

## **Notes of the Plymouth Parent and Family Forum**

**25<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

**9:30 am – 12:00 pm**

### **Welcome Hall, Devonport**

#### **1. Welcome and Introduction of new members**

- Welcome to all attending, particularly the new parent representatives. Also welcome to GB from the Parkside Action Team, AW, Travellers' Representative and to the Family Workers from the Excellence Cluster.
- Apologies from JB,.
- BB established that the views raised at today's Forum are the views of the groups that are represented and should not be the personal views of parents that are attending.

#### **2. Service Developments – what do parents want to know?**

MC, along with AJ, (Team Leader, Special Services) and TE, (Statementing Officer), answered questioned raised at the last forum regarding SEN Provision and budgets. The questions and answers are listed below:

1. It is recommended that 5% of school budgets are kept for SEN – how is this being monitored?
  - AJ – one way to monitor this is through annual reviews. This process is currently being updated. AJ would also want to know how the schools are operating this through checking paperwork. All schools are now updating their Provision Mapping in order to show where the funding is going.
2. How does the Local Authority set aside appropriate funds?
  - MC – This is up to the government. Funding can be provided specifically for SEN but general funding would have to be encouraged for SEN. We are currently looking at making sure that SENCOs understand this subject area.
  - AJ – Schools are now looking at SENCOs to be more involved with the budgeting scheme. Now they will get breakdowns of how the budget works for SEN. Staff from the PIET Team help to identify effective use of resources in schools.
3. How can the needs of children with statements who have moved to Plymouth be met?
  - MC – The Local Authorities differ across the region and across the country. Plymouth has a high percentage of statements (3.4%) – some other Local Authorities do not issue the same percentage of

statements. Schools are required to meet the needs of children with statements. However, if a child has moved to Plymouth with a statement from another Local Authority, we would have to look in to that.

- TE – We would try to match the provision in a statement for a child from another authority with our own process of making provision. We would refer to an Educational Psychologist for advice but in the meantime we would continue with the child's statement.
  - MC – in Plymouth we are aware of the level of provision in each school, so we assess the need for a statement and any additional provision in context of each school.
  - AJ – remember we have Special Schools and we would have to assess this too.
  - MC – we would consult the parent from the beginning.
4. Do all schools have governors for SEN? And how are they involved with the budget for SEN?
- MC – Yes, all schools must have a governor with responsibility for SEN.
  - AJ – Now the SEN governors work closely with and are trained by the SENCO's.
  - MC – The governors have access to the school budget and can challenge the subject of SEN funding
  - A school governor in the audience said where she is based, they have programme of training.
5. There are more SEN pupils in mainstream schools - how are the provisions funded for residential trips?
- AJ – in this case, usually teaching assistants go on the trips. Funding for this is worked out within the school.
  - MC – when funding is devolved to schools it is based on a formula, therefore the school must manage their budget for a range of things. Therefore this is an in-school management issue.
6. There are mainstream SEN pupils who require special equipment – who funds this?
- MC – This has the same answer as the last question. If the child has an extreme physical disability it may be different.
7. Some schools are pushing for statements in order to obtain extra funds. How is this being dealt with?
- MC – It costs around £3000 to go through the statementing process overall, so we try to let the schools know that the money is devolved to them. Sometimes there are other incentives for statements, not just schooling. There is a rigorous approach to when assessing whether a statement is required.
  - TE – we have a panel that obtains as much information as possible from the parents/school. Paperwork is looked at carefully and there are strict criteria. If no statement is given then the reasons for this will be explained to the parents/school.

