

PARENT CARERS TOGETHER



Bournemouth Christchurch Poole

the voice of parent carers of young people with special educational needs and disabilities

What is a Parent Carer Forum

The SEND Code of Practice (para. 1.13) explains the purpose of parent carer forums:

“Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other services providers to ensure that the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families”

Parent Carers Together is an independent not for profit Community Interest Company, formed by parents and carers for parents and carers. We are the official parent carer forum for Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP), recognised by the Department of Education as the strategic partner for parent carers voice in BCP. We have a strong and committed [steering group](#) and parent carer representatives who strive to enable our SEND community to have a strong voice by sharing concerns and issues with key policy makers at a local, regional and national level.

Beth, our part-time administrator, helps us function effectively. As well as helping the steering group, Beth is the first point of contact for enquiries and new members, keeping our members up to date with information via newsletters and social media posts.

What We Do:

Parent Engagement – the forum finds out from BCP parents and carers what the issues are so that we can be well informed. We sometimes do this by hosting coffee mornings. We are also developing good relationships with other organisations and support groups (this is not about us doing everything) and we also have direct engagement with parents and carers through our social media platforms ([Facebook](#) and mailchimp communication).

[Partnership Working](#) – we work with both the local authority (BCP Council) and Health (Dorset NHS), sending parent representatives to meetings to inform partners of the challenges faced by families in our area and collaboratively work on reviewing and developing strategies for improving services. We aim to not only raise the issues faced by families but also be part of the solution by offering a parent carer perspective on workable solutions.

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In the past year, our representatives have attended many strategic meetings and boards and given parent carers feedback on a variety of issues including school transport, the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) pathway, the [BCP local offer](#). There is more we as a forum want to do, but we are reliant on parent carers giving us their time to get things done. The more volunteers we have the more we can achieve together.

Our Highlights Apr 2022 – Apr 2023

We attended over 300 strategic meetings with BCP Council/Dorset NHS

We took part in 50 events - conferences, workshops and consultations

We were involved in 6 interview panels

Our steering group members and reps attended 16 training courses

We attended over 20 coffee mornings - our own and other groups

Your voice matters and shapes the work we do!

One voice can be easily drowned out and unheard. Can you imagine the impact of thousands of voices??

Together we are so much stronger and collectively we can make such a difference so please [join us](#) and become a member of Parent Carers Together.

If you can spare some time each month to be a parent representative, then please have a look at the [volunteer opportunities](#) advertised on our website: