



Annual General Meeting

1 September 2021 from 18.30 to 19.30

Ayton House
11 Ayton Rd
Wymondham
NR18 0QQ

and via Zoom

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Report from the Chair

Tracey Sismey reports:

Welcome to our 2020/21 Annual General Meeting. For many of us this is our first 'live' public event. Others have chosen to join us online via Zoom. This hybrid way of working is likely to become familiar to all of us in the coming months.



As usual, I want to begin with heartfelt thanks to all the parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) who have shared their views and experiences with us. You enable us to speak up more effectively for families who live or receive services in Norfolk. In the past eighteen months that has been more essential than ever.

Family Voice Norfolk representatives, ambassadors, staff and Board members are all parent carers themselves. We know how difficult life has been and that 'normal life' may never quite be what it once was. Families with children and young people with SEND have been some of the most profoundly affected by the pandemic.

We are proud to have been busier than ever throughout this time, working to improve services for families like ours. We are determined to view change as an opportunity rather than a difficulty and to learn from all our experiences during this challenging time.

Normally our AGM documents are exclusively about the financial year in question, and the AGM is held only a month or so after the year end. This year, our work has had to adapt significantly to meet different circumstances, and we wanted our AGM to be held in person if at all possible. For that reason, some of the information in this document relates to aspects of 2021/22 and the future as well as last year. Some of the most important changes of this extended period are:

Engaging with and for families

During a time when we could not go out and meet parent carers face to face, we knew that families who already felt isolated would be in particular need. We did our best to address this by:

- **Sharing the experiences of Norfolk families nationally** via the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF), of which we are a member and which has direct access to government ministers. We were able to use Norfolk families' evidence to influence national guidelines about, for example, enabling autistic people to go outside more than once a day, and vaccinating carers
- **Engaging with NCC, health and voluntary services** to ensure that plans to support families were as effective as possible
- **Feeding back** what families told us about their experiences of education, health and social services in Norfolk so that professionals understood the impact of their plans
- Having regular meetings to ensure that the differing needs and concerns of **parent carers of young adults and very young children** with SEND were understood
- Offering online social '**coffee mornings**' and '**teatimes**' for parent carers
- Organising **Let's talk...** online events in which professionals and parent carers could discuss important topics and gain information on both sides
- Finding ways to ensure that Family Voice could continue to **share information and support internally** – our reps also experienced the isolation and challenges of parent carer families
- Agreeing with Contact that we could use some of our Department for Education funding to supply wellbeing **sunshine packs** to parent carers, which were much appreciated.



Family Voice Norfolk CIC

On 1 May 2021, like many other parent carer forums and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF), Family Voice Norfolk formally became a community interest company (CIC). This guarantees our not-for-profit status and commits Family Voice Norfolk's assets permanently to be used for the benefit of the community. It also enables us to give our administrative staff the benefits of employment, including paid holidays and pension options.

For those who do not know how we are structured, our representatives and ambassadors operate on a freelance basis, invoicing us for their time and expenses. Our Board members (formerly our steering group) are not paid for Board roles, but when operating as representatives or ambassadors are able to claim in the usual way.

Details of our structure and reward and recognition policies (indeed all our policies and processes) are publicly available on our website at www.familyvoice.org.uk.

Nothing has changed about the aims and focus of Family Voice. We have simply made our status more stable as we have grown as an organisation.

Opportunities and challenges

On pages 4 to 6 you can read about the opportunities and challenges that face us in the year to come. They are significant but we also consider ourselves fortunate. This has been a difficult time for parent carer forums throughout England. Within our own region, Suffolk Parent Carer Network closed in June 2021 and work is ongoing to form a new forum. In Norfolk, the Written Statement of Action following the SEND Area Inspection in March 2020 has given a focus to co-production and other forms of parent carer participation. We have welcomed working alongside other parent carer groups in meetings and to develop surveys. It is true that together we are stronger.

We were sad not to be able to hold our **annual Conference** in 2021. We have identified a date for 2022, but many venues are not yet fully open and we know that some families and professionals will continue to be wary of large gatherings indoors. We are investigating other options and will let you know as soon as we have a good solution.

Goodbye and hello...

