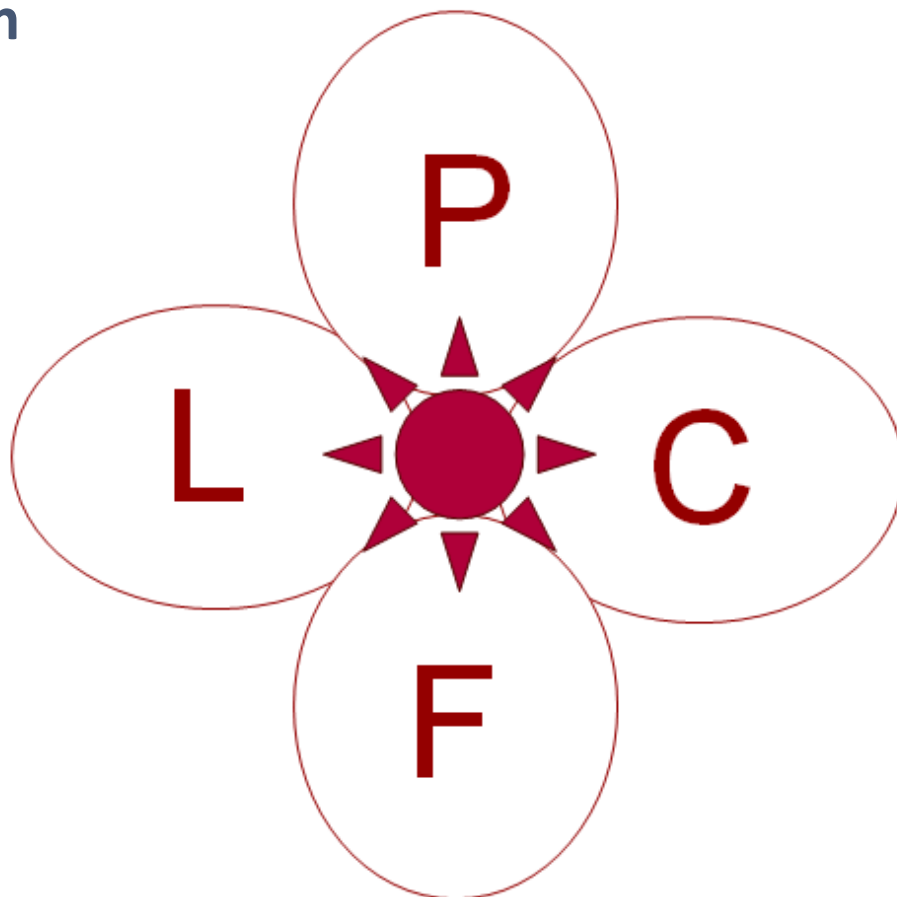


2018

Lincolnshire
Parent
Carer
Forum



PARENT CARERS' FEEDBACK

ON

**Building Communities of Specialist Provision
for Children and Young People with Special
Educational Needs and Disabilities in
Lincolnshire**

Contents

Introduction	2
Meeting One: Horncastle 11am-1pm	4
Meeting Two: Lincoln 11am-1pm	5
Meeting Three: Grantham 11am-1pm.....	5
Meeting Four: Spalding 11am-1pm	6
Written correspondence.....	9
Appendix A: Steps LPCF have taken to ensure that Parents are Informed and Consulted.	12

Introduction

As Lincolnshire's Parent Carer Forum we are specifically tasked, under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015), with working alongside the Local Authority and Health to ensure that the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children.

The Local Authority invited LPCF to be involved from the start of the project. Without the forums' participation in this project, the Project Board would not have heard the voice of parents and carers in the way that it did during the development of the proposals.

With nearly 2000 parents on our membership, we are able to represent families of children with a diverse range of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities and we have taken care in ensuring that all types of disability and needs have been taken into consideration.

Our participation in this project has enabled LPCF to ensure that parents and their children were at the heart of the strategy and that we could ensure that our expertise in listening to and representing parents' views could be utilised to inform the development of the strategies proposed.

Involvement in the project has taken a huge commitment from LPCF volunteers, who have given their time for free, to ensure that parents' around the county have their views represented and to also enable them to participate fully in the five additional LPCF consultations.

The transparent collaboration during the development of the proposed strategy has given LPCF confidence that the parents views they have gathered, have been taken on board and utilised from the beginning.

