



## **Chairs Annual Report June 2018**

Welcome to the Torbay PCF's AGM.

This year started with our rebranding from the Parent Participation Forum (PPF) to the Torbay Parent Carer Forum (PCF). We also moved to a new office to make us more accessible to our members and give us the potential to expand the forums work and the service we provide to our members.

The steering group and especially Tamzen Pugh and Claire Howell worked extremely hard to ensure all our promotional literature and signage was amended in time to promote to everyone as we hosted Fairplay day last August. The event was well attended by families and professionals alike and everyone's feedback was very positive.

Our November event "What to expect in plans"- Needs, Outcomes & Provisions, was delivered by Marianne Lewis, Local Authority to parents and professionals. Feedback after this event was that both demographics felt they understood much better how an EHC plan should be written in order to improve clarity of interventions required and monitor effectiveness of outcomes for the child. The presentation from this event is available on our website.

Unfortunately all of the steering group members have had an extremely challenging year in their own personal lives and caring roles and by December there were several weeks in which our Treasurer Tamzen Pugh was the only member of the steering group still able to take on any PCF work.

This prompted a much need recruitment drive for new steering group members and at the end of January we welcomed Jackie King, Trina Brooks, Helen Baker and Sue Jones. We are always looking for members to join us as this adds capacity to our workload and a wider perspective and skill base to the forums vision.

Sadly Clare Foulds has stood down from the SG as she is unable to dedicate time to the forum at present, but as with all our members we welcome anyone who has the capacity to donate their time and effort to helping other parent carers as all our lives change constantly. Also Claire Howell is currently taking a leave of absence from the SG for personal reasons but we hope she will return to us as soon as she feels able. Her energy and drive have been sorely missed.

One of the key issues all our families have told us about is isolation and lack of emotional support. Jackie and Trina were very keen to address this issue in particular and proposed running a peer support group. With the forum in an administrative support role for this venture they are now running the very successful 'Tissues and Issues' group once a fortnight in Torquay and once a month in Brixham. This group gives a much needed break and pampering to its parent carer members, as well as carefully chosen speakers that member's request. They also have a school holiday activities programme so parents don't feel abandoned.

This in addition to them being part of the steering group gives them a unique insight into the day to day issues faced by parent carers and the ability to pick up trends and patterns that concern them. This then helps the forum to focus on workstreams that matter to its members.

Another major change this year has been to apply for community interest company (CIC) status. Once this is complete it will allow us to access other potential funding streams. This will give us the ability to support you in different ways.

At the last AGM I was able to report to you that we had a dedicated parent rep who was sitting on the 'Children's procurement engagement steering group' to continue the co-production work you began the previous November. This piece of work is now coming to its conclusion after 9 months hard work by Tamzen, representing parents views of what the future service should look like and designing the questions that will now be asked of potential service providers.

Currently I am chairing a multi-agency task and finish group into 'Parent Carer Needs Assessments' in order to address the disparity of provision between carers of adults and carers of children/young people. While this is a statutory duty of the local authority there is a clear cross over into the health and wellbeing of the parent carers as well as between children's and adult services which was not correctly addressed in the children and families act 2014.

The forum have also been surveying annual health provision for people with learning disabilities and Autism in GP surgeries. The results are being reported back to the Clinical Commission Group, Healthwatch and Patient Participation Group forum. This will give them a picture of what is being offered across the bay compared with expected protocols.

In addition to these individual workstreams SG members continue to represent parents at regular meetings with the local authority and health colleagues. Current meetings being attended are:

SEND operation leads group (multi-agency)

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) participation group

Carers Strategy Group (multi-agency)

Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) SEND panel (fortnightly)

Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN) - Access to communication group (multi-agency)

I am glad to say that despite the difficulties we have faced over the last 12 months we have still pushed on with the forums mission to represent you this year. None of this would have been possible without the determination and dedication of the steering group members and our fantastic administrator Tammy Maguire. Tammy has worked tirelessly behind the scenes, on many things including GDPR and without her we would not be able to attend the meetings that we do.

On behalf of all our members' I would like to thank the SG and Tammy for all your efforts this year and may we continue to support Torbay families in the year to come.

To our families I would ask that you keep helping the PCF to help you by telling us via facebook, website, e-mail or text what provisions and services are like for you as a family, good or bad. If we can find examples of what has helped you we can promote them to other services as good practice, this has just as much power as a complaint.

In conclusion I would like to wish everyone a positive year and look forward to seeing many of you soon.

Carole Brierley  
Chairperson