



Chairs Annual Report June 2018

Welcome to the Torbay PCF's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

This year started with our rebranding from Torbay Parents Participation Forum to the Torbay Parent Carer Forum, which was done to:

- help us articulate who we are and what we can offer more clearly
- help families understand what we can do to support them
- more accurately reflects our involvement and co-production with local services and agencies, and
- align our organisation better with the national scene and Children and Families Act 2014

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.

All members of the PCF Steering Group (SG) 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 Education, Health and care (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 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. In addition, 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 kept telling us about is their feelings of 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. The forum was able to provide administrative support for this venture and they are now running the very successful 'Tissues and Issues' coffee mornings 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 closed facebook peer to peer support network and school holiday activities programme so parents don't feel abandoned.

The benefits of Jackie and Trina running this support hub 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 the recent application for a SEND HUB community interest company (CIC), which is proposed to sit as an umbrella company to contain the PCF as the initial work strand sitting underneath this umbrella CIC. Once this is complete it will allow the SEND HUB (CIC) to access other potential funding streams to be able to create additional work strands alongside the PCF and give us the ability to support families with children and young people who have SEND and or disabilities in additional and 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 that we have involved our members in right from the start of that process. 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 has unfortunately suffered from a lack of consistent approach between the two key pieces of legislation (the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014).

The PCF 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, Patient Participation Group forum and will be posted on our website. This will give health commissioners and other interested organisations and a picture of what is being offered across the bay compared with expected protocols.

In addition to these individual workstreams, mentioned above, 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