LPCF was supportive of the proposed strategy going to public consultation. We were able to support the proposals being consulted on because the Local Authority and Special School Head Teachers have taken into account our feedback, constructive challenge and the contribution that we have been able to make based on the extensive feedback we receive from our members throughout Lincolnshire.

Message from LPCF Team

We are delighted that parent carers felt passionate about attending our consultations and sharing their views with us. We cannot express enough how valuable these views are in ensuring that we are representative of parents of children with a diverse range of disabilities and SEN, who are members of our network.

We have given our parents a chance to feedback their views to us by offering five independent consultations around the county in Horncastle, Lincoln, Grantham and Spalding (2). Not only that, but to further support the value of parent carers' feedback, we have recorded all the responses that were collated at the meetings. In addition, further communication was received from parents by email, through our website's 'Your Say' page and through face to face events such as the coffee mornings and meetings.

The meetings were hosted by Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum and Lincolnshire County Council representatives were invited as guests to present the strategy and answer questions about the proposals. We were also fortunate enough to have four heads of Special Schools attend our consultations, who listened to parents and were able to give their own views about the proposals and answer any specific questions about the strategy.

Over fifty people attended to have their say on the proposals as well as to share their personal experiences and views. LPCF also gave parents the chance to book an appointment to speak to the Local Authority on a one to one basis about their individual issues. This opportunity was taken up by parents who were grateful to have their individual issues addressed by the Local Authority on a face to face basis.

Feedback from each consultation has been kept separate as there was a distinctive difference in the ethos of the questions posed by parents at each event. Whilst concerns over the effect the strategy would have on their own children was voiced by many parents, Spalding's meeting brought up particular questions about the "All Needs" designation of Gosberton House Academy.

Additional feedback from parents who were not able to attend a meeting is also recorded in this document.

As well as hosting our own Consultations to inform the process, our team of volunteers have attended all of the consultations at each Special School and also the three public consultations held by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). Our volunteers have been committed to ensuring that the views of parents are at the heart of this project and have given their time willingly to help inform the process.

This document will be given to the project board in a bid to inform the consultation process.

We hope you find this report valuable reading and would like to thank all of you who participated, Lincolnshire County Council staff and the Heads of Special Schools for supporting the involvement of parents in the project.

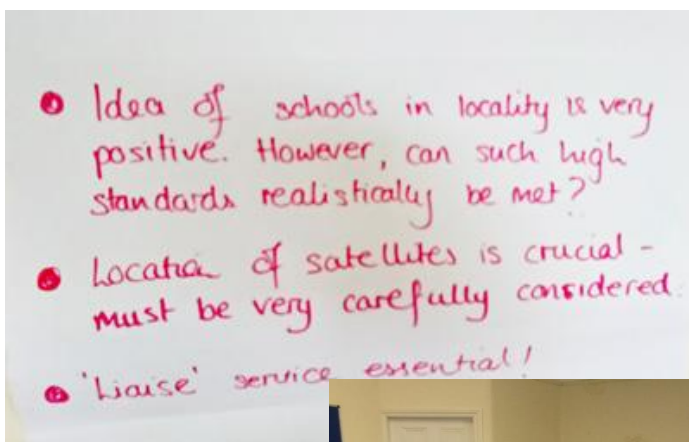
With best wishes,

Coralie Cross & LPCF Team

This is the unadulterated feedback collected from parents:-

Meeting One: Horncastle 11am-1pm

- ❖ Satellite sites on mainstream school sites, has this been mapped?
- ❖ South of the county, close to the Lincolnshire/Peterborough border (Crowland). Peterborough is nearer for schools. Is there still a choice for parents to choose schools?
- ❖ Some time ago, there was some funding for a satellite unit which was going to be placed on the Priory Witham Academy site. Nothing happened with this. This did not materialise and nothing happened. This is not how we want the units to be run.
- ❖ What about SEMH schools?
- ❖ Is any of this going to affect the funding for schools transport?
- ❖ What about transport for pupils aged 16-19?
- ❖ The bursary at schools for 16-19 transport is not applicable to parents with pupils accessing education in independent settings. This disadvantages parents with low incomes. Cambridgeshire pay for this, Lincolnshire don't.
- ❖ Stamford – what is the closest school, is it Grantham? Mainstream said no to taking my son. Who makes the decision on placing in the satellite sites?
- ❖ Transport already in place. Entitlement already granted. At the annual review thoughts around nearer schools would be raised and the question asked. The transport policy will only fund a pupil to the nearest school. What choice do parents have?



