

February 2022

The Parents' Forum for Bradford and Airedale

Newsletter



In This Issue:

- 2 Latest news
- 3 Being a PFBA Trustee
- 4 How **you** can help families in Bradford
- 5 Masking - parent carer voices being heard
- 6 SEN Coordinators
- 7 Future events

February 2022

Latest news



Local Offer Refresh

The Local Offer Team at Bradford Council are looking for ways to improve the website, which includes information about all aspects of services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the Bradford district. To have your views included in this survey, [click here](#)



Data | Neurodiversity Event

The PFBA hosted the first Neurodiversity Pathway Event on 20th January, 2022. We had 85 parents sign up to the two sessions which is a fantastic number of parent carer voices to be heard.

Parents and carers were asked to contribute with their experiences and help develop and co-design the new Data1 (Digitally Acting Together As One ... on Autism and Neurodiversity) project which aims to build a new Neurodiverse system in Bradford that is needs driven, provides faster more effective access to assessments and specialist support and a more skilled and aware 'universal' workforce.

The pilot project focuses on the Holme Wood, Manningham and Girdlington and Keighley Central areas. The schools in these areas have been asked if they would like to be part of the pilot. There will be ongoing engagement sessions over the next several months to ensure that parents are involved at every stage of developing the pathway and processes. We will continually update next steps as and when the project moves along and once we know which schools will be participating we will update you. If you would like to have some input into this project please email supportnews@pfba.org.uk

February 2022

Being a Trustee for the PFBA

Trustees are an essential part of the PFBA organisation. They have a say in how we operate, and as we are a charity, it is compulsory for us to appoint and retain people who are passionate about our work to support parent carers of disabled and SEN children and young people.



What's involved? There is not a huge time commitment - the trustees and staff meet once every half term, at a time that is convenient to all. Additionally, there is an Annual General Meeting every 1-2 years. Trustees are welcome to be involved in other areas of the PFBA's work, for example attending events, however, this is not compulsory. There is an option to undertake training too.

What qualities do you need? It's not essential to be a parent carer, however trustees must want to improve services in the district for all disabled/SEN children and young people. At meetings, trustees need to offer their opinions and be supportive to the staff and others' views.

What next? To find out more, send an email to supportnews@pfba.org.uk, with a bit about what you could bring to the role. We will invite you for an informal chat to let you know more about how the PFBA works, and then you can decide if you want to continue.

Our "oldest" trustee! Michael Firth has been a trustee for the PFBA for more than 10 years now and during this time he has taken on the role of Chair. He says "I am a volunteer because I have been there and got the life skills so I now wish to make a difference and help others to achieve what is best for their children."



Helping other families in the Bradford district

Being a trustee for the PFBA is not the only way to help other parent carers to find out information and to access the services they need for their children.

Some of the roles need very little time commitment, and some can be done from the comfort of your armchair, at a time that suits you!



Would you be interested in helping in any of these ways?

- **Newsletter contributor** - we produce a newsletter every half term. Do you have a good idea for an article, for something that would interest other parent carers? You can be involved regularly, or just once. If you prefer not to write, we can do this if you suggest the topic.
- **Outreach helper** - we like to go out and meet parents, but there's just not enough time to go to all the places we want to. An outreach helper would go to a venue such as a Child Development Centre or school's coffee morning, and let people know about the PFBA's work.
- **Social media champion** - help us to get the word out on Facebook and Twitter by sharing our posts far and wide, and sharing interesting posts in our group.
- **Event helper** - we are hoping to hold more in-person events now things are getting back to normal again, and some assistance with tasks such as assisting speakers and making tea.
- **Event representative** - attend an event which would be of interest to parent carers on our behalf, and share what you have found out. For example, open days of other charities/support groups.

We offer support, and training where appropriate. If you'd like to know more, with no obligation, contact supportnews@pfba.org.uk

When schools returned after the summer break in September 2021, we had so much feedback from parents and carers about the subject of masking. We were truly grateful that so many of you were able to share the struggles you were having when a child seems to be 'fine' in school, yet once they had left the playground, emotions that had been hidden and kept in all day exploded. One parent likened it to a coke can that had been shaken all day and opened once it had got to 3pm. EVERY DAY!

Experiences of violence, aggression, anger, upset, fear and many children not able to go to school were discussed and compounded by feelings of not being believed or being blamed for poor parenting as behaviour was fine and not observed in school. A masking perfect storm! As a result of hearing such desperate, heart-breaking stories, PFBA wrote and submitted a report to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board expressing the issues parents had voiced and what recommendations we thought would help.

Please read the report [here](#).

The recommendations have been discussed, accepted and an action plan drawn up. Here is the [action plan](#).

Thank you so much to all of the parents and carers who have input into this so far. We will keep you updated with the progression of the actions and continue to promote parent carer voice with issues you are facing.

February 2022

SEN Coordinators



We have been hearing from families about their experiences with SENCOs, and we would like to hear about yours.

Tell us about your child's SENCO - what's going well and what could be improved? We'd like to hear about academies as well as local authority maintained schools.

We will use what you tell us to to improve training, and to help build communication and relationships between parent carers and schools.

Please email us at supportnews@pfba.org.uk or use our online form which you can access [here](#).



Going out again!

We are very happy to be able to go out and about and meet parent carers again! Adele Jones, our Engagement Manager is holding coffee mornings in schools to introduce the PFBA and tell parents about the work we do. So far, she is booked in to go to Blakehill Primary School, Grove House Primary School, Ben Rhydding Primary School, Abbey Green Primary School and Midland Road Nursery School.

We are also holding a parent carers' social event in Shipley in late March. This event is already fully booked, but keep an eye out for further events this year, including Carers' Week in June.

Education, Health and Care Plan Workshops

The dates the workshops before the Easter break are:

- Monday 21st March
- Tuesday 5th April

Please email supportnews@pfba.org.uk to book or find out more.

We are also planning to hold an online Q&A for EHCP questions. This would be on Facebook, in our closed group, and we are currently running a poll to ask if parents are interested in this. To join the group to respond to the poll, and to be involved in the supportive discussions, follow [this link](#).

We would love to know what you think of this newsletter! Please let us know [here](#)