



# Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice Spring Newsletter February 2024

## Chair's update

It's been a busy few months since our last newsletter was published in October 2023 and delivered to all schools across the county to share with parent carers.

Some highlights include our series of face-to-face Meet and Eats and online events between October 2023 and January 2024.

Topics included:

- New neurodiversity drop-in hubs and other strategic health developments
- Disabled children's services and short breaks
- SEND system developments
- Behaviour support and autism outreach services

Parent carers told us that our events provided a valuable opportunity to meet other parents in similar situations and talk to strategic partners from the local authority and health to raise awareness, ask questions and get answers.



“  
Meeting other parents in similar situations. I have never had this opportunity, and it was so valuable.

Parent carer

## New Developments

We're delighted to tell you that following a review of the current forum set-up, our trustees feel that it's time for change to develop a more collaborative and inclusive model.

Our vision is to create a consortium model with a new operational steering group creating exciting new volunteer roles and training opportunities for parent carers. We want to welcome new members and work more inclusively with local SEND groups, school SENDCos and school parent carer groups from all across the county.

We believe there is a huge untapped resource out there and a real power in numbers if we get this right.



If you're part of a SEND parent carer group working in Derbyshire, please join our online **Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice (DPCV) Refresh and Renew Event on Friday 1 March, 10.30am - 12.30pm**. We want to hear your ideas about how we can refresh and renew DPCV by working with you to capture the voice of more parent carers.

Visit [derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates](https://derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates)

## Festive Christmas Event

In December we held our first festive cinema event for parent carers, children and young people to see a fabulous Christmassy showing of Elf at Cineworld Chesterfield.

This event was made possible by a generous donation from Irwin Mitchell solicitors and was well received by parent carers and their children. We hope to run another Christmas cinema event in 2024, so watch this space.

“  
The social aspect of getting the kids together, we really enjoyed it.

Parent carer



“  
Very well organised and thought about children's needs.

Parent carer

## "Speaking up for what matters - when it matters"

Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice is an organised group of parent carers of disabled children and young people (or supporters of their families). We work strategically with local authorities, education settings, health providers and others to make sure the services they plan and deliver meet the needs of disabled children and families in Derbyshire.



[derbyshireparentforums.co.uk](https://derbyshireparentforums.co.uk)



# The role of a parent carer representative



To attend meetings with the local authority and health in order to represent the views of parent carers.

- Use evidence to support position
- Collate parent carer feedback/input, surveys, research, etc

To engage in discussion and decision making

- Ensure that any impact on families is understood throughout the process
- Present creative ideas and solutions

To improve outcomes for local families

To provide feedback

- Inform future forum activities/priorities
- 'You said, we did' - what difference is the forum making? Let parents know
- How are outcomes being improved?



## Benefits of DPCV membership

You'll be involved in reshaping DPCV – the local parent carer forum for Derbyshire.

There is real power in numbers and the more parent carers involved, the more accurate the views we have on how Derbyshire's families' needs are being met.

All our members will have access to a variety of services and resources as follows:

- Member only newsletters
- Have your say on important issues via consultations and surveys
- Funded training to develop your skills
- Opportunities to represent the forum at strategic meetings
- Become part of the core steering group
- Peer support and network of valuable connections

## New volunteer recruitment opportunities

- **Trustees** – we are looking for people with a range of complementary skills and knowledge to join our Board of Trustees – secretarial, finance, legal, HR as well as SEND-specific expertise such as educational psychology, teaching and inclusion
- **Steering Group Members** – meets monthly to help run the forum - including maintaining the website, setting up and running new events, engaging more parents, delivering the annual plan
- **Parent Carer Reps** – see role description in article above

Please contact us by email if you are interested in any of these roles and would like to find out more, [info@derbyshireparentcarerveice.org](mailto:info@derbyshireparentcarerveice.org)

## Parent representation training

In January we were very excited to run our first virtual training sessions for parent carer representatives. We explored the current situation in Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice and covered things like:

- Governance – how the forum is organised
- What matters to parent carers
- How you can get involved – the different volunteering opportunities
- Opportunities for working with partners
- Skills audits – the skills you already have and any you would like the forum to help you to develop

Our new parent carer reps will be supported to get more involved. One parent carer is planning to set up a coffee morning in High Peak to gather parent voice, another is thinking about becoming a trustee and the others have offered a range of skills and expertise, including data analysis for our surveys.

Our next parent carer training sessions are on Thursday 29 February and Wednesday 6 March from 10am - 12 noon. Visit [derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates](http://derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates) to book your place.

# it's about me

Derbyshire's Holiday Activity  
and Food Programme

It's About Me is a holiday activity and food programme funded by the Department for Education (DfE) for families in Derbyshire. It's a fantastic opportunity for children aged 4-16 who are eligible for benefit-related free school meals and those with SEND to enjoy free holiday fun activities with a nutritious meal. It runs across the spring, summer and winter school holidays with clubs across the county offering various activities.

To book a session, use the webpage [www.itsaboutmederbyshire.co.uk](http://www.itsaboutmederbyshire.co.uk) and follow the booking link to search for clubs in your area.

The team are expanding the range of holiday clubs for children with SEND and continue to identify those who work directly with SEND children.

For information about the Easter programme and tips on eligibility criteria, how to book using codes and booking online, join one of our online awareness events on **4 March at 1.30pm - 2.30pm** or **7 March at 10.30am - 11.30am**.

Visit [derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates](http://derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates) to book your place.



## Impact of anxiety at school

**The impact of anxiety on school attendance and engagement: great training opportunity for parent carers**

Many children and young people experience high levels of anxiety which affects their attendance and engagement with school. This is sometimes described as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). It can lead to many behaviours from high levels of distress in the morning to persistent lateness or 'refusal' to attend school altogether. Following a pilot project which took place in Derbyshire and Derby City schools, they're developing some training materials for school staff and parent carers. They're looking for parent carers of children experiencing EBSA to attend a session and provide feedback to help develop the training further and hopefully roll out more widely.

**The aims will be to:**

- Give a brief introduction into EBSA
- Explore what anxiety is and what it might look like
- Share strategies about how parent carers can support children who are experiencing high levels of anxiety

The in-person session will take place during the summer term so if you wish to express your interest please contact: [info@derbyshireparentcarerveoice.org](mailto:info@derbyshireparentcarerveoice.org)

## Transitions Survey - You said, we did. So what?

Thank you to members who took the time to complete our Transitions survey last year. The survey gathered parent carers' views on the transition process across education, health and social care.

There were 76 responses and many different views were expressed.

### You said:

Your main priorities were the need for:

- Greater clarity about transitions rights and responsibilities
- Improved information and communication with parent carers
- A more coordinated approach from education, social care and health

### We did:

We shared the survey results and your priorities for improvement with our strategic partners at Derbyshire County Council in SEND, social care services and health. We asked officers to create opportunities for our parent carers to work with them to co-produce and improve transition services.

### So what:

They listened and invited two DPCV parent carer representatives to join the SEND Strategy Transitions Development group. They are now working with officers as equal partners to co-produce a set of 'frequently asked questions' and design and run some transition workshops. These events will focus on clarifying rights and responsibilities and will provide opportunities for you to tell us what an ideal transition would look like for you and your child, for example, primary to secondary school. We have also worked with the Autism in Schools project, producing a transition video for Granville Academy. These workshops are on Wednesday 13 March, 1.00pm - 2.30pm and Thursday 14 March, 10.00am - 11.30am. Visit [derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates](http://derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates) to book your place.

## Pre Ofsted SEND Survey: A real chance for you to have your say!

In December 2023 we launched our SEND survey for families of children and young people aged 0 to 25 years with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND), not just those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or on formal Special Educational Needs (SEN) support at school. It closed on the 31 January with an excellent 802 responses. So a big thank you to all parent carers who took time to complete the survey and give us your views.

We are now doing detailed analysis of your feedback. We'll share the results with strategic partners to ensure that they take your views into account when providing SEND services in Derbyshire. We will also share your feedback with Ofsted and CQC when they do their inspection of SEND services later this year.

We offered a grocery voucher worth £20 as an incentive to five people who completed the survey. Following a random draw, five lucky winners have received a voucher to spend as they please!





# Events Coming Soon!

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
<b>Friday 1 March 2024</b>	10.30am – 12.30pm	Refresh and Renew Summit Event	Online
<b>Thursday 29 February and Wednesday 6 March 2024</b>	10.00am – 12.00 noon	Parent Carer Representative Training Session 1 and 2	Online
<b>Monday 4 March 2024</b>	1.30pm – 2.30pm	HAF Programme Awareness and Signposting Event	Online
<b>Thursday 7 March 2024</b>	10.30am – 11.30am	HAF Programme Awareness and Signposting Event	Online
<b>Wednesday 13 March 2024</b>	1.00pm – 2.30pm	Preparing for School Transitions Workshop - between classes, key stages and settings	Online
<b>Thursday 14 March 2024</b>	10.00am – 11.30am	Preparing for School Transitions Workshop - between classes, key stages and settings	Online
<b>Monday 18 March 2024</b>	5.00pm – 6.30pm	SEND System Update and Q&A sessions with Dan Careless and Jenny Hooper, DCC	Online
<b>Friday 22 March 2024</b>	11.00am – 12.30pm	SEND System Update and Q&A sessions with Dan Careless and Jenny Hooper, DCC	Online
<b>Wednesday 24 April 2024</b>	1.00pm – 2.30pm	Preparing for Adulthood Workshop with partners from schools and learning, social care, community connectors and supported internship services	Online
<b>Thursday 25 April 2024</b>	10.00am – 11.30am	Preparing for Adulthood Workshop with partners from schools and learning, social care, community connectors and supported internship services	Online

**Lots more exciting events being planned April - July 2024**  
See website and social media for confirmed dates

Overview of Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) and Q&A session provided by PDA Society

Specialist SEND and Sleep training course

SEND Health System Update and Q&A

Resilience training for parent carers

Early Years SEND Service Awareness and signposting session

## JOIN OUR EVENTS

Scan the QR code to gain free access to all of our events

[derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates](http://derbyshireparentforums.co.uk/forumdates)



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