

# Impact Statement 2020



Around 13,000 children and young people in Sheffield have a disability or special educational need. Services designed to support them are overstretched and underfunded. Their parents face significant challenges, from financial strain to securing the right support for their child. Many feel isolated, stressed and anxious every day.

## Who we are and what we do

We are an independent local charity run by and for parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25 years. Our aim is to provide mutual support, share information and influence policy and practice. We support families by:

Providing an information and signposting service

Organising information events and training sessions for parents

Gathering parents' views and representing them at strategic meetings

Organising social events where families can meet each other

Providing training to raise awareness of the issues faced by our families

## Our year in numbers During the financial year 2019/20:



630

hours of work (approx) donated by our volunteers



237

new families joined our organisation



147

meetings attended by our parent representatives with Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners



7,500

copies of our newsletter. Two issues distributed: 6,000 and 1,500 copies respectively (due to the lockdown, the spring issue was only sent to members, not settings)

## We organised 51 events and meetings, including:

309



people came to a family fun day

250



people came to our 10th anniversary party

252



people watched two Christmas film screenings

100



people attended an information day about support for young children with additional needs

55



different families attended 10 inclusive trampolining sessions

52



different parents attended 10 taster sessions for wellbeing activities

75

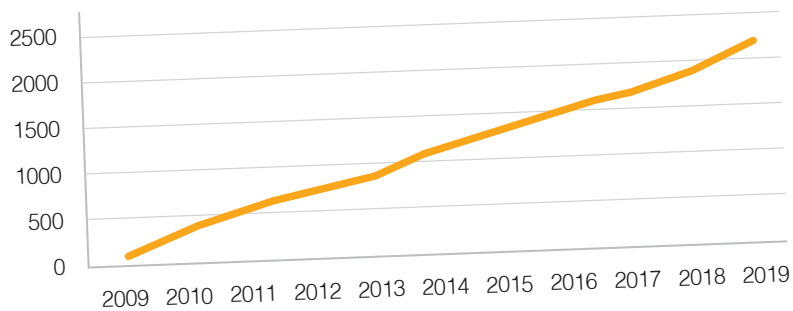


different parents attended 12 information/training sessions

## Our members

We have 2,182 members, consisting of 1,931 families and 251 professionals and practitioners. Our members have 2,233 children and young people with SEND.

Our membership has grown steadily, with over 200 new members joining us every year. Demand for our services has increased accordingly, whilst our funding from Sheffield City Council and the Department for Education has remained largely static.



Our members come from all postcode areas of Sheffield, and their children cover the full range of age groups and disabilities. Around 22% of our members are not White British.



## Connect

In 2019/20, we organised 51 events and meetings, including three large family events. Many of our events were oversubscribed. Soft engagement through events like family fun days,

wellbeing activities and coffee mornings enables us to build relationships with parents and can be the first step towards them becoming more involved. Our events also help to build a community and reduce isolation and stress.



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*“We love the family fun day. It is one of the only times my son can be at a social event and not feel like he is being judged. It is well organised and everyone is very welcoming.”*

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*“Just to say a huge thank you for the Christmas film. It was a great film and was enjoyed greatly by my grandson. It was the first time he has been to the cinema and I never expected him to sit through it. On the walk back up to get on the bus he kept saying he was very happy.”*

# Inform

We keep parents informed through a range of channels:



Website:  
**13,500**  
users per year



Email bulletins:  
sent to over  
**1,600**  
subscribers



Newsletter: approx  
**6,000**  
copies per issue,  
two issues every  
year



Facebook: over  
**2,340**  
followers, average  
post reach of over  
900 people



Twitter:  
over  
**1,500**  
followers

Families regards us as a source of trusted, verified information. In our last membership survey, 83% of parents said that being a member had made them feel better informed about services. Information empowers families, increases their options and ultimately improves children's life chances.



*"I attended an information session recently about SEN Support and was then able to use the things I learnt when attending a meeting with school. Within the space of just one week, the school have implemented changes in the classroom [...]. A few small changes have made a big difference to my little boy who struggles with ADHD and poor concentration."*



