

Parent Partnership Service Scrutiny Board – Action Plan Response, June 2007

11(2) Ensuring that parents are kept informed from time to time of changes in policy or legislation which may affect the choices open to them for their children's education.

- Links have now been established with the National Parent Partnership Network (NPPN) who provides early notification of any proposed policy or legislation changes allowing the Parent Partnership Service to plan and prepare more up to date and accurate information for parent and carers.
- Upon receipt of the information it is then disseminated through the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILC's) and their partnership schools to all the appropriate parents/carers.
- If necessary the Parent Partnership Service will attend training to ensure they have a sound understanding of policy and legislation in order that they can provide parent/carers with further accurate information on a one to one or group basis.
- Training opportunities in respect of changes are offered to parents/carers through the Specialists Inclusion Learning Centres (SILCs).
Example: Officers from the Parent Partnership Service used the Parents Forum at the North East SILC to inform parents of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Parent Partnership Service Co-ordinator attends the Children's Disability Interagency Group where legislation and policy maybe discussed.
The Parent Partnership Service Co-ordinator has engaged with a further nine parents who have expressed an interest in participating with the Children's Disability Interagency Group.
- Parents have been identified to participate in the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres Partnership Board. This in turn will advise parents of local changes in order to disseminate across the SILC's.
- The aim of the Parent Partnership Service is to empower and enable parents/carers to engage in forums across the city using the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre as the nucleus. The forums will enable parents to have a voice and inform strategy across Education Leeds.

- **South:** The designated Parent Partnership Officer for this area is currently working in partnership with the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre Learning Mentor to develop the forum. The Principle of the South Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre is supportive. Information has been disseminated to the parents/carers, meeting venues have been established.
- **East:** A forum has already been established in the East by a designated member of the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre staff, this forum is managed by the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre and a designated Parent Partnership Officer can link into this group when the need for consultation arises.
- **North East:** Formal and informal forums take place in the North East Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre, facilitated and managed by Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre staffing structure. They have recently appointed a parent Welfare Officer and formed a new parenting forum. Further information is available to parents/carers through a termly newsletter. The designated Parent Partnership Officer is able to access these groups in order to consult and inform strategy. The officer contributes information through the newsletter.
- **West:** The designated Parent Partnership Service Officer has worked in partnership with the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre to establish and launch the parents' forum.
- **North West:** The designated Parent Partnership Service Officer has worked in partnership with the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre to establish and launch the parents' forum.

Case Study:

The Parents Forum in the North West was established in the autumn term of 2006.

The development of the forum began following discussions with the Governing Body and the SILC's parent Governors. Advice from the DfES and the local authority supported the establishment of a parent's forum.

The North West Parents Forum has an operational management committee that liaises with the Parent Partnership Service to facilitate half termly open forum meetings. These meetings are held on different sites and at different times to enable as many parents as possible to attend. On average 8 people attend the forum meetings. This includes parents, carers and volunteers.

The focus for the meetings are governed by what the parents want to discuss and previous topics have included respite provision and training for the management committee in marketing skills.

In January 2007 the forum was approached by a working party established to review the buildings of the North West SILC. In the past a concern for parents and staff has been the rumoured closure of the Back Lane site in Guiseley. These rumours have so far been unfounded.

The Parents Forum invited members of the working party, local councillors and other members of staff to an open forum event at the Back Lane site.

Questions were invited from parents and carers and the panel were asked the questions directly. The Questions and Answers were then written onto flip chart and clarified to the forum by the Parent Partnership facilitator.

The first Estate Review open forum attracted around 20 parents and 5 children. Another 6 people attended who were either local councillors, staff or Governors.

In April 2007 the open forum results were feedback to parents at the Pennyfields site. 5 parents attended the meeting and 3 new parents registered for future forum meetings.

The next stage of involving parents in the Estate Review is to communicate regularly with parents through the forum on the developments of the review and invite parent participation to discuss any options that come out of the review.

- **BESD SILC:** The designated Parent Partnership Service Officer has worked closely with existing staff to recruit parent governors in the first instance. This has been successful in as much as three parent governors have been identified and are working with the governors unit to enable them to undertake this role. The BESD SILC has also been invited to take part in the national Parent Support Adviser Pilot Research in order to support parents in respect of attendance and exclusion issues, inform parents and carers of their roles and responsibilities, develop and implement Parenting Contracts.

11(3) Ensuring that information on services available to parents incorporate non-statutory services.

An Information Officer has been appointed to the Parent Partnership Service from March 2007. Her role is to fulfil the minimum standard requirement outlined in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001 in respect of information. This minimum standard takes into account the availability of information around voluntary services. The officer will be working in Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres, schools and communities to ensure that parents/carers with children who have special educational needs have the information they require.

The Information Officer has the resources available to provide parents/carers by means of a comprehensive information library. Her responsibility includes researching information for parents/carers, ensuring that it is up-to-date and accurate at all times.

Close links have been established with Children's Information Services (CIS). A consultative process is underway to publish a multi-agency community newsletter which will incorporate non-statutory services.

11(4) Development of the Parent Partnership Service's profile with SILC parents.

The Parent Partnership Service has been re-aligned in order that a designated officer is in place within each Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre and partnership school area. The officers work to a robust service development plan which enables them to prepare for constant changes to service delivery.

Effective supervision and performance management is in place to ensure the activities and targets in the development plans are met, including compliance with 'minimum standards' outlined in Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Work is in progress to further develop existing protocols for the team.

Development of a 'Monitoring Group' is underway. This will monitor and evaluate the teams' existing good practice, ensuring that they meet the requirement of a Level 1 service as outlined in the National Evaluation of Parent Partnership Services 2006. Parents/carers of children with special education needs will be invited to participate in the monitoring group.

The Parent Partnership Service is currently working towards Charter mark accreditation for customer services.