

Notes from the meeting of the Plymouth Parent & Family Forum

Chaucer Way Primary School

Monday, 06 February 2006

6.30 pm – 8.30pm

Introduction

Peter Jones introduced the second meeting of the Forum and reflected back on the hopes and aspirations people had shared at the first Forum meeting. He then outlined the Agenda for the evening.

Maria Chase (Information Support Worker, Parent Partnership)

Discussed the importance of ensuring that Forum members represent a wide range of views as possible. This should include representation from geographical communities, the views of parents and families with a specific area of interest e.g. disability and providers of Children's Services. Parent Partnership has sought to achieve this by inviting representation from as many groups as possible from across the City. Unfortunately some of the people who expressed an interest have not been able to attend this evening. The list of representatives invited to attend was read out.

Feedback on the Proposed structure of Forum

Forum Working Group

Denise Fitzpatrick - parent and Chair, Lisa Bligh - parent, Bob Burton - parent, & Maria Chase - PPPS.

Denise Fitzpatrick (Chair of Parent Partnership Development Group)

- Explained the purpose of the working group was to identify a proposed structure for the Forum to bring to this meeting for consideration.
- It had been agreed that Parent Partnership would take the lead in facilitating this process until structures and details were in place.
- Clarified what has been done so far within the working group.
- Emphasised the Forum is in the process of development
- It was agreed that Denise will initially chair the first two Forum meetings.
- Proposals from the working group to develop the Forum's structure were outlined, inviting those present to vote with a show of hands.

Following discussion, agreement was reached on:

Frequency of meetings – agreed to meet every three months.

Timings of Meetings – agreed to alternate times between daytime and evening meetings.

Venue – agreed to compile a list of possible venues and to use different venues across the City according to availability.

- Suggestions for possible venues included: Quaker House at Mutley, Onward House at Greenbank, Highfield Community Centre Efford, Honicknowle Youth & Community Centre, YMCA, Naval Community Centres, Plym View Community Room,

Dates of next meetings:

- Friday 5th May - 9.30 a.m. for a 10:00 a.m. start at Honicknowle Community Centre
- Wednesday 12th July - 6:00 p.m. for a 6.30 p.m. start -Venue to be confirmed

Agenda for future meetings:

- It was agreed that in the first instance the agenda would be agreed by the Forum Working Group.
- In the future this could be arranged and organised within the whole Forum.

Agreed outline for the agenda:

- Agree previous notes
- Matters arising
- Guest speaker to address a particular issue
- Small working groups to discuss
- Feedback/plenary

Forum Chair person:

- It was agreed that a Chair was needed for the Forum
- Chair should be someone from the Working Group
- Denise will fulfil that role for the next meeting.

Forum Working Group:

- Agreed a minimum of five and maximum of ten people
- Meetings would be held at least once, possibly twice, between Forum meetings
- 8 people volunteered to sit on the Working Group –Caroline Jones, Glyn Griffiths, Linda Buckly, Jo Bussell, Edith Bayley, Bob Burton, Debbie Palmer, Denise Fitzpatrick.

Parent Partnership will endeavour to cover any out of pocket expenses incurred to enable people to attend Forum meetings.

Individuals attending were invited to introduce themselves and whom they represent.

Developments across the City of parent's involvement and widening Forum participation were discussed.

- 6 Extended Schools clusters and 43 named neighbourhoods in the City
- need to gain some sense of what is happening in neighbourhoods and seek parent's views on service development
- extended schools roll out will inform service provision in neighbourhoods
- the Forum can act as an umbrella for other smaller forums to feed in to
- the Forum acts as a vehicle to ensure the voice of the wider community and communities of interests are heard and that it is a true representation of parent's views
- Parent Partnership will help to bring issues for wider consultation to the Forum
- School-based Parent Partners (PPPS volunteers) are in a good position to seek the views of parents and know their locality.
- Sure Starts and Children's Centres have detailed knowledge of services in their area
- It was felt the Forum will develop its own agenda and momentum
- Important to remember that Forum members are representing the views of their community and /or areas of interest
- It is suggested that the Forum needs to engage with Councillors and identify the parent representatives who sit on Council committees.
- There is no (child) cut off age for parent representation. The experience of all parents and carers is relevant for the development of services for children and families. Need to hold the focus on parents.
- Need to consider the forward planning of Forum meetings to enable other consultation to feed in.
- Health are already seeking the views of children and young people directly
- Having guest speakers at meetings can be useful but a two way dialogue needs to be maintained
- Change Up – a voluntary sector 10 year vision that devolves power from top down, to shift the power balance, is being developed.

Richenda Broad (Development Officer for Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership)

Presentation on the national and local progress of Children's Services

- Explained what it means to make 'Every Child Matter' and the Government's initiative.
- Summarised good practice and how it relates to inspections and outcomes.

- A child centred, outcome led vision
- Inspections from government will be looking to see how the child's life has changed from its contact with a service.
- Inspectors will now be looking for qualitative differences rather than quantitative evidence, e.g. fewer exclusions, a reduction in ASBOs and tribunals etc.
- Local authorities will need to demonstrate the positive impact Children's Services have on children, young people and families.
- Within the delivery of universal Children's Services to meet the Every Child Matters 5 outcomes, there are eight priority areas for targeted and specialist services. These are:
 - Physical health and well-being
 - 0-11 years
 - 11-19 years
 - Mental health and psychological well-being
 - Children with disabilities and long-term conditions
 - Looked after children
 - Teenage pregnancy and sexual health
 - Young people's Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)
- It was suggested that the Forum Working Group might want to focus on these eight priority areas.

Questions

Other service providers in the room were invited to contribute to the discussion / response to questions.

Fiona Fleming (Joint Commissioning Officer for Local Authority Children's Services)

- Described how the Authority buys in services and the tendering process
- The required outcome from a service is described in the tender
- It has a descriptor that evidences the outcome and how it can be achieved.
- The tender is no longer static but requires more dialogue.
- The Joint Commissioning Officer's post will be covered by the summer whilst the post holder is on maternity leave
- Organisations submitting bids for tender are carefully selected and considered within the local and national context of their service provision /delivery

The Big Event

Flyers for the event distributed

- People can come for the whole day or part of the day.
- Coffee and tea will be served from 9.30am-6pm.
- No formal lunch break, it will be provided over a 2-hour period.
- There will be no set agenda. In the first hour people will sit in a large group so issues for discussion can be generated

- The issues people raise will then be the discussion for each group.
- Each working group will generate key points.
- The idea is to develop a vision for Children's Services
- It is open to everybody.
- Encourage parents to attend and make their views known.

Plymouth Principles from HAZ (Health Action Zone) Parenting Project

- HAZ Parenting Project was a working group that established key principles relating to quality standards for services working with children and families.
- Forum members were invited to take these Principles back to their representative groups to gather feedback
- Ask if groups would want to agree and adopt the Principles as quality standards for providers delivering services to parents and families.
- The Principles could provide a self evaluation framework for service provision
- It was agreed that the Principles were a good model that service providers would want to work towards.

It was concluded that the Forum is now functional and will continue to develop. The meeting was closed with thanks to all for attending.

Maria Chase
Information Support Worker
Plymouth Parent Partnership Service
February 2006