Principles for AI Use

Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum

Policy version 1.0 | Approved | 4 November 2026

Purpose: To make sure artificial intelligence (AI) is used responsibly, transparently and safely to support—not replace—the lived experiences and collective voice of parent carers in Halton.

Policy owner	Forum leadership / Steering Group
Approval date	4 November 2026
Review date	4 November 2027
Signed by / Authorised by	Clare Collins, Chairperson
Forum address	Office 2, 2 Linacre Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 9DN

1. Core principles

- Parent carer voice comes first: AI must never substitute for direct engagement, lived experience or genuine evidence.
- Human oversight is essential: a forum representative checks every AI-assisted output before use.
- Privacy and confidentiality are protected: no identifiable, confidential or sensitive information is entered into unapproved AI tools.
- Transparency: families and partners are told when AI materially supports engagement analysis or published work.
- Fairness and accessibility: AI must not invent evidence, reinforce stereotypes, exclude groups or misrepresent views.
- Accountability remains with the Forum—not the AI provider.

2. Scope and responsibilities

This policy applies to Steering Group members, staff, volunteers and anyone using AI on behalf of Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum. It covers generative AI, automated transcription and note-taking, translation, summarisation, image/design tools and other AI-supported software.

Forum leadership is responsible for approving appropriate tools and uses, maintaining guidance, ensuring training, checking compliance and responding to concerns. Individual users must follow this policy and report errors or suspected data breaches promptly.

3. Appropriate uses

AI may support the Forum's work where suitable safeguards are in place. Examples include:

- Preparing plain-English explanations of public consultation or policy documents.
- Drafting agendas, discussion questions, public communications, newsletters, posters and accessible materials.
- Organising or summarising properly anonymised or aggregated survey and engagement feedback.
- Suggesting report structures and helping draft consultation responses grounded in verified parent carer feedback.
- Supporting translations or accessibility, provided important meaning is checked by an appropriately skilled person.

AI-assisted graphics, quotes, case studies or images must not be presented as authentic parent carer experiences or photographs when they are synthetic. Obtain permission for use of real images, logos and third-party content.

4. Parent carer voice and evidence

All reports, submissions and representations must reflect actual engagement with families. AI may help identify themes, but it must not fabricate responses, quotations, statistics, case histories or consensus. Outputs must be checked against the original anonymised evidence and must preserve minority or dissenting perspectives where relevant.

Decisions on priorities, policy positions, escalation and representation remain with forum representatives.

5. Data protection and confidentiality

The Forum will follow its UK GDPR, data protection, safeguarding and confidentiality procedures. Staff and volunteers must not paste or upload identifiable personal information, special-category information, safeguarding details, individual case information or confidential partnership material into public or unapproved AI services.

Examples include names, contact details, parent carer IDs, identifiable accounts of children's health or education, photographs, recordings, unpublished strategic documents and sensitive meeting papers.

- Use aggregated data or robustly anonymise feedback before AI analysis; simply replacing a name may not make a distinctive case anonymous.
- Use only approved tools and settings following a documented assessment of the purpose, privacy terms, retention, access and whether inputs are used to train systems.
- Ensure any processing of personal data is subject to a lawful basis, a suitable processor arrangement and any required data protection impact assessment; obtain advice from the Forum's data protection lead where needed.
- Tell respondents about any intended use of AI to analyse feedback through engagement information and the privacy notice.
- Do not use AI to handle sensitive material where it cannot be done safely, lawfully and with appropriate authorisation.

Anonymisation example

Before: "My daughter Emma waited two years for an autism assessment."

After: "A parent carer reported a two-year wait for their child's autism assessment."

Check the full context: dates, rare circumstances and other details can still identify someone.

6. AI note-takers, recordings and meetings

An AI note-taker, live transcription or recording service must not join a forum meeting automatically. Before use, the meeting organiser must confirm that the tool is approved, what it captures and retains, the lawful basis for processing, and that all participants have been clearly informed. Obtain any necessary consent or permissions and offer an alternative for anyone who does not wish to be recorded.

Do not use AI note-takers for confidential, safeguarding or identifiable case discussions unless a specific documented assessment and authorisation permit this. Human-reviewed minutes remain the official record.

7. Accuracy, accessibility and ethical use

- Check facts, references, figures, dates, quotations, links and legal statements against reliable originals.
- Review for bias, missing context, misleading summaries and unequal representation of parent carers.
- Check translation, easy-read and accessibility outputs for accuracy and meaning before sharing.
- Never use AI alone to make decisions about individual families, support needs or entitlements.
- Do not enter protected, copyrighted or third-party confidential information without appropriate rights and permissions.
- Acknowledge significant AI assistance when it would help readers understand how content was prepared.

8. Transparency

Where AI has materially helped analyse feedback or prepare public-facing documents, include a proportionate disclosure, for example:

"AI tools helped organise anonymised feedback and draft sections of this document. Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum representatives reviewed and verified the content. The findings are based on real parent carer engagement."

The Forum must not imply that AI-generated text is a direct quote from a parent carer.

9. Approval, concerns and incidents

Anyone proposing a new AI tool or a new use involving personal data, recordings, confidential documents or external sharing must seek approval from forum leadership before proceeding. Suspected confidentiality or data protection incidents should be reported immediately through the Forum's existing reporting process. Preserve relevant details and do not attempt to conceal or independently resolve a potential breach.

The Steering Group will review incidents, lessons learned and whether additional restrictions or training are needed.

10. Review and sign-off

This policy should be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if AI technology, law, organisational practice or national guidance changes. It should be read alongside the Forum's safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection and related policies.

Approved by: Clare Collins, Chairperson Date: 4 November 2026

Role: Chairperson Next review: 4 November 2027

Appendix 1: Short survey on AI use in the Forum

Purpose: To understand how staff, volunteers and Steering Group members use AI, which tools they use, and the guidance or training they need. Do not include any identifiable family information in survey responses.

Current use

1. Do you currently use any AI tools for Forum work? ☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

2. Which AI tools do you use? (Select all that apply.)

☐ AI note-takers or transcription tools

☐ Translation tools

☐ Writing or editing tools

☐ General AI chat tools (e.g. ChatGPT or Copilot)

☐ Design or image tools

☐ Other: _____

☐ None

3. What do you use AI for? (Select all that apply.)

☐ Meeting notes or summaries

☐ Translation or accessibility support

☐ Drafting emails, letters or reports

☐ Research or locating information

☐ Publicity, images or social media

☐ Analysing anonymised feedback

☐ Other: _____

4. What has been helpful about AI use, and what concerns, if any, do you have?

_____

_____

Support and boundaries

5. What would help you feel more confident using AI? (Select all that apply.)

☐ Clear guidance on acceptable and unacceptable uses

☐ Training or practical demonstrations

☐ Privacy, confidentiality and data protection guidance

☐ Examples from other parent carer forums

☐ Nothing further at present

6. Are there any situations where AI should not be used in Forum work?

_____

7. Any other comments or suggested tools?