

**Forum Meeting
Tuesday 13th July 2010
Welcome Hall, Devonport
09.00 – 12.00**

1. Introductions and Welcome

EB welcomed parent representatives and introduced some new members:
EB offered her apologies for the last Forum Working Group meeting.

Sally Sleyman- Health Improvement Practitioner.

A new six week programme called 'Healthy Kids' has been developed for overweight children. It is for children aged seven to thirteen years and is free of charge. The sessions run from 3.45pm to 5.30pm, including forty five minutes of theory and one hour of fun time. There has been a low uptake so far so SS is trying to publicise the course so that a pilot can run in September in the Devonport area.

Question: Is 'Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It!' (MEND) still running?

Ans: Yes, MEND is for ten weeks, twice a week for two hours. The YMCA is now running MEND. It is a huge commitment for families. Also families with low levels of literacy struggled with the content of the course. This is why 'Healthy Kids' has been developed.

Question: Do the children have to be a certain amount overweight?

Ans: No, when children attended the MEND programme children would say they were attending 'fat club'. SS wanted to move away from this and focus on healthy lifestyles.

Question: What will the group sizes be?

Ans: Twelve children ideally, if demand is high then they will run another pilot. The pilot is aimed at deprived areas, but if there are other children from other areas who would benefit from the course then SS would be happy to take them on.

2. Forum Activities

- EB attended a 'Plymouth 3rd Sector' conference at the Novotel. The conference was held for all voluntary services in Plymouth re the current economic climate. EB gained new contacts who are interested in attending the Forum.
- EB also sits on the Children and Young People's Trust Board and was asked to be the Champion for Anti Bullying in November 2009.

3. Parents Apart- Sally Hawken

- Parents Apart started taking on casework in February 2010. Since that time they have had 111 referrals. 80% had a full assessment and 20% decided that the service was not appropriate for their situation or were signposted to appropriate organisations. Occasionally families have approached the service with situations that are not in their remit.
- A bulletin for the service is produced on a regular basis.
- 20% of the referrals are fathers, including the 4% of referrals that were mum and dad both being engaged.

- SH welcomed any ideas on engaging dads. PA are aware of the issues around dads engaging and are responsive to this.
- Referrals come from various routes: Children's Centres, PSAs etc. The PSAs are the biggest source of referrals. SH would like to widen the referral base. 50% is education establishments and children's centres, 25% is self referrals and the other 25% is other agencies such as Health Visitors.
- The support offered involves: mediation, counselling for parents and children, contact, financial advice, legal advice, benefits advice, group support, dealing with domestic violence, housing and social interaction. Most common support that people request is counselling for themselves, counselling for their children and financial advice.
- The people that use the service are many and varied. Examples of services users are; mothers struggling to engage fathers in visiting the children, children struggling with the unreliability of a parent who visits them, fathers trying to establish contact with their children after a period of time, mothers with a history of domestic abuse negotiating a contract for the father to visit the children, parents seeking advice on child maintenance arrangements and fathers who think that their children would be better off without them.
- As the project is still in its pilot phase Parents Apart have been experimenting with different ways of engaging parents including barbeques and parent's and children's workshops. Parents did feedback that they felt the group environment could be intimidating.
- The service also provides parents with one key worker to access all services.
- **Pippa Cann- Money Adviser.** Pippa Cann is employed by the Citizen's Advice Bureau and her role is funded by the Parents Apart project. She provides advice around debts, managing the family budget and empowers parents to have an ongoing handle on their finances. The CAB can be quite an intimidating process, but PC can be reached directly through the parent's Parents Apart key worker with a waiting time of one-two weeks. PC will also go out to the project in Devonport instead of asking parents to go to the CAB.
- PC is also running Money Management workshops which there are flyers for.
- SH sends the Parents Apart bulletin to Plymouth Parent Partnership to be disseminated to all Parent Representatives.
- Thanks were expressed by the Parent Representatives to the project for all of the work that has been done with parents.

4. AHDC Parent Reference Group Update

- The next meeting is Wednesday 21st July 12pm-2pm and is the only meeting until September.
- The focus of the reference group is to disseminate information to parents of children with SEN and disabilities.
- Helen McLindon has retired as Health Commissioner but will be attending the Parent Reference Group. She will be updating the group on progress within Health for children with SEN/Disabilities.
- The group has also had consultation on the Disability Strategy first draft.
- The group has also been asked for parents who would like to deliver a two hour session in the CWDC training. The session will focus on what it is like for a parent on the receiving end of Children and Young People's services and Anagrette Ward will be helping the parents to write the session.

- Fran Rae has also invited parents from the Parent Reference Group to rewrite the Eligibility criteria for Short Breaks. Four Parent Representatives are taking part.

5. Starting School 2011- Bob Burton, Choice Adviser.

- BB delivered a presentation around the application process for starting primary school and the allocation process. Please see PPP website for slides.

Question: Are the Published Admission Numbers (PANs) changing for 2011?