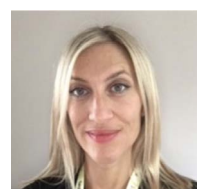
During 2020/21, our Office Manager Bernadette Pallister decided to return to New Zealand with her family. We are glad that she has been able to continue to do some work with us from afar and have welcomed Sally Craythorne to take on other aspects of the role. Since the end of the financial year 2020/21, two of our Board members have resigned because of other commitments. We would like to thank Pamela Durham Green and Natasha Oakley-White for all their support and hope to work with them again in the future.



Sally Craythorne



Pamela Durham Green



Natasha Oakley-White

Finally...

I would like to thank the whole Family Voice Norfolk team – Board members, representatives, ambassadors and staff – who have worked together with enormous commitment to ensure that the voices of parent carers in Norfolk continue to be heard.

They've survived dodgy broadband, unreliable laptops, deliveries during meetings, families at home, and meetings called at a day's notice, but have never stopped working to improve services for the families of children and young people with SEND. I am enormously proud of them.



Report from the Board: opportunities and challenges



Tracey Sismey
Chair and
Representatives
Lead



Alison Furniss
Treasurer



Lorraine DeVere
Vice Chair and
Data Protection
Officer



Nicola Baxter
Communications
Lead



Rachel Clarke
Joint Ambassadors
Lead and Staff
Lead



Anita Evans
Joint Ambassadors
Lead

The Family Voice Norfolk Board reports:

There are many reasons why 2020/21 has been a demanding year for Family Voice Norfolk – some within our control and some not. It has been the responsibility of the Board to consider the impact of the many changes that have taken place and to consider how best to prepare for a future that will present further challenges. The most significant issues are outlined below and divided between opportunities and challenges, although – as is the nature of change – some could appear under both headings.

Opportunities

- The Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection in March 2020 took note of what parent carers in the county said about services and their experiences of supporting children and young people with SEND. Family Voice was involved in several meetings with the inspectors and supplied a wealth of information about areas of concern. Parent carers were also able to feed back individually via a survey and in meetings. We are grateful to all those who took the time to do this. As a result, the inspectors highlighted communication and co-production, EHCPs, and preparing for adult life as areas of significant weakness. **Parent carers have been heard.**
- The inspectors will revisit Norfolk in 2022. In the meantime, education, health and social services had certain steps to take: preparing a Written Statement of Action (WSOA), gaining approval for the WSOA, and carrying out those actions within the timescales given. Family Voice Norfolk has been very much involved in the first and last of these steps, and the work continues. It has meant that issues that parent carers have long identified as problematic are being addressed and **parent carers themselves play an important role** in that.
- As a result, Family Voice has been involved with teams and workstreams that have not been open to our input before. We have welcomed this and found that the **breadth of work** in which we are now involved can sometimes mean that a Family Voice rep has a better overview of the work as a whole than members of individual teams have themselves.
- As Family Voice's involvement across a wide range of services in education, health and social care has expanded, so has the input of **other parent carer groups**, such as SENsational Families, Norfolk branches of the National Autistic Society, and other organisations. Family Voice has very much welcomed this, and parent carers have often found that they have been able to support each other in meetings and reinforce messages about the needs of families.
- Working online for the past eighteen months has been challenging, especially with Norfolk's variable broadband coverage, but it has also meant that we have been able to attend more meetings without lengthy travel times and respond more quickly to meetings called quickly to solve an immediate need. In short, we have been **able to be more flexible**.

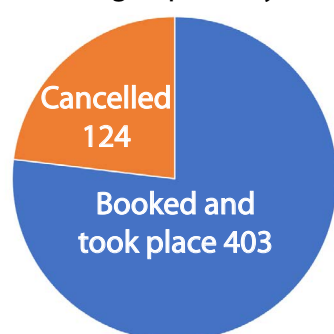


- Our **resources have stretched further** because we have not needed to pay travel costs.
- We were **able to reach a wider range of families** in more rural parts of Norfolk, as long as they had good digital access.
- Meeting online also made it **easier for FV representatives to meet weekly** (we call it our Friday Debrief) to keep up to date with each other's work and initiatives happening across the county.
- With more and more information being shared online, our **social media, website and newsletter have gained a wider reach** and become an increasingly important way for us to share information with families and ask for their views.
- Becoming a community interest company (CIC) in the past year has enabled us to **employ key administrative staff**, rather than requiring them to work freelance, and offer them the related benefits of security, holiday pay and pension options.

