



FACT (Families and Carers Together) Bucks

**A Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered in England Number 1155067
Registered Office PO Box 1032, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP22 9NL**

TRUSTEES for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

Julie COOPER
Kelli EVANS
Marylene ISIAIH
Margaret NYAMBIO
Sarah SHAW
Penni THORNE

Governance and Administration

FACT Bucks is the Parent Carer Forum for Buckinghamshire, as required by the Children and Families Act 2014.

The objects of the Charity are to embed a local, pan disability, parent led parent/carer forum; build parent/carer participation/co-production based on good practice; and share good practice, knowledge and expertise about parent participation to ensure that it continues to grow and strengthen.

The Charity is not able to undertake campaigns, pursue individual cases nor offer support and counselling to individual parent carers.

There are now 160 families registered as full members with an additional 250 families on our contact list. Whilst membership is open and free to all those with an interest in the needs of children and young people with SEND, there remains a reluctance to commit. Nevertheless, the Charity seeks to represent all parent carers and makes all its activities open to all parent carers and accesses the networks of support groups throughout the county to enable greater outreach and feedback.

None of the trustees have resigned their office during the period. The Charity may have up to 12 trustees elected by the AGM. Trustees must be members of the Charity.

Under the terms of the Trust, the Trustees have delegated away the day to day administration of the Charity to the Steering Group appointed by them.

The membership of the Steering Group for the period under review has been as follows:-

Olga HAMER
Emma HOPKINS
Andrew HOWARD (Chair and Secretary)
Phil OGLEY
Ena SMALE (Admin and Membership Officer)
Penni THORNE (Treasurer)

The Steering Group meets monthly to manage the Charity; to co-ordinate parent participation; and to plan events. It also meets twice a year with a wider group of parents who represent the Charity on various bodies; twice a year with professionals to facilitate dialogue and encourage co-production; and also with representatives of Buckinghamshire County Council SEND & Commissioning teams, as well as BUCKS SENDIAS to ensure effective co-ordination of activities.

The Charity is a member of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums. We attend regular meetings for our area, discussing various topics matters with other parent carer forums. We provide financial administration for the South East Region and continue to offer support to other forums.

Finance

In the year ending 31st March 2018, the Charity received grants from the Department of Education (through a scheme administered by Contact) and Buckinghamshire County Council. It did not undertake any fundraising.

The total income for the period was £23,700.

During the year the Charity expended £23,300.

The main items of expenditure were payments to parent carers for their time and expenses in participation and/or co-production; the administration of the Charity; the provision of a website; training of parents to participate and the staging of certain events.

The operating surplus for the year was £400.

The Steering Group have resolved that a balance of £8,000 being the equivalent of 4 months expenditure should be held in reserve since the payment of income grants is subject to annual application processes that delay receipt of funds. The remainder of the General Reserve is available to support the work of the Charity.

The Charity has adopted Financial Control, Safeguarding and Equality & Inclusion policies in accordance with best practice guidance from Contact and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums

Activities

The year covered by this report saw the implementation phase of the Children and Families Act 2014 draw to a close. This was a significant milestone marking the culmination of a 10 year process to focus attention on the outcomes of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND CYP); increase Parent Carer participation; and develop a holistic response to the needs of Young People and their families. By the end of March, Buckinghamshire County Council had completed almost all the transfers of the 3500 Statements existing in 2014 to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), the benchmark by which the implementation phase has been judged nationally. This was achieved through the focussing of resources both within the SEND team but also across related areas such as Therapies, Educational Psychology, Paediatrics and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Whilst the achievement of the target is welcome, FACT Bucks did reflect back throughout the year the concerns of parents that the devotion of resources to this task had severely impacted upon wider SEND support.

In a similar way, although making the transfers was a vital element of the task of implementing the Act, there remains a concern across the Local Area – among parents and professionals alike – that the quality of those Plans may still not be at the level to which we would all aspire. In addition, it is accepted that the processes relating to SEND across the Area need further work to ensure that the underlying spirit of the Act – that resources will be effectively focussed on improving the outcomes of SEND CYP by meeting needs identified as early as possible and addressed holistically across education, health and social care. The Local Area's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) – to which FACT Bucks have contributed – sets out areas requiring further work. In our last report, we welcomed the establishment of the SENDIAN Pilot aimed at refocusing SEND staff resources at a more local and relationship focussed level engaging professionals, Parents, Schools & Settings and Young People in early identification of need and provision of resources to address them. This Pilot is still underway but it offers a clear opportunity to develop the type of approach envisaged by the Act and we continue to offer our full support to it.

In March, we held another of our popular awareness raising events at Green Park, this time focussed on SEND and the Law. A Parent Carer and IPSEA trained adviser, Emma Hopkins, gave an overview of the Act as it applies to the processes relating to Plans from assessment through drafting to appeals against final documents. 50 parents (and a few young people) are now more aware of the system as it should operate and are enabled to participate more effectively in the system on behalf of their SEND CYP. In conjunction with the ongoing Outcomes training course developed with FACT Bucks and delivered in partnership with SENDIAS, we are continuing to apply our limited resources to a key element of the Act which is to ensure more effective Parent Carer coproduction both of Plans and every aspect of SEND.

The latter stages of the implementation phase have, as noted above, focussed attention on the process of transferring Statements to Plans to meet the deadline. However, whilst Plans are a vital element of the system supporting SEND CYP – they represent only a legal process and statement of intent – they do not deliver outcomes on their own and there are an equal number of SEND CYP who do not qualify for a Plan but who still have Needs that must be met. To this end, we have continued to engage with partners across the Local Area who provide vital elements of the overall support. We have now established Parent Advisory Groups for Integrated Therapies, Short Breaks and CAMHS; participated in Stakeholder meetings for the same; and we have begun to be engaged in the contract monitoring of these key support services. We have provided members for co-production of Local Offer; Personal Budgets; re-commissioning of Short Breaks; home to school transport; as well as Post 16/Transitions. We have provided members for the Carers Partnership; Bucks SENDIAS; Transforming Care; Assistive Technology and Autism Board. We have attended Healthwatch Bucks meetings; Local Area information events and Support Groups for various disabilities.

At a strategic level, this last year has seen a significant change in key personnel within the Local Authority and with it a refocusing on an Area Wide responsibility for the delivery of SEND support. The SEND Board has become the Integrated Services Board bringing together Area wide representatives tasked with ensuring that the Act is being fully implemented within Bucks. The Chair of FACT Bucks is a member of this Board which strives “to be bold for change” asking three questions for any item raised which are “What is best for the child; how can we make it happen; and who is going to pay for it”.

We have participated in national training events for SEND (often the only parent reps); we have attended national and regional National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) events; and we are actively promoting the development of a regional gathering of parent and professional representatives to develop local coproduction at a more strategic regional level.

The Charity has a very effective Steering Group as well as a well-trained and connected wider group engaged in parent participation. This small but dedicated team have enabled your Parent Carer Forum to ensure that we take every opportunity to make the voice of parent carers heard in the most co-ordinated and effective manner possible using the skills of the members to maximum effect. As we move ahead, it is clear that the Act has increased awareness of parent participation (and we hope coproduction) across the Local Area but this seed change can only continue to embed and grow if there are Parent Carers willing to turn up. FACT Bucks offers support and training to all who volunteer and in the year ahead we will be working hard to develop a larger pool of representatives.

The year under review has been very busy in terms of participation but this has left little time to keep members as fully briefed as we would have liked. This is in part due to the lack of flexibility in the design of our current website and the lack of a willing volunteer to develop our social media presence. In the year ahead we have agreed to devote time and funds to the development of a new website and an increased online presence to keep members informed and encourage feedback.

Looking to the future, FACT Bucks have been offered a place on the Inclusion Hub which is developing initiatives to reduce exclusions of SEND CYP from mainstream schools through a realignment of additional resourced provisions (ARPs) in mainstream schools as well as the focus of Special Schools with the aim of meeting the needs of SEND CYP within the County. At the same time, the reintegration of the Specialist Teaching Service with the SEND team again provides a new opportunity to increase effective SEND support in mainstream schools which is an area that has to date not received the attention it deserves. We will also continue to be active in the recommissioning of the Short Breaks Offer seeking to minimise the impact of continued financial pressures as well as achieving greater alignment of approaches with Adult Services to enable the smooth transition of young people as they reach 18.

