



SAIB report

Parent Carer Forum – Key Updates

JANUARY 26 - DATA

1114 Registered members - up by 31 from December

1714 facebook followers - up by 109 from December



Engagement activity

Our engagement team has been actively attending a wide range of parent group meetings hosted by other support organisations and our training offer (thanks to the PINS project funding from the ICB) has proved very popular with the 1st session of Sensory processing, EBSA, ADHD all booked out. Limited spaces still available for the Autistic Not Weird seminar and the Connections in Mind executive functioning related to behaviour workshop. Our self care group sessions remain as popular as ever as does our anxiety support sessions but again there is some limited availability if you know any parent carers who might benefit please do let them know.

Already delivered sessions :-

1. Difficult conversations
am session - 12 face to face
pm session 16 online.
2. Who cares for you & sound bath - 21

This month our team have engaged with **265 parent carers** (including our training / workshops)

We continue to engage with families in a wide variety of ways including via social media and on other digital platforms to ensure we capture as wide a perspective as possible, ensuring we facilitate as wide a demographic as possible.

FUN DAY 1ST AUGUST planning well underway with invitations to services for the information hall already out.



Local Area Partnership Governance

The Stakeholder Board remains on hold while current difficulties are addressed.

Position Statement – Stakeholder Board Progress Update

Background

Following a meeting on 22 January, attended by Pippa (SEND IASS), Claire, and Sam (NPCV), this statement provides an update on the current position and the agreed way forward in relation to the Stakeholder Assurance Group.

Current Activity and Purpose

SEND IASS and NPCV are currently receiving independent facilitation support, funded through NPCV's allocation resource bank. This demonstrates a shared commitment to constructive partnership working but this resource is finite.

Status of the Stakeholder Group

The Stakeholder Group has remained on hold since August 2025. All parties recognise that: Further work is required to ensure the voice of Children and Young People (CYP) is meaningfully embedded within engagement structures, as outlined in the Participation and Engagement Plan (PAP).

A proposal for the Stakeholder Assurance Group to be chaired by NPCV has been shared in principle. This would enable SEND IASS to focus capacity on leading a dedicated Children and Young People's Group. Clarity is required from appropriate leadership regarding SEND IASS's role in delivering and supporting CYP voice. Until this clarity is provided, governance arrangements cannot be finalised. Neither SEND IASS nor NPCV can implement changes to the stakeholder Board structure until the Terms of Reference are formally amended.

NPCV is keen for the Stakeholder Board to recommence as soon as possible to ensure the parent and carer voice remains at the heart of decision-making. While NPCV's preference is to progress this as a partnership, it is acknowledged that NPCV may need to host this independently if required.

It is recognised, however, that SEND IASS has requested further clarity regarding the operation of the CIC that hosts the Parent Carer Forum and the Advocacy service, in order to fully understand how its functions operate and are governed as well as its potential impact on IASS services. In particular, there is a perceived risk that advocacy services could present a conflict or risk to IASS. They have requested structure charts, and staff names/roles for all services hosted, and further conversations. We are actively working on this alongside a rebranding of the CIC to provide further separation.

To reset and refresh the working relationship, the purpose of our facilitated mediation work is to:

- Rebuild trust and strengthen partnership foundations, ensuring a shared understanding of the distinct roles and functions of each service of the CIC and how they operate independently.
- Clarify roles, expectations and boundaries, enabling each organisation to operate confidently and effectively within its remit.
- Define meaningful future collaboration, identifying where joint working adds value and where independence must be maintained.



NPCV notes that these matters are already set out within the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Local Area Partnership and remains confident that these services can co-exist without impacting partnership working as they operate separately and independently.

This work is essential to establish a stable, transparent, and sustainable model for future engagement, and to ensure SEND IASS feels confident working alongside NPCV.

Next Steps

To maintain transparency and confidence across the partnership:

- The SAIB / Operational Board will define, agree, and share the requirements, objectives, and intended purpose of the Children and Young People's Stakeholder Assurance Group with SEND IASS.

Once this direction is received, partners will:

- Confirm the agreed governance model
- Establish clear responsibilities for chairing and facilitation
- Agree a timetable for the recommencement of meetings

Summary

NPCV remain committed to delivering a stakeholder model that strengthens the collective voice of families, children, and young people. While further clarity is required before formal decisions can be made, we are actively working towards a positive, sustainable, and conflict-free solution that supports effective partnership working.

