



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 2020 to 31st March 2021

Kelli EVANS
Margaret NYAMBIO
Penni THORNE
Tracie TWOHIGG

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 more than 500 families on our contact list and nearly 200 subscribers to our FaceBook page. 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; 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 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:-

Andrew HOWARD (Chair and Secretary)
Phil OGLEY
Ena SMALE (Admin Officer)
Penni THORNE (Treasurer)

The Steering Group meets 3 times each term time to manage the Charity; to co-ordinate parent participation; and to plan events. It also meets with a wider group of parents who represent the Charity on various bodies; with professionals to facilitate dialogue and encourage co-production; and with representatives of Buckinghamshire 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 2021, the Charity received grants from the Department of Education (through a scheme administered by Contact) and Buckinghamshire Council. It received a payment from the South-East Region of Parent Carer Forums in respect of its provision of a finance function, along with a compensation payment from NatWest Group. It did not undertake any fundraising.

The total income for the period was £20,750.

During the year the Charity expended £17,920.

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 update and provision of a website; training of parents to participate and the staging of certain events.

The operating surplus for the year was £2,830.

The Balance Sheet records both the activity and balances for FACT Bucks and for the South-East Region of Parent Carer Forums.

The General Reserve for FACT Bucks at the year-end was £14,822

The Charity ended the financial year upon which we are reporting in a significantly improved financial position as noted above. The lockdown restrictions imposed in late March 2020 in response to the COVID 19 pandemic required the Council and local Health bodies to adopt severely restricted engagement in the first half of the year.

The Steering Group have resolved that a balance of £7,000 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. In addition, the Charity has moved to online banking (amending its Controls accordingly) and is set adopt an email and file sharing platform that will remove the need for representatives to use their personal accounts in future.

Activities

The year ending the 31st March 2021 was anything but routine. The Charity, like the rest of the world, was required to adjust its model of operation significantly and very quickly. Whilst the core objectives of the Charity remained unchanged, the opportunity for engagement with members and with colleagues within the Council and Health Service all but ceased in the first quarter during the initial lockdown. We fully understood the reason for the focus on the immediate need to keep children safe and to provide for education in an unplanned set of circumstances.

However, we remain active and engaged, both through the increased use of social media as a platform for information sharing and online meeting tools to keep ourselves connected with each other. The Chair attended a weekly meeting with the Head of Integrated SEND; the Head of Improvement for Education; the Lead for SENDIAS; and the Head of Early Years. As a result of these meetings, we were involved in the co-production of guidance notes for parents and carers on the changes to processes etc in the light of the Coronavirus Act. In addition, we supported some testing session for the emerging new platform for Local Offer. We also undertook 2 surveys on the impact of the pandemic in this period which highlighted several key issues including the variability of the response of schools and the impact of the ceasing of respite care/short breaks, both of which led to changes in provision and process.

Once the Schools returned in September, levels of engagement (although online) increased significantly; and we ended the year having attended more than 200 meetings, despite the lull in the first quarter. The SEND Strategy was finally approved by the full Council in the spring of 2021. It was co-produced in its entirety and its focus on Preparing for Adulthood is in direct response to the input of parents and the Forum. In addition, a co-production Charter and Pledge have been drafted and will be launched by the end of 2021.

There has been significant activity in relation to the SEND Improvement journey with the establishment of 8 Impact groups focussed on the most pressing areas including Autistic Spectrum Condition/Social, Emotional & Mental Health; Preparing for Adulthood; SEN Support and Voice of the Child/Co-Production. The OFSTED inspection of SEND provisions were halted during this year but they restart from September and so Buckinghamshire will be inspected before May 2022. The Charity is prepared to engage fully with the process and has been actively engaged in the preparations locally including the Self Evaluation Framework and the Overview presentation.

Whilst engagement increased after September, the working model adopted of online meetings and the inability to hold any face-to-face events, along with the possibility that this will continue for a further period led the Steering Group to commission Buckinghamshire SENDIAS to prepare and deliver online training to educate parent carers and better equip them to participate individually and collectively in matters relating to SEND in Buckinghamshire in the year ahead.

We again assisted with a further review of the Home to School Transport statement for SEND CYP post 16. We are happy to report that the feedback from parents has been heard and the outcome is a more workable solution including the option for full reimbursement of costs for those providing their own transport and a fixed fee for those preferring the Council; to provide the transport. We are more confident that there will be increased dialogue with the Transport team going forward which we hope will lead to a better experience for families.

With the end of the first lockdown and the return of more normal health service staff activity, we returned to Parent Dialogue Groups for Therapies and for CAMHS – both of which were opened to any parent who wished to engage and were held on-line – attracting new parents into these key forums.

As part of the SEND strategy there is a commitment to seek and respond to the reflections of parents and carers on the SEND provision and process in the County annually through a formal survey. The Charity and Buckinghamshire SENDIAS worked in partnership to design and deliver this during the first quarter to 2021. 530 eligible families completed the survey and a further 102 opened the survey but were either ineligible (outside Bucks or young person over 25) or did not answer any questions. The full report including all the additional comments was made public in May and has been shared with colleagues in the Council and Health Service.

