

Notes of the Plymouth Parent and Family Forum

1st March 2007

9.00 pm – 11.30 pm

Plym View Primary School

1. Welcome and Introduction/Apologies.

- JB, as chair, welcomed all attendees and gave special welcome to all the PSA colleagues that were in attendance.
- JB gave apologies from those unable to attend.

2. Update on Forum Activities.

- Foster Carer Survey questionnaire has been distributed for comments and returned. Report currently being edited. The results won't be public until a meeting with Foster Care management has taken place.
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness – unfortunately no one was able to come to today's Forum meeting to talk about this issue. MC suggested DS be invited to come and talk at an upcoming Forum meeting.

3. Terms of Reference Vote.

- JB went through the Terms of Reference for the Parent and Family Forum.
- Everyone was asked to fill in the voting form provided with the agenda. They were asked:
 - a) do you agree with what the Terms of Reference say?
 - b) do you agree with the way the Terms of Reference are worded?
- Forms were collected in and result would be given before the end of the meeting

4. Working Group Resignations and Recruitment.

- BB has stepped down as co-chair as he now works full-time for the Plymouth Parent Partnership Service.
- The working group is looking for new members, to help with the groundwork that goes on before each Forum.
- JB mentioned that she has been in the position of chair for a year and that nominations for someone to take over would be welcome.

5. Parent Support Adviser Project – PJ.

- PJ provided an outline of the PSA Project including: original DfES project brief; time scales; eligibility criteria for schools; role description; the Plymouth model; and the way the project fits in with the City's current thinking for the development of services for parents and families in Plymouth.
- LT-B asked whether there was a plan to take the project into the wider community for older children, especially over the age of 16. PJ responded that the focus is on primary and secondary schools, and that post 16 year olds were shared between the schools and the CFE. Unfortunately, the PSA project is limited to the schools named.
- AC asked how long the pilot was to run for. PJ and MC responded to this. The pilot will be running until July 2008, but what happens after that is unknown. There will be a Central Government funding review in July 2008. Worst case scenario, funding is stopped, and the schools are encouraged to continue to employ the PSA's and prioritise funding to make that possible, but it really is an unknown.

6. "Helping the media understand how parents are working with the Children's Services." – PJ.

- Request from council media department to attend has been received however they were unable to attend this time. Work like the PSA Project and the Forum are a huge area of media interest.
- Wanting to promote any development and positive parent involvement in the development of services for children and families in Plymouth. Need to convey to the media that development of services and involvement of parents is a transparent and positive process. The Forum plays an important role, it is an effective means for parent voice to be heard.
- Examples of this positive publicity include a radio interview by PJ on Radio Devon, talking about the PSA project. Another example of positive media coverage would be to do some features in the Evening Herald.
- PJ to work with Press office and see if there are any opportunities for positive press coverage.
- MC then spoke to the Forum about establishing the 'Plymouth Children and Young Peoples Trust'.
- Initiative to bring all organisations and services in Plymouth aimed at children and young people under one umbrella organisation.
- Will be outcome led. Will work to improve outcomes for children in Plymouth. Working together as an integrated service will improve outcomes and service delivery.
- Want to develop local services for each area. Parent representatives are wanted for the Trust Board. Work to begin in April 2007, and should be up and running by April 2008. Please contact PJ for further details.

7. Service Developments – What do parents want to know?

- SRO spoke as a parent representative for Four Woods Children's Centre. Funding cuts between £400,000 and £500,000, will result in a reduction of available services. Four Woods offers valuable support to local parents and families, but will no longer be able to do so at the same level. In addition to this, staff will be made redundant. Other reductions in services were mentioned to highlight this issue.
- JB suggested a sub-meeting to discuss developing gaps in service provision.
- MC agreed that it needed to be a bigger agenda item. Possibility of asking WJ, the Children's Centre Co-ordinator to attend the Forum. Initially had 4 Sure Start Centres, PCC has been given funding to increase this to 15 Children's Centres. The level of funding for each centre needs to be equal, which in turn will mean lesser funding for established Children Centres.
- LC flagged up the 3-year waiting list for Speech and Language Therapy. Concerned that in the early years, before 5, when it is easier to manipulate speech and language, support may not be available for all children who need it.
- MC – intense pressure on Speech and Language Services, Plymouth is developing new ways of delivering Speech and Language Therapy. A possibility of Early Years funding to appoint 2 Speech and Language Therapists to go into Early Years settings, such as playgroups, and imbed practice with the teaching staff.
- HS brought up a positive development. An old Scout hut to be converted into a Community Centre and the setting up of a Stoke Forum, with input from school parents.

8. Service Developments – What do service providers/commissioners want to know?

- DF – Integrated Disability Service initial report. It needs more parental involvement to make sure it's rolled out quickly.
- PJ – Has written outline for Parent and Family Strategy Document. He needs to ask parents views on it, and is planning a questionnaire to distribute through Forum members.

9. Any Other Business.

- None

10. Date of next meeting.

After the meeting, the voting slips relating to the Terms of Reference were counted. The Terms of Reference have been accepted unanimously by the Forum members as have the words used.