Parent/carers in North Northants are currently unable to hold the LAP to account on their improvement journey. NPCV recognise this is unacceptable and this must be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.

UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING SAIB ACTION LOG

- **SENIF +** 1st raised in July 2025. There should have been a proper handover from the outgoing Assistant Director of Education to the incoming postholder but unfortunately, this did not happen effectively. We attended a meeting intended to plan an agreed mid-January engagement event as a clear step towards co-production in response to concerns raised by parent carers, but the incomplete handover meant the meeting was not productive. However we were given assurance by Annita Gray that commitment remained to deliver the event. We heard no more. An alternative meeting was later offered by the Interim ADE, Annita Gray to discuss early years experiences, however, we declined as the agreed action we are seeking to progress relates specifically to **SENIF funding**, following our July report on this issue. To date, there has been no further progress. While we remain committed to constructive engagement, we are disappointed that a clear co-production opportunity was provided and not taken forward. Parent carer voices should not be sidelined in this way, and we are increasingly frustrated that this issue continues to stall without meaningful action.

Report available here:-

https://northantspcv-my.sharepoint.com/personal/enquiries_npcv_co_uk/Documents/SENIF%20Plus%20Funding%20report.docx?web=1



ACTIONS SOUGHT FROM REPORT:-

1. **Urgent Review of the Hours-Based Formula:** Implement a safeguard that minimum funding is provided where reduced attendance is disability-related.
 2. **Reassess the Salary Cap:** Introduce flexibility to accommodate higher-cost staff where required to meet complex needs.
 3. **Enhance Co-Production:** Convene a working group of parent carers, providers, and SEND professionals to directly co-design future funding policies
 4. **Introduce an Exception Process:** Where the hours model disadvantages a child due to their SEND needs, allow discretionary adjustments.
 5. **Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):** Evaluate whether current funding mechanisms are compatible with the council's legal duties and strategic SEND aims.
- "You said we will" - meeting booked Wednesday January 28th to begin this work.
 - We are delighted to share that we have now signed our SLA with North Northamptonshire Council and we look forward to continuing to work effectively with partners to achieve the identified aims.
 - IASS steering group (initially raised in July) - Still no steering group that we are aware of so we again ask the Local Area Partnership to support the urgent establishment of a formal SEND IASS Steering Group, in line with the Minimum Standards, with clear Terms of Reference and inclusive membership as outlined above.
 - AP provider list still not available (requested Dec 25)

SEND WORKSHOP & MEET THE TEAMS :-

- Following on from last month's report on the highly successful workshops we can confirm we have sent a draft / skeleton for a **co-production framework** with assessment criteria and suggested operational tools. We have also started plans for a **Co-production conference** with plans for external experts speaking in the morning and then a facilitated workshop after lunch. We'll bring further details when things are more finalised.
- **NEXT WORKSHOPS.** The next round of workshops are due to take place in April and whilst we can sort dates & book venues we need to co-produce the content. Therefore we'd like to know where the partnership would like to focus this time, either linked to PAP work or driven by parent carer feedback.

Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

Engagement in schools is progressing well. We have visited all schools within the North programme and are building relationships to support inclusion and co-production within primary settings.

COMMON THEMES :-

Phase transfer processes
Progress tracking & attainment
Lack of co-production on an individual level
Hostility from neurotypical families
Suspensions & exclusions - behaviour management & policy
Lack of knowledge and skill to meet complex needs being "forced" into mainstream.



Transparency and feedback

As previously committed, we have launched a **Padlet** to increase transparency around parent carer feedback. The link has been shared to enable partners to view what families say is working well and where further improvement is needed.

<https://padlet.com/enquiries188/share-your-experience-qu9lmsxwff0rrn5u>

Thematic Analysis of Padlet Feedback

(Padlet – January)

1. Inconsistent Delivery of Statutory Processes

What parents are saying

- Repeated references to the LA **not meeting statutory timescales**, particularly around EHCP processes and phase transfer.
- Parents describe uncertainty, delays, and a lack of confidence that statutory duties will be met without escalation.

