



# Supportive Parents

SUMMER 2011

Providing the Parent Partnership Services for Bristol , North Somerset & South Gloucestershire

Information & support to parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), encouraging partnership between parents and professionals.

## Welcome to our Summer newsletter

This summer feels rather unsettled – and not just because of the changeable weather! Many parents are concerned about how budget cuts and restructuring of services will affect their children's provision. At Supportive Parents we continue to offer information and support to parents of children with SEN and are delighted that service-users report 100% satisfaction with our service. Our AGM took place on 4<sup>th</sup> July and we welcome our Board of Trustees, who includes Carolyn Sims, Anne Bush, Moira Lloyd, Meryl Woodgate, Paul Lifton and Tony Watkin. If you are interested in joining the Board take a look at the enclosed leaflet and contact us to find out more. We welcome and value your interest and support! We will report back to you any news of the outcomes of the SEN Green Paper consultation: a White Paper is due in the autumn. Finally, welcome to a new member of our team: Jodie Thame, our new Office Manager!

## Enquiry Monitoring System (EMS) 2010-2011

Detailed analysis of our EMS is showing some interesting trends which reflect local and national priorities in SEN. The proportion of our work with parents around Statutory Assessments and Statements has reduced to around 50% from around 65%. This reflects the increased delegation of SEN funding to schools so that children's needs can be met to a much greater extent without needing a statement. Calls to our helpline around permanent exclusions have also shown a marked decrease. This reflects the national drive to reduce the number of children with SEN who are excluded from school.

## Inside this Newsletter

- Local Area News
- Network & Collaboration-update on parent forums
- Chairs report 2010-2011
- Service User Satisfaction Survey (SUSS) 2011
- Support Group Details
- Membership form, "We're looking for Trustees" leaflet & Coffee morning invitation!

Our Information and Support Line 0117 9897725 is available 10am - 2pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday term time. We operate a limited service during the school holidays and an answer machine at all other times. Or take a look our website [www.supportiveparents.org.uk](http://www.supportiveparents.org.uk) Address: 3rd Floor, Royal Oak House, Royal Oak Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4GB Admin: 0117

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## Bristol Area News – Davina Evans

I have been visiting a variety of groups this term. First of all there was a coffee morning at Bankleaze Primary school, then an information session around the Statutory Assessment process and finally I met a group of parents from Elmfield School who invited me in my dual roles as a member of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Development Group and Bristol Local Coordinator for Supportive Parents. I also attended a meeting of Inclusion Managers from East/Central Bristol to explain who Supportive Parents are and what we do. I enjoyed meeting with all of these groups very much and learnt a great deal in the process.

### SEN Strategy

A first draft of the SEN Strategy has been circulated to all of the people who attended the meetings and other members of the Strategy Group for feedback. Wider consultation should take place shortly. John Ward, Senior School Improvement Officer for Bristol City Council is retiring from his position which includes developing and driving the SEN and SEN Provision Strategies. I would like to thank him for being a key ally of parents in Bristol and would like to wish him well in the future.

### SEN Green Paper

I am busy at the moment collating the responses from the Bristol Parent Carers meeting held in early June as well as helping to make a response from Supportive Parents in their role as Parent Partnership Service. I was also pleased to be able to take part in the SEN Strategy Group meeting discussing the Green Paper.

## North Somerset News-Jackie Oxley

Supportive Parents facilitated the Education Workshop at the March Parent Forum Open meeting. The workshop was entitled 'Building Effective Communication between Schools and Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs'. As a result of discussions between parents and professionals, the Local Authority have drawn up an action plan focused on information for parents, assessment, provision, transparency, progress and review. Parents will work together with the appropriate services to address the issues that arose. Main points raised were: a) the lack of information to parents around SEN. (Action - to set up a working group of parents to support the authority

