

Parents Partnership News

Just when I thought that Parent Partnership could not get any busier, we are just coming to the end of a record-breaking year. 452 parents or carers have used the service in the twelve months up to 31st March 2010. This does not necessarily mean that there are more parents who are having problems with the SEN system as the number of new referrals to our service has only gone up slightly. Many parents return to us at times when they wish to discuss their child's progress, find out about the next stage in their child's education or to find out about policies and procedures affecting special educational needs. Increasingly, parents are also using our STARS service to help them make better informed choices about secondary school education for children with additional needs.

Seeking Your Views

It is also an important function of the Parent Partnership Service to make sure that parents' views are fed back to the CYPDisP, schools and educational services. We have recently participated in two consultations. At the Parents Information Day, we sought the views of parents on their experience of completing Common Assessment Framework forms. This information has now been collated and passed on to Cath Millington, Head of Service, CYPDisP.

Our other consultation was carried out on behalf of the Learning Support Service which provides specialist teaching for children and young people who need extra support with reading, writing, spelling and number work. More than three quarters of respondents were confident that their children's specific learning needs were being met. There were some reservations about early identification of needs and individual

school issues. Parents recognised that their children could make good progress if given one-to-one support. It was noted how this was beneficial to the young person and boosted self-esteem if there was someone available who was trained and had a good understanding of the young person's individual learning needs. There was overwhelming support for the Learning Support Services specialist teachers to be available in all secondary schools.

Consultation is a two way process and in Stockport there are a number of ways in which parents and carers can have an input. The Parents' Forum is an open group in which all parents are invited to find out about special educational needs, new initiatives and take part in discussion. I am hoping to see many of you at the next meetings of the Parents' Forum which will offer you the chance to put your views and ask questions to a panel made up of heads of services and a primary school headteacher. The subject of the meeting will be to look at how working together we can help children and young people to become more confident learners. Parent participation in the shaping of CYPDisP services is being undertaken by PIPS (Parents in Partnership Stockport)

The group is open for anyone to join and it aims to represent all parents of disabled children in Stockport, by trying to work with the professionals to improve services for children with disabilities.

New Leaflets

Have you seen the new Parent Partnership leaflets? These can be downloaded from the Together Trust website: www.togethertrust.org.uk/education/parent-partnership-services They will be available through your child's school from September 2010. You will also be able to see our policies on Impartiality and Confidentiality.

'For all parents of disabled children in Stockport' on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=66386428424>



Parent Partnership regularly informs parents about national consultations on this Facebook site which was set up to by a parent to encourage parent participation and discussion.

The Lamb Inquiry took views from many parents before recommendations were made to Parliament. This has resulted in the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010 which includes:

- A new right for parents to appeal if their child's statement is not amended at their annual review
- A requirement for schools inspectors to report explicitly on provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities
- A requirement for local authorities to provide full-time education for children and young people who for medical, social and emotional reasons are not in school but in alternative provision

Sonia Florent, Parent Partnership Manager



The Dyspraxia Foundation Stockport Area Support Group

The Dyspraxia Foundation Stockport Area Support Group are a group of parents with children, teenagers and adults who have dyspraxia or related learning or motor difficulties. Currently we meet at Stepping Hill Hospital, Pinewood House. We are a new local group and are very happy to welcome new members. You don't initially need to join the Dyspraxia Foundation, though if you did decide to do so you would also then have access to their wealth of support, information and literature on all aspects of dyspraxia from childhood to adulthood. We offer an informal atmosphere and the ethos of our group is to 'care and share'. It's so easy to feel confused, lonely and in need of information when dyspraxia and related learning difficulties are first identified.

We have started some specific evenings with speakers, the first one on 20th May was a presentation by the creators of Motor Skills United, a programme of intervention specifically aimed

at children in primary education with dyspraxia and related learning or motor difficulties. "The effect on self esteem and children's writing was frankly astonishing." Wonnie Barry's presentation is fascinating and really helped me to understand quite how our children may be perceiving the world and how it might feel for them. The invaluable information is thankfully easy enough to understand that even I got it! All the primary schools in Stockport have been given this programme for free and have been offered free training to implement the programme. So it's available right now for free for any child attending a primary school in Stockport.

So come and meet us to see if we can offer any support that you may need.

Contact Ian Woollams on 0161 406 9531 (after 7pm please) or email df@woollams.co.uk

Parents' Forum

Can we avoid learning difficulties affecting behaviour or behavioural difficulties preventing learning?

All Parents are welcome to come along and learn more about how parents, schools and local authority services can work together to boost children's self esteem.

"How can my child become a more confident learner?"

Come and ask our 'panel'

Cathy Lyall - Vice Chair, Primary Heads Consortium

Mark Hancock - Principal Child and Educational Psychologist

Martin Wakeling - Head of Learning Support Service

1.00 pm – 3.00 pm Wednesday 23rd June 2010

at Heaton Moor Methodist Church Hall, Stanley Road, Heaton Moor SK4 4HL

OR

7.00 pm – 9.00 pm Thursday 24th June 2010

at 1st Floor, Beckwith House, Heaton Lane, Stockport SK4 1HN

Please phone Liz or Leoni at Parent Partnership on 0161 431 3024 to book your place



Parent Support Group

For parents who have a child with Autism
Dates for 2010 (NOTE – NEW VENUE)



Thursday 24th June – Personal Hygiene
Thursday 29th July – Fantasy/reality and fibs
Thursday 26th August – Social Session
Thursday 30th September – Faddy Foods

Thursday 21st October – Sleep
Thursday 25th November – Any Issues
Thursday 16th December – Xmas Night Out

These parent sessions will be held monthly from 7pm to 8.30pm at Zuri's Bar (conservatory), Hazel Grove. They are a great opportunity to share ideas with parents going through similar issues and get advice from various professionals. Due to the youth club we have changed the PSG to only Thursdays not Tuesdays.

Contact Cheryl Salt or Jenny Newbold or Hazel Hall from the ASD Partnership Project
for more details on 0161 249 4474 or 07891 949467

PIPS – Parents in Partnership Stockport

Since the last news letter the **Parent Participation Focus group** has changed its name to **PIPS**, which was voted for by the parents as it was felt we required a name more descriptive of what the group was about.

Over the last 12 months there have been some great achievements within Parent Participation in Stockport. We thought it would be good time to take this opportunity to give feedback to parents on what the group has been doing and what has happened as a result of this.

Parent Representatives

There have been a number of parent representatives that have joined various Aiming High Sub Groups and two parents on the Steering Group. Parents were asked for their input into the Nursery Schools Admissions booklet plus, eight parents were involved in the scoring of applications (tenders) for short breaks.

'Confidence Building for Participation'

Following on from the first course last September, we went on to do a second training day in early February for which there were 30 parents over the two days that attended the training. This was to develop skills in communicating their needs, dealing with anger, developing self-esteem and working alongside professionals in a way they feel confident. These training days are also a really good way of building confidence and we will be continuing to run more of these courses in the coming year.



Parent participation Information Day

Fun Day

Our fun day was held at Stockport County Football ground on the 28th February. There were fun activities suitable for all children whatever their needs with trained support workers there to help supervise. These included bouncy castle, disco, wii games, lots of craft activities and a quiet space for the children, there were also pamper treatments, goody bags for the adults and refreshments for all. This was a great day with over a hundred parents and children present.



Family day

Information Day

Our first information day organised jointly with Stockport (CYPDisP) was a huge success with over 130 parents/carers attending. The interactive day included 10 workshops giving various talks on Education, Stress relief, Aiming High Short breaks and support groups. There were over 35 organisations/providers that were able to give up to date information for families and children with disabilities. The outcome of the event was that it reached a wide number of parents through providing the information, workshops and gathering parent's views. Also parents were more informed and aware of services in Stockport as well as having the opportunity to join up to the parent group (PIPS).

The following events were all fully supported and represented by parent reps and professionals from Stockport.

NW Parent Participation Partnership Event (ST Helens) Exploring joint working; how parents and professionals facilitate successful partnership working. During the day we worked on the following areas: The dos and don'ts when working together, Problems and Pitfalls, Overcoming Barriers, The Benefits of Working in Partnership, Building Successful Relationships, Trust and Respect.

National Transition Support Programme (Widnes) The aim of this event was to give everyone a better understanding of Parents' experiences and to identify how best to meet the needs of disabled young people, and their families, moving into adulthood and from children's to adult services (transition), through working in partnership.

Together For disabled Children - (Anfield Liverpool) This was a two day event. From this they will produce a working document (strategy/guidelines/minimum standards) that has input from both parents and professionals involved in parent participation in the North West of England.

National Conference – Westminster London – The Aiming High for Disabled Children conference on how parent participation can improve services for disabled children and their families. The day comprised of speakers, workshops and organisations. The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls MP, spoke about the improvements Aiming High for Disabled Children has delivered and how parents and disabled children and young people should be involved in shaping services in all areas. Following his speech he took a Q and A session. It was then announced that they were starting a National Forum.

