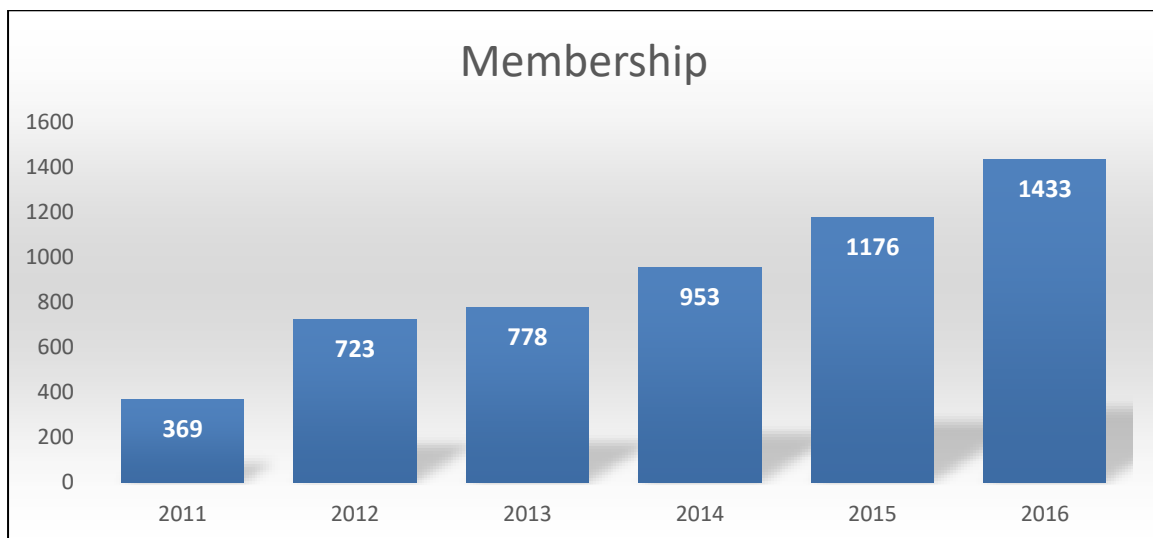


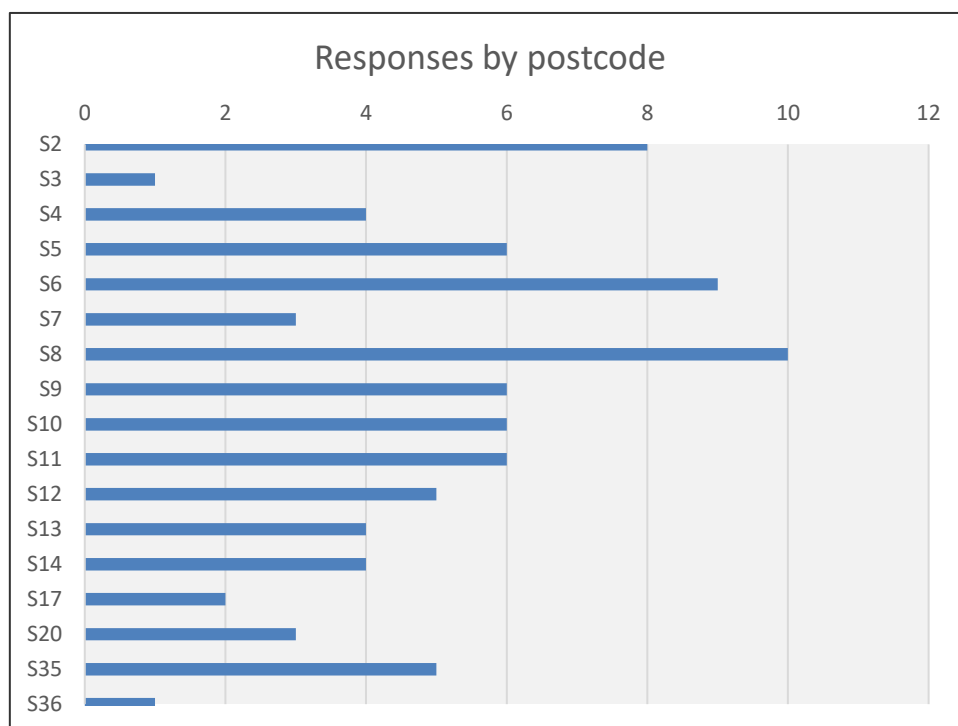
Membership Survey 2016

1. Participants

At the end of September 2016, Sheffield Parent Carer Forum had 1,234 full members (families) and 199 associate members (professionals and practitioners). The membership questionnaire was circulated the full members (post or email) with the autumn newsletter. We received 85 responses; a response rate of 6%. Most responses were completed online (71) and 14 were hard copy responses.

