



Exeter Parent Carers' Voice
Notes from the meeting held on Tuesday 1st July 2008 – Cowick Barton, Exeter

Present:

8 Parents

Nicky Ruane Development Worker

Liz Batchelor Parent Partnership

Hil Rundle Complex Cases Manager, Exeter JAS

Apologies:

Apologies were received from 2 parents

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

Margaret welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made and apologies given.

2. Play Park Update

To date more than £200, 000 has been raised. The work on the site is due to commence later this month.

Miriam is looking to form a committee to organise activities within the park. If anyone is interested please contact her by phone on 01392 256869 or by email to guard@eclipse.co.uk.

Further details of the project can be found at www.theplaypark.co.uk

3. Mental Capacity Act – Clare Cox

Clare began by explaining that the Act had come into force on 1st October 2007. Its aim had been to clarify and simplify the existing law and it applies to people from the age of 16 upwards, although advance decisions and Lasting Power of Attorney can only be made by those of 18 or above.

What is capacity?

This is about identifying whether people are able to make decisions for themselves. It focuses on particular decisions at a particular moment in time.

If, for example, in deciding whether to give medication a GP must do an assessment for capacity for that decision at that time. Capacity can vary from situations to situation. It recognises that some decisions people can make and there may be some they cannot.

The Act covers all people, not just those with disabilities or special needs. People may lack capacity at a moment in time if they are drunk, ill or unconscious.

If a person has no family or friends outside of their carer team they may need an Independent mental capacity advocate (IMCA) to help speak on their behalf. Devon Age Concern and Living Options provide IMCAs.

There is a criminal offence should anyone wilfully neglect or ill treat anyone who lacks capacity.

Where a person lacks capacity and does not have a lasting power of attorney the Court of Protection can appoint a deputy to make decisions on their behalf in relation to property and affairs. There are annual costs involved with this as the Court does supervision.

The over-riding principle is that decisions have to be in the 'best interest' of the person for whom they are being made. To do this those making the decision have to talk to those who are involved in the persons care.

If you are making a Lasting Power of Attorney it is best to name several people in order to prevent a situation of having no-one. Those with power of attorney can make decisions either jointly or severally, you choose when make the LPA.

The Office of the Public Guardian holds a register of all LPAs.

For 16 and 17 year olds who lack capacity those with parental responsibility can make a best interest decision. Alternatively, the Local Authority or other authority (decision maker) can make the decision. They must consult with you as the parent, but can make the decision themselves. Parents can challenge the decision. If it goes to Court it can be heard either under the Children's Act in the Family Court or under the Mental Capacity Act in the Court of Protection. Decisions made in the Family Court are only valid until the child reaches 18.

For more information about the mental Capacity Act you can contact either:

- Safeguarding Adult Team, DCC, County Hall 01392 382339
- or
- Office of Public Guardian, Customer Care Team 0845 330 2900

Clare also left copies of her presentation and some useful information.

4. Hil Rundle, Exeter JAS

Hil Rundle introduced herself to those present and explained a little about the current structure of the Exeter Joint Agency Service. She explained her role and stressed that she wanted to help parents.

There followed a discussion about some problems that some families have experienced in trying to get through to someone at the JAS. Examples were cited where families end up speaking to someone in a call centre who does not appear to listen to what they are being told and so families end up speaking to the wrong people.

Hil has offered to attend future meetings and will be happy to speak with any family about matters concerning the JAS.

5. Liz Batchelor – Parent Partnership

Liz spoke of some of the recent developments within the Parent Partnership Service. She explained that a new member of staff will be starting in October, and that they will be covering the East Devon area together with part of Exeter. A decision on how to split Exeter has not yet been finalised.

Liz had brought with her a selection of useful leaflets, information and a copy of the SEN Code of Practice for parents to look at.

Liz is also able to offer training sessions to parents. She can offer a short 30 minute information session on:

- Conflict resolution
- Assertiveness
- Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus
- Disability Discrimination and the Disability Equality Duty

Longer, awareness raising sessions lasting approximately 2½ hours are also available on the following subjects:

- How schools meet the needs of children with special educational needs
- Managing meetings
- Children with SEN reaching their potential

Liz then talked about her intention to come to our meetings regularly so as to be available to any parent who might wish to talk with her. She also hoped that she could arrange to meet other parents at the meeting so they not only could talk with her but also meet other parents and share information through the Parent Carers’ Voice meetings.

6. Information and Any Other Business

Conversation days

Details of the 3 conversation events were given out together with the contact information for reserving a place at these events.

Since the meeting these events have been postponed until later in the year, possibly November. Details will be announced as they become available.

Restraint training

Nicky is currently looking to secure some training on restraint techniques for families. It is proving a little difficult to find a trainer/suitable course. Further information will be circulated when more is known.

Margaret thanked the speaker and everyone for attending the meeting.

Date of next meeting: **Tuesday 18^h November**
 Venue **The Cowick Barton, Exeter**
 Speaker: **Liz Batchelor, Parent Partnership Service**

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