



## **Norfolk SEND Youth Forum**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025 - 6:30pm – 7:30pm**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Attendees:**

Bridget Robinson (Norfolk SENDIASS)  
Dawn Jones (Inclusion & SEND, NCC)  
Belinda Coxall (Norfolk SENDIASS)  
Katrina  
Isaac  
Charlotte  
Callum  
Lily  
Alec  
Charlie

**Apologies:** - Gabriel and Reece

#### **Guests:**

Laura Mace, Participation Officer (SEND, NCC)  
Rebecca O'Connell – Hertfordshire University  
Andy Feltham – Hertfordshire University  
Lauren Denyer – Hertfordshire University

### **Welcome and introductions**

Laura Mace, Participation Officer SEND, NCC attended the meeting to meet the Youth Forum and introduced herself to the group.

### **Professional Consultation – Return Visit to update the Youth Forum**

Rebecca O'Connell, Andy Feltham and Lauren Denyer visited the group last year to talk about food in special schools and the Adapt-Ed Project. They have returned to update the group about what has been happening since their visit and where the project is now.

At this meeting they would like to ask the group: -

1. What sort of foods should schools provide?
2. How should schools support pupils to eat well?
3. What will we notice or see if pupils eat well?
4. Their opinion on which logos they like for the project

### **Question 1 – What Sort of Foods Should Schools Provide?**

- Plain food with option to customise food with sauces i.e. plain pasta with choice of cheese or tomato sauce separate to add if required.
- Plain food with sauces like ketchup and mayonnaise available if required.
- Snacks or drinks if needed during lesson times and an option of healthy fruit and vegetables but also options of safe foods.
- Schools should provide healthy food like vegetables, but they should also have some popular snacks such as crisps and pizza
- Something plain and that feels easy and comfortable to eat. I know everyone has different safe foods, but I personally like plain crisps, plain bread etc especially when I'm anxious. Things with too strong of a flavour or smell make me more anxious
- Have a tasting day - have an option to try the food to decide what the menu would look like
- Some people struggle using cutlery and like to touch food before they eat it, so foods that they can pick up with their fingers
- Having control and personal choice and make sure everyone's needs are met
- Food that people are used to eating at home

### **Question 2 – How Should Schools Support Pupils To Eat Well**

- It is not just the food – it is also the environment, spaces and surroundings.
- Don't force children to eat as they will be put off by that food or by the teacher. It doesn't help and makes things worse. Use friendly encouragement but not be too pushy.
- Have separate queues or introduce waiting times so queues not so long.
- Long queues – feel overwhelmed in queues and do not like the noise.

- Feel rushed to choose food after standing in queue and waiting for so long.
- Sometimes having 1:1 support and gentle encouragement to take another bite or to try a new food but also recognising when we need space to eat alone, people watching me eat makes me anxious. But don't force us to eat if we can't, we will eat when we feel comfortable.
- Understand not everyone likes all food.
- Some reasons pupils won't eat well is if the food hall is too busy and they don't feel like waiting that long, or they don't like it being too busy and being watched while eating. Noise can also be a problem too. Solutions could be to make it easier for students to get food and eat it in a comfortable situation.
- It's the way they try to get you to eat the food that makes the difference.
- It can differ on the days too, just because we can eat lots and try new things on one day doesn't mean we can the next, and vice versa. Often there are lots of external factors that contribute to not being able to eat so helping to understand and fix them will help.
- Sit with your friends.
- My personal experience has been that it's always been too loud and busy in the hall, but I wasn't allowed to eat somewhere quiet. I would come home every day, and my mum would worry because none of my food had been eaten. Unfortunately, it never got better, and I became very physically unwell but no one at school picked up on it until it was too late. I'm so glad things are changing now. I wish I had this support when I was at school but I'm happy things are changing now!
- Have meal plans so we know what foods to expect each day. The unknown is scary sometimes.

### **Question 3 – What Will We Notice Or See If Pupils Eat Well At School?**

- We would be more energetic, more involved in lessons, able to concentrate more. When I wouldn't eat, I would have terrible headaches, feel very weak and dizzy and so tired. Bodies need fuel to function so when we eat well and feel fulfilled, we have more strength to deal with things.
- Happier, more focused, happy to do more work.
- Change in attitude – get angry and upset if hungry.

- More excited to go to school and not dread going into the canteen or being hungry.

### **Adapt-Ed Logo Design**

The group looked at 29 images for the Adapt-Ed logo design which were numbered from 1 to 29. The members of the group gave the numbers of their favourites and suggested combining colours from some of the logos with other ones.

Rebecca, Lauren and Andy thanked everyone for all their comments and ideas. The Youth Forum agreed Rebecca, Lauren and Andy could return in the future if they wanted to ask more questions.

### **Professional Request to Consult with the Group – Knowing your Rights – Health information for young people – Norfolk Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy (NASAPS) Action Plan**

The group agreed to this professional request and Bridget will book it in for the May meeting.

### **Cooking Workshop – Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Bridget asked everyone to let Belinda have their vote for the menu choice if they had not done so and Option 1 so far had received the most votes. An email will be sent out with the preferred option and details for the trip by the end of this week/beginning of next week.

### **Family Voice Conference, St John Innes Centre – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2025**

Bridget will be at the Family Voice Conference on the Youth Forum stand. Bridget said if any members wanted to help, they could and if their parents were attending encourage them to visit the stand.

### **Discussion for Members – Future Projects/Campaigns and Opportunities**

Bridget asked the group if they had any projects which they were passionate about which were related to their experiences that they would be interested in looking at.

Lily has recently applied for PIP and had a bad personal experience and Bridget is helping Lily with this.

Bridget asked the group to let her know if there were any projects the group would like to take on, and Bridget will support and work together with them to raise awareness.

**Any Other Business**

Next meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

**Thank you for all your contributions!**