Sherann Hillman Parent rep/Treasurer. If you would like any further information or interested in coming along to a meeting, please email us at pipstockport@yahoo.com

Participation in Partnership

Parents hold key information and have unique insights into their child's development; all agencies and educational settings can work more effectively where they involve parents in decision making. The participation of parents of disabled children is a continuing and evolving engagement. Settings should routinely and actively seek their views about individual needs, provision, services and local/national issues. The Parent Participation Parents Guide says:

"We believe that good participation leads to empowered parents, empowered Children and empowered services. This is undoubtedly a win-win situation for disabled children, their families and the professionals who work with them – what more could we want?"



Glenis, Sherann, Julie and Sonia

It has been a really successful year working in partnership with Stockport (CYPDisP) and we are looking forward to the up and coming year in which we will be arranging many more workshops/training days.

Finally we at PIPS would like to encourage as many families as we can to be involved in our group at whatever level you feel comfortable with, you are able to do this by email at: pipstockport@yahoo.com

Aiming High – Parent Participation

PIPS – Parents in Partnership Stockport

Participation places parents and carers at the heart of service planning and delivery.

I am sure that most of you are now aware of the Aiming High Project which is a Central Government initiative aimed at improving the range and quality of short planned breaks and outreach. Increasing parent participation in relation to developing and delivering services is also an aim. The initial focus is on short planned breaks and outreach but eventually it is hoped that there will be true partnership and participation between the parents and carers and the Stockport Children and Young People's Disability Partnership. The project is now in its third and final year but, hopefully, by the time the project finishes there will be a well established Parents Participation Group which will meet regularly with senior officers to plan, develop, improve and monitor service provision.

Stockport has a long history of strong networks of support group activities which are often related to the age, school or ability of the child. Within these groups there is an absolute wealth of knowledge and skill and long may they reign! However, true participation requires that parents from all the interest groups come together or are represented so that all the skills and knowledge can be pooled and channelled into improving and developing services that best meet the wide range of needs of the children and young people. There are issues which are particular to individual families but they're issues that all families affected by child disability have in common and this is where parent/carer participation really can make a positive difference.

I have worked in Stockport for some considerable time and I know that it would be very easy to be cynical and recall times when parents have been invited to consultation meetings only to be told what is going to happen. I hope that Parent Participation can be seen as a new and genuine opportunity for parents, carers and professionals to work effectively together to further the best interests of the children and young people. There will be areas of disagreement and some challenging debates but this often strengthens working relationships and, hopefully, all voices will be heard in a climate of mutual respect.

A lot of hard work has been undertaken by parents/carers, the Aiming High staff and Sonia from Parent Partnership

to establish the basis for a participation group. It has been identified that this is a huge learning curve for all involved and that work needs to be on going in order to bring about this improvement. To this end training needs have been identified. During last year confidence building workshops were provided for parents. The parents who attended felt very positive especially in relation to feeling more confident at meetings. Parents from other areas have undertaken training related to understanding their rights in relation to local policy and government legislation and it is hoped that this will soon be available in Stockport. Professionals will also need some help in order for true participation to take place and workshops will be provided for staff during the course of the next financial year. The ultimate aim is for parents to be in the driving seat and deliver the training themselves. This is already working very successfully in some parts of the country.

Some parents do not like formal meeting, some can only meet in the evenings and some during the day.

In order to facilitate as many parents as possible to participate during the year there will be monthly evening meetings and daytime coffee/mornings/afternoons at various informal locations in the Borough.

It is also hoped that there will be some workshops during the year, some fun/leisure activities and another information day.

We have started in a small way and hope to go from strength to strength.

We have some cause to celebrate as the fun days, workshops and the information day were well attended and we received positive feed back. Some parents have really benefited from exchanging information and problem solving on their Facebook page. Last year we were the only project in the country to have parents and young people involved as equals in the selection and commissioning of services. We are proud of this achievement.

The members of PIPS are keen to hear from you as soon as possible so please make contact or come to one of the events. Let's make participation in Stockport really work.

