

East Sussex Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Coproduction Charter

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Accessibility help

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East Sussex Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Co-production Charter

We work together to ensure every parent carer in East Sussex feels that their voice, their views and their experiences matter and contribute towards developing and improving services to positively impact upon the lives of children and young people with SEND.

Glossary

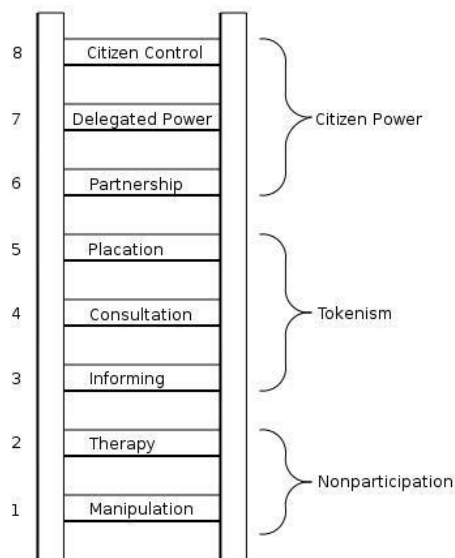
CYP	Children and young people
DfE	Department for Education
ESCC	East Sussex County Council
ESPCF	East Sussex Parent Carer Forum
LA	Local Authority
NHS	National Health Service
NNPCF	National Network of Parent Carer Forums
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Service

1. Scope

This charter covers the work between East Sussex County Council (ESCC), East Sussex Parent Carer Forum (ESPCF) and NHS Sussex. The aspirations for co-production, however, are much broader and, where possible, both parties will facilitate joint working with other statutory agencies, departments, and organisations, by liaising with representatives and coordinating projects with shared objectives. Anyone working with parent carers needs to be aware of and supported in using this Charter.

2. Definitions

Parent carer participation: parent carers and professionals working together, recognising each other's expert knowledge, to design, develop and improve services for CYP with SEND in East Sussex. See Arnstein's Ladder of Participation.



Co-production: an equal and reciprocal relationship where everyone's knowledge and skills are used to create better outcomes. In East Sussex, strategic co-production is where ESPCF parent carers play an integral and equal part in strategic decision-making processes and are fully engaged in shaping, developing, implementing, and evaluating SEND services and systems.

Parent carer representation: in East Sussex, a trained team of parent carer representatives are supported by ESPCF to sit on, for example, strategic boards, committees, task and finish groups across ESCC and health partners. They feed in parent carers' views and experiences, so that parent carers' voices are heard and acted upon when decisions are being made about services affecting their children. ESPCF and partners agree co-production priorities and proactively identify opportunities for parent carer representation.

ESPCF strives to have a diverse membership, ensuring a broad range of different interests, special educational needs and disabilities are represented. ESPCF engages with parent carers to hear their views through a range of activities, (e.g., through events, social media and connections with other local groups and organisations) and parent carers can input in different ways to ESPCF in addition to attending strategic meetings, e.g., joining focus groups, co-designing materials and resources, joining interview panels, being a member of the ESPCF steering group. ESPCF's representation is underpinned by clear roles and responsibilities and policies and procedures which inform how staff and volunteers' work.

3. Support for ESPCF

Funding for ESPCF from ESCC, NHS Sussex and DfE is specified in a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) [MoU between ESCPF and Amaze](#), along with the commissioned support provided by Amaze. The funding for ESPCF is focused on achieving shared priorities across statutory partners and ensuring broad representation of parent carers across the county.

4. Arrangements for meetings / ways of communicating

- Times of meetings will match parent carer representative availability wherever possible.

- Meetings will be accessible, either in safe venues or virtual, with travel time to/from venues taken into consideration as necessary.
- Technical support will be provided where required, to aid accessibility, and working around caring needs.
- Clear meeting aims, including where relevant terms of reference to define the membership and purpose of any co-production activity.
- All partners will adhere to best practice principles for meetings including:
 - notice for meetings ideally not less than two weeks' notice, except for occasions when this is not possible due to an urgent deadline; and
 - agendas will be coproduced as much as possible and be distributed with papers in sufficient time (e.g., one week ahead of meeting).
- Papers will be jargon free and written in plain English and recognise that parent carers may come to meetings with varying levels of background knowledge, so technical information may need to be explained in advance and appropriate support provided.

