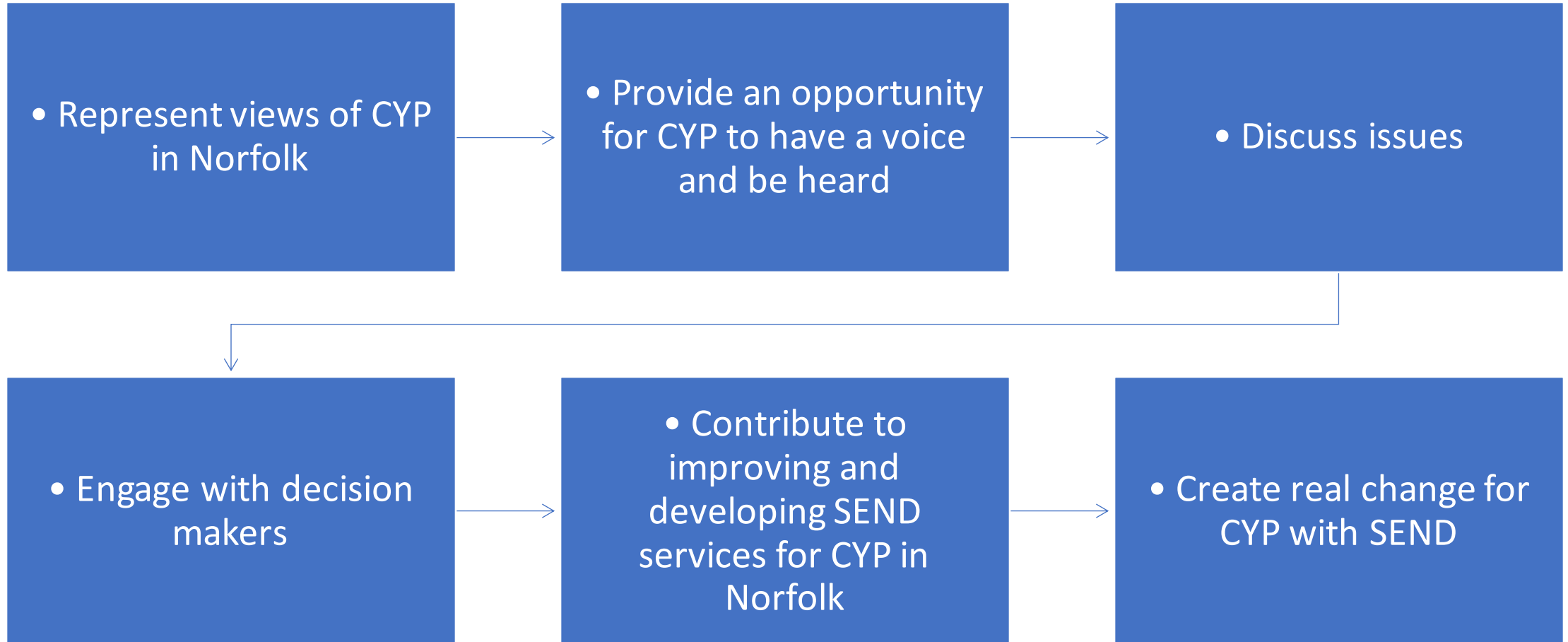
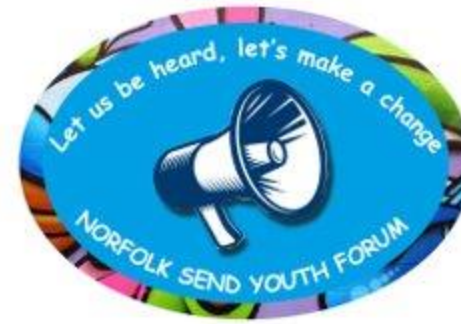


Topic: Friends & family

Norfolk SEND Youth Forum



Aims of the Group:



What happens at the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum?

- Regular online meetings (every month)
- A minimum of X3 trips/outings/meetings face to face per year.
- Agenda co-produced with CYP
- Fun activities – building trust and developing positive relationships
- Professional consultations
- Opportunities to speak about their experiences to share holders
- Space for YF members to raise issues of concern
- Focus on ownership - CYP developing the Youth Forum to be what *they* want it to be
- Celebration and sharing sessions



2023

**Bowling Trip
and Review
Day at County
Hall**



Charlotte - A Piece on Friends and family

Friends

It was hard to make friends and keep them, because I was at a school that was far away about an hour away, and not all my friends were close by, so it was hard to get together with them after school and weekends. Many friendships stopped when school stopped.

