



East Devon Parent Carers' Voice
Notes from the meeting held on Wednesday 28th November 2007 – Bowd Inn, nr Sidmouth

Present:

10 parents/carers attended
Nicky Ruane Development Worker

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

Nicky welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone in the room introduced themselves. Nicky explained that Ian and Lois had agreed to represent families from East Devon at the Parent Carers' Voice County Forum.

2. Updates from other meetings

County Forum

Ian and Lois had both attended the last County Forum. They had been impressed in that they felt the professionals attending had really listened to the opinions of parents. The next one will be focusing on education.

There were updates on the short breaks funding, commissioning for the Children's Trust, conversation days and the Young Devon Transitions Project.

Full minutes can be found on the Parent Carers' Voice website at www.parentcarersvoice.org.

3. Update on developments with Joint Agency Services in Exeter, East and Mid Devon

Frank O'Friel, manager of the Joint Agency Services for Exeter, East and Mid Devon had attended a meeting in Exeter earlier that week and Nicky explained what he had said in respect of developments in services.

- Devon PCT now runs the health provision
- Integrated services have been formed across adults and children's services
- Devon will be split 3 ways:
 - Exeter, East and Mid Devon,
 - North Devon and
 - Teignbridge, South and West Devon

- CAMHS is part of the integrated service
- Integrated assessment teams have been set up across Exeter, East and Mid Devon and are working well. The number waiting for an integrated assessment has reduced from 160 to between 20/30.
- There are still some problems with complex cases and some are having to wait for longer than he would like
- Fair Access to Carers Breaks is still focusing on those children and young people with a physical, sensory or learning disability. By this time next year everyone should have been reviewed.
- The integrated assessment team is looking to work with CAMHS. Families will be asked to complete a questionnaire and, if meeting the threshold, will be offered a choice appointment. There will be some delay as CAMHS will have to implement their Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA) before fully integrating with the Joint Agency Service.
- The final announcement as to whether Exeter gains unitary status has yet to be announced. It is hoped that things will continue in a similar way should they be successful.
- There are plans for an Exeter complex cases team and an East and Mid Devon complex cases team.
- Service development
 - Provision of after school, Saturday and holiday clubs at Ceda
 - Growth of the enabling service
 - Development of the Family Intensive Support Service (FISS), which is a 12 week intensive support service in the home.
- There have been some problems with respite over the summer where for a variety of reasons some families had to be cancelled, however things are improving and there is a little more flexibility in the system.

4. Any other business and locality issues to take forward to the County Forum

A lively discussion was held covering a range of topics including referrals to CAMHS, keyworking and speech and language

Conversation events

Conversation events are taking place at 4 venues across Devon giving parents a chance to find out more about services and the opportunity to voice their opinions about them.

Speech and Language

The therapist for the Exmouth area is leaving; has a replacement been appointed?

Consultant Paediatricians and waiting times

Concern was raised that Charles Holme is approaching retirement and that families will have to transfer to another consultant. It was hoped that when he leaves he would be replaced as some families already face a considerable wait for appointments.

Future meetings

Ideas for future meetings were discussed. It was felt that the Bowd Inn was a convenient venue and agreed that meetings should continue there for a while.

It was agreed that a workshop day focusing on behaviour management would be a good idea; Nicky has asked Frank about the possibility of funding for the event and is awaiting a reply.

SEN in schools

SEN in schools is to be discussed at the next County Forum and Nicky asked that if parents had experienced problems that they could let her have details by Christmas so she can provide examples of problems to the County Forum.

There followed a discussion about the differences that exist in the willingness and ability of schools to meet special needs and concern that there needs to be sufficient provision in special schools to accommodate those children whose needs cannot be met in mainstream. Some parents felt that there were not sufficient places available in special schools and that children were being forced to remain in mainstream schools even though the school could not meet their needs. Where a child had challenging behaviour they might be on the verge of permanent exclusion even though the behaviour was directly due to their condition and the staff's lack of understanding of how to deal with them.

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