

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

**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007**

**6:30 pm – 8:30 pm**

**Honicknowle Community Centre**

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

- JB welcomed JU from the Kids and Dads group. JU gave an overview of the group and invited any one at the Forum to get involved.

### **2. Feedback from Forum activities**

- EB confirmed that she and AS have attended two more meetings for the Children's Trust Board. Progress is being made and feedback will be provided.
- BB spoke about the School Admissions Forum of which CE (parent rep –primary) and KO (parent rep – secondary) are also members. Application processes were discussed at the last meeting. The Plymouth School Admissions Forum is looking at producing a parent friendly annual report.
- VR, SA at Mount Street Primary, spoke about the NHS Children & Young People's Services conference in Taunton, which she attended with BB. NHS were trying to find out about best ways of engaging parents with service planning and development. VR and BB felt that they put forward representative parent's views, but that this whole consultation process was extremely complicated, demanding and not parent friendly. BB attended the next two follow up meetings where they discussed more professional areas. BB will be writing to them to convey the parents'-eye view of this consultation process. The Southwest region of the NHS will be reporting the information gathered to LD in the near future.
- BB gave feedback about the Parents on the Plaza event.
  - The aim of the event was to obtain parents' views and bring voluntary and statutory organisations together.
  - It is estimated that between 2500-3000 people attended the event throughout the day and 176 parents were interviewed using a structured survey questionnaire to gain their views on development of services.
  - BB gave a brief overview of some of the outcomes.

- It is hoped that a similar event will take place next year. A provisional date of 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008 has been booked.
- JB said feedback from participant stallholders was positive.

### **3. Parent Reference Groups – Peter Jones**

- Plymouth Parent Partnership seeks parents' views about service provisions and developments.
- Results of the survey from Parents on the Plaza indicated that 25% of parents find out about services by word of mouth and 25% of people said they need opportunities to get information from services at weekends – particularly fathers.
- We need to be creative in furthering parent participation and not assume the stereotype of parents being unemployed, available during the school day and wanting to attend working groups etc. on a voluntary basis. We need to encourage all the services that apply to parents e.g. housing, benefits etc, to work collaboratively at a local level.
- We now have two parent reference Groups functioning – one for the Integrated Disability Service and one for the Parent & Family Support Strategy. These have been developed because we recognise that individual parents may not find it easy to attend working groups/meetings as a parent representative on their own.
- Bringing together parent reps., each with a focus of interest, to form a Parent Reference Group, shifts responsibility to professionals to report thinking and recommendations to parents and addresses some of those difficulties. In the Parent & Family Support Strategy Task Group Leads report to the Parent Reference Group who in turn would consult with parents within their area of interest. The Parent Reference Group would provide feedback to the working group leads. .

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

- NM from the local Connexions service – Connexions are carrying out their annual survey and are asking how parents access information..
- KD from Working Links – requires input about lone parents for their Lone Parents Team who are helping lone parents get into employment.
- FR from the Children with Disabilities Team – needs to know what barriers there are for children with Special Educational Needs to attend after school clubs and activities.
- JB asked how funding is obtained to provide provisions for children with Special Needs. FR answered that the FIP team is often involved. They are trying to get views on these issues to sort them out.
- JU from Kids and Dads and is also an English Language teacher. He felt there are problems regarding access for people from black and

minority ethnic backgrounds to find information about employment, lone parent help, youth support etc. People are not aware of the help that is available.

- BB confirmed that representatives of BME groups such as Fatahe and PIETY are members of the Forum.
- JU offered his contact details for services to contact him: 07903826991 or jeffniga@yahoo.com
- FR thanked everyone who is involved in working groups.

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

- KD from Working Links informed the forum that they provide a life skills course, which includes various activities.
- The issue of the lack of Speech Therapists available for children in Plymouth was raised. Parents don't even get tips/advice on how to help their children with their speech.
- It was suggested that Speech Therapists could be based in Children's Centres, as this has been effective in the DELL area.
- JT from Parent Partnership Service will look into this sue and report back at the next Forum.
- RB (Parent Representative John Kitto CC) put forward that many parents are worried about the availability of drugs and whether their children will use them. JB said that DS from the Drug and Alcohol Team had asked whether this service should integrate into mainstream services, so this is being looked at. RB added that parents are not being provided with this information.

#### **6. Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) Presentation – PJ**

- A presentation was given to illustrate the Strengthening Families Programme.
- It is a multi-agency course designed for parents and young people aged 10-14 years and is one of the most evaluated parenting programmes in the world. It was devised in the USA.
- The three parenting programmes that are currently being promoted by the Government are 1. SFP, 2. Incredible Years and 3. the Triple P Programme from Australia.
- A key starting point for the SFP was as a response to the concern for young people's involvement with drugs and alcohol. In the USA the results of the SFP showed that young people who took part did not get involved with drugs and alcohol until much later on, if at all.
- A DVD presentation was also given to provide a broader view of the programme.
- PPP has now trained the first cohort of facilitators via its contract with the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit. The first course will be evaluated to see

if it is sustainable. The development of multi-agency teams to deliver FSP fits within the the Parent and Family Support Strategy.

- HR asked how the criteria are being set to determine what families can go on the course. PJ responded that this is currently being worked on. There will be approximately 8-10 families in each course group. There are currently going to be three groups and the courses will take place in three secondary schools across the city.
- If you would like more information about the SFP, please call Parent Partnership Service on 01752 258933.