



*Shropshire Self Evaluation Framework: A Parent Carer
Perspective, the Other Half of the Story*

May 2024

Introduction

Self-evaluation is recognised as an important part of any improvement journey and is well established in the SEND system as part of the inspection process. Shropshire Local Area has recently reviewed its SEND Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) to support the current delivery of the SEND and Alternative Provision Change Programme. This self-evaluation is area based and reflects on the effectiveness of the whole SEND system, covering the work of education, health and social care sectors. It is important that any system understands its strengths and weaknesses so it can use resources effectively and deliver the best possible outcomes for everyone impacted.

It is also important that self-evaluation is clearly informed by the voice of the community served by the system being evaluated and reflects their day to day experiences. PACC has produced this document to provide a Parent Carers perspective of the effectiveness of the SEND system in Shropshire. It is informed by a survey PACC ran in 2023 asking Parent Carers to rate the areas identified as key in the SEND Inspection Framework, alongside ongoing conversations with Shropshire Parent Carers about their experience of the Shropshire SEND System. The results of this survey were shared at the workshops hosted by Shropshire Council to inform the development of the Shropshire SEND SEF but we feel is not sufficiently reflected in the current draft SEF. This document also reflects PACC's experience of being a strategic partnership in the Shropshire SEND system and how the Parent Carer's voice is received and decision making informed through co-production.

Co-production

Co-production is recognised as being central to effective delivery in the SEND system and is required through SEND legislation and statutory guidance. In Shropshire, PACC Shropshire, the Department For Education funded Parent Carer Forum, has actively promoted the need co-production to be fully embedded across all levels of the system.

While some progress has been made in this area, particularly with the development and recognition of the PACC Co-production Bench Model and work starting on the Shropshire Council Co-production Framework, recently PACC has seen a reduction in the opportunities to co-design processes and decisions, reducing the influence of Parent Carer voice in Shropshire. There is also a worrying move away from a shared understanding that Co-production is about the relationship between individuals who receive services and the system, and not the relationship between different parts of the system. Different parts of the system working in partnership and collaborating is important, but this is not Co-production.

Disability Rights UK have recently strengthened their commitment to embedding Co-production in the way that they work and have highlighted that Co-production is about a shift in power between the system and individuals.

"The term 'co-production' describes working in partnership by rebalancing the power between professionals and Disabled people, especially those of us who draw on care and support or are carers.

At its centre is an organisational shift in power dynamics to create a more equal relationship between the people who use services and those who provide them. It involves people with different forms of lived experience and knowledge, alongside people with professional knowledge and understanding, all working together. What is essential is genuinely embracing this way of working and the values that underpin it."

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/co-production-glance>

This local lack of shared understanding has resulted in some local activity being wrongly described as co-production, when it is in fact joint working or collaboration and missed opportunities for the voice and experience of Shropshire SEND families to inform local decision making and system development.

Each year in PACC's monitoring return to the Department For Education PACC is asked to describe its relationship, in terms of Co-production, with different parts of the local SEND system. In PACC's 2022/23 monitoring we provided the following description;

- Relationship with Education – Coproduction
- Relationship with Social care – Consultation
- Relationship with Health – Participation

In PACC's 2023/24 monitoring the following report was made;

- Relationship with Education – Participation
- Relationship with Social care – Participation
- Relationship with Health – Participation / Consultation

This reflect PACC's experience of a reduction in the quality of the relationship between PACC and the local SEND System in terms of co-production and a lack of progress in the work to embed co-production throughout the system following on from the Co-production workshop held in January 2023.

PACC does recognise that it has a well-established presence in strategic meetings in Shropshire and to a certain extent that presence has recently increased, with parent carer representation now in Early Help and Commissioning strategic meetings. This enables engagement and participation, but without the next step of co-design, it does not deliver co-production, since there is a lack of joint decision making. This lack of co-production is particularly noticeable in some area of strategic planning, such as the development of the Shropshire EHCP process, including reviewing Annual Review paperwork, where we feel that the Parent Carer voice and experience has not been fully considered or acknowledged and the Shropshire SEF. We have also experienced a noticeable reduction in strategic co-production opportunities in the local health system and have particular concerns about the lack of opportunities for the voice of the SEND community being heard in the design and delivery of core mental health services.

Increasing stresses in the system appear to be limiting opportunities for Co-production at a time when it has never been more important to effectively work in partnership with SEND families, to ensure that resources are maximised and the best outcomes for all achieved. Co-production appears to be increasingly seen as a luxury that the system cannot afford rather than a fundamental part of delivering successful services.

PACC acknowledges that some positive activity is taking place in parts of the Shropshire SEND system and appreciates that a significant amount of work is being done. Examples of this are reflected in the most recent PACC Annual Report.