Risk

High statutory compliance risk under the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Regulations.

- Increased likelihood of Tribunal appeals
- Complaints to DfE / Ombudsman
- Financial pressure through late, reactive decision-making
- Erosion of trust in the SEND system.

Suggested Accountability Board Actions

Request a **clear, transparent performance dashboard** for:

1. EHCP timescales
2. Phase transfer consultations and decision points
3. Require a formal recovery plan where timescales are not being met, with:
4. Ownership at senior officer level
5. Agreed milestones and review points
6. Explicitly link timescale compliance to the Board's risk register, not just operational reporting.

2. Phase Transfer as a High-Risk Pressure Point

What parents are saying

Phase transfer (particularly primary → secondary) is described as *“extremely daunting”*

Concerns about:

- Insufficient specialist capacity
- Late or unclear decision-making
- Children being consulted to mainstream settings that parents feel are unsuitable.

Risk

Predictable annual system failure, rather than isolated issues.

Children at risk of:

- Inappropriate placements
- Delayed placements
- Heightened anxiety and emotional distress
- Significant reputational risk during inspection or external scrutiny.



Suggested Accountability Board Actions

Treat phase transfer as a **strategic risk**, not a seasonal operational issue.

Ask for assurance on:

1. Sufficiency planning for specialist and resourced provision
2. Consultation timelines and escalation routes when preferred placements are not available
3. Commission a **post-phase-transfer learning review** (not blame-focused) to identify system bottlenecks.

3. Quality of EHCPs Determines Whether the System Works

What parents are saying

Where EHCP provision is **clear, specific, and consistent**, parents report better experiences.

Where plans are vague or poorly implemented, problems escalate quickly.

Risk

- Poor plan quality leads directly to:
- Non-delivery of provision
- Disputes over responsibility (education vs health)
- Increased tribunal success rates against the LA
- System becomes reactive instead of preventative.

Suggested Accountability Board Actions

Seek assurance that **EHCP quality assurance** is:

1. Robust
2. Consistent
3. Focused on legal enforceability (specific and quantified provision)

Align EHCP QA expectations with:

1. Workforce capacity
2. Realistic throughput
3. Ensure QA improvement is **properly resourced**, not added on top of already stretched teams.

4. Reliance on Individual 'Good Practice' Rather Than System Strength

What parents are saying

Positive feedback is often linked to **individual teams or professionals** (e.g. school nursing, individual schools).

Success feels dependent on *who* you encounter rather than a consistent system.

Risk

- Fragile system resilience:
- Good outcomes depend on individual goodwill
- Loss of staff = loss of quality
- Inequity of experience across the local area.

Suggested Accountability Board Actions

1. Identify and **codify what is working well** into standard practice.
2. Ask: "*How do we make this the norm, not the exception?*"
3. Support cross-service learning so effective practice is embedded, not siloed.



5. Parent Confidence and Trust Are Being Eroded

What parents are saying

Repeated themes of stress, uncertainty, and feeling worn down by the process. Even when things eventually work, the journey is described as exhausting.

Risk

- Long-term damage to co-production credibility.
- Increased disengagement, escalation, and adversarial relationships.
- Parents less likely to trust engagement exercises or consultation.

Suggested Accountability Board Actions

1. Acknowledge parental experience as a **system indicator**, not anecdotal noise.
2. Ensure Board communications and actions demonstrate:
3. Listening
4. Responsiveness
5. Tangible change following feedback (“you said, we did”)
6. Re-centre co-production as a risk-mitigation tool, not an optional extra.

Cross-Cutting Board-Level Risks Identified

- **Statutory non-compliance**
- **Predictable annual failure points (phase transfer)**
- **Unsustainable pressure on EHCP services**
- **Loss of trust in SEND governance**
- **Escalating financial and legal exposure**

Summary for the SEND Accountability Board

This feedback does not indicate isolated dissatisfaction. It points to structural pressures and predictable risks that require strategic decisions, not just operational fixes.

Parent carers are telling us:

Where the system is clear, timely, and lawful, it works.

Where it is delayed, inconsistent, or under-resourced, children and families carry the risk.

The Board’s role is now to ensure that these risks are prioritised, and mitigated at the right level of the system.