Challenges

- In May 2021 we passed the milestone of attending 100 meetings in a month. These were fairly evenly spread between education, health, children's social care and adult social services. We only attend meetings where parent carer voices can make a difference. It is vital that we continue to attract and train new representatives – all of whom are parent carers – so that we are able to broaden expertise within the team and plan for the future. **Training, supporting and mentoring new representatives is essential but adds to the workload of administrative staff and existing representatives initially.**
- As co-production has gained focus in the local authority and health services, we have been involved in an increasing number of key strategic meetings. These often require a representative at Board level, adding to the commitment of Board members who are also overseeing the strategy and development of Family Voice. **Increased administrative support is needed to enable Board members to prioritise strategic representation and Family Voice planning over paperwork and reports.**
- The ability of Family Voice as a community interest company to employ staff has many benefits but also **requires additional administration and costs to cover key roles during holiday breaks.**

Meetings April–July 2021



Total booked 527

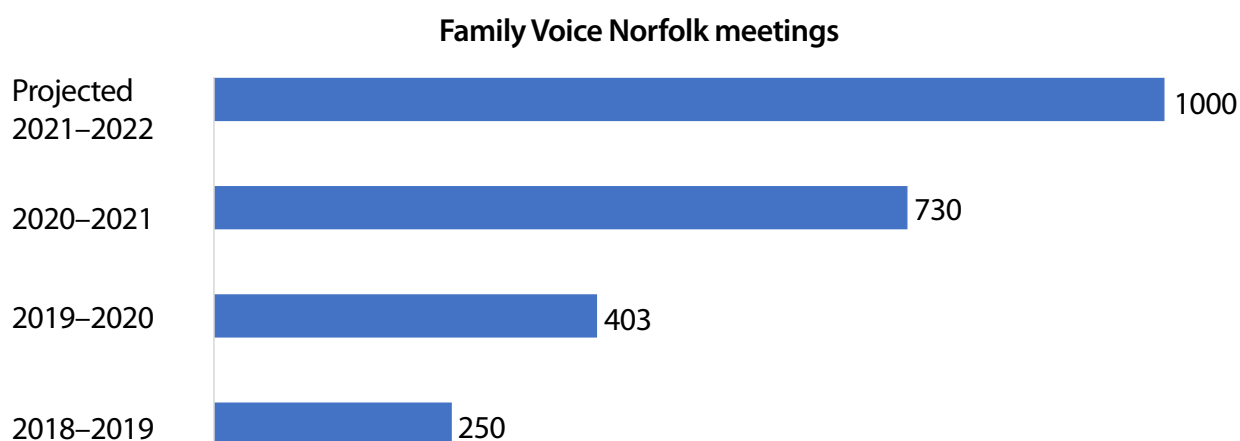
- Online meetings have meant that the local authority and health services are able to call meetings with less notice as rooms do not need to be booked. Our Co-ordinator works full time to organise parent carer reps who, by their nature, have caring responsibilities and often other employment. However, ease of calling meetings is matched by ease of cancelling them. **Alerting reps to cancellations and adjusting our shared calendar is additional work** – on top of the time taken to organise representation originally, now not needed. And, of course, the likelihood is that the cancelled meeting will need to be organised again at a later date. The diagram on the left is just a snapshot of a recent period, but this is a continuing challenge.

- It is tempting to think of a 'meeting' as lasting for one or two hours but many are longer than this. Parent carer input in local authority and health service job interviews, for example, is important and we are pleased to provide this service, but this may involve an **all-day commitment**. Only some



reps are able to organise family arrangements to enable this and are then, of course, not available for other meetings at the same time. Again, this adds to the **need to prioritise recruitment and the additional administration involved in this**.

- Deadlines, particularly for WSoA work, also add to the **intensity of meeting organisation**. Very often, with a deadline looming, several meetings will be organised within one week to complete the work. Representatives who have been involved in the work will do their best to participate but may already have other meeting commitments with other teams. Again, this is a challenge administratively.
- As well as the WSoA work, there are many other workstreams. We continue to be involved with the SEND Area Strategy refresh, the new schools and SRBs transformation work, the Children with Disabilities transformation work, early prevention work, LO website development and so on. We are assured that co-production and other forms of parent carer participation will continue to be a focus beyond WSoA deadlines. As a result, **we foresee that our work will increase over the coming months and years**. In addition, national government initiatives, such as Integrated Care Systems, the current Children's Social Care Review and the long-awaited SEND Review, are certain to mean more work for everyone. The graph below shows vividly how our involvement has increased in the past three years, despite a national pandemic and the pressures this has meant for parent carers.