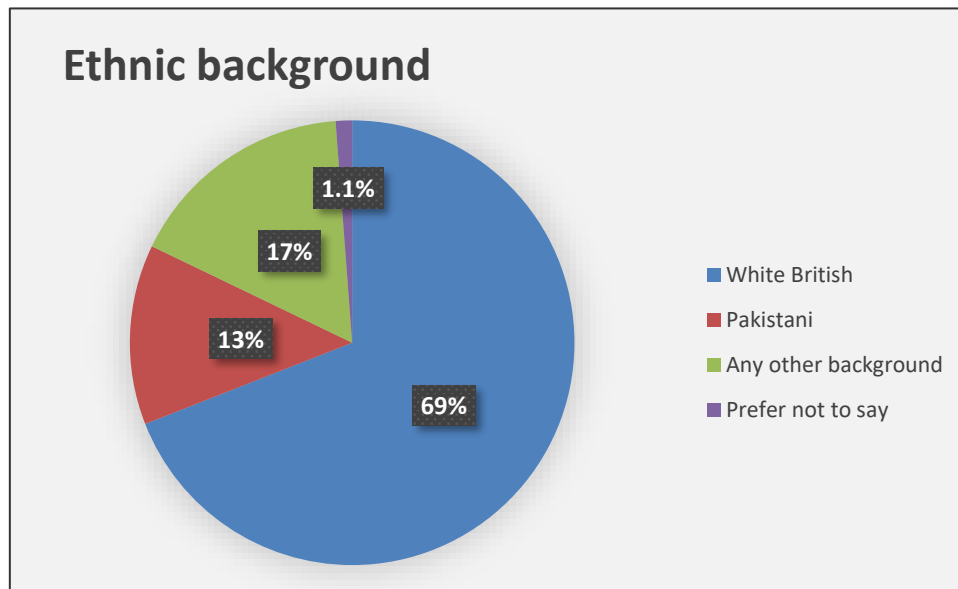


2. Postcodes and ethnic background



There was a good geographical spread of responses, with the largest number from S8, S6 and S2.

The ethnicity of respondents was 69% white British, 13% Pakistani and 17% from other ethnic backgrounds (including Bangladeshi, Chinese, African, Indian and Yemini).



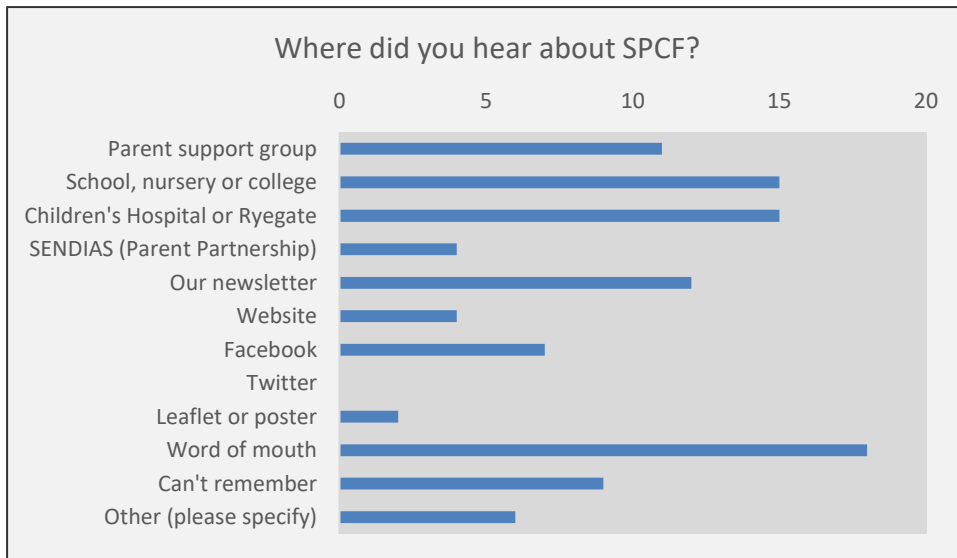
3. Child's main disability, age and school

- Over half of respondents (58%) had children on the autistic spectrum, 10% had Down Syndrome, 10% had ADHD and 6% had SLD. All other main disability categories were represented by at least one respondent except BESD, mental health issues and multisensory impairment.
- Most respondents (51%) had children aged 5-10 years and 11-15 years (35.4%).
- 51.8% were educated in mainstream settings, 28.2% in special schools, 12.9% in IRs and 3.5% were home educated.

