

# Family Champion Introduction



# Welcome to the Team!



- ❖ Thankyou for expressing an interest in becoming a Family Champion
- ❖ You should by now have been contacted by your Family Champion Lead
- ❖ This pack just gives you an overview of Essex Family Forum, what is expected of a Family Champion, what is required of our FC Leads and where your information will feed into
- ❖ Our mission is to improve services for SEND children and young people in Essex across Education, Health and Social Care and you are a vital part of this.



# Purpose of Parent Carer Forums



- ❖ Parent Carer Forums work with Local Authorities, Health Commissioning bodies and Social Care to represent parent views and experiences to influence and inform the provision and services used by our children, young people and their families.
- ❖ Essex Family Forum believes in co-production. Co-production is when parent/carers play an integral and equal part in the decision-making process and are fully engaged in shaping, developing, implementing and evaluating services and systems.



# Network of Parent Carer Forums - make a difference across the country



Essex Family Forum are part of the Eastern Region Regional Parent Carer Forum which consists of 11 forums. We are also part of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums which number 151 forums all over England. This means your views not only contribute to the work we do in Essex but also to Regional and National discussions and developments relating to SEND.



National Network of Parent Carer Forums  
'Our Strength is our Shared Experience'



# Structure of Essex Family Forum



- ❖ **Management Committee (MC)** - The MC sets the strategic direction for EFF and oversees the general management of all EFF work. Certain members of the MC also have designated roles; e.g. Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Company Secretary, Health and Safety Competent Person, HR Lead and Safeguarding Lead.
- ❖ **Strategic Development Coordinators (SDCs)** - The SDCs are the operational 'bridge' between the MC and the Quadrant Leads. The SDCs have an in-depth overview of all the work being undertaken by EFF and, as experts in their designated areas, they make recommendations to the MC. SDCs attend the majority of strategic meetings and boards and have involvement at regional and national level as well.
- ❖ **Family Champion Quadrant Leads (QLs)** - The QLs are each responsible for a quadrant of Essex – North East, Mid, South and West and support the FCs within their quadrant. Their role is to coordinate the voluntary work of the FCs, as well as to support and encourage their involvement with projects, training and development. The role is largely involved with getting out in to the SEND community, linking with SEND families, and also with frontline services and organisations used by SEND families. The QLs have some involvement with strategic meetings pertinent to their quadrant area.
- ❖ **Family Champions (FCs)** - FCs are the much-appreciated and vital group of volunteers, without whom EFF would be unable to gather the lived experiences of SEND families and fulfil its purpose. FCs are the first point of contact for SEND families. The role can include signposting families to services and support, helping to spread the word about the work of EFF, attending/ supporting events (either with QL or independently), input in to any relevant reviews, surveys and projects. In many ways, this role is the 'eyes and ears' of EFF. Any person in any of the other identified roles within EFF also acts as a FC.

