



National Network of Parent Carer Forums

'Our Strength Is Our Shared Experience'

NNPCF (London Region) – Response to the Consultation: The Mayor's Vision for a Diverse and Inclusive City

1) The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) is made up of local Parent Carer Forums from across the 152 Local Authority Areas of England, and has a steering group which consists of 10 Parent Carer Representatives from each of the nine regions in England, and the Co-chairs of the Network. Our current membership is in excess of 85,000 parent carers. These parent carers representatives link into the regional Parent Carer Forum Networks. The London Region consists of local forums across 32 London Local Authorities.

The NNPCF welcomes the Mayor's vision for a diverse and inclusive city.

At the NNPCF Annual Conference in October 2015, delegates were asked to provide the Steering Group with their 'Burning Issues'. 'Burning Issues' were defined as being the most common and current issues that forums were facing at that time. These issues were collated in a national report.

www.nnpf.org.uk/national-priorities-report-burning-issues

This report highlighted the National priorities for Parent Carer Forums across England. Many of these priorities are covered in the Mayor's vision including inclusive and accessible Education, Health (including Mental Health), Transport, Employment and Housing for our disabled young people as they transition from Children to Adult Services, Community Engagement and meaningful Participation/Co-Production.

2) The NNPCF London Region work with forums in their region to gather evidence to support our response to this consultation. We believe that our response helps to identify the most common experiences and views of Parent Carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (birth-25) in London.

This response recognises that developing employment pathways and finding sustainable jobs for disabled people is a very complex area, involving many players and systems.

The NNPCF welcomes the Mayor's vision for a Diverse and Inclusive City that whoever you are and wherever you are from, you should receive the right healthcare, education, help and support that you require to be the best that you can be. Health issues or disability should not be a barrier in life or work.

The NNPCF recognises that the current health, welfare and education systems do not always promote this ethos; this in turn affects the health and wellbeing of our children as they grow up and moves towards adulthood and has a negative impact on the wider family too.



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We agree that help and support should be available to everyone who could work at whatever level they can achieve. Quality care should be provided to those who cannot work ensuring their wellbeing.

Context

The NNPCF London Region has a wealth of evidence, both formal and antedotal, which demonstrates the inequalities faced by children and young people affected by special educational needs and disabilities and their families. This includes;

- Individual family experiences
- Local Parent Carer Forum surveys and reports
- Feedback reports For Regional Termly Cluster meetings (North West, North East, South)
- Department for Education SEND Survey responses
- National Consultation responses covering Education, Health, Social Care and Employment.

www.nnpcf.org.uk/get-involved/consultations

- NNPCF London Region Health Report

3) Our children have the same dreams and aspirations as non-disabled people. They have many skills and abilities to offer. They want to work, have a better quality of life and play a full part in society like everyone else. These dreams and aspirations, however, often come to nothing through no fault of their own.

These aspirations have been listened to and addressed through the Children & Families Act 2014 which aims to deliver a new SEND system that will improve life outcomes for children and young people from birth-25 years who have a Special Educational Need (SEN) or disability.

"Our vision for children and young people with special needs is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in early years, at school and in college; lead happy and fulfilled lives; and have choice and control."

(Department for Education)





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The Key Principles set out in the Children & Families Act are that:

- Children and young people should be at the centre of planning for and making decisions about their future. Discussions should focus on what they want to achieve, and the support they will need to get there. This should start from the earliest age.
- There is now a single system of support for children and young people with SEN from birth to 25 which focuses on preparing for adulthood across four key pathways:
 - Employment and training
 - Good Health
 - Independence
 - Friends and community

Many disabled young people want to work but some, especially with learning and other disabilities including autism, find this very difficult. As a parent led organisation, the NNPCF want to understand better why this is and to find solutions together to fix it. We believe that this can best be achieved by working in co-production with parent carers and young people at a national, regional and local level.

The NNPCF believe that the most effective actions that the London Assembly could action to act on the Mayor's priorities is to be open and engaged organisation which leads by example (priority 6.3).

The London Assembly needs to work together in a Spirit of Co-production with residents, community and voluntary sector groups, schools, Health (CCGs and providers), Local Authorities and Government departments. Participation needs to be meaningful. There needs to be early and effective interventions with clear outputs and improved outcomes for all Londoners across the priority areas. Those involved need to see how their engagement is making a real difference.

The Challenges

4) The Peer Networks established the Department for Education following the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 are an example of how a range of organisations including service users (PCFs) can come together to learn from each other and share good practice. This work is supported by a Regional Wiki which is a virtual source of information and support.

This model could be used to build upon existing networks across London for each of the key priority areas.





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In order to achieve the Mayor's vision set out in this Consultation there needs to be a change in 'hearts and minds'. Society need to change. The barriers are not only physical and financial they are attitudinal.

We request that the London Assembly listens to the experiences of service users, young people with SEND and their families, to identify the underlying problems that they face. This will enable the Mayor to develop support and services in London around the needs of the young person and their families through co-production.

5) The NNPCF Strategy requests that the London Assembly works with the London Region on their priorities for a diverse and inclusive city.

This can be achieved by working with the NNPCF Steering Group members for London on key priority areas which effect children and young people with SEND and their families.

Kay Moore and Fazilla Amide would be willing to represent parent carers at meetings or on strategic boards.

In addition, Kay and Fazilla are able to facilitate any opportunities to engage with PCFs through arranging focus groups, sharing surveys and inviting members of the London Assembly to attend the regional cluster meetings.

Finally, we can share evidence of the challenges and good practice relating to all areas of disability and special educational needs.

6) Children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities have the same dreams and aspirations as their peers. They have many skills and abilities to offer. They want to have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers, have a better quality of life and play a full part in society like everyone else. As parents we want the best possible life outcomes for our children.

The NNPCF London Region would welcome the opportunity to work with the London Assembly to develop better life outcomes for young people affected by disability. As parent carers we are experienced individuals who have been working with the Department for Education and Department of Health for many years and have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share in a spirit of co-production.

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Annex A – The NNPCF

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) was launched in 2011, and is funded by central government.

We became a formally constituted Group in November 2013. The NNPCF membership is made up of Parent Carer Forums of which there is one in almost every local authority area in England. Each parent carer forum in receipt of the Department of Education participation grant is a member of the NNPCF.

The function of the NNPCF is to develop cohesive good practice and effective participation and a solution focused approach at all levels, locally, regionally and nationally.

The aims of the NNPCF are to:

- Ensure that good practice, knowledge and shared expertise about parent participation continues to grow and strengthen.
- Develop a cohesive and coherent structure to sustain and develop the effectiveness of parent carer forums across England.
- Strengthen the pan disability, parent/carer led model of local forums and boost our collective voice.

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