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

National Co-Production Week: 3–8 July 2017

Family Voice Norfolk and the local authority have been working hard to mark National Co-Production Week. Both organisations believe that the best way to ensure that services take into account the views and experiences of service users – you! – is to work in partnership when planning, developing and reviewing provision. National Co-Production Week is an opportunity to show what that means in Norfolk.

- A special edition of *Improving Times* weekly newsletter (Children's Services), which will also appear as a special edition of the SEND e-Newsletter, includes many examples of co-production in practice, including several that Family Voice has been involved in. Family Voice members have written articles worked alongside the Local Offer to edit and organise the newsletter. The hope is that further areas of the local authority will appreciate the benefits of co-production for all concerned.

- Some footage has already been shot for a short film, which will appear on the Local Offer, YouTube and the Family Voice website, showing co-production in practice and what it means in Norfolk. Children and young people, Family Voice members and representatives of the local authority will all appear, and the filmmaker is Jacob Furniss, himself a young man with SEND.

As well as being an excellent example of co-production in itself, the film will show more clearly than any explanation what it is that Family Voice Representatives actually *do!*



Jacob filming a Liaison meeting between Family Voice and the local authority. So much talent in the Family Voice family!



Update from the Reps Team



Hi, I'm Cheryl and mum to a teen with a diagnosis of ASD and complex needs. Having heard about the work of Family Voice Norfolk in listening to and representing the views of families across the county, I joined the Reps Team in March last year. I wanted to get involved in helping to shape and improve services for all our children and young people with SEND and their families. I was – and continue to be – passionate about the opportunity to try to make a difference.

After the AGM in May, I was pleased to take on the role of leading our highly committed Reps Team. Representing the voices of Norfolk families, we continue to be involved in a wide range of strategy groups and project boards with our partners from Norfolk County Council's Education Inclusion Service, Children's and Adult's Social Services, Information and Advice Services, Health and Voluntary Sector providers. Many of the groups we are involved with have what's known as 'multi-agency' representation, seeking to bring professionals from all the teams involved in delivering a service around one table.

We are always looking for more parent carers to join our team and are particularly hoping to involve more families living in the east of the county and those with experience of palliative care needs.

The first step would be to come and have coffee and a chat to find out what's involved. You'll never be pressured to do more than you can fit in with family and other commitments.

If you would like to know more, please contact our Administration Manager, Bernadette, on 07950 302937 (please leave a message) or email admin@familyvoice.org.uk

Here's an update of key areas where the Reps Team has been busy this month.

In June, Family Voice Norfolk Reps attended a meeting with Rachel Gates, local authority Disability and Health Commissioner.

We discussed our recent membership consultation, which asked families to tell us about their views regarding changes to the way Short Breaks are commissioned. You can read the results of the consultation on the Family Voice Norfolk website at <http://familyvoice.org.uk/index.php/news>.

Following the meeting, Family Voice Norfolk continues to have concerns about the suitability of the RAS (Resource Allocation System) questionnaire to reflect the true need of every family to have a Short Break. We are also worried about the impact and extent of the confusion around the allocation of budgets and provision available.

In July, we hope to launch a second, wider consultation in partnership with NASSH (Norfolk Association of Special School Headteachers), which will help us to audit the Short Breaks experiences of a larger number of Norfolk families. We want to reach as many affected families as we can, so will use several different ways to reach both our members and other families. When we contact you, please feel free to encourage other families you may know to complete our survey as well as giving us your own response.

We also attended the NSFT (Norfolk Suffolk Foundation Trust) Transition Planning meeting, part of a national initiative to drive clinical quality improvements and transformational change to the experiences and outcomes for young people as they transition out of the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service. Family Voice Norfolk was extended a warm welcome at this meeting. We look forward to working as a key part of this initiative.