4. Where did you hear about us?

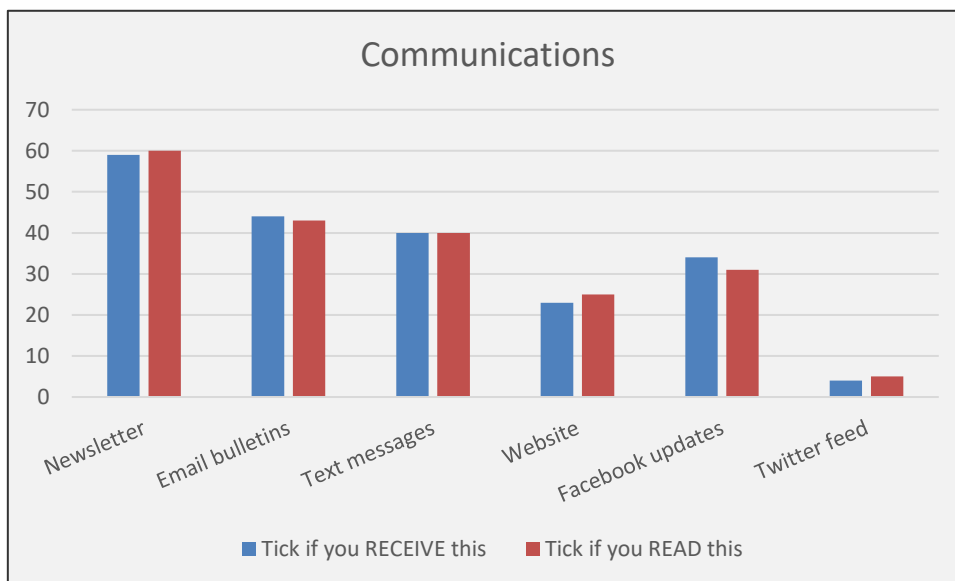
Most had heard of the Forum by word of mouth followed by school and the Children's Hospital/Rygate. Facebook and our website are becoming more important as ways to engage parents.

Of those who ticked "Other", two had attended an event, one had heard about us from a social worker and one through Portage.