- AJ – If a child has a statement with no extra funding on it, it's the same as School Action Plus. There are a lot of options now to help a child; therefore it is better to go through the statementing process after trying these options first.
- MC – We have a system of devolving funding. The reality is that schools change and their attitudes change and they try to raise the profile of SEN. We recognise that there is always a need to support and challenge this area.
- AJ – we need parents to talk to us about it, as we are here to support this area.
- A parent in the audience queried the meaning of a 'statemented child', as her son was due to be statemented but this did not happen. MC confirmed that in the case of individual situations, a parent should talk directly to AJ and her Team. PJ also suggested that the parent could contact Plymouth Parent Partnership Service for information and support.
- BB asked the Forum if anyone wants Plymouth Parent Partnership Service to give training sessions on School Action Plus and the Statementing Process – a number of hands were raised. PPPS will look into this.

### **3 Service Developments – what do service providers/commissioners want to know?**

- HY from The Zone talked about the Young Carers Project.  
The service for young carers:
  - Raises awareness in schools.
  - Does consultations and referrals.
  - Ensures that parenting skills are not demeaned.
  - Creates individual Young Persons Plans.
  - Will help with resolving difficult situations.
  - Provides one to one support sessions.
  - Gets young carers involved in mainstream activities.
  - Provides services for 8-12 year old groups but not within The Zone (as their age group service provides for 16-25), so they are using the Theatre Royal facility (TR2) at Cattdown for this age group.
- BB - We've had a request from the NHS Southwest Review to provide parent representation at 3 meetings the purpose of these meetings is to discuss the future of the NHS for children and young people.. It was hoped that Parents would be able to attend all 3 dates 12<sup>th</sup> October, 9<sup>th</sup> November and the 20<sup>th</sup> November. Volunteers were asked to contact BB.
- PJ spoke about CAMHS and the Starting School Project:
  - CS informed PJ that CAMHS would put a paper out which they want parents to respond to. PJ will make requests for responses once the paper is out. Feedback for this is important.
  - PJ explained the series of Starting Schools Project Sessions taking place in schools – (engaging with parents after their child has started primary or moved into secondary school) – explained parent's involvement with the schooling of their child – involving different

partnership roles. The project will be starting at all PSA schools this term and will be rolled out to all schools from September 2008.

- AM spoke about the Parent and Family Support Strategy Steering group and requested that two parent representatives could join the group. This group would meet fortnightly. Parents would alternate so that they only attended 1 meeting a month.

#### **4. Forum activities**

- PJ gave an overview of the Foster Carers Survey, which was carried out by Plymouth Parent Partnership Service at the request of the Forum. It was completed by early July and is now on the Plymouth Parent Partnership Service website. The research indicated that there is a lot of variability in levels of support for foster carers. It also expressed improvements that are needed. KM has been made aware of survey results (as SS has moved post). We are still waiting for a response from KM regarding the survey.
- There was a request at the last Forum for two people to come forward as parent representatives on the Schools Admissions Forum. KO is the representative for Primary Schools and CE is the representative for Secondary Schools.
- CE spoke as a representative. At the last Admissions Forum they looked at the transition process from primary to secondary school. The system has now changed and is based on equal preferences.
- The two representatives on the Shadow Children's Trust Board will provide feed back at the next Forum.
- DS gave a talk at the last forum and he requested feedback. Over 25 responses were received. BB read out DS's response to this. DS has expressed his thanks for the feedback. He is currently working on a strategy for the city and would appreciate more feedback in the future.
- BB reminded the forum about the Members Interests forms. Forum members can fill these in to show which areas of experience they would be interested in representing.

#### **5. Angela Edmunds (Plymouth NHS Trust)**

##### **Consulting on becoming an NHS Foundation Trust**

- Explained that a Foundation Trust is free from central government and SHA Trust. It would incorporate various bodies that would monitor how things are run.
- It would be accountable to its members, (not to the Strategic Health Authority as it is now). People at the Forum were encouraged to consider becoming members.
- It is important that people have more of a say in how the Health Services are run.
- There would be a better framework for partnership working.
- Went through positive points of the current service, the Vision Statement and Values and the Strategic Aims which includes Children's and Young People's Services in it's top four.

- Safety, Quality and Efficiency are now focused on more.
- Goes through the Care Services' Aims. They will work with GP's and non-hospital bases for this also.
- CAMHS will be increased over the South West.
- Access and Facilities – referred to car parking at Derriford Hospital. They are aware of the difficulties and confirmed there will be a multi-storey car park at Derriford in the next two years. They are also aware of how negative the environment can be in Derriford Hospital – they are looking to improve it and to recruit the best staff. There will be more training and development. Part of the Foundation Trust application is to change the name to Plymouth University Hospitals Foundation Trust.
- They are working closely with the Peninsula Medical School and the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter. Aiming to become a Centre of Excellence for Research and Development.
- The Vanguard Pathway Programme is a Service Improvement Programme. Part of its achievements is a new Unit for patients to wait.
- Acknowledgement of getting things right, but also where there is more to do, e.g. apologies were made for the confusion around appointment times; this will be improved.
- It was confirmed that you have to be over 16 years to be a Trust Member. Membership can be restricted.
- Communication would preferably be electronic due to the large amount of members the Trust is hoping to attract.
- AE confirmed she was there to get our views – have up until 7<sup>th</sup> October to get views in.
- There will be an informal application made to the Secretary of State in November, who will make a decision. Authorisation will be given in April 2008 – there may be a delay due to amount of applications at moment.
- Question asked about funding. AA answered that they get money from the Primary Care Trust. However they would get to invest any surplus back into services/hospitals if they are efficient enough, which they aim to be.
- PJ asked about the concerns of parents with children who have multiple disabilities. They are worried that only the majority are being catered for and those with such specialist needs are being neglected.
- AE answered that those services will be protected. They are looking at not only Disabled Parking but also Parent and Children Parking. It is not in their interests to stop such services. Such cases may be referred to the Primary Care Trust but they'll be working closely with them.
- A question was raised regarding fees for car parking. There are sensitivity issues alongside this. Also enquired in to the cost of the patient line, which is considered to be very expensive.
- AE – this is very important. They do set the car park fee. It is necessary in order to maintain the car park. However, they are reviewing the length of time for parking when paying. The patient line is a commercial organisation; therefore they don't have control of the fees for this. It was suggested that the trolley/phone/TV be brought back however it is thought that these are not appropriate for the nurses' work.
- A forum member disputed the short parking time – the appointments and in/out patient services are not quicker in her experience.
- AE said they are looking into it and it depends upon the number of in/out patients on the day.
- Forum member disputed the method of phone call follow up appointments being made rather than a face-to-face appointment check up.

- AE - this is happening more in order to not waste peoples' time and create more car park charges, it frees up more time for inpatients' operations.
- A question was raised about whether the hospitals need as many staff during the summer holidays. AA – Yes, as it is still very busy.

#### **6. Parents on the Plaza - Parents week event (13<sup>th</sup> October 2007)**

- BB explained that it is happening as a result of a forum member asking what we are going to do for Parents Week at the last forum meeting.
- BB explained that there would be a variety of attractions at the event including Pennywell Farm, Devon and Cornwall Fire Service, Plymouth Raiders etc.
- The aim of the event is to get feedback from parents on how local services can be improved.
- BB showed the event poster and the Parent and Family Forum logo. He emphasised the importance of promoting the event. Working Links are co-sponsors of the event with Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust

#### **7. Election of new Chair Person and members of the Working Group (procedures)**

- JB is standing down as Chair Person. Therefore we need a new Chair to start from January '08. There are also a couple of spaces on the Forum Working Group.
- BB invited people who are interested to come to Working Group meetings in order to get a feel for how it works.

#### **8. Dates of next meetings**

- Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November '07 (18:30 – 20:30) Honicknowle Community Centre
- Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January '08 (09:30 – 12:00) Welcome Hall
- Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March '08 (18:30 – 20:30) Venue TBC

#### **9. AOB**

- BB reminded the groups to let him know of any topics that can be discussed at future forums.

End of Forum