**Education Participation Session report Spring Term 2025**

**Background**

Whilst encouraging co-production in all areas with partners delivering services across Health, Education and Social Care we found that uptake at focus groups was low as parent carers were being asked to attend too many sessions. To ensure that parent carers voices continue to be heard directly by those providing services, we now hold thematic participation sessions with one being held each term for each of the following themes – Health, Mental Health, Education and Social Care (What other help is available). This round was held virtually.

*There were a number of professionals in attendance at the session who heard these voices including Oak Academy, SEND district team, early years and school readiness team and Nessie these professionals were all asked to take back issues to their teams that they need to manage and support with.*

*We continue to regularly attend a number of monthly strategic meetings with colleagues in health, education and social care as well as those in the private, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors where we raise parent carer voices with the professionals involved.*

*We continue to offer weekly Tii hubs for peer support.*

Oak Academy presented an overview of their alternative education provision for young people struggling in mainstream education. They offer time-limited support (typically 2-3 terms) for up to 15 hours per week, focusing on emotional wellbeing, personal development, and academics. Their goal is to help students regulate behavior and eventually reintegrate into mainstream or specialist settings. The provision is quality assured by the local authority, works with students with and without EHCPs, and emphasizes communication with parents and commissioning bodies. They stress that alternative provision is not for everyone, and the majority of students' needs should be met in mainstream education. Find out more here: [March 25 - PinPoint Online Presentation - Role of AP and Oak.pptx](https://pinpointcambs.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/s/PinpointPublic/ETPQAzHFNvlHo02BUGsvOeYBk9QvZk_r0ajZjpZJU_lUKw?e=7wa98A)

Sarah initiated a discussion with the team about the role of Alternative Provision (AP) in education. Michael Kaoura, from the team, provided a balanced presentation on the role of AP as a temporary stepping stone to getting students back into mainstream schools. He emphasized that AP is meant to provide wraparound support for children who are unable to receive it in their regular schools. The team also discussed the importance of addressing the root causes of student behavior issues, such as trauma, and working with schools to develop safety plans and messaging for staff and parents.

Bev from the SEND district team reminded parents about the EBSA toolkit [Emotionally Based School Avoidance Toolkit](https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/cambridgeshire-send/cambridgeshire-send-oap-toolkits/primary-and-secondary-send-oap-toolkit/social-emotional-and-mental-health-semh/resources/emotionally-based-school-avoidance-toolkit).

Subtle visual aids to help children to track their day can be helpful. There is also support available from education inclusion officers, and it can be helpful to keep a diary to track patterns in behaviour. The discussion emphasizes the importance of finding individualized strategies and communicating with children in ways that make them comfortable.

Bev introduced the Send Service Team, a group of specialist teachers, practitioners, and educational psychologists who work with schools and families to improve learning outcomes. Bev emphasized the team's role in offering advice, support, and fresh perspectives to schools and families. She also highlighted the importance of the team's ability to step in and out of support as needed. Bev suggested that parents initially reach out to their child's school or link teacher for support.

Bev discussed the statutory assessment team's role in consulting with schools and advised parents to contact their casework officer or senior for their area. Sarah emphasized the importance of getting in touch with the team and clarified that help while waiting for a place could be requested. Rachel, the founder and CEO of Nessie, shared that their service had helped 70 children with autism, resulting in a 95% positive outcome. Nessie is now offering support to parents and carers, with 80 sign-ups in 4 days. They are trying to link up with Younited to understand pathways for children. Rachel encourages parents to reach out directly to her for assistance. The discussion highlights efforts to connect overwhelmed school staff, especially SENCOs, with available resources and support.

Philippa (pinpoint) gave a brief update on the pilot work that she has been doing on the PINS project (Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiveristy in Schools).

Sarah led a discussion with Pinpoint and Chris (Early years and school readiness service) on the benefits of early intervention for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Chris, a senior advisor for early years, access, and inclusion, explained the early support pathway, which provides individualized support packages for children with SEND. Chris also mentioned the family information service, including a specialist SEND childcare broker, Tracey, who helps families find appropriate care for their children.