



Suffolk County Council



Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Suffolk County Council

And

Suffolk Parent Carer Forum

And

Suffolk Northeast Essex Integrated Care Board

And

Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

NHS
**Suffolk and
North East Essex**

NHS
**Norfolk and Waveney
Integrated Care Board**

May 2023

1. Purpose

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provides a statement of intent between Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Suffolk Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) and the Integrated Care Boards (ICB) of Suffolk (as part of the Suffolk ICB & North East Essex and Waveney (as part of the Norfolk and Waveney ICB) to work collaboratively.

This statement was approved between the parties on 10 May 2023

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to set out the intentions of the partnership for co-production.

This Memorandum of Understanding is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations shall arise from the provisions of this Agreement.

2. Partners

The partners to this Memorandum of Understanding who will also all be parties to the contracts are.

- (1) Suffolk County Council whose principal office is at Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX (SCC)
- (2) Suffolk & Northeast Essex Integrated Care Board whose principal office is at Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX (ICB).
- (3) Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board, whose principal office is at Floor 8, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH (ICB)
- (4) Suffolk Parent Carer Forum whose principal office is at Community Action Suffolk, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 0HH (SPCF)

3. Scope of the Agreement

3.1 Agreement

This agreement seeks to provide a framework for all key strategic partners to work in collaboration to achieve the best outcomes for Suffolk children and young people. It is set within the context and principles laid out in the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in recognition that **all children and young people's right to participate in decision-making** is enshrined in law via Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and the Care Act 2015.

<http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/unesco-salamanca.shtml>
[Childrens and Families Act 2014](#)

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

We acknowledge that good coproduction¹ and participation² does not just mean listening to children and young people and their parent carers, but also acting on their input and giving them quality and timely feedback about the decisions we make.

In order to ensure that all voices are heard, we will make sure that appropriate and accessible coproduction and participation opportunities are available, providing the support that parent carers, children and young people need to take part in a way that works for them. Good coproduction and participation will be embedded as standard across services and considered from the very earliest stages of the commissioning cycle and throughout (from assessing needs, looking at best practice, service design and transformation, ensuring capacity meets demand to monitoring service provision).

It is expected that this MoU remains in place for as long as SPCF is the recognised parent carer forum for Suffolk but may be amended upon joint review.

3.2 Ways of Working

1. SPCF will work to increase the range of parents and carers involved in co-production through growing the number of parents and carers Representatives and supporting the involvement of the general membership in specific activities and specific membership reflecting Suffolk communities.
2. The SPCF Management Committee will have a broad membership with the aim to include members with children in primary, secondary, and post-16 age groups and with lived experience of early years.
3. SCC and the ICBs will commit to facilitating active parents and carers involvement by scheduling events and activities wherever possible at times that are most convenient to those with caring responsibilities.
4. SCC and ICBs will provide SPCF with clear, comprehensive, jargon free, timely information to enable members to make informed decisions and choices.
5. Meeting papers including presentations will be sent to all parties 5 working days in advance of meetings whenever possible. To achieve this, all meeting papers by any party must be submitted to the meeting organiser at least 6 working days prior to the meeting taking place.
6. To support the partnership working SPCF will share the MOU and a summary document detailing what coproduction is, and the need for papers and

¹ Parent carer participation is when parents and professionals work together, recognising each other's expert knowledge, to design, develop and improve services for disabled children in the local area.

² Co-production is when parent carer forums play an integral and equal part in the decision-making process and are fully engaged in shaping, developing, implementing and evaluating services and systems.

presentations to be shared in advance of meetings

7. SCC and ICBs will ensure the opinions of SPCF members, wider groups, families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are heard and listened to and taken into consideration when developing SEND services and delivering improvements. If work undertaken is not SEND specific, then the ICBs will work with other appropriate groups who may hold specialisms such as respiratory group this may include SPCF. SCC and ICBs will endeavour to ensure everything co-produced with SPCF carries the correct logos and acknowledgments.
8. It is required that whenever possible SCC and ICBs will ask for the availability of SPCF prior to arranging meetings and events and provide as much notice as possible for requests for parent/carer input with clear objectives stated. (*Linked to number 17, for SPCF member consultation it is required that 4 weeks' notice is given to the forum*).
9. SCC and ICBs will ensure that their plans for researching parents, carers, children and young people's views relating to services for SEND are communicated to SPCF, with clear guidance as to what can be shared with parents and carers.
10. SPCF aims to provide SCC and ICBs with parent, carer and young people representation to enable co-production. SPCF will seek to gain representation across the whole range of parents and carers through links with other organisations. If SPCF recommends an organisation that is better placed for co-production, it does not form part of this agreement. Where co-production takes places outside of SPCF it also does not form part of this agreement.
11. SPCF are to ensure where possible, that representatives at meetings have the delegated power to endorse decisions on behalf of SPCF. Where this is not possible, a timescale will be agreed as to when decisions can be brought back to SCC/ICBs.
12. SPCF are to be actively involved in co-production, planning, development, and monitoring of the implementation of SEND services within the local area.
13. SPCF will seek to represent the views of parents and carers of children and young people who live in Suffolk who have special educational needs and disabilities and will act as the main channel for the local area to represent Suffolk parents and carers.
14. SPCF will feed back to its members in an appropriate way and ensure that members are regularly updated on the work of the forum via newsletters, updates on the websites, mail-outs, parent/carer information events and the annual general meeting.
15. SPCF will actively promote co-production and feedback activities that are being led by the partnership through social media, links to the local offer website and through the SPCF network with local charities.

