

# Annual Report

A review of the  
last year

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*June 2023*





# A word from our Chair Kerri Rennie...

It's that time of year again! I hope you and your families are all safe and well.

We have had a very active year at Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum (BBPCF). I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our membership for their contributions. Your engagement supports the continuing, important work of the forum by keeping the needs of our families at the forefront of everything we do. Your feedback informs service providers and organisations, including Bedford Borough Council, Cambridgeshire Community Services and NHS Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICB.

This Annual Report (June 2023) provides information on BBPCF's work throughout the year. I hope you will take a few minutes to look at all the different areas we have been active in representing the whole SEND community.

In my role as BBPCF Chair, I have the opportunity to hear many different views and experiences. This motivates me to seek further improvements in all areas of support for our SEND community. BBPCF aim to create a culture of participation and co-production with all stakeholders in Bedford Borough. At the centre of this is the SEND community voice which must be heard to create real effective improvement.

With continued regard for the work the forum has done and a focus on what we have still to do, I ask you all to keep supporting your local forum, so that the 'Lived Experience' of families continues to improve both for now and for future generations.





# What is a Parent Carer Forum?

A parent carer forum is a group of parents and carers of children with a special educational need and/or disability who work with local authorities, education settings, health providers and other providers to make sure the services they commission, plan and deliver meet the needs of SEND children and families in the local area.

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) is made up of all of the parent carer forums from across England. The NNPCF ensures that local parent carer forums are aware of national developments. It promotes opportunities for the voice of parent carers to influence at a national level.

The NNPCF works closely with the Department for Education, the Department of Health, and other partner organisations to improve outcomes for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and their families.

BBPCF is a member of the Eastern Region of Parent Carer Forums (ERPCF). The Eastern Region consists of 11 forums covering Peterborough, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough, Luton, Hertfordshire, Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, Southend, Essex and Thurrock. Representatives from each forum meet 3 times a year and look at local and national developments, and there is an opportunity to feedback to the regional representative of the NNPCF and the Regional Adviser from Contact.







**Equality is everyone getting a pair of shoes.**



**Diversity is everyone getting a different type of shoe.**



**Equity is everyone getting a pair of shoes that fits.**



**Acceptance is understanding we all wear different kinds of shoes.**



**Belonging is wearing the shoes you want without fear of judgment.**

## What is Parent Carer Participation?

Parent carers can help pinpoint problems frequently experienced by families with SEND children. This knowledge is essential to practitioners to help them improve how children's services are planned and delivered so they better meet families' needs.

Parent carer participation is when parents and practitioners work together, recognising each other's expert knowledge, to make informed decisions about children's services to ensure the best possible outcomes.