# Quadrant Breakdown, Lead and Coverage



## West Essex - Stacey:

- Uttlesford
- Harlow
- Epping Forrest

## North East Essex - Sarah:

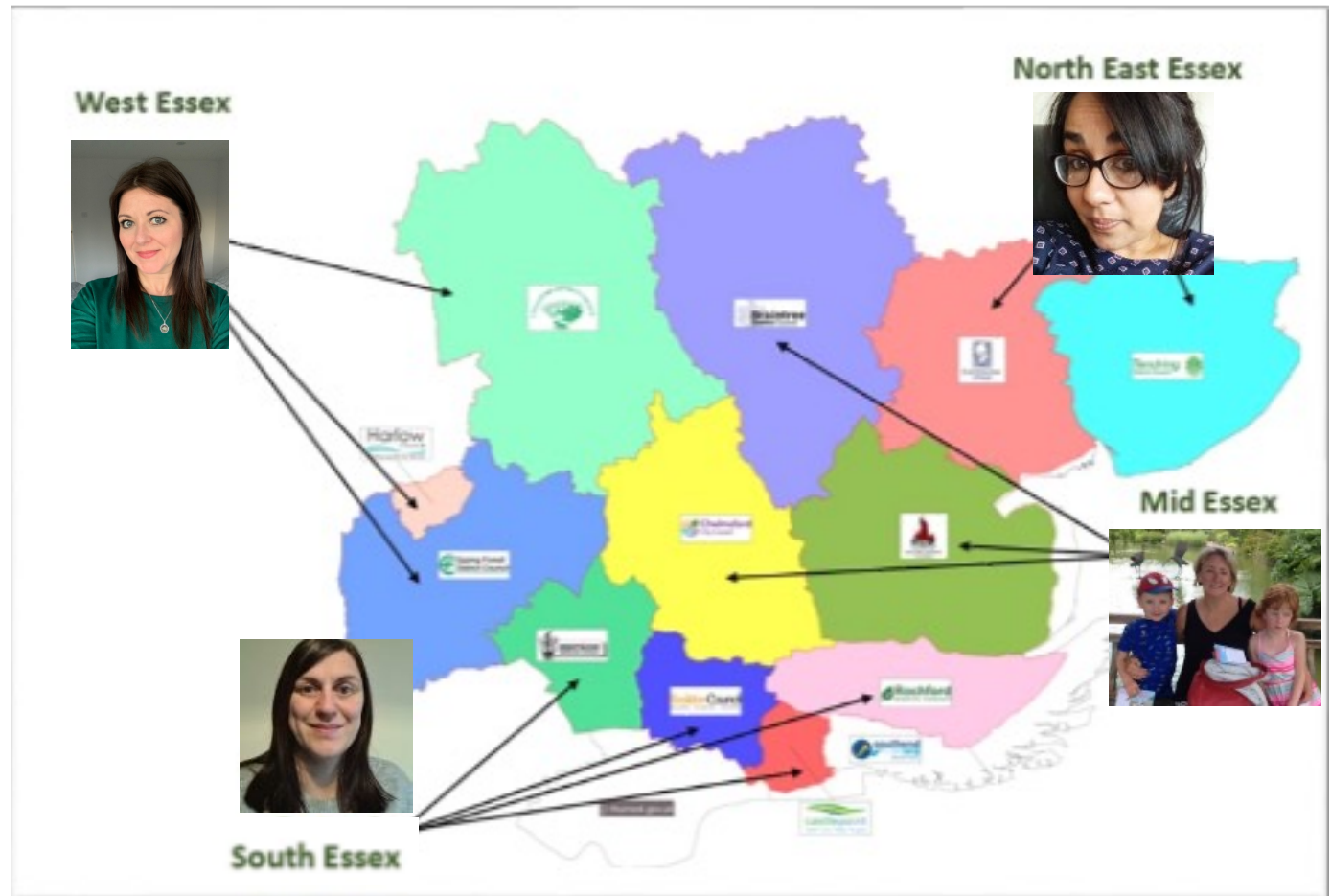
- Colchester
- Tendring

## South Essex – Kiri:

- Brentwood
- Basildon
- Castlepoint
- Rochford

## Mid Essex – Claire:

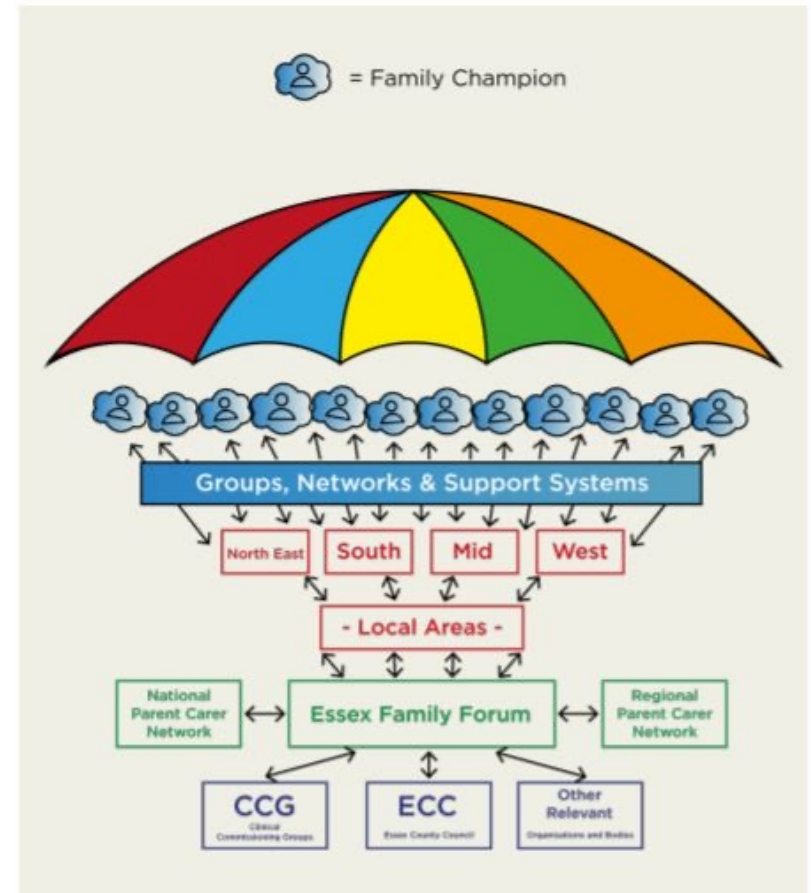
- Chelmsford
- Braintree
- Maldon



# How YOU make a difference



- ❖ Your individual voices can gain insight into the lives of so many families across Essex. Insight that we just could not gather by ourselves.
- ❖ Through your groups and support systems you can feed those experiences up to the Essex Family Forum through your Family Champion Quadrant Lead or directly via the graffiti wall.
- ❖ We then use those experiences when talking to services about issues and changes and we also use them regionally and nationally!



# What we ask of you



**Key Objective** - Increase reach\* of SEND families by:

- ❖ Keep your FC Lead up to date with the parent groups you are involved in
- ❖ Support your FC lead to identify where there are new groups you hear about or, if you can, identify possible new Family Champions
- ❖ Let your FC Lead know if you will need to be inactive for a period

\*Reach – The geographical areas, ages of children and young people, and types of SEND that we represent through our Family champions and support groups.



# What we ask of you (continued)



**Key objective** Identification and escalation of Issues/Good Working Practice by:

- ❖ Feed back to your FC Lead where you hear issues from your parent group or in relation to a specific topic as requested
- ❖ Take part in monthly Family Champion online meetings (to be confirmed by FC Leads)
- ❖ There will be opportunities to take part in specific projects, e.g. this could Local Offer, One Planning, SEN Transport etc.



