

**Parent Reference Group
27th January 2010**

**Old Treasury Building, Catherine Street
12:00pm-2:00pm**

- 1. Present:** LJ, TW, VH, KY-C, CM, CP, EB, KM, SB, JC, JT, SL, GO, PW
Apologies: HL
- 2. Welcome and introductions:**
 - JT welcomed everyone to the meeting. PW was introduced to the group as the Single Point of Contact Coordinator.
 - JT gave a brief history of the Parent Reference Group (PRG).
 - JT explained that there will now be two sessions on the last Wednesday of every month, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, to encourage more parent participation.
- 3. Notes of last meeting:**
- 4. Single Point of Contact (SPC) Penny Whitell**
 - SPC is due to launch on the 1st April 2010.
 - PW talked the group through the draft profile of the SPC and the questionnaire that she would like parents to fill in. The questionnaire is a way of gathering evidence to say that parents of children with complex needs above the age of five need the SPC. At the moment it is only for parents of children aged 0-5 or those who have only recently found that their children/ family have an unmet need.
 - PW was the Coordinator for Team Around the Child (TAC) which was very successful.
 - With SPC parents set the agenda and lead multi-agency meetings with the help of an Early Support Key Worker. Parents can be their own 'Key Worker' and PW can then support them. Meetings will be very clearly minuted and each professional will know exactly what actions they are supposed to take after the meeting and by when.
 - PW handed out questionnaires to the group to be filled in and given back.
 - After research SPC was found to be a priority for parents. The Children's Integrated Disability Service (ChIDS) is based around TAC and is working towards SPC. They want parents to be able to make the decisions and want to acknowledge that no two families are the same.
 - Only certain professionals are accessible through SPC, the professional needs to come under the ChIDS umbrella, which includes Paediatricians, CDC Assessment Group, Clinical Psychologists, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Specialist Health Visitors and Speech and Language Therapy.
 - Question: Can you add to the list of SPC professionals? PW will take this back to ChIDS as a question.

- PW will be able to signpost and tell parents exactly where to find other professionals if they are not under the ChIDS umbrella.
- PW sits on the Early Years Forum so will have access to Educational Psychologists.
- Question: What if a child above 5 years old needs access to an Educational Psychologist? Primary schools are only allocated three visits a year and Special Schools only receive forty hours a year. Discussion with Alan Fuller is needed.
- PW is planning to liaise with schools.
- Question: If your child is in a mainstream school and you cannot access anyone can you phone SPC? A parent can put in a request and then SPC will be set up.
- It was raised that 'Single Point of Contact' is misleading because it is only a SPC for services under ChIDS. A disclaimer is needed.
- The idea is to stop parents having to tell their story to different people/services over and over again. Why don't professionals talk to each other?
- If the referral needs to be made by someone else SPC will know who to contact.
- PW has access to Health, Social Care and Education databases so when working with a family, with their permission, she can look at all of this information. This also shows up where there are gaps in professionals working with a family, and where there is an overload of professionals. The information is then added to the ChIDS database. A print out of this information is sent to families annually to check that all of the information is correct.
- There are ten principles- no assumptions, joint assessment, integration and holistic, learning and development monitored and promoted, informed decisions, 'ordinary lives', shaping and developing services, practices and systems integrated, confidence that professionals have skills and the training.
- A 'Family File' will also be set up, which is an opportunity for parents to write down the history of the child's needs, how the family would like to be treated, any requirements e.g. child does not like busy places so can they sit in separate waiting rooms in hospital etc. It will also include a contact list of all the professionals that the family has worked with and all of the meetings that they have attended with all of the actions that took place as a result of those meetings.
- PW is also running training for the prospective Early Support Keyworker; 'Working in Partnership through Early Support'. This will be about how to help parents, how to empower parents and how to listen to parents. It is a two day course. Parents themselves always take part in the training.
- A member of the group has experienced Team Around the Child and it was a very good experience, however when the child reached five years old the approach was taken away.
- Question: If you have a Key Worker what is the role of SPC? Part of setting up a SPC is the acquisition of a Key Worker.

- Portage's support also ends at age 5. Once Portage ends parents feel very isolated. Portage do make sure that there is a smooth transition where possible.
- Question: what happens to all of the families out there who are lost but do meet the age criteria? JS will speak to managers.
- Question: What about children coming into Plymouth from another LA? There is a huge adoption population in Plymouth. LA children can have SPC and children who are going to be adopted. Penny will take this back as a question.
- Question: How do you access SPC? A request is made on the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) form. The CAF process has only been in Plymouth for the past twelve months. It involves all agencies giving informed information on your family with consent from the parent(s).
- All PSAs are given training on the CAF process in their initial training. Some are also doing further training with the PCC. PSAs cannot be the Lead Professional or a key worker this is because PSAs do not know the child, they are there to support the parent.
- Why do you need to have a CAF? CAFs give you access to the services you need, e.g. Social Workers.
- SPC is only for parents where it has recently been acknowledged that their child has additional needs.
- It used to only be for children with complex needs. This is defined by having three agencies involved with the child; health, education and social care.
- Question: If your child has had no diagnosis are they old or new? If a child still has unmet needs then they can be classed as 'new'.
- Child intake meetings take place with representatives from other teams. Question: will there be a parent sitting on the team? Probably not because confidential casework is discussed.
- Ali Richardson (ISW) could attend because she sits on the Early Years Forum. PW will take this back.
- Question: What criteria do you need to meet to get a Key Worker? Everyone is entitled to have a CAF assessment and a Key Worker is a result of that.
- PW is mostly contactable on 01752 304239.
- ACTION: PW to email JT with information to put on to the PPP website and also to hand out to all PSAs.
- Questionnaires were filled out and given back to PW. The questionnaires are a chance to participate.

5.

- Money for childcare provision for children with additional needs has been allocated to Plymouth from Aiming High. Plymouth has been awarded £89,362 to increase child care provision in the city.
- Parents do not always feel comfortable leaving their child in mainstream school when the child may not have anyone suitable to support their needs.

- The LA has a legal requirement to carry out childcare sufficiency assessments.
- The LA are now looking at barriers to childcare and also at supporting parents who may want to return to work but have no suitable childcare. This includes holiday clubs, breakfast clubs etc.
- There is a worry that the workforce cannot always look after your child correctly.
- RP will be talking about child care efficiency at the next forum.
- There is a questionnaire which will be put on to the PPP website and will be given out to PSAs.
- Training for settings can be given through PICSS (Plymouth Inclusion Childcare Support Service).
- Settings have to accept children with SEN legally.

6. Woodlands Update

- There is now a parent rep on the Woodlands Board. EB would like to be able to provide evidence of unmet needs. The Board are saying that there is not a need for the number of beds they currently have.
- ACTION: JT will put an email out to the PRG and to all special school PSAs to ask parents if they use the Woodlands Residence.
- The centre provides overnight respite for children with complex needs. It is a very expensive provision so if needs can be met elsewhere then they will do.

7. Living with Caring free workshop

- The workshop is being held in Greenbank, leaflets were passed around.
- There is also information about vacation schemes for blind/partially sighted children in mainstream settings. It will be put onto the website.

8. Aiming High Update

- JC went to a conference in Taunton Colleagues from Devon, Cornwall and Somerset were also in attendance.
- Plymouth are doing very well and have taken on more than other areas.
- There is a second Parent Participation course being run at Courtlands. Everyone is welcome.
- The funding for Aiming High needs to be spent by the 31st March.
- Can anyone eligible for expenses please put in claims for anything dating back to September 09.
- ACTION: SL to see how many meetings GA and CP have attended since September 09.
- Payments can be made to parents who attend meetings and the PRG. Receipts need to be kept for any claims. A parent must attend three things in order to be paid.
- JC is looking into a text messaging service to notify parents of meetings. This idea was taken to the regional meeting.
- A coffee morning is being held for all special schools. The Aiming High money can fund food for this meeting.

- PSAs could invite parents from mainstream schools also so that parents can share information. This will be discussed with the Head teacher of Courtlands.

9. Date of next meeting

- Wednesday 24th February.