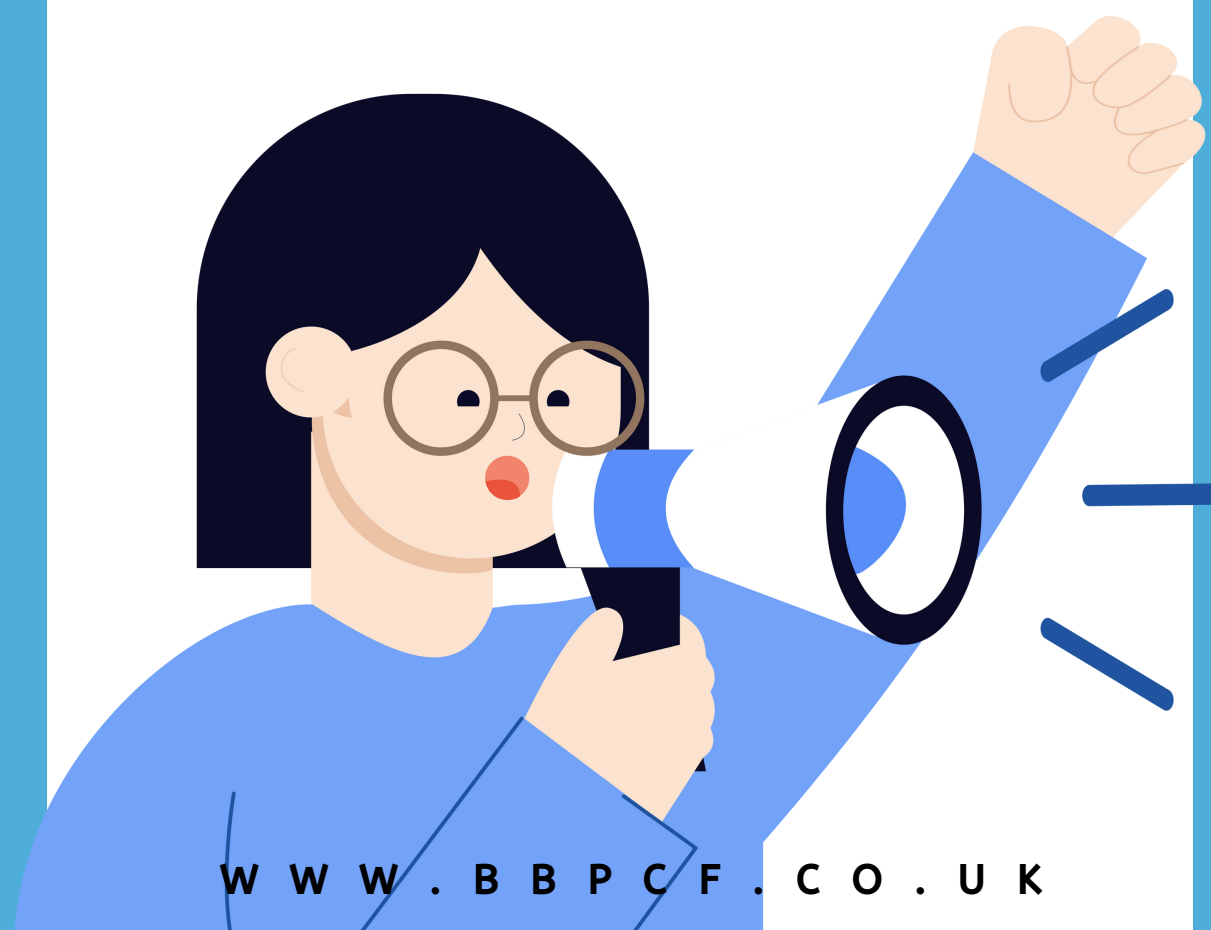
# Who we are

We are the voice for Parent Carers of children & young people 0-25yrs with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities in Bedford Borough. BBPCF work alongside Bedford Borough Council (BBC), and the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) as a strategic partner, representing our parent carers and working alongside services when key decisions are being made.

We are passionate about raising aspirations and improving outcomes for our children & young people and keep this at the heart of everything we do.

We have built strong working relationships, and have a trusted role as parent carers of children and young people with SEND. We are experts by experience and as such, have a unique understanding of how challenging life can be raising a child or young person with SEND.

Your  
**VOICE**  
MATTERS



WWW.BBPCF.CO.UK

# We are not

We are not a support group



We are not a protest group



We cannot advocate for individual cases



**But**



Without your feedback we can't represent your voice



# OUR REACH



**1500**

*Members*

**1700**

*Facebook Followers*

**1034**

*Twitter Followers*

**379**

*Instagram Followers*

**37**

*Linkedin Followers*

**8**

*Steering Group Members*

**85**

*Parent Participation*

Over **2000 parents** attended our events in 2022/2023. The forum runs regular get togethers, events and training.



# How do we ensure we hear the voice of the parent carer?

We do this by giving parent carers the opportunity to participate in a number of ways such as get togethers, training, social media, email and focus groups, both online and face-to-face. This feedback can then be used to co-produce and work at a strategic level with the Local Authority and the ICB.

*Thank you for another brilliant session.*

*Definitely given me some new strategies to consider and old ones to revisit.*

Our regular events are always a great way to get feedback from parent carers on how services are working for them. We invite guest speakers along based on feedback from parent carers. This is an opportunity for the guest speakers to tell us more about their service but also for parents to ask them direct questions. We have also arranged training sessions in the last year hosted by IPSEA, ADHDwise, The Girl with the Curly Hair and many more

Following our experiences we now take a more blended approach to our engagement and are running a mix of daytime and evening, online and face-to-face sessions. Over the last year we have had the following services attending our events to speak to parent carers:

**Jo Drew** (Designated Clinical Officer Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND))

**Tim Long** (Head of School Support Services)

**Chris Morris** (Acting Chief Officer – Education, SEND & School Infrastructure)

**Christian Weatherley** (Principal Social Worker)

***We always like to hear feedback from parents as to who else they would like us to have speaking at our events so if you have any suggestions please email us [communications@bbpcf.org.uk](mailto:communications@bbpcf.org.uk)***



# The Healthy Parent Carer Programme

Over the last couple of years we've had 75 parents access the programme.

