



Annual General Meeting

20 May 2019 at 18.00 for 18.30

Ayton House
11 Ayton Rd
Wymondham
NR18 0QQ

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Report from the Chair

Tracey Sismey reports:

We've had another busy year!

Last year saw the launch of our new Family Voice Five-Minute Focus surveys – opportunities for busy, stressed families quickly and easily to give us useful information about the services they receive or would like to. Our first survey was on Social, Emotional and Mental Health. The results of this survey were fed back to the Virtual School for SEND Advisory Group. Our next Five-Minute Focus survey is being launched today and will seek views about Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) services.



Family Voice Ambassador teams ran two successful sets of Family Voice Family Chat sessions this year – one on Preparing for Adult Life and the second on SEND Transport and Travel. Turn to page 3 to find out more.

Our Ambassador team also works hard to sign up new members. At 31 March 2019, our membership numbers were over 1,250, which includes parent carers, associates and affiliate members. Our Membership Secretary Kate Draycott is always in contact with new members and reports that we now represent over 1,060 children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Kate gathers the views of new and existing parents so that our Representatives can highlight weaknesses in service provision and champion good experiences.

Our Ninth Annual Conference attracted over 270 parent carers and their children and over a 100 professionals offering support, information and advice. A report can be found on page 5.

Last year we were able to secure funding from Norfolk's five Clinical Commissioning Groups, which, together with the funding from Norfolk County Council, enabled Family Voice Representatives to attend more meetings regarding health, education and social care than ever before.

A new initiative last year was meeting with various local support groups and establishing common themes that are affecting many of our families. These included issues around Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), tribunals and autism diagnosis. The resulting report was discussed at a meeting with NCC, and we will all be working together to address the actions that arose.

Sam Booker has joined the team as Administration Assistant and although she is not staying in this role, she will be continuing her sterling work of setting up and maintaining the increasingly vital IT systems for Family Voice Norfolk.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Steering Group, Representatives and Ambassadors for continuing to make our forum as successful as it is. I would also like to thank our Administration Manager, Membership Secretary and Administration Assistant for their continued support throughout the last year.

I am proud of the role that Family Voice Norfolk has played over the years in making families' lives a little better. We have come a long way since our beginnings. We will be holding our Tenth Anniversary Conference on Saturday, 14 March 2020 and look forward to celebrating with you.



Report from the Ambassadors Lead

Lisa Lonergan writes:

I took on the role of Ambassadors Lead in September 2018. Over the last year our Ambassadors have attended many events and coffee mornings, promoting Family Voice and our work as well as gathering feedback from families about their experiences of SEND services. We record this data and pass it on to our Representatives and Steering Group, who use this information when feeding back to the local authority and service providers in order to shape and improve services.



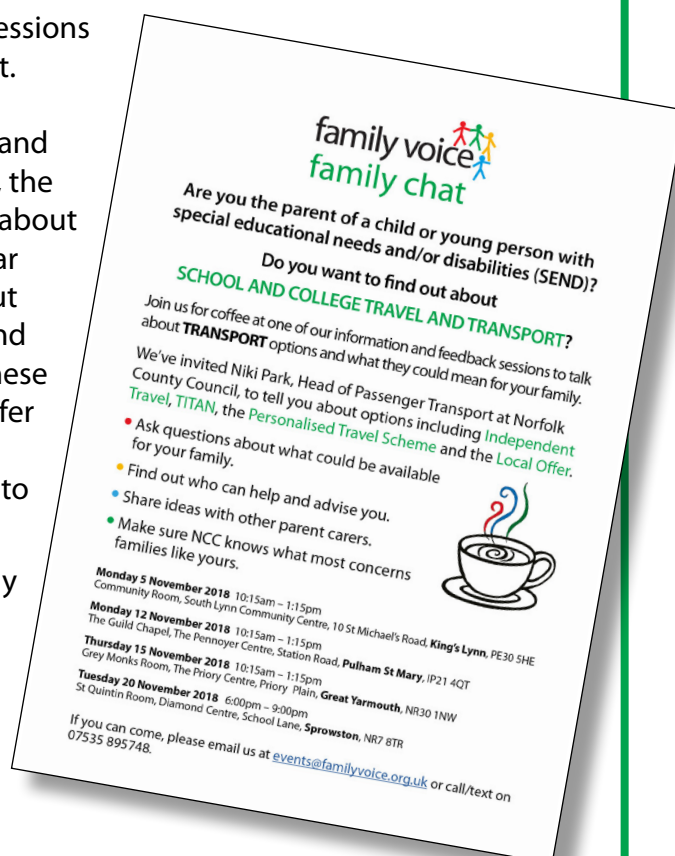
Our own parent participation format – Family Voice Family Chat – continued to prove popular with parent carers. We hold a set of four sessions on each topic, aiming to ensure that these take place across the county, especially in harder-to-reach areas. The idea is that we enable parent carers to hear from service providers and experts on topics of interest and also capture families' own experiences and issues to feed back to the authorities.

