

Notes of the Plymouth Parent and Family Forum

30th January 2008

9.00 am – 12.00 pm

Welcome Hall

Attendance list: 75 Persons attended the meeting

1. Welcome and introductions

- JB (Chair) welcomed new members.
- Apologies – LH, DP, HR,PJ

2. Forum activities

- KM will be give feedback on latest Foster Carer Survey at the next forum in.
- EB who is a representative on Children's Trust Board confirmed that the last meeting was cancelled.
 - Trust members will be spending a day on the moors with a group of children next week.
 - A team-building event was held at the Future Inn where the children brought up issues about disability.
 - Event at Jury's Inn- Issues were raised regarding parents feeling comfortable attending such events.
- A Parents Reference Group is now set up for the Integrated Disability Service. Eight parents with children / young people with a range of additional needs are involved in the group. Progress has been positive so far.
- BB spoke about the Plymouth Parent and Family Strategy strands that make up the priority areas of work in the Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2010. Members from the forum have come forward to represent the views of parents for the Parent & Family Support Strategy parent reference group Members of the group and the areas they represent are:
 - KS - BME Working Group
 - CT - Children and Youth with Disabilities
 - TBL– Children and Youth with Disabilities
 - GM - Fathers and Male Carers
 - RB - Domestic Abuse
 - DM - Homelessness / Youth
 - JA - Substance Misuse
 - JM – Families at Risk
 - LS - Teenage Pregnancy
 - BB - Think Tank Group

- Lesbian, Gay and Transgender Vacant Position

A Briefing on the Children and Young People's Plan is taking place on 7th February between 9:30 am and 3:30 pm at Marjons. Contact BB for further information.

- A request was made for a parent representative to join the Standards Advisory Group for Education (SAGE). Lisa Bligh represents the forum on the group and will report back at regular intervals. The group will be looking at education standards across the whole of education. The meetings will be three times a year and feedback will be provided.

3. Service developments

- A request was made for someone to look into 2 Tier Schooling in the north of the city.
 - The school start time is 7:00 am and the finish time is early.
 - Windsor House confirmed that the project is small and there are no plans to extend it.
- Head lice –BB followed up a request for information/policies on Head Lice checking at schools.
 - Leaflets that schools and governors receive on this topic are available from BB via email.
 - LR created a group questionnaire regarding the issue of Head Lice checking, which has now been sent to the government.
 - Question – Suggestion was made to have a national day of parents treating head lice
 - A “Head Lice Awareness” raising week was arranged by one of the PSAs in Plympton. Activities and competitions were held for parents and children. There was a good response from most schools in the area.
 - There are issues about school nurses not being allowed to check children's heads for head lice.
 - It was confirmed that there are two national days dedicated to Head Lice checking.
 - BB asked the Forum if people want to arrange a day in Plymouth. Show of hands confirmed yes. Some schools have already held information sessions on this subject.
- BB has spoken to JS about SATS testing. The procedures remain the same. It was requested that someone come and speak at a future Forum meeting should the procedure change.
- JT has spoken to GP about Speech and Language Therapists. GP will give a presentation at the July Forum about how the service is being re-designed and expanded. 3000 children were reviewed and there were positive outcomes when they were seen by speech and language therapists in school. (Children 0-5). In Special schools there were a large number of open cases. Children were not receiving further attention – this is being changed too.

Cases will be closed if the therapy is not affecting a child's everyday life. However, they can be re-opened. Bob Burton will email forum members information from GP for them to read before her presentation.

- KD asked "How many schools have free milk for young children?" This will be investigated.
- EB spoke of the Project Implementation Document that has been created for the Integrated Disability Service, which has been sent to the parent reference group for consultation. The reference group have been asked to identify what they see as priorities from the parent's perspective, for the implementation of the Integrated Disability Service.
- Request for people to contact BB if they want to get involved with reference groups.

There are strong benefits from having parent representatives on working groups etc. as different backgrounds/situations are represented and views are put forward.

4. Service Developments / Providers

- The Parent Partnership Service Development Group are looking for parent representatives to increase parental involvement. The purpose of the development group is to monitor the service's impartiality and 'arm's length' status as well as other functions. The group meets three times a year, during the day and are looking for at least three parents. four parents have indicated an interest. JT will contact them with information and details of the next meetings.
- JW is setting up a grandparents group. It is to be wide-ranging, covering all aspects of grand-parenting. Contact BB for more information.
- Request made for people to fill in Interest Forms, as some representatives have moved on. Members of the Forum are needed to represent parents on groups/at meetings etc.

6. Working Links presentation – Martin Huggins

Questions raised after presentation:

- How do Working Links help people who have English as an additional language?
 - They are referred through Job Centre Plus. A course is run where this information is included amongst the criteria as a referral/entry to Working Links.
- What is the youngest age you can be to attend Working Links?

- 16 is the youngest age – anyone of a working age. This will change by the end of 2008. Working Links are looking into putting advisors into schools to work with children and young people and also with family centres.
- Is there a centre for children with learning disabilities?
 - If the child is in full time education, they are unable to provide this due to funding.
- Does Working Links calculate whether someone is financially better off if they are working?
 - Yes, calculations are done straight away. People are generally better off when employed, even part-time. They would be informed if they wouldn't be better off working. All this is done in confidentiality.
- Are you qualified to help someone who isn't single but has a situation where their partner is disabled, so they can't work?
 - There are services that you can be referred to. If you are a carer then that is a criteria for Working Links.

Martin thanked BB for his time and hard work.

- 7. The position of Chair for the Forum was handed from JB to EB**
- 8. Requests for Vice-Chair –appeal was made for a member of the working group to volunteer for position of vice chair.**
 - Monday 4th February – next working group meeting at Welcome Hall.
 - You would need to have attended at least 2 meetings to be Vice-Chair.