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Pinpoint Cambridgeshire

Strategic Plan 2023-2028

March 2023

Completed: March 2023

Next update: October 2025

**Chair’s introduction**

Pinpoint has come a long way since it was set up in 2008 ‘for parents, by parents of children with additional needs, and is now well established and well respected for being able to make a real difference to services and to outcomes by providing strong parent carer voices. With parents, we have been instrumental in improving a wide range of services and strategies from Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, to the coproduction of a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy for Cambridgeshire.

The 2014 SEND Reforms provided a real opportunity for radical change and improvements. At the heart of the reforms is the imperative that services work together and work with parents as equal partners to achieve the best possible outcomes for children; as the Parent Carer Forum for Cambridgeshire, this is the core of what we do. We use every opportunity to embed a culture of ‘coproduction’ – working together, so that Cambridgeshire County Council, health services, schools and others work together with parents, facilitated by Pinpoint, to commission and provide the best possible services for all children and young people with additional needs.

The 2014 SEND Reforms are now embedded and the EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) process can work very well for some of those with the most complex needs, but for others and those with less complex needs the picture is very variable. As it is, the number of EHCPs issued in Cambridgeshire has almost doubled over the last 5 years, and the system can’t cope with the numbers; meanwhile, those reported to have SEN support within schools has decreased as the emphasis has been on the EHCP process rather than early identification and intervention within schools. Times are tough; council and schools funding, and benefits for families, have been slashed while the Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine and inflation has resulted in prices for food and energy rising to unprecedented levels; the pandemic has led to long delays in the SEND system for assessment, diagnosis and for appropriate interventions coupled with increasing needs from its effects with greater levels of mental health issues particularly and the lack of early intervention. Schools are under huge pressure not only with funding but also with teacher and staff recruitment and retention.

Everyone is faced with hard choices but by working together we can make the best use of scarce resources. Everyone desperately wants to move away from parents feeling they have to fight for their child’s rights to services and support, but this requires a massive culture change: parents need information, support and often training but so too do the staff who are working with them. Pinpoint’s key role is to engage and empower parents to work effectively with services to achieve the best possible outcomes for their family and by sharing their experiences and ideas to influence the services and support for other families and the wider community. The 2022 SEND Green Paper will bring further changes.

At Pinpoint, we focus on engaging and empowering parents, embedding coproduction, and ensuring strong parent voices can influence the shape of services so all children have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Over the last year, we have looked at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Pinpoint’s work and reviewed our Vision, Mission and Values. We have set out in this Strategic Plan the ambitious developmental Goals for the next 5 years in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for all children and young people with additional needs in Cambridgeshire.

*Fay Dutton and Janet Dullaghan, Co-*Chairs of the Trustee Board

**1.What Pinpoint Stands For: our vision, mission, and values.**

**Vision**

Our Vision is for all children and young people in Cambridgeshire to be valued and thrive whatever their needs.

**Mission**

Pinpoint works with parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs, Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities, to celebrate their differences and empower their families.

We are committed to working alongside families and services to represent parent carers in co-producing service improvements so that children and young people have the support they need.

**Values**

Children, young people and families with additional needs are at the heart of what we do.

* We listen and value the experience of parents/carers, standing in their shoes.
* We expect high aspirations to be the norm for children and young people with additional needs.
* We take a positive, “can-do” approach to problems.
* We focus on people’s abilities- what they can do, not just their disabilities and what they can’t do.
* We treat everyone with respect, we value differences, and we are not judgmental.

**2. Achievements over our 5-year strategic plan 2017-23**

Over the last 5 years, Pinpoint has grown into a stronger, more stable and more effective organisation. We focus on engaging and empowering parents, embedding co-production, and ensuring parents can participate in influencing service improvements so all children can achieve their full potential.

Pinpoint has continued to provide high-quality services to fulfil its contracts and grants. Much of what we do enables parents and carers to increase their knowledge and understanding of their child’s needs and the services and support available in the local area; we build their confidence and resilience through information, signposting, involvement, peer-to-peer support and training for parents and carers. We also work with parent groups, service providers and commissioners, providing strong parent carer voices and further embedding the coproduction process across services and support.

