

MINUTES of the meeting of the Herefordshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership held at the Education & Conference Centre, Blackfriars Street, Hereford on Thursday, 10th March, 2005 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Mary Baskerville	Diocesan Authorities (RC)
Gill Bilbrough	Herefordshire Special Needs Consortium
Hazel Blankley	Herefordshire Health Authority
Jon Dudley	Herefordshire Council (Social Services)
Sheila Dunsford	OFSTED
Joyce Elliott	Private Sector Providers
Diane Gibson	Herefordshire Homestart
Carol Jenkins	Sure Start
Tony Kew	OFSTED
Liz Lord	Independent Schools Sector
Lucy Mackie	Learning and Skills Council
Liv Moss	Voluntary Sector Providers
Andrea Payne	Jobcentre Plus
Pauline Platt	Local Parent Partnership
Sally Robertson	Herefordshire Council
George Salmon	Herefordshire Council (LEA)
Klaus Wedell	Chair of EYDCP

In attendance:

Lea Abbotts	LEA
Barry Ashton	Herefordshire Council
Rebecca Coultas	LEA
Elizabeth Davies	LEA
Heather Donaldson	Clerk
Sue Fiennes	Herefordshire Council (Children's Services Director)
Paul Haley	LEA
Alison Murphy	LEA
Sue Peasgood	LEA
Carla Preston	LEA
Don Rule MBE	Herefordshire Council
Ruth Sinfield	LEA
Bryan Twitty	LEA

496. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Janice Greenow, Lynn Marsden, and Ailsa Robbie. It was also noted that a vacancy had occurred for a Youth Service Representative, following the resignation from post of the previous one.

497. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

None.

498. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following additional items of business were reported, and it was agreed that they would be considered:

- Requirement for one setting to receive continued Nursery Education Grant following a change of management (this would be discussed as part of Agenda Item 12 – **QUARTERLY CHILDCARE REPORT – MARCH 2005**);
- Proposal for funding to continue the Fun2Talk programme (this would be discussed as part of Agenda Item 9 – **REVIEW OF GRANT TO SUPPORT SPECIAL NEEDS**).

499. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from Members of the Public.

500. MINUTES

In response to a question about Minute 484 (**MINUTES**), the Ruth Sinfield referred to an earlier decision to seek assistance from the Inclusion Sub-Group with drawing up a service plan to enhance Special Needs provision in Herefordshire, and with identifying funding and voluntary organisations to support this. This decision had been taken following a request from Marches Family Network to provide support in out of school settings for older children with Special Needs. She reported that the Inclusion Sub-Group had considered the issue at length, and that further work was required. The Sub-Group would submit a report for consideration to the next EYDCP meeting.

In respect of Minute 486 (**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL CONSULTATION**), Alison Murphy reported that she had submitted the EYDCP's response to the Strategic Area Review Consultation (StAR). The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) had acknowledged receipt, and would be sending a formal response in the near future. Lucy Mackie, the LSC representative, added that all of the responses were being analysed and would form the basis of a full report in due course. This would be delayed slightly in order to take account of the recently published DfES White Paper: "14-19 Education and Skills".

Referring to Minute 489 (**SURE START OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMME**), Ruth Sinfield reported that Early Years Development Workers had produced an extremely helpful Good Practice Guide for out of school settings (breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday playschemes). Copies were available to anyone on request. Carla Preston informed members that the Guide would be constantly subject to review, and would be amended if there were any further issues which needed inclusion.

AGREED:

- that
- (i) the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December, 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman; and**
 - (ii) a report from the Inclusion Sub-Group about support in out of school settings for older children with Special Needs, be considered at the next EYDCP meeting on 5th May, 2005.**

501. GOOD NEWS EXCHANGE

Members introduced themselves and exchanged items of recent news and events.

502. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Klaus Wedell welcomed Sue Fiennes, Children's Services Director and Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing, to the meeting. She outlined the changes that were taking place within Herefordshire Council in response to the Children Act 2004 (the Act would take effect from 1st April 2005). One of the most significant changes had been the Council's shift away from being a Local Education Authority to being a Children's Services Authority, and this had led to the creation of a Children's Services Directorate, complete with her new Director role. The Directorate combined Social Services, Children's Services and all Education functions, and would necessitate significant changes to working practices. She outlined the next steps towards implementation of the Act as follows:

- The development of the Child Concern Model would continue, and would underpin all aspects of Children's Services;
- The integration of services would begin with formal arrangements being drawn up. Children's Centres and Early Years work would be an expanding area for integrated service delivery, and it was anticipated that up to eight Children's Centres would be established in the long-term. Although full guidance was not yet available, it was likely that the EYDCP would play a key role in integration and encouraging partnerships, and the Children's Services Director envisaged that it would be consulted on issues such as Commissioning and Planning Children's Services;
- The Children's and Young People's Partnership Board would begin its business the following week. This would run along the lines of a Children's Trust for Herefordshire, and included representatives from a broad spectrum, including Health;

