

25<sup>th</sup> February 2025

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Dear Parent and Carers,

### **Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND): forming a new Parent Carer Forum the Isle of Wight**

We know that including the views and opinions of parents and carers is key to making services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities on the Island, and their families, as good as they can be. Following the decision by the Island's previous official Parent Carer Forum (Parents Voice) to end operations towards the end of 2024, it is necessary to establish a new Forum. We also need interim arrangements to ensure the views and opinions of parents and carers are included until the new Forum becomes operational.

The NHS and the Isle of Wight Council share the lead statutory responsibilities for SEND arrangements on the Island. The Island's SEND partnership would like to invite you to attend an event to help us shape the future of parent carer representation and support on the Isle of Wight. As valued members of our community, your voices and experiences are vital in building a strong and effective Parent Carer Forum (PCF) in the future. A Parent Carer Forum is a platform led by parent carers, where you can work collaboratively with local authorities, health services, and other providers to ensure the needs of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs are met. This forum will provide a space for you to share your perspectives, drive positive changes, and influence decisions that affect our families.

To ensure the forum reflects the needs of our diverse community, we will be hosting three **listening events**. These events will allow you to:

- Share your experiences, challenges, and priorities.
- Help identify the key areas the forum should focus on.
- Understand how you can be involved in shaping the future of a Parent Carer Forum on the island.

### **Listening Events Details**

We warmly invite you to attend one of the following sessions:

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#### Face to face session

- **Date:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025
- **Time:** 10am – 12pm
- **Location:** Riverside, Newport

#### Virtual session

- **Date:** Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025
- **Time:** 17:30 – 19:30 or 18:00 – 20:00
- **Location:** Teams invite

### The Process of Forming the PCF

The formation of the new Parent Carer Forum will involve several stages, including:

1. **Listening and Engagement:** Gathering your input to understand priorities and concerns.
2. **Establishing a Steering Group:** Recruiting parent carers who are passionate about helping to guide the development of the forum.
3. **Building the Forum:** Creating a structure that reflects the values and aspirations of our community.
4. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Forming strong relationships with local authorities and services to ensure your voice is heard in decision-making processes.

We want this forum to be truly inclusive, representative, and impactful. Your involvement will ensure the PCF meets the needs of our children and young people, as well as supports parent carers effectively.

### How to Get Involved

- **Join a Listening Event:** Let us hear your voice.
- **Express Your Interest:** If you are interested in being part of the steering group or contributing to the forum, please email us at [SandLBusinessSupport@iow.gov.uk](mailto:SandLBusinessSupport@iow.gov.uk)

The local area partnership has been liaising with the Operational Lead at Contact ([Contact: the charity for families with disabled children](#)) to identify a positive way forward to collaboratively work with all families across the island to improve services and understand lived experiences.

We are excited about this new opportunity to create a Parent Carer Forum that truly represents and empowers our community. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to improving the lives of children and young people with additional needs on the Isle of Wight.

Yours sincerely



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Naomi Carter  
Service Director – Education, Inclusion and Access