16. SPCF will network on a regional and national basis within the parent carer forum movement, feeding issues into the region and bringing issues, and good practice, back to Suffolk.
17. Where parent/ carer consultation is desired for service improvements, where possible this will be planned with at least 4 weeks' notice to allow SPCF to liaise with parents as well as other local organisations to support any review. This is separate to any formal public consultation requirements that may be a requirement of the local area, where SCC and ICBs will follow statutory consultation arrangements. *(This links to number 8).*
18. SPCF to facilitate 3 Open Forum Events, in 3 separate localities across Suffolk geographically and an online open forum event. Invitations should be sent to SCC and ICB's to enable officers to meet the wider SPCF membership.
19. Representatives from SCC & ICB will attend a monthly strategic meeting to discuss matters as set out in the Co-production Strategic Meeting terms of reference.
20. SEND Programme Manager & Communications & Engagement Officer will meet with SPCF on a monthly basis to share communications and discuss matters arising from the SEND Programme of work.
21. All parties will fully respect that the nature of information shared, especially about individuals or families, must be kept confidential and only used in the right settings.
22. All parties will respect the confidence of children and young people, parents, and carers relating to their protected characteristics, medical condition and financial circumstances. All parties will not disclose any such information to others who are not authorised to have it and will abide by the Caldicott requirements in confidentiality at all times. SPCF have their own Code of Conduct which they abide by and is available as a separate document.

[The Caldicott Principles - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
23. SPCF will seek to represent the views and needs of Suffolk parent/carers, however SPCF are not a campaigning or direct casework organisation.

3.3 Our Co-production Principles

We will:

- Be welcoming and caring.
- Treat everyone equally and with respect.
- Communicate clearly and honestly.
- Work in partnership and be inclusive.
- Agree upfront the level of co-production on any activity.
- Use a co-production logo on published documents.

- We will develop and cultivate our working relationships in order to achieve trust.

We, as people, families, carers, council officers, decision makers, and partner organisations in Suffolk who access services, are committed to ensuring that we work together to ensure that the principles of effective co-production underpin the shaping and improving of services.

To ensure that genuine co-production happens in Suffolk we will:

- Be clear about the nature of the work to be undertaken and the level of co-production needed to get the best outcome.
- From the start consider “who do we need to involve?” and make contact at the first possible opportunity. We will always ask “who have we missed?”
- Directly involve children with SEND, their parent/carers along with other participants to ensure our way of working together is built on trust, transparency, and open communication.
- Consider when, where and how any meetings will take place to make sure that they are accessible to all.
- Ensure SPCF are involved in setting the Terms of Reference for the co-production meetings and have the opportunity to contribute to setting wider meeting agendas. SPCF will be involved in co-production as early as possible so that they are able to ensure representation from the people who access the services. SPCF will monitor the agenda and how it progresses to ensure it is clear how all views have shaped the direction.
- Give equal value to every participant’s contribution.
- Ensure that everyone gets sent the same information at the same time in a way that they can access it.
- Maintain confidentiality as agreed for every project.
- Facilitate discussion and actively listen.
- Always provide feedback so that people can see what happens as a result of their participation.
- Understand that agreed outcomes may require compromise, however we will ensure that all voices have been heard in reaching decisions.

Always remember: Who, Where, When, What, Why and How.

- Who are we engaging?
- Where are we meeting? Make sure this is a setting where everyone feels comfortable and can access it. Can it be a virtual meeting?
- When are we meeting? Remember school run times and working parents. Where possible avoid any parent consultation exercises through the school holiday period. Make sure everyone is given enough notice.
- What method of engaging will suit the purpose best?
- Why are we co-producing and what is the outcome we are looking for?
- How will we co-produce this piece of work?

How will we know if it is working?

We will know that true co-production is working in Suffolk when all parties can agree with the following statements:

- I am an equal partner and am listened to and valued,

- I listen and value others
- I am able to be a part of the process and am able to participate in all stages.
- My views and experiences are represented.
- I give and receive clear information, timely information in a format that is accessible to all.
- I know that policies, processes, and services have been co-produced.

These will be reviewed on a quarterly basis at the regular catch-up meetings with SPCF, ICBs and SCC.

We will also monitor and evaluate to ensure that effective co-production is happening:

Evidence

- All partners who have engaged in co-production should be able to see their work within whatever is produced or undertaken. This includes detailing the contributions in service specifications, policies, and procedures.

Evaluate

- We will gather feedback to ensure that all stakeholders feel that their voices have been heard and that they have been able to make a difference.