- The Extended Schools Model would play a key role in service delivery, particularly in rural areas;
- Herefordshire Council would undergo numerous inspections in the coming year, including OFSTED, Adult Learning, 14-19 Year-Olds' Services, Youth Offending, Fostering and Adoption. It was inevitable that new priorities would emerge following the inspections;

Sue Fiennes suggested that the Cabinet paper listing priorities for Herefordshire, and the Outcomes page from the "Every Child Matters" website be circulated with the published minutes of this meeting, as useful further reading. She also referred members to the Public Health White Paper "Choosing Health", which could be found on the Department of Health Website, and set out national priorities for improving Public Health and tackling obesity.

The Partnership thanked Sue Fiennes for her presentation.

AGREED: that the report be noted.

503. EARLY YEARS REVIEW

Ruth Sinfield reported on an Away Day that had been held on 17th January 2005, with the purpose of considering the approach that would be taken to assess the EYDCP's effectiveness, efficiency and quality. The requirement to do this had stemmed from the DfES, who had created a self-assessment toolkit to help the process. Officers from Health and the Children's Services Directorate, Parents, Elected Members, Service Providers and EYDCP Staff had attended the Away Day to discuss the methodology to be used, and to make the assessments.

Ruth Sinfield outlined the strengths that had been identified in Early Years and Childcare Services (collectively called Sure Start by Central Government), and highlighted the various actions attached on a separate list, that were necessary in order to improve further. Members agreed that these actions would form part of the Sure Start 2 Year Action Plan with timescales set alongside them. In addition, members agreed that:

- Early Years work needed to be mainstreamed/be a central part of Children's Services;
- In order to build links with Housing, the EYDCP would ask for nominations for a service representative to become a Partnership member;
- A Diversity Impact Assessment would be either considered at the next meeting on 5th May 2005, or attached to the Minutes of today's meeting, whichever was most practical;

- It was agreed that more work was required on Travellers' issues. The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) reported that moves had been made to improve Sure Start provision on the Pembridge Traveller's site. Carol Jenkins added that her organisation had been very involved with Travellers. It was noted that a Service Level Agreement had been made between EYDCP and the Traveller's Support Group, and this had been very positive.

AGREED: that the Action Points contained in the report, plus the bullet points listed above, be incorporated into the Sure Start 2 Year Action Plan, with targets set against each one.

504. REVIEW OF GRANT TO SUPPORT SPECIAL NEEDS

Sue Peasgood presented her report on a review of Special Needs grants funded by the Children's Services Directorate, and the proposals made by the Inclusion Sub-Group on 22nd February 2005. In addition, she reported verbally on the Fun2Talk project, which required further financial support in order to continue. Members considered the following key points:

- **Inclusion Grant:** Funding in Herefordshire had been highly successful, helping 61 children in the previous financial year. The majority of these children had been referred through the Area SENCOs because of speech and language problems. In order to continue support, £43,000 was required from the LEA, and £10,000 from EYDCP. She added that in some instances, under 3s were unable to access a nursery place because no Nursery Education Grant was available for them, although wherever possible, Sure Start Leominster and Kington had funded places for children covered by its area.
- **Outreach from Child Development Centre (CDC):** Sue Peasgood provided information on this grant and what it was used for. The Inclusion Sub-Group had felt that this funding should continue for another year on the basis that there were still waiting lists.
- **Support for Under 5s with Sensory Impairments:** In 2004 there had been a significant increase in the number of children referred to the Physical and Sensory Support Service (PASS). Members acknowledged the importance of this service, and were asked to consider mainstreaming it to ensure its continuation in the long-term.
- **Fun2Talk:** This project supported 0-3 year-olds experiencing speech and language problems. Sue Peasgood said that she had received a request to continue funding, and she felt that the project would help to formulate a speech and language strategy for Herefordshire, because it formed part of the support pathway to primary school. She estimated that the project would require £12,000 over the next year, and she gave a breakdown of the costings.
- **Area SENCO:** Sue Peasgood highlighted the need for a fourth Area SENCO, which would ensure that children with Special Needs would have continued support through to their primary school reception year. There was no funding allocated to this at present, and it was estimated that it would require up to £35,000 with on-costs.

George Salmon said that he would assess funding priorities, depending on what resources were available.

AGREED:

- that (i) **Funding should continue for twelve months for (a) Inclusion Grant, (b) outreach work from the CDC, (c) PASS support for children with sensory impairments, and (d) Fun2Talk;**
- (ii) **A proposal be made to the Children's Services Directorate to fund the PASS Outreach Worker as a mainstream service rather than relying on the EYDCP grant;**
- (iii) **A proposal be made to the Children's Services Directorate to appoint a fourth Area SENCO, in order to support transition into reception classes.**

505. EXTENDED SCHOOLS UPDATE

Klaus Wedell welcomed Rebecca Coultas, Extended Schools Assistant, to the meeting. She provided information on current projects, which included a Film Club, and looking at ways to encourage young people and families to access the Sure Start bus in the Weobley area. In addition, she had conducted a very successful consultation and research on "Wrap-Around Childcare", and as a result, new provision would start in April. A Kid's Club and Holiday Club would follow this later in the year.

Ruth Sinfield reported that Rebecca's model would be duplicated elsewhere in Herefordshire. Members thanked Rebeca for her effective work.

AGREED: that the report be noted.

506. AMALGAMATION OF HUNDERTON INFANTS AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

George Salmon informed the Partnership of the Council's proposals to merge Hunderton Junior and Infants' Schools. This had arisen from the retirement of the Infant's School Headteacher, and subsequent discussions with the two Governing Bodies. It was felt that there were significant benefits to the formation of a single school in new buildings on the same site, and staff and parents had supported the proposal.

AGREED: that the report be noted, and the amalgamation of Hunderton Infants and Junior Schools be endorsed.

507. QUARTERLY CHILDCARE REPORT – MARCH 2005

The Partnership noted progress made against Childcare targets in the Two-Year Plan for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged wards. The targets covered a total number of places created within pre-school, Out of School and Childminding during 2004 – 2006.

In particular, it was noted that the targets for the first three periods of 2004/05 had been exceeded, and that the ration of childcare places opened to closed was still within the national targets.

In addition, the Partnership was asked to consider proposal to continue Nursery Education Grant for Cherry Trees Nursery in Bromyard. A new provider had taken over on 20th February 2005. The staff and the setting had remained the same. Sheila Dunsford of OFSTED reminded members of the importance of the general principle of continuity of care when a new provider was registered. She said that in such circumstances, it was necessary for the old provider to give written assent to remain responsible for provision until the new provider's registration certificate came through. The old provider was liable until this happened, and that this applied even if the business had been sold to the new provider.

AGREED:

that

- (i) the report be noted; and**
- (ii) continuation of the Nursery Education Grant for Cherry Trees Nursery in Bromyard, under the new provider, be endorsed.**

508. 2004 CHILDCARE AUDIT INITIAL SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

Bryan Twitty informed members about the statistical outcomes of the 2004 Childcare Audit. The audit took the form of tables, which were submitted to the Sure Start Unit to complement the Implementation Plan and the Local Action Plan. It was used to plot changes and scope of childcare provision in Herefordshire.

Members noted the initial findings in the report, which covered cost of childcare, staff training and qualifications, age and ethnicity, vacancies, availability of childcare, etc.

AGREED: that the report be noted.

509. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EYDCP

Geoarge Slamon reported on the changes being made in the management of the Early Years Unit. The focus for this had arisen following Ruth Sinfield's announcement that she was resigning to take up a new post with Blaenau Gwent Council. The new arrangements were outlined as follows:

- From April – September 2005, it was proposed to fill the post temporarily from existing staff. He reported that Ros Hatherill, Sure Start Leominster and Kington Programme Manager, had been appointed as a result. In addition, the line management responsibilities for the post, which were currently held by George Salmon, would instead be transferred to Jon Dudley.
- After September, 2005, permanent arrangement would be put in place.
- It was felt essential to give early years work a permanent voice within the Schools Forum, and to this end, an early years representative would attend future Forum meetings as an advisor.

The Chair expressed his and the Partnership's appreciation to the Early Years and Childcare Services Manager for leading early years work in an exemplary manner. He said that he had been impressed by her dedication, and her concern for transparency and accountability. The Head of Policy and Resources (Education) thanked her on behalf of Herefordshire Council, acknowledging all that she had accomplished. He said that she has played a key role in developing Children's Services amidst tremendous change, and it was now nationally and regionally regarded as a good Service.

The Partnership wished her well in her new post, in which she would be able to pursue her commitment to children and preserving and protecting their rights.

AGREED: that the report be noted

510. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates of future meetings were noted, and all meetings would take place at 7.00 p.m.:

- Thursday 5th May 2005 (Note: After the meeting the Chairman agreed that this date would be changed because of the General Election);
- Thursday 13th October 2005;
- Thursday 1st December 2005.

511. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

The meeting ended at 9:00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN