



Annual General Meeting

30 June 2022 from 18.30 to 19.30

Ayton House
11 Ayton Rd
Wymondham
NR18 0QQ

and via Zoom

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Family Voice Norfolk CIC
Company number 14181696



Report from the Chair

Tracey Sismey reports:

Welcome to our 2021/22 Annual General Meeting – to those in the room with us and to those of you taking part online. This hybrid way of working has become more familiar to us in recent months. Many of us have recently enjoyed attending meetings face to face but the advantages of online meetings have become clear. We don't currently foresee a time when all meetings are 'live' again. Zoom, Teams and other platforms are here to stay.



It will be no surprise that 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 and continue to do so. Your voices enable us to speak up strongly and clearly for families who live or receive services in Norfolk. In the past year we have attended over 1,000 meetings with the local authority, health and voluntary services, underlining the needs of parent carers.

Our current work

Family Voice Norfolk representatives, ambassadors and Board members are all parent carers themselves. When our work does not bring about significant improvements in attitudes and services, we are as frustrated and upset as you are. But we carry on with the conviction that our voices and our children's voices matter. Our work is not always highly visible. Our remit does not allow us to campaign, although we very much value groups who do. We work *with* services to make positive change but we *always* do so with families' needs in mind. We will never stop speaking up for what we all need.

The most critical periods of the pandemic appear to be over, but its effects will be felt for years to come. Families with children and young people with SEND have been some of the most profoundly affected – and they continue to be so. In many areas, their ability to 'catch up' from the experiences of the past two years requires intensive support. I am thinking particularly of academic support, mental health support, delays on diagnostic pathways and access to work experience and employment. In all these areas we are currently representing the needs of children and young people with SEND and the importance of them and their parent carers being appropriately informed about and involved in decisions and services.

Much of the past year has been taken up with work related to the Written Statement of Action that was produced by Norfolk County Council and health services following the SEND Area Inspection in March 2020. That inspection identified three areas of significant weakness in Norfolk:

- the processes involved in writing and maintaining education, health and care plans (EHC plans)
- services and communication to support preparing for adult life
- communication and coproduction more generally.

We have worked with other parent groups and professionals to improve these areas but there is still a great deal to do.

The inspectors will re-visit Norfolk later this year – perhaps early in the autumn term – and we will be able to speak directly with them about parent carers' views on whether they have seen improvements in these areas. So please do keep responding to our surveys and letting us know what is working well or not so well for your family. You can also keep our Membership Administrator informed at any time by email on membership@familyvoice.org.uk.



Family Voice Norfolk CIC

Our status as a community interest company (CIC) guarantees our not-for-profit status and commits Family Voice Norfolk's assets permanently to be used for the benefit of the community. It has enabled us to give our administrative staff the benefits of employment, including paid holidays and pension options. Our representatives and ambassadors operate on a freelance basis, and are able to claim reimbursement for time and expenses. Board members are not paid for Board roles, but when operating as representatives or ambassadors or otherwise working on behalf of Family Voice Norfolk are able to claim in the usual way.

Further details about our structure and policies are publicly available on our website at www.familyvoice.org.uk.

Opportunities and challenges

We were not able to hold our **annual Conference** in 2021 and sadly also cancelled our proposed 2022 Conference, as venues were not yet able to welcome the numbers of people we need to invite. However, we know how important it is to parent carers to be able to meet service providers and planners face to face and ask their own questions, so we organised our first **Family Voice Norfolk Question Time**. Rachel Clarke will tell you more about this.

Comings and goings...

Our former Office Manager Bernadette Pallister has continued to work with us on financial and record-keeping matters from far away in New Zealand. It involves some early-morning or late-night meetings both here and there, but is working really well.

Sally Craythorne, our Administration Officer, left us late in 2021 to take up a new post. We are delighted that she is still a member and in touch with us. Emma Parncutt, Family Voice Norfolk Co-ordinator, also took on a new role with NCH&C Volunteer Service. Board member Anita Evans left us more recently for an exciting new job that takes her out of Norfolk. We would like to thank Sally, Emma and Anita for all their support and are sure that our paths will cross in the future.

We have been very pleased to welcome Gemma Everett to a new, full-time role as Administration Manager, while Rachel Clarke, who continues to be a Board member, has taken over the role of Family Voice Norfolk Co-ordinator.



