

**Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties Partnership Forum
(CWDL)
Monday 15 October, 6.00pm – Terrace Room, York House, Twickenham**

1. Apologies and Introductions

Attendees: Councillor Percival (Chairman), Councillor Chappell, Councillor Eady, John Doherty (Richmond Parents and Carers Action Group (RPCAG)), Anne Breaks, Paul Leonard (Strathmore School), Becky Powell (London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT)), Stewart Jones (LBRuT), Keith Tysoe (LBRuT), Judy Weleminsky (Three Wings Trust), Michelle Williams (LBRuT),

Parent Observers: Mireille Khair, Joanne Kemp, Ian Hendy and Jaqui Hindley

Apologies: Jan Tellick (Three Wings Trust), Judy Weleminsky (Three Wings Trust)

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 June 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

Matters Arising

It was agreed that there were no matters arising from the last meeting.

3. Green Paper Update

The SEN Services Manager introduced the item and explained how the SEND Bill was being formed. At the time of the meeting the draft proposals for the SEND Bill were being scrutinised by a Select Committee and the report of the Select Committee which was due for publication in December 2012 would feed into the Bill. The most recent conference on the SEND Bill had focused on the importance of engaging with young people and engaging parents at each stage.

Mr Jones explained that Richmond had been pro-active in recognising that local authorities would not be given a large time frame in which to implement the new work streams. Pathfinders were in the middle of their work, however this did not give much time to report back with findings and therefore the Council had developed their own programme. The Council had organised a SEND Children's Bill Group to look at work streams. The group was comprised of representatives from local groups as well as Council Officers and had identified the work that needed to be done and allocated people to work streams.

Following questions raised and comments made the forum heard that:

- (i) The Bill would be published in early 2013 and would be followed by outline regulations and a code of practice.
- (ii) The feedback received from Pathfinders suggested that the new work streams were difficult to implement. Richmond had some prior

- knowledge of individual budgets as these already existed in adult services, however the other areas were less clear.
- (iii) The Bill would be broad and therefore the code of practice would be the document that set out how work streams should be operated.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Green Paper update be renamed the Children and Families Bill Update and that it be a standing item.

4. Transition Action Plan

The Disabled Children's Service and Centre Manager introduced the item and explained that the Transition Action Plan was an evolving document and therefore Ms Williams shared the structure chart with the forum rather than the action plan. There had been a virtual transition group for approximately two years and a transition management group had been recently established. This group was chaired by Robert Henderson and Derek Oliver. The work carried out by the group included looking at transition cases and identifying any noticeable trends. There was also a strategic transition group comprised of assistant directors in Children's and Adult's Services Directorates.

5. Update from Richmond Parents and Carers Action Group

The Joint Chair of RPCAG, Mr Doherty, wished to express the gratitude of the group that the Council were continuing with transport escorts as they believed it was important for the escorts to be separate. The group had met with transport providers and there had been positive feedback about the transport arrangements. Six vehicles from the local authority were still being used but this was due to an over demand for taxis. A lot more communication with parents and active parent participation was needed and so RPCAG were working with transport providers to see what could be done.

6. Transport Working Group Report

The Chairman of Governors at Strathmore school introduced the item and explained that the working group had looked at the 18-25 year old age group using public transport. Mr Leonard explained that through the Price Waterhouse Cooper initiative parents had input in the contract facilitation. The central message that parents had given was that they had received a good service and wanted to be sensible and practical about resolving problems.

The working group hoped that drivers would receive competence training which will lead to an award to show they are able to deal with complex behaviour. Mr Leonard explained that a transport buddying scheme to increase disabled young people's confidence on public transport.

7. Any Other Business

Direct Payments – The Disabled Children's Services and Centre Manager presented the forum with a guide on direct payments. Ms Williams explained that the guide had now been signed off and was no longer a draft. Historically direct payment was done more by Adult Services but since Adult Services had individual budgets there was little guidance on direct payments. The guide

had been produced by a working group which included parents and also included information for social workers. Over 100 families were signed up to the scheme.

Ms Williams explained that it was necessary to require personal assistants to have a CRB check for their role because this was the only mechanism the local authority had for safeguarding.

Terms of Reference – The Forum discussed the terms of reference of the CWDL. It was decided that all members should receive a copy and it should be discussed whether they were fit for purpose at the next meeting.

Capital Money – The Aiming High Project Manager explained that all the money from the early intervention grant had been used for resources and services for disabled children. The Borough had received capital money from central government again this year and Ms Powell explained that she was looking into what this money could be spent on. The ideas that had been put forward included more work at the Croft Centre, transport options and work on premises at the other side of the Borough.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the terms of reference for the CWDL be reviewed at the next meeting.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Monday 14 January 2013 at 6pm and that the Clerk would send an email to remind the Forum that the meeting would begin at 6pm. It was noted that some parents were unable to arrive for the 6pm start time but they were encouraged to still attend and join the meeting as soon as possible.