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Parental involvement network for parents of disabled children

Notes from the Fenland network meeting

Date: 26 June 2013 **Time:** 10am – 2pm

Venue: Oasis Community Centre, Wisbech

Number of parents and carers: 15

Professionals joining at 11am: 8

Facilitator: Lenja Bell, pinpoint

This was the 14th parental involvement network meeting for Fenland.

Workshop ground rules

The workshop ground rules were put up as a reminder for participants at the beginning of the meeting.

- Everyone is valued
- There are no wrong answers or silly questions
- Everyone will have the chance to hear and be heard – mobile phones on silent
- We respect each other's opinions
- We respect confidentiality
- We respect each other's values and cultures
- Every will be able to understand what people are saying – avoid jargon
- The whole is bigger than the sum of the parts.

Updates

Pinpoint gave updates from previous network meetings. These are outlined in the document: *Parental involvement network for parents of disabled children: feedback for June 2013 network meetings*. Additional updates were:

- pinpoint was successful in its bid for the parent participation contract with Cambridgeshire County Council. Pinpoint will therefore be working with parents for at least another two years.
- pinpoint is actively recruiting more parent volunteers and is holding a volunteer morning on 12th September. For more information see: <http://pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/events/pinpoint-welcome-and-update-volunteers-and-parent-reps>.
- The *People to Talk to* leaflet has been updated and reprinted. Hard copies are available from pinpoint or view an on-line version: <http://pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/support/support-groups-linked-to-the-pinpoint-network>.
- pinpoint is working with Home-Start to deliver *Empowering Families* training to parents of children under five with a disability or additional need. A four week course is running at March Children's Centre from 19th September, and more courses will be scheduled in other areas. See <http://pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/events/empowering-families-course> for more information about the March course and contact details for information about future courses.

Hot topic: Update on the Cambridgeshire County Council SEND Strategy and the Single Plan

Background

At the June 2012 network meetings parents were asked to identify the actions they wanted to see around 14 identified priorities in the new SEND strategy. The outcomes of these meetings can be seen on the pinpoint website: <http://pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/pinpoint-reports> and were presented to the SEND Project Board in February 2013.

Parents identified six top priorities in June 2012. At these June 2013 network meetings, pinpoint shared a hand out with the six priorities which showed the actions that parents had requested.

Pinpoint also shared a Parent Partnership Newsletter (Special Edition) which outlined how each of the 14 priorities was being addressed. See: <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/specialneedsdisabilities/supportforparents/parentpartnership/parentpartnershipnewslettertrainingevents.htm> for a copy of the newsletter.

Parent feedback on actions for the six priorities

pinpoint put up each of the six priorities on the blue sticky wall and underneath each priority, the actions that were highlighted in the Parent Partnership (PPS) newsletter. Pinpoint then asked parents what they thought of the actions. In all of the meetings, there wasn't enough time to gather feedback on all six priorities so we worked through as many as possible, sometimes prioritising ones that parents felt were most important.

Parents' comments are listed below in bullet points under each of the priorities and under the specific actions for those priorities. Comments from professionals (from when parents' comments were fed back to them later in the meeting) are written in italics. Priorities and actions that were not discussed or commented on in the meeting are not listed.

Priority Services should work together

- Can't attend cross-border groups
- GPs cross border issues
- What happens when services in 2 different LAs e.g. holiday activities
- Battle to get everyone in one room
- There is no team

Action Working to extend 'key working' approach to coordinate services, and provide emotional support and practical support

- Cross border issues with keyworkers, want to keep keyworkers
- Keyworking sometimes doesn't work, depends on individuals
- Families need a review of circumstances e.g. bedroom tax
- Professionals too busy, need time for the job
- Assessment but no provision afterwards
- Services take too long to return calls made in a crisis
- No feedback from CAMH, not getting information for parents
- Open access (paediatrician, OT, CAMH)– good idea but poor response time
- CAMH – confidence building for teenage girls – very good
- How to re-engage services after sign off
- Keep an eye out to prevent crisis
- Parents need to pick the right person
- Parents want to access local services regardless of county

Priority Continuing professional development for those who work or support children and young people with SEND

Action Training provided this year: recognised qualifications for all new SENCOs; qualifications for dyslexia; autism (Early Bird Plus); speech and language (Elklan); effective use of TAs; managing positive behaviour (Team Teach); restorative approach – promoting behaviour that builds and maintains relationships

- Do schools have to do this? *Don't have to do any training*
- What about training for existing and older teachers?
- Lunch supervisors, canteen staff also need training
- Exclusion from school trip (residential)
- The results of this training are not evident to parents
- Problems when TAs off sick or training – back up plan
- Training should be compulsory
- Dyslexia support and training
- How long is SENCO training last? *9 months, due within 2 years*
- Support group set up training, SNUG (Cambs and Norfolk)
- What is happening on in-set days?
- Training in school in-set days
- Share training with parents. *Does happen in some schools.*
- *Ofsted framework – schools have to demonstrate training.*
- *All teachers should have awareness and understanding of SEN*
- *Autism Education Trust (AET) training for all schools, 3 levels, starting in September. Level 1 and 2 whole school.*
- Extremely useful to be involved as a parent.

