



SUPPORTIVE PARENTS
Registered Charity No. 1079761



**AREA
NORTH SOMERSET**

**VOLUNTARY
REPRESENTATIVES**

**MEETING
WITH C&YPS**

**MEETING HELD ON 30TH JUNE 2009
FROM 10.00 - 12.00
AT FOR ALL HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE, WESTON**

Present:

Kathy Crawford	Parent member
Florence Gradwell	Mencap, parent member
Jacky Hayler	NAS N. Som parent rep
Sue Harding	Manager, Education Support Service
Ruth Heard	Parent member
Angela Jones	NAS parent member
Jenny Maxwell	Senior Educational Psychologist
Jackie Oxley	Supportive Parents, N. Som Local Coordinator
Maggie Potter	Supportive Parents, note-taker
Jane Routledge	Manager, Complex & Additional Needs Service

Apologies:

Ann Ramsey	Springboard Opportunity Group & Early Years
Liz Kelly	Parent Representative
Jan Seamer	Contact a Family
Sue Brooks	SEN school governor

Meetings commence with an hour-long themed session to offer an opportunity for discussion, information-sharing or consultation with Local Authority Officers. This is followed by another hour, when general issues and concerns can be raised by parent reps, via the set agenda, for response by officers.

Part 1:

Last year the Inclusion Development Programme was launched. Phase 1 covered dyslexia and speech, language and communication. This year it has been developed to support mainstream teachers to include children with ASD. What was the take-up of this programme in schools? Can we have some examples of how this has been/will be used to enhance children's inclusion? How is the programme being promoted and how are outcomes for pupils being measured? Whose responsibility is it monitor take-up of CPD as a whole-school initiative?

Inclusion Development Programme is an online professional development course from the Department Children Schools and Families, for education staff. This programme was initiated in North Somerset last year, when the Education Support Service supported access to the IDP on communication and dyslexia. Sue Harding provided the meeting with an example of the school support model which the Learning Language and Communication team (part of the ESS team), uses with schools. Four half-day regional launches will take place across the authority in September for the next phase of the IDP programme on Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Sue highlighted that the ongoing work of the Behaviour and LLC teams will also underpin this programme. (The ESS teams will come together from September, merging learning, language, communication and behaviour elements.)

Schools can choose to do IDP as a whole-school action, or “toe-dip” – focussing on discrete elements within the programme or individuals within the school pursuing the course. Bigger schools are chunked down into faculties and this allows targeted training. ESS can now identify and tailor training as this Continuing Professional Development opportunity is taken up. IDP offers an awareness raising opportunity and in time ESS hopes to extend this with more specialist accredited training to schools. IDP is a stand-alone online CPD. It needs to be well-supported and so it will be important that staff are offered opportunities to share learning. Outcomes of IDP are fed back to DCSF via the SEN hub, and this is being used as a way of sharing good practice across the SW.

Jane Routledge feels schools will be quite keen to take advantage of this – as a whole school awareness-raising opportunity – and that it will be really useful for support staff. ESS is thinking of offering twilight sessions or a surgery to enable support staff and governors to also benefit from IDP. One of the things schools need to identify when schools apply for audit funding is what training they have or intend to take up. IDP builds on the national strategies and contributes to development of good practice. This sort of training is still not compulsory, but OFSTED inspectors will be asking what training school staff have undertaken. So much of this is around hearts & minds – training can make such a difference to effective inclusion, and this is a valuable starting point. Many teachers are now showing a significant interest in different ways of including children with additional needs and building capacity within schools.

Next year IDP focus will be “behaviour” and ESS hopes that this will be presented as a wider learning opportunity that includes emotional literacy and will build on the ASD strand.

Sue felt it was a bit early to see pupil outcomes for those schools who have pursued the previous IDP module, it will also contribute to “Narrowing the Gap” National Strategy. Each school will be mapped, and if attainment levels are measurably increased in schools which have used IDP and SEAL (Social and emotional aspects of learning) this will be considered significant. Schools will now (new government initiative) be required to provide 1:1 tuition for children who are underachieving in numeracy and literacy (primary-focussed) – this is a development from the DCSF called ‘**Your child, Your schools, our future, building a 21st Century Schools system**’ (*The Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future White Paper sets out statutory Pupil and Parent Guarantee underpinned by legislation, a clear devolution of power matched by stronger accountability and an uncompromising approach to school improvement so that every child can succeed.*

It creates a new Pupil Guarantee setting out what every young person should get during their school careers, including one to one or small-group tuition for pupils falling behind at primary and the first year in secondary school – with a progress check at Year 7). For further information see: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0116

PART 2; Hour 2

1. Locality developments: could we have a quick update on progress?

There are four Locality Leaders, one heading learning support, youth, early years/family support and health in each area. Physical bases – Sara Griffiths (Locality Lead Weston South) is in the old Bourneville Infants school. Central base is not fixed but Shelia French (Locality Lead, Central) spends time at the NSC Nailsea office. North base is in St Barnabas School, Portishead. Weston East unknown as yet. All assistant Locality leads are now appointed.