- Many meetings will continue online but some will begin to be held in person. Family Voice ambassadors have already this year begun the first steps towards face-to-face meetings with parent carers. These are likely to increase, adding travel expenses to our overall costs. At the same time, we will continue to offer online engagement to families, so ambassador time costs will increase.
- As well as meetings, we spend a significant amount of time as parent carer representatives feeding back on documents from services. These can be leaflets (online or paper), letters, surveys, proposals or larger pieces of work such as the Local Offer Communications Guide. It is often difficult for service providers to judge how communications will be received and understood by families. Simple changes of wording or reorganisation can help enormously, simplifying the huge amount of text that parent carers have to deal with on behalf of their child with SEND. We consider this to be an important part of our work and service providers are often very appreciative of how we can help with documents, but this aspect of our role, too, is increasing.

In view of the above, in addition to the grant that we receive (via Contact) from the Department for Education, we are asking for increased funding from Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group.



Report from the Membership Administrator

Kate Draycott reports:

This is my ninth year in the role of Membership Administrator. It has seemed like an extra-long one! The pandemic and lockdowns have affected every family in one way or another, with issues arising from home schooling, working from home, a total change in routine, or just not being able to go out. For families with children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), there have been additional difficulties – and for many families a new insight into the challenges their children face in education and the ways in which professionals address these. Families report a wide range of experiences.

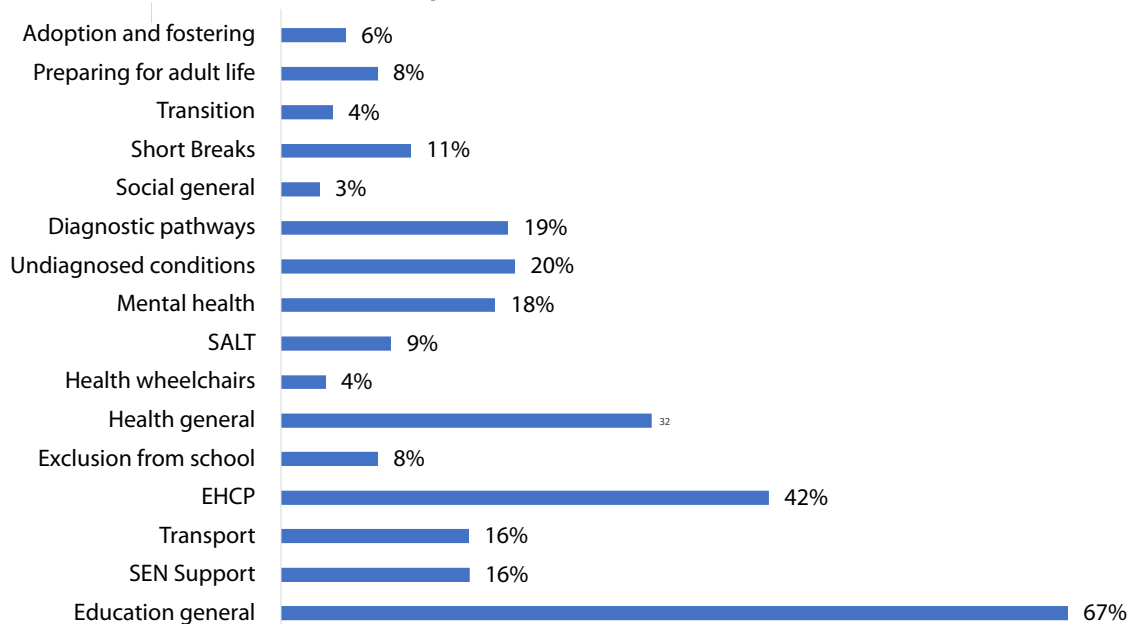
My membership role has always been worked from home, so there has not been much change there, but my office is now in my bedroom, and school of Dad has been in the lounge. Sounds of what you might call educational disagreements reached me from below – my youngest was sometimes rather uncompliant!

Many new members were glad when I telephoned them, as some had not spoken to another adult that day. I am aware of how difficult it is to talk about our children when they are close by, and children always want their parents' attention when they are on the phone, but as parents we can be very creative. Family Voice is grateful to all the families who share their situations and experiences with us. All our representatives and staff are parent carers themselves, but hearing from our members is vital in ensuring that we are able to represent – anonymously, of course – their experiences and needs.