Bernadette
Pallister



Sally
Craythorne



Emma
Parncutt



Anita Evans



Gemma
Everett



Rachel Clarke

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. Some of our reps cover many meetings each week. Others, because of family and work commitments, are only able to attend a few. It doesn't matter. Among our representatives we have a wide range of experience and expertise. We value each and every one of them. All of us juggle our Family Voice Norfolk work with family lives including children or young people with SEND. It's not always easy, but we continue to believe that we can make a difference.



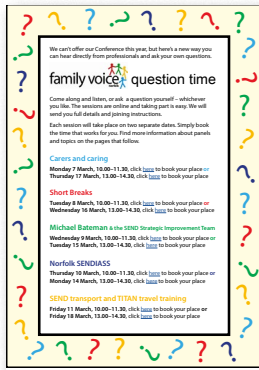
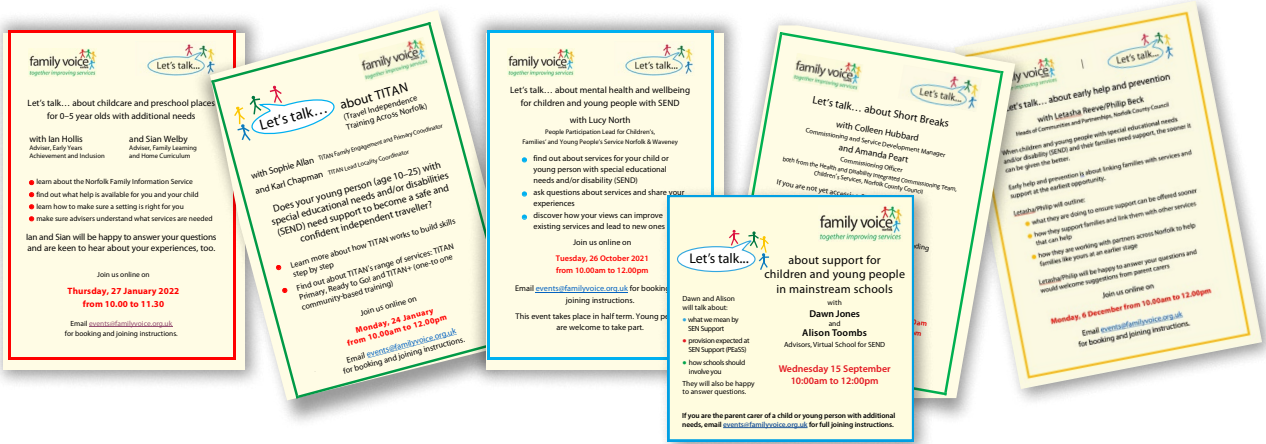
Report from the Ambassador Lead

Rachel Clarke writes:

Throughout 2021/22 our ambassador team has facilitated events for parent carers to attend and represented Family Voice Norfolk at events organised externally.

Our **Check In and Chat** sessions have been held monthly and are an informal way for parent carers to share their experiences with us, meet other parent carers and pick up information and tips from others who understand their situations.

Our **Let's Talk...** sessions have proved very popular and, as a general rule, have been occurring monthly, again facilitated by our ambassador team. These give parent carers the opportunity to hear directly from professionals who plan or supply services and enable families to contribute directly to the development of future services. We have been able to offer a wide range of topics to interest different parent carers. Please don't hesitate to let us know if there is something you would particularly like us to focus on.



This year, in the absence of our annual Conference due to a second year of pandemic restrictions, we offered a fortnight of **Family Voice Norfolk Question Time** sessions with specialist panels offering information, advice and answers to the questions our families posed.

Both representatives and ambassadors enabled these to be very successful and again I would like to thank everyone for their help and hard work in making each session valuable for all – parent carers and professionals alike.

External events are becoming increasingly 'live' again and our ambassador team has been out and about with our stand, talking to parent carers, collating experiences and explaining how important and instrumental families' voices are for improvements within services. If you see us at any events, please come over and say hello.



