

SOCIAL & CARING SERVICES, EDUCATION & THE ARTS AND THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

PARENT CARERS PLANNING GROUP

**Notes of meeting held on Wednesday 20 April 2005, 10.30am
at Pulborough Village Hall**

Present:

Bernadette Daly	MENCAP/Family Placement Team, S&CS
Barbara Dolan	Parent, Parents Action for Respite Care
Annabel Forbes	SCOPE
Ruth Foster	PACSO
Caroline Gibbins	Early Years & Child Care Development
Jenni Herrett	Kangaroos
Joan Martin	Parent
Peter Moor	County Councillor
Debbie Newson	Wellspring Newsletter
Lisa Perks	Sussex Autistic Society
Jon Philpot (chair)	Group Manager, Specialist Services, S&CS
Nigel Scott-Dickeson	Springboard Project
Jane Tickner	Springboard Project
Jo Tyler	Parent Partnership Officer, Education
Shelley Woodage	Parent
Sandy Palmer	Minute Taker
Sally Dovey	Rural Transport Partnership Officer, WSCC
Bill Leath	Transport Co-ordination, WSCC

Apologies:

Cathy Caine	Service Manager, Child Disability, S&CS
Liz Catchpole	Horsham PCT
Anna Cowie	Parent, Parents Action for Respite Care
Jillian Lovejoy	Strategic Partnership Manager, S&CS
Madaleine Owens	Service Manager, Child Care, S&CS
John Parsons	Western Sussex PCT
Louise Williamson	VSLDO, S & CS, Horsham

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jon Philpot welcomed all members to the meeting and took the chair in the absence of Robert Dunn.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held on 26.01.05

Page 1, Respite Care

Jon Philpot informed the group that there has been a delay in the setting up of the task force which will be a joint body between S&CS and Education. It is hoped that a meeting will be held in the near future. Nigel Scott-Dickeson will represent voluntary organisations on the task force.

Peter Moor outlined the changes in the structure of S&CS and the appointment of directors for the two new bodies – Children's and Adult Services.

Mapping Exercise

Nigel Scott-Dickeson has been approached by the Coram Family Trust concerning a mapping exercise. This is currently delayed due to the General Election.

NSD also updated members on the Inclusive Leisure Opportunities research which was presented by Di Kelly at the last meeting. The research material is with Sure Start and the publishers. The research findings, together with a summary of the recommendations, should be available in June on the website www.sersen.uk.net. (This information is now available)

Page 3, item 4, West Sussex Children's Trust group

The two parent representatives were unable to attend the meeting on 15 March, which focused on the Joint Area Review.

Page 5, Meeting Young Carers

Peter Moor reported that a meeting had taken place between county councillors and twelve young carers. The day had been very informative and the young carers had presented a list of needs, which would hopefully be met.

Page 5, item 6, Any Other Business, ICIS website

ICIS had expressed concern that the website was not considered user friendly. Some members had experienced difficulty with the efficiency of the search facility and agreed that the information needed to be more inclusive. Ruth Foster gave information about a website: www.DisabledGo.info. The website will be expanded to include West Sussex information, although it will take some time to set this up.

3. Joint Area Review (JAR)

The leaflet entitled "Every Child Matters – Change for Children" had been circulated with the agenda. Jon Philpot informed the group that West Sussex is to be a pilot in the forthcoming Joint Area Review, which is an integrated inspection of Children's Services. The inspectors will be coming to West Sussex in June and will be looking at all publicly-funded provision for children and young people. We have presented 100 case histories on young people who are supported by S&CS and the inspectors will be looking closely at 10 of these cases.

The Review will be making Key Judgements in Evidence within 5 stated outcomes:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

The inspectors have expressed the wish to meet with groups in the county during the week beginning 13 June. Whilst it is not clear how this will be

achieved, Jon Philpot asked members to consider whether they would be willing to attend a meeting of the group during the week of 13 June, or to agree to attend another meeting which may be arranged. The options were considered and some members expressed a preference for a special meeting of the Parent Carers Planning Group, perhaps with an open agenda to enable parents to identify their needs.

Jon Philpot said that the JAR will include feedback from the authority on the process and that questionnaires would be sent out to children and young people. One parent stated that her son had received a questionnaire, seeking his views on the support received from S&CS.

4. Transport

Jon Philpot welcomed Sally Dovey and Bill Leath and proposed that general discussion follow the presentations.

Bill Leath outlined the structure and function of the Transport Co-ordination Team, which was set up two years ago and encompasses Education, S&CS, community transport and local bus/rail services. The team provides the service but policy is set by Education and S&CS. The policy for special needs is the same as for mainstream requirements.