We began this time in June 2018 with a presentation from Frank Crowdy, Transition Lead for Norfolk County Council, on Preparing for Adult Life and the new Transition Service. This was welcomed both by parent carers whose young people were making that transition into adult life and by those for whom transition is still a few years away. These sessions were a useful way for families to gather information and think about aims and outcomes. We also had a short presentation by Wayne Doman from the Local Offer about how accessing this can help families with young people preparing for adult life. The feedback from both presentations was very positive and parent carers felt better informed.

Our second round of Family Voice Family Chat sessions in November were on SEND Travel and Transport. We had presentations from Niki Park, Head of Passenger Transport at Norfolk County Council, and representatives from Independent Travel, TITAN, the Personalised Travel Scheme and the Local Offer about their services. Again, these sessions were popular with our families, and parents raised issues about taxi services to and from school and where to find the information they need on the Local Offer. These issues were fed back to NCC, where the Local Offer team have subsequently made changes to the website to ensure that this information is easier to find.

Full reports about both these Family Voice Family Chat sessions can be found on our website at <https://www.familyvoice.org.uk/articles-reports/parent-carer-participation-events/>

Our final big event of the 2018/19 year was, as usual, our annual Conference in March 2019.



This was our best attended Conference to date, with over 270 parent carers participating. Our key note speaker was Sara Tough, Director of Children's Services, with a presentation about Making Change Happen – Service Re-design across Children's Services.

The 44 stands covered a wide range of subjects and service providers of interest to families with children and young people with SEND, while eight workshops covered key topics and 14 professionals offered short 'speed-dating' meetings to discuss parent carers' specific and personal concerns. You can find a summary report of the Conference on page 5 of this document and the full report will shortly appear on our website at <https://www.familyvoice.org.uk/articles-reports/conferences/>

This was a very successful day and the feedback from parent carers was extremely positive. Many professionals present also valued the opportunity to engage directly with families.

I would like to thank all our Ambassadors for their hard work in promoting the Conference and helping everything to run smoothly on the day. A big thank-you to Bernadette, our Administration Manager, who is responsible for most of the organisation, bookings and administration – a huge task. Next year is our Tenth Anniversary Conference. We intend to make it bigger and better than ever.

Earlier this year, our Steering Group discussed how we could improve communication not only with our membership but also with other groups within the world of SEND. We are not ourselves an advice or support group but we value the contribution that other groups make to the lives of families with children or young people with SEND. We instituted an Information Sharing Day, where we invited other groups to share with us and with each other their ways of operating and the major concerns of their families. This was an interesting and informative session that we hope to repeat in the future.

We already communicate in many ways with our membership and other families. This includes our ten newsletters a year, our website, via our Membership Secretary Kate Draycott, and the work of our Ambassadors. However, recently we decided to trial increasing our use of social media, especially Facebook, which we could use to share and signpost information that would be useful for our membership. We could also use this method for feedback on experiences of services that our families were using and share with them the projects we are working on. As Ambassadors Lead I was happy to take this on and I'm delighted that since we launched almost two months ago we have had a hugely positive response and feedback.

The work of our Ambassadors is evolving all the time. We have regular discussions on how best to reach the wider community in rural Norfolk. We regularly share ideas and support each other within this role and hope to roll out some of our ideas in the current year, with a new round of Family Voice Family Chat sessions. Preparations are also underway to set up a central database to make contact with schools, colleges and other organisations more efficient and effective.

I am looking forward to growing our Ambassador team to add to our already fantastic group and developing the role over the next year.



Family Voice Norfolk Conference 2019

Bernadette Pallister, Administration Manager, reports on this year's Conference:

The Conference began with a 'real buzz' when Sara Tough, the Director of Children's Services at Norfolk County Council, opened Family Voice Norfolk's ninth annual Conference for parent carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She spoke about the SEND Transformation Programme and how this investment will provide more spaces for children in Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) and new special schools. Many parent carers came to the Conference specifically to see Sara's presentation and to find out more about the Transformation Programme. Some were disappointed that there was not more time at the end for questions. We will bear this in mind when planning next year's Tenth Anniversary Conference.



The best day so far on this journey of ours...

Over 370 participants attended the 2019 Conference, making it our most popular to date. Of this number, over one hundred were professionals offering stands, workshops and the opportunity to talk to parent carers one-to-one. There were eight workshops, over 40 stands and more than 60 speed-dating sessions.



The morning workshops covered the popular topic of Preparing for Adult Life, the new Health digital platform called Just One Norfolk, a presentation on the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Pathway (standing room only) and the local authority's guidance for educational settings on the Provision Expected at SEN Support level.

Our ever-popular and over-subscribed speed-dating sessions were held over the lunchtime period. Fourteen professionals offered their time to talk, one-to-one, with over 60 parent carers, many of whom felt this was the most useful part of their day.



The afternoon workshops included a question and answer session with professionals about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), a presentation about the new service available for Young Carers, an 'engaging' workshop for young people to capture their views in the Local Offer and a presentation about Reviewing an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Nearly 200 parent carers attended the workshops and presentations will be available on our website shortly.



As well as the many stand holders who regularly attend our Conference, this year we included several new stands to give families increased variety, including local and national SEND charities, healthcare organisations, NHS service providers and services from the local authority. Stand holders value the opportunity to meet and talk to parent carers and network with other professionals.

The Family Voice Norfolk Ambassador team ran our own stand where parent carers were able to find out more about the work that Family Voice is involved in and sign up to become a member or to join the team. It is excellent to be able to talk directly with parent carers – after all, expressing families' views to decision-makers and planners is what we are all about. Our motto is 'together we are stronger', so the more voices we can represent through our membership, the more we can positively affect the services that we all need for our children and young people.

Never knew there was so much help out there...

Each year we ask parent carers and professionals for feedback about the Conference, which assists us with preparation for the following year. This year 100% of those parents who filled in their feedback forms said that they would recommend the Conference to a



friend and 95% said that they would come along next year. The other 5% have children who will be over 25 by this time next year.

It was lovely to see the friendly faces of parent carers who have been to many of our Conferences over the years and continue to get so much from the day. We were also delighted to welcome over 80 parent carers who attended for the first time. Many parent carers are not aware of all the services and support available and the Family Voice Conference is an important annual event that allows them to come together and realise that they are not alone. Many find the Conference day a wonderful chance to network with other parents and catch up with old friends.

Details of the feedback from parent carers and professionals will soon be available on our website at www.familyvoice.org.uk. If you would like a hard copy of this report or any of the presentations, please email office@familyvoice.org.uk or write to us at Family Voice Norfolk, PO Box 1290, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2HD.

We would like to thank all the parent carers and professionals who attended for making it such an amazing and successful day. Next year is our Tenth Anniversary Conference, so we welcome any ideas you have to make it an even more memorable experience.



See you next year!

It's never too early to save the date...