Our work with parents enables Pinpoint to identify barriers and challenges, issues, and ideas that we share with the county council and our partners. We promote coproduction and support positive relationships e.g., with settings, schools, SENCO network activities, health services, professionals, and partners.

The Parent Champions programme has evolved as a way to make more parent carers aware of Pinpoint through a cohort of trained and supported volunteers. This group raises awareness of Pinpoint with other parents; they speak up for Pinpoint and regularly participate in Pinpoint sessions to share their experiences and expertise.

With a small, dedicated and hard-working team of six part-time staff and a Trustee Board of seven, as well as parent-carer volunteers, Pinpoint facilitates strong parent carer voices. Work carried out for Cambridgeshire County Council, the Department for Education, the NHS and other funders strengthens and expands our parent engagement and empowerment, to enable parents to be equal partners in services and support for their own families and the wider community.

The four goals in our strategic plan for 2017-22 have served us well with all staff having ‘Action Plans on a Page’ based on the goals to allow monitoring of progress. Achievements over the last 5 years during our Strategic plan 2017-2022 are listed below under our 4 goals for the period.

2.1 **Goal 1 Extending our reach and engagement**

* Over the last 3 years during the Covid pandemic, Pinpoint had to move everything online, widening our reach through social media, newsletters and website.
* The website has been developed and improved including adding a whole series of ‘Handy Guides’- one-page summaries for parents written by parents on different topics.
* Pinpoint has a strong social media presence, posting regularly on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
* Pinpoint has developed and been holding regular workshops and webinars most weeks during term time with local and national speakers and excellent feedback, including a monthly twilight session for dads and working mums.
* The monthly Network sessions developed into facilitated weekly online ‘coffee mornings’ which we have called Tii hubs (**T**ogether we can reduce **i**solation through **i**nformation) open to all parent carers and offering peer-to-peer support.
* The issues raised at all these sessions influence the future workshop topics and enable Pinpoint to provide feedback to services and commissioners on what is and isn’t working for parents and ideas for improvement.
* We made successful bids for funding for a programme to identify, train and provide on-going support for 30 Pinpoint parent champions
* For the NHS, we developed and continue to run successful workshops, webinars and training for parents of children with ADHD or Autism, whether diagnosed or undiagnosed.
* With the provisions of extra funding we strengthened our offer for the East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Opportunities Area.
* During Covid, we secured extra funding to offer information and access to benefits.

**2.2 Goal 2 Creating Opportunities to Promote a Culture of Co-Production**

* We have influenced Cambridgeshire County Council to understand that coproduction – working together from start to finish as equal partners – produces far better outcomes than just consulting with beneficiaries after reports have been written and decisions made.
* We have embedded co-production as the way of working with the council, health and other partners to ensure a strong parent voice on the development of the Cambridgeshire all age Autism Strategy and a number of other SEND strategies and processes.
* With the Council and other partners coproducing the Cambridgeshire SEND strategy with the three Strategic SEND Priorities reflecting Pinpoint’s:   
  1. SEND is everybody’s business  
  2. Identify and respond to needs early  
  3. Deliver in the right place at the right time.

**2.3 Goal 3 Influencing policy and practice within Cambridgeshire and beyond**

Many of the policies and practice we have influenced and co-produced in Cambridgeshire are mentioned in Goal 2 and in our Annual Reports and Reviews. In addition:

* As the Parent Carer Forum for Cambridgeshire, Pinpoint participates in the National and Eastern Region Networks of Parent Carer Forums. Pinpoint’s CEO has just taken up post as the vice chair of the ERPCF and represents the ERPCF at the NNPCF. Through these Fora, we have influenced the SEND green paper and the OFSTED Local Area Assessments as well as other regional and national issues.
* Child and Adolescent Mental Health services have been extensively reviewed and improved although Covid has hugely increased demand putting the services under more pressure.
* Numerous improvements to services over the years can be seen in the Annual Reviews and Reports on the Pinpoint website.