How do you ensure access to health?
(OT, physio, SALT, ed psychs, CAMHS)
These are needed school nurses
within special schools, especially schools with such a 'broad' remit.

Cross-boundary CCGs - funding

Community links in localities - short break etc.

- Staff training, from outset and ongoing
- From mainstream perspective, they're already overstretched
- Don't feel autism fits this model - spikey profile - but how do teachers possibly cope with such diverse needs and meet those needs effectively?
- Does reality live up to dream?

Meeting Two: Lincoln 11am-1pm

- ❖ I have a child in a very small village mainstream. There are challenges from the mainstream side. If this is going to happen then involving mainstream schools will be challenging.
- ❖ Mainstream schools need to communicate better with each other about challenges and issues but successes also.
- ❖ People need to be open- minded and not blinkered in their thoughts and views.
- ❖ The SENCo training should also include training on disabilities (Downs etc). This would help to develop knowledge and skills before school settings take on pupils.
- ❖ It was noted that Teaching Assistants (TA's) should be able to share expertise and practice the same as the SENCos do. Do they need a working group as well as the SENCo's?
- ❖ This proposed strategy and model will get challenges from parents and headteachers. It is understood that people don't like change.
- ❖ Why aren't parents engaging?
- ❖ Parents want to have the flexibility of mainstream settings and not to lose the special school places that they have had to fight for.
- ❖ Is it county wide?
- ❖ Units – is it going backwards?
- ❖ Must meet the needs of the child holistically.

Meeting Three: Grantham 11am-1pm

This meeting was cancelled due to lack of attendees.

The parent that had booked was encouraged to feedback via the questionnaire and was given the opportunity to speak to someone from the Local Authority if they so wished.

Meeting Four: Spalding 11am-1pm

- ❖ Who decides which school is the best place?
- ❖ In-house training or specialist training? Buying in training and therapies? The NHS also faces challenges to provide services for pupils with SEND.
- ❖ Going forward are there going to be adaptations of mainstream school premises to accommodate needs?
- ❖ Where and when do you think that mainstream school teachers will have the time to look at pupils with SEND? How will this be done?
- ❖ £5m shortfall in funding. Are you expecting schools, either the special or mainstream schools to pick up this difference?
- ❖ Satellite Units – this name is misleading.
- ❖ All in agreement that children need specialist education. Why are we diluting it?
- ❖ Transport – will it be provided if I refuse nearest school?
- ❖ Autism is not a one size fits all disability.
- ❖ Need more mainstream school staff effectively trained to educate and care for the needs of children with SEND.
- ❖ More access to specialists to advise and support teachers, parents and children in schools.
- ❖ Better processes for identifying SEND within schools, more SENCos and more disability aware staff.
- ❖ More specialists to work in schools and advise and work with teachers, parents and children.
- ❖ More transparency and less ambiguity in processes for SEND identification & support.
- ❖ More open, active promotion about services and support to parents within Lincolnshire.
- ❖ Better more effective working of services across the board. Teachers, doctors, health services, parents, psych services, CAMHS, occupational therapists!!
- ❖ All needs into Gosberton will disrupt.
- ❖ Accreditation is at Gosberton.
- ❖ If you can't meet their needs, why not? Why is there no provision in place for them?
- ❖ Until today I didn't realise the decision to make Gosberton House "all needs" was a decision made by the school themselves (or the Trustees) – where were they?

