

## What is Darlington Parent Carer Forum?

Darlington Parent Carer Forum (DPCF) is a group of parents/carers of children aged 0-25 with additional needs and/or disabilities.

DPCF are currently working in partnership with the Darlington Mental Health Support Team to offer peer support to parents and carers of children with mental health needs and/or special educational needs.

## What is peer support?

Peer support is when people use their own experiences to help each other. There are different types of peer support, but they all aim to:

- Bring together people with shared experiences to support each other
- Provide a space where you feel accepted and understood
- Treat everyone's experiences as being equally important
- Involve both giving and receiving support

We are running sessions with parents in primary and secondary schools in Darlington where we focus on looking after ourselves as parent carers, so we are better able to meet the needs of our children. These sessions will involve:

- Prioritising listening, giving a safe space to share experiences
- Training opportunities on needs and themes to be decided by the group - but has included transitions, sleep, sensory, etc.
- Offering workshops to build confidence and self esteem and improve parental wellbeing
- Advice and signposting as systems can be overwhelming, so a peer supporter can offer practical and factual advice and signposting

The sessions in each setting are different and decided upon by the parents who attend. Please speak to your child's school to see if they access our services.



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