Lack of communication and difficulty in navigating a complex range of services are what I hear from families most frequently. The feeling that everything is a battle continues to be a constant theme. It can be distressing to hear of these struggles but underlines for me what an important job Family Voice Norfolk does. And just sometimes when I ask a new member if they have any issues, they say no, and that does make me smile with happiness.



Summary of issues and concerns from new members April 2020 to March 2021



Report from the Family Voice Norfolk Co-ordinator

Emma Parncutt reports:



When the local authority, health and voluntary services would like Family Voice Norfolk representatives to give parent-carer input in meetings, documents or surveys, they contact me to organise this. Sometimes the approach also works the other way – knowing the concerns of parent carers in Norfolk, FVN asks to be involved in work that we know is ongoing or about to begin. Whichever way round this happens, the job of organising reps, controlling the FVN calendar, ensuring that new reps have support and mentoring, and feeding back to the Board has become increasingly complex in the past year.

At the beginning of April 2020, like the organisations we work with, we were reacting to the Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection findings for Norfolk (and the work that would be required to create a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) in response to them), while dealing with the fall out from the first COVID-19 lockdown. We needed to find a way of working during the pandemic.

Many of our team members were in full isolation, and we soon found ourselves, along with Norfolk County Council, Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (NWCCG), and voluntary sector groups, working from home and using a variety of virtual online platforms for meetings. This quickly became the norm.

These early days of the pandemic were driven by the need stay in contact with families, members and service users, hearing how they were coping and feeding back to service organisers and planners about what was needed.

Through the summer, we saw the number of meetings for reps increase week on week as we were invited to join the COVID-19 recovery meetings, which had six workstreams of interest to Family Voice. Eastern Region Parent Carer Forum (ERPCF) meetings also increased, with local feedback finding its way to central government departments via the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF), of which FVN is a member.

The Written Statement of Action response to the Area SEND Inspection was also in full swing, requiring input at Board level and idea/brainstorming sessions to assist in identifying the 109 actions that eventually found their way into the required response. Family Voice reps worked hard to keep our parent-carer families' voices alive.

As schools reopened their doors in September, some of the reps team were able to become more involved, while others were still isolating at home with their young people. Logistically this was a challenge, but the determination of the team never faltered.

Many new projects started to emerge, particularly as one of the three main areas of weakness identified by Ofsted was communication and co-production with families. Our voice was now needed more than ever, and we have found ourselves in more and more workstreams. We do not take up all requests for representation – we need to feel that the work will really benefit from the input of families – but on the whole we are very glad to have more opportunities to ensure that families' voices are heard.

The capacity of the reps team is, of course, sometimes a concern – and we know that professionals within NCC and health services have also found the number of initiatives currently underway challenging. We continue to recruit new reps and are very glad that several have recently joined us. We embraced technology and launched our first online 'New representative introductory programme' with sessions being delivered virtually.



October 2020 saw yet another increase in scheduled meetings. The WSoA meetings were now established, with a Board meeting, three subcommittees and various task-and-finish groups, all requiring FV representatives.

Our work also involved a closer look at how parent carers can contribute to the development of services. A participation strategy and resources for Norfolk is a vital part of this. FV contributed to the planning of four workshops that developed these themes further and sent representatives to the events themselves. We felt that it was important for Norfolk professionals to hear the voices of parent carers from outside our county as well. Family Voice is part of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) and we know how useful it is to hear other areas' experiences and to be able to feed back our Norfolk parent carers' views directly to central government. Powerful speakers, sourced via Contact, included a young person with SEND and a parent carer. All of us came away from the sessions with a renewed eagerness to work in co-production to develop and improve services as much as possible.

We also attended workshops with the Norman Lamb Coalition of Young People Fund, aimed at raising awareness and funding for local groups who support learning disability, autism and mental health work in the county.

In the New Year of 2021, with a third lockdown in full swing and the vaccination programme picking up speed, we not only saw another considerable uplift in meeting requests but also the speed at which the meetings were being organised appeared to increase. There was very little notice for some workstreams and I am extremely grateful to the team for their flexibility, availability and commitment to the cause. We very rarely sent apologies. However, many meetings, already allocated reps and scheduled in our calendar, were also cancelled at short notice. This takes up a good deal of administrative time and is difficult for reps who may have changed family arrangements in order to attend.

