

This section provides details of issues discussed at previous meetings of the Disabled Children Policy Group Meetings

June 2009

Update on Transition Key Working

The Welsh Assembly Government has allocated £500,000 in each of the three years from 2008/09 to establish a number of pilot projects across Wales. Care Co-ordination Network UK (CCNUK) is working with WAG to support the development of the pilot sites and take forward the transition key worker agenda in Wales. The funding was allocated in September 2008 to five LEA pilot sites namely:

- Anglesey
- Ceredigion
- Gwynedd
- Monmouth (as part of a regional collaboration with Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Gwent Healthcare trust)
- Pembrokeshire

The five transition key worker sites are now operational and each has established a project/implementation board to set the direction of and oversee the development of transition key working within each pilot site.

Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion have also established a reference or stakeholder group for consultation purposes and have mechanisms in place to consult with young people and their families. All pilot sites now have recruited to the agreed staff complements and all have commenced their employment. In addition, a cross section of disabled young people, taking into account difficulty or need, and age, as well as demographic and geographic issues will take part in each of the five pilot sites.

WAG have now secured additional £1.6m of match funding under the "Reaching the Heights" European Social Fund initiative. WAG officials are still in discussion with CCNUK and other key partners as to how best to distribute this additional funding, but the aim will be to ensure that it is used to recruit as many additional key workers as possible in order to increase coverage within the convergence areas across Wales and thereby supporting as many young people as possible. The pilot projects are financed to run for 3 years and officials are considering the need for an external evaluation of each of the sites on a case study basis. Revised key worker standards are being developed by CCNUK to reflect transition (up to the age of 25) and later this year the pilot sites will complete a revised self assessment tool audit. This, together with regular progress reports should help give an early indication of their success. CCNUK will also develop a transition key worker framework to provide guidance on developing and sustaining transition key working in Wales.

ASD Strategic Action Plan

The Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategic Action Plan for Wales was launched by the Deputy Minister for Social Services in April, 2008. Funding of £1.8m was made available for 2008-09 to support local authorities to map the services already available across all statutory, voluntary and independent provision, and to identify any service gaps and how these could be addressed. The money was in addition to the recurrent sum of £1.7m which has been made available to local authorities from 2007-08 specifically to develop specialist services for children with autism.

During 2008, an ASD lead was identified within each local authority and assumed the responsibility of overseeing the mapping of needs and existing services, the production of local action plans and the formation of local stakeholder groups. They have submitted their local action plans together with data from their mapping exercise to the Welsh Assembly Government, and these are presently being collated and analysed. Working in partnership with the WLGA, funds have been identified to enable the appointment of three regional support officers, together with a regional co-ordinator, who will be in post at the end of May. The regional co-ordinators will provide mentoring/networking support to the local ASD leads and inform regional planning priorities and multi-agency commissioning structures.

A letter giving details of funding for 2009-10 has been issued to local authorities and the development of a consistent structure to improve access to assessment and diagnosis across the age range in Wales will be a key national action for this current financial year. A further priority will be the development of awareness raising materials aimed at the range of practitioners and agencies who work in the field, and will also be of help to families/carers. There will also be a focus on the recommendations arising from the work of the Adults ASD Task and Finish group, who looked at specific issues relating to adults with ASD. Their report will be submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government shortly.

Disabled Children Matter Wales

An open meeting of the DCMW campaign will take place on 23rd June at 2.00pm in Children in Wales which will help with forward planning for the next 12 – 18 months. There will be 3 main discussion areas – the tone and tactics of Campaign, what our Key Asks should be and a request for new members to join the Steering Group.

Feedback from Assembly Event in December

December 3rd was the International Day for Disabled People. Learning Disability Wales led an event where young disabled people asked questions of the First Minister Rhodri Morgan and Children's Minister Jane Hutt in the Old Chamber in Ty Howell. Unfortunately the event did not proceed as planned. The First Minister was late arriving (he apologised and said that he had made an important phone call before hand). As a result the time for young people's questions was shortened and not all the young people had the opportunity to ask the question that they had prepared which left them feeling disappointed and annoyed. The First Minister did however launch "We are on the Way – A Policy Agenda to transform the lives of disabled children and

young people” This is based on the 7 core aims and highlights what the Assembly government have done up to now under each of the aims and what is planned for the future.

After the event, the young people gave a presentation to the Task Group. Unfortunately there were only a few of the regular Task group members present and representatives of the Voluntary Group who had been present at the Senedd event were invited to make up the numbers.

Feedback from the Young People’s Meeting with The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in February.

The young disabled people met with Jane Hutt in an event that had been organised in response to complaints from the young people and professionals who had complained about the event in December. The Minister gave the young people two hours of her time to answer their questions. These included questions about careers advice, independent and living and application for social fund benefits, the need for young disabled people to be employed in meaningful jobs, access to public transport, disability equality awareness training for staff and the issue of young people being bullied when going out in Cardiff in the evenings. Following the question and answer session the young people bowling and had lunch, which was paid for by the Welsh Assembly.

The Barnardo's and NSPCC campaign on mental health and learning disabilities has been delayed. The role of the CAMHS in supporting disabled children is also being looked at.

Consultation on proposed Education (Wales) Measure

Information was shared about proposed Measure the purpose of which is to extend children’s entitlement by providing them with rights to make special educational needs (SEN) appeals and claims of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (the Tribunal). It will amend the law that gives parents² the right to make appeals and claims to the Tribunal, as set out in Part 4 of the Education Act 1996 and part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The Measure will:

- provide for an initial legislative pilot phase during which children in specified local authority areas will be able to make appeals and claims to the Tribunal and also enable the Tribunal to register and hear appeals/claims;
- subsequently give children across Wales the right to appeal and claim to the Tribunal;
- require that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) inform children of their appeal rights;
- place a duty on LEAs to make arrangements for, and inform children about access rights to, Partnership and Disagreement Resolution Services;

- place a new duty on LEAs to provide access to independent advocacy services that can listen to and give voice to children's views and concerns. Advocates will be expected to be able to assist children in resolution processes, appeal/claim case preparation and support or represent them at hearings;
- remove Minister of the Crown functions and consent requirements in relation to regulations governing the Tribunal's disability discrimination jurisdiction;
- empower Welsh Ministers to make regulations governing the Tribunal's Disability Discrimination jurisdiction;
- place on Welsh Ministers the responsibility for considering complaints about non-implementation of Tribunal Disability Discrimination orders.

The Measure was developed in response to a proposal by the Children's Commissioners Office. Peter Hosking has devised a Paper giving further information about the Measure and this was circulated. Children in Wales and some of the other group members will be developing a written response to the consultation. Concern was expressed by the meeting as to how accessible the process will be to disabled children and young people and what processes need to be in place to provide support.

Presentation by Nia Lewis Implementation Manager of the Children's National Service Framework.

On Slide 14 of the presentation, Chapter 5 actions, comments from responsible organisations about specific key actions are recorded. These [key actions and comments are highlighted here](#).

A [document showing the progress](#) of the responsible organisations in meeting the key actions between 2005 and 2009 was also distributed (chapter 5).

Information Exchange

RNIB

The U Can Festival for blind and partially sighted children and their family and friends will take place in the Millennium Centre Cardiff on 15th and 16th July. RNIB will be continuing in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council to establish a college tertiary provision for students with complex needs. This will be a hub and spoke model.

Autism Cymru

The charity are continuing with their local authority training courses on teaching children with autism. The training appears to have had a significant impact on the schools and changed their attitudes towards children with autism. Currently 10 out of the 22 Local Authorities have received the one off basic training.

Barnardos

New guidelines on anti-bullying which includes disability are being drawn up. The charity is also participating in research with Cerebra.

National Deaf Children's Society

The charity has completed a consultation with deaf children entitled "If I could change one thing" as part of their deaf awareness strategy in Wales. The main issues identified are the limited access deaf children have to activities and the desire for more hearing children to learn BSL.

Disability Wales

The Streets Ahead campaign which concentrates on disabled people's access to the high street is underway. An independent living strategy for the organisation is being developed. This will involve education on independent living issues and disablism.

Any Other Business

Children and Young People's Partnerships

Training is being developed on inclusive play, participation, bullying in the community and emotional safety.

Healthy Wales

Ann Jones AM has commented that there is no mention of disability in the strategy. This needs to be addressed.