The healthy parent carer programme is designed to improve parent carers' health and wellbeing by promoting emotional balance through understanding, empowerment, confidence and resilience.

We are looking at running both an online and a face-to-face programme in the Autumn Term so if you are interested please email us to register your interest [communications@bbpcf.org.uk](mailto:communications@bbpcf.org.uk)



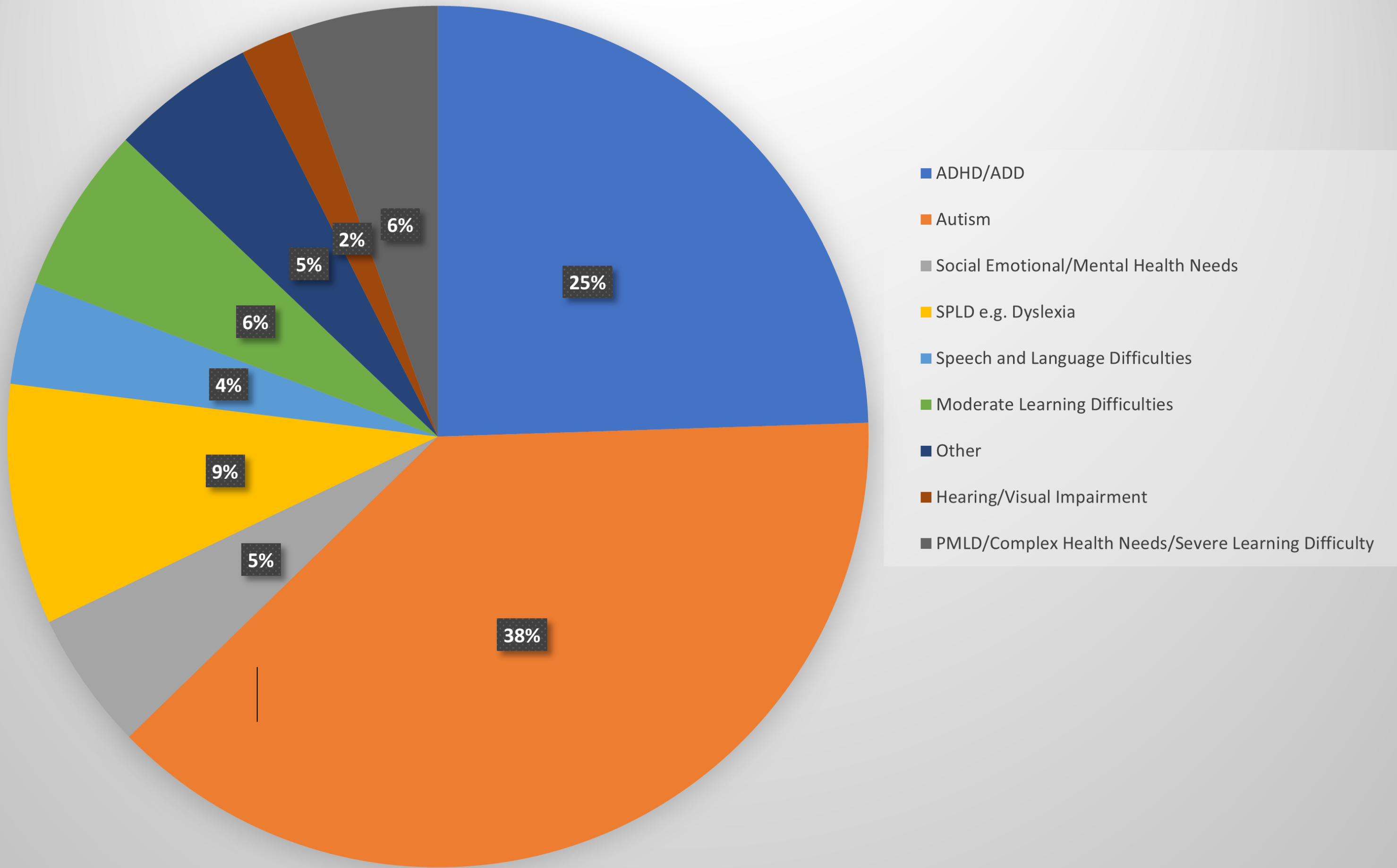
*“Being in a room full of other parents that totally understand where you're coming from and how you are feeling is invaluable”*

*“The program has helped me gain confidence to get back into the real world”*

*Healthy Parent Carers is the the best course I've taken so far*



# BBPCF Members by Disability





# The Official Opening of the Inclusive Park

On a Sunny Day at the start of September, we gathered at the new inclusive Park in Russell Park for the official opening.

This opening was the result of 2 years of work following feedback from parent carers that there wasn't enough inclusive equipment at parks in Bedford. BBPCF were awarded £100,000 from Bedford Borough Council through the Mayor's Youth Empowerment Fund to help build an inclusive and fully accessible outdoor area of play within the existing Russell Park play area.

The Mayor came to join us with several families to enjoy the official opening celebrations.





# The Local Offer



We continue to monitor the Local Offer and feedback to the Local Offer Officer, Sorcha O'Loughlin on what our members are saying and we meet regularly to ensure it is kept up to date.

Sorcha has continued to attend our events over the last year to speak to our members and gain their feedback on the local offer so that it is being co-produced with those who use it.

<https://localoffer.bedford.gov.uk/>

# Our Annual Survey

BBPCF continue to run our annual survey. This is a tool we use to measure how well Bedford Borough Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) are meeting the needs of children and young people (age 0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Our last survey was completed by over 500 parent carers which gave us a rich amount of data to share with the local authority and ICB, this feedback links directly into the SEND Strategy in Bedford Borough and informs our focus groups and priorities. From this we have created our annual outcomes report which we have shared on our website.

[www.bbpcf.co.uk/reports](http://www.bbpcf.co.uk/reports)





## HERE ARE SOME OF THE MEETINGS/WORKING GROUPS WE'VE ATTENDED OVER THE LAST YEAR TO REPRESENT THE PARENTS VOICE:

SEND Panel	SEND Improvement Board	Local Offer	SEND Quality Assurance Board
Early Years Reference Group	CAMHS Stakeholders	Multi-Agency Panel	School Improvement
Social Care	Quality Assurance Audits	SEND in Early Years	SEND in Education
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	Child Health and Wellbeing Partnership	E-Learning	Beds CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Group
Counselling Collective	Preparing for Adulthood Joint Commissioning Group	Personal Budget Group	Cambridge Community Services Meetings
Neurodevelopmental Pathway	Bedford An Inclusive Town	Palliative Care Team	Post-16 Provision
	Post-18 Provision	Autism in Schools	

## What we do with your feedback...

We attend many boards and meetings within the local authority and the ICB to represent our parents experiences and themes that we have picked up on through our get togethers, surveys and other events that we run throughout the year...

# What have we done with your feedback?

Following your feedback, the meetings and involvement we've had with the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board we have done the following:

- We have started running termly Drop-in sessions with practitioners so that you can speak to them face-to-face
- We organised our first Coffee Morning with local Charities and Organisations so that you can find out what local services offer you
- We have continued to run various activities and training to support parent carers wellbeing as you have told us this is important to you
- An Outcomes report has been produced from our annual survey where we had over 500 responses, this feeds into the Local Authority SEND Strategy so your voice is being heard.
- We were involved in the organising of the SEND Section at the River Festival and in providing your feedback so that this can be improved in the future
- We work with the co-production lead for Cambridge Community Services to ensure there is clear co-production and your voices are heard
- Representation from The Local Offer at several of our events so that they can hear your feedback about its content
- Representation from SENDiass at our regular Coffee Mornings so that you have an opportunity to seek information, advice and support from them.
- Received funding to help us provide whole family events that are inclusive