# What we can offer you



- Regular Meetings with your FC Lead.
- Opportunities to engage in projects of interest.
- A pack of resources to use when talking to families.
- Early notification on events/webinars you may like to attend.
- A regular update of EFF news and other news/training/events from around the county.



# Virtual Graffiti Wall



## **What do we want to know? EVERYTHING – The good, bad and ugly**

- ❖ Therapy provision
- ❖ Diagnosis – waiting times, pre and post-diagnosis support
- ❖ Pre-School and School Support
- ❖ Social Care
- ❖ Education, Health & Care Plan process
- ❖ Clubs and Activities
- ❖ Transitions inc. Preparing for Adulthood, Home Education, SEND Transport, Mental Health and Wellbeing services, Shortbreaks

It is anonymous, and views/feedback etc are only ever shared on the Graffiti with the consent of the parent/carer – Remember to always ask for consent



# Consent & Data Protection



It is always important that when you are passing on information from groups and other parents that you have consent to do so. It does not have to be written consent, just ensure that they understand the following;

- ❖ By providing consent, they are agreeing that personal information will be collected **anonymously**, stored securely and will not identify anyone personally.
- ❖ The **anonymised** data will be used and shared with relevant organisations for the purpose of improving SEND provision within Essex and England but will not identify anyone personally.

**Data Protection Policy (see attached)** - The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Essex Family Forum complies with legislative requirements as to how it “collects, stores and processes” data about individuals. It also explains how committee members, employees, representatives and volunteers are expected to comply in terms of sharing and storing personal information.

