well as lots of other information of interest to families) can be found on their website: <https://contact.org.uk/>