The total expenditure on transport between home and school is £12 million per annum, of which half funds special needs transport. The planners receive referrals and make transport arrangements and the period between April – October is extremely busy. The team also deals with transport for young people between 16 – 19 years.

Bill Leath outlined areas of particular challenge:

- Transport for respite care
- Quality of information for referrals. Questionnaires are sent out to parents to identify travel needs
- Distances travelled result in very high costs (can be £150-£200 for a single journey).
- Funding for new transport schemes
- Code of behaviour of young people
- Lack of confirmation of places being taken up
- Demand responsive transport
- School Transport Bill – likely to be re-introduced after the General Election
- Yellow bus schemes
- Through-ticketing (rail/bus)

Sally Dovey outlined the work of the Rural Transport Partnership, which covers the Worthing, Adur and Horsham areas. The two main categories are public transport and community transport. Various leaflets on rail travel etc. are available, including the Community Transport Directory, which has a mailing list. Some examples of community transport are:

- Dial-a-Ride operate a minibus, pre-booking system. Some vehicles are adapted for disabled use with volunteer drivers.
- Volunteer car schemes where volunteer drivers use their own cars – primarily for hospital visits.
- The WRVS run a scheme in Lancing run by volunteers, which can also provide companions.
- Some areas have demand-responsive transport e.g. DORIS and BUS4U (pre-booking necessary).

Sally Dovey said that there is a useful helpline for disabled travellers. The team are currently putting together local guides encompassing bus services, timetables and community transport available.

Southern Rail Assisted Travel Scheme information is available on:

0800 138 1016

0800 138 1017 (fax)

0800 138 1018 (minicom/textphone)

www.southernrailway.com (downloadable accessibility map and guide)

A car share website has also been established where it is possible to register online if spare places are available or for those wishing to share a journey.

Jon Philpot invited questions from the group. Some examples of points raised were:

- (a) Confusion about the new guidance concerning mobility benefit and its implications for transport. Bill Leath replied that Education is responsible for transport policy and Jo Tyler agreed to refer parents' concerns to Education department.
- (b) Parents asked about the screening of drivers. Bill Leath replied that drivers are employed by Education and taxi drivers are mostly contracted out. Transport department would prefer to employ escorts to ensure adequate training and security checks. Any concerns can be referred to the general office contact tel. no. **01243 753530**. The Escort Co-ordinator will deal with problems specifically related to escorts.
- (c) A query was raised concerning responsibility for drivers and escorts receiving information supplied by parents in care plans for transport. Bill Leath said that transport department were responsible for ensuring that all escorts are aware of relevant information and urged parents to keep him informed of any concerns around this issue.
- (d) One parent expressed concern that she was not contacted when her child was involved in an accident while being transported with an escort. Bill Leath responded that the established

procedure should have been followed and that contracts are in the process of being revised.

- (e) Bill Leath agreed to report back to the department that parents wish to have the opportunity to evaluate the transport provision.
- (f) Nigel Scott-Dickeson requested information concerning the availability of the policy document on single transport. Bill Leath agreed to follow this up.
- (g) Two parents gave positive feedback on the standard of transport provision. Bill Leath thanked parents for this feedback, which he would report back to the team.

Jon Philpot thanked Bill Leath and Sally Dovey on behalf of the group for their informative presentation.

5. Any Other Business

- (i) Jon Philpot drew the attention of members to the poster entitled "Time Out for Carers 2005", giving information on activities in the Horsham area during June.
- (ii) Transition: Mike Smith has been appointed specifically to deal with issues on transition. The multi-agency group has been meeting and there is now a draft policy and protocol which will be tested during a half-day workshop on 18 May. The group have invited 1/2 parent carers to be part of the process. Interested members were asked to contact Jon Philpot.
- (iii) Bill Leath said that WSCC has a forum for accessible transport. Jon Philpot asked anyone interested to see Bill Leath following the meeting so that details could be provided.
- (iv) Peter Moor expressed his appreciation for having the opportunity to attend meetings of the Parent Carers Planning Group. The various issues which had been discussed had been very valuable.
- (v) Annabel Forbes said that she would be attending a meeting with Mike Smith on 5 May to look at what other local authorities are doing. The group would be updated at the next meeting.
- (vi) Scope are running a campaign focusing on access to polling stations via. the website: www.polesapart.org.uk.
- (vii) Jon Philpot will report back to the group at the next meeting on progress on the Social & Caring Services Child Disability Strategy.

(h) Discussion topic for next meeting

Four areas for discussion were proposed: Benefits, Direct Payments, Incontinence and Assessment.

It was agreed that the two topics to be discussed at the next meeting would be:

Incontinence
Assessments

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 20 July 2005
10.30 – 12.30 followed by a buffet lunch
Arun Hall, Pulborough Village Hall.