**2.4 Goal 4 Ensuring financial sustainability**

* Successful funding bids have enabled Pinpoint to fund specific projects and develop our work
* We have built our financial reserves over the last 5 years to allow Pinpoint to be sustainable in the longer term.
* We have set up a Finance Sub-Committee chaired by our Treasurer to closely monitor grants and contracts by funder, new funding bids, review the monthly management accounts against the Annual Budget, and ensure financial probity.

**3. Challenges**

Over the last year, the trustees, CEO, staff and other stakeholders have analysed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, and the challenges facing Pinpoint to produce our strategic plan for the next five years. This is a challenging time for everyone with the cost of living crisis but it is particularly challenging for families with children with additional needs.

The Local Authority has experienced massive funding cuts over the last 10 years and has a large deficit in its Special Needs funding. Schools in Cambridgeshire are funded below the national average, and many have big problems with teacher recruitment and retention. Many teachers only had half a day of training on SEN in their initial teacher training, yet are expected to be able to meet the varied needs of the 10% or more of the children in their class with SEN. The level of in-service training that teachers get varies from setting to setting and depends on the priorities and options available. Teaching Assistants can earn more working in a supermarket than in a school and there’s a real shortage in many areas.

There is particular concern about the whole EHCP process from needs assessment, production of the plan, financing, delivery and annual reviews and the tribunal process. There is also concern about poor SEN support or inclusivity in some schools and the lack of accountability of these schools. (Most schools in Cambridgeshire are Academies with no accountability to the Local Authority for their SEN provision and inclusion policies.)

Pinpoint is not responsible for some of these challenges but does try to influence those who are. The main issues identified by staff and trustees in 2022 were:

1. Problems within the wider SEND system, EHCPs and lack of early intervention and support for children and young people with additional needs.
2. Lack of engagement by schools and educational settings, hampering awareness of Pinpoint amongst parent carers and staff.
3. Providing equitable reach to all families that need Pinpoint, including those in digital poverty and those who are seldom heard (such as Travellers, migrant families, refugees and those without good English).
4. Providing sustainable growth for Pinpoint, ensuring capacity and resources to match work demands and meet needs.
5. Importance of upskilling staff, especially with digital skills
6. Concerns that Pinpoint is perceived to lack independence from the council.
7. The need to improve internal monitoring and evaluation (of needs, emerging issues, impact).

Building on our successes and the challenges we face, we have developed ambitious developmental goals requiring innovative, affordable solutions from the trustees, staff and volunteers, while maintaining the ability to respond to new issues and challenges as they arise.

**4. Developmental goals over the next five years**

**Goal 1 Extending our reach, engagement and participation and empowering parents**

Data from the Local Authority shows that in November 2022, there were 6,827 children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans -this number has doubled since 2017. In contrast, 10,219 pupils are on SEN Support compared with 12,000 in 2017. Based on this data there are some 17,000 pupils in our target audience. If we assume half have two parent carers, then we might extrapolate a potential parent carer audience of around 25,500. These numbers rely on schools and settings identifying and recording those with Special Educational Needs, and we know this is an underestimate as we know there are long waiting lists for full assessments and diagnoses and when a school identifies needs, they have a responsibility to meet those needs, so there may be a disincentive to identify SEN and register students on SEN Support. Parents may recognise their child is struggling but not yet recognise that their child has Special Educational Needs.

There are some 300 schools and settings in Cambridgeshire. in our last strategic plan, we had envisaged improving our reach by having a named Pinpoint parent champion at every school and educational setting in Cambridgeshire. While we have trained and support a cohort of some 30 champions, we do not have the capacity to expand this substantially while ensuring the quality and consistency of representation we would want from Champions.

Pinpoint wants to reach all communities, including those who may be heard less often. and parent carers at the start of their journeys. Schools are an essential link in raising awareness of Pinpoint, and we will review other ways to reach parents through schools including having link parent-carers for every school and considering new ways of introducing the Champions programme to schools working in coproduction with Pinpoint.

We need to ensure that parents can access the information they need but also feel able and confident to work together with teachers, health workers and other professionals to have their children’s needs met. Pinpoint will continue to offer opportunities to parents through webinars, training, and peer support to build parents’ confidence and resilience, empowering them to work with all those involved with their child.

