



## Hackney SEND Parent Carer Forum (HSPCF) Review & Planning Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Monday, 19 January 2026

**Time:** 1:00pm – 3:15pm (*revised*)

**Venue:** Marie Lloyd Centre, 329 Queensbridge Road, London E8 3LA

**Format:** Hybrid (in person and online)

### 1. Welcome, Housekeeping and Introductions

The meeting was opened by **Joanna Brunt**, CEO of City & Hackney Carers Centre (CHCC), who welcomed attendees joining both **in person and online**.

Housekeeping information was provided, including:

#### Introductions

A round of introductions took place, beginning with online attendees, followed by those in the room.

Key introductions included:

**Joanna** – CEO, City & Hackney Carers Centre (host organisation)

**Ella** – Parent carer; Local Authority Local Offer & Participation Lead (chat facilitator for online attendees)

**Judit** – Steering Group Member, Hackney SEND PCF

**Preetam** – Carer Support & Information Officer, CHCC (Meeting minutes)

**MA** – Steering Group Member (joining remotely)

**Sarah** - Steering group member

**Parent carers** attending both online and in person.

### 2. Purpose of the Meeting

Joanna outlined the purpose of the meeting:

- To feedback to members on the work of the HSPCF over the last year.
- To explain how PCF has engaged with the local authority and key stakeholders and to look forwards into the next year and ask for suggestions and feedback on what will be important for the HSPCF to focus on.

The session was recorded via zoom for note taking and reference only and will not be shared.

### 3. Presentation: Hackney SEND Parent Carer Forum – Review & Looking Ahead

**Presenter:** Judit (on behalf of the Steering Group)

#### Who We Are

Hackney SEND Parent Carer Forum is a **formally recognised group, funded by the Department for Education**

Led by parent carers, for parent carers (of children aged 0–25 with SEND)

Hosted by **City & Hackney Carers Centre**, a local charity.

Part of the **National Network of Parent Carer Forums**

Brings lived experience into **local, regional, and national SEND decision-making**

Works in partnership with education, health, housing, and the local authority

The current Steering Group has been working together since January 2025, focusing on establishing governance, structure, and sustainable ways of working.

#### 4. Activity Overview (Jan 2025 – Jan 2026)

##### Membership & Reach

- Membership has **approximately doubled to 274**
- There are an estimated **10,000 parent carers** in Hackney so it is clear there is a continued need for wider outreach and engagement

##### Key Areas of Involvement

- Attendance at the SEND Strategic Partnership Board. This is a meeting held every two months which brings together system leads, senior managers and heads of services within the local authority, health and education.
- SEND & Inclusion Strategy development – the steering group has participated in workshops with the system leads which has inputted to the strategy as well as contributing via surveys.
- Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Delivery Group - members of the steering group have been part of the planning and design process for the event across the year and the HSPCF contributed to the event through volunteers and holding an information stand.
- Local Area SEND Inspection engagement – members of the steering group were present at meetings with inspectors and helped to promote the survey across its membership.
- Submission to **Parliament’s “Solving the SEND Crisis” inquiry** – the document submitted can be viewed on [www.hspcf.org](http://www.hspcf.org)
- Parent involvement in commissioning, transport, and leadership recruitment decisions.

##### Events & Engagement

- 9 Coffee Mornings were run in partnership with Peabody Housing
- A successful Family Fun Day at Ickburgh School in February 2025 (~80 participants)
- A successful and enjoyable end of year gathering at Pembury Community Centre in December 2025.
- A WhatsApp peer support and information group (this has been noted as being valuable but busy; Judit emphasised the need for respectful and experience-based sharing)

#### 5. Needs of Children (Demographic Overview)

Data collected via PCF sign-ups indicates:

- The majority of parents and carers support a child with a diagnosis of Autism
- Those who care for a child or young person with learning disabilities, ADHD, Down’s syndrome and epilepsy or mental health issues are also represented

Members present at the meeting noted the importance of ensuring **all needs are represented**, including those not currently captured.

## 6. Focus Areas – Updates & Discussion

### Inclusive Education

- National influence through Parliamentary evidence submission
- Participation in SEND & Inclusion Strategy workshops
- Hosted an EHCP webinar (June 2025) with SENDIAGS and the Local Authority. Attended by 40 parents/carers.

There was acknowledgement in the meeting that although EHCP timelines have improved for some, **systemic issues remain**

- Trial of new school transport application process
- Looking ahead: Response to the **2025 Local Area SEND Inspection Report**

### Complex Needs & Disabilities

- Ongoing engagement with council and health partners
- Links with Hackney Ark and NHS Integrated Care Board
- Autism Expert meetings with Penny Heron
- Plans for a **dedicated focus group and event** in March on complex needs.

