



Exeter Parent Carers' Voice
Notes from the meeting held on Monday 26th November 2007 – Exeter CVS, Exeter

Present:

8 Parents/Carers

Nicky Ruane	Development Worker
Nadia Stone	Express and Echo
Trish Oliver	Face 2 Face Co-ordinator

Speaker:

Frank O’Friel Manager of Joint Agency Services for Exeter, East and Mid Devon

Apologies:

4 parents/carers sent their apologies

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

Nicky welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone in the room introduced themselves. Nadia explained that she was attending the meeting as the Express and Echo is looking at doing a piece on Carers and she was looking to identify issues of interest to carers and to seek their opinions.

2. Notes from previous meeting and matters arising

Parent Representation at other meetings/groups

Nicky is still looking for parents available to attend other meetings, consultations and to sit on interviews where required. She is holding a list and any parent who has expressed an interest in taking part will be contacted if and when an opportunity arises. One parent mentioned that she has already mentioned her willingness to be contacted, especially for interviews. Nicky confirmed that she was aware of this.

Lack of services for young adults

A general discussion took place about the concern for a lack of services when young people transfer from children’s services into adult services. It was felt that there is a need for work-related, meaningful activities for young people and adults.

Trish highlighted the high class learning opportunities that CEDA can provide for adults. There then followed a discussion about CEDA and the after-school, holiday and Saturday clubs it currently runs for children with special needs.

The conversation then continued with one parent expressing that she was experiencing considerable difficulties at home and the lack of support she received. It was agreed that she should speak to Frank O’Friel when he arrived and ask that her circumstances be looked at.

It was felt that the level of support provided by schools varied greatly and that in most cases the attitude was set by that of the Headteacher.

The minutes were agreed by those present.

3. Update on inclusive play park

Miriam has now submitted the bid for funding to the National Lottery for £¼million. The aim is to provide a play park that is truly inclusive, being wheelchair accessible and having multi sensory equipment. She explained that the City Council has given the land and that the planning permission has been approved. There had been some slight problems initially as planners failed to recognise the need for a 1.8m high fence and gates with catches. Miriam explained that this was necessary so that children and young people who have a tendency to run off could access the play park and use it safely.

The plan is that the play park will have access to a well equipped disabled toilet with a changing bench and a hoist.

There followed a discussion about the Changing Places campaign for better facilities in disabled toilets. Miriam informed the meeting that she was attending a meeting with the City Council to discuss the issue in Exeter.

Miriam asked those present to complete a questionnaire about their use of play parks and what they liked and disliked about them.

Concern was raised that teenagers in groups can be intimidating and also that they might leave broken glass etc should they congregate there at night. Miriam explained that the site chosen did not currently suffer from damage by young people and that it was thought to be too remote for them to congregate there in the evenings. Everyone agreed that it was an excellent idea to have equipment large enough for everyone to access.

4. Updates from other meetings

Conversation events

Conversation events are taking place at 3 venues across Devon giving parents a chance to find out more about services and the opportunity to voice their opinions about them.

Fair Access to Carers’ Breaks

One parent told of her experience of this where she has been told that she needs a Social Worker to make an assessment about the new care package but that there has been a considerable delay as no Social Workers are available. It was suggested that this issue be raised when Frank arrives.

Frank O’Friel joined the meeting at this point

5. Update on developments in Exeter – Frank O’Friel, JAS Manager

Frank gave those present an update on what is happening in the Exeter, East and Mid Devon areas.

- 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.

Frank then answered questions from parents/carers.

Q. A parent felt there was a shortage of keyworkers for complex cases. Parents often do not wish to or feel unable to keywork their own child and it can be difficult to find community keyworkers as they are not given extra money to do so.

A. Frank assured everyone that the situation should improve and that some of those working in the community will soon see that keyworking is part of their job.

Q. Can families self- refer?

A. Yes, to the AXS pathway co-ordinator. The referral can be moved on to the Joint Agency where necessary.

Q. Do you have to have a Social Worker to do a Social Care assessment as a lack of one was causing a delay?

A. There have been some delays and there are about 30 cases outstanding. Frank will check the individual details.

Q. There has been a problem with continence supplies. Is this sorted and also who do people approach if there is a problem with obtaining/fitting spare equipment, especially after hours?

A. Frank will let Nicky know

Q. How do new parents find out what help is available?

A. Either ask the paediatrician to refer the child or self refer.

6. Any other business and locality issues to take forward

Future meetings

Ideas for future meetings were discussed, including whether people would be interested in evening meetings and arranging something specifically for 'Dads'. It was felt that a practical session may be more appealing and Nicky said she would look into the possibility of arranging something and asked for any ideas or suggestions to be sent to her.

It was agreed that a workshop day focusing on behaviour management would be a good idea; Nicky would ask Frank about the possibility of funding for the event. It would be helpful if for any events such as this the notes/handouts could be made available to those who cannot attend.

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.

7. Date and time of next meeting

Future meeting dates have yet to be set, but there will be an informal meeting at the Imperial in Exeter on Wednesday 5th December at 11.00. Parents are welcome to come for coffee and a chat and then to stay on for a sandwich or lunch if they wish.

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Nicky Ruane,
Parent Carers' Voice, Exeter CVS, King William Street, Exeter, EX4 6PD

Telephone: 01392 201572
nicky.ruane@exetercvs.org.uk