**Goal 1 Aims**

* Continue to strengthen our social media presence, provide access to webinars, workshops and signpost to services and support.
* Develop strategic alliances and partnerships with other organisations working with families with additional needs in different sectors of the community
* Ensure our Engagement Strategy focuses on extending our participation to all communities, including those we hear from less often, to ensure we can represent their voices and they can access the SEN services and support they need.
* Facilitate effective parent-to-parent support and training to enable more parent carers to feel equipped and empowered to speak up for better outcomes for children and young people.
* Work for parents with schools and services to provide better and more timely SEN assessments, services and support as soon as a child or young person starts to struggle.
* Have a parent carer link for every school and educational setting in Cambridgeshire and maintain a cohort of Parent champions, using the new Neurodiversity Booklet to promote co-production.

**Goal 1 Outcomes**

* Parents continue to give good feedback about the impact of Pinpoint’s work on their family.
* Pinpoint can show that it reaches families with SEN that are seldom heard including travellers and migrant families, those with limited English and those in digital poverty and that their feedback shows a positive impact on their families.
* Pinpoint has a parent carer link for every school and educational setting in Cambridgeshire and improved relationships with schools.
* Pinpoint has maintained and developed the Parent Champions programme.

**Goal 2 Continue to Promote a Culture of Coproduction**

Pinpoint will continue to facilitate and promote meetings, events and forums where parents work in equal partnership with service providers to assess, design/redesign, deliver, monitor and evaluate the services their children, and others like them, receive. While at the strategic level, there are good working relationships and a commitment to coproduction, this doesn’t always filter down to managers and front-line staff, and parents can be disadvantaged if they are not given equal access to the information and support required to be able to make informed decisions.

**Goal 2 Aims**

* Enable parent carers to be equal partners with service providers by equipping all involved to fully understand and use co-production principles.
* Extend our engagement to Cambridgeshire schools to enable them to better co-produce with their parent carers as equal partners through training and by offering and enhancing the Champions programme and establishing a parent carer link for every school.
* Develop training for parents, professionals and organisations to promote involvement of parents as equal partners in discussions with service providers at all levels;
* Promote coproduction opportunities for parent carers in Cambridgeshire through partner organisations including the Local Authority and the Integrated Care System and health partners.
* Continue to make parents aware of the council’s SEND Information Hub (the Local Offer), ‘Ordinarily Available Provision’ for SEN support in schools and their SEND Transformation work and promote opportunities for co-production.
* Continue to coproduce with LA, ICS and other partners through attending strategic, meetings and forums to ensure parent voices are heard and influence policy and practice.

**Goal 2 Outcomes**

Pinpoint will continue to work with parents and Cambridgeshire County Council, the ICS, health services and schools that provide services for children with additional needs. The outcomes we are seeking to achieve is that improved co-production leads to:

* all EHC Plans being truly co-produced and their delivery and outcomes are jointly monitored by parents and staff.
* schools and parents being aware of the ‘Ordinarily Available Provision’ that should be available in every school so that every child can have their needs fully assessed and get the EHC Plan or SEN support to meet their needs; and
* Cambridgeshire moving from having one of the highest to one of the lowest percentages of tribunals in England, where disputes could reasonably have been avoided.

**Goal 3 Influencing policy and practice within Cambridgeshire and beyond**

Pinpoint influences policy and practice for better outcomes by building and maintaining stakeholder relationships and presence at policy-making forums in Cambridgeshire. Pinpoint coproduced the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SEND strategy with the Local Authority and other partners.

As an active member of the Eastern Region Parent Carer Forum (ERPCF) and National Network of PCF (NNPCF), Pinpoint and other PCFs share experiences and work together to influence local, regional and national policy to improve outcomes for all children and young people with additional needs and their families.

Pinpoint will continue to demonstrate impact through seeking formal feedback after contacts and events and through surveys, but will additionally seek to demonstrate impact locally, regionally and nationally through soliciting formal and informal feedback on Pinpoint’s contribution at local and regional levels.

