

Parent Partnership Service

Newsletter Winter 2010/11

Welcome to the new edition of the Parent Partnership Service e-newsletter.

We hope you will continue to find it useful and informative. The aim of the Newsletter is to keep you up to date with what is happening in the Wakefield District with regards special educational needs (SEN). In future editions of the newsletter we would welcome contributions from parents and professionals.

Transition Update

New Transition Advocate

Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. It promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice. Advocates work in partnership with the people they support and take their side.

Cloverleaf Advocacy was established in 1995 in Kirklees, West Yorkshire.

It provides independent advocacy services for people with mental health needs, people with learning disabilities, and people with physical and sensory impairments, acquired brain injuries, carers and older people.

More recently it has secured funding to provide a one year pilot looking at supporting young people going through transition. The work of the transition advocate is varied and concentrates on the issues that the young person themselves feel are important. This on occasion can greatly differ from the issues that professionals involved in the young person's care may want to address. The project offers a means by which young people with a special education need can express their own views and expectations at a crucial time in their development bridging the divide between children and adult services.

If you would like to find out more about what Cloverleaf Advocacy are doing then please get in touch with them. They are also interested in finding out about your experiences and views on transition, whether you are a service user, professional or carer.

You can get in touch by the following -

Email

lisa.barnes@cloverleaf-advocacy.co.uk

scott.williams@cloverleaf-advocacy.co.uk

Telephone

01422 364057 - Cloverleaf Calderdale Office

01977 705437 - Cloverleaf Pontefract 'Your Voice'

Transition Information Network (TIN)

The Transition Information Network is an alliance of organisations whose aim is to improve disabled young peoples experience of the transition process. The TIN have recently updated their website. The website has lots of information about transition including education, free time, health, money, employment, housing and relationships. There is also a young person's area, which has links to organisations that support young people going through transition. The TIN also produces a magazine called My Future Choices for young people, parents/carers and professionals.

To find out more about the Transition Information Network visit

www.transitioninfonet.org.uk/home1.aspx

The Parent Partnership Service

Parents in Partnership Forum (PIP)

The latest meeting of the Parents in Partnership Forum took place on Wednesday 19th January 2011 at the Town Hall in Wakefield.

A Parent Partnership Activity Report for September to November was presented to the meeting. It showed a good start for the year. The number of contacts and referrals were up on previous years with 182 case related calls and emails (09/10 = 142).

The Service has provided advice support and information to 68 families and attended 39 meetings to support parents and carers. The team have attended 54 other meetings and support groups particularly talking to Headteachers, and other professionals to raise awareness of the work the Service does with parents.

There was a good deal of discussion about the breakdown of referrals, with a high number relating to children with Communication and Interaction difficulties such as Autism.

There had been some discussion in the past about whether the Forum should change or develop. It was agreed that the SEN systems in place now were much better than when the Forum started about ten years ago. The relationships between the Forum and the LA representatives were much better and a great deal had been achieved.

In the open discussion session, the main topic of conversation was the depth and impact of the proposed changes to DLA / Disability Benefits. It was commented that there had already been a large increase in referrals to Carers Wakefield as a direct result.

The Parents in Partnership Forum meet four times a year and all parents/carers that have a child with special educational needs are welcome. The aim of the Forum is to feed parent/carers concerns and issues back to Wakefield Council about services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and their families.

If you would like more information about the Parents in Partnership Forum please contact Gary on 0800 587 8042 or alternatively come along to the next meeting at 6.00pm on Wednesday 27th April in the Town Hall, Wakefield.

Parent Partnership Service Website

Watch this space!!!!!!!

The Parent Partnership Service website is moving in the next few months. It is to become part of the Families Information Service Website. The new website will still include information on what help and support we offer, information leaflets and Links to other organisations. It will also include information on jargon busting which aims to explain some of the terms that can be used by professionals. There is also a frequently asked questions section which covers information on the statutory assessment process, school applications and transition.