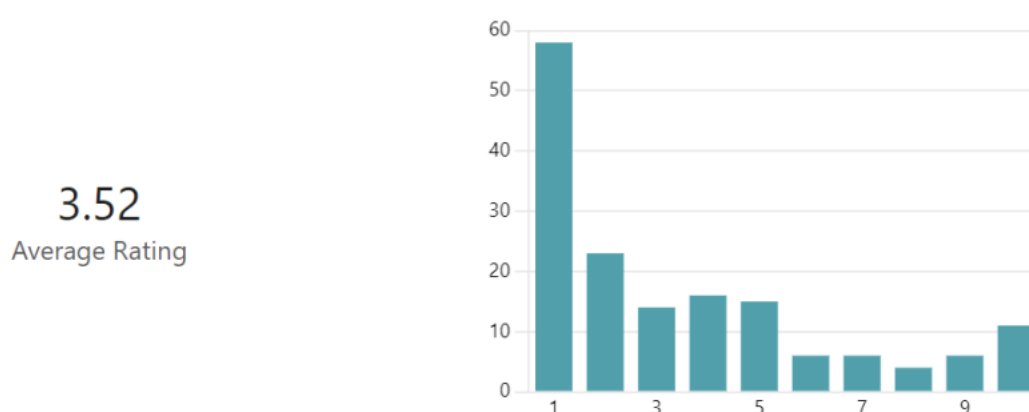
<http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/pacc-s-annual-report-published>

PACC Survey to Measure the Effectiveness of the Shropshire SEND System

Parent Carers were sent the following statements and asked to rate these from 1 (do not agree at all) to 10 (fully agree). These statements are central to the SEND inspection process.

A total of **163** Parent Carers completed this survey. Feedback has been reviewed for each area and a summary of the key points and main areas for each statement area have been provided, alongside additional observations from PACC based on its ongoing conversation with the Shropshire SEND Community.

Children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way.



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Delays in assessment cause delays in the appropriate support being provided
- The amount of information required for assessment causes huge delays
- Parent Carers do not feel listened to when they raise concerns and ask for assessment
- Delays in assessments are causing breakdowns in education provision
- Waiting times for assessments are too long
- Families are reaching crisis whilst waiting for assessment- support is not in place during this process
- Parent Carers have reported that they feel they are “blamed” by professionals and their view of CYP needs are ignored
- Parent Carers are having to pay for private assessment due to wait times and referrals not being put in
- Early diagnosis is vital to ensure CYP have the correct support and are in an appropriate education provision
- Poor communication between BeeU and Parent Carers
- Parent Carers are not clear of the referral process and waiting times

PACC's Comments

This is one of the lowest ratings and feedback highlights the negative impact that the current long wait for assessments in many services, has on early identification.

Families are continuing to be significantly impacted by the excessive waiting list for Neurodevelopmental (ND) assessments, SALT support and delays in the EHCP assessment and review process, all of which result in delays in needs being accurately identified.

Work on both the ND and SALT pathways has been progressed and the recent introduction of the ND Practitioner role in some schools is welcomed. Information provision about both pathways has been improved, and two short term roles have been funded by Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust and the Integrated Care Board to support the 'waiting well' approach and provide support if families go into crisis while awaiting assessment. Very recently there has been a commitment by the ICB and MPFT to increase funding for ND assessments to reduce waiting times.

These positive steps have however in the main only been very recently achieved and PACC is being contacted by increasing numbers of families here the lack of responsiveness in the Shropshire system has resulted in their child no longer being able to attend school because of escalating anxiety and distress.

The response of schools to young people who are struggling in the school environment is very mixed in Shropshire, with some schools taking a very person-centred approach and working positively with families to respond to needs, while others appear to lack the awareness of even basic approaches to supporting neurodivergent pupils. Shropshire Council have implemented a series of Inclusion training days for schools, but it is not clear what impact these are making. The Marches Academy Trust is trialling a new approach to providing a much more person-centred approach to Alternative Provision, but this is in its early stages of development. PACC are increasingly being contacted by families where school placements are breaking down or have failed because reasonable adjustments are not being offered as a matter of course throughout Shropshire schools. In the worse cases there are examples of disability discrimination being reported.

PACC has a particular concern that the 'SEND Mental Health and Wellbeing' workstream has only very recently been established as part of the APP and that links with the Inclusion Team and their work via the SEND Partnership Board is not clear. There is no clarity about how young people who are not in school, and their families are being supported to return to education or how the Inclusion Team is responding to the needs of young people with SEND.

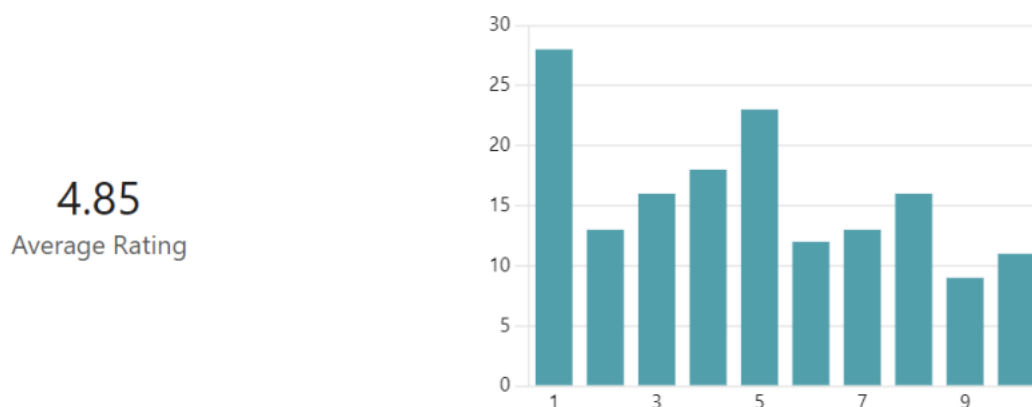
There continues to be no clear route for the SEND community to influence core mental health services, even though evidence shows that young people with SEND are more vulnerable to poor mental health than other young people and there is no clear support pathway to offer mental health support to young people with SEND while awaiting assessment. There is ongoing confusion about how mental health support is provided for the ND community.

One of the concerns most frequent raised with PACC is the lack of responsiveness of the SEN Team to families who are either going through the EHC needs assessment process or annual review process. Families report that they feel they are in limbo with schools not providing support until EHCP's are in place and a significant level of unanswered queries and confused communication from SEN case officers. Requested amendments to EHCP's following annual review are often not actioned or significantly delayed, meaning that in too many cases there is no accurate record of a young person's current needs, abilities and wishes. This has a particularly negative impact on the PFA cohort (see

comments in Area 2). We have heard recently from a number of families that they are being told by Derwen College that they need to pay for an Ed Psych report because the information in EHCP's is so out of date. This lack of communication and timely delivery is contributing to an increasing number of complaints and tribunal cases.

A significant number of families have been identified through PACC's PFA Navigators has not having been assessed by Adult Social Care (through the PFA Team) in a timely way. This includes young people for whom it is clear that there will be a continuing need for Social Care support in adulthood and where support from children's Social Care has been in place. This has caused considerable distress and concern for families and resulted in a lack of timely transition support.

Children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support.



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Parent Carers report feeling 'blamed' and that their views are not taken seriously when they talk about their concerns
- Parent Carers feel their views are sometimes dismissed by professionals
- Parent Carers have told us that updates and information about consultations have been sent to schools and not them
- When requesting support from social care services parent carers have experienced being told that this isn't possible because there is no funding available, and assessments are not carried out.
- Some parent carers feel that there is a focus on labels and assessments and not a person-centred approach to providing the correct support
- Parent Carers report feeling that too often children and young people are not given the most appropriate support, which reflects parent carers input, but are given the cheapest support option.

- Parent Carers feel they are not well informed of available support to support their decision making

PACC Comments

This is the area that received the highest rating, however there were concerns that Parent Carers didn't always feel listened to and because of this the right support has not been provided and children and young people have gone into crisis.

To fully participate in decision making families need access to quality information about what options are available to them. One of the biggest issues that families still report to PACC is a lack of clear information about SEND pathways and what support is available from which service. Work has been done to address this in some parts of the system, but this is not embedded in all areas. Positive work has been done on areas of the Local Offer, but this is not consistent. Information about Preparation for Adult and social care (children's and adult) pathways are still very unclear to families. PACC has invested a lot of time in commenting on and drafting text for the Local Offer which meets the needs of Parent Carers and has been disappointed that there have been significant delays in making this available or in some cases it has not been used at all. The creation of the Shropshire SEND Newsletter has been a positive step.

Issues relating to delays in communication with services is frequently raised with PACC by Parent Carers, which we believe creates the feeling that Parent Carer views are not valued or believed. This is particularly the case with Annual Reviews, where families are frequently waiting months and in some cases years for amendments to be made to EHCP's. This strengthens the sense that Parent Carers and young people's views not being valued within the local system. This concern was particularly evident in the feedback collected as part of PACC's MAD, SAD, GLAD 2024 survey at the PACC Conference on 13th May.

PACC is aware that complaints from SEND families are increasing, along with cases going to Tribunal. What concerns us most however is that families are regularly reporting to us that they often feel that these are the only options to them after numerous failed efforts to contact managers and senior leaders about their concerns.

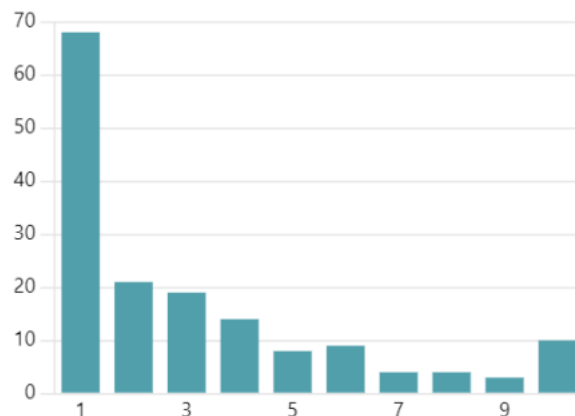
Families report needing more support to get their views heard, many tell us that they have approached IASS for support but due to capacity the Shropshire IASS service is no longer able to attend meetings with parent carers, often meaning that issues escalate. The Shropshire IASS service is currently being recommissioned and in this context, it is concerning that the funding is not being increased for this statutory service to meet local demand.

In an effort to improve communication a regular feedback meeting between PACC, IASS and the LA has been implemented, where IASS and PACC can raise specific issues, however senior service managers are not attending this regularly and we are frequently failing to secure responses to the issues raised.

PACC see evidence of a person-centred approach in some parts of the system, but it isn't embedded system wide. Our PFA Navigators particularly see a lack of working in partnership with families to support transition, with a lack of future planning outside of a focus on what happens in school/college. PACC recently shared a number of case studies illustrating this issue within PFA EHCPs, including situations where families had shared information about a young person's needs but this had not informed transition leading to poor experiences.

Children and young people receive the right help and support at the right time.

3.15
Average Rating



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Delays in providing the right support are leading to breakdown of education placements
- Delays in providing the right support are causing families to be in crisis
- Waiting times are too long in too many services and families feel they are left in limbo
- There is a general lack of support post diagnosis
- Parent Carers are increasingly paying to go private for assessments and interventions such as Speech therapy, some families are going into debt to do this.
- EHCP's are not adhering to legal timescales and are consistently issued late again delaying the right support being put in place.
- EHCP's are not being updated in a timely ay following review- multiple Parent Carers have been waiting over 8 months for updated plans – this impacts the quality of support particularly during transition points
- EHCP's are reported as not being seen as useful tools to inform how support is delivered and there are reports of agreed provision not being adhered to in some education placements
- Parent Carers report that services do not communicate with each other sufficiently. Parent Carers feel they have to constantly repeat themselves.

PACC Comments

This was the area that received the lowest rating, with concerns about EHCP's not being updated, families not receiving support until they are in crisis and a lack of co-ordination between services.

PACC is increasingly being contacted by families where a young person has not been accessing education for a significant period of time due to a lack of suitable provision. There is insufficient in-county specialist or alternative provision and due to financial pressures, there appears to be an

approach that means out of county placements are being avoided at all costs even when they are the only suitable option. We are seeing situations where families are experiencing multiple rounds of consultations with potential settings, some with settings that Parent Carers do not agree are suitable for their child, delaying the provision of support.

PACC is particularly concerned that Severndale Academy have indicated that they will be no longer offering a specialist nursery provision in the near future because of demand for places in the statutory education years. This will mean that there will be no specialist nursery provision in Shropshire which is experienced in meeting the needs of those young children with complex disabilities, who often need associated medical care. We feel that this will be a significant loss and will reduce the opportunities to access crucial early support for some of the most vulnerable families in Shropshire.

PACC has concerns that many Alternative Provision (AP) providers are not sufficiently linked to rest of the SEND system and are working in isolation. There is a general lack of oversight and quality and assurance of these providers with PACC seeing examples of AP providers not been familiar with their role in delivering outcomes agreed within EHCP's and their responsibility to participate in the annual review process in terms of planning for the future. PACC is aware that as part of the SEND & AP Change programme an AP Strategy has been developed to increase provision however PACC has not seen or contributed to this.

Positive work is being done by the Marches Academy Trust to develop a person-centred alternative offer for young people with SEND. PACC supports this approach and would like to see this way of working extended to other Trusts.

Families of autistic children and young people who are showing signs of distressed behaviour report being unable to access help in a timely way. There is no equivalent service to the Bee U Learning Disabilities Team for those with a diagnosis of autism only. It should be noted that some of these children and young people possibly would be diagnosed as having a learning disability and therefore would be eligible for this service, if Shropshire had a learning disability assessment pathway, which currently it does not.

There is a lack of post diagnostic support for those on the Autism or ADHD assessment pathways. Families currently only receive a diagnosis letter, which includes sign posting to potential sources of support. PACC repeatedly hear from families who have children or young people who are diagnosed as neurodivergent and are struggling with high levels of anxiety but are unable to access support. They are told they are not eligible for core mental health services because of their ND diagnosis and yet there is not specialist ND service to support them. This often results in escalating situations where it becomes impossible for them to participate in education and families go into crisis.

Those who do have a diagnosis of either Autism or a Learning Disability and are facing a potential crisis at home or school, can be referred onto the Dynamic Support Register, however because of the significant assessment waiting times, Shropshire has a number of young people in crisis who are waiting for an expected diagnosis, who can't access this additional level of support. Those who do receive support from the Keyworker Team have benefited from this, but PACC is disappointed that there seems to be little strategic input from the Keyworker Service, and we are not seeing the strategic improvements that this service was meant to deliver.

The Autism in Schools (AIS) project has delivered some pockets of good practice which PACC would like to see embedded more widely in Shropshire. MPFT and AIS have jointly funded a Clinical Psychologist post to improve communication and provide support to those families who are waiting

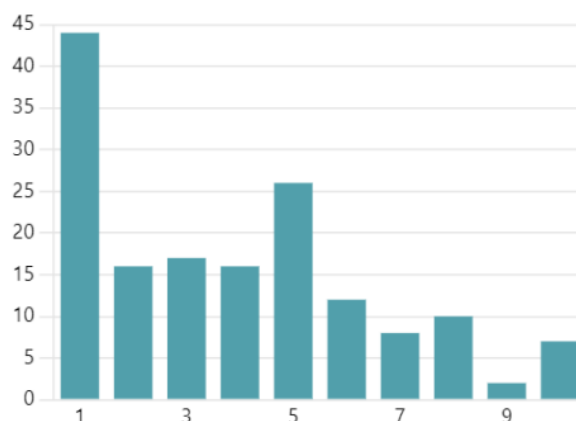
for assessment, promoting a waiting well approach. The second year of delivery of the Autism West Midlands' 'Autism Confident' course in schools, funded through AIS, is delivering good outcomes, reporting that young people have an improved understanding of autism and its impact, and positive relationships developing between peers and with support staff. This course provides the positive foundation experience that is essential for school placements to be successful. Currently there are no plans or consideration by system leaders about how this provision could be embedded in the Shropshire system and the benefits are at risk of being lost.

The Neurodevelopmental Practitioners are now in post and supporting some schools in Shropshire. This is currently a trial to evaluate the impact of these roles, to date PACC have heard positive things about the support offered by ND practitioners and we hope that these roles will be maintained going forward. There is good join up with the Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) programme and the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme.

The specialist Short Break service has been operating at a reduced capacity for well over 12 months and families are consistently not able to access the allocation that meets their assessed need. The Short Breaks offer in Shropshire is currently being recommissioned and while PACC welcomes the fact that the funding level has not been reduced it is of concern that the offer will still not be at a level which is sufficient to meet local demand. The demand for social care assessments from SEND families has significantly increased over recent years and the Disabled Children's Team is struggling with capacity to respond to support requests in a timely way. Without an effective assessed Short Breaks offer there is an increasing risk of families going into crisis. There is also no specific PFA Short Breaks offer, focusing on increasing young people's independence and confidence away from the family home or support. This is particularly important for those young people for whom it is clear that there will be a need for social care support in adulthood, many of whom report that they experience a lack of preparation for the move to adult services.

Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes.

3.91
Average Rating



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Transition relies on a coordinated approach across services which Parent Carers report is not happening

- Parent Carer report that annual reviews from year 9 do not have the focus on PFA that they should and EHCP's are often out of date.
- Parent Carers report finding it difficult to find information to support planning for the future and there is insufficient support and guidance for Parent Carers when during transition to adult services / post 16 education
- When Parent Carers enquire about support for transition into adulthood, they report being told they can not access services because of a lack of funding
- There is little focus on preparing young people for adulthood other than considering the next educational step, health and social care needs are consistently not considered
- Parent Carers report feeling that transitions are not person centred and that young people are fitted into what is available rather than developing plans that reflect their aspirations and interests
- Annual reviews are very education focused with limited input from social care or health services
- There is a lack of provision for young people with complex needs as they move into adulthood
- Families frequently report that the move from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care has been late to start and poorly planned
- Communication throughout the system is frequently identified as poor but it is a particular issue when families are planning for the future and communications become time sensitive. Delays in decision making is creating considerable stress for families.

PACC Comments

There are concerns about an ineffective PFA review process, poor communication with families, service not working well together and delays in transition between children's and adults service resulting in poorer outcomes.

PFA annual reviews are consistently not resulting in updated EHCP's which is directly impacting young people's transition experience and outcomes. PACC recently provided a number of case studies evidencing this issue, with the following themes highlighted;

- Decisions about post 16 placements are made too late which means that there is a lack of quality transition taking place, putting placements at risk. Placement decision need to be made earlier to support effective transition.
- EHCPs are often out of date at year 9 and are not being updated, meaning that post 16 providers are not receiving accurate information about needs and do not have the correct support or adjustments in place at the start of the placement. This is causing distress for both young people and parent carers and is putting placements at risk.
- There is insufficient consideration of PFA outcomes in EHCP's from year 9, with a focus on academic outcomes and not the wider life skills that young people with SEND need to learn. In particular there is a lack of detail about provision and outcomes particularly relating to ensuring a successful transition between school and college.
- Annual Reviews are happening inconsistently and are not considering the wider needs of young people, which is having a negative impact on transition. This means that frequently

the health and social needs of young people are not being appropriately considered, even where these needs are significant.

The ultimate aim of support from the SEND system is to enable young people to have a good life in adulthood, including good health, social inclusion, access to employment or voluntary roles and a home of their own yet families continually highlight issues with future planning and access to information about what is available for their young people in adulthood. The Preparation For Adulthood (PFA) workstream has not delivered progress in this area and there is no clear plan to address these issues.

PACC recently met with CQC Inspectors in preparation for the upcoming Inspection looking at how the Local Authority is meeting its duties under the Part 1 of the Care Act and shared the following points

- Concerns about the current lack of proactivity and person centredness in the Shropshire Adult Social Care system
- There seems to be an increasing expectation that young adults should remain in the family home and a decrease in support offered: This in the long term has a negative impact on the young person independence, with reduced choice and control about how they live their lives. It also is increasing pressure on family carers, who are finding themselves either unable to work or having to give up work and experiencing both poor mental and physical health.
- More Parent Carers/Family Carers are telling PACC how concerned they are for their 'children's' future, especially about the inevitable point where parents are no longer able to provide care or die: There is a lack of forward planning via EHCP Annual Reviews and social care in particular do not seem to be proactively engaging in this process. Reports from parent carers indicate that contact with the PFA Team happening too late and is often prompted by parent carers rather than the system reaching out to families.
- There is a lack of recognition that individuals with disabilities and complex needs who will require lifelong support, on reaching the age of 18 become adults with their own right and are no longer the legal responsibility of parents. This includes a lack of aspiration for young adults once they have left education and little focus on providing support which will help them to continue to grow and develop as individuals. For example, there is no co-ordinated or consistent approach to supporting young adults with disabilities into volunteering or employment once they have left education or a focus on actively reducing health inequalities and providing opportunities to increase activity levels and establishing a healthy lifestyle.

Shropshire is part of Project Search and we have seen an increased focus on Supported Internships, however this is benefiting a small number of young people and for many there is a lack of future planning. Transitions and pathways are not clear, with limited options for young people with complex needs and those who are academically able.

The PACC PFA Navigators have captured the issues highlighted above in their termly reports:

PFA Navigator Yr1 Report 1. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/content/uploads/files/PACC%20PFA%20Year%201%20First%20Report%20Final.pdf>

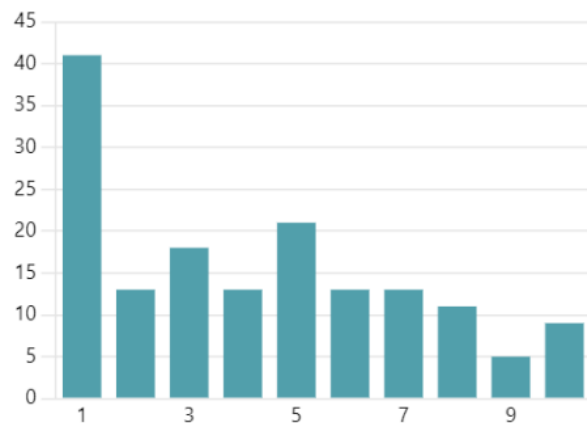
PFA Navigator Yr1 Report 2. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/content/uploads/files/PACC%20PFA%20Year%201%20Second%20Report%20Final.pdf>

PFA Navigator Yr1 Report 3. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/content/uploads/files/Term%203%20Report%20%28002%29.pdf>

PFA Navigator Y2. Report 1. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/content/uploads/files/PFA%20Y2T1%20Report.pdf>

Children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities.

4.27
Average Rating



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Parent Carers report feeling that there is limited support for CYP to be included in their communities and this is left to them
- Opportunities for social inclusion are particularly limited for CYP in rural locations
- Parent Carers report limited opportunities for peers to meet outside of education provision
- There is a particular lack of support for CYP with complex needs (1:1) to access community activities
- Post 16 education does not provide sufficient opportunities to develop social skills and peer relationships
- There is a lack of accessible outdoor activities (i.e limited accessible playground equipment or wheelchair accessible routes)
- SEND holiday provision is insufficient
- Parent Carers report feeling isolated, alone and excluded
- Parent Carers report that they feel the SEND Community have little or no little visibility in the wider community

PACC Comments

Parent Carers felt that this was something that was very much left to them, with little support from the system. Young people have little opportunity to meet outside of school and parent carers report feeling isolated, particular those living in rural areas.

We know that having a good quality of life is key for good physical and mental outcomes, a sense of belonging and being connected to your community is an essential to achieve this. The lives of many young people with SEND in Shropshire revolves around school and home, and many do not have that wider experience of community inclusion, which plays such an important role in the development of their peers without SEND. Some SEND families report feeling very much part of their school community but even this then presents issues when their young person leaves school, and they lose contact with that source of support and find that there is nothing to replace this.

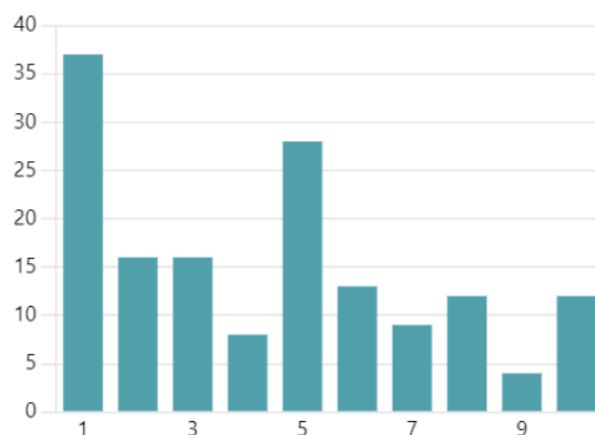
Families report that there are limited opportunities for children and young people with SEND to access community activities: mainstream activities are generally not inclusive, there is insufficient SEND activities for children and young people with complex needs, SEND families face a higher level of financial difficulties than none SEND families which limits opportunities, and even where Social Care support is provided there are real challenges finding Personal Assistants to support young people to attend activities and limited transport options.

The value of offers such as PACC Buddies Social Network and the PACC's Healthy Lives holiday programme is recognised and has been supported with some funding from Shropshire Council and the PFA Navigator Project. The HAF programme has delivered limited opportunities for SEND families in Shropshire and families report that they find it too complicated to access. Opportunities could be increased if there was improved joint working in the system with a focus on creating a comprehensive community based offer and increasing SEND families confidence to access this.

*** Please note that Leader has been interpreted in multiple ways. Parent Carers have interpreted this as either LA leaders/ Head teachers or SENCo/ or have stated they do not know what is meant by leader. ***

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND.

4.40
Average Rating



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Parent Carers report feeling that there are lots of discussions, but little impact is seen
- Parent Carers report poor communication from leaders, and they are not visible to the SEND Community
- Parent Carers do not feel that SEND is a priority for local Leaders
- Leaders at school are more positively reported
- Parent Carers feel leaders do not engage with children and young people with SEND, so how can they have ambition for them?

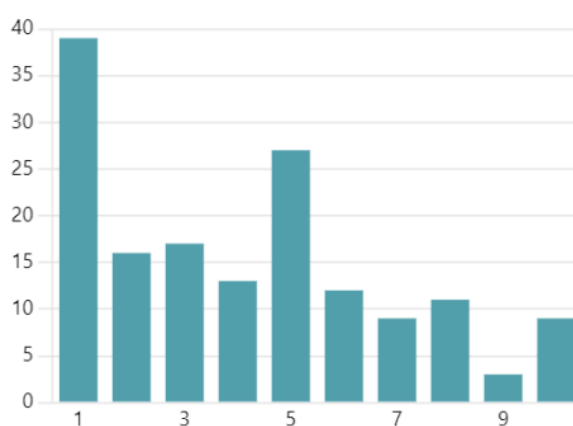
PACC Comment

‘Leaders’ was interpreted in a number of ways with more positive feedback about school leaders being received. System leaders were felt not to be visible and communication from them poor. There was feedback about there being lots of discussion but little action.

The central feedback from Parent Carers was that Leaders do not acknowledge or understand the lives of SEND families and impact of the challenges they face. This in turn is translated into a sense that SEND families are not a priority in local decision making and creates relationships based in conflict, where families feel they constantly have to battle to secure good outcomes for their child.

Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families.

4.16
Average Rating



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Leaders are infrequently seen SEN events and do not actively engage with the Shropshire SEND Community

- Parent Carers report that leaders in general only engage when they are in crisis
- Parent Carers report that in general communication is poor from system leaders, it was noted that there is nothing on Local Offer about leaders and what they do

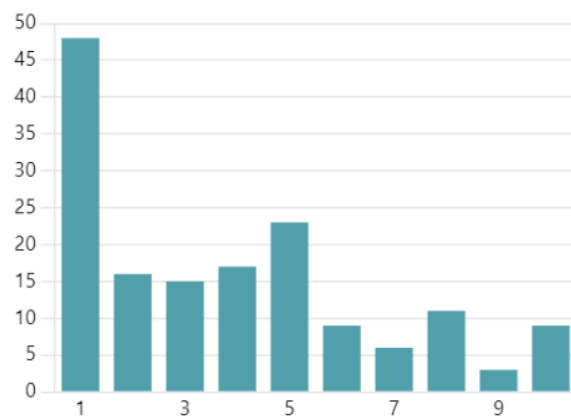
PACC Comment

Similar feedback to the previous statement but with a particular focus on the lack of quality communication.

We are seeing an increase in families feeling that their only option is to make formal complaints about their experiences of SEND services. PACC believes that if there was better engagement from leaders with families, with increased transparency and contact there would be an increased focus on working in partnership and less on conflict. PACC would encourage increased opportunities for Leaders from throughout the system to meet with SEND families.

Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area.

3.88
Average Rating



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Parent Carers report a lack of empathy or understanding of the lives of parent carers within the SEND system
- There is a lack of comprehensive data about the needs of the Shropshire SEND Community and JSNA and public data is not used to actively change and shape services
- Parent Carer report a lack of confidence in system leaders

PACC Comment

Responses highlight that many SEND families do not feel listened to and do not feel that local leaders understand the challenges they face on a daily basis.

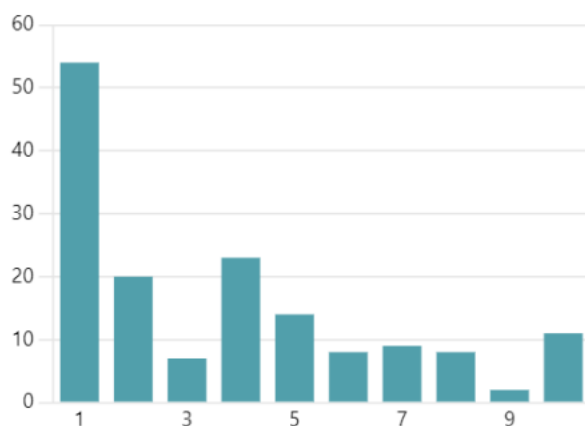
PACC is particularly concerned that there is a lack of quality data about health and social care needs and outcomes in documents such as the Shropshire Joint Strategic Needs Analysis and the Shropshire draft Self Evaluation Framework. Strategic documents continually focus on education provision and outcomes and do not provide sufficient information about health and social care support.

PACC is also concerned that feedback and issues raised are not being responded to in a timely way or dismissed as only being representative of the experience of a few families, despite PACC evidencing that these are consistent themes raised by the SEND Community across many sources.

Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people.

*** Please note Parent Carers have interpreted leaders both as LA staff and as education provision staff**

3.72
Average Rating



Themes in Parent Carer Feedback

- Parent carers report a significant lack of provision for CYP with complex needs (needing 1:1 support)
- Parent Carers report holiday provision is almost non-existent
- Services are limited in rural locations
- Parent Carer report feeling that the only factor considered is the cost of provision and effectively meeting the needs of their children is a secondary consideration
- SEND service are in general reported as underfunded and insufficient in meeting the needs of the Shropshire SEND Community

- Parent Carers report experiencing a lack of support for their own wellbeing

PACC Comment

In this area there was a focus on the lack of capacity in services, in particular the lack of support during school holidays, a lack of Speech and Language therapy input and no psychological support for families. Poor communication was again highlighted as an issue.

There is increasing evidence about the impact of being a Parent Carer and how damaging it can be to individuals mental and physical health due to constant ‘battles’ with services, fears for the future of their child, isolation and a loss of social support networks. Locally there continues to be a lack of support for parent carers wellbeing and in fact parent carers report an increased sense of being blamed for their child’s difficulties.

Conclusion

PACC understands that this will be a difficult report for Shropshire Leaders and practitioners to read, it was difficult for us to write. We felt that PACC was left no alternative other than to present the other half of the story left untold by the draft Shropshire SEF.

What is presented reflects the experience of many Parent Carers in Shropshire. It won’t be the experience of every Parent Carer, but this report shares feedback themes that PACC regularly hear and illustrates what we believe to be consistent issues in the Shropshire SEND system.

PACC understands that some challenges within our local SEND system are due to significant financial issues impacting capacity, however we believe that it remains important that the impact of this is understood and acknowledged. Other issues are not directly funding related, such as poor communication, the lack of understanding and empathy reported by Parent Carers, in relation to their contact with some parts of the system and the continuing lack of join-up and co-ordination within the system.

PACC is committed to ensuring that the voice of Shropshire Parent Carers is heard and that their experiences inform local decision making and strategic planning. We believe that transparency about the day-to-day experiences of SEND families is key to being able to move forward and improving outcomes for all involved. PACC’s ultimate focus is on finding solutions which work for both the system and families by listening to each other and co-producing the next steps.

Appendix 1. - Shropshire Self Evaluation Framework Survey Response Table

SEF Question	Rating out of 10 (1 – strongly disagree, 10 – strongly agree)	Comments
Children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way.	3.52	This is one of the lowest ratings and feedback highlights the negative impact that the current long wait for assessments in many services, has on early identification.
Children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support.	4.85	This is the area that received the highest rating, however there were concerns that parent carers didn’t always feel listened to and because of this the right support has not been provided and children and young people have gone into crisis.
Children and young people receive the right help and support at the right time.	3.15	This was the area that received the lowest rating, with concerns about EHCP’s not being updated, families not receiving support until they are in crisis and a lack of co-ordination between services.
Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes.	3.91	There are concerns about an ineffective PFA review process, poor communication with families, service not working well together and delays in transition between children’s and adults service resulting in poorer outcomes.
Children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities.	4.27	Parent Carers felt that this was something that was very much left to them, with little support from the system. Young people have little opportunity to meet outside of school and Parent Carers report feeling isolated, particular those living in rural areas.
Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND.	4.40	‘Leaders’ was interpreted in a number of ways with more positive feedback about school leaders being received. System leaders were felt not to be visible and communication from them poor. There was feedback

		about there being lots of discussion but little action.
Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families.	4.16	Similar feedback to the previous statement but with a particular focus on the lack of quality communication.
Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area.	3.88	Responses highlight that many SEND families do not feel listened to and do not feel that local leaders understand the challenges they face on a daily basis.
Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people.	3.72	In this area there was a focus on the lack of capacity in services, in particular the lack of support during school holidays, a lack of Speech and Language therapy input and no psychological support for families. Poor communication was again highlighted as an issue.