



Nottingham Trent University



International Parent Centred Network

Conference Report

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Compassion in practice: humility in parent-centred working
20th to 24th April 2026

Venue: Nottingham Trent University, Newton Building, City Centre Campus,
Goldsmith Street, Nottingham. NG1 4BU

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Compassion in practice: humility in parent-centred working

Executive Summary

This report documents and celebrates the International Parent Centred Network (IPCN) Conference hosted by Nottingham Trent University in April 2026. Bringing together students, academics, practitioners and people with lived experience from across Europe, the conference focused on the theme *Compassion in practice: humility in parent-centred working*.

Feedback from participants demonstrates that the conference strongly met its aims. Participants consistently highlighted the importance of lived experience, relational learning, and the integration of theory and practice. Compassion was understood not as an abstract value, but as something active - something that requires humility, attentiveness and action when working alongside parents.

The inclusive and respectful atmosphere enabled honest dialogue across countries, disciplines and experiences. Participants described feeling safe to reflect, challenge assumptions and learn from one another. The conference has had a clear impact on professional identity, teaching practice and future ambitions.

This report centres participant voices and reflects IPCN's shared commitment to seeing parents as subjects with histories, strengths and agency. It also offers learning for future IPCN activity, ensuring the network continues to grow with humility and care.



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1. Introduction

Supporting parents who experience vulnerability, marginalisation or disadvantage requires more than technical knowledge. It requires humility, compassion and a willingness to listen, reflect and act differently. The IPCN Conference created a space in which these qualities were not only discussed, but actively practised.

Hosted by Nottingham Trent University, the conference brought together a diverse international community connected by shared values and a commitment to parent-centred working. This report captures the spirit of the event through structured reflection and participant feedback.

2. The International Parent Centred Network (IPCN)

The International Parent Centred Network is a collaboration of universities and partners across Europe committed to improving how professionals are educated to work alongside parents. IPCN values learning that is relational, ethically grounded and shaped by lived experience.

This conference represented both continuity and growth within IPCN — strengthening international relationships while deepening shared understanding of compassion and humility in practice.

3. Conference Theme, Aims and Ethos

The conference theme, *Compassion in practice: humility in parent-centred working*, framed every element of design and delivery. Compassion was approached as an ethical and relational practice that involves noticing suffering, understanding its context and taking action. Humility was understood as openness — to learning, to being challenged, and to recognising power.

Participants repeatedly noted how these principles shaped the tone of the event:

“There was a great sense of safety, respect and openness in the room.”

4. Programme Overview

The five-day programme combined:

- Keynote lectures
- Interactive theatre-based learning
- Parallel academic and practice workshops
- Student group work and presentations
- Cultural and social activities
- Field visits and IPCN network meetings

This blend supported learning across thinking, feeling and doing.



5. Participation and International Reach

Participants included students, academics and professionals from:

- Belgium
- The Netherlands
- Finland
- Lithuania
- Malta
- United Kingdom

This diversity was widely seen as a core strength:

“I loved connecting with other countries.”

“The connections made because of conversation is something I will take with me.”

6. Feedback Methodology

Feedback was collected via an anonymous online questionnaire completed by 28 participants. The survey included quantitative ratings and open-text responses. This report prioritises participant voice, aligning with IPCN’s parent-centred ethos.



7. Overall Conference Experience

The conference was rated very positively overall. Most participants reported that the conference met its aims around compassion, humility and parent-centred practice “very well” or “excellent”.

Table 1: Overall Experience – Did the Conference Meet Its Aims?

Rating	Number of Responses	Percentage
Excellent	18	64%
Good	9	32%
Fair/Other	1	4%
Total	28	100%

The overwhelming majority of participants reported that the conference met its aims to a high standard, with 96% rating the experience as “good” or “excellent”.

Participants frequently described the atmosphere as safe, respectful and relational, enabling engagement across cultures and disciplines:

“There was a great sense of safety, respect and openness in the room.”

“Everything in the event felt very helpful for me.”

“It worked very good in my opinion.”

“Stunning venue, everything considered.”

The sense of connection was particularly important:

“I liked connecting with other countries.”

“The connection with others was the most valuable.”

“Coming together and hearing different perspectives was very thought provoking and motivating.”

Many participants expressed appreciation for the experience overall:

“Thank you for the amazing week.”

“Thank you for this opportunity and all the knowledge I have gained.”

“It was a beautiful experience.”



8. Learning Design: Theory, Practice and Lived Experience

A core strength of the conference was the balance between theoretical insight, professional experience and lived experience. This blended approach enabled participants to connect ideas with real-world contexts and emotional understanding.

Table 2: Balance of Theory, Practice and Lived Experience

Response Option	Number	Percentage
Very well	17	61%
Mostly	10	36%
Not really	1	3%
Total	28	100%

Participants strongly affirmed the balance of learning approaches, with only minimal critique, primarily focused on increasing interactivity.

Participants highlighted the impact of lived experience and personal storytelling:

"The personal stories related to teaching compassion really stayed with me."

"Just honest stories of keynote speakers and their lives."

"The great personal stories in the keynotes or workshops."

Interactive elements were also highly valued:

"The interactive lessons."

"The theatre and interactive practice really stood out."

"Because it was interactive, the content really stuck with me."

Participants emphasised the importance of experiential learning:

"The way we worked together made it easier to understand different perspectives."

"Group work was interesting because people come from different systems."

The integration of approaches was widely seen as effective:

"Each speaker spoke from the heart, and that meant a lot."

"The mix of approaches really helped the learning stay with me."

9. Organisation, Space and Environment

Participants described the conference as well organised, welcoming and thoughtfully structured:

"Instructions were clear."

"We knew where we needed to be and when."

"Communication worked well, and the signage was clear."

Small environmental and logistical elements were particularly appreciated:

"The coffee and tea each morning so you could ease into the day was nice."

"The refreshments were a great bonus."

Participants also offered constructive reflections, demonstrating engagement and investment in the event:

"Some sound or mic issues."

"The acoustics were challenging in the room."

"Rooms should be properly available for the whole time frame."

Suggestions around pacing and energy included:

"The days were quite long."

"Maybe a little more free time."

These reflections provide valuable learning for future IPCN events while affirming the overall positive experience.



10. Parent-Centred Practice in Action

A key strength of the conference was the consistent emphasis on parent-centred thinking, not only as a concept but as a lived practice.

Participants reflected on shifts in perspective:

"A family is not always a mum and a dad."

"There are no dysfunctional parents — there are dysfunctional buffers."

"Seeing parents not just for their behaviour but their situation."

There was strong recognition of the importance of context:

"What may look like failure is often circumstances."

"Parents are shaped by their experiences and history."

Participants also identified the importance of recognising diversity:

"Own experiences and the many different sides which were displayed."

"Different perspectives helped me understand more."

These insights highlight a move toward more relational, contextual and compassionate approaches to working with parents.



11. Compassion and Humility: Key Learning Themes

Compassion emerged strongly as an active and practice-based concept:

"Compassion is about actually doing something."

"Compassion includes action."

"You have to take action!"

Participants reflected on humility as an essential professional stance:

"Everybody has a judgement — it's okay, recognise it and park it."

"You have to understand before wanting to be understood."

There was also recognition of structural challenges:

"Institutions can be cruel contexts."

"We need to resist through humility and compassion."

Participants connected compassion to awareness and reflection:

"Importance of awareness."

"Reflection and action."

These responses demonstrate depth of engagement with the core theme and its implications for practice.



12. Voices from Participants

The following anonymised reflections capture the depth and diversity of learning:

"Sometimes people react in a way you might not understand — that doesn't make it wrong."

"Humanity in any kind of relationship."

"Compassion is to connect and take action."

"System-centred versus parent-centred thinking."

"Understanding trauma and intergenerational impact."

"There are a lot of takeaways — we can always learn from the other person."

"Do what you feel inspired to do."

"Encouraging contact between students from different countries was really powerful."

"The interactive workshop day really stayed with me."

"The keynotes left a great impression on me."



13. Impact on Practice, Teaching and Professional Identity

Table 3: Most Impactful Elements of the Conference

Element	Frequency
Workshops / Parallel Sessions	22
Lived Experience Contributions	21
Networking & Informal Discussion	20
Keynote Talks	18
Cultural / Social Activities	16
Student Group Work	14

Learning was experienced as relational and interactive, with lived experience, workshops and networking emerging as the most valued components.

Participants described meaningful impact on future practice and thinking:

"This will change how I work with parents."

"I gained ideas for my own teaching."

"The experience was thought-provoking and motivating."

Students highlighted growth in confidence and awareness:

"I learned things that I will use in my future."

Academics emphasised pedagogical learning:

"Valuable ideas for my own teaching."

Across all groups, there was a shared sense of renewed purpose:

"Compassion work back to its place."

Table 4: Likelihood of Recommending IPCN Conference

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes, definitely	25	89%
Yes, somewhat	3	11%
No	0	0%

The conference achieved extremely strong endorsement, reflecting high satisfaction and perceived value.

14. Looking Ahead: Learning and Development

Participants provided thoughtful suggestions for future improvement:

"More interactive elements in sessions."

"More time for workshops."

"Include students in field trips."

"Longer breaks would help."

There were also suggestions to further strengthen the IPCN approach:

"Make parents more centred in the programme."

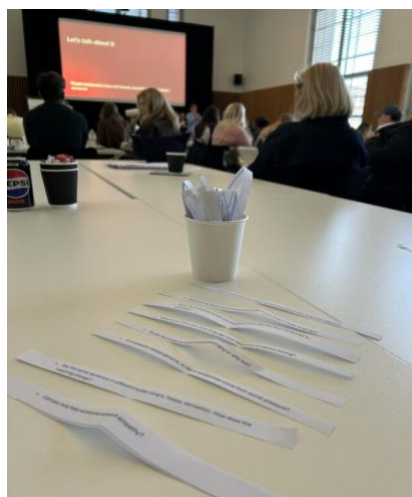
"Balance compassion and parent-centred practice."

Importantly, these reflections were framed positively:

"You did an amazing job."

"Everything was very well organised."

"IPCN is a gem worth protecting and promoting."



15. Conclusion and Appreciation

The IPCN Conference 2026 stands as a powerful example of international collaboration grounded in compassion, humility and parent-centred values. Participant feedback affirms its impact and highlights the importance of creating learning spaces that are relational, inclusive and ethically grounded.

The organising team extends sincere thanks to all givers of feedback, speakers, facilitators, students, partners, parents with lived experience, events team, administrators and contributors who made this conference possible and kept the IPCN mission alive.

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