

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

Document Title: East Sussex SEND Coproduction Charter

Revision: Version 11

Target Audience: All LA/NHS Sussex/ESPCF Staff and parent carers

Document Owner/ Author Approval: ESPCF / NHS Sussex / ESCC

Current Version Date: 18 September 2024

Implementation Date: June 2020

Review Date: December 2025

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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.

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 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.
- d. 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.
- e. Be accountable for the identification of service developments which require working in co-production at the earliest possible stage.
- f. Ensure parent carer reps are invited to sit on key strategic boards and groups. Communicate via info@espcf.org.uk if a new workstream/group is identified as needing a parent carer rep.
- g. Consult ESPCF on communications (including letters, guidance, website pages and other documents) to ensure the language is parent carer friendly.
- h. Arrange for ESPCF reps to be involved in recruitment processes (including in job description development, shortlisting, interview activities and panels) for senior/strategic roles.
- i. Ensure that information and feedback from ESPCF and parent carer reps contributes meaningfully and effectively to service development.
- j. Provide feedback to ESPCF on the impact of co-production and what changes as a result of parent carer input
- k. Work to principles of transparency, e.g. ensure processes are open and clear when planning services; explain if there is a confidentiality status to any information or data that is shared and what is expected in terms of data protection protocols.
- l. 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.)

- m. 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.
- n. Work with and through ESPCF to ensure that the wider views of parent carers are heard, as opposed to individual voices.
- o. Be aware that parent carer reps, as well as professionals, wear multiple hats (parent carers, ESPCF steering group member, parent carer support group leaders). 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.
- p. 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.
- q. Support ESPCF practically and financially.
- r. Take positive action to support information sharing around ESPCF's role and activities.
- s. Ensure that ESCC and NHS staff have the understanding and skills to work in equal partnership with parent carers. Provide opportunities for practitioners to learn from each other and share information and practice around parent carer participation.
- t. 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. Work with parent carer support groups to access the broadest possible range of views.
- b. Accurately represent ESPCF members' views, highlighting consistent themes/trends and/or a diversity of opinions as necessary.
- c. Ensure that the information ESPCF receives is shared with its members in a timely, appropriate and reliable manner. Ensure ESPCF members are regularly updated on ESPCF's work.
- d. 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.
- e. Ensure parent carers understand and are supported around when to share their own 'personal stories' and when to illustrate points with more comprehensive/wider

community views. Ensure parent carer reps are provided with information on parent carers' views, where this has been collated and is relevant to the specific workstream.

- f. 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).
- g. Ensure parent carer reps operate within [existing policies](#) and decision-making processes (e.g. confidentiality, conflict of interest). Ensure that all sensitive personal information is managed in accordance with [ESPCF's confidentiality policy](#).
- h. Ensure ESPCF is effectively staffed, and activities overseen by an ESPCF Steering Group, all with clear roles and responsibilities.
- i. Contribute to the workforce development of staff across services, including providing parent carer representation on relevant interview panels.
- j. Identify ESPCF's representation priorities in response to member input and commit to ensuring meaningful strategic representation.
- k. Share details of ESPCF activities with commissioners.
- l. Work in an open and transparent way, sharing information on ESPCF's approach and development plans to be a strong parent carer forum in line with national good practice.
- m. Uphold the [Nolan Principles](#)
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership




To achieve effective co-production all partners agree to:

- a. Commit to a partnership based on trust and open and transparent dialogue.
- b. Ensure that everyone is treated with fairness and respect.
- c. Be mindful that partners may have disabilities, some hidden, and access arrangements and adjustments will be made as required.
- d. Respect confidentiality.
- e. Constructively challenge one another whilst working together to provide effective and innovative solutions using available resources creatively.
- f. Where conflict occurs during co-production, all efforts should be made to seek a resolution through dialogue and discussion directly between the parties involved.
- g. 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 organisations' formal policies (e.g. complaints) and / or recourse to Contact as a neutral body.

In summary, partners subscribe to the following principles:



Signatories

Representing	Name	Job Title	Date	Signature
East Sussex Parent Carer Forum (ESPCF)	Holly Riley-Saxby	Chair	11.07.23	
East Sussex County Council (ESCC)	Carolyn Fair	Director of Children's Services	25.09.24	
East Sussex County Council (ESCC)	Mark Stainton	Director of Adult Social Care and Health	30.06.23	
NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB)	Dr James Ramsay	Chief Medical Officer, NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board	23.09.24	