Family Voice Norfolk
Tenth Anniversary Conference
Saturday, 14 March 2020



Family Voice representation

These are just some of the groups and topics that Family Voice Norfolk Representatives have been involved with this year. You can find a fuller list on our website at www.familyvoice.org.uk/current-projects/boards-meetings-projects/

Eastern Region
Parent Carer Forum
(ERPCF)

All Age Autism
Partnership Board

SEND eNewsletter
Planning Meeting

SEN Support
Guidance
Document Review

Children's Health
and Integrated
Commissioning
Group

Norfolk Health
Overview and
Scrutiny Committee
(HOSC)

SEND Post-16
Learning Group

Communicative
Technology Aids
(CTA) Advisory
Panel Board

SENTravel, Personalised
Travel Scheme (PTS)
Working Group

Carers Council
Partnership
Meeting

Clinical Commissioning
Groups' (CCGs)
Community
Engagement Panels

Wheelchair User
Group

Transforming
Care Programme
Implementation
Steering Group

Local Offer User
Forum and
section reviews

SEND Leadership
Board

National Network
of Parent Carer
Forums (NNPCF)

Integrated
Residential Short
Breaks Project
Board

Palliative Care
Network

Norfolk Area SEND
Multi-Agency
Steering Group
(NASMA)

Norfolk SEND
Partnership

SEND e-Learning
Project Board

Norfolk Stakeholder
Group for Speech,
Language,
Communication Needs

SEND Health
Clinical Network

Local Offer
Peer Review
Workshops



Report from the Representatives Lead

Lorraine Devere reports:

Our team of Representatives (Reps) attended more meetings than ever last year, covering over 200 education, health, social care, voluntary sector and carers meetings.

In addition to this, they attended regular training sessions and team meetings. Last year we delivered training on SEND reforms, SEN Support and the assessment process, safeguarding, transforming care and conflict management.

These meetings also give our Reps an opportunity to find out more about each other's meetings and to share experiences and knowledge.

We are currently working on a mentoring and induction programme for new Reps, so that they feel confident and well prepared when they begin to attend meetings.

The meetings that our Reps attend are hugely varied. Some are one-off task-and-finish groups and some are long-standing meetings that we have been attending and contributing to for many years, such as the Communicative Technology Aids Advisory Panel Board and the Wheelchair User Group.

Last year we were invited to sit on the Speech, Language and Communication Needs Norfolk Stakeholder Group and present our parent carers' views on SALT services at the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). We will be attending this again in October 2019 and will be seeking to update and increase our understanding of parent carers' views and experiences of SALT services shortly. Please look out for news of the survey in our newsletter and on social media.

Our involvement with nursing interviews and training has meant that the next generation of nurses will, we hope, have a better understanding of the specialised needs of our children and young people and of the families that love and support them.

We are pleased to have leaflets at this AGM of the newly launched e-learning course for parent carers and professionals. This course gives learners a foundation knowledge and understanding of SEND for children and young people aged 0–25. It has been designed to support the professional development of those who work, or are training, in the field of SEND and is also a useful tool for parent carers. The course can be easily accessed via the Local Offer at www.norfolk.gov.uk/send

We aim to work in co-production with the local authority and health services. Being involved at the beginning of a project means that parent carers' views are taken on board right from the start. Our Reps sit on the Norfolk Area SEND Multi-Agency Steering Group (NASMA) and the SEND Leadership Board, and this means that we have been involved with the SEND Sufficiency Strategy from the beginning. We are now looking forward to being included in the working groups for the new Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) and new school provision.

We are always looking for new Representatives. Our Reps receive payment for their time attending and preparing for meetings and are reimbursed for their travel costs. If you would like to find out more, please email admin@familyvoice.org.uk.



Report from the Membership Secretary

Kate Draycott reports:

I am in my seventh year as Membership Secretary for Family Voice Norfolk and we have a steady increase year on year of new members. Numbers do fluctuate as young people reach 25 (when our remit ends) and then I ask if the parents would like to become associate members instead of full members.



Up to the end of March 2019, Family Voice Norfolk had 865 member families, representing 1,062 children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We have 76 affiliate members representing groups and organisations. We also have 164 associate members (for practitioners and extended family).

Our Ambassador team attend various events during the year and ask parent carers to sign up as members. Parent carers can also sign up via our website. Last year we had a net increase of 112 parent carers signing up to be members.

It's important for us at Family Voice to engage with members, so signing up is just the first step. I will then call them to complete the membership process. Each telephone call I make is different, as is the nature of our families, and sometimes I am the only adult conversation that parent has had in that day. Once I have explained that I am a parent just like them, as are all our Representatives and Ambassadors, I think it puts their mind at rest, and they find it easier to talk to me. While we do not offer advice or support, I often send out emails to new members with links to other useful groups and sources of information, with my signposting hat on, and hopefully the information given is useful.