Health meetings had doubled due to the redesign of mental health services and other therapies being back on plan. We were working with the Early Years teams more frequently, and adult social care meetings also increased. We were pleased to have gained more involvement in both these areas, which have not always been easy to access. Regional sessions with other parent carer forums increased in frequency and reflected the ever-increasing seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In February, we relaunched the FV Liaison meetings. The co-production workshops were also underway, with Board members facilitating alongside other local and national professionals. The communications aspect of the WSoA response also gathered pace, with projects on a new information portal for families, post-16 booklets and the SEND Communications Guide.

The past year has also seen a great deal of work on the Norfolk Area SEND Strategy refresh, and we are now attending a regular parent carer multi-agency group.

We brought the year to a close by topping the 100 mark for the total number of meetings and events attended and hosted in a month – a first for us. The team are working incredibly hard.

It is more important than ever that our internal communications keep representatives and ambassadors informed about all our work. A Friday Debrief is our current solution, at which we share useful information and updates on the week's meetings and events, and future projects.

This is an exciting and incredibly busy period for Family Voice Norfolk – a situation that looks set to continue through 2021 and beyond. I would like to extend huge thanks to the representatives team for your hard work and enduring commitment, through what has been a very tricky period of our lives.



Family Voice Norfolk 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/.

Adult Social
Services:
employment
services

Adult Social
Services:
housing and
accommodation

Carers Council:
partnership
meetings

Carers Voice:
Locality meetings

Child Nursing
Programme

Children and Young
Persons Mental
Health Parent Carer
Forum

Children's and
Young Persons'
Strategic Alliance
Partnership

Children's Health
and Integrated
Commissioning
Group

Communication
Technology Aids (CTA)
advisory meeting

COVID-19
Communications
meeting with
parent carer groups

District Early
Childhood Advisory
Networks (DECANS)

Direct Payments
Support Service
(DPSS) advisory
group

Early Childhood
Advisory Board
(Norfolk)

Early Language
Forum

Eastern Region
Parent Carer Forum
(ERPCF) meetings

EHCP quality
audit framework
meetings

Families We've
Got This meetings

Learning Disabilities
Partnership Board
(LDPB)

SEND Local Offer
website revision
meetings

SEND Local Offer
User Forum

Making It Happen
Strategy Oversight
Group

New Schools and
Special Resource
Bases (SRBs)Project

Mental Health
Support Teams in
Schools Steering
Group

Norfolk Children
and Young People
Strategic Alliance
Board



Norfolk County
Council (NCC)
Scrutiny Committee

National Network of
Parent Carer Forums
(NNPCF) meetings

Neurodevelop-
mental Delay (NDD)
stakeholder group

Norfolk Area SEND
Multi-Agency
Steering Group
(NASMA)

Norfolk and
Norwich University
Hospital (NNUH)
Children's Board

Norfolk Autism
Partnership Board
(NAPB)

Norman Lamb
Coalition for Young
People

Palliative Care
Network

Preparing for
Adult Life (PfAL)
Interviews

Partnership
recovery meetings
(COVID-19)

Adult Social
Services Update
Meetings

RUSH Self Harm
Pathway

Provision Expected
at SEN Support
(PEaSS)

SEND
Communications
Group

SEN Information
Report audit

SEND Family
Roadshows and
planning meetings

SEND
Communication
Guide and Glossary

SEND Health
Clinical Network

SEND Post-16
Learning Group

Short Breaks
review meeting

Speech and
Language Therapy
Project Board

Virtual School
SEND Advisory
Group

Written Statement of
Action (WSOA) Board
meetings

Written Statement
of Action (WSOA)
subcommittee:
Preparing for Adult Life

Written Statement
of Action (WSOA)
subcommittee: EHCPs

Written Statement
of Action (WSOA)
subcommittee:
Communications and
Coproduction

Young Carers Multi
Agency Steering
Group



Report from the Ambassador Leads

Rachel Clarke (left) and Anita Evans write:

It will not surprise you to hear that 2020/21 has been a busy but very different kind of year for the Family Voice Norfolk ambassador team. To respond to the changing needs of parent carers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has offered new online opportunities for our members to share experiences and to learn about education, health and social care services in Norfolk.



