



# Six Month Report

## Contact Details

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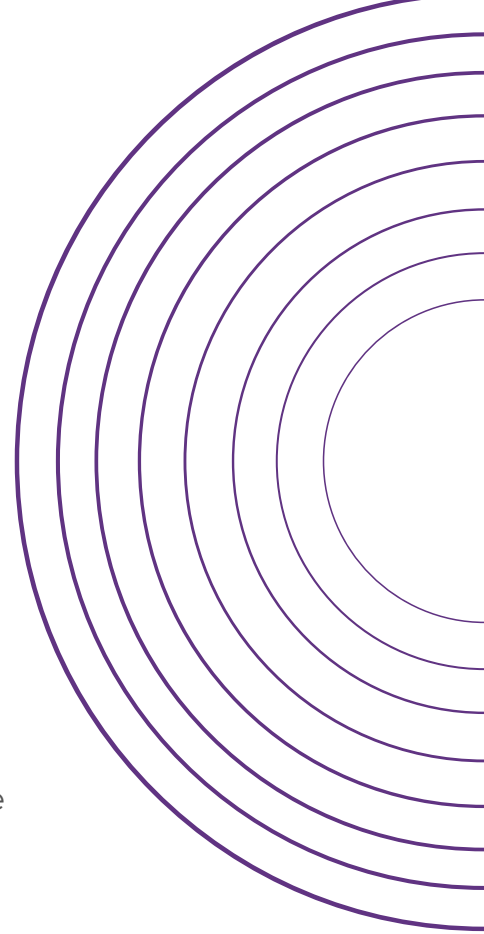


[www.birminghampcf.org](http://www.birminghampcf.org)

2023

# Welcome

As we come to the end of the year and reflect on the past six months, we would like to share the progress and achievements that the Birmingham Parent Carer Forum has made with your continued involvement and we are incredibly grateful for your support. This is playing a vital role in shaping our updated model to ensure we are reflecting diverse views from across the city as we continue to shape and grow.



The Management Committee have been working hard to actively engage with more parent carers across Birmingham and continue to collaborate with local authorities, educational institutions, and healthcare providers to ensure that the voices of parent carers and families are not only heard, but embedded in the decision-making processes.

We are really pleased to share some of the fantastic work that has taken place over the last 6 months and the opportunities that are coming in the new year. We have some exciting plans for 2024 and would love to have you join us and help shape the services our children receive in Birmingham.

# Meet the team



**Pam Armstrong**  
Chair



**Michelle Emery**  
Treasurer



**Amanda Gardner**  
Secretary



**Jo Green**  
Committee Member



**Lucy Crowe**  
Early Years Lead



**Amber Din**  
Community Lead



**Gwilym Evans**  
Participation Coordinator

## An updated forum model

Earlier in the year, we reflectively looked at the operation of the forum as a whole. The decision was made that we would move towards creating a more updated, accessible and inclusive model. As parent carers ourselves, we understand how busy our lives can get and that attending meetings is not for everyone, particularly on top of the demands that we may already have and we recognised that we needed to be much more visible in the community. Because of this, we have started to reach out to parent support groups, coffee mornings and other community groups. Over the last six months, we have had the pleasure of attending over 20 different parent meetings across the city.

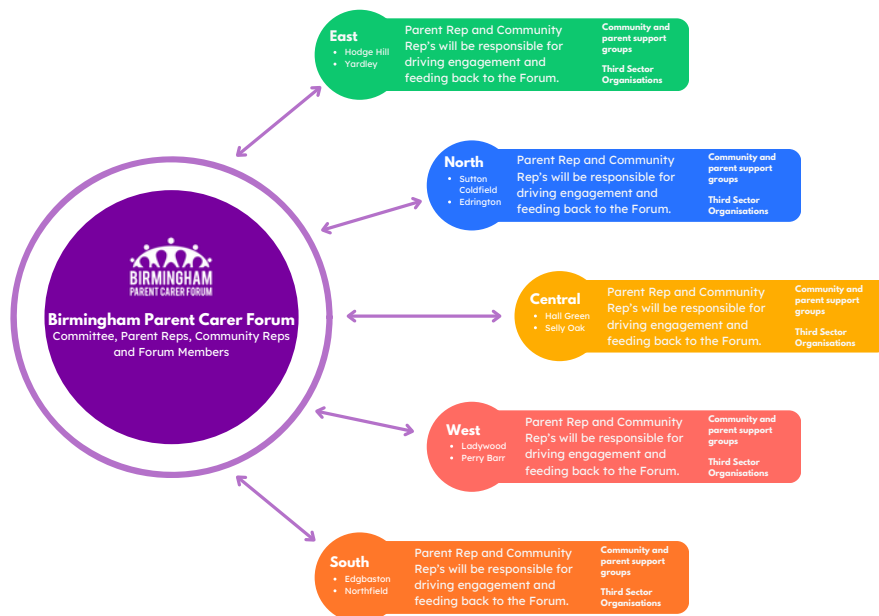
This included parent support groups, school coffee mornings, health visitor groups, stay-and-play groups and holiday activities. The feedback we received while attending these groups showed us we needed to be more visible and available. We thank all the parents, parent carers and community groups across the city that have shared space and collaborative learning opportunities with us over the last six months