As the Parent Carer Forum for the Local Area, FACT Bucks is mandated by the Children and Families Act to give voice to the concerns of Parent Carers whilst working with professionals to coproduce more effective responses to the needs of SEND CYP. This is not an easy balance to achieve, especially in the context of wider funding constraints, but we believe it is important to be partners as well as critical friends in order that decisions that are made are taken with a clear understanding of the impact on the lives of SEND CYP and their families.

Public Benefit

We declare that we have had due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in exercising our power and duties.

Approved by the Trustees

14 November 2018

Andrew Howard
Secretary

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

At the request of the Trustees, I have examined the receipts and payments account for the year ending 31st March 2018, along with the related paperwork.

In my opinion, the financial statement that follows gives a fair view of the financial activity of the Charity in the year ending 31st March 2018.

Jo-Ann Potts

15 November 2018

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Income and Expenditure 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 – General Fund

	2018 £	Note	2018 £	2017 £	2017 £
Receipts					
Grants – BCC	5,000			5,000	
Grants – DFE	18,500			16,394	
Regional Admin	200			200	
Donations					
	<u>23,700</u>			<u>21,594</u>	
Payments					
Promotion Costs	(110)			(1,026)	
Special Events	0			0	
AGM/Training Event	(1,917)			(737)	
Attendance Fees	(4,793)			(5,304)	
Travel					
Costs	(1,902)			(2,265)	
Room Hire	(477)			(584)	
Refreshments	(737)			(975)	
Regional Participation	(963)			(664)	
Childcare	(1,315)			(146)	
General Admin	(7,700)			(7,499)	
Finance Admin	(1,410)			(400)	
Audit and Accountancy					
Fees	(100)	1		(100)	
Printing	(3)			0	
Postage and Carriage	(347)			(289)	
Telephone	0			0	
Stationery	(26)			(34)	
Website Costs	(564)			(763)	
IT Costs	0			0	
Training Costs	0			(388)	
Insurance	0			(319)	
Outcomes Project	(934)	2		(3,891)	
Miscellaneous	0			(34)	
	<u>(23,300)</u>			<u>(25,776)</u>	
Surplus receipts over payments			400		(4,172)
Reserves brought forward			8,669		12,841
Reserves carried forward			<u>9,069</u>		<u>8,669</u>

Notes

1. This is the honorarium to the Independent Examiner
2. Our contribution to the Outcomes training project

Income and Expenditure 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 – Regional Cluster

	2018 £	Note	2018 £	2017 £	2017 £
Receipts					
From Cluster	5,400			5,700	
Grant - DfE	<u>2,000</u>			<u>2,000</u>	
			7,400		7,700
Payments					
Meetings	(3,808)			(2,210)	
Administration	(200)	1		(200)	
Audit	(50)	2		(50)	
Bad Debt Write Off	<u>0</u>			<u>(1,800)</u>	
			<u>(4,058)</u>		<u>(4,260)</u>
Surplus receipts over payments			3,342		3,440
Reserves brought forward			8,536		5,095
Reserves carried forward			<u>(11,878)</u>		<u>8,536</u>

Notes

1. Contribution to costs incurred by FACT Bucks to administer regional fund as agreed by Cluster Group meeting.
2. This is the honorarium to the Independent Examiner

Balance of Funds 31st March 2018

	2018 £	2017 £
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	20,647	16,904
Net Assets	20,647	16,904
Current Liabilities		
Monies owed to the Cluster	11,578	8,236
Reserves		
General reserves	9,069	8,669
Net Liabilities	20,647	16,904

Balance of Funds (Regional) 31st March 2018

	2018 £	2017 £
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	11,578	8,236
Debtors	300	300
Net Assets	11,878	8,536
Reserves		
General reserves	11,878	8,536
Net Liabilities	11,878	8,536