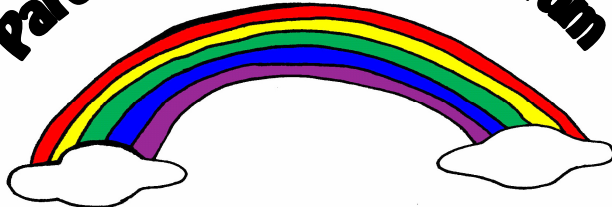


North Somerset Parent Participation Forum



Our Voice Counts!

A network for parents
and carers of
with complex
needs

www.nsppf.org.uk

20th April 2010 – 12.45pm – 2.15pm
Inclusion workshop notes
Facilitator: Maggie Potter

Agenda Item 1:

Extended schools funding – how/where was this money spent, and how did it enable children to be fully included in their communities?

Discussion:

This money became available from January 2009 – the funding went in to schools based on higher level audit funding categories and continues to be allocated in that way.

The Strategic Schools Forum has been informed by schools of how the money has been used, supported by consultation with pupils. The funding is still available.

- Some parents haven't heard about this initiative, and aren't aware that this funding is available to support extended school opportunities for their children with additional needs.
- Some Special Schools have used it to fund long-term arrangements that will promote development of extended opportunities: eg. Family liaison Workers.
- Parents felt it would be great if all schools reported how they are using this funding – information is key to accessing and developing services! There is a huge range of ways in which

this funding is being used (£200,000 across North Somerset, per annum)

- Parents need to feel that it is OK to approach their child's school to ask for the sorts of activities their child wants/would enjoy or for the support to join in before- or after-school activities, or lunch-time activities – buddies may be able to offer support (contact the Firs to discuss the "Buddying" Service on 01934 632538).
- Find out who the lead person is in your child's school, if you want to know more – ask the SENCO if you aren't sure who to approach. Secondary Schools have dedicated Extended Schools Managers.

Agenda Item 2:

How do you check that the requirements of the DDA have been carried out, to ensure that children have full access to community provision? How can children be enabled to have equal access to community services during the holidays? Will support be embedded into social/leisure activities in the community so this is a possibility? Do play rangers have training to support our children to attend unstructured activities in local playspaces?

Discussion:

From April 2010 additional funding will become available from the government to enable children in receipt of free school meals to access community activities – called "Join up, join in" – community forums to discuss the use of this money are already being set up in North Somerset.

Play Rangers are trained to work with children (level 2) and work to the principles outlined in the Play Strategy. They can facilitate play for children under age 8 with parents/carers in attendance (they do not provide child-care) and with over-8s in groups, and do additionally work on specialist projects (usually in partnership with special schools).

Focus for
our
Inclusion
Working
Group

- Parents would love their children to be able to access activities such as Scouts, Beavers and Football. Currently Anna Sutherland (Educational Psychologist) is sending out a questionnaire on behalf of the Complex Additional Needs Service to parents of children with complex additional needs in the Central locality of North Somerset. The aim of the project is to identify what if any barriers exist in children accessing community services and activities and what can be done to remove the barriers. The outcomes of this project will inform future work linked to Aiming High. **Anna will be drawing together the outcomes of this research and has agreed to meet with a working group of parents, interested in contributing to thinking around inclusive community developments. She hopes to be able to hold a further meeting with interested parents to hear their views during June, and to meet with this group to feed back final outcomes of the research in September. Parents would be interested in contributing as a group to planning arising out of this work and Anna will include this in her recommendations.**
- It was also noted that all schools must develop a policy, explaining how they are taking forward the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Agenda Item 3:

Many families currently struggle to access direct payments in North Somerset. They seem to be the last, rather than the first option on offer. How can families access direct payments, to enable them to set up individual packages of support for their child? What support is available for families to plan for and manage this scheme?

Discussion:

Direct payments are only available via a Social Worker, after an assessment has been carried out and has identified needs that meet the criteria for a service. A direct payment can be awarded instead of

allocation of a service/provision from the Local Authority. The Direct Payments Team, based at Long Ashton, will offer support to set up a direct payment scheme (and come highly recommended!). Parents would need to be able to set up a trust deed and separate bank account to make this system work – it is similar to acting as an employer, so can be demanding and involves basic paperwork. It is currently mostly used by adults to support leisure activities at present. It is certainly an alternative that should be discussed with all parents of children identified as entitled to a service, by all social workers (they should be able to provide you with a leaflet about this option).

Parents would value more information about direct payments, so they are clearer about what they are and how they can be used. We were told that North Somerset Council (NSC) publishes information on the website.

- Cases for direct payment are presented to the SCIP panel.
- Direct payments are reviewed every six months
- They are a valuable way of achieving flexible help
- NSC will carry out necessary CRB checks
- Don't give up!

Agenda Item 4:

What is the response available to parents who need to work and suddenly find themselves without care or support for their child/young person with complex additional needs?

Discussion:

Aiming High funding has provided additional bank workers for the Family Support Team: health and social care assistants and family support workers; but this is not an emergency service. Training is crucial to meet the needs of individual children as part of a package of care and this limits an emergency response by the team.

Crossroads does offer an emergency system, but it is essentially an emergency liaison planning tool, which allows notification of pre-agreed and established emergency systems to be triggered in the case of sudden incapacity of the principle carer. We agreed that this issue needs further consideration.

Thanks to Helen Caldwell for her input re questions 1 & 2 **and to Anna Sutherland** for her input re question 2 and her agreement to meet with a group of interested parents to discuss their views re. access for children with complex additional needs to community services.

We also wish to thank Debbie Bench for her support in addressing issues raised in questions 3 & 4.