Following our visits into the community it became clear we needed to create a way of working that meant we would have a greater reach across the city, ensuring that we are also able to capture the voices of seldom-heard and underrepresented families, to be more accessible and inclusive to all.

Through our updated model, our aim will be to pick up on how different issues are being felt across the city. We will be more visible and accessible to parent carers and be able to provide a two-way communication network where information is shared from the Committee into the ten localities, and feedback from the localities is shared back to the Committee.



Across the city there are ten localities, grouped into North, South, East, West, and Central, each having two focused areas. Within each of these areas, we plan to build a team of Parent Representatives and Community Representatives who will work together to identify parent and community groups, as well as 3rd sector organisations in their area, so that we capture the voices of parent carers. This information will then be fed back to the SEND Improvement Board and heads of service.



## SEND Co-production training

Working with the Co-production officer and members of the Rise and YES youth groups we co-produced, co-designed and co-delivered eight Co-production Skill Sharing Sessions over the last 6 months.

The sessions created a learning environment for practitioners to discuss; how to overcome barriers to Co-production and share learning and good practice, how to effectively Co-produce with children and young people and parent carers and to raise awareness of the Birmingham Local Area Partnership Co-production-framework-and-charter and discuss how its principles and pledges can be embedded within everyday practice.



**Over 120 participants took part in these sessions with representatives across Education, Health and Social Care and Voluntary Sector.**

# Survey Results

At the start of the summer we shared a survey with you all to gather your views and feedback on the services you and your family are accessing. The survey yielded valuable insights, providing a comprehensive overview of your experiences and concerns within Birmingham's SEND services.

Positive feedback highlighted the impact of charitable support and some positive school experiences. However, challenges were underscored by a lack of support and legal involvement, coupled with issues related to local authorities, communication breakdowns, and funding constraints. Concerns about mental health, transportation, and the Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) program were also prominent.

Family priorities centred around health, education, equality, and advocacy, with safety, transition planning, collaboration, and happiness identified as crucial. Parent carers expressed a desire for improved SEND services, emphasising the need for better communication, educational support, accountability, adherence to legal procedures, and a child-centred approach. Quick and proper medication, increased funding, and collaboration for cultural shift were also highlighted as necessary changes. Overall, the survey underscores the pressing need for enhanced support, communication, and collaboration within Birmingham's SEND services.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. The anonymised results of the survey were shared with the SEND Improvement Board in October, who have agreed to take part in the SEND Co-production training in January. The survey is still open and we will continue to check your feedback for current themes and issues that arise throughout the year.

You can complete the survey using the link below.

<https://forms.gle/u2a8EgL29CNwyUeM8>





# SEND Communication and Engagement Event

On Wednesday 29th November, we held our first SEND Communication and Engagement Event at the Wibbly Wobbly World of Soft Play!

The event was for families with children and young people with additional needs. Families had the opportunity to speak with organisations from across the city about the services they offer, as well as provide feedback to the Forum on the services they are using and how the Forum can work for them.

Families were able to speak with the following organisations: Midland Mencap, Our Special Angels, KIDS West Midlands, Better Pathways, Sense, Autism West Midlands, Resources for Autism, Autism Hub West Midlands, Ackers Adventure, B:Music, Compass Support, Forward Carers, Birmingham Carers Hub, Action for Children, OSCAR, and Sutton YMCA.



This was a free face-to-face event for parent carers and children, where children had access to the soft play area. The event was attended by over forty families, and we really want to thank the organisations who supported us, but most importantly, the families whose feedback we will be using to shape how we work moving forward. We already have plans for more events in 2024; make sure to keep an eye out on our social media for more information in the coming weeks.