The PANs are all published in the Next Step booklet and the only changes for 2011 is Notre Dame from 132 – 140 and Sir John Hunt from 180 down to 150.

Question: When can you start applying for a primary school?

1st September 2010.

Question: Are children with statements prioritised for school places?

Yes. Children with a statement of Special educational needs will automatically get into their first preference school.

Question: Do parents put one school down on their application form?

It is recommended that you Do NOT put only one school on to the application form. If you do not get allocated that school then you will be given the closest community school with space after all of the other allocations are made.

Question: Have they changed the online system where a parent can only use one email address, even though they may have to apply again for another child?

A parent can login in subsequent years by using the same email address and password. However if this does not work then you may need to set up a new email address.

Question: Why appeal?

The only real chance of winning an appeal is if the LA has made an error in the allocation. The parent must look at the oversubscription criteria for the school they are applying for and think about whether it is a reality that their child will get place.

Question: Can a class size be larger than thirty children?

If a child is accepted to a school through an appeal for exceptional reasons, such as medical, the school has to justify why they have a class larger than thirty. However the school also has to strive to get the class number below thirty. It then becomes a school issue and not a LA issue.

Question: Can a children's centre know where it's children are going to Primary and can a primary school know where it's children have come from?

No. It is the parent's choice to inform the children's centre/school.

Question: Can a child start school in Year One?

A child does not have to start school until the term after their 5th birthday, or if their birthday is very late in the year it has to be in the academic year that they applied for. They have to be in school by July that year at the very latest.

There is a problem if it becomes an In Year Admission, there may not be a place for them by the time they want to attend (year 1).

Also the schools do not get money for their budget if that child is not in school and it can be frustrating for parents whose children are on the waiting list for that school. However individual children's needs need to be taken into account.

- The Starting School Booklet is not automatically given to all parents, it is on request. Can be accessed through early years settings or through primary schools. They are also available to download on the PCC website.

6. Echo Project (Empowering Children of Young Offenders)- Claire English

- Claire English delivered a powerpoint presentation about the Devon Echo Project. Please see the PPP website for slides.

Question: Do you work with siblings of offenders?

Yes.

Question: Do you work with the children if their parents are separated?

Yes but need to have parental consent.

Question: How does it work if the child is in care and their birth parent is in prison?

Hopefully Social Care will refer to Echo. It is not automatic. Depends on the child and the behaviour that they are exhibiting and the people around the child who can refer.

Question: Will the Echo Project visit schools and talk to parents?

Yes.

Question: Under safeguarding legislation do the prisons not have an obligation to be aware that prisoners are parents?

No. They are there to run the prison, the only obligation they have is to maintain the welfare of the prisoner.

Question: Can school staff refer parents to Echo?

Yes.

Question: Can parents self refer?

Yes.

7. Next Step 2011- Lucy Daniels

- Lucy Daniels delivered a presentation about the Next Step; applications for secondary school. See PPP website for slides.

Question: If a family put down two choices as grammar schools on their applications does that mean if the child does not get a high enough score in their 11+ they are only left with their third choice?

Yes. The third choice then becomes the first choice.

Question: What if admissions are unable to offer any of the schools stated on the application form?

The child will be placed in the nearest community school with space. The child will remain on the waiting list for the first 3 preferences.

Question: Do Grammar schools have different mark expectations?

No. The highest 120 will be allocated to each school.

Question: If you have put DHSB as your first choice can you put St Boniface as your second choice?

Yes, remember to look at the over subscription criteria to see if where your son sits in the oversubscription criteria.

Question: If your child does not get a high enough score in the 11+ can you still do a 12+ and a 13+?

Yes but there has to be space in the school and there usually no vacancies in the school by that point.

- Remember if applying to DHSB or St Boniface that there are supplementary forms that need to be submitted along with the application form.
- All Saints Academy will also need a supplementary form.

Question: Do the girls grammar schools not need a supplementary form?

No because they are both run by the LA. The boys schools are there own admissions authority so need supplementary forms.

8. Stepping Stones to Nature- Zoe Goss

- Zoe Goss delivered a presentation around the Stepping Stones to Nature program in Plymouth, improving the city's green spaces.

Question: Does the transport have disabled access?

Yes. The Granby Island bus is used which does have disabled access.

Question: Access to open spaces is very difficult for children with disabilities who use wheelchairs.

Difficulty is funding and capacity. Stepping Stones will enable some of the parks to be brought up to the standard they should be. It is also about education and understanding for the parks department to make sure that they know what needs are in Plymouth and that access to parks is improved.

Stepping Stones are working on preventing anti-social behaviour but letting people have access to green spaces.

Question: The National Trust use radar keys for gates, can other green spaces use this facility?

Zoe Goss can look into that. It is a limited pot of funding but may be possible.

9. Next Forum: September. Family Information Service will be talking to the forum. There is no venue at the moment.

EB asked if parent representatives had any ideas for future focus forums. Please contact PPP with any ideas.