Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Charity Number: 1183372

Report dated
January 2025

Medway Parent Carer Forum
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Administrative information

Trustee's during the reporting period
June Patey (Retired 20.03.2024)
Keith Clear
Shenda Smith
Anita Oxenham
Hannah Burke (Resigned 28.06.24)
Felicity Baker
Jennie Fretwell

Steering Group
Angela Debont
Jayne Pardesi
Lisa Scarrott
Elizabeth Bradley
Leigh Baseley
Maxi Card
Krystal Sutton

Volunteers
Sonia Melia
Sandra Barrett
Sarah Buttery
Beth Morgan
Heather Stuart

Employees
Jayne Pardesi
Elizabeth Bradley
Lisa Scarrott
Belinda Woodhams

Bank
HSBC 231 High Street, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4BQK
CAF Bank 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Vision statement
The forum has been created to help parents and carers of disabled children to have a say in the way services are shaped and delivered in the Medway area, in Education, Social Care and Health services.

Mission
Medway Parents and Carers Forum, work with (not for) the local authority, health, and local services to improve services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families, by ensuring that families' voices are heard by planners and decision-makers.
We provide an opportunity for parents and carers to express their views and input into the planning and delivery of SEND services. Wherever possible, we aim to work in co-production.
We signpost, support, and empower families to obtain the best possible support and services for their children.

Our Aims

- To have a collective voice, around common issues.
- To work in partnership with those who provide services and support.
- To raise awareness of what support /services are needed.
- To raise awareness of issues faced by our children.
- To share experience and knowledge.
- To give feedback.
- To ensure that the future for our children is a good one.

  To achieve these aims we need families support, our strength and effectiveness rely upon their opinions and viewpoints.

Objectives

- We will continue raising common issues that affect all types of disabilities.
- Through shared knowledge, the forum will raise awareness of the groups and services available to the Medway Community.
- Work together in partnership, to gain the right outcome on policy making and service provision for all disabilities**.**

Ensuring our activities achieve our objects and benefit the public.

The Forum has been created to help parents and carers of disabled children to have a say in the way services are shaped and delivered in the Medway area, in Education, Social Care and Health services.

We support our families and carers with our Family Support Team, in helping with filling in forms and guidance of how to complete them with one to one support.

We benefit the public and our members by being their combined voice in attendance at meetings and planning for services in the Medway area. We are the established and committed individuals that attend the same meetings and put across the parents and carers thoughts, feelings, frustrations, and elation. Ensuring inclusion for all and transforming services for service users.

We ensure that all our activities undertaken by the forum meet our Vision, Mission, Objects, and Objectives. At the heart of the forum are Trustees that want to ensure the future of the forum and the community ties that we have already built, in coproduction and consultation. Looking to a future where coproduction is natural and inclusive. This enables our parents the autonomy, confidence and empowering their progression of dealing with the needs of their young persons. They are part of a community of like-minded individuals changing the future of services and support.

This year we have helped support various initiatives from the local authority and our parents and carers, we constantly feedback to our members about what has been achieved and to the professionals that supported parents and carers. We have received great feedback from the professionals on how they enjoyed meeting parents and carers, and that they felt the sessions achieved what the session objectives were.

Review of activities

The forum maintains 3 different Facebook pages.
MPCF (Medway Parents and Carers Forum) Professionals page
MPCF (Medway Parents and Carers Forum) Professional parents' page
MPCF family page
also
LinkedIn
Instagram
Twitter
We also attend Local Authority meetings for Health, Social Care, and Education. Here are some of the events we attended between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.
Strategic meetings 264
Training and Events attended 114
Coffee mornings/meetings 31
Internal 47

A total of 3200 hours of input, which does not include talking to families, managing the social media posts, or creating newsletters, this is 3 times the figure of the previous year.

This indicates a huge surge in need, of co production and participation from a forum perspective. At these meetings we represent our membership of parents and carers, engage with the committees and local authority on parents and carers views, feeding back to parents and carers after also.

The one to one support that the team offer with form filling, and sign posting when in need, has the team in great demand. In this year alone they saw 137 parents and carers.

We received funding this year to facilitate the Parent Carer Panel (Family Hubs and start for life Parent Carer Panel) Helping make sure that all parents and carers can access services from pregnancy through to their child's early years.