- ❖ Why build another school in the Lincoln area when you could build one in Sleaford providing for lots of local villages?
- ❖ It was nice to see Head Teachers from South Holland and South Kesteven represented at the meeting to confirm their support for the proposal, sadly there was a notable absence of the Head Teacher of Gosberton House School to indicate their position.
- ❖ If you change Gosberton House Academy that's then not meeting the needs for those kids already there.
- ❖ Mainstream struggle now – influx of SEN.
- ❖ Improvement in EHC process required.
- ❖ More Special School places needed.
- ❖ Early intervention is critical in child's life long- term.
- ❖ All needs at Gosberton House will reduce "Autism Specialist" places.
- ❖ I feel that this meeting was pointless. I feel that you haven't explained everything so very pointless.
- ❖ Very confused – I don't think that changes need to be made at all. Yes in fairness extend the Special Schools that's fine to some extent but changing to all needs to everyone is too much.
- ❖ No more cuts to transport, if anything improve training to Personal Assistants (PA's) on the transport and Autism is on the rise and should be addressed, not drowning out the schools for Autism to all needs. Not every disability is the same. If anything more funding to improve the Special Schools to get the children out of the mainstreams who don't get all the funding needed and the choice to move. Not every child suits mainstream. Class sizes are too demanding, noise if they have anxiety and how they follow work.
- ❖ Battle to get Special School place is isolating.
- ❖ After the LPCF Representatives had dealt with the hostile environment I learnt a lot about the proposed changes. One lady had to leave, due to being distressed by the hostile and confrontational attitude of some parents who were not even prepared to listen to the presentation.
I personally think the strategy has some very good points e.g more school places, less travelling times for children, more funding into the terrible school buildings to make them fit for purpose and at last some investment into staff training.
I understand parents are frightened of change but I think that some changes are for the best and it has to be looked upon as a big picture and not be governed by the views of parents of one school.
- ❖ Good idea to have more autistic schools.
- ❖ No respite for ventilated – go to Leicester Hospice 40-50 miles.

- ❖ Really happy in mainstream (Reception) – mainstream support continue – more support needed.
- ❖ Educational Psychologists only seeing children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).
- ❖ Get it right at the beginning i.e. Pre-school.
- ❖ Need a teacher for the hearing impaired.
- ❖ Gosberton keep the same or expand and build another school.
- ❖ Can't see all needs working with Autism.
- ❖ Why do people think that Autism is MORE special than other special needs? All children need to have their needs met and if the heads of Special Schools say they can do it – why not let them. They will be accountable later in the implementation stage if it goes ahead.
- ❖ What's going to happen after 11 – no Specialist Autism provision then?
- ❖ More schools needed but smaller schools.
- ❖ Don't want to go back to mainstream with all teachers who don't know about Autism. Keep it specialised.
- ❖ Convert an existing building – Sleaford area – satellites may work.
- ❖ Will more kids be home schooled? This may affect the family unit.
- ❖ Good idea – stay at Special School but access i.e. Science GCSE is a good idea.
- ❖ Can we be clear - Gosberton House Special School is not the only school that deals with children with Autism. All Special Schools, Primary schools and Secondary schools cater for children with Autism, almost without exception.
- ❖ Why change something if it is working?
- ❖ Why was Mr Hayes invited by parents unless he was representing all parents and not just a few?
- ❖ I was very saddened by the rude, haranguing, bullying tactics of a small group of the audience when some people were trying to listen. Very disappointed with these parents.
- ❖ Child in a mainstream primary. Happy that the school is meeting needs and does not want child to go somewhere like Gosberton House but continue in mainstream into secondary (currently in reception). I am looking forward to the future. The only drawback was lack of British Sign Language (BSL) knowledge of staff, no teacher of the deaf going into the school as child no longer wears hearing aids, but uses sign supported English, BSL to communicate. Lack of assisted communication aids in school. Schools not informing them about the consultation.
- ❖ Concerned about parents who are too shy to ask for support.

- ❖ Parent asked why are EHC plans being rejected at pre-school age, when it is supposed to be from birth. This affects children as the Educational Psychologist only becomes involved with children with an EHC plan.
- ❖ Gosberton School have children who have co-morbidities not just Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), so they are not just an Autism school, they meet other needs already.
- ❖ I asked some of the parents on my table if they had been to any coffee mornings or events (no not heard of LPCF till recently) but LPCF has been going 10 years, why have Gosberton School or Early Bird trainers not mentioned LPCF?
- ❖ So say Gosberton stayed as it is, children grow up and are going to move to one of the all needs schools, so why not start mixing your children now with children with other needs, so they recognise difference from an early age. Just some of my own conclusions.
- ❖ Why are the LA proposing this?
- ❖ Training and workforce development, where is the money coming from to fund this?
- ❖ Messages from certain schools should have been clearer.

Meeting Five -Spalding 6.30pm-8.30pm

This meeting was cancelled due to lack of attendees.