These sessions, called **Let's Talk...**, have given parent carers the opportunity to hear directly from professionals who plan or supply services. They have also enabled families themselves to contribute directly to the development of future services. As well as giving information about organisations that can support families, children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the sessions provide a great platform for parent carers to support each other and for both parent carers and professionals to share helpful ideas.

Topics have included: SEND transport, Short Breaks, dentistry services, mental health services, Early Years services, and the role of being a parent carer. Participating parent carers have told us how useful the sessions have been. The professionals who have joined us at **Let's Talk...** sessions have also shared how valuable they have found them. We already have a plan of events for the new academic year commencing September 2021.

In addition to the **Let's Talk...** events, we have been able to organise online **coffee mornings** and **afternoon teas**, at which parents have come along to chat with our ambassadors about how life is for them, ask questions, and share tips and information with other parent carers, all within a less formal but very safe space.

Family Voice **Five-Minute Focus surveys** enabled busy parent carers to tell us quickly about their experiences of services and support during lockdown, dental services for children with SEND, and returning to school in September 2020. Their information (carefully anonymised) was fed back to service planners.

Although ambassadors have not been able to be out and about in Norfolk, they have continued to engage with other organisations to reach as many of those in the SEND community as possible. They have taken part in the online **SEND Family Roadshows** organised by Norfolk County Council and will continue to take part in the next academic year in the roadshows' new format of **Making sense of SEND**. They have also contributed to training sessions for new Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and received praise and thanks for speaking frankly and movingly to health professionals about life as a parent carer.

We know that 2021/22 will see our ambassador team and our Administration Officer Sally Craythorne continuing to adapt to the challenges of living with COVID-19. The team will embrace the reintroduction of face-to-face events as these become possible, but we also understand that Norfolk is a large county and online events have been helpful for many families. We will continue to offer **Let's Talk...** events and social opportunities to parent carers.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the parent carers, professionals and ambassadors for making the sessions we have held such successful, informative and interactive events.



Report from the Communications Lead

Nicola Baxter reports:

I have been heard to say – and recently it has felt a little tactless – that communication is like a virus. It hasn't done its job unless it has been passed on. By this I mean that it isn't enough to produce a leaflet or an email and send it off in the vague direction of someone who might need to know about it. That's not communication. The communication happens when the recipient receives, reads and understands the contents. In fact, I'd go further. Real communication has happened when the recipient has received, read, understood and knows what to do next.



As a Family Voice representative with a particular interest in communication, I've spent a lot of this year working in co-production with teams from the local authority, health and voluntary services to produce documents that fulfil this brief. It's not always easy to persuade professionals to let go of their favourite jargon. Why call something a 'strategy' when 'plan' is so much easier to understand?

As part of the Written Statement of Action following the SEND Area Inspection in March 2020, Family Voice reps have been working with the Local Offer team to develop a SEND communications guide. You can find it on the Local Offer website at www.norfolk.gov.uk/send. We're hoping that those who send you information will use the guide to make sure their communications are as simple and straightforward as possible. We don't mean to be patronising about parent carers' ability to read lengthy, complicated messages. It's just that we are parent carers ourselves and know that life is busy and easy is better.

After all, if documents are difficult for us to read, what chance do many of our children with SEND stand? I recently saw a letter to a young woman with a known learning disability advising her to 'refrain from exacerbating the condition'. There is still work to be done!

If you come across examples of very bad or very good communication, or have suggestions for Family Voice's own messages on our website (www.familyvoice.org.uk), social media or in our newsletter, let us know at comms@familyvoice.org.uk.



Report from the Social Media Administrator

Lisa Lonergan reports:

Social media is now an important way for Family Voice to communicate with our members and other parent carers, but it also enables them to communicate with us, particularly in our closed Facebook group, Family Voice Members Chat Room (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/674209366743395/about/>).



However, there are other ways in which we can learn from our Facebook and Twitter accounts. Statistics from both platforms give us useful information about what concerns parent carers most. We can readily see which posts are widely viewed and shared.

Our own Family Voice posts about **Let's talk...** events are certainly popular, as are posts about education, autism and support for families. These point to areas in which parent carers do not currently feel sufficiently supported or knowledgeable. They help us to understand priorities for our own events and underline what is important to emphasise in meetings.

For example, in February 2021, our **Let's talk... about Early Years** reached 10,970 people, with 65 shares. These parents are at the beginning of their journey in the SEND community. It is good to know that they are already in touch with sources of information and support.