in putting together a leaflet for schools to give to parents.) b) Schools to include SEN information on their websites,. c) Parents to receive clear IEP's and Provision Maps. (Action - new guidance to schools emphasising that all parents should receive copies of their IEP's and Provision Maps.) d) Transparency; parents would like information about how the SEN system works, their child's progress, and to have more involvement in feedback and review processes. (Action - to look at training focussing on current good practice to involve school staff and parents.) The Local Authority have stated that many of the points raised by parents echo those found in the SEN Green Paper and they will be working over the next few years to accommodate some of the findings . If you would like to see notes of the outcomes from the March Education workshop go to: [www.nsppf.org.uk](http://www.nsppf.org.uk)

South Gloucestershire News - Anne Jerrom

A new Head of Integrated Children and Young People's (CYP) Service will be in overall charge of Locality Services, district wide specialisms and specialist services for children with disabilities /SEN and children in care from July. The management and structure of the SEN section is also changing - the Head of Specialist Care and Inclusion and the Acting Head of SEN both leave this summer. An Implementation plan 2011-12, which includes some Our Voice Matters (OVM) Open Day Action Plans, has been drawn up by the Children Trust Board. The Parenting Strategy is to be revisited in the autumn, with the aim of reviewing and promoting provision of parenting support to vulnerable families. A TAMHS (Targeted mental health in schools) evaluation report describing the work of six 1yr Counselling and Mentoring programmes is available at <http://www.sgocyp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=kndphh0pxmc%3d&tabid=36&mid=1231> This years SENCO Conference was dedicated to raising awareness of this work. We have delivered training for new SENCOs with a presentation about how we work, giving an example of a "typical" parent call. We discussed what SENCOs and the PPS could separately do to support such a parent. Feedback was positive. Inclusion Support have now emailed a PPS Information pack out to all SENCOs. Feedback from events organized by OVM is that many parents still feel that they "don't know what they don't know" about SEN. We have produced a checklist for parents, which we hope SENCOS will pass on. We have provided an information stall for Carers and for Parent Links attending an Extended Schools event. If you want to know about the Common Assessment Framework and what it might offer to families, take a look at the CAF Toolkit at

[www.sgcyp.org/](http://www.sgcyp.org/) and the parent leaflet "Working Together is Better". New guidelines have been produced by Inclusion Support to improve transition from primary to secondary school for children with complex needs. Following the well attended training session in May, OVM have added a Dyslexia focus group to those already running. For more details go to [www.ourvoicematters.org.uk](http://www.ourvoicematters.org.uk) Have a good summer!

Networking and collaboration - *finding out about local initiatives and considering how Supportive Parents can support these developments* - by Maggie Potter.

The Supportive Parents team met recently with the Chairs of our local Parent Participation Forums, to find out more about recent and planned future developments. Each forum has a parent-led steering group and is always eager to hear from parents who are interested in becoming involved in managing the work being undertaken. Each forum is providing training for parents and professionals in the coming year on good participatory practice and will provide other opportunities to parents and carers to find out more about and become involved in working in partnership with the Local Authority, to plan and develop services for our children. They are all applying for £10,000 grant funding from the Department for Education to allow this crucial work to continue, and are committed to enabling parents to engage at a strategic level with planning and delivery of services for children with additional needs.

Supportive Parents identifies an ongoing commitment to supporting the development of parental participation forums across the three authorities. We are also committed to sitting alongside parent forum reps at strategic and working groups, promoting and supporting their involvement at this level. Local Coordinators sit as co-opted members on the steering groups in each authority and we continue to facilitate SEN education focus groups, workshops and working groups. We also identify a role in directly supporting Chairs to Forums by offering networking opportunities, active listening, sign-posting and problem-solving. Supportive Parents will continue to promote the work of the forums wherever possible.

Disclaimer: The opinions and information in this Newsletter have been given in good faith and, as far as we know, are correct at the time of publication. We do not accept any responsibility for any errors of fact and advise readers to check with authors of original publications before acting upon them.