# Graffiti Wall



This is where you can find the Graffiti Wall on our website.

https://essexfamilyforum.org/parent-surveys-and-feedback/virtual-graffiti-wall/

Essex Family Forum

HOME ABOUT **PARENT EVENTS, SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK** FAMILY CHAMPIONS GET INVOLVED CONTACT USEFUL INFORMATION

**Graffiti Wall**

As a SEND parent/carer do you sometimes feel you're hitting your head against a brick wall?

We want to hear about the experiences of our SEND Families in Essex.

What do we want to know?

**EVERYTHING!!**

From NHS waiting times to support in schools, accessing clubs/activities to obtaining equipment to support your child.

Tell us what life is like for you – what works, what doesn't, how can it be improved.

**Share your experiences on our Graffiti Wall by clicking on the image.**

Leave my comment

# Resources for families



EFF is proud to have worked with parents from Send the Right Message Southend, Takiwatanga Support Services and professionals from across Health, Education, and Social Care to produce a pack of useful information for families with a neurodiverse child. This pack includes information about the diagnosis process, how to get support for your child at school, health and wellbeing and much more.

The team have shared their own experiences and hints and tips, along with those of parents, carers and young people from across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. There are also signposts to useful books, blogs and online resources which are all tried and tested resources that the team have used and found helpful.



# Levels of involvement



We would love to have all our family champions involved fully in all aspects the role has to offer, but we understand with family and work commitments sometimes that is not possible. However much you can be involved it is all appreciated and makes a difference, and the best part you can adapt the level of involvement around your needs at the time!

- ❖ **Level 1** – Share requests for feedback on specific subjects with your groups and families, encourage the completion of GW for any parent expressing a view or experience.
- ❖ **Level 2** – All of the above plus attending support groups/coffee mornings to help promote EFF and obtain feedback from attendees
- ❖ **Level 3** – All of Levels 1 & 2 plus attending/participating in steering groups/workstreams/working groups/meetings on specific subjects to represent a group of parents\*

\*A feedback form is attached to help you record meeting content. Your FC Lead can always answer questions and support you.

# Representing Essex Family Forum



When you are acting in your role as a Family Champion for Essex Family Forum we ask that you:

- ❖ represent Essex Family Forum courteously at all times
- ❖ keep in mind that you are representing **all** Essex families of children & young people with disabilities and special educational needs, whilst drawing on your own experiences.
- ❖ not use this position as a vehicle to fight a personal battle for your own family
- ❖ treat the information gained from Essex Family Forum matters as confidential.

# Confidentiality & Safeguarding



- ❖ **Confidentiality** - Sometimes you will receive confidential information from Essex Family Forum and also from the families that you speak to about their circumstances and experiences.

It is important that we keep this information confidential when directed to, getting consent to use experiences and following data protection guidance outlined previously. However there may be some circumstances where safeguarding concerns may arise and maintaining confidentiality will not be possible. It is important that you familiarise yourself with our Safeguarding policy.

- ❖ **Safeguarding** - This policy is for ensuring the welfare, protection and safeguarding of any child or young person with SEND, aged 0 – 25, that becomes known to Essex Family Forum. It provides information on what EFF are doing to ensure safeguarding and clear guidance on roles and responsibilities if you have concerns or receive a disclosure from a child, young person, parent or carer.

# What can you do now?



Read the attached documents along with this pack;

- ❖ Safeguarding
- ❖ Data protection
- ❖ Expenses and remuneration.
- ❖ Feedback Form (used when attending meetings on EFF's behalf)
- ❖ Voluntary agreement.

Please complete and return the form emailed to you from your Quadrant Lead to confirm you have read and understood the above and answer a few general questions about yourself.

- ❖ Familiarise yourself with our Website and Facebook pages.
- ❖ Start gathering information from your group/s – what are the main common issues, where do things work well and get them on the graffiti wall!



Do you have any  
questions?



**Please don't hesitate to ask your FC Lead.  
Thank you for joining us!**

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**Website** - [www.essexfamilyforum.org](http://www.essexfamilyforum.org)

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