

Experience of a Barnet Parent

Shaping Barnet SEND Services through the Barnet Parent Carer Forum (BPCF)

Being the parent of a child with SEND can be a lonely, exhausting and frustrating experience. Trying to secure the best outcome for your child and your family isn't easy and the learning curve is steep.

We may be facing different struggles but the knowledge we gain along the way is invaluable in helping develop the services available for all SEND families. It is for this reason that I joined the BPCF a year ago.

I felt strongly that the voices of parents and carers needed to be heard to ensure the services available were as helpful and accessible as possible.

Shortly after attending my first steering group meeting I was asked to get involved in two projects, both mental health related. I was initially nervous attending meetings with SEND professionals having little knowledge of how the systems operate but everyone was keen to hear my story and it was clear my input was valued.

I have gained a huge amount from my involvement with the BPCF.

The difficulties we have encountered in seeking help for our family have shaped my views on how services can be improved and I'm grateful for the opportunity to use my experience to help create a better system.

Although the BPCF is not a support group we share similar struggles and it is reassuring to be around others who understand and feel passionate about using their own experiences to promote improvements.



Do get in touch if you feel this is something you would be interested in getting involved in.

<http://www.barnetpcf.org.uk/>

Lisa Coffman



Preparing for Adulthood from the Early Years

Over 50 parents / carers attended our 'SEND -Promoting Independence' parent workshop ([access via this link](#)) in October 2018, that focused on preparing for adulthood from pre-school all the way to 25 years of age.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the Barnet community to learn more about how we can work together to prepare our children and young people for adulthood from their earliest years.

This focus also linked in to the 'Maximizing the Impact of Teaching Assistants' (MITA Project) that had been delivered in Barnet's June SENCO Conference (over 80 schools accessed this session) and is based on current evidence based research.

A key area that was highlighted during the workshop was Barnet's Preparing for Adulthood '[Transition Protocol](#)'; this has been coproduced with our parent / carer community and is a really useful resource for parents and professionals. The protocol details the responsibilities of agencies involved in transition planning process for young people with complex learning difficulties, disabilities, additional needs and/or mental health needs in Barnet.

Upcoming SEND Events

19 November

[Down Syndrome – An Introduction](#)

22 November

[Autism Workshop - What is it like to be autistic? Personal experience of autism and ADHD](#)

29 November

[Supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health in Schools: Anxiety](#)

Young Person's Voice – BDTY – Rachel Gibson

The Barnet Development Team Youth (BDTY) group is about children and young people with disabilities having their say to make sure society makes changes to make a difference to young people's lives. The group invites important people in Barnet Council and the Health Service to listen to young people's experiences and make changes for young people.

There are about 7 of us who attend every session. These are some of the things we have done.

An educational psychologist called Amy came to ask us about our experiences in school in meetings about us and we told her what helps us best. She is going to share what she has found out with schools so that meetings about young people can be made better.

At another session, we told an advisory teacher about the transition from secondary school to college and she is

going to make a booklet to help young people with their transitions.

We helped the Health Commissioner with the process of employing a new therapy service.

The meetings are monthly and held at North London Business from 5 until 7 o'clock.

Not only are we helping the council make better decisions we are also helping ourselves by gaining experience of talking in public and adding to our CVs.

Although we have serious moments we also have a lot of fun.

Rachel Gibson

The BDTY are seeking young people to join, if you are interested or know a young person who would be, please email Jenny Gridley:

Jenny.gridley@barnet.gov.uk



SEND 2018 Annual Conference Feedback

Barnet launched its first annual SEND Conference in April 2017 and on 14 June 2018, our second annual SEND Conference took place with over 160 attendees (majority of attendees were parents / carers of children and young people with identified SEND).

Barnet's annual SEND conference for Barnet parents, carers and professionals was jointly organised by education, health, social care and representatives of the Barnet SEND parent / carer community.

The conference was developed to ensure the Barnet community have an opportunity to gain greater awareness of SEND developments, structures and services in Barnet from key professionals and senior leaders across education, health and social care.

Following feedback from those parents / carers who attended in 2017, an external keynote speaker was identified to present at our 2018 SEND conference. This year we were delighted to welcome Barry Carpenter, CBE, OBE, PhD as our key note speaker who provided a powerful, purposeful and well received session. *'Engaging Learners with Complex Needs; the 21st Century Challenge'*

A feedback summary ([access via this link](#)) can be found on Barnet Local Offer page (You Said – We Did page) which outlines some of the key issues raised and how Barnet SEND services are responding.

