

Case Study 1



Parent A has two children, the younger of whom has Special educational needs.

Mum first contacted SGPC by requesting some 1:1 support via the virtual support package we established in response to the pandemic. This support package offers various ways in which parents and carers can connect to us including phone calls, video calls, email support and virtual support groups. Prior to the pandemic we ran regular face to face support sessions and already had social media groups where parents could connect to each other. We have found that often parents say they do not know where to go or how to gain the support their family needs.

The SGPC support team offered mum an online 1:1 session which gave mum a safe space to be heard and a chance to chat through support options and strategies that may be helpful for the family's needs. Mum received 1 session online with a follow up email detailing the appropriate signposting links and support options open to her. An offer of a follow up session was given along with encouragement to join the virtual support group sessions when mum felt ready.

After the initial 1:1 support, the team have been delighted to see mum regularly joining the virtual support groups and gain the confidence to share within the group as well as offering support to others. It's great to see a parent reach out and make the journey from a feeling of isolation to making connections with others and feeling part of a community.

We often hear how families feel safer knowing that our organisation is there for them even if they haven't accessed us yet or as often as they would like.

Families can also access us through our social media support group where they can receive support from other families too and we have noticed that mum has also made use of this support group in order to gain information and advice as well as offer help to others.



When concerns were initially raised about my child, I felt really sad and lost. I didn't know where to start with getting the support I felt he needed. I came across the SGPC website through the South Gloucestershire council website.



I was initially offered a 1:1 virtual session with one of the support team it was so reassuring to chat through where I was and feel supported about where to go next.



I have since been part of the virtual group support that happens. I feel part of a supportive community and it's lovely to meet people on a similar path. Knowing the support is there and that there is always a friendly face to talk to has helped my confidence around my son so much.



Case Study 2




Parent B has 3 children, the younger 2 both having Special educational needs. The family had started to access one of our face to face support groups a couple of months prior to the pandemic starting.

The family found that most of their support agencies were no longer accessible as the first lockdown started and the family became increasingly pressured. Mum initially contacted us for 1:1 support and the team were able to support her using video call. This enabled mum to have someone to talk with about the families needs and struggles.


Over the last year mum has used the 1:1 support option for three separate reasons and has joined one of the smaller virtual groups regularly.

The team have seen how important it is for families of children with SEND to know there are people they can talk to who really understand. To have access to SGPC support has been hugely important for this family to feel less isolated.


Mum has become more confident within the groups and just this week it was wonderful to see her join and take part in a larger virtual support group after the team had been encouraging her to do.




At South Glos Parents and Carers I have met some incredible people and been welcomed into an amazing community.



I have been able to access virtual support both one to one and group sessions throughout this last year has enabled me to find understanding, comfort, support and the opportunity hear about other's experiences.



It means I don't feel so alone in my journey with two children having SEND.
I only wish I had found SGPC sooner.



Case Study 3



Parent C has 2 primary aged children with SEND and has regularly accessed face to face support with SGPC in previous years.

The changes brought by the pandemic increased the pressure within the family home.

As an organisation we were very aware that a lot of families would be feeling the pressure, especially as a lot of services and support agencies were no longer accessible for varying reasons. Mum has regularly accessed all aspects of our support offer available.

The support team have become very aware throughout the year at just how much the effects of the pandemic and the restrictions have affected the mental health of families. The opportunity to connect with others virtually has been crucial to helping many families through these difficulties.

Mum is also a regular user of our social media support option which she uses to gain advice and share her journey. Despite the very real challenges this family face, the team have been inspired by how this mum has supported others whenever she can. We have watched her become more and more confident over the weeks to use her own experiences to stand with and encourage others.

The very act of doing this seems to have created a way for her to build on her own inner strength and resilience. This family have also accessed some of the training webinars that we have been able to offer in order to provide families with extra information, support and strategies.



When the pandemic started I felt very overwhelmed with the whole family having to be at home. The expectation of trying to home school amongst everything else was really difficult. I felt very much on my own and needed support and input.



SGPC were really quick to provide their virtual support. I have used the one-to-one support option to discuss specific difficulties that I have had and brainstorm strategies and have also attended the virtual group support throughout.



It's been so important for my mental and emotional health. I would definitely not have stayed this level of sane without it. Life has been really challenging at times as a parent so to have somewhere to vent, gain advice, share strategies or just have a natter with people that get it has been so important.



Case Study 4



Parent D has 2 children under 8 and prior to engaging with SGPC both she and her husband felt very alone and that no-one really understood their concerns.

She felt she had no-one she could connect with who really understood the challenges the family were facing and was feeling quite anxious.

Mum initially made an enquiry about a stay and play support group SGPC run and was placed on the waiting list. In the meantime, she accessed some support by attending our community base where she was able to speak with the support team and other parents. Mum has engaged with the support team regularly and in a variety of ways - one to one online support, our face to face 'Little Treasures group and community base, online support groups and also through webinars we run.

The family have found the support they received hugely positive. Mum now feels part of a community of friends who she can relate to and no longer feels alone which has boosted her confidence, knowledge and understanding. Mum can see how her children have benefitted through the support the family has received via face to face sessions they have attended and also through practical suggestions and strategies that have made day to day tasks more manageable. She feels her mental health has improved and her anxiety and stress levels have been significantly reduced.

When going to parent/ toddler groups I felt quite unsure and lacked confidence and noticed that we spent more time at home and were becoming more and more isolated.