5. Governance of co-production

- The Strategy Partnership meeting between ESPCF, ESCC and health partners will be established to discuss priorities for co-production, monitor collaborative working with parent carers across strategic groups in East Sussex and drive the co-production agenda. This will support development of partnerships with other LA/health departments/services and organisations, e.g., schools, commissioned providers etc.
- Termly meetings (3 times a year) will be established to take stock of how effectively this Co-production Charter is being implemented and identify areas for development.
- Monthly co-production meetings between ESPCF and ESCC, with support from Amaze, will track projects and relationships. Staff wanting to work in co-production with ESPCF will be invited into these meetings to discuss and explore opportunities and ensure an understanding of the expectations set out in this Charter.
- All staff and volunteers working in co-production will have access to this Charter and associated resources and be accountable through their organisational structures for its implementation.

6. Co-production Agreements

ESCC and NHS Sussex agree to:

- a. Respect parent carer reps as partners with a caring responsibility, bringing relevant and vital expertise and whose contribution is as significant as that of LA and NHS staff.
- b. Actively engage with ESPCF, to enable them to participate as active and equal contributors to the planning of services and provision for CYP with SEND, and their families.
- c. Ensure that all plans for researching families' views on strategic plans are communicated.
- d. Ensure that information on key plans and changes that may affect service delivery for parent carers of CYP with SEND will, wherever possible, be communicated in a timely way.

- e. Ensure that ESPCF, CYP with SEND and their families have the information and support they need to develop knowledge and skills to fully participate in service planning.
- f. Be accountable for the identification of service developments where co-production and partnership is appropriate with ESPCF at the earliest possible stage, ideally providing ESPCF with at least a month's notice of a request for involvement.
- g. Ensure parent carer reps are invited to sit on all strategic boards and groups that may be relevant for ESPCF involvement (i.e., may have an impact for CYP with SEND and their families).
- h. Consult ESPCF on communications (including letters, guidance, website pages and other documents) to ensure the language is parent carer friendly. This applies to both communications directed at parent carers, as well as more general communications where capacity allows.
- i. Invite ESPCF reps to be involved in recruitment processes (for example job description development, shortlisting, interview activities and panels) for senior/strategic roles or those that have direct impact on coproduction with CYP and parent carers.
- j. Communicate with the ESPCF (via info@espcf.org.uk) if a new workstream/group is identified as needing a parent carer rep and complete the ESPCF workstream request form shown in [Appendix 1](#).
- k. Ensure that information and feedback from ESPCF and parent carer reps contributes meaningfully and effectively to service development.
- l. Feedback on outcomes (and the longer-term impact of change) is provided to ESPCF on how input and information has been used to affect change via (developing/established) feedback routes such as coproduction/working group meetings, the wider 'You said We did' feedback framework.
- m. Work to principles of transparency, e.g., ensure processes are open and transparent when planning services; make it clear if there is a confidentiality status to any information or data that is shared, explain why something needs to be confidential and what is expected in terms of data protection protocols.
- n. Recognise that information and feedback from ESPCF comes in a variety of forms, e.g. quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, anonymised examples/case studies demonstrating particular themes. (Whilst it is not within ESPCF's remit to advocate for individual cases, it is recognised that there may be occasions where, with express consent from the parent carer(s) involved, it would be appropriate for individual cases to be flagged to ESCC SLT/relevant NHS management.)
- o. Recognise the value of ESPCF's independence and the importance of ESPCF's decision-making that places the interests of CYP with SEND and their families first and foremost.
- p. Work with and through ESPCF to ensure that the wider views of parent carers are heard, as opposed to individual voices, on all strategic planning groups.
- q. Be aware that parent carer reps, as well as professionals, wear multiple hats (e.g., parent carers, ESPCF steering group member, parent carer support group leaders). For example, parent carer reps will probably choose to join a workstream or project topic where they have some knowledge and/or a particular interest, and as such the rep's personal views and experiences may be expressed as examples.

- r. Respect parent carer privacy, taking care not to blur the boundaries of parent carers' roles, i.e., professionals should neither reference a parent carer's work with ESPCF when interacting with the family as a service user, nor reference the family when working with a parent carer rep in an ESPCF capacity.
- s. Support ESPCF practically and financially at an appropriate level to ensure effective engagement and participation (see [MoU between ESCPF and Amaze](#) for more detail).
- t. Take positive action to ensure that ESPCF membership and activity is communicated to parent carers of CYP with SEND.
- u. Provide a point of contact at the LA and NHS (e.g. queries about meetings and events hosted by each organisation).
- v. Ensure that staff have the understanding and skills to work in equal partnership with parent carers. Provide opportunities for practitioners from different sectors to learn from each other and share information and practice around parent carer participation.
- w. Uphold the [Nolan Principles](#)
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership

ESPCF agrees to:

- a. Work to actively recruit a diverse membership to reflect as far as possible the geography and demographics of the SEND community, using NNPCF toolkit and good practice guidance.
- b. Work with parent carer support groups to access the broadest possible range of views.
- c. Accurately represent ESPCF members' views, highlighting consistent themes/trends and/or a diversity of opinions as necessary.
- d. Ensure that the information ESPCF receives is shared with its members in a timely, appropriate and reliable manner.
- e. Ensure ESPCF members are regularly updated on ESPCF's work.
- f. Ensure that ESPCF parent carer reps attend training and are supported in developing their knowledge, skills, and confidence, to maximise their participation and representation. This includes supporting reps with any emotional aspects of the role.
- g. Ensure an understanding of when to share their own 'personal stories' and when to illustrate points with more comprehensive/wider community views.
- h. Ensure parent carer reps are provided with information on parent carers' views, where this has been collated and is relevant to the specific workstream.
- i. Try to match parent carer reps to groups and topics in which they have experience, expertise, or an interest and try to ensure that reps can commit to

- regular meeting attendance (acknowledging that it can take time to build up an understanding of particular issues, topics, the language used, and relationships).
- j. Ensure parent carer reps operate within [existing policies](#) and decision-making processes (e.g. confidentiality, conflict of interest).
- k. Ensure that all sensitive personal information is managed in accordance with [ESPCF's confidentiality policy](#).
- l. Ensure ESPCF is effectively staffed, and activities overseen by an ESPCF Steering Group, all with clear roles and responsibilities, with support from Amaze.
- m. Contribute to the workforce development of staff across services, including providing parent carer representation on relevant interview panels.
- n. Identify ESPCF's representation priorities in response to member input and commit to ensuring meaningful strategic representation.
- o. Share details of ESPCF activities with commissioners.
- p. Work in an open and transparent way.

To achieve effective co-production all partners agree to:

- a. Commit to developing a partnership based on trust and open and transparent dialogue.
- b. Offer opportunities for introductory meetings and getting to know each other, to build relationships.
- c. Ensure that everyone is treated with fairness and respect, and that any barriers to participation are identified, and every effort is made to find positive solutions.
- d. Be mindful that partners may have disabilities, some hidden, and access arrangements and adjustments will be made as required.
- e. Respect confidentiality.
- f. Constructively challenge one another whilst working together to provide effective and innovative solutions using available resources creatively.
- g. Where conflict occurs during co-production, all efforts should be made to seek a resolution through dialogue and discussion directly between the parties involved.
- h. If a solution cannot be found between those directly involved, disputes will be escalated internally within the management hierarchies of the organisations involved. Where necessary mediation will be considered, use of an organisation's formal policies (e.g., complaints) and / or recourse to Contact as a neutral body.
- i. Build upon and not duplicate or seek to replicate existing work completed by wider stakeholders both nationally and locally.
- j. Ensure that all partners including parent carer reps, the local authority, NHS Sussex, and strategic leads work together on the co-production of key strategies and service development plans.
- k. Discuss and reach agreement around strategic goals, which are prioritised and form co-production workstreams.
- l. Commit to regular partnership meetings, where progress with planned work and potential new developments can be reviewed and discussed.
- m. Ensure parent carer participation and co-production is monitored and evaluated, to demonstrate that it has brought about positive change.



Appendix 1: ESPCF workstream request form






Workstream request Thank you for your enquiry. To help us respond to your request, it would be useful to gather more information in relation to the input from East Sussex Parent Carer Forum. Please complete and return to info@espcf.org.uk

Name of work stream: (Name of project/group)	
Lead contact:	
Contact information: (email/phone)	
Organisation:	
Department:	
Description of work stream: Please describe the type of involvement you are seeking and what stage you're at in a co-production process, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You're embarking on a co-produced plan/strategy/service etc. • There is an opportunity to feedback on a written report/leaflet/service spec etc. • You are seeking meeting reps, to share expertise • Other - please explain 	
Is this input ongoing or one-off?	
What is the expected timeframe if not ongoing?	

Expected number of meetings per year?	
Any known/planned dates/times/location of meetings?	
Any other important information about this work	

Signatories

<u>Representing</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Signature</u>
East Sussex Parent Carer Forum	Holly Riley-Saxby	Chair	11.07.23	
East Sussex County Council	Alison Jeffery	Director of Children's Services	14.6.23	
	Mark Stainton	Director of Adult Social Care and Health	30.06.23	
Health	Dr Dinesh Sinha	Chief Medical Officer, NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board	16.6.23	