The Families Information Service Website also has an area dedicated to disabled children, young people and their families and has lots of information about what is happening in the Wakefield area.

For more information go to www.wakefieldfis.org.uk

Government Updates

Green Paper on Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In the summer of 2010 the government asked for views from parents, charities, teachers, local authorities and other professionals on the present special educational needs system in England.

As well as looking at the present SEN system it is intended that the Green Paper will also cover issues including:-

- School choice,
- Early identification and assessment,
- Funding
- Family support

It is expected the Government will publish the Green Paper outlining its findings and recommendations in February.

For further information visit; www.education.gov.uk

Special Educational Needs and Disability- A Statement is not enough

In September 2010 Ofsted published its findings of a review it carried out, called "Special Educational Needs and Disability - A Statement is not enough". The last government commissioned the review. The aim of the review was to look at the present special educational needs system and the support children and young people with special educational needs receive. The report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk/ under news/news archive.

The Children, Schools and Families Act 2010

This Act requires Ofsted to report on how a school is to meet the needs of its pupils with special educational needs/disabilities. The Act also now enables parents to appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal if the local authority decides not to amend their child's statement to reflect their changing needs as part of the annual review process.

To find out more go to www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/26/contents

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010. The act has replaced all other equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The new act gives greater protection to disabled students and staff in further and higher education, training and employment. Most of the provisions under the new Act have remained the same as the DDA. However, the duty to provide reasonable adjustments has been strengthened. The definition of disability has remained broadly the same as under the DDA. Under the new Act there are eight protected characteristics which are:-

Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. More information about the act is available at www.equalities.gov.uk

The Academies Act

The Academies Act became law on 27th July 2010, the Act means that schools can decide not to be controlled by their local council. This means that schools will get their money from central government and not their local council. The Act ensures that children with special educational needs attending academies are still protected by:-

- Ensuring that academies behave the same way that maintained schools do in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs, and
- That they appoint a properly qualified SENCO.

More information about the Academies Act can be found at: - www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership or www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpages/2010/32/contents

In the Wakefield District, three schools have become academies, Outwood Grange Academy, Wakefield City Academy and Ossett (High) Academy. Two other secondary schools have also expressed an interest, Airedale High School and Castleford High School and Technology College. Outwood Rooks Nest J and I School are also interested.

Information and Support

Parents Reference Group

Wakefield Parent's Reference Group is holding a parents conference for families that have a child with a disability and/or special educational needs. It will take place on the 7th March 2011 from 9.45am till 2.30 at the Minsthope Training and Conference Centre. At the conference there will be information stands and workshops on Back Care, Growing up and Autism, as well as a chance to meet and talk with other parents.

To find out more information and book a place (as they are limited) contact Carers Wakefield and District on 01924 305544.

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Skill is a national charity that promotes opportunities for learning and employment for young people over the age of 16 with special educational needs /disabilities. Skill provides an information and advice service on a range of topics including financial support, physical barriers and discrimination to young people and professionals.

It has a website aimed at young people aged 11-25 years old, with special educational needs with lots of information about options and choices that are available to young people in education, training, volunteering and work.

To visit Skills young person's website go to: www.skill.org.uk/youth

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM)

Every Disabled Child Matters was established in 2006 and is jointly run by four of the countries leading organisations that work with disabled children and their families. The aim of the EDCM is to raise the profile of disabled children and their families with central and local government. They work closely with the children's sector to lobby the government to ensure disabled children and their families receive the support and services they need.

To find out more information on the Every Disabled Child Matters and their campaign go to: - www.edcm.org.uk

Let's Celebrate

Here at the Parent Partnership Service we don't often get to hear about the good work that is happening in the Wakefield District.

We would like to start to celebrate this good work and make people aware of it. We would like to do this by having a celebration area in the next newsletter. Anybody can make a nomination and it can be for an individual person or service. All you have to do is contact Gary at the Parent Partnership Service on 0800 587 8042.