

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

PARENT CARERS' PLANNING GROUP

**Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday 21st January 2004, 10.30am at Pulborough
Village Hall**

Present:

Jon Philpot	Assistant Group Manager, Child Disability, S & C S
Pat Arculus	County Councillor and Policy Adviser for S&CS and Children's Trust (Part)
Tessa Ashton	Buddy Scheme Co-ordinator – Springboard
Cathy Caine	Service Manager Child Disability- Social & Caring Services (Part)
Bernadette Daly	Committee Member – Mencap
Lindsay Haines	Parent Partnership Officer – West Sussex County Council
Sue Harris	Project Officer- Social and Caring Services
Ben Holcliffe	Development Co-ordinator- West Sussex Disabilities Network
Lynnette Humphry	Parent
Wendy Jones	Assistant Education Officer – West Sussex County Council
Kate Mulligan	Parent representing Ingfield Manor Special School
Debbie Newson	Wellspring – West Sussex
Madaleine Owens	Service Manager Arun- Social and Caring Services
John Parsons	Service Development Manager - Western Sussex PCT
Anne Rodriguez	Area Team Adviser LLDD- Sussex Learning and Skills Council
Anne Scott	Personal Adviser – Connexions
Nigel Scott-Dickeson	Springboard – Project Manager
Gill Young	Special Needs Officer – Education, WSCC
Gail Cusden	Management Support Social and Caring Services – Notetaker

Apologies: Nick Longdon – Group Manager (South) Children's Services S & CS, Rosemary Diggins – Director of Community Services AAW PCT, Liz Catchpole – Acting Director for Public Health, Kim Paul - Parent, Joan Martin - Parent, Joanna Jones- Parent, Caroline Gibbins- Early Years and Child Care Development

1. Minutes and Matters Arising from last meeting held on 15.10.03

Springboard Buddy Scheme - started in October, lots of training of volunteers is taking place. Scheme has started Crawley and is to be introduced to Horsham

Wellspring- Website is now up and running the address is www.wellspringwestsussex.org.uk

Best Value Review – The report came out with 18 recommendations, which have all been approved by the joint select committee and the cabinet member for Social and Caring Services. Work has started on taking the recommendations forward, in particular setting up a multi-agency group to co-ordinate strategic planning for children with disabilities or special needs and their families. This group will also link with the new Children's Trust.

Another recommendation related to the development of holiday playschemes - JP is working with the Children's Fund and Early Years. Initial funding is available from the Children's Fund and a two-year project has been set up to take this forward. Springboard are involved with developing play schemes and felt it would be important to link into this work.

An information leaflet is to be produced about the Best Value developments, to be distributed to schools, voluntary organisations and parents. The Review recommendations are available on the West Sussex County Council website at www.westsussex.gov.uk. Western Sussex PCT also have a link to the Best Value Review and post the minutes of the PCPG on their 'special needs' site – the address is <http://www.westernsussexhealth.com/specialneeds.htm>. The password for this website can be obtained from john.parsons@wsha.nhs.uk. It was important not to have too many sources of the same information to avoid confusion – one website that all parent carers would know of and visit for information would be best.

Ways to increase **parent participation** at the PCPG were discussed - Information can go into the West Sussex Disability Network and Parent Partnership newsletters and Kate Mulligan can put up information at Ingfield School.

Action - All. JP will draft an attachment to the minutes, which can be used to publicise the meeting.

2. Transition

Connexions- Anne Scott -The role of Connexions in the transition process was discussed and publications were made available on the service. Connexions is a new national initiative of personal advisers for 13-19 year olds leaving secondary education with 10 advisers for Special Needs in West Sussex. They are linked to schools, colleges, local council and the community and work with partner agencies such as YOT, Social Services and the Community Teams. A Section 140 Assessment is a legal requirement under the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Connexions are charged with ensuring this is done at the point of leaving education and moving to further education or training. This assessment applies to children in School Action Plus and/or statemented. Any suggestions on the assessment process would be welcome to be fed back to Connexions.

The advisers will follow up the placement; careers advice is available up to the age of 25, while the young person is still in education. Connexions can also highlight any lack of provision to statutory agencies. Joint evaluation work being is being undertaken and they are consulting with parents, colleges and agencies that are involved in the process to identify any lack of provision. Connexions will be part of OFSTED who will audit the service.

The (LEA) have to look at whether the needs of the child can be met locally before looking at funding special or out of county placements. Parents do have a right of appeal over the LEA's decision and mediation and support is available with this process from Parent Partnership.

It was highlighted that in Sept 2004 the Education Maintenance Allowance is available to young people going on to further education with a family income of less than £30,000. The allowance is paid directly to the young person and does not affect any other benefit. Information is available from the DfES.

Action - Information on Education Maintenance Allowance to go in Parent Partnership and Wellspring Newsletter

LH talked about her experience of transition – it had felt as though she had to make all the initial enquiries and seek the relevant information. However once she had made contact with Connexions the service had been very helpful.

Learning Skills Council - Anne Rodriguez - Anne Rodriguez is the Area Team Adviser for Operations within the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) based in Brighton. They receive funding from the DfES and this information is posted on the LSC website www.lsc.gov.uk. The LSC are responsible for funding and strategic planning for post 16 education but not higher education.

They fund NVQs/work based learning/modern apprenticeships/key skills/adult and community learning. There is also additional support for work based learning. The shared funding guidance is available on the LSC website. The young person should approach the college and when they are offered a placement they can apply for extra funding and the Connexions Adviser can support them with this. If the child needs extra support they only apply to LSC if cost is over £19,000.

There is a LINK programme where children attend college before 16 one day a week to help aid transition and the Increased Flexibility Programme in Year 10 where the student attends college one day a week to obtain an NVQ in a vocational subject scheme, this is operating in Sussex. Schools have to be willing to fund these and some schools do not participate in the scheme.

The LSC are working with the Learning Disabilities Partnership and agencies involved with transition to look at how they can work together and look at existing provision and how can better meet needs.

Transition Planning Group - Sue Harris – This multi-agency group with representation from parent carers and young people is taking forward the recommendations from the WSCC members' scrutiny group and the main purpose is to improve transitional arrangements by implementing the recommendations and action plan.

Action - Group to report back to PCPG when drafts of protocols, etc are available.

It was highlighted that there were other points of transition for example from playgroups to school and felt this could be a topic for another meeting. Children not statemented have great difficulties in transition, as they are not 'protected' by the statement. Parents do not want to deal with all the different agencies and technicalities.

The LEA Support Team are undertaking a pilot on difficulties at different points of transition.

The group discussed the lack of provision and support available with transition from primary to secondary school, following comments from KM about the difficulties for children and families in this process and the lateness of decision-making. The LEA have a lack of resources, the Best Value Review has recommended an increase in staff to enable the LEA to undertake this work.

Action - Pat Arculus will take this back to be discussed at the highest level and to be fed back to this Group.

3. Any Other Business

Lindsay Haines proposed that there was a formal sharing of minutes and membership list between the PCPG and the SEN Forum, the focus of the SEN group is primarily education issues and voluntary organisations are represented. It has been discussed at the SEN Forum that the links between the groups need to be strengthened. It was suggested that maybe a joint event could be organised in the future. This suggestion was accepted by the group.

Action - Pat Arculus to liaise with Sally Greenwell who attends the SEN Forum. JP/LH to ensure minutes and membership lists are shared.

4. Topic for Next Meeting

Early Years services

Action: JP will contact the Early Years & Child Care Partnership and the LEA to come to the next meeting.

BD also suggested the topic of 'circles of support' which can be considered for a future meeting.

5. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, **28th April, 2004** at **10.30am** Venue: **Pulborough Village Hall**