The SGPC team have supported and empowered me to be the best possible advocate for my children and helped me feel both validated and more confident.

The SGPC support team's experience, knowledge and advice are absolutely invaluable and like the many other families and the friends I have made through SGPC, I would be lost without them. The work they do is absolutely vital. Our family is far better supported, informed and without doubt, happier because of them.



Case Study 5



Parent E has 2 children, both of whom have additional needs. She had been to a couple of groups before the pandemic and always tried to get involved in the discussion groups as she felt the forum was the best way to raise family's concerns with the council. Mum had also attended courses that have been organised by SGPC.

Due to her own health difficulties, her anxiety was heightened before attending face to face groups. When the virtual meetings started in the pandemic started mum was anxious about logging in & speaking to people she didn't know to begin with. Initially the team engaged with her via our online one to one support option. Over the months, the team were delighted to see her also join our online group support meetings.

The family had been having real difficulties trying to access and gain the correct support and education for their children. The support groups helped when mum needed to talk through problems and was struggling to find the correct placement for one of her children. SGPC were able to raise concerns and provide anonymous feedback to services about concerns and difficulties families were having.

The family eventually came to the decision that home education would be the best way of supporting their children's needs. The team have seen mum develop in confidence and it is great to see her share her knowledge with others now. The children too have developed in confidence and they are no longer anxious about mum logging on to support groups. It's wonderful to see the family enthused about the topics they are learning and eager to share all the different things they are doing. Mum says she has a lot more confidence now and it's been important for her to continue getting support, advice and information throughout the time she has been shielding.

I was shielding so it's all had to be virtual since the start of the pandemic. I've continued with this as I've actually found it to be a lot more comfortable for myself. I've been attending the support groups regularly. I've also attended some of the training sessions.

I was able to talk to the support group when I was going through some of my toughest times. The team were there when I was trying to figure out what I could do to help the boys when they were struggling with distance learning. The group was able to make me feel less lonely then, and it still does now.

SGPC team have shared strategies, information, resources that can be helpful. In our home, the support your group gave when I was trying to make decisions has led to a much calmer environment. The support you give is invaluable, the information is relevant to the situation so many parents find themselves in & at the group we can share our own difficulties, struggles without being judged.



Case Study 6




Parent has an autistic daughter as well as a toddler. Dad originally reached out to our individual Support Service as he had lots of questions and did not know where to find the help he needed. SGPC provided him with support and information about what was available.

Parent told us working from home during the pandemic he became more aware of his daughter's needs and felt uncertain about if she had the right support at school. He also felt very isolated, particularly as although his family and friends knew about his daughter's disability; autism is not easily discussed in his culture. We encouraged him to join our online support groups so that he could get to know some other parents. He was a little uncertain when he first joined, but we encouraged him to listen initially and then when he felt comfortable, he began to talk to the group about his concerns for his daughter and whether his son may also develop autism. We really encourage parents to support each other in our groups and he received lots of support and reassurance which built his confidence.

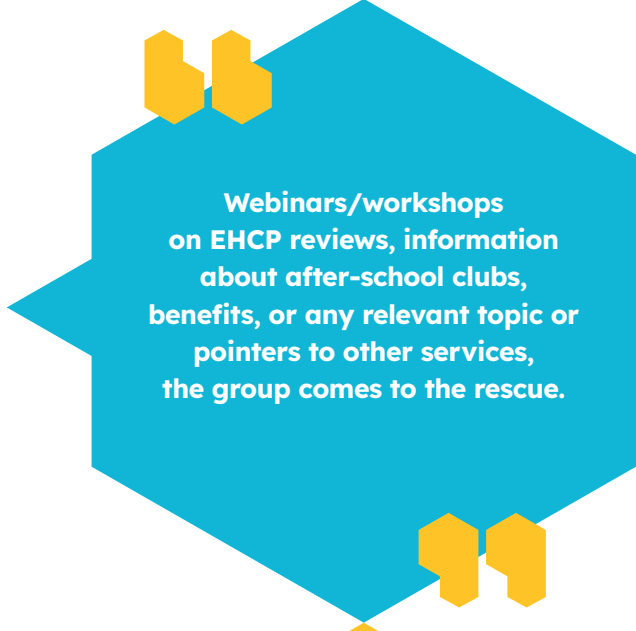
The parent benefited that having more information helps him to feel empowered to ensure his daughter has the best support. He attended some webinars we were running with SENDIAS that would help him prepare for an upcoming EHCP review and shared some resources with him about how the process works. Dad was able to successfully review his daughter's EHCP with her school and agree on some positive changes.

Dad has continued to attend our evening support groups and now is a very active member. It's great to see that he is confident to support other Parent carers in their journeys and has built several friendships with other parents.


Although we have resumed our daytime face to face activities, we have chosen to continue our evening online support group for parents to be more accessible for working parents as this gives him a way to engage and be an active part of our community.



Before joining South Glos Parent Carer, I did not know about all the support services available for families with kids with additional needs.



Webinars/workshops on EHCP reviews, information about after-school clubs, benefits, or any relevant topic or pointers to other services, the group comes to the rescue.



I gained the confidence to deal with the difficult conversations with the school and SENCO based on other parents' experiences and suggestions. They helped me save tons of time and effort, but the most important thing they do is to provide much-needed strength and hope for lots of parents like me