We were nominated for a Pride in Medway Award 2024, unfortunately we did not win this year.

medway parents & carers forum
Registered Charity 1183372
WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING IN 23-24?
264 Strategic meetings attended
Over 3200 hours of input
31 coffee meetings
114 events/schools and training sessions atteded
47 internal meetings
Strategic meetings are any meeting where decisions are made and parents views are raised
Many events/schools and training sessions are approx 5hours per session usually needing more than 1 colleague.

Future plans

Our future for the Medway Parent Carer Forum is to engage and recruit more Trustees into the forum and elevate the number of volunteers we have.
Carry on with our successful coffee meetings.
Carry on meeting the needs of our members, by being their voice at local authority and charity meetings.
Ensure training is available to our members for subjects they feel they need support in.
Enlist the help of more professionals for our Meet the Professionals Coffee Meetings.
Ensure that co-production carries on between ourselves Health, Education and Social Care.
Keep our membership growing, whilst retaining our current members, and whilst safeguarding our young people.
Engaging and networking with other charities to support the voice of our parents and carers.
Carry on supporting individual family needs with applying for EHCP's, and Form filling.
Carry on supporting parents/carers and Local authority with independent evaluation of ECHP plans.
To employ further administration staff, for day to day running of the office.
To employ further family support officers to support our families and carers with the administration requirements they need.

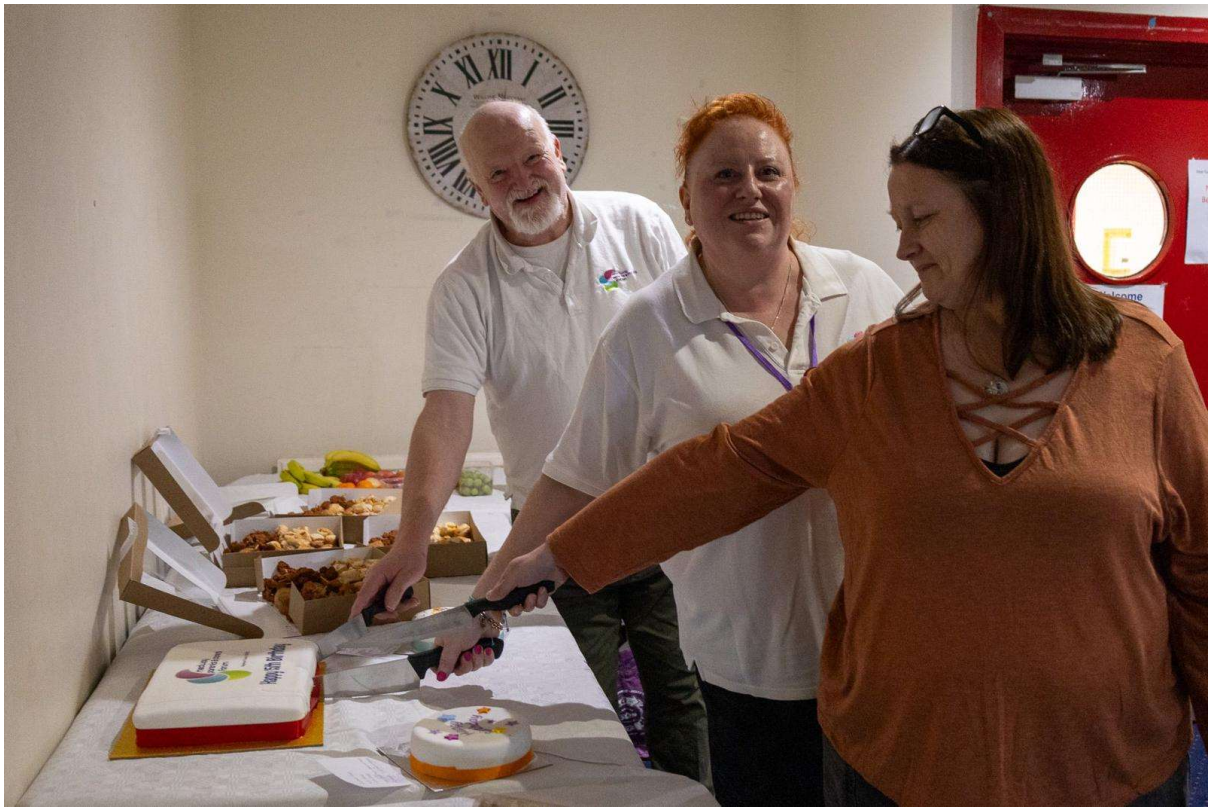
Financial planning

Over the past few years, we have worked tirelessly to coproduce with both the Local Authority and Health to help shape Children's services. Coproduction is well known to increase both cost efficiency and consumer satisfaction. The fulfilment of what is for the authority a legal requirement, (that underpins both the Children and Families Act and the Care Act) has however financial implications on the Forum, and we have been becoming increasingly stretched to coproduce whilst still covering our everyday activities. It is now usual in most authorities for the LA to match the Department for Education funding to Forums to allow them to coproduce effectively.
We have put together a business plan for the next year.