Since leaving school and college it's been hard to make friends as there is not many places to make friends that is safe for me to go to, or I am able to access.

The group I go to, my mum and dad must come to, as I have epilepsy and the group needs a parent to be there, as they won't take responsibility for me, and as my mum or dad is there, there is not much chance to make friends.

Family

My close family are good with me, and except me for who I am, but some other family, (cousins etc) don't always accept me for who I am, and sometimes try to keep me away. Which makes me angry, annoyed and sad.





Loneliness (Mencap)

Social inclusion involves making meaningful connections and participation in fulfilling activities (Cummins and Lau 2003; Overmars-Marx et al., 2013). **Research suggests that 1 in 3 young people with a learning disability spend less than 1 hour outside their home on a typical Saturday (Mencap, 2019).**

In a *survey* by Sense, **over half of disabled people reported feeling lonely**, rising to over three quarters (77%) for those aged 18-34 (Sense 2017). **Loneliness is associated with physical and mental health problems and poorer quality of life** (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2014).

Take my hand and walk with me - (by Katrina)

Let me speak my mind

I know the world has made you think

I'm of a different kind

Society tells you that I am different

And while that can be true

I'm not broken or a mistake

I'm a human too

Take my hand and look at me

Focus on my eyes

Can you see how wise I am

From the struggles and the cries

**I have faced ableism
I have faced adversity
I've coped with so much for being so young
Because of my neurodiversity**

**Take my hand and sit with me
Please lend me your time
I know its not easy to be my friend
But loving me is not a crime**

**There may be times when I cannot speak
But I still have things to say
My voice and feelings still need to be heard
I need you to listen in other ways**

**Take my hand and talk to me
Tell me I'm not alone
I still want you to spend time with me
Though I can't deal with phones**

**My friends will message and I don't reply
But it's not that I don't care
Its that I'm so overwhelmed at the pressure
Opening and reading makes me scared**

**Take my hand and listen to me
I cannot go out
Never that I don't want to
Its not a choice- I want to shout!**

I can't go and see a doctor

I can't meet up with family

DO you ever think of how I feel?

Missing my life and being in agony

Take my hand and think like me

Believing you are alone

When people seem to forget you exist

They just move on and easily disown

When people think that you are weird

Because you won't eat your tea

It's not because I'm rude

I just cannot tolerate the peas

**Take my hand and imagine being me
I'd like you to take another perspective
If people were more understanding
Wouldn't that be more effective!**

**It's not easy being me
But the world makes it more difficult
Don't shout at me for being different
Don't belittle or insult**

**Take my hand now do you see?
It's not us that need to adapt
The world needs to change to help us
It's not that hard as a matter of fact!**

Instead of closing off from us
Or making our challenges harder
Make us feel included and listened to
Be our guide and partner

Will you take my hand?
Will you walk with me?
To create a better world
Where everyone can feel free

We deserve our needs to be met
We deserve to be respected
We are a part of your world too
Don't make our lives more restricted

Changing attitudes to disabled people

Barriers are not just physical. Attitudes found in society, based on prejudice or stereotypes also disable people from having equal opportunities to be part of society.

Feedback from our members:

- Want social opportunities which they can access close to where they live.
- Rely heavily on parents, to enable them to access and engage in activities and opportunities, into adulthood.
- In our annual review members agreed that the Youth Forum is a group where we accept and embrace difference and diversity, (“ **We are all unique and all brilliant**”) and where they can be themselves.
- They share the same aspirations as other young people to be independent, have relationships, have fun with people their own age, and to have more opportunities to access work and meaningful activities.



What our members say....

I feel
valued

We have a sense
of community

I love how members
of the group support
each other

I feel inspired
and happy

I feel listened
to and equal

It is fun and I
always enjoy the
meetings!



Contact Details:

How to:

- Register (join) the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum or
- Make a request to consult with the group:

Go to the Norfolk SENDIASS Web site, and complete an on-line Registration Form or Professional request form, and we will then contact you to identify and discuss how we can best support you.

<https://www.norfolksendiass.org.uk/young-people/>

Telephone: 01603 70 40 70

Email: bridget.robinson@norfolk.gov.uk