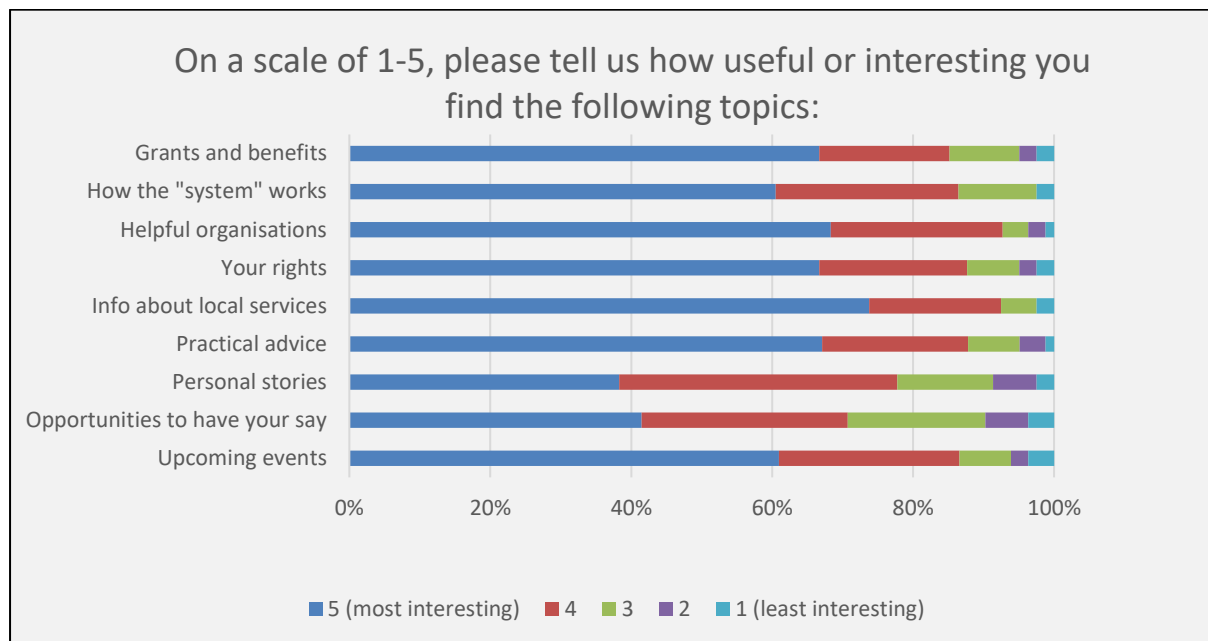
5. Communications

The newsletter is still the most popular medium of communication. Email bulletins were received and read by over half of respondents and text messages have proved very useful for reminding members about events. Facebook continues to become more important.



We asked those who did not read our communications to tell us why. Only 8 people answered this question; 4 ticked not relevant/interesting and 3 said they were too difficult to understand. Of the five people who ticked "Other", 3 said that they didn't receive anything from us and 2 said that they didn't do social media.

The most useful or interesting topic in our communications was information about local services. Other popular topics included helpful organisations, practical advice, grants and benefits and rights. The least popular topics were personal stories and opportunities to have your say.



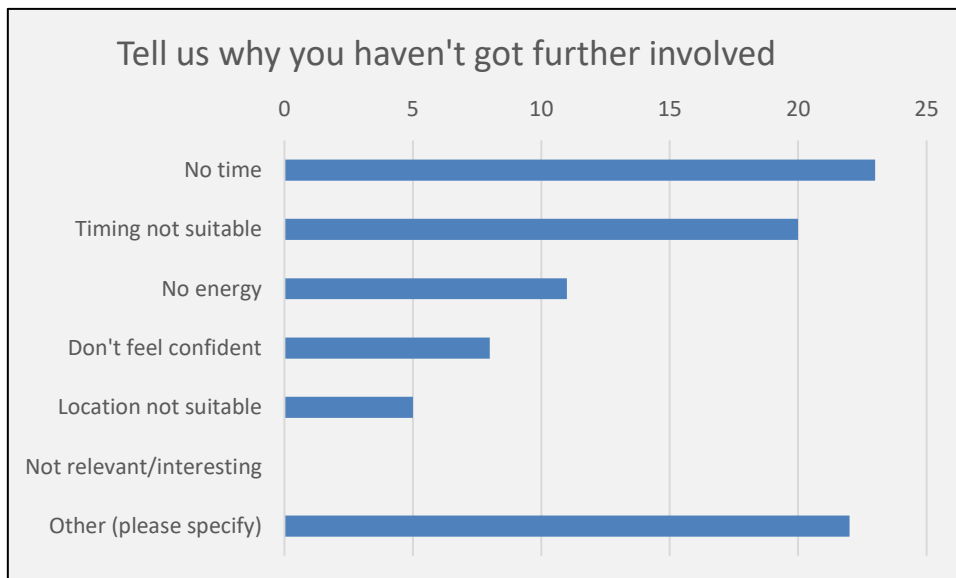
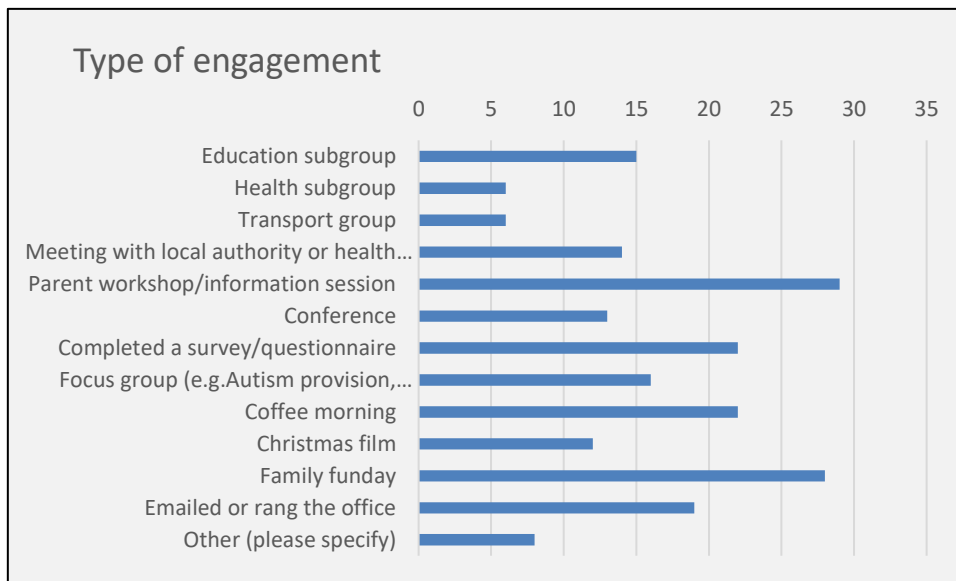
We asked “What else would you like to read about?” and got 27 responses. Information about activities for children after school and at weekends was mentioned by six respondents. Two people wanted more information about the transition to adult services and benefits and two others wanted to know about activities for younger children. Other suggestions included information on grants, mental health awareness, organisations that can help you challenge decisions and the experiences/views of young people about school, college, life choices and independence.