Alex Buckley, Parent Participation Support Worker
email pipstockport@yahoo.com

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP		0161 426 5216
Cath Millington	Head of Service	0161 249 4471
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) TEAM		
Ian Donegani	Education Officer – SEN Access and Performance	0161 249 4469
Sara Carratt	Personal Assistant to Ian Donegani	0161 249 4459
Moira Atkinson	Education Officer for all EBD Provision	0161 249 4453
ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OFFICERS (AROs)		
Sharon Meikle	Senior ARO for all Early Years/Nursery Children	0161 249 4453
Sarah Jewitt	ARO for Brinnington, Reddish and Part Cheadle	0161 249 4453
Jane Oakley	ARO for Hazel Grove, Bramhall and Part Cheadle	0161 249 4453
Angela Critchley	ARO for Heaton's and Part Stockport	0161 249 4453
Emma Lawson	ARO for Marple, Romiley and Part Stockport	0161 249 4453
SEN SUPPORT OFFICERS (SENSOs)		
Liz Starkey	Transport Commissioning Officer	0161 249 4450
Ashleigh Sutcliffe	SENSO for Brinnington, Reddish, Marple, Bredbury and Romiley	0161 249 4453
Caroline Jordan	SENSO for Cheadle, Hazel Grove, Bramhall and High Lane	0161 249 4452
Marilyn Miller/Joanne Parkinson	SENSO for the Heaton's and Stockport	0161 249 4454
Email Address:	specialeducation@stockport.gov.uk	



Afasic is the UK charity supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication impairments.

We provide:

- Information and advice through our national Help line – 0845 35577 and our web site www.afasicengland.org.uk

- A wide range of publications
- Local support groups
- Activities for young people
- Expertise in developing good practice

Training and conferences for parents, carers and professionals

Locally Afasic is recruiting parents and carers as volunteers to raise the profile of children and young people with speech, language and communication impairments. Following on from Aiming High for Disabled Children, and the Better Communications Action Plan there has never been a better time for parents and carers to engage with service providers and commissioners to influence the design and delivery of services for their children.

If you would like to find out more about Afasic and/or becoming a volunteer please contact Lesley Corina on 079500911004 – Lesleyc@afasicengland.org.uk

Notice Board

contact: Liz Dabrowski 0161 431 3024 parentpartnership@togethertrust.org

Independent Options Children and Family Centre

The Children and Family Centre is currently running a Parent Support Group on the last Wednesday of every month 7pm until 8.30pm. The group is open to any parent of a child who has a learning disability/additional needs. It is a very informal group who meet for a chat in a friendly place.

Also starting in May is an 'open access' Parent Networking Group who will meet on the 2nd Friday of each month 1.30 – 2.30. Again this is where the family support worker is available for advice, support or an hour 'out' for refreshments in a welcoming environment. For more details please call Rifath Khan on 0161 482 2535 or email rkhan@independentoptions.org.uk

Dadz'n'kidz is held on the last Saturday morning every month from 10 – 11.30am. This is a dads and their children group with different fun activities for the children and an opportunity to some time with other dads and children. Please call 0161 482 2525 and ask for Rifath to book a place.

Rifath Khan (family support worker) is also busy organising a variety of different training/ information events that are being held for parents and families. They are held during the daytime and evenings and cover different topics each month (such as Makaton training, Positive parenting skills and talks from professionals). Any parent or extended family member (grandparent, aunt, uncle etc) is welcome to join any of our events. Please call 482 2535 or email for more information rkhan@independentoptions.org.uk

If you are interested in any of the parent/family support activities please call.

The Inscape Centre

Courses on autism for parents, carers and professionals. Library specialising in autism. 'Living with Autism' support group meetings. *Contact: Liz 0161 283 4761*

FADS Friends and Disability Support

Meet twice a month. Also support Heald Green carers jointly with Signpost.

Contact: Jenny Davies 0161 485 4427

Stockport CP Society—Leisure Link Sharecare Project

offers the following leisure and play activities for disabled children/young people aged 5–18.

- 1-1 support to enable disabled children to attend mainstream play schemes and out of school activities.
- Open Access Schemes for disabled children to have free play opportunities
- 11+ scheme offering community based activities for 11-18 year olds

Valley school holiday and after school club / Heaton school after school club

Intr'great' project

Offers the following short breaks and community based activities;

- Weekend outdoor pursuits holidays 5 – 18 year olds
- Evening youth outdoor groups age 11 – 18 year olds

Both projects aim to introduce new play/leisure activities to individuals as well as build confidence and skills, provide an opportunity to socialise with peers, promote inclusion of all children/young people and also gives parents an opportunity to have a break from their caring roles or enable them to continue working during school holidays.

For further information contact the team on 0161 494 5771 or email overdale@stockportcp.co.uk or visit our website www.stockportcp.co.uk

ABC Support Group

For parents/carers of children with disabilities. Two groups, one for 0 – 10, and another for 11-16.

Contact: Dawne/Paul 0161 428 2429 or Tracey/Dave 0161 431 9867, www.abcfamilygroup.com

Inclusive Parent and Toddler Playgroup

At The Pines, 67 Chester Road, Hazel Grove

Contact: Nicky Jones on 0161 482 2536

SPACE – Support Group

Monthly meetings at Arden Arms Stockport for parents and carers of children with ADHD.

Contact: Fraser 07846441182