Occasionally, if I am unable to contact new members by phone, I will email questions through to them.

While corresponding with parents, I take notes of what is currently working and not working for them and their children. These notes form the basis of information that our Reps then feed back into the various meetings that they attend.

The information that I supply to our Reps and Steering Group is always anonymised. I will also change family details if I think there is a possibility that professionals or others could identify the family concerned. I always want members to feel comfortable about telling us their views and experiences. It is vital to us that we understand what life is like for our members, and although we have our own experiences as parent carers of children and young people with SEND, we know that all children are individuals and all families are different.

It's important that we understand the needs, too, of families who have had difficulty in engaging with services or who have misunderstood what is available to them. One of the messages we are constantly giving to authorities is guidance about the language they use. Within the LA, talk of stakeholders and service users is normal, but families don't think of themselves like that and it's important that communications from education, health and social services is in language that is accessible to everyone – as we also aim to be.



Report from the Treasurer

Alison Furniss reports:

Thanks to the generous support of Norfolk County Council (NCC), the five Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the Department for Education (DfE) via Contact, we were able to carry out a full range of activities on behalf of our members this year. These included our annual Conference attended by nearly 400 people, Family Voice Family Chat events around the county and our attendance at numerous meetings with the local authority (LA), health and social services, voluntary and carers groups, and at national and regional parent carer events to represent your views.



This year for the first time we received financial support from the CCGs in recognition of our continuing participation on health matters.

The accounts have been presented as usual to show the monies received that were earmarked for specific activities (restricted) and those that can be used more flexibly at our discretion (unrestricted).

Restricted funds come from the DfE (via Contact) for agreed activities. All the agreed activities have to be justified and vetted beforehand and audited afterwards. The money for these comes in two parts from the DfE, one as a fixed sum of a maximum of £15,000 that is given to all forums during the summer and an additional amount, received later in the year. In total we received £20,430, some of the extra funds being used to purchase IT support for our Ambassadors.

Our unrestricted funds (£62,360) came from our LA allocation (£48,000) and the CCGs' allocation (£14,360) and supported our Ambassadors and Representatives to attend meetings, and Family Voice Norfolk to carry out other activities to engage with parent carers and use their views and experiences to improve services.

There was an increase to our allocations this year as, due to growing workloads, we recruited for an additional part-time role within our admin team.

The Conference is our largest single item of expenditure and is well received by both our parent carers and the professionals who attend.

Our reserves have been maintained again this year so that we can continue for a short while should our other sources of support be lost. I should like to thank our Administration Manager Bernadette Pallister for her support in making my role as Treasurer much easier.



Family Voice Norfolk financial report

Financial year ending 31 March 2019

	Financial year 2018/19	Financial year 2017/18
Balance brought forward	£61,755.76	£61,074.56
INCOME		
Restricted	£20,430.00	£39,170.00
Unrestricted	£62,360.00	£28,390.65
Interest	£177.44	£60.99
TOTAL INCOME	£82,967.44	£67,621.64
EXPENDITURE		
Restricted	£20,386.65	£42,261.76
Unrestricted	£57,538.75	£24,678.68
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£77,925.40	£66,940.44
Balance carried forward	£66,797.80	£61,755.76

INCOME		
Restricted		
DfE Grant	£20,430.00	£19,170.00
NCC staff		£20,000.00
Total restricted income	£20,430.00	£39,170.00
Unrestricted		
NCC participation	£48,000.00	£28,000.00
CCG participation	14,360.00	
Reimbursement of UEA costs		£390.65
Interest income	£177.44	£60.99
Total unrestricted income	£62,537.44	£28,451.64
TOTAL INCOME	£82,967.44	£67,621.64

EXPENDITURE		
Restricted		
DfE restricted	£20,386.65	£20,421.49
NCC restricted		£21,840.27
Total restricted expenditure	£20,386.65	£42,261.76
Unrestricted		
Travel, room hire, claims	£57,538.75	£24,678.68
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£77,925.40	£66,940.44