The SEND Green Paper and potentially LA funding may result in major changes impacting SEND in Cambridgeshire; Pinpoint will attempt to promote positive changes and to mitigate the impact of negative changes for parents –as far as we are able within the constraints of our funding; we will continue to feedback on the issues and challenges for parents.

**Goal 3 Aims**

* Take every opportunity to influence policy and practice for better outcomes by building and maintaining stakeholder relationships and presence at policy-making forums.
* Articulate the impact we make in our communications to parent carers and stakeholders to demonstrate that coproduction - working together with Pinpoint and other partners - improves outcomes.
* Seek out opportunities to engage in regional and national work for the benefit of Cambridgeshire families, representing their voices to decision-makers and bringing back learning from effective practice from elsewhere.

**Goal 3 Outcomes**

Pinpoint can demonstrate how parents’ feedback and ideas have influenced policy and practice in Cambridgeshire through a variety of mechanisms including surveys, case studies and other quantitative and qualitative data.

To do this, Pinpoint will have developed robust monitoring and evaluation systems, with the impact shared regularly with parents.

**Goal 4 Ensuring Pinpoint is fit for the future while remaining financially sustainable.**

Pinpoint has improved the financial monitoring processes to enable the Trustees Board to have a clear view of the finances and regularly monitor income and expenditure for existing contracts, grants and other funds. Additional funds have been raised successfully for discrete projects such as developing parent champions.

Our ‘core funding’ comes from Cambridgeshire County Council, the Department for Education and the NHS to facilitate parent participation but we also need to raise our own funds from other sources as well as additional funding from our core funders to carry out specific work such as developing webinars or training packages.

**Goal 4 Aims**

* Identify and secure funding opportunities to sustain existing activities, achieve developmental goals, and diversify sources of income.
* Ensure that Pinpoint has the capacity and can act swiftly to harness funding opportunities as they arise.
* Develop the Board and staff to support the growth of Pinpoint and consider development of further Sub-Committees or Working Groups to support the Board and staff and strengthen Pinpoint’s governance.

**Goal 4 Outcomes**

The Finance Sub-Committee continues to ensure strong financial governance and Pinpoint remains financially viable and sustainable.

Pinpoint attracts the funds it needs to meet the goals in this strategic plan as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Possible initiatives such as membership or offering paid for training packages to partners have been thoroughly evaluated before decisions are taken on possible implementation.

The Board continues to attract parent carers and others to ensure robust governance of Pinpoint, supported by Sub-Committees or Working groups as required.

**Charity Registration Details:**

Charity Name Pinpoint Cambridgeshire

Charity Number 1156920

Address IG 6/7, Town Hall, Market Hill, The Old Riverport, Saint Ives PE27 5A

Telephone 01480 499043

Website [www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk)

Legal status: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), incorporated on 6 May 2014.

HMRC Ref 120PF00810070

**Charitable Object:**

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered with the Charity Commission on 6 May 2014. The charity is governed by its Constitution as amended on 4 April 2019. Pinpoint has been in operation since 2010 as the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) from its outset supported by Cambridgeshire County Council and the Department for Education (DfE). Pinpoint selected the following charitable object, changes to which must be agreed upon by a majority of members and be renegotiated with the Charity Commission:

*To relieve the need of children and young people in Cambridgeshire aged 0-25 years with additional needs, their parents, carers and families by providing support and services in particular but not exclusively by a) providing a range of forums, training opportunities and advocacy services and b) providing information, advice and signposting to specialist services* More information about the governance of the charity is in Appendix 2.

In England, to receive the DfE grant, parent carer forums must be open to all parents or carers with a disabled child living in the local authority area. They also must be pan-disability, meaning all parent carers with a disabled child can become a member, regardless of the nature of their child’s disability or medical condition. Pinpoint works with parent carers of young people up to the age of 25, in line with the Children and Families Act 2014.’

**Trustee Board in January 2023**

Co-Chairs: Fay Dutton and Janet Dullaghan

Vice Chair: Christine Stocker-Gibson

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: Tina McEwan

Members: Hasan Amjad and Dawn Hall