

# GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES SWINDON SEND FAMILIES VOICE

## WHAT ARE WE MAKING BETTER?

We have built our local parent carer forum (1,545 Facebook followers and 345 on our mailing list) but we also recognised that as volunteers with busy lives built around our children, we can easily get over-stretched and exhausted. We want to be part of what is available to help parents and families for SEND in Swindon in a real and practical way as well as making sure we represent the voice of parent carers.

We know that to represent parents we need to reach as many as possible and show them that we can make a difference

## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

We started with 5 parents on the team, we now have 16 (5 committee members with specific roles, and 10 representatives).

We have used social media really successfully see our blog which has gone national as an example of success! Go to <https://contact.org.uk> and search Swindon SEND Families Voice to find "Swindon SEND Family Voice - a parent carer forum based on Positivity (...and good PR!)" Our facebook numbers have grown to 1544 and our closed chat room (The SEND room) has 788 members. Representatives have attended 298 meetings this year already and are on the major decision groups such as Scrutiny and the SEND Strategic Board. In addition to specific events such as mindfulness workshops, we launched Branches a pan-disability information and support group meeting every other month with the average attendance up from 15 to 20. Our surveys and communications regularly ensure 1-200 returns for online surveys

We have identified that 36% of the meetings we attend are at the coproduction level for participation, this is good but could be better.

## HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE BETTER?

We are still not top of the list to talk to when there are issues or developments that strategic leads want to look at that affect children, young people and their families with SEND.

We are developing expertise in use of social media, participation and reviewing documents for language and access and as presenters at conference events but we would like be able to help evaluate and design services with providers, commissioners and officers.

We want to be part of what is available to help parents and families for SEND in Swindon in a real and practical way as well as making sure

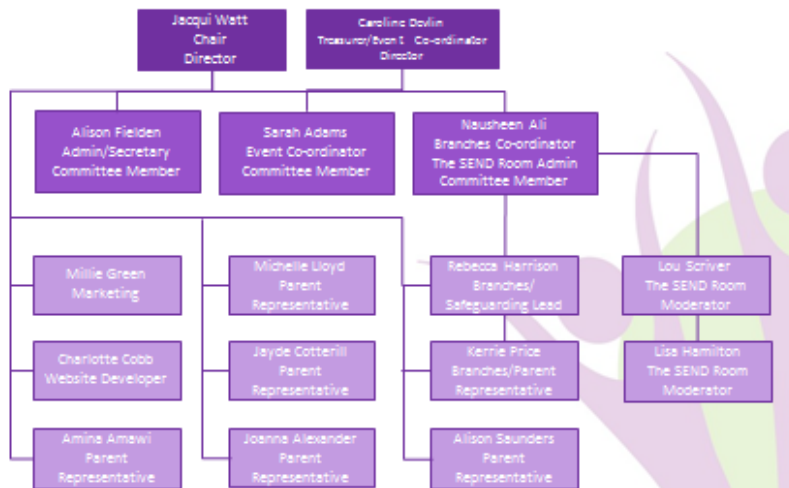
we represent the voice of parent carers. We know that to represent parents we need to reach as many as possible and show them that we can make a difference.

We started with 5 parents on the team, we now have 15 (5 committee members with specific roles, and 10 representatives).

We have used social media really successfully - see our blog which has gone national as an example of success! Go to <https://contact.org.uk> and search Swindon SEND Families Voice to find "Swindon SEND Family Voice - a parent carer forum based on Positivity (...and good PR!)"

## Swindon SEND Families Voice Team Structure

Working together



Swindon SEND Families Voice

## WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL THIS MAKE?

We are established enough so that we can be more proactive with planning activities. Moving away from being just reactive, this means we will also be targeting the meetings to attend where we think we can make the most difference.

We will be feeding back to meeting organisers on the level of participation achieved and letting them know where good co-production has been experienced.

We will continue to grow our use of social media and track and share the data monthly. We will be encouraging more opportunities to be able to share with parents and carers how their feedback has made a positive difference to services.