Jane is aware that it is crucial to make clear what localities will deliver and how the locality services can be accessed. Central is to pilot a joint Communication Assessment Framework/Complex & Additional Needs Service link to see how it works. North Somerset Council’s Change for Children newsletter includes an update on locality developments see:

http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/DF1F891E-FCDC-4D0B-889F-C819FA410AA4/0/publication_20090716_CfCIssueJuly09Final.pdf

Thresholds criteria for locality working are currently under review. It is essential that parents understand what the criteria are, and what services can deliver. All children must be able to access universal services within each locality – support may need to come from the CAN Service to enable inclusion. Jane is working with the Extended schools service, to map out who delivers what, so that every child can access all provision and social/leisure activities in the authority.

2. What is the current situation regarding access to EP assessments? Have there been any developments since our last meeting? Parents report that CAF assessment actions requesting an EP assessment are not happening.

Previously there were (April 2009) 4.5 staff in Education Psychology Service (EPS). From September, staffing will be 6.1 and this will rise to 7.1 when professional lead is appointed. Sam Carr will focus on Looked after Children and Anna Sutherland will focus

on Early Years, but any additional available staff capacity goes into schools, Weston schools will have been impacted most by this staffing shortfall.

It should be noted that EP reports are not a required element of an audit-funding application – there is no gate-keeping role. This would only apply when a child's needs are not clearly identified, in which case their assessment would be prioritised. EP services are part of a menu of services that can be called on, but EPS would be aim to be very responsive in this circumstance.

CAF was considered as high priority, but CAF should not be a way of circumventing the usual referral routes. CAF referrals have been picked up when it is seen as appropriate. CAFs are coming though at a higher level than was anticipated, and this will resolve over time, and as it becomes clearer when CAF is appropriate and when other routes to support should be sought. Different authorities are pitching CAF in various ways. For N. Somerset it's at tier 1/universal.

(Matters arising from previous agenda)

3. Could we have feedback about the developments towards an enhanced provision for children with ASD? Could we refer to the recent example of Hanham High School as the sort of unit we would like to aim towards.

LA has looked at piloting this sort of unit in a local secondary school, but problem has occurred re availability of accommodation – the ability to provide a dedicated space is considered essential. CANS are trying to identify both a secondary and a primary school, who can set up a partnership arrangement. The aim is for these schools to host the unit, and (initially) for the LA to provide teacher-time and a Parent Support Advisor/Teaching Assistant who can offer liaison with parents and responsibility to ensure that subject-dedicated school-based TAs are informed about children's needs. Eventually it is hoped that this provision will be taken over by the school, and then the development will ideally move on to set up a unit in another school. The partnership between primary and secondary will allow a child to be supported throughout their school experience. There is now a mandatory requirement for schools to work together in partnership, and this will potentially be attractive, in that it could be beneficial in enabling this to happen. Aim that this will be up and running within the next year (6 months - 1 year).

There could be an expectation that a child from another school could access this sort of unit/resource base, but this will be part of the development work of the pilot – to work out how this can be managed. This intervention will be child-centred, and will focus on the child's individual needs and will also allow and enable awareness-raising across the whole school community.

The initial provision will in time allow links to be set up with other therapeutic services (eg: Occupational Therapy, Speech & Language Therapy, physio, drama therapy etc). Members of the ESS team went to see how Inclusion works in Canada and came back enormously enthusiastic about the possibility of importing the rigorous approach they saw demonstrated. This will contribute to thinking around this development.

Jane is also visiting other local schools in Bristol with the special school heads, to find out more about innovative developments.

4. Audit funding: We have heard about a new funding structure in Bristol which provides for annual review and Transition planning at school action plus and an opportunity for schools to apply for funding up to three times a year. This seems an improvement on the current audit funding system as it functions in North Somerset. In light of this, could we ask for the audit funding protocol to be reviewed?

Jane will talk to Bristol to investigate their model, which she hasn't been updated on. 10% of N. Somerset schools are now holding reviews for children with Audit funding and they are being encouraged to do so – a review form has now been developed. The flexibility of Bristol's 3 x yearly opportunity to apply for top-up funding was considered by vol reps. to be particularly attractive, as was the required monitoring of progress and access to an annual review – Jane asked that we send her specific examples of what we felt were improvements, as the N. Somerset Audit Funding system is always reviewed during the summer. She is in touch with Bristol Local Authority and will be visiting some of their schools, so will look into the system. Sue was interested in finding out which Bristol L.A staff are supporting and reviewing children's progress.

