

Notes of the Plymouth Parent and Family Forum

21 November 2006

6.00 pm – 9.00 pm

North Prospect Community School

Welcome and Introductions

- SR welcomed all attendees and thanked CW, head teacher of North Prospect Community School for providing the venue and childcare.
- Apologies were received from PJ, JT and MC of Plymouth Parent Partnership Service and JB, chair of the Forum Working Group.
- BB will be acting as chair in JB absence
- BB welcomed all and provided an introduction to the Parent and Family Forum for new attendees.

1. Feedback on Forum Activities

Integrated Disabled Services

- Notes on Advice and Information Service for Disabled Children's Services have been passed to the Integrated Services committee.
- Any further feedback is welcomed.
- Work is continuing on the roles and responsibilities of those working with children.
- Input is still needed from parents of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders or Down's syndrome.
- Special schools are represented on the committee and are involved but still need a parent to join them.
- Reorganizing how the 3 services will come together to provide services for children.
- Appealed for more reps, anyone interested should contact the Parent and Family Forum working group via Plymouth Parent Partnership Service.

PJ, JT and EB have also been working together regarding the clarity of information for parents. Please contact Plymouth Parent Partnership Service if you would like to see what has been considered so far and add your own input. None of the ideas are set in stone at this stage.

2. Register of Parents' Interests

SR distributed a form for registering interests to all attendees and gave an overview of its purpose.

- As more services are seeking to engage parents it would be useful to hold a central list of parent's' interests and areas of expertise. This will allow suitable parent representative to be identified more readily.
- Plymouth Parent Partnership Service will hold this information as a database and will contact parents as appropriate. Information will not be shared with service providers without the express permission of the parent.
- The register will also allow the working group to identify areas not represented at the Forum and help improve engagement
- Feedback on the form was invited

3. Terms of Reference and Mission Statement for the Parent and Family Forum

- The Forum working group and Plymouth Parent Partnership Service have been working on terms of reference and a mission statement for the Parent and Family Forum. SR gave a presentation of the first draft.
- Feedback on this will be taken back to the working group and a final draft will be presented at the next Forum meeting when members will be able to vote on whether to adopt them.
- Comments on the current draft were invited and a discussion was held. The principle issues raised were:
 - The possibility of a formal mechanism for electing parent representatives from parent support groups.
 - Language used in the terms of reference should be simplified so that it is more accessible.
 - A maximum number of Forum attendees and an equal balance of service providers/commissioner and parent representatives.
 - Will parents be allowed to attend the Forum if they are not part of a formal parent group?
- SR also appealed for more parent representatives to join the Forum working group. Anyone interested should contact Plymouth Parent Partnership Service.

4. What do parents want to know?

- Regarding voluntary contributions for school trips. Many are being cancelled because some parents are unable to pay; this is perceived as penalizing those parents who do pay.
 - School governors voted on this issue and it was agreed that the school cannot enforce payment but equally cannot expect parents to pay more to cover the cost of other children. The school had to set a limit of how much of the cost it could absorb. This is a matter for the governors of individual schools. For residential trips only part of the cost can be enforced.
 - Schools take the view that if a trip is during the school day all children should be involved.

- Parents of children with ADHD/ASD are still facing difficulties in gaining recognition for their child's additional needs. Provision of support ceases when the child reaches 18 regardless of their stage of development. More practical help is needed.
 - The new Parent Support Advisers (PSA) will be able to assist parents in accessing services; however the PSA project does not cover all schools in the city.
 - The extended services advisor is currently doing an audit of provision in the city to establish where there are gaps.

5. Service Developments – What do service providers want to know?

Requests for volunteers:

- A parent representative is needed for the PSA Project Advisory group. Expressions of interest should be forwarded to Plymouth Parent Partnership Service.
- GS asked for parent representatives to attend a visionary day regarding the future for secondary schools in the city on 4th December 2006. This is an opportunity for parents to 'think big'.

CS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

- Requested parent input on two areas of work:
 - Infant Mental Health Services (ages 0-5) will be bringing together various professionals to work to improve services. This group will be seeking to improve collaborative working and needs parent input.
 - CAMHS is writing a strategy to prevent adolescent suicide, which is a national problem. How can services recognize problems early to take preventative action? The aim is for this to be a used and useful document drawing together existing plans and policy with input from Police, coroner and schools. Parent involvement and input is welcomed although the mechanism for gaining this is not fixed. It could be documentation from group of parents, via feedback to the Forum, or from individual parents attending strategy meetings.

RB – Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)

- A meeting of CYPSP was held to discuss how to develop services to support parents/carers/young people. RB charged with developing the strategy which will inform the direction but not the detail. There is an existing document which can be developed into a Family Support Strategy.
- This development won’t work without strong input from parents and carers.
- The city needs to develop a single approach. How services can fit together. Childcare and travel costs can be covered for parents attending events.

6. AOB

- Foster carer survey is now going ahead should be completed soon. Feedback will be given to participants as soon as it becomes available.
- Alcohol & Young People. What is the city doing regarding young people drinking heavily? Could there be a discussion of this at the next Forum.
 - Children’s Fund is carrying out a survey regarding drinking. The issues and priorities on this are being set by central government. The majority of funding is linked to work with substance misuse. RB can take this request for information back to the lead officer and will invite to next Forum or feedback to PPPS.
 - HMCL will ask public health what action is currently being taken and bring to next Forum.
 - It may be possible to invite someone from the Life Centre to next Forum.
- Extended Services consultation needs parent reps for the neighbourhoods. Individual schools have further details of how to participate.
- Efford Children’s Centre has its own forum and wants parent attendees. Contact the Children’s Centre directly for further information.

7. Date of Next meeting

- Thursday 1st March 2007 - The meeting starts at 9.00am for 9.30am and will finish promptly at 11.30am.

Venue

Plym View Primary School - Main Hall