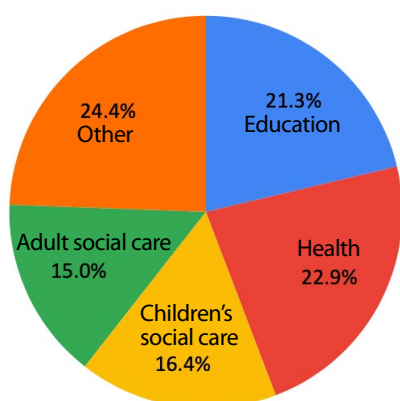
Report from the Family Voice Norfolk Co-ordinator

Rachel Clarke reports:

Although I have been involved with Family Voice Norfolk for many years, as a representative, an ambassador and a Board (previously Steering Group) member, February 2022 saw me become the new Family Voice Norfolk Co-ordinator, also leading on all of the representatives' and ambassadors' work. The role is a busy one, with no two days the same and many a juggling act to be performed.



The number of meetings FVN attends has continued to rise. Between April 2021 and March 2022, we attended 1,081 meetings. As you can see in the chart below, these were spread between meetings with an education focus, those related to health services, and both adult and children's social care. The 'other' category includes the voluntary sector, internal meetings and regional and national parent carer meetings.



When we are invited to a meeting, my job is to find one or more suitable reps to attend. Some reps specialise in certain topics or are only available at certain times, so this is a major part of my juggling act. Reps are freelance, so it is up to them whether they wish to attend a meeting. As parent carers themselves, they have other calls on their time.

I am very lucky to work with a wonderful bunch of representatives who do their very best to cover all the opportunities we have to speak up for families. I would like to thank them for their flexibility and dedication to each and every meeting that they attend, for joining our weekly debrief

sessions and for ensuring that the voices of families who share their experiences with us are heard within the local authority, health services and voluntary sector.

Finding the right rep for the right meeting is unfortunately not the only job. In the period shown in the chart above, we were in fact invited to 1,455 meetings. However, 374 of these (25.7%) were cancelled before the event. So each of these meetings had to be dealt with twice. When a meeting is cancelled for professionals, they can often simply get on with other work. Our reps may well have made childcare and other arrangements to be available.

I am pleased to say that in the past year we have attracted new reps to the team. This is an ongoing process and there will be a new round of training in September.

Meetings continue to be held mostly online using Teams and Zoom. Slowly, one or two meetings are becoming 'in person' and we have been reminded how lovely it is to be working together in a room. However, travel time to reach in-person meetings is tricky to find when our reps are so busy.

In addition to meetings, as an organisation we are increasingly asked to review and improve materials that are intended for families to use. We have also taken part this year in presentations and webinars both locally, regionally and at national level, both as attendees and as presenters. We have been part of the recruitment process for many positions within NCC Children's Services and Children's Health Services. We have taken part in training for student teachers about SEND and presented to many professionals on the realities of life with children who have complex needs. Most recently, three of our team took part in the peer review of Building the Right Support for individuals who have autism and/or a learning disability.



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	Carers' Passport workshop	Carers Voice partnership meetings
Carers Voice: Locality meetings	CYPMH Executive Management Group	Direct Payments Support Service (DPSS) advisory group
Children's and Young Persons' Strategic Alliance Board	Children's Health and Integrated Commissioning Group	Communication Technology Aids (CTA) advisory meeting
EHCP Quality Assurance Board	District Early Childhood Advisory Networks (DECANS)	Every Relationship Matters in Norfolk steering 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)
Learning into Action	Norfolk Area SEND Strategy	Making It Happen Strategy Oversight Group
Home-School Transport Collaboration	Mental Health Support Teams in Schools steering group	SEND Local Offer website revision meetings



Norfolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) meetings

All-Age NDD Stakeholders

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

Norfolk and Waveney Eating Disorders Strategy

Partnership recovery meetings (COVID-19)

Prevention and Early Help Board

NNUH Transitions Working Group

Provision Expected at SEN Support (PEASS)

SEND Communications Group

SENDfest planning

Making Sense of SEND planning and events

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Unpaid Carers Group

SEND Health Clinical Network

SEND Post-16 Learning Group

Short Breaks

Speech and Language Communication Network

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 Membership Administrator

Kate Draycott reports:

I now have a decade of talking to families as Membership Administrator under my belt. Ten whole years! I always knew I really liked talking, and that's why I was offered the job!

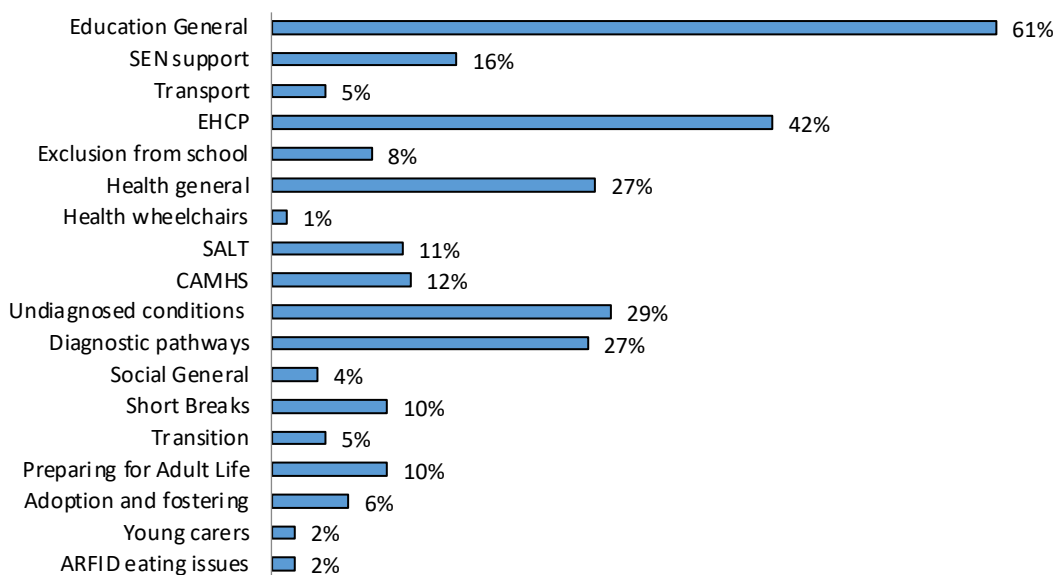


It is always a privilege to talk to Family Voice Norfolk members. Some of the conversations are sad and frustrating, but some have me laughing out loud. Parent carers tell me how much they welcome speaking to someone who understands their life. Someone who 'gets it' that you can love your child with SEND unreservedly while still feeling at times angry and desperate. My biggest compliment was being told at the end of a phone conversation that "it was just like talking to a friend over the garden fence".

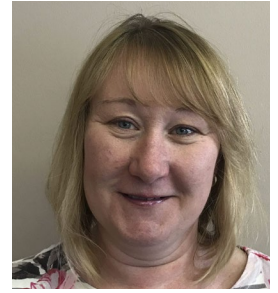
If you are new to FVN, my role is to telephone or email our new family members, to gather the voice of our families to find out what issues they are facing, like a snapshot of what's going on. Family Voice is grateful to all the families who share their situations and experiences with us. All our representatives 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.

I do love my job. I am passionate about my role in Family Voice Norfolk. I myself have two young people with additional needs, and I have similar challenges to those that many of you face. When parent carers tell me that everything feels like a 'battle' or a 'struggle', I know exactly what they mean. It can feel as if you are alone in what you are facing, but you're not. Please do join us at one of our informal Check in and Chat sessions or contact me to update me on your family. Your experiences are so important for us in representing parent carers' views. You can email me at membership@familyvoice.org.uk.

Summary of issues and concerns from new members April 2021 to March 2022



Report from the Social Media Administrator



Lisa Lonergan reports:

Our social media platform has continued to grow since our last AGM, with both the numbers of followers and their engagement increasing. Our closed Facebook group, Family Voice Members Chat Room, has 391 members now and regularly sees interactions between members about issues that have arisen for their families. For them it's a source of peer support and the ability to talk with others in a safe, private space. For us it's a valuable insight into the issues affecting our families. We never say anything that could identify anyone, but we are able to inform services directly about what is concerning parent carers when we attend meetings. We also feel it's important that it's a space where our members can chat to other parent carers who just 'get it' and not feel judged or alone. Anyone wishing to join this closed Facebook page must be a full member of Family Voice. It is easy to join us via our website at www.familyvoice.org.uk. The link to the closed Facebook group is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/674209366743395/about/>

