



## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

Parent Carer Forum Devon (PCFD) is for ALL families of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities who live or access services in Devon.

We aim:

To **connect** with

- Families and carers
- Parent carer support groups
- Regional and national Parent Carer Forums
- Devon Information, Advice and Support
- Service providers (the Local Authority, NHS and other professionals)

To **empower** through signposting, access to training and networking

To **influence** policies, decisions and services through coproduction

PCFD is an independent Community Interest Company made up of parents and carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within Devon local authority area. Our aim is to make sure that services provided by education, health and care meet the needs of children with SEND and their families.

We are funded by grants from the Department for Education, the local authority and NHS Devon, but work independently to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND and their families.

We connect with parent carers across Devon and this helps us to understand the wide picture of what life is really like for families – identifying problems as well as what's working well. We work in partnership with the Local Authority (LA), the NHS and other professionals to make sure that services in Devon are accessible and meet the needs of children and their families.

Across Devon, we want to hear from as many parent carers of children and young people with SEND as possible. Parent carers can often pinpoint problems frequently experienced by families with disabled children. Understanding these experiences is useful to professionals as they plan services to meet disabled children's needs. We gather and understand the experiences and views of families in many ways. We use this knowledge and information when we work with providers and decision-makers.

Parent Carer Forum Devon is part of the [National Network of Parent Carer Forums](#), which means that the voices of parent carers in Devon reach decision-makers in national government.

Although we are unable to offer a one-to-one support or advocacy service to parent carers and their families on an individual basis, we will endeavour to signpost them to the appropriate agencies that could offer them one to one support and guidance that they may require.



## The Devon SEND Community

Parent Carer Forum Devon is made up of members of the Devon SEND Community. The Devon SEND Community is made up of family members and carers of children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities (aged 0-25 years) who live in Devon or access services in Devon.

This will include:

- Residents of Devon who are parents/carers of a child or young person with additional needs and/or disabilities
- Parents/carers of a child or young person with additional needs and/or disabilities who accesses services within Devon
- Extended family members (e.g. grandparent) or carers (including foster carers)
- Bereaved parents/carers for the following three years

## Roles

Roles within Parent Carer Forum Devon include but are not limited to the following:

- Members of the Company
- Directors
- Steering Group members
- Parent carers and those supporting the parent carer community

A Member of the Company must be a Director.

A Director can apply to become a Member of the Company after serving at least a 12 month term on the Steering Group.

No person shall be admitted a Member of the Company unless he or she approved by the Directors.

Every person who wishes to become a Member of the Company shall deliver to the Company an application for membership in such form (and containing such information) as the Directors require and executed by him or her.

Any person who is willing to act as a Director, and is permitted by law to do so, may be admitted to be a Director by a decision of the Directors.

All parent carers and those supporting the parent carer community in Devon are encouraged to share their experiences via surveys, social media, workshops, coffee mornings, events, email, post or any other convenient method. There is no formal membership database, but parent carers can join the PCFD Facebook group, follow the Facebook page, monitor the website or sign up for the newsletter.



## Steering Group

### Role of the Steering Group:

The day-to-day business of the Parent Carer Forum Devon will be managed by the Directors. The Steering Group will provide guidance to the Directors on the Forums' aims and priorities. The Steering Group will provide constructive challenge to ensure the effective management of the forum.

### Steering Group Structure:

Ideally the Steering Group members shall number no more than 12 and no less than 6.

At least 80% of the Steering Group shall be parent carers.

The Ambassador Volunteer Coordinator will attend Steering Group meetings and provide an update as a standing agenda item.

### Steering Group Decision Making:

Each member of the Steering Group will have one vote each. The Ambassador Volunteer Coordinator does not have a formal vote. The Steering Group recognises that there will be differences of opinion and priority between members. Decisions will be made by consensus where possible, or where not possible, by majority.

The Directors have the casting vote if a majority is not reached. There should be a quorum of no less than 3 members or one third of members whichever is greater including a Director present for a decision to be made.

In the event of any disagreement which cannot be reconciled or in the event of any concerns about the behaviour of a Steering Group member, the Code of Conduct will be followed. If disagreements still cannot be resolved, the Steering Group will seek outside impartial support.

The Directors retain the right to veto a decision in the exceptional circumstance where it could bring the company into disrepute, is illegal or is deemed to carry an unacceptable level of risk.

### Steering Group Meetings:

The Steering Group will meet on a regular basis usually every half term - at least three times per year. This can be changed if there is a need to meet more often.

Venues and meeting times will be arranged for the convenience of parent carers. Meetings will be during term time and within school hours where possible. This will be reviewed at least annually to ensure access to a wide range of people.

Steering Group members will be entitled to claim reasonable expenses for travel and childcare incurred to attend.



### Structure of Steering Group meetings:

Agendas will be prepared in advance by the Directors. Steering Group members are encouraged to submit agenda items to the Directors at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Information to be presented at Steering Group meetings must be circulated in good time prior to the meeting in order that members have timely access to information.

For meetings to be a productive use of members' time, the meeting structure will be:

- Welcome, introductions and apologies
- Minutes of last meeting & matters arising
- Directors Report
- Ambassador Volunteer Coordinator Report
- Agenda items
- A.O.B

Minutes of Steering Group meetings are available on request from

[admin@parentcarerforumdevon.org](mailto:admin@parentcarerforumdevon.org)

### Steering Group membership requirements:

All members of the Steering Group must be a member of the Devon SEND Community as described above. Each member will be responsible for representing the views of a wider group of parents. Therefore, each member should have a system of networking and disseminating information to other parents.

Steering Group members will complete training relevant to their role.

All members of the Parent Carer Forum Devon Steering Group will agree to and sign these Terms of Reference.

All members of the Steering Group will sign the Code of Conduct. If the Steering Group considers that any member's conduct is in any way harmful to PCFDs Aims, Purpose and Values, PCFD will reserve the right to request the individual to leave. A private conversation will be held with the individual in the hope of mediating the situation. If a consensus cannot be reached, the individual will no longer be invited to PCFD meetings, and an explanation will be provided to the individual concerned.

To ensure the coherent running of the Forum, Steering Group members need to attend meetings consistently where possible. If a member has not attended three meetings consecutively without giving apologies, they will be asked to stand down.

### How to apply:

Any member of the Devon SEND Community wishing to join the Steering Group will produce a personal statement detailing how they are representative of other parents.

The personal statement as well as a formal request to join the Steering Group must be sent to the Directors via email at [cochairs@parentcarerforumdevon.org](mailto:cochairs@parentcarerforumdevon.org) or by post to PCFD, Office 4, Teignbridge Business Centre, Cavalier Road, Heathfield, Newton Abbot TQ12 6TZ. Steering Group members will be elected via a unanimous vote at a Steering Group meeting. All applications will be managed under the PCFD Data Protection Policy which can be found on our website.

### How to resign:

A Steering Group member can resign from the Steering Group at any time, by putting this in writing to the Directors.



### Agreed

This Policy was agreed by the Directors on 3rd March 2021.

Print Name	Signature	Date
Victoria Mitchell Director PCFD		03/03/21
Julia Bonell Director PCFD		03/03/21

Date of next review:

September 2023