3.5 Funding

The Department for Education (DfE) provides funding to Parent Carer Forums, and this can be applied for through the national DfE funded group Contact. SPCF will apply for this funding on an annual basis in the beginning quarter of the financial year. SCC will match this amount up to £17,500. Once SPCF has submitted their application SCC will confirm to match fund – SPCF will contact the accountable officer listed below directly to confirm.

In addition, in recognizing the value of contribution from SPCF, an additional recurring fund of £10,000 will be added to the grant to be invoiced to SCC.

Any direct work from SPCF reps relating specifically to the Local Area Inspection should be invoiced in addition to SCC. These claims should be discussed in advance with SCC Senior Responsible Officer.

SPCF agree to sign up to the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) national memorandum of understanding which covers both the DfE and the local contribution.

SCC will be invoiced quarterly in advance by SPCF for the above.

The ICBs will jointly match fund up to a maximum of £17,500.

Funding will be reviewed on an annual basis.

SPCF will maintain accounts and have these independently examined on an annual basis as per the Charity Commission requirements. Accounts will be audited regularly, open to scrutiny and reviewed at the AGM.

Accountable Officers

The officers accountable within each organisation will be: -

- (1) Suffolk County Council**
Name: Ros Somerville
Title: Assistant Director Inclusion
Address: Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX
- (2) Suffolk & Northeast Essex Integrated Care Board**
Name: Richard Watson
Title: Director of Strategy & Transformation/Deputy Chief Executive
Address: Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX
- (3) Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board**
Name: Tricia D’Orsi
Title: Executive Director of Nursing
Address: Floor 8, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH
- (4) Suffolk Parent Carer Forum**
Name: Sue Willgoss
Title: Chair
Address: Community Action Suffolk, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 0HH

4. Strategic Governance for the Arrangements

The overall responsibility for the implementation, development, delivery and quality monitoring is the joint responsibility of the Partners. Each Partner will ensure suitable attendance at quarterly review meetings to monitor the progress of this agreement.

5. Variation of This Agreement

It is expected and understood that this Agreement will be developed and varied as circumstances change over time. Variations shall be recorded by Suffolk County Council in writing after agreement of the partners to this agreement and included at the end of this Agreement.

6. Dispute Resolution

May 2023

The Parties agree to attempt in good faith to negotiate a settlement to any dispute between them arising out of or in connection with the Agreement within 20 Working Days of either Party notifying the other of the dispute. Such efforts must involve the escalation of the dispute to the Service Director (or equivalent) of each Party.

7. Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding of the Parties and supersedes any previous agreement between the Parties relating to the subject matter of this Agreement.

This agreement will be reviewed at least annually.

Signature Page

Signed: 

Name: Ros Somerville

Job Title: Assistant Director Inclusion

Organisation: Suffolk County Council

Date: 10/05/2023

Signed: 

Name: Richard Watson

Job Title: Director of Strategy & Transformation/Deputy Chief Executive

Organisation: Suffolk & Northeast Essex Integrated Care Board

Date: 10/07/2023

Signed: 

Name: Tricia D'Orsi

Job Title: Executive Director of Nursing

Organisation: Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

Date:

Signed: 

Name: Sue Willgoss

Job Title: Chair

Organisation: Suffolk Parent Carer Forum

Date: Jul 22 2023

Addendum 1

Thank you for inviting SPCF to attend {insert meeting name}.

We are the recognised Parent Carer Forum for Suffolk and the Strategic Partners of Suffolk County Council, Norfolk & Waveney and Suffolk & North East Essex Integrated Care Boards.

We have a Memorandum of Understanding with our Strategic Partners which details our partnership for co-production so we can achieve the best outcomes for Suffolk children and young people with SEND. The document in its entirety can be found here: [\(insert link\)](#)

Co-production is when Parent Carer Forums play an integral and equal part in the decision-making process and are fully engaged in shaping, developing, implementing and evaluating services and systems.

How can you help us to co-produce with you?

- Involve us at the earliest opportunity. Lived experience should be at the core of any piece of work, project or programme. Even if it is just an idea, let us know. We can always support with business cases and letters of recommendation for bids.
- Give us as much notice as possible for meetings. We will always try to accommodate tight timescales but to ensure the best representative is attending the meeting and we are able to seek specific feedback from our membership, we would like 4 weeks' notice.
- Some of our reps have SEND themselves so please provide us with clear, comprehensive, jargon free, timely information to enable reps to understand what will be happening during the meetings.
- Please send meeting papers including presentations to all parties 5 working days in advance whenever possible, as all members of the forum work around their caring commitments.
- Ensure the opinions of SPCF members, wider groups, families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are heard and listened to and taken into consideration when developing SEND services and delivering improvements. It may be difficult to hear constructive criticism, but please remember that we all want the same thing – to enhance the experiences of families of children and young people with SEND in Suffolk.

How can we help you to co-produce with us?

- Co-production only works when partners are treated equally, so please do not hesitate to let us know what we can do to help you too.

If you would like to know more about SPCF, please head over to our website: www.suffolkpcf.co.uk or send us an email to: info@suffolkpcf.co.uk .