

LGA/CNN Reforming the SEND System - Insights from the NNPCF



National Network of Parent Carer Forums

'Our Strength Is Our Shared Experience'

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What is a Parent Carer Forum?

A Parent Carer Forum (PCF) is a group of parents and carers of children and young people aged 0 – 25 who has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) . A child or young person is considered to have SEND if they have a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support

PCFs gather the views of local families whose children and young people have SEND across all local communities and fed back these views into strategic meetings to support the improvement of local services in their area. This is to ensure services are designed to better meet the needs of, and improve outcomes for, children and young people with SEND and their families

PCFs do this by representing the lived experience of parents and carers in their local areas across Education, Health and Social Care.

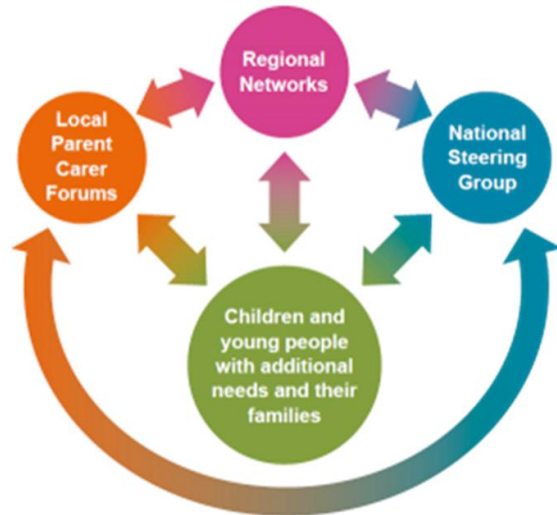
PCFs work in a solution focused way and aim to work in *co-production* and *participation* on key projects and service improvements that are important to the families that they represent.

Who is the NNPCF?



The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) is the independent national voice of parent carer forums. The NNPCF's membership is made up of 152 local parent carer forums, currently comprising of 130,000 parent carers.

The NNPCF Steering Group (SG) is made up of 10 Regional Steering Group (1 for each Department of Education Region and 2 for London) Members who are appointed through a regional application process and must be active members of their local PCF and within their Regional Network. They may also sit on the board of Directors. As with many Local PCFs, the NNPCF also has two "Co-Chairs" who are elected from within the Steering Group.



NNPCF represent the PCFs' views at a national level. The NNPCF also has National Parent Reps, who are members of their local parent carer forums, and who, as well as SG members, will attend meetings, events and workshops at a national level.

Recommendation 1

– National Vision and Guiding Principals

- **Establishing a national vision for SEND** – that creates equity and opportunity for all.
- **Importance of co-production with families** – ensuring parent carer voices are valued and included resulting in better outcomes.
- **Aim for children to feel valued and capable** – ensuring children and young people have a say in their future.
- **Concerns about a reduction of any statutory entitlements** – the legal rights of families need to be protected.

Recommendation 2

– A National Framework

- **A National Framework** – has potential benefits, to supporting local areas in understanding and providing support.
- **Importance of co-production and decision-making** – coproduction is vital to ensuring that services achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people and make the best use of available resources.
- **Concerns about classification of needs and holistic approach**- no one size fits all, and any system would need to demonstrate flexibility in order to meet the needs of any individual.

Recommendation 3

– Inclusive Mainstream Offer

- **Support for inclusive mainstream education** – where pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and the needs of the pupils with SEND are consistently met.
- **Need for flexibility in pathways and assessments** – in order to meet the needs of pupils with SEND the system needs to be flexible and not marginalise those with SEND.
- **Adequate resources and school environment** – is required in mainstream settings to enable increased accessibility for SEND pupils.
- **Accountability** - clear lines of accountability across the Local Authority, Schools, Health and Social Care is required to support SEND pupils to be able to access mainstream provision.

Recommendation 4

– Reforming the Statutory Framework

- **Agreement on accountability and inclusivity** – families are ‘crying out’ for clear accountability within the system, due to the difficulty in navigating the system to obtain positive outcomes for their children and young people.
- **Importance of Provision Planning** – place planning for SEND is a priority, from mainstream to specialist.
- **Concerns over tribunal outcomes and parental rights** – with clearer lines of accountability early on in the SEND system, there would be potentially be a reduction in tribunals. A legal right of redress will always be important to families.

Recommendation 5

– Preparation for Adulthood

- **Support for improved transition into adulthood** – transition into adulthood continues to be an unnecessary ‘cliff edge’ for too many families. Aligning Education, Health and Social Care system to a simplified the process is welcomed.
- **Supporting those with the greatest needs** – will always be a priority, however, the categorization needs to ensure that the mainstream SEND pupils won’t be disadvantaged.
- **Concerns about categorization of needs and ongoing support** – the need for coproduction and to ensure that those with SEND are protected until 25 to enable those with SEND every opportunity to develop.

Recommendation 6

– Realigning Powers & Responsibilities

- **Involvement of parent carer forums and children's voices** – coproduction is vital to ensure the reality and the lived experience, is embedded into strategic and operational discussions and decisions.
- **Need for clarity in commissioning processes** – strengthening commissioning across services is welcomed and needs strong feedback and coproduction mechanisms built in to ensure services meet the needs of the area.
- **Concerns over funding redistribution from post 16 into delegated budgets of providers** – Redistributing funding streams, whilst may seem simplistic the implications for commissioned providers are far reaching, with current offers attached to existing contracts and service specifications, which the report we feel has failed to give thought and time into the process to amend.

Recommendation 7

– Role of the Independent Sector

- **Growth of the independent sector due to local provision gaps** – highlights the importance of local provision planning and inclusion in mainstream and the need for more bespoke care.
- **Concerns over the removal of judicial oversight in placements** – may potentially result in children and young people being placed in settings which cannot meet their needs. The NNPCF does support that settings should not be able to profile through the provision offered.

Recommendation 8

– Developing a National Workforce Strategy

The NNPCF agrees with the rationale, ambition and the proposal of this recommendation. This is featured in the SEND AP implementation plan work. The Change Programme Partnership has not fully tested the changes that it needs to and therefore the direction of travel has not been fully established.

- **Importance of training including, SEND training and retention of the workforce is vital.**
- **Focus on inclusive practices across all education levels from Early Years to Further Education.**

Conclusion

- ▶ **National Vision and Co-Production:** Establish a national vision for the SEND system that prioritizes co-production with families and values their input in decision-making processes.
- ▶ **Inclusive Framework:** Develop a National Framework that accurately reflects the diverse needs of children with SEND, emphasizing holistic approaches and sufficient resources for support.
- ▶ **Mainstream Inclusion:** Promote an inclusive mainstream education system that provides flexible pathways and adequate training to meet the varied needs of all learners.
- ▶ **Accountability and Rights:** Ensure accountability within the SEND framework, protecting parental rights and clarifying support mechanisms, particularly during transitions into adulthood.
- ▶ **Workforce Development:** Create a national workforce strategy focused on training, retention, and recruitment to ensure educators are well-equipped to support children with SEND effectively.



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Questions?