# New roles

A key part of our updated model of working is the new roles we have made available to Parent Carers and Professionals. These roles will enable the forum not only to increase its capacity which will help create a stronger collective voice and most importantly achieve its aim of creating better services for children and young people. Below is a break down of the three new roles.

Parent Rep	Community Rep	Committee Rep
A Parent Rep will be a parent carer who will attend meetings on behalf of the forum acting as the parent voice or an expert by experience. They complete feedback forms to keep the committee up to date with the work they are involved in whilst also sharing their experience with other Reps and linking in with Community Reps.	A Community Rep will be a member of a charity, support group or third sector organisation who works with or supports children/young people and families with SEND in Birmingham. They will also be a member of the Birmingham SEND Community Round Table and will share information from the families within their local community in order to extend the reach of the parent voice.	A Committee Rep will act as a lead rep within a group for example the Parent reps or the Community reps. They will attend Committee meetings to act as the link between their group and the Committee members. Committee Reps will not have the same responsibilities as Committee members and will not be expected to attend all meetings. Committee members are expected to attend.

## Birmingham SEND Community Round Table

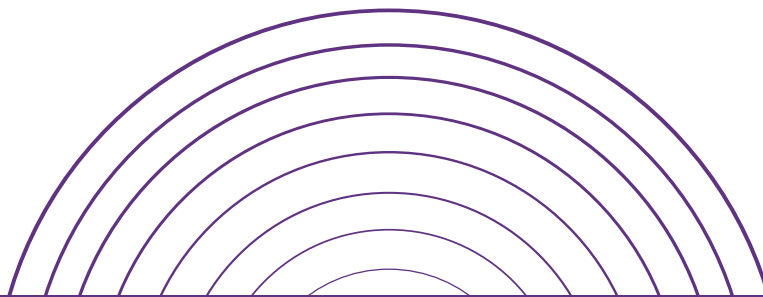
This year we set up the Birmingham SEND Community Round Table. It is a group of charities, parent support groups and third sector organisations who work with children/young people and families with SEND in Birmingham. We work together, share information and combine our voices to improve outcomes and services for families.

We currently have 12 Members sitting on the round table and our first meeting took place on 26th October. We are looking forward to meeting again in the new year. If you are a member of an organisation or know of any that would like to join the round table please email us your details at [info@birminghampcf.org](mailto:info@birminghampcf.org).

# Summary

In Summary, we have been working really hard to reflect on the forums aims and how we go about achieving the vision we have for Birmingham. We are incredibly proud of the work we have done in the past six months and want to thank everyone that has given their time and support to us. However, we understand there is still so much to be done.

We know there is a lot of uncertainty at the moment with the recent section 114 notice, we wanted to take time to reassure you that the Management Committee has asked for clear communication around what this will mean to SEND Services and the families of Birmingham, we will be sure to share any updates with you as and when we receive them.



## What Next?

We have some really exciting plans for 2024 these include more events to enable families to speak with charities and 3rd sector organisations as well as statutory service providers. We look forward to setting up regular virtual and in person parent carer catch up meetings across the city.

Dates for your diary:

Wednesday 24th January - Parent Representative Coffee Morning

9:30 AM - 12:00PM

Tuesday 20th February - Meet the services

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Wednesday 27th March - SEND Engagement and Communication Event

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM





# Work with Us

Are you Compassionate and have a strong desire for change? We are looking for a team of parent carers to represent the forum.

Do you have experience you can offer to strengthen the forum? We would love you to join us as a voluntary Parent Representative. The main aim of a Parent Representative is to spread our vision for Birmingham and raise awareness of the forum; this can be done in a number of ways. Whether that be participating in projects within Education, Health or Social Care having a strategic input into services or supporting other families at coffee mornings and support groups. The Parent Representative role can be shaped to meet your experiences and interests. All Parent Representatives will be supported by a member of the Committee and will receive training to ensure they have all the skills and knowledge needed to fulfil their role.

If you would like to become a Parent Representative it couldn't be easier! Complete the online form on our website or use the QR code. We will be in touch to welcome you on board and see how the role will work best for you!

## Get in touch

We are always keen to receive your feedback for how we can improve the work we do and work better together with parent carers. We would also like to hear your suggestions for any workshops or training that you feel would be beneficial to parent carers.

If you would like to get in touch to discuss this please email [info@birminghampcf.org](mailto:info@birminghampcf.org)