6. Engagement

Have you attended any of our meetings/events or responded to a consultation/survey?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67.1%	55
No	32.9%	27
<i>answered question</i>		82
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Well over half (67%) of respondents had been further engaged with the Forum. Most had come to a parent workshop/information session or had attended the Family Fun day.



The main reason for not getting further involved was that the parents felt that they had no time. This was reflected in some of the written comments:

“Not always got the time so I look on the website and newsletter for information”

“We spend a lot of time at meetings with school, activities for my grandson and medical appointments”

Timing of meetings is a problem for many parents especially those who work:

“Struggle to attend due to work”

“I only work part time but the 10-12 meetings haven't fallen when I can make them”

“Usually not able to attend due to working full time and most of your coffee meetings are mornings, why not look at holding an evening session for parents that are working?”

Other responses included being busy with child's health needs (2 mentioned prolonged hospital stays) or that they had only just joined. A couple of responses mentioned not knowing how to get more involved or felt that they hadn't been invited and a grandparent was unsure if they were welcome.

7. Confidence in SPCF

How confident are you that the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum can accurately represent parents' views?

Very confident	39	94%
Confident	37	
Not confident	3	6%
Not at all confident	2	
	total	81

If you are not confident, why not and what could we do to improve?

Only 4 people answered this question:

“To communicate and to keep us updated”

“Need translation for Urdu. I don't understand English enough”

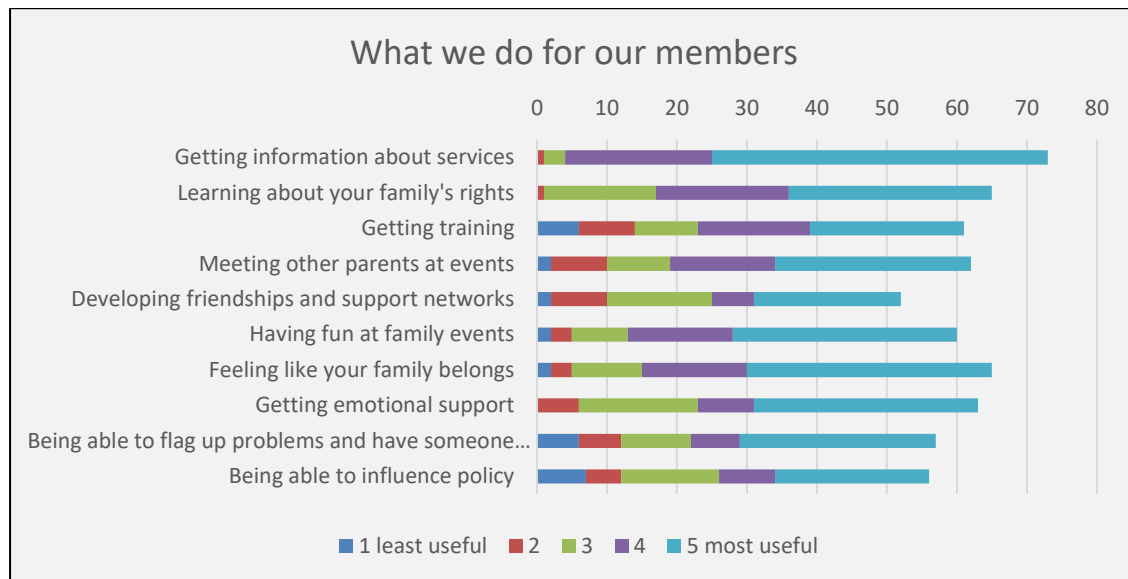
“You could provide more help by encouraging volunteers to contribute their potential. Specially by doing home visits and giving reassurance to families listening their difficulties and sufferings they have because of having a disabled child. Then there should be feedback system in order to maintain the effectiveness of Forum”

“I am not sure because I have read nothing that is similar to my son's story and I think committees are about people on the benefit spectrum or parents who don't need to work. The intentions are honourable but I still feel isolated and unhelped”

8. What we do for our members

We asked members “What was the best thing that we have done for you?” and asked them to rate their answer on a scale of 1 to 5. The top five most useful (4&5) things were: information about services, belonging, family's rights, family events and meeting other parents.

The least useful (1&2) were: getting trained, being able to influence policy, flag up problems, and developing friendships.



We also asked parents if they agreed with the following statements:

Answer Options	Agreed Percent	Response Count
I feel better informed about services for my family	78.5%	62
I feel more able to support my child/children with disabilities	58.2%	46
I feel that I am making a difference for other families	19.0%	15
I feel less isolated	46.8%	37
I am a new member and have felt no benefit yet	10.1%	8
I have felt no benefit	5.1%	4
<i>answered question</i>		79
<i>skipped question</i>		6

Have you used any of the information we have given you to change things for your child?

73 people answered this question and there was a fairly even split between “Yes” (53.4%) and “No” (46.6%). We asked those who answered “Yes” to provide more information and the following are some examples:

“I have implemented things from workshops into everyday parenting. I have attended events I have heard about”

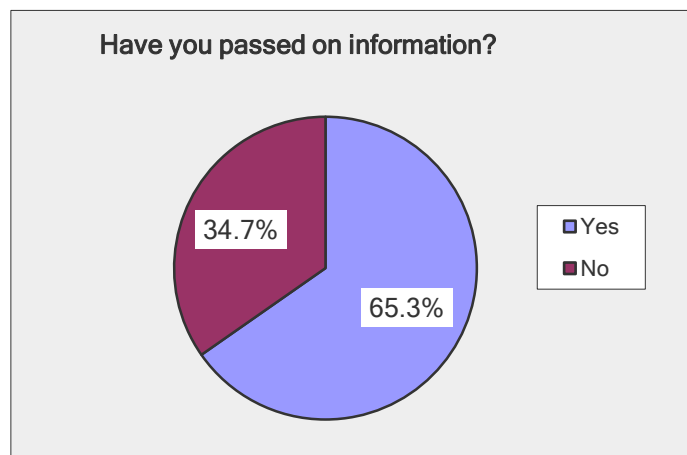
“Communicate in Print workshop was brilliant. We use the visuals that I made daily”

“Applied for the short breaks grant which enabled the whole family to enjoy a break together. Hope to use the info from the EHC training for our transition meeting in the near future”

“Information regarding transport has helped me move forward, when basically as a standstill”

“When speaking to other parents at events I have gained ideas from their experiences and also information that has helped me make better decisions.”

Have you passed on information you have picked up from us to anyone else?



Again we asked those who answered “Yes” to provide more details. Most said that they passed information on to family, friends and other parents.

“I’ve taught my family Makaton”

“Distributed newsletter via email”

“I pass on information about how system works and timescales to another SEN parent who is not keen on joining things”

If you had to choose, what ONE issue would you feel the Parent Carer Forum should concentrate on this year?

Education was mentioned, most particularly EHC Plans. Other issues included: transition to adult services; disability awareness; transport; activities for children; training careers and jobs for parents; and *“Just being there for us”*

Do you have any comments/complaints/suggestions about how we can work with you?

Out of the 26 responses only one raised a definite concern:

“You have always been brilliant, but I do have a concern over SPCF not being independent and therefore criticism of council services not allowed/not welcomed/frowned upon and maybe getting too close to the system to be a voice for change (this is a concern, not a criticism) ...”

The timing and location of meetings were also mentioned as a problem for a few parents.

There were lots of positive responses to this question e.g.

“I think you do an amazing job and thank you very much. You have made a difference to our lives”

“I think you have and are doing a wonderful job. I am grateful every time I get a newsletter booklet text etc. Your service is invaluable to parents like me in so many ways. Thank you”