

Providing information & support to parents, encouraging partnership between parents and professionals

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Dates for your Diary:

Barn Dance
11th September
Open Meeting
22nd November
Coffee Morning
2nd December

Networking and Collaboration meetings

Supportive Parents holds regular meetings with local authority (LA) staff from Bristol, South Glos and North Somerset as a way of learning about new initiatives and filling gaps in our understanding of local and national services and strategies. We hope that the meetings also allow LA staff to gain a clearer understanding of how the Parent Partnership Service can support and enable parents to be more confidently involved, both in individual planning for their child and in strategic developments. At our most recent meeting, with the School Improvement teams, we found out more about the new progression guidance to schools, which is particularly relevant for children working at p scales/underachieving. The new framework enables the progress of pupils to be measured. Its value is in helping schools look at targets and judge their robustness. The new framework includes pupil questionnaires and individual meetings with parents, and guidance is clear that schools need to include parents in this "conversation" about better outcomes for children with SEN. That "first conversation" with parents is crucial; both when children enter school and when any concerns arise. An exciting and pioneering pilot project, Achievement for All (AfA) aims to use a clear framework (the structured conversation) for developing an open, ongoing dialogue with parents about their child's learning. South Glos is involved with Gloucestershire, one of the pilot authorities, in setting up a joint training programme providing input to SENCOs. To find out more and to view some remarkable training videos that provide examples of how parent/teacher conversations can be structured and developed (potentially useful for parents as well as school staff!) go to <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/254294>

Maggie Potter

Another busy term, the highlight being the first Open Day for 'Our Voice Matters' (OVM) the new South Gloucestershire Parent Participation Group www.ourvoicematters.org.uk. Professionals from Education, Social Care and Health joined parents to learn about their priorities and hopes for developing services for disabled children. Responses from parents have been very positive, with new members offering to join the steering group and help out with the website. Brief but interesting talks from parents and professionals were followed by lively workshops run by parent facilitators. Over 100 educational priorities were listed by parents, and have been sorted into themes by the Steering Group. These will form the Agenda for future focus groups with the Authorities. The findings will be sent to all participants. A further years funding from Together for Disabled Children (TDC) looks hopeful, to continue with this work. Surprisingly, few comments were made about bullying, hopefully a sign that anti bullying and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) initiatives in schools are beginning to achieve positive outcomes for pupils. Members of the Aiming High Parent Reference Group have now joined up with OVM to avoid duplicating work. To get involved or to receive reports contact info@ourvoicematters.org.uk.

The SEN section have moved to Badminton Road working alongside the Child, Health and Disabilities (CHAD) Team. Section training in July includes a talk on the PPS and two parents' experiences of life with their children with hearing/ visual impairments. Other teams Inclusion Support, Educational Psychology and Education Welfare are gradually moving out to the 3 localities. The Head of the proposed new Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) School has now been appointed. Building work is due to start soon on the primary Courtney Road site (completion Nov 2011) and secondary Falconride site (completion summer 2011).

Meetings held with Extended Schools/School Improvement staff this term have stressed the need to encourage schools to give our

leaflets to parents when SEN is identified and to link their website to ours. Information packs on the Parent Partnership Service (PPS) have been sent to Parent Support Advisors (PSAs), and Parent Mentors. Our manuals are now going out to Children Centre staff. Have a good summer!

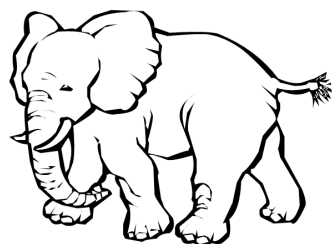
Bristol News - Davina Evans

Parent Participation

The Bristol Parent Carers launch event took place on 21st of May at the Council House and was a great success. The parents on the steering group worked really hard to organise the event and were supported by the Princess Royal Trust, Supportive Parents and Bristol City Council. A variety of local organisations, including Supportive Parents, had information stalls at the event. Jeannette Kemloe

from Cornwall Parent Carer Voice told the meeting about how Parent Participation works in her area but the highlight for me (and a lot of others) was Caroline Temple-Bird's "Elephant" presentation about parent participation in Bristol. In this she likened the different parts of Bristol Parent Carers to the different parts of an elephants body so that we can all climb on board and travel

to where we want to go. The afternoon session was given over to four focus groups. These were on Education, Information, Transition and Assessments. The first follow-up focus group on Education was held on 30th June to look at some of the issues raised at the conference. Follow-up meetings for the other topics are being arranged. For more information about Parent Participation and Bristol Parent Carers go to <http://www.bristolparentcarers.org.uk/>



General

The Local Authority has published revised guidance on Statutory Assessments following the introduction of the scheme for delegating most of the SEN budget to schools. You can find this on the Bristol website at <http://www.bristol-cyps.org.uk/services/pdf/sen-statutory-assessment-criteria.pdf>

In June, Liz Halson from the Educational Psychology (E.P) Service came to provide information about the teams work with schools, E.P assessments, staff changes in the service, and feedback about a recent consultation carried out with Supportive Parents and local parents to look at 'Direct access to the North Somerset E.P service for parents'.

As we continue to ensure we are considered as a key partner in strategic planning we were pleased to be invited to participate in the Weston East Locality and Central Locality development days giving us the opportunity to ensure other services and schools understand who we are, what we do and how parents of children with SEN should be provided with our information at the earliest possible stage. The theme of early intervention and working in partnership with parents was continued when we addressed the Primary Head Teachers Meeting recently, to support this we also requested that all schools put Supportive Parents information and a web link for parents on their school websites.

The North Somerset Together for Disabled Children Parent Participation Forum held its first open meeting in April, this event was attended by 80 parents and professionals. Workshops were held to discuss matters around Education, Health, Inclusion and Social Care, working groups have been set up to focus on specific issues. The SEN Education group will be focussing on Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and effective communication between schools and parents of children with SEN. Notes from the workshops can be found on www.nsppf.org.uk and details of the next open meeting on 19th October 2010 at Nailsea Methodist Church Hall.

Disclaimer: The opinions and information in this Newsletter have been given in good faith and, as far as we know, are correct at the time of publication. We do not accept any responsibility for any errors of fact and advise readers to check with authors of original publications before acting upon them.



Contact Us:

Our Information and Support Line 0117 9897725 is available 10am - 2pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday term time. We operate a limited service during the school holidays and an answer machine at all other times. Or take a look at our website www.supportiveparents.org.uk Address: 3rd Floor, Royal Oak House, Royal Oak Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4GB Admin/Fax: 0117 9897724