

NNPCF cochairs meet with new Department for Education Permanent Secretary

20 October 2020

Last week, NNPCF cochairs Tina Emery and Mrunal Sisodia met with Susan Acland-Hood, the newly appointed acting permanent secretary at the Department for Education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/susan-acland-hood>

Susan approached Tina and Mrunal for a meeting and wanted to hear first-hand from parent carers about the what it was like to raise a child with SEND.

In a wide-ranging discussion, they discussed the following topics

- An introduction to the parent carer forum movement, who we are, what we do and the way we are set up.
- The difficulties faced by families with SEND in the current system. This included the problems families face being heard; the difficulties in getting early help before situations reach crisis point; inadequate funding in the system; and the disincentives for school leaders to be inclusive.
- The problems faced by families with SEND during the Covid 19 pandemic – the challenges in the absence of schooling, social care and health services. The NNPCF have reported on these extensively over the past six months.
- The future of the SEND system and the need for far reaching reform that the NNPCF outlined for the SEND review from our conference last year.

At all points Tina and Mrunal emphasised the importance of coproduction with families- actually listening to them and shaping services in a way that makes sense to them. Susan commented that the PCF movement was doing a great job in modelling strategic coproduction and asked for further a meeting with more parent carers again in the new year.