In March, **Let's talk... about caring** reached 7,166 people, with 39 shares. This was also good to see, as parent carers often struggle to think of themselves as carers, and we have been working to make sure that parent carers of under-18s receive a service alongside parent carers of over-18s and young carers.

As well as Family Voice posts, we share information for a huge variety of organisations, including the local authority and health services. We are able to promote activities suitable for children and young people with SEND throughout Norfolk and can repeat reminders close to the event. The Family Voice newsletter is able to share a great deal of information but this often comes to us too late for a monthly publication. Social media is ideal for spreading the word.

In the past year we have been pleased to see an increasing number of small groups, schools, nurseries and community groups sharing our posts. It is heartwarming to feel that we are part of a network of people and organisations that care about children and young people with SEND and like us are working to improve services. Please follow us!



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



[familyvoicenfk](https://twitter.com/familyvoicenfk)



Report from the Treasurer

Alison Furniss reports:

Thanks to the support of Norfolk County Council (NCC), the clinical commissioning group (CCG) and the Department for Education (DfE) via Contact, we were able to carry out within the confines of COVID-19 a full range of activities on behalf of our members this year.



This was the first year that we received financial support from adult social services at NCC, in recognition of our increasing participation in this area. The accounts for 2020/2021 are a little complicated, showing expenditure over a 13-month period from 1 April 2020 to 30 April 2021, although our income from the DfE grant and NCC children's services covers until 31 March. The reason for this is that during the year we took the decision to become a community interest company (CIC). We hoped that the change would coincide with our financial year end, but the pandemic made everything more difficult to organise and it was on 1 May 2021 that we finally achieved this. Although we have shown the 2019/2020 figures for comparison on page 16, as we usually do, this time (and next year, too) it will be more difficult to compare years. By 2022/23, we will be showing 12 months of both income and expenditure again.

We have a small overspend during 2020/21, but this would have been significantly higher had we travelled to meetings and events.

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 – a fixed sum of a maximum of £15,000 that is given to all parent carer forums in England during the summer and an additional amount received later in the year. In total we received £19,536.80. In previous years, the majority of these monies has been used to fund our Conference and Family Voice, Family Chat engagement events. As we are all aware, we were unable to host our annual Conference, but Contact understood the importance of parent carer wellbeing during the pandemic and authorised the use of DfE funding for supplying our ‘sunshine boxes’ – little packs for parent carers and families containing both practical and enjoyable contents. We organised one pack during the dark days of the third lockdown and one at Easter.

Our unrestricted funds (£81,160) came from our local authority allocation (£66,800) and CCG allocation (£14,360). These fund our representatives' and ambassadors' work and that of the administrative team that supports them.

Our reserves have been maintained again this year in order that we could continue for a short while should other sources of support be lost. I should like to thank our administration team for all their support in making my role much easier.



Thank you so much for my
Easter 🐰 Sunshine 🌻 box. It is
so very much appreciated ❤️

Thank you so much for our
goodie box. I couldn't stop
smiling 😊



Family Voice Norfolk financial report

Financial year ending 30 April 2021

	Financial year 2020/21		Financial year 2019/20
Balance brought forward	£57,597.32		£66,797.80
INCOME			
Restricted	£19,536.80		£20,850.00
Unrestricted	£81,160.00		£67,860.00
Interest	£24.81		£114.51
TOTAL INCOME	£100,721.61		£88,824.51
EXPENDITURE			
Restricted	£21,873.96		£20,915.25
Unrestricted	£81,144.53		£77,109.74
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£103,018.49		£98,024.99

Balance carried forward	£55,300.44		£57,597.32
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INCOME			
Restricted			
DfE Grant	£19,536.80		£20,850.00
Total restricted income	£19,536.80		£20,850.00
Unrestricted			
NCC children's services to 31 March	£53,000.00		£53,500.00
NCC adult social services to 30 April	£13,800.00		
CCG participation	£14,360.00		£14,360.00
Interest income	£24.81		£114.51
Total unrestricted income	£81,184.81		£67,974.51

TOTAL INCOME	£100,721.61		£88,824.51
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EXPENDITURE			
DfE restricted	£21,873.96		£20,915.25
Unrestricted			
Expense claims, running costs	£81,144.53		£77,109.74
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£103,018.49		£98,024.99