Priority SEND provision needs to be regulated and accountable

Action Parents took part in reviews of mainstream Specialist Provision re: quality of provision

- Parents not aware of this
- IPSEA independent, are the PPS?
- IPSEA are fantastic
- Are PPS withholding info?
- PPS service limited in term of hours available (10am - ?)

- PPS language too jargon-y

Action PPS Special Edition newsletter comparing attainment, attendance and exclusion with other LAs

- Parents haven't seen this newsletter
- Need to compare SEN with specialist provider (ASD) in other counties
- Issues around the law with academies
- Information about schools being taken to tribunal or court – outcome?
- *Normal complaint process – governing body, detail how to escalate to Secretary of State*
- *Tribunal – print each year information on appeals, pass information to parents*
- What special schools are in the area – how to get information?
- List of school on internet – special schools and independent schools
- *National list of approved schools*
- Difference between mainstream and academy?
- *Academies – should make no difference re: statements*
- *Can challenge academies*
- Also ask non education professionals about schools
- Information about SENCos is useful, (got) from a family worker
- Parents need to access SENCos
- Not easy to find an autism school in local area
- Autism school - need one in Fenland

Action Special schools working together with other special schools in regions to compare progress assessments at P scales for writing and maths (P scales used when children working below national levels)

- How can this be measured when all children are different?

General comment

- What about thresholds, what about children coping okay and have no statement? *They will still have something else in place.*

Feeding back to commissioners and service providers

Commissioners and service providers joined the meeting at 11am. After introductions and going over the ground rules, parents fed back on the priorities and actions from the morning. Comments from professionals are written in italics in the above section.

Update from commissioners:

Helen Phelan, Principal Educational Psychologist, gave an update on the reforms to SEND at a national level with key highlights from the Children and Families Bill. See **Appendix 1**.

Helen also gave a talk on the Single Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, also known as the Single Plan. See **Appendix 2**. Helen asked parents to work in groups with service providers to answer questions on what would a good single assessment look like, what do you value about the current assessment process and system, and what would you like to change? Helen collected parents' responses which she will summarise and use for the development of the single plan.

Judith Davies, Commissioner for Enhanced Services, told parents that the statutory assessment process is being reduced from 26 to 20 weeks and shared a table which outlines the steps in the old and new processes. See **Appendix 3**. The new process will be practiced on statements from September 2013. Judith asked parents to feedback on how they would like to be involved in drafting statements in the new process. Parents fed back as follows:

- How will urgent review be arranged?
- Up to parents to contact professionals and let people know
- Would solve worry about falling off TAC meeting if part of annual review
- Commitment from people to attend

Evaluation

We asked parents and professionals to feedback on the meetings by answering a few questions on a flip chart. This was voluntary so unfortunately feedback was not always gathered. Comments from professionals are in italics. See feedback below:

Liked this

- Very informative
- Very useful – food for thought for the future
- *Listening to parents with other professionals*

Didn't like this

- Didn't like group work

More of this

- Discussion with other parents

Anything else?

No comments made

Email feedback received after the meeting

Actually, think there is an issue that has come to my attention. Had a short chat with my son's bus/taxi driver and said just lost the contract for Meadowgate school. This issue has come up before, last time tender went elsewhere parents upset then that small monetary savings meant their kids would suffer from having to cope with new people taking them to school. Just thought let you know.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 16th October 2013 from 10am – 2pm at the Oasis Community Centre, Wisbech.

pinpoint actions

In response to issues raised at this meeting, we will:

1. Summarise and report findings to the Disabled Children's Action Group and SEND Project Board, and other groups that pinpoint is represented on.
2. Add the network meeting notes, presentations and summary report to the pinpoint website. Share the link in our weekly update.
3. Discuss key issues arising from the district network meetings at the county Partners in Commissioning (SEND) Group meeting in July 2013.