The overall sentiment of the survey is reflected in the 36% to 44% split between those who think their child is receiving the correct support and those who think that the support is not correct. A further 20% are undecided. The survey is now a major driver of the SEND improvement journey and there is an intent to offer response to the themes emerging from the parent comments this autumn. The survey will be repeated next year and will therefore provide a basis for measuring improvement.

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 supporting 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 small but very effective Steering Group. This is supplemented by 2 other parents who take lead responsibility in key areas including Preparing for Adulthood, Autism, Local Offer and Adult Services. We also welcomed some new parent representatives who have engaged specifically in focussed discussions relating to Autism and Social, Emotional and Mental Health. Unfortunately, we do not have as many parents willing to engage in specific areas as we would like. This places a considerable burden on the small band of willing parents as we attempt to ensure that a parent is present at every opportunity offered to the Forum. If there is not a parent there it is much easier for others to think we just don't care.

As we move ahead, the Act has increased awareness of parent participation (and we hope coproduction) across the Local Area, but these seeds of 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. It remains a stated objective of the Steering Group to deliver more representative and to expand the Steering Group in 2021/2.

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

5th October 2021

Andrew Howard

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

At the request of the Trustees, I have examined the receipts and payments account for the year ending 31st March 2021, 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 2021.

Joanne Potts

6th October 2021

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Income and Expenditure 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 – General Fund

	2021 £	Note	2021 £	2020 £	2020 £
Receipts					
Grants – BCC	5,000			5,000	
Grants – DFE	15,000			17,650	
Regional Admin	400			300	
Donations	350	1			
	<u>20,750</u>			<u>22,950</u>	
Payments					
Promotion Costs	(477)			(369)	
Special Events incl AGM	(2,730)	2		0	
Attendance Fees	(4,708)			(5,143)	
Travel					
Costs	(59)	3		(2,338)	
Room Hire	(72)	3		(632)	
Refreshments	(89)	3		(788)	
Regional Participation	(390)	3		(1,536)	
Childcare	(20)	3		(85)	
General Admin	(6,650)			(7,880)	
Finance Admin	(1,380)			(1,370)	
Audit and Accountancy					
Fees	(100)			(100)	
Printing	(408)			0	
Postage and Carriage	(8)			(364)	
Telephone	(23)			0	
Stationery	0			(226)	
Website Costs	(344)			(330)	
IT Costs	(173)			(43)	
Training Costs	(100)			0	
Insurance	(146)			(146)	
Miscellaneous	(43)			(53)	
			<u>(17,920)</u>		<u>(21,403)</u>
Surplus receipts over payments			<u>2,830</u>		<u>1,648</u>
Reserves brought forward			<u>11,992</u>		<u>10,344</u>
Reserves carried forward			<u><u>14,822</u></u>		<u><u>11,992</u></u>

Notes

1. Due to errors by the bank in the transfer to online banking, we received compensation payments
2. A contract was entered into with Buckinghamshire SENDIAS to provide 4 training webinars
3. The impact of the lockdowns arising from COVID 19 and the transfer to online meetings is the underlying cause of the low levels of expenditure reported in these areas

Income and Expenditure 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 – Regional Cluster

	2021 £	Note	2021 £	2020 £	2020 £
Receipts					
From Cluster	5,500	1		5,475	
Grant - DfE	<u>2,500</u>			<u>3,000</u>	
			8,000		8,475
Payments					
Meetings	0	2		(1,303)	
Administration	622	3		(2,767)	1
Representative					
Engagement	500			(1,241)	
Finance Services	400			(400)	
Audit	50			(50)	
Special	<u>3,000</u>	4		(300)	
			<u>4,572</u>		<u>(6,061)</u>
Surplus receipts over payments			3,428		2,414
Reserves brought forward			8,602		6,188
Reserves carried forward			<u>12,030</u>		<u>8,602</u>

Notes

1. One Forum was invoiced incorrectly and whilst the error was noted and rectified the additional payment was not received until after the year end
2. Due to COVID 19 lockdowns no physical meetings were held as all were held online instead.
3. A vacancy existed throughout the period for an Administrator and limited cover was provided by other third parties
4. The Region started work on a project with NHS England in relation to Admission Avoidance and whilst costs were incurred in this year, the grant was only paid after the year end

Balance of Funds 31st March 2021

	2021	2020 £
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	26,852	20,594
Net Assets	26,852	20,594
Current Liabilities		
Monies owed to the Cluster	12,030	8,602
Reserves		
General reserves	14,822	11,992
Net Liabilities	26,852	20,594

Balance of Funds (Regional) 31st March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	12,030	8,602
Debtors	200	
Net Assets	12,230	8,602
Reserves		
General reserves	12,230	8,602
Net Liabilities	12,230	8,602

Approved by the Trustees

6th October 2021

Andrew Howard
Secretary