



Collective Get T★gether

Snakes and ladders of the SEND system

The Collective Get Together was held Friday 1st August 2025, with this session being delivered in-person in Nottingham to 29 young people representing all regions in England.

The snakes and ladders game played was co-produced as part of a workstream involving both young people and parent carer forums.

Ladders were examples of things that work and help support young people, and snakes were examples of challenges young people had accessing support.

Below are topics identified in response to snake cards (challenges accessing support):

Reasonable adjustments

- Feeling unheard
- Not given what I need

Accessibility

- Took a long time for support to be put in place
- The right services not available
- Too Autistic or not enough

Funding

- Always hard
- There isn't enough money in schools to pay for the support

Transport

- Buses are unavailable

Lack of trained staff

- Didn't know how to cope with my disability
- They don't know how to support or just don't have time
- Without an EHCP little support was given

The following were identified during the ladder card discussions (things that work and help to support young people):

Co-produced

- Youth groups – art drawings
- Training
- Mental health first aid

Reasonable adjustments

- Having a reader for exams
- I was given extra time for exams

Transitions

- Early access to school really helped me
- EHCP put in place so I could get extra support

Feel listen to

- A friend within the forum, listens and understands me
- Best work which has been completed
- Working with SEND leaders, so we now feel listened to
- Every young person should have the option to be in a forum or be heard

Trained staff make a difference

- School staff all need to be trained

Person centred plan

- SENCO advocated for me

Also in the deck were mystery cards; if they landed on a mystery card they read out a question to answer. These created discussions around their forums, co-production journeys and impact and can be seen below:

How often does your forum meet?

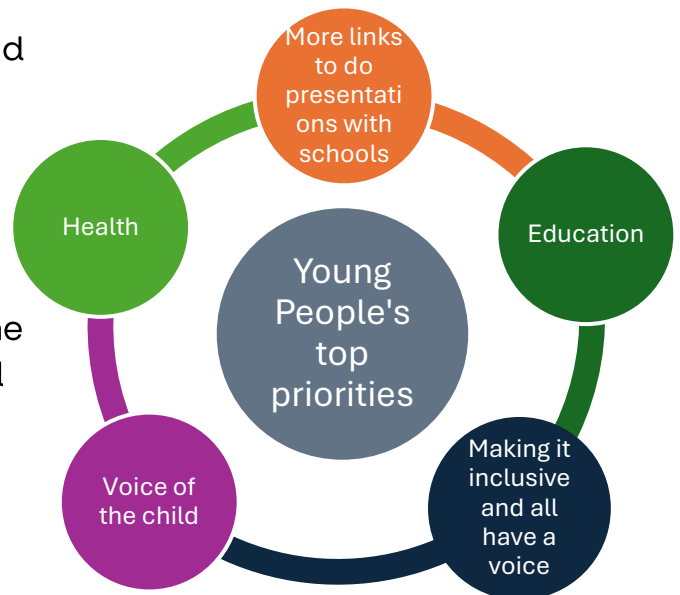
- Every other month – London

The impact the forum has made

- MacDonalds parking changes
- CAMHS support
- Workshop's which they have been a part of speaking with professionals
- A terminology guide for ASC people.
- Sit on interviews
- Sit on loads of panels

Best thing about the forum

- Food
- Learning to be independent
- Have a voice
- Make impact
- Change
- Friends
- It was co-produced from the beginning



How does your forum communicate

- WhatsApp chat
- Attend meetings regularly
- Emails
- Social media
- Lots of visuals

Areas of interest

- I love Lego
- Supporting mental health charities
- Watching movies

When and where do your forum meet

- Online and face to face

Other discussions had

- Having accountability for LA's
- No more Jargon
- More accessibility
- Leaflets through doors
- Need more easy read guides
- Local offer needs to be better suited for us – work with us
- Forum info is the local offer but is it easy to find – is the question
- Young people need to be part of their EHCP – so many young people are not
- Portals hard to access
- Have glossary to explain words – too many acronyms and long words.
- Case workers not attending stuff
- Digital poverty.
- Long waiting lists
- Was seen quickly once I was in a mental health crisis, but that was far too late – should not have got to that point

Following on from this, information should be shared with the relevant people in order to enable change, or at a minimum to make them aware of lived experiences of young people who use and are impacted by the current systems. Efforts should be put in place to share and replicate good practice.

The Collective encourages teams within the Department to reach out (via contract leads) to gain further insight, with potential to support co-production