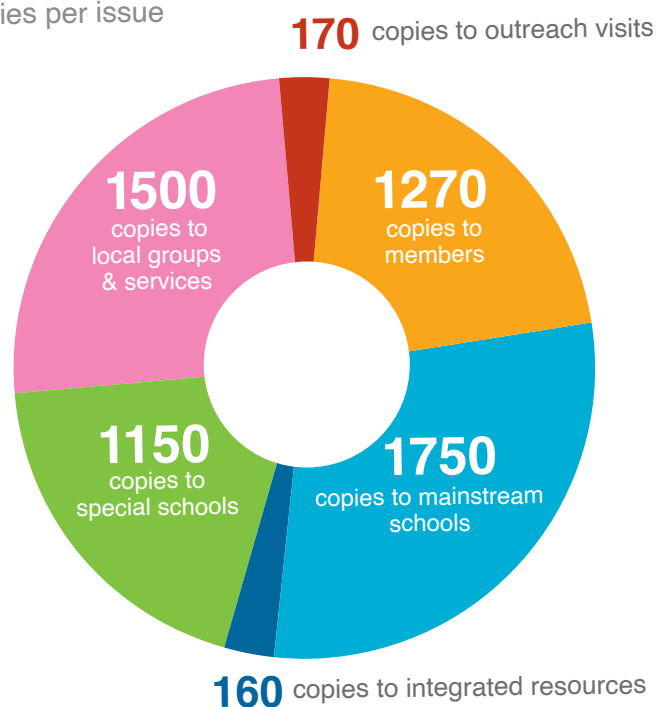
*"I just wanted to comment on how clear and helpful your transitions guide is. It's really concise and comprehensive. It's very helpful to me, as a support co-ordinator, and I'm sure even more so for parents and carers."*

## Newsletter distribution

We distribute 6,000 printed copies of the newsletter because we feel it is important to reach beyond our membership, so that as many parent carers as possible can benefit from the information and emotional support we provide. Not all parent carers have the energy or inclination to join a forum like ours. The newsletter is also an important marketing tool for us – around 27% of our members joined our organisation through the membership form at the back of our newsletter. We also circulate an electronic version.



Distribution of printed copies per issue



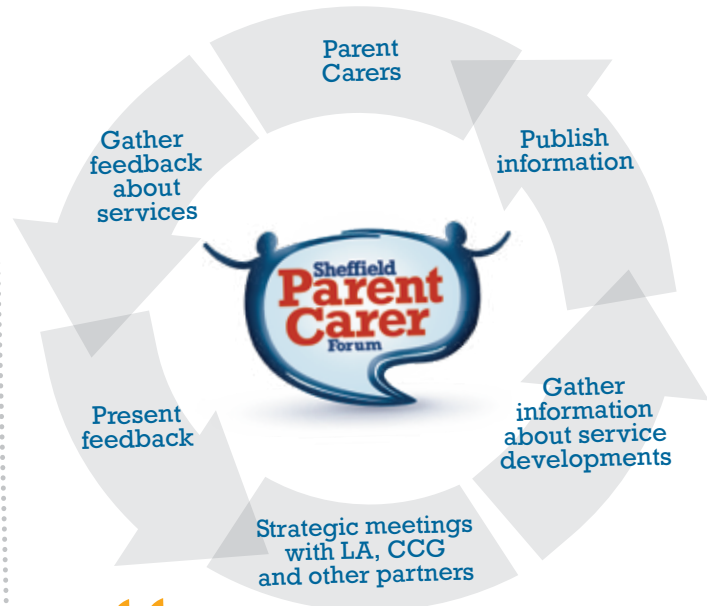
# Empower

Virtually every local authority in England has a parent carer forum. Forums work with local authorities, health and other local partners to review, design and improve services for children and young people with SEND. Together, they reach over 80,000 parents.

We collaborate with other parent carer forums in the region by attending Yorkshire and Humber cluster meetings. The regional clusters feed information into our national steering group, which is represented on many top-level boards that influence national policy.

We continuously gather parents' views through social media, outreach visits, questionnaires, meetings and calls and emails to the office.

Twice a year, we condense this feedback into a report, which we present to the local authority and the health service. We also feed parents' views into meetings of around 20 strategic and operational groups we attend regularly. Our parent carer representatives are highly experienced and provide continuity through times of change.



*"Families value the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum [...]. They provide accurate information, support and guidance about Sheffield's arrangements for children and young people with SEND."*

Local Area SEND Inspection report

Parents trust us to do this job well. In our last membership survey, 95% of respondents said that they were "confident" or "very confident" that we could accurately represent their views. Data from our State of Sheffield survey of over 700 parent carers is being used as a baseline to measure the effectiveness of Sheffield's action plan to address weaknesses that were identified through the local area's SEND inspection in 2019.



**We would like to thank our current funders:**

- Sheffield City Council
- Department for Education
- Gripple Ltd.
- National Lottery Community Fund
- People's Health Trust

[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)