Appendix 1

Update on the Reforms to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The National Context: SEND Green Paper and proposals for new Children and Families Bill 2013

- ◆ The vision
 - Early recognition and support
 - Staff knowledge, understanding and skills
 - Parents knowing what they can expect from services
 - An integrated assessment and single plan 0-25 years for children and young people with complex needs.
 - Greater control for parents
- ◆ The commitments
 - single assessment process
 - Education, Health and Social Care Plan
 - offer of personal budget
 - a 'Local Offer'
- ◆ Draft Legislation and indicative SEND Code of Practice

Children and Families Bill - Key Highlights

- ◆ Involvement of children, young people and parents at the heart of legislation, including assessments and local offers.
- ◆ More streamlined assessment process, which integrates education, health and care services, and involves CYP and their parents.
- ◆ New 0-25 Education, Health and Care Plan, replacing Statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments, which reflects the child or young person's aspirations for the future, as well as current needs.
- ◆ New requirement for LA, health and care services to commission services jointly to meet the needs of CYP with SEND.
- ◆ LAs to publish a clear, transparent 'local offer' of services for all CYP with SEND, so parents can understand what is available.
- ◆ New statutory protections for young people aged 16-25 in FE, and a stronger focus on preparing for adulthood.

Timetable for the new Code of Practice

- **Stakeholder engagement** - September 2012-January 2013
- **Initial Drafting** - New Year 2013
- **Publish indicative draft of Code to support Parliamentary progress of the Children and Families Bill** - Committee Stage, Spring 2013
- **Public consultation on draft Code** - Autumn 2013
- **Code of Practice laid before Parliament** - Spring 2014
- **Final Code of Practice published** - Spring 2014

This means that there will be opportunities throughout the process to be involved in commenting on the new Code.

Appendix 2

Single Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

EHC Plan

- ◆ 0 – 25 years
- ◆ A streamlined assessment process, which integrates education, health and care services
- ◆ Children, young people and families are central throughout the process
- ◆ Replaces statements and learning difficulty assessments, and Individual Healthcare Plans (IHP)

EHC Plan

- ◆ Threshold for an EHC plan is the same as for a statement of SEN
- ◆ EHC plans extend statutory rights and rights to appeal to the Tribunal into further education.

We'd like to hear your views...

- ◆ What would a good single assessment look like?
- ◆ What do you value about the current assessment process and system?
- ◆ What would you like to change?

Appendix 3

STATUTORY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

	Request received	Parental Agreement	LA Decision	Statutory Assessment	Drafting	Final and Resources
<p>Current process</p> <p>26 week process</p> <p>Final outcome is a Note in Lieu or Statement of SEN</p>	<p>Request received from school, parent, setting or other professional</p> <p>Day 1 of week 1</p>	<p>LA secures parental permission to consider the request</p> <p>To be received within 29 days</p>	<p>LA decides whether the evidence indicates that it is necessary to undertake a statutory assessment</p> <p>Within 6 weeks a decision must have been made</p>	<p>If agreed LA contacts parents and professionals requesting up to date advice (reports). LA monitors receipt of the advice and gathers the reports submitted</p> <p>Must be received within 16 weeks on the start date</p>	<p>The LA considers the advice submitted. If the advice received supports the drafting of a Statement the LA will agree to issue a draft/proposed Statement If not agreed a Note in Lieu (NiL) will be issued</p> <p>LA issues a draft/proposed or NiL by week 18</p>	<p>Parent/carer has 15 days to respond to the draft statement. At this stage parent/carer can ask for a meeting or just confirm their agreement to the draft Statement. The parent will also indicate their preferred school. LA agrees (through a panel process) the level of resources required to meet the needs detailed</p> <p>Process must be completed within 26 weeks</p>
<p>Proposed Process from September 2014 (TBC)</p> <p>20 week process</p> <p>Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)</p>	<p>Request received from parent, young person (or person acting on their behalf) school or other professionals such as Health, Youth Offending Team</p>	<p>?</p>	<p>LA decides whether the evidence indicates it is necessary to undertake a statutory EHC assessment</p> <p>Within 6 weeks a decision must have been made</p>	<p>If agreed LA contacts parents and professionals to gather the evidence required for a statutory EHC assessment. LA monitors receipt of the advice/reports and gathers the reports submitted</p> <p>Must be received within 12 weeks of the start date</p>	<p>The LA considers the advice submitted. If the advice received supports the drafting of an ECHP the LA will agree to issue a ECHP.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Drafting Process</p>	<p>Parent/carer has 15 days to respond to the draft EHCP, At this stage parent/carer can ask for a meeting or just confirm their agreement to the draft plan. The parent will also indicate their preferred school. LA agrees (through a panel process) the level of resources required to meet the needs detailed. The ECHP will name a setting, school or college.</p> <p>Must be completed within 20 weeks</p>