Written correspondence

Email to LPCF received as follows :

"My name is x and I attended the meeting this morning at Spalding. I left the meeting early as I felt very uncomfortable with the way it was going and the confrontational feeling. I just wanted to thank you and your volunteers. A lady (I'm afraid I've forgotten her name) followed me and got me a drink (I'd had a few tears) and made sure she wrote down my viewpoint as she felt it was important all voices were heard."

"I'm joining LPCF this evening so that I'm more aware of what's going on - but I just wanted to say thank you to you all for the professional manner in which you conducted yourself and the support you provided me."

Feedback on Facebook

We should be all in this together, it's not rocket science what's needed, was sad to see you guys had already agreed to this.

Common Themes

For ease the most common themes have been grouped together:-

- ✓ Will children be forced to change schools?
- ✓ School Transport
 - Is it a money saving exercise?
 - Will my child's current transport arrangements be honoured by LCC?
 - Concerns over length and time of taxi journeys, although a few exceptions were noted (child/parent liked the journey).
- ✓ Satellite provision
 - Are mainstreams supporting the proposals?
 - Access.
 - More flexible opportunity.
 - Maybe many challenges for mainstream schools.
 - Sharing expertise – good news.
 - Confusion about "units".
- ✓ Staff training
 - Will staff in mainstream be adequately trained?
 - Will mainstream schools be adequately resourced?
- ✓ All needs designation change- concerns by some about how this can be achieved.
 - Dilution of provision
 - Concerns specifically from parents at Gosberton House School.
 - Myths and rumours with regard to Gosberton House School.
 - Whether Gosberton House is actively supporting the proposals.
 - What happens if one school decides not to support the proposals?
- ✓ Health offer – engagement with health?
- ✓ Funding – is it enough?
- ✓ What about SEMH schools?
- ✓ Why is Sleaford not being considered for the new school site?
- ✓ Transitions – some parents were happy to have no transitions between Primary/Secondary; however, some were concerned that no transition meant children did not experience change.

How LPCF engaged with parents and enabled their views to inform the proposals.

- Case studies were provided by LPCF to inform discussions during the development phase, looking at issues such as travelling times for children, parental anxieties surrounding separation when child attends out of county placements and the battle that parents experience on a daily basis.
- Evidence from our “Parents voice reports” was also used to inform the process. These views are gathered from parents around the county about the services they use and are their unadulterated feedback.

Parents are encouraged to participate in giving LPCF their views at every coffee morning, workshop and event and through the “Your Say” page of our website. We publish the reports every three months and they are circulated to the Local Authority and Health services for their information. We also feedback the views of parents on our forum to the Department for Education through the DFE SEND survey.

- Findings from LPCF’s Transport Consultation report (2015) and our LPCF SEND survey (2016) also informed the process.
- Eight pages of our website have been dedicated to the Proposed Strategy as it was prioritised by our forum.

How LPCF were involved in the development of the proposed strategy.

- During the development of this project our volunteers have attended many meetings with the Local Authority and Heads of Special Schools.
- LPCF team had input into the narrative document including two of our representatives being filmed for inclusion in the document.
- Input into the two page bulletin of the summary to ensure stakeholders were informed of the main bullet points in an easy to read format.
- LPCF had input into the Frequently Asked Question sheet so that parents could be informed prior to the consultations.
- Input into the design and wording of the Questionnaire to make it as easy to read as possible.
- LPCF have regularly emailed all parents and other stakeholders including professionals, support groups, voluntary organisations, schools and SENCos to keep them informed of the documentation, website pages and access to all consultations.
- We regularly used Facebook and Twitter to inform parents about the proposals.
- Our volunteers informed parents of the opportunities provided for them to engage at every coffee morning and event during the consultation period. If they were not able to attend in person they were advised on how to participate in giving their views.
- Our own survey has increased our membership and all new members have been written to and invited to give their views on the proposals.

Appendix A: Steps LPCF have taken to ensure that Parents are Informed and Consulted.



Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum

LPCF have dedicated eight pages of our website to the Strategy e.g.

The screenshot shows the top section of the LPCF website. It features the logo on the left, contact information in the center (LPCF, PO Box 1183, Spalding, PE11 9EE), and social media links on the right (Facebook, admin@lincspcf.org.uk, Tel 07925 232 466). Below this is a navigation bar with links: LPCF Home, Strategy Home, Strategy Summary, Strategy FAQ, Contacts, Consultation LPCF, Consultation Special Schools, and Consultation Public (LCC). The main heading is "Building Communities of Specialist Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Lincolnshire". Below this is a "Big News!" section with a link to the "Strategy Summary (key points)". The text describes the development of a new strategy for special education in Lincolnshire, involving the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy and the result of this work. It mentions that the strategy will address many of the challenges pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families face when trying to access the right education, in the right place at the right time.