### Parent Carer Wellbeing

- CAMHS parent support talk
- Six coffee mornings focused on wellbeing
- Healthy Parent Carer Programme (there is a current course running online and 2 previous in-person courses which ran at the Marie Lloyd Centre, E8)

Parents contributing to this discussion area highlighted the strong links between wellbeing, burnout, and systemic failure

### Community

- Forum on Housing (40 carers attended)
- Hosted a housing & rights workshop in collaboration with Shelter
- Family Fun Day and Festive Celebration
- Upcoming: participation in the Behaviour & Inclusion Scrutiny Commission focus groups

### Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

- PfA Delivery Group involvement – the HSPCF has been working with the delivery group to plan greater involvement and coproduction with parents, carers and young people.

Parents and carers feedback their strong concerns raised around **lack of smooth transition**, accountability, and joined-up working for children and young people transitioning into adulthood.

**Action: It was agreed that the HSPCF would take forward a commitment to arrange a dedicated PfA session with the council**

## 7. Parent Carer Feedback – Key Themes

A significant portion of the meeting focused on **lived experience and systemic issues**, including:



### Systemic & Legal Accountability

- Parents are repeatedly fighting the **same legal battles in isolation** – can the HSPCF help bring their voice and experience together?
  - There is a lack of consequences when statutory deadlines are missed by services.
  - Poor communication and lack of joined-up records across education, health, and social care
- Action: There was a call for the HSPCF to collate recurring issues and push for policy-level change rather than individual fixes**

### EHCP & SEND Processes

- Ongoing delays, repeated requests for evidence, and inconsistent application of law
- Concerns that parents must act as “caseworkers” for their own children
- Recognition that recent backlog work to improve the turnaround time for EHCPs must be closely monitored

### Transport

- Entitlement frequently challenged despite clear criteria
- Parents having to escalate repeatedly to secure provision

### Short Breaks

- Long response times, inaccessible phone systems
- Card payment issues and blocked cards last year.
- Families losing access to funds due to timing out of funds when system failures were to blame.
- Lack of flexibility for children experiencing burnout to receive their short break in a creative way.
- Option for Short Breaks to be spent on online mentoring for young vulnerable people who spend much of time online

### Burnout & Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

- Strong consensus that **burnout is poorly understood across services**
  - Current models assume children can access community-based provision
  - Burnout disproportionately impacts families, parental employment, and mental health
  - Calls for training, awareness, and flexible support models (including respite care)
- Action: HSPCF to feedback to membership on its work in this area.**

### Exclusions & Behaviour Policies

- Rising exclusions and lack of effective alternatives
- Concerns that academisation limits accountability
- Strong desire for PCF involvement earlier in **agenda-setting**, not just consultation

## 8. Governance, Representation & Transparency

Joanna spoke to the members regarding the current model for the HSPCF:

- Some members have left over the year for various reasons. The constitution states that there is space for up to 12 steering group members, but in practice, it was difficult to make decisions in a timely manner. Some members had very limited time and availability and so a decision was made in consultation with Contact (the national charity supporting parent carer forums) to operate with a smaller group for the time being.

- There was considerable time and effort put into developing the governance of the HSPCF through Haydn Jones (HSPCF Coordinator) who has since left the post.
- The current steering group of 5 have worked productively together for a year now and holding elections risks an entirely new set of members forming the steering group and the process would have to start from the beginning again.
- The steering group and Contact have agreed that a good model for now is to invite members from the wider forum to work on particular projects or represent the forum at particular meetings. The Steering group will provide an induction and on-going support for that to happen.
- Parents/carers can be remunerated for their time and will be invited to feedback to the steering group on their area of work and make recommendations.

### 9. Agreed Next Steps

- The HSPCF will log all issues raised and identify recurring themes through an online form; 'Tell Us Anything'.
- Follow up meeting to be held after the publication of the SEND Inspection Report
- Training on SEND Law to be arranged once we know what is within the SEND White Paper
- Arrange targeted workshops (EBSA, exclusions, PFA, short breaks)
- Improve website updates and access to minutes from public meetings.
- Continue strengthening parent involvement at strategic levels.
- Publish the Constitution of the PCF on its website with comments invited by email to [info@hspcf.org](mailto:info@hspcf.org)

### 10. Close

Judit thanked all attendees for their **commitment, expertise, and time**, acknowledging the emotional labour involved.

The importance of collective voice, peer support, and structured influence was reaffirmed.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm.