

Notes of Plymouth Parent and Family Forum
5th May 2006 10.00 – 12.00
Honicknowle Community Centre

Attendees

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| Denise Fitzpatrick- | Parent Partnership Development Group Chair |
| Carol Henwood | - Extended Schools Coordinator |
| Richenda Broad | - Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, Development Officer |
| Maggie Carter | - Head of Learner Support Service |
| Verity Jones | - Social Services, Asst Director Strategy & Performance Division |
| David Forrest | - Social Services, Strategic Partnerships |
| Jan West | - Plymouth Association of Governors |
| Helen McLindon | - Children's Services Commissioner, Health |
| Kay O'Shaughnessy | - Parent of Children with Disabilities |
| Liane Cvetanovic | - Surestart Keystone |
| Jeanette Chinnock | - Foster Carer/Parent Partner |
| Marcia Hipwell | - Foster Carer |
| Casey Mitchell | - Honicknowle COMNET Ltd |
| Liz Brown | - Parent, Stoke Damerell Community College |
| Jo Bussell | - School Based Parent Partner, John Kitto |
| Toni Steels | - School Based Parent Partner, Lipson |
| Debbie Palmer | - School Based Parent Partner, John Kitto |
| Caroline Jones | - School Based Parent Partner, Plymview |
| Bob Burton | - School Based Parent Partner, Lipson |
| Alison Casey | - School Based Parent Partner, Plymview |
| Edith Bayley | - Parent Partner |
| Verna Pollard | - Parent Partner |
| Peter Jones | - Parent Partnership Service Manager |
| Jane Taylor | - Parent Partnership Service Development Leader |
| Maria Chase | - Parent Partnership Service Information Support Worker |
| Angela Archer | - Parent Partnership Service Administrative Assistant |
| Simon Redfern | - Parent Partnership Service, observer. |

Welcome and Introductions

Denise Fitzpatrick, Forum Chair

- Opened meeting.

Maria Chase

- Recapped the main points from the last meeting of the Parent and Family Forum with particular reference to the 'Plymouth Principles' (see attachment). It was agreed by a show of hands that the Forum would adopt the Plymouth Principles.

Peter Jones

- Emphasised that the Plymouth Parent and Family Forum is the recognised forum for service providers to consult with parents and carers.

Request from the floor that the use of jargon and acronyms should be avoided.

Denise Fitzpatrick

- Reviewed main points from the notes of the previous meeting. All agreed that they were an accurate record.
- Gave an overview of the work of the Forum Working Group

Handover of Chair

Denise Fitzpatrick formally handed over the role of Forum Chair to Jo Bussell

Widening Parent Representation

Jo Bussell

- Outlined that the current priority for the forum is to have the widest possible participation of parent groups and service providers, and invited comments from the floor on who should be included:
 - Forces Families
 - Teachers and Head teachers
 - Childminders
 - Nursery providers
 - Grandparents
 - Police
 - Parent-to-Parent groups
 - Housing
 - Young Parents
 - Providers of services for disabled children (hands on workers)
 - Devonport
- Attempts have been made to contact some of the groups listed above for representation, but without success (see attached list). It was suggested that anyone with personal contacts to the 'missing' groups should contact Plymouth Parent Partnership Service so an official invitation can be made.
- It was agreed that Plymouth Parent Partnership Service would produce an official invite letter to send to all new invitees.

ACTION 1
- A query was raised regarding the level of participation by schools and governors. PPPS Development Group has representatives from the three head teacher associations – primary, secondary and special. It was suggested that an invitation could be extended to them.

- Jan West will continue to attend the Forum as a representative of the Plymouth Association of Governors, and will pass information both ways so that all school governing bodies are kept up to date and that feedback from them is passed to the Forum.
- It was highlighted that all attendees must put forward the views of the group they represent and ensure that information is passed both ways.
- A suggestion was made that information about the forum be placed on notice boards in Doctors' Surgeries and Community Centres around the City
- Forum Working Group to agree a text and format for an information flyer, Plymouth Parent Partnership Service to administer the process.

ACTION 2

- Suggestions were made regarding the development of a dedicated website for the Plymouth Parent and Family Forum outside of the information currently held on Plymouth Parent Partnership Service website.
- As the forum becomes more established the working party will be actively pursuing publicity through the local press.
- Plymouth Parent Partnership Service has experience in working with Parents who have learning difficulties and will facilitate contact with them. It was requested that any attendees with suggestions on how this group of parents can best be supported contact Plymouth Parent Partnership Service.

Presentation from Verity Jones, Assistant Director of the Strategy and Performance Directorate – The tendering process for Social Care in Plymouth

- Explanation given regarding the four tenders for provision of services in Plymouth.

Questions to Verity

- Regarding user representation on the tendering panel, questions were raised regarding how the parent representatives were chosen, as many extremely active parents were entirely unaware of the process. It was pointed out that the panel members were not so much parent representatives as parents with significant experience in the areas of need being tendered for.
- It was agreed that in future all requests for parent views and parent representative would come through the Forum.

- There is currently a 2-month slippage in the timetable for tenders being awarded so it is unlikely to occur until the end of May 2006. The impact of this is that, unfortunately, services will not be in place in time for Carers' Week on the 10th June 2006. However, every effort will be made to offer something. Verity will liaise with Denise Fitzpatrick concerning this issue.

ACTION 3

- Discussed eligibility criteria. David Forrest will be working with Social Services to develop the eligibility criteria, and he will be contacting Devon County Council to find out how they assess eligibility. Feedback will be given at the next meeting

ACTION 4

- Stringent performance targets will be in place to ensure that the new service providers meet their obligations. The process has been externally validated and services will be reviewed annually. Relevant parents will be included in this process and contract monitoring has been tightened. There will also be an in built probationary period for all contracts.
- Social Services are well aware of the need for consequences for providers that do not perform. There will be financial penalties for those that do not. Verity will look into the recourse available for parents and report back to the next Forum.

ACTION 5

- Performance will no longer be assessed by numbers, but rather by outcome and impact. This is not the traditional way of assessment, but the aim is that parents will see a real improvement.
- The Forum as a whole would be grateful for more information regarding any services that may be lost. In particular, what will be put in place to fill any gaps left after the tendering process is complete.

Service Developments – what do parents want to know?

- Concerns were raised about the attitudes and services offered to the parents and foster carers of looked after children. For example, a foster carer does not receive a copy of any Statement of Special Educational Needs issued in respect of their foster child. It was felt that there is a need for better access to Social Services and more clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- The recent inspection of Social Services has picked up this issue and work has begun to address the concerns raised. Any input from parents and foster carers would be welcomed. Plymouth Parent Partnership Service will work with foster carers and report back to the Forum.

ACTION 6

Service Developments – what do providers and commissioners want to know?

- As the Forum is the official body to approach when parents' views are sought, the providers and commissioners attending the meeting were given the opportunity to explain what they hope to achieve through the forum.
- Plymouth Parent Partnership Service will act as a conduit between service providers and the Forum, and to this end will collate a list of which groups the Forum attendees represent.

ACTION 7

- It was agreed that there must be a permanent agenda item allowing service providers to use the forum to gather the views of parents.

ACTION 8

- Service providers would welcome any feedback from the Forum on how they can best encourage parent participation, and it was emphasised that the focus would be on participation, not consultation. To this end the suggestion was made that the Forum working group develop 'Plymouth Participation Principles' to be agreed by the Forum.

ACTION 9

- Peter Jones reiterated that there was no desire to have a preset structure for the Forum meetings, and that anyone with ideas regarding the direction of the Forum should feel free to contact Plymouth Parent Partnership Service.

AOB.

- Maggie Carter informed attendees that the Joint Annual Review (JAR) of Plymouth Children's Services will be held in September 2006, and inspectors will be looking for input from parents and carers. Further information will be placed on the website in due course.
- Helen McClindon informed attendees that there would be an event at Plymouth Pavilions on 15th June regarding health issues in the city, and that those wishing to attend should collect an application form.
- Any volunteers for the Forum working group should contact Maria Chase at Plymouth Parent Partnership Service.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 12th July at 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.

Actions List

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| Action 1 | Produce official Parent Forum invite letter to send to new invitees | Plymouth Parent Partnership Service |
| Action 2 | Produce information flyer for doctors' surgeries and community centres | Plymouth Parent Partnership Service and Forum Working Group |
| Action 3 | Discuss representation of service providers at carers' week | Denise Fitzpatrick and Verity Jones |
| Action 4 | Feedback to Forum regarding eligibility criteria information gathered. | David Forrest |
| Action 5 | Feedback to Forum regarding procedure for complaints against new service providers | Verity Jones |
| Action 6 | Carry out research project in conjunction with Foster Carers to assess their needs | Plymouth Parent Partnership Service |
| Action 7 | Collate list of which groups the Forum attendees represent | Forum Working Group |
| Action 8 | Parent views to be ongoing agenda item | Forum Working Group |
| Action 9 | Produce draft list of principles for parent participation. | Forum Working Group |