For parents and carers, we recognise some of the challenges you may have had to deal with.

- Your nearest special school may not be able to meet your child's specific needs, so they have to travel long distances to get to a school that can meet their need.
- Your nearest special school may not have space to accept your child, so they have to travel long distances to get to a school that has a space.
- Your nearest special school may not have the resources to meet your child's needs, so they have to travel long distances to get to a school that can give the right support.
- Your child may have specific, complex needs and because the special schools in Lincolnshire cannot meet their needs, they are being educated out of county. This can mean long periods living away from home or long daily journeys.
- You may have wanted your child to remain in mainstream school but did not feel there was adequate support and training for staff

This screenshot shows a section of the website titled "IMPORTANT Message from LPCF". It features logos for Ash Villa School, Francis School, Eresby School, and Athena School. The text states: "The following strategy proposes that children with SEND receive 'the right education, in the right place at the right time to enable them to achieve their full potential'." It then explains that the Lincolnshire's Parent Carer Forum was invited by the Local Authority and heads of Special schools to work in partnership in the development of the strategy. It mentions that they have been working closely with all partners, from the beginning to ensure that the challenges families face and the issues that they may have are taken into consideration in the development of this proposed strategy. It also states that their involvement enabled LPCF to ensure that parents and their children were at the heart of the strategy and that they could ensure that their expertise in listening to and representing parents views could be utilised to inform the process. Finally, it says: "We are now asking **you** to give us your views and tell us what **you** think to the proposed changes."

Statistics - Increase in engagement of LPCF members

<u>LPCF Website Statistics</u>	Average Jan-Dec 17 (For comparison)	Jan-18	Feb-18
Unique Visitors in month	642	1715	1180
Visits	1089	2393	1666
Page Views	5942	12007	8465

Our massive increase has two key drivers – the Special School Review and LPCF Survey.

We cannot separate the impact of each driver but the enormous increase would seem to evidence that parents were engaging actively with us in Jan-Feb 18.

<u>LPCF Website Statistics</u>	Jan-18	Feb-18
Visits to Special Schools Review Index Page	472	367
Visits to LPCF Consultation Page	115	45
Visits to LPCF E-Booking	141	127
Special Schools Review Document Visits		
Summary	90	127
FAQ	71	72

This table shows defined visits to the key Special School Review pages of our website.

It does show that good numbers visited the key pages but a much smaller number then went on to read the Summary and the FAQ pages.

Interestingly, in February, people visited less but were more inclined to read the Summary document more.

Reassurance to parents

Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum have been very reassured that included in the proposed strategy is the following statement:-

"LCC and all other stakeholders can confidently reassure parents and all concerned parties that, at no point in the implementation of this strategy, will any pupil be expected or forced to change school against their wishes. All opportunities to move to a school closer to home will be on a voluntary basis and transition will only occur as part of an agreed and fully supported process, at a time in their education that is least likely to cause upset. If this strategy is agreed, it is an opportunity for pupils and families, not a requirement."

LPCF are aware that some parents have misinterpreted and misunderstood our role in this process.

We would like to clarify that LPCF **were not the decision makers** in this process.

LPCF were party to a transparent process where the proposed models of provision were agreed by **ALL the Heads of the Special Schools** without the Local Authorities presence at the time of the decision.

Thanks

LPCF would like to thank the Local Authority, Heads of Special Schools and stakeholders involved in the co-development of the strategy for giving Lincolnshire's Parent Carer Forum the opportunity to co-produce these proposals.

It is imperative that LPCF remain active partners in reviewing how the system is working and providing constructive challenge as active partners to the local authority and health services as developments continue.

Working together with parent carers from the outset and giving them an equal voice may be challenging for services as they are held to account, made to look at issues from different perspectives and asked to consider working in different ways.

However, working in co-production also helps parent carers to better understand the constraints and limitations placed on services, particularly around the budgetary and legislative requirements for provision of services.

In our experience, co-production takes a very real commitment to make it happen and we believe that the Local Authority and the Heads of the Special Schools in this process have made that commitment and need to be recognised for their forward thinking approaches.

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