

## DORSET PARENT - CARER COUNCIL IS YOUR FORUM



### Where did Parent Carer Forums come from?

Parents & carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) use lots of different services to get support for their child, young person or themselves.

This can include getting additional support for their child/young person's education, being seen by different health services, getting help from social care/early help so their child/young person can take part in fun activities while families take a break from caring. When parents of children/young people with SEND meet other parents they often find they have similar problems accessing services and finding information.

Since 2008 parent carer forums, like Dorset Parent - Carer Council (DPCC) have been set up in most Local Authority areas in England and with help from the Department of Education who provide a small grant they have been successful in improving services for children/young people with SEND.

### What is a Parent Carer Forum?

Forums are for parent carers of children/young people with all types of disabilities or special educational needs. They are in contact with many parent carers in their local area who keep them informed about what is happening.

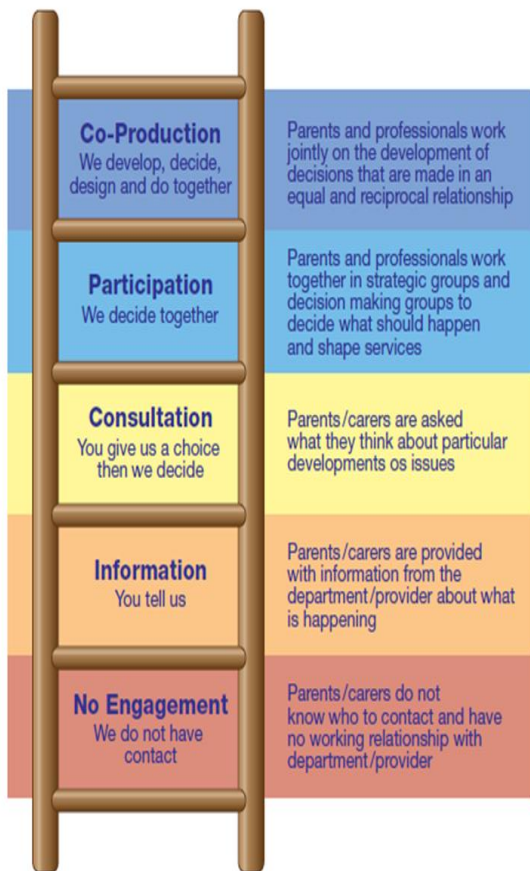
Forums including DPCC have a small steering group of parent carers who help to lead and manage the work of the forum. Parents and carers representing the forum who work with their local authority and health service bring with them the views and experiences of a wide range of parent carers in the local area.

All forums are members of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums. Regional representatives feed the views of parent carer forums into national planning and delivery. ( <http://www.nnpcc.org.uk/> )

### Why get involved?

It is really important that you as a parent carer of a child/young person who is disabled or someone with special educational needs joins Dorset's forum so DPCC they can share your experiences and give **you** a voice to change things in **your** local area. ( <http://www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk/membership-form> ).

Parent carers can choose to be involved in a wide range of ways - you may just want to get information from the forum, have opportunities to be involved in consultations or attend events that interest you. You may want to get more involved and be a representative in your area, or you may want to be on your steering group. Dorset Parent-Carer Council is a voluntary organisation and is always looking for parent carers with a range of skills to help with running the forum – and everyone has something to offer.



## What is parent carer participation?

Parent carers can help pinpoint problems frequently experienced by families with disabled children. This knowledge is useful to professionals to help them improve how services are delivered so they better meet families' needs. When parents and professionals work together, recognising each other's expert knowledge, informed decisions are made which make the best use of people's time and money. Over the last eight years, DPCC has developed the parent carer participation agenda in Dorset and DPCC is now one Dorset Local Authority's co-production partners.

## Understanding Parent Carer Participation & Parent Carer Forums

Ensuring the participation of parent carers is an underpinning principle of the Children and Families Act 2014. It is helpful to consider this as two distinct aspects,

- 1 – the individual participation of children, young people and their parent carers in your own assessments, plans and support and subsequent reviews of these.
- 2 – the strategic participation of children, young people and parent carers in local (and national) service design, delivery and evaluation.

 [www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk](http://www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk)

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