These are all positive developments that families have welcomed. However, families are still reporting issues in these main areas (taken from our Annual Survey 2022):

- 1.Children with EHCPs in mainstream schools show significantly worse scores than those in special schools.
- 2.The older children and young people get, the lower their average scores
- 3.Parents of Children and Young People with EHCPs were significantly more worried about their ability to be independent
- 4.Many families mentioned access to leisure facilities as an issue

“

Hopefully you hear this a lot but in case I don't say it enough, thank you for all the hard work you put in to the forum, it is much appreciated

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# Our Achievements This Year

- Official opening of the inclusive park
- Family Fun Day for over 200 families
- Our work has led to a change in provision of services from the council / ICB, for example extra high needs funding and Speech and Language Therapy
- The second year running involved in the Autism in Schools Project
- Running another 5 Healthy Parent Carer Courses (we have now completed courses with 75 participants overall)
- Facilitated a craft wellbeing workshop for parent carers
- Increased our membership to over 1500 including all areas of the SEND Community
- A variety of FREE training (Sleep Training, ADHD Training, IPSEA, Anxiety, and much more)
- Enhancing our positive relationships with the voluntary sector
- Attended keeping in touch schools SENCO events
- Continued promotion of BBPCF within Education, Health and Social Care
- Hosting various focus groups to ensure the parent carer voice is heard
- Increased our Coffee Mornings to twice monthly
- Begun the process of organising Family Participation Events to enable families to enjoy activities together.



**Thank you for all your support, you have really helped me understand what is happening and where to get the right support**





“ Just wanted to say a massive thank you for yesterday's event. We all had such a great day and it was refreshing to be amongst a group of parents who are in the same boat. ”



# Family Fun Day

In January we held our first ever Family Fun Day for children with SEND in Bedford Borough. This was organised in conjunction with SSG who were incredible in helping with the organising and providing their facilities and staff on the day. The feedback we had was really positive and we were so pleased that over 200 families came out and enjoyed the day

“ It was so well organised, with such a huge variety of activities for people to choose from. ”



“ Never before have we been to a SEN event that actually feels like it's being run by people who fully understand autism. ”



“ To say we all had an amazing day today is an understatement. It was fantastic. ”



# Bedford Borough's Co-production Charter

for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

## What is co-production?

Co-production means working with people who use services as equal partners in design, development, commissioning, delivery and review of services to create better outcomes.

There are lots of reasons why we should co-produce:

- It leads to better services that improve people's lives
- It creates more effective and efficient services that save money
- There is a legal requirement to co-produce in the Children and Families Act, the Care Act and in the NHS Constitution.

This co-production charter lays out five principles that all parties will use to work together in the right way.

### We listen to everyone

We take the views of all parents, children, young people and practitioners seriously.

No-one should feel that they have to fight to be heard.

### We empower people

We share the information everyone needs to know to take part in decision making.

We provide support and advice where needed.

### We co-produce from start to finish

We set the scope, agenda, key decisions and review progress together. Everyone is invited to the right meetings and made to feel welcome.

### We are person centred and solution focused

We do not put barriers in the way of good ideas and do not hide behind policy and protocol for reasons why things cannot be done.

### Everyone is enabled to take part

We make sure that everyone can participate: meetings are held at convenient times, accessible venues are used, interpreters are arranged.

Co-production should happen at all levels of service delivery:

- Individual—we take a person centred approach
- Operational—we deliver services in a way that works for the community
- Strategic—we take all big decisions in partnership



**BEDFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL





# Priorities

- Organising Family Participation Activities
- Preparing for adulthood
- Participation in discussions and meetings and feedback to parent carers
- Ensuring SEND is everyone's business
- Open up more direct discussions between parents and practitioners
- Bullying and Loneliness
- Raise awareness of all areas of SEND
- Ensuring parent carers are treated as equal partners
- Monitoring the ongoing situation with therapies and waiting lists
- Continue to provide training and wellbeing sessions for parent carers based on parent carer feedback
- Increased engagement with seldom heard communities
- Refreshing and promoting the Co-production charter

We are constantly engaging with, and listening to our members, to ensure that our priorities remain current throughout the year.







# CONTACT US



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