

**Parent Reference Group  
Wednesday 26 May 2010  
Old Treasury Building, Catherine St**

**Present:** Jane Taylor, Annegret Ward, Hannah Haines, Bob Burton, Claire Paddon, Edith Bayley, Julia Donnell, Gillian Ormiston, Lyn Pashby, Angela Powell, Sally Birch, Sharon Bratchley

**Apologies:** Kevin McKenna, Gareth Allen, Marie Lilley, Claire Moore, Hayley Lee

**Welcome, introductions.**

JT welcomed everyone, including speakers AW, Staff Development Officer and HH, Policy & Planning Officer.

JT has had requests from commissioners for parent representatives to sit on evaluation panels for projects that are being considered under the Aiming High Short Breaks funding. Two parents have already volunteered but another parent representative is requested for Thursday 27 May to sit on the evaluation panel for the tendering for locality projects. Anyone interested to contact JT.

**Notes from previous meeting and matters arising**

- TY has been sent information.
- The Phase 3 grant application form has been submitted, now waiting to hear from them.
- EB talked about the Wheelchair users group:
  - Have been invited to user groups
  - Has asked them to change the meeting time
  - The first meeting will be held in June.
- EB also informed the group about a health commissioning group. EB will attend this to represent the children (re wheelchair users group).
- EB has received an email to say there have been changes in a grant. This will have an impact on the users group.

**Draft of Disability Strategy - HH, Policy & Planning Officer**

HH, Policy and Planning Officer, discussed the working draft Disability Strategy with the PR group:

- HH asked for input from the PR group to help with the phrasing of parts of the paper. The PR group discussed suitable wording and HH will take the suggestion back to HM. The suggestion made was that '*a disabled child is able to enjoy childhood experience, a successful transfer to adulthood and have the opportunity and support to achieve.*'
- The focus on disabilities is often negative; the strategy will look at a more positive approach.
- The ethos of the strategy is to change attitudes as well as to meet needs.
- The strategy is about supporting the child, rather than the parents. (They will be met in the Carers Strategy). HH asked for ideas of how to

phrase 'helping parents to help their children?' The PR group suggested '*I want my family to encourage me to do things myself. Families need to be supported, encouraged and enabled to help their child achieve.*' HH will take suggestions back.

- HH asked if the PR group preferred the word 'impairment' or had other suggestions. After discussion, the PR group concluded that they preferred the term 'additional needs' instead of 'impairment'.
- When published, the Disability Strategy will be available on the Children's Trust website and Plymouth Parent Partnership website.
- HH will email the working draft and the summary to members of the PR group to ask for further feedback from the group.

#### **AW, Workforce Development Officer:**

- AW runs an induction programme for people who have contact/ an impact on families for 1-5 year olds across the workforce. (This includes how to behave, the skills needed when working with children and families).
- The Children's Workforce Development has always wanted to have children and young people's voices represented. Children from Woodlands, Sir John Hunt and other schools have therefore produced a DVD which can be used in induction.
- Training is also involved with counteracting the negative feelings/associations around disabilities. One of the five training modules looks at equality, inclusion and discrimination. AW wants to include what parents of children with disabilities experience when meeting professionals. She invited someone from the PR group, or other groups representatives are involved with, to do an input with her to new workers ie to refresh the training module to help workers understand the 'parent'.
- Timescale: September. Eight groups per year. One group per month. The commitment would be one afternoon every two months. The group will be held at PPDC in Southway although may be run in different parts of the city.
- **Action:** JT to email the PR group and will pass any interest to AW. It was suggested that two parents attend together.
- JT borrowed a copy of the DVD 'Someone who listens'.

#### **Small Grants Application**

- Tendering bids are going in for short breaks from the Aiming High for Disabled Children Short Breaks grant.
- An amount of money is being given to each locality to develop services for children in the locality.
- One bid is tendering for weekend holidays for children with complex needs (JE will do this).
- One bid was for saddles/bridles. A parent was asked to go out and check this. (EW will do this).
- Another bid is going through for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

- The Small Grant Funding enables local groups to set up a provision for children and their families to top up where funding has ended. Groups can apply for up to a certain amount. All applications come to the PR group and the PR group makes recommendations.
- The PR group discussed a bid from the Plymouth Music Zone. Comments from the group will be fed back to JGS. After discussion, the PR group recommended that there is an indication that it is just open to Devonport youngsters. If there isn't enough take up (in Devonport) could it be open city wide?

**AOB:**

- HMc has been supportive of the PR group. She is due to retire and JT would like to invite her to the next PR meeting in June.
- **Action:** JT will email everyone.
- **Action:** Everything H McL has done for the PR group and everything the group has done for H McL to be put together for her visit.
- Re: Ofsted Briefing (Children's Services). The Ofsted report is now out. PPP were tasked to put focus groups of parents together so that the Ofsted inspectors could talk to them. Groups were:
  - A group of parents of children with disabilities
  - A group of parents of children at risk of exclusion
  - A group of parents whose children were at risk of being taken into care.

Children's Services were given a 'good', User engagement got 'outstanding'. PP was mentioned in the briefing, there was lots of praise for the parents involved. An invitation has gone out to parents who took part in the focus group to attend a briefing by MC on Thursday 27 May at 2.00pm.
- Earlier this year JS presented a draft paper for the Short Break Service Eligibility Criteria. The original eligibility criteria from 7-8 years ago has to be revamped to reflect Aiming High. Fran Rae has been tasked to set up a small working group of parents to start re-drafting this. She is looking for a parent of children with profound and multiple difficulties, a parent of children on the autistic spectrum and a third parent will be needed. LP volunteered for this.
- JO (Inclusion Works) would like feedback from parents regarding their experience of childcare/after school clubs. They are aiming to skill up the workforce and set up network of childminders who are able to look after children with disabilities.
- JD (leads council's playwork) could be invited to the PR group.
- SR (she led the Bercow review) came to speak to parents to see if they would like to join a group developing a pathway for access to Speech and Language provision. They were looking at using parents' views to inform the Bercow pathfinder project and the National Better Communication Research project.

AA, Consultant, will lead on the Plymouth Pathfinder Project. They are looking for the group to continue and eventually to be involved in the discussions for commissioning services.

- JD, Development Worker, Virginia House informed the group about places available for Carers Week.
- An ASD task and finish group is looking at provision for children in the city. MJ is reviewing provision for children with ASD across the city. He has asked for a focus group of parents with autistic children. If you know of any parents, especially post 16, who would like to attend the focus groups, let JT know.