We apply for a grant from the Department of Education yearly, via Contact. Which we have been successful in receiving for the last 15 years. Since we were formed in 2009.

We have sought funding from various establishments for costs incurred in employment of staff, core costs and events, these can be seen on the financial records. Our funding for the family support team for the one to one work they do, has been funded from alternative sources that we have bided for funding for.

We are truly grateful for any funding we receive that supports our families, carers and allows us to keep doing what we are passionate about for the last 15 years.



In 2024 we celebrated our 15th Birthday of the forum being founded. In this photo our Trustee's Keith Clear, Shenda Smith and June Patey are cutting the celebration cake.

Management

The trustees are responsible for the overall management and control of the Medway Parent Carers Forum and meet monthly to support the needs of the steering group and the forum overall.

The work of implementing most of the policies is carried out by the members of the Steering Group, who meet monthly, to plan and enable events to take place, to meets with the needs of our parents and carers.

The Steering Group prepare the papers, manage the accounts and the review of any matters arising. They also deal with the day to day running of the Forum, including but not exhausting social media, emails, telephone enquiries and running of the office.

All trustees give of their time freely and no remuneration was paid in the year.
Expenses were paid in the year.
No trustee received any benefit from the Medway Parent Carers Forum. We have employed Lisa Scarrott in the previous year, due to a conflict of interest, (Lisa's Mum is one of our Trustee's) we sought and received permission from the Charity commission for this and Anita is not involved in anything regarding the employment of Lisa.

The below photo is Keith Clear receiving his life time achievement award. Fantastic.

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing a Trustees 'Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards. Medway Parent Carer Forum CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) has income over £25,000 and has therefore elected to prepare the financial statements on a Receipts and Payments basis in line with the Charities Act 2011.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
Last year we had our accounts, audited as we received higher funding for the first time, we were late submitting them to the charity commission once they had been verified, unfortunately. However, they were all passed. Late in 2024 we changed our accounting system to QuickBooks. We have taken the time to update all the accounts from 2023-2024 to QuickBooks to enable the auditors a speedier time of checking them. Our thanks to our very dedicated team for this achievement.

Membership

A member may be an individual, a corporate body, or (an individual or corporate body representing) an organisation which is not incorporated.
Membership of the CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) is open to anyone who is interested in furthering its purposes, and who, by applying for membership, has indicated his, her or its agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members.

In 2023/2024 we had around 1014 members recorded, having completed a membership application form this is an increase of 340 on the previous year. These members have full voting rights. 30 are associate members with no voting rights. All members have been supplied with a new membership number and membership card. This figure has risen from the previous figure of 674 members.

We also have members divided amongst our Family pages
The Professional page has 110 members.
The Professional Parent page has 131 members.
Our general public page has 1000+ followers at present. The members of the general public page do not have voting rights as they are not signed up members.
This has been steadily increasing, via word of mouth, information days, Charity events, Facebook advertising on other groups, through the children's centre at Snapdragons and promotion by other council services.

The pages enable our members to interact with each other, support and encourage and share information. This is always encouraging to see members supporting each other and helping us to change the future of services for our young people.

Instagram has 245 followers
Twitter has 585 followers

Statement of Accounts

Please see separate document for statement of accounts 2024
In summary and in accordance with our governing document and financial policy, the forum should have funds available, in case of any need arising. This should consist of 4 months of running costs including salaries or £1000 whichever is greater, which currently stands at £15000.

Total cash fund at year end was £75,888 from which £39,978 is unrestricted. Unrestricted cash fund increased by £18,416 on last year from the previous year's closing amount of £21,562.

The Trustees of the charity are pleased to present their report together with the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2024. The accounts comply with current statutory requirements, the governing document, and Charity Commission guidance.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on its behalf by:
Anita Oxenham and Keith Clear on the Statement of Accounts 2024

Shenda Smith Trustee
Date 28th January 2025