



Norfolk SEND Youth Forum

Wednesday 30th April 2025 - 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Bridget Robinson (Norfolk SENDIASS)

Dawn Jones (Inclusion & SEND, NCC)

Katrina

Isaac

Charlotte

Callum

Lily

Steven

Reece

Apologies: - Belinda Coxall (Norfolk SENDIASS), Gabriel, Charlie

Guests:

Rebecka Wakefield, Participation Officer (NCC)

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Feedback from cooking workshop, 29th March 2025

- Members said they had enjoyed the cooking workshop.

- Members who went to school in specialist provision commented on the size and layout of a mainstream school, and recognised the differences, for example the size.
- Members liked the choice of menus, and opportunity to make food around their personal tastes.
- Members enjoyed eating what they had made.

3. Practice Week Takeover

Bridget provided the group with an update about the next Childrens Services Practice week - Practice Week takes place in May, beginning on May 19 and this year is led by young people. The week will be dedicated to amplifying the voices of children and young people across Norfolk.

Bridget invited members ideas and suggestions for a question to ask attendees as part of gaining feedback.

Members suggested the following:

- **What is 1 thing that you can take away from practice week or that stuck with you?**
- **Or what is 1 small thing you can do that could support a young person with SEND?**
- **What attributes do you have, to help someone with SEND?**

ACTION: Bridget has sent these suggestions over to the organisers of Practice week.

4. Professional consultation – Rebekah Wakefield, NCC Participation Officer (on behalf of Paul Webb).

Rebecca explained that Norfolk County Council are working on a plan of how we can get more young people with SEND going to activities and events. This might be with their family, friends or independent, however we know there are a lot of barriers and challenges young people face to do this.

Question 1: What challenges and barriers do you or did you face in attending activities and events?

Feedback from group

- location and timing - what I mean by that is sometimes the whereabouts of the activities is difficult to get to and sometimes the time that it starts and ends is hard to deal with
- Not sure if this applies to me but it's just so hard for me to ever access anything because I am housebound. But it's something I'm trying to work on – group feel this DOES apply and need more groups/opportunities online.
- Too big a group
- Public transport – this is busy and overwhelming – when I am not in a controlled environment its really difficult.
- Some places are not well organised
- I often feel people with SEND are treated as an inconvenience
- Due to my epilepsy, I cannot go to groups on my own.
- age limits – members explained that often groups have age restrictions, but these are often extended for young people up to age 25 years with SEND. However, members agreed that as an adult don't want to be in a group for children who are much younger.
- I'm super nervous with public transport as well especially on my own!
- also, times and days and places. We don't have lots round our area
- Or you contact groups, and they don't come back to you
- 16 – 18 age group is not a big enough cohort. It is not a big enough inconvenience to provide groups for this age group.
- also being 16-18 is hard to find stuff because it's sort of an awkward age gap and you're with people too young or too old/Do I really want to hang out with 4 year olds? /It might be seen to be slightly creepy!
- I went to see Little Mix at Norwich Park, but I was not expecting fireworks at the end of the concert. My headphones came in handy, but they should have told us beforehand.
- Officials (staff in venues) are not talkative or helpful.

Question 2: What kind of things work or might work for you to be confident to attend activities and events?

- if I had friends that like the same thing as me
- Preparation...know what you are going into.

- Look at more training for public transport staff.
- YP should train older people – I want to be treated like another person of my age. YP need age-appropriate stuff.
- Remember we are human...people forget we are individuals.
- We need specific places we can go which are calmer/quieter, designed for us.
- I feel more comfortable being around others who know me and how my brain works.
- Knowing more about the groups and not going in blind and what sort of other people are attending.
- Preparation – know what you are going into.
- If I understand the place more and can meet the people. I am more able to experience it without being worried and scared. I would rather go there before to see if it's good for me
- Knowing what other people are attending
- Something which helped me – someone there you can trust - like a “trust” person – so if I feel alone, there is someone I can go to if I am scared, or if you don't know anyone.
- We don't know who these people are as it is not communicated, and communication needs to be simpler/better.
- In Italy at an airport there was a assistance desk which was really clear for passengers (good model).
- In large concerts (e.g. Wembley) they provide accessibility areas for wheelchair users...why can't they provide something similar for all people with SEND...beyond physical disabilities?
- Could there be electronic tags which can be scanned which hold key information about you, to avoid carrying confidential medical information?
- Improve pre visit resources...stick some accessibility information on your website.

Question 3 What tips would you give other young people with SEND?

- bring some noise cancelling headphones with you, and maybe bring an instant ice pack in case you get hot and overwhelmed

- I've got an access card too! (I am tired of telling people /every venue how to support me)
- Contact venue – ask them what they can do to support you.
- I always take headphones, ear defenders and something else to do it if it's not for me, wordsearch, colouring etc
- Most venues will have ear plugs available.
- Visit place before the event and meet people working there.

Rebekah has invited members of the group to a SEND Participation event:

On May 30th NCC will be holding an event with young people with SEND to produce some resources around what we have discussed today. These might videos, artwork, poetry or voice recordings/mini podcasts.

- We would like to invite any of you who may be interested to come.
- It will be held at County Hall from 10-4pm on Friday 30th May.
- There will be 10-12 other young people there from other groups like the DRAGONS and YABs.
- We can cover transport costs, lunch on the day and £25 voucher to say thanks for your help.
- There will be lots of helpful and trained staff on the day to support you.

Dawn observed that based on feedback from the group, members require more information to feel confident to attend. Bridget to liaise with the NCC Participation team, please find more detailed information about the day in a separate attachment.

ACTION: Bridget has met with the Participation team and there is now a detailed plan of the day and an opportunity to meet both the workers and other young people who will be attending online on Wednesday 21st May 6 -7pm via Microsoft Teams.

Please contact Bridget if you are interested in attending this event. - **bridget.robinson@norfolk.gov.uk**