

Topic of Importance - Parents on Panels

In Peterborough a number of decision making panels exist that are utilised to allocate resources and support to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). These are:

- Peterborough Access to Support Panel
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Panel
- Children and Young People's Quality and Expenditure Panel
- Early Support Process
- SEN Inclusion Fund
- Transport Panel
- Primary Behaviour Panel
- Adults Quality and Expenditure Panel

Full information about panels and how they work can be found via the local offer <https://fis.peterborough.gov.uk/kb5/peterborough/directory/advice.page?id=OF-HKpC5YIq>

The Panels page on the Local Offer was developed after the forum previously raised parent carer concerns over lack of information about panels and decision making. It was developed as part of a "You Said and We Did" approach to parent participation.

Parents are updated about decisions made at panel either in person and then in writing. There are appeals and mediation processes linked to some of the panels and parents in some cases have taken up their right to appeal decisions they disagree with.

The membership of the panels varies and includes PCC professionals and professionals from organisations external to PCC e.g health. Currently the only parent carer input on panel is for the SEN Panel where a parent representative attends in an advisory capacity.

What are parents telling us?

Through a combination of online surveys, discussions on Facebook and feedback from completion parents are telling us that they are appealing decisions from the SEN panel; they do not trust panels; there is not enough information known about panels especially in relation to how decisions are made and who makes the decisions; the panels are simply a way to save money. Parents feel they are not included or consulted about decisions made.

Where we get our evidence from

OFSTED/CQC SURVEY COMMENTS

If there was a change in culture and more openness and transparency parents wouldn't feel they are battling a faceless system who cares nothing for them and their struggles.

Refused to listen to the child and the parent views in all areas We took it to the SEN panel for a therapeutic independent school

Social Media Chatroom Discussions

Anecdotal evidence through queries relating to how decisions are reached

How have FVP responded

FVP have responded to the views expressed by

1. conducting wider research
2. developing this 'topic of interest'

Wider Research

Facebook Poll:

FVP initiated a poll entitled “Do you think parent carers should be able to attend Panel meetings where their child or young person is being discussed?” Possible Responses were “Yes” or “No.” This was based on a comment from a parent carer in response to a survey question seeking solutions. This poll was duplicated across three separate Facebook platforms, the main “Family Voice Peterborough” Facebook page, The “Family Voice Peterborough SEND Participation” group and the “Peterborough Women’s Association (PWA)” group. Due to where the Facebook Poll occurred it was not possible to guarantee that all respondents were parent carers, but all could be identified as interested parties. Duplicate responses to polls were removed before tallying the total number of respondents.

Do you think Parent Carers should be able to attend panel meetings where their child is being discussed. (All interested parties)

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES PER CHOICE	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	161	170
No	9	

Do you think Parent Carers should be able to attend panel meetings where their child is being discussed? (Identified Parent Carers Only)

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES PER CHOICE	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	51	53
No	2	

Commented Responses to Panel Polls:

- *“I’ve been on both sides of this and as a parent I felt I should be there to hear what’s said, but then on a professional side no I don’t believe parents should be, professionals need to be able to talk to one another and discuss various avenues and also what needs to be put in place. It’s nothing against the parent it’s just not always what the parent needs to hear. It’s a tough question to answer but everything is done in the child’s best interests”*
- *“No because the emotional attachment to the “client” means that you can’t reach an objective outcome based on needs not wants and limited resources. I do believe that social workers and community mental health nurses should have access to a budget which they can authorise as they are in my opinion best placed to make these decisions as they spend more time getting to know the families.”*
- *“Only professionals can discuss in confidentiality.”*
- *“#nothingaboutuswithoutus”*

Where FVP have shared this talking point

1. FVP Website
2. FVP Social Media Channels
3. FVP E-News
4. Peterborough City Council Commissioners

Next Steps and Areas for Consideration

1. As well as sharing this 'Topic of Interest' as identified in the list above it will be used to inform the charities annual report as evidence of what parent carers are saying.
2. This will also be used by parent reps in strategic meetings to inform strategic discussions.
3. This will be presented to commissioners and decision makers to help develop further 'you said - we did' work.
4. For PCC to consider exploring different ways to communicate decisions with parent carers and young people.
5. For PCC to consider what information can be provided in addition to the information that is currently provided on the local offer about who makes decisions and how.
6. For PCC to consider providing case studies that demonstrate the decision making and feedback process and for these to be available via the local offer.

Timescales

1. FVP will endeavour to pass the Topic of Interest to the LA within two weeks of completion and they will look to respond within two months.