Jane reassured vol reps that Audit Funding could be used flexibly by schools, but schools must prove that they are meeting the identified needs of the individual child for whom funding was awarded. SEN delegated budget should provide for the majority of children's complex needs, through "Quality first" teaching and differentiated provision. Audit funding must be identified as providing additionally to what is the school's current range of differentiated provision.

Audit funding is only ever refused because the school has not provided sufficient evidence. Jane speculated that failed applications should be followed up in 3 months to find out what has been done to further identify, support and meet the needs of children. Maybe the panels' response should request the provision map, as evidence of what they have put into place to meet the identified needs? This will be looked into to.

Appeals go back to the SCIP panel and ESS is asked to visit if concerns are raised about the school's ability to develop strategies.

Jacky H. noted that schools do not always share with parents details of the needs that have been demonstrated through the audit funding application. Jane felt that this should be done via the Individual Education Plan review process, coupled with use of a provision map to set out the school's range of resources. It is appropriate to ask for this info to be supplied with an IEP. Vol reps felt that it would be valuable to draw attention to this possibility on IEP format. Sue thought it could also be discussed via SENCO clusters.

Audit funding's basis is enabling a child's access to the curriculum, so it is difficult to assess the child's possibly anxiety-related behaviour in other settings (eg: home) in this context, but a daily contact to ensure the child was confident about the demands of the day could be considered (to address issues around access to the social curriculum/homework, for example).

It was agreed that it is crucial for staff to develop a general understanding of anxiety-related difficulties and their impact on a child's functioning – particularly in relation to ASD. Help might become available via extended schools or Out-of-school clubs, but currently schools are not appearing to build access to extended school provision into their planning for children.

5. Transition planning: could we have some feedback about plans to pilot person centred reviews in schools in North Somerset? What will this process look like and how will guidance on timing be given out to schools? (We have been told by Connexions that the recommendation is that 2 - 2.5 hours should be set aside for this process.)

Person-Centred Planning (PCP) offers holistic planning. The LA accepts that the PCP model needs to extend down into the Transition process, to ensure that needs are identified across all areas of need, including health, benefits, social care, leisure, housing and employment. Some authorities have developed a Person-Centred Review (PCR) model very effectively, and N. Somerset hopes that they will be able to facilitate and develop PCR for children with statements in this authority. Every authority has been awarded £10,000 to respond to a self-assessment questionnaire on transition, and Jane is prepared to fund this out of her CANS budget so she can free up this money to fund the PCR pilot and to develop proper planning around this model so that it can then be rolled out progressively to all schools. A pilot on PCR is being aimed for from September '09. Special schools have been written to, asking for expressions of interest. CANS is aiming to start this PCR pilot in a volunteer Special School in the hope that enthusiasm and successful outcomes will drive this forward into other schools, mainstream as well as special, as has happened in other authorities. (eg: This is how it started in Exeter, who are now successfully rolling it out in mainstream.)

Transition planning is part of the statutory framework, so PCRs will start with children with statements, but it is hoped that this will also influence the whole school ethos for all children, and influence the reviews of audit-funded pupils (and ultimately the Connexions post-16 planning for all children as they move into adult life). For planning/commissioning purposes PCR will need to inform adult services developments too. The information available to parents has been demonstrated to increase enormously as a result of PCR, so it has a potentially significant valuable knock-on effect.

6. Ed Balls says that parents need to be confident that they have the necessary information, that they will be listened to, that they will have policies and practice explained to them and will be informed of their rights and entitlements. What advice does Children & Young People's Service give to schools to ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties to parents with respect to the information they provide and accessibility?

DCSF National Strategies, see, <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/> are responsible for monitoring statutory compliance across schools and Local Authorities – They will now visit 3 x yearly and during their most recent visit to N. Somerset they asked about Disability Equality schemes and will be coming back next to inspect quality of and access to information. It is part of statutory compliance – It was suggested vol reps make this the focus for part 1 next time, Jane will bring this information to the November meeting.

Extended schools are completing a mapping exercise of what services are on offer across schools in N. Somerset and now need to find a way to share this information with parents.

7. How are schools developing the Parent Support Adviser (PSA) role? How does their work sit alongside that of the Education Welfare Service? How do they provide support to families with children who have SEN? How has their impact been measured?

It was agreed that Kate Wilcox (PSA service manager) will be invited to SPSC support group to address this issue

Sue Harding has also requested an opportunity to further discuss the 'Narrowing The Gap' National Strategy, at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting

CYPS meeting: 24th November 10am – 12 noon at (*venue TBC.*)