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Concerning news from families of a consultation being launched regarding the proposed closure of the Autism SRB (Specialist Resource Base) at the Open Academy, Norwich, led to members of the Family Voice Steering Group raising their concerns at a meeting with Education Inclusion Commissioner Nikki Rider. We will also highlight this via our Eastern Region

Parent Carer Forum Rep to the NNPCF (National Network of Parent Carer Forums), whose Reps sit on national planning and project meetings. Our aim is to ensure that the actions of Academies and their effects on children and young people with SEND and their families will be discussed and heard at government level.

Remember...

If you have news or views you'd like us to know, contact our Membership manager Kate on 07950 302937 or membership@familyvoice.org.uk or

 www.familyvoice.org.uk

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

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

Save the date...
Family Voice Norfolk
Eighth Annual Conference
Saturday, 10 March 2018
John Innes Centre, Norwich
NR4 7UH

Executive Director of Children's Services

As we have previously reported, since February Matt Dunkley has been interim Executive Director of Children's Services. This month comes news that the permanent post of Director of Children's Services has been advertised.

The job description, key documents and a video featuring Dr Wendy Thomson, Managing Director of Norfolk County Council, and the new Chair of Children's Services, Councillor Penny Carpenter, are now available online at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/senior-vacancies/current-vacancies/director-of-childrens-services>

The closing date is 9th July, with the selection process taking place before the summer break.

Chair of Children's Services Committee



Following the local government elections in May, the posts and responsibilities of councillors have changed. The new Chair of the Children's Services Committee is Councillor

Penny Carpenter, who represents the Caister division, having previously served on the Great Yarmouth Borough Council as deputy council leader. A Conservative councillor, before retiring she worked for Norfolk Constabulary as a Civilian Crime Reduction Officer. As a councillor, she has been very active in community initiatives and led the response to the Regent Road fire last year that affected many Yarmouth businesses.



1) Your feedback needed...

In a previous newsletter we reported on a piece of work that Family Voice was involved in with the local authority and a number of other partners to set down what education settings can be expected to supply in terms of **SEN Support**.

Members have told us that the provision they can currently expect from schools and colleges varies very much and that they are given conflicting messages about how SEN Support relates to EHC Plan assessments. We have made the local authority aware of your comments and this is an area in which they also feel that further clarity is needed. This will help both education settings to know what is expected and parent carers to know what their children and young people have a right to receive.

A draft document (**SEN Support guidance**) is now available on the Local Offer at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-0-25/provision-the-local-authority-expects-to-be-made-available>

Family Voice Norfolk plans to set up a **focus group** to meet just once, hopefully in the next two weeks before schools break up, to go through the document and put together our comments. If you would like to take part in this, please contact Bernadette urgently on admin@familyvoice.org.uk or 07535 895748.

2) Your feedback needed...

Family Voice Norfolk are working with Suffolk Parent Carer Network and are gathering feedback on the NSFT (Norfolk Suffolk Foundation Trust) Mental Health Services.

Tell us about your experiences of mental health services for children & young people (0–25) across Suffolk and Norfolk at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/M5Y6JNV>

The survey ends on **7th July**.

Coming soon to a venue near you...

Family Voice is excited to be organising some 'new-style' parent carer participation events, entitled **Family Voice Family Chat**.

These will be informal 'coffee, tea and cake' sessions, enabling you to share your thoughts and experiences on a variety of topics related to our children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

We would really like to get these sessions right for you – at the right venues and at the right times – so that you have every opportunity to come along, meet other parent carers and help us gather the realities experienced by our families. **To achieve this, we need your help.** We will shortly be sending out a very short survey. Please could we ask you to take a few minutes to fill this in and return it to us. Or if it is easier, you can find it [here](#). Tell us what you would like from these **Family Voice Family Chat** sessions.

Your voice matters – always.

SEND e-Newsletter

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

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

Newsletter deadlines

The next newsletter will appear at the end of July. If there are issues that you would like to see covered, please contact admin@familyvoice.org.uk or 07535 895748 before 24 July 2017.