From our Facebook and Twitter accounts we can look at statistics that give us information about which posts are widely viewed and shared. This gives us a useful insight into what are members are interested in and what they like to hear about. Our own Family Voice posts about the events we hold are always our most popular and have the highest engagement rates. Our surveys are also popular with all families across Norfolk and we get several shares of these surveys. Like our closed Facebook page, these surveys are an important way for us to gather information and for parent carers to be heard. As we aim to reach as many families as possible, we are also developing our Instagram presence. You can follow us: [@familyvoicenorfolk](https://www.instagram.com/familyvoicenorfolk)

As well as Family Voice posts, we share information for a huge variety of organisations, including the local authority and health services. We can promote activities suitable for children and young people with SEND throughout Norfolk and can repeat reminders close to the event. From our statistics we can see that workshops or sessions that offer families the chance to gain knowledge in a subject or learn about a service are very popular.

Family Voice Norfolk **Let's Talk... about behaviour** – 6,943 people reached, 31 shares

Family Voice Norfolk **Let's Talk... about early help and prevention** – 6,476 people reached, 23 shares

Family Voice Norfolk **Let's Talk... about Short Breaks** – 5,390 people reached, 19 shares

Family Voice Norfolk **Let's Talk... about childcare and preschool for 0–5 year olds with additional needs** – 3,510 people reached 11 shares



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



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



[@familyvoicenfk](https://www.instagram.com/familyvoicenfk)



Report from the Treasurer

Alison Furniss reports:

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



As warned last year, comparison of the 2021/2022 accounts with 2020/2021 is a little complicated. Our income and expenditure from the DfE grant, NCC Children's Services and the CCG covers the usual financial year until 31 March. However, because of our change of status to a Community Interest Company (CIC) last year, our unrestricted expenditure last year covered 13 months and this year covers only 11. For 2022/23, we will be showing 12 months of both income and expenditure again.

We have an overspend during 2021/22 of £4,792.25. This would have been considerably higher if we had been travelling to events, but reflects the fact that we have been busier than ever, attending over 1,080 meetings compared with 730 meetings in the previous twelve months, and that there are additional costs to being a CIC as we now have three permanent staff with associated on-costs of pensions, National Insurance, paid annual leave and administration.

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 £17,500 (increased from the £15,000 per year previously granted) 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 £29,500.

In previous years, the majority of these monies has been used to fund our Conference and Family Voice, Family Chat engagement events. Once again, we were unable to hold our Conference or in-person engagement events, but Contact allowed us to buy essential IT equipment and IT support with the money that would have been used for this. It seems likely that we will continue to attend the majority of our meetings online, so having reliable equipment and swift access to support has been essential.

We also received £7,500 from the Pears Grant, which enabled us to fund our social media role and some other expenses.

Our unrestricted funds (£87,932) came from our local authority allocation (£73,572) and CCG allocation (£14,360). Our funds from Adult Social Services are higher this time because they only began contributing halfway through the previous year. 'Other income' is £300 granted to us by the Eastern Region of Parent Carer Forums (ERPCF). Our unrestricted funds support 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, particularly Bernadette Pallister, for all their support in making my role much easier.



Family Voice Norfolk financial report

Financial year ending 31 March 2022

	Financial year 2021/22	Financial year 2020/21
Balance brought forward	£55,300.44	£57,597.32
INCOME		
Restricted	£29,500.00	£19,536.80
Unrestricted	£87,932.00	£81,160.00
Interest	£5.18	£24.81
TOTAL INCOME	£117,437.18	£100,721.61
EXPENDITURE		
Restricted	£29,660.20	£21,873.96
Unrestricted	£92,569.233	£81,144.53
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£122,229.43	£103,018.49
Balance carried forward	£50,508.19	£55,300.44

INCOME		
Restricted		
DfE Grant	£29,500.00	£19,536.80
Total restricted income	£29,500.00	£19,536.80
Unrestricted		
NCC children's services to 31 March	£54,000.00	£53,000.00
NCC adult social services to 30 April	£19,572.00	£13,800.00
CCG participation	£14,360.00	£14,360.00
Interest income	£5.18	£24.81
Other income	£300.00	
Total unrestricted income	£88,237.18	£81,184.81
TOTAL INCOME	£117,737.18	£100,721.61

EXPENDITURE		
DfE restricted	£29,660.20	£21,873.96
Unrestricted		
Expense claims, running costs	£92,569.23	£81,144.53
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£122,229.43	£103,018.49

