



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

SERVICE DESCRIPTION AND 'ARMS LENGTH' STATUS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bath & North East Somerset Parent Partnership Service has a statutory duty, under the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001)* to provide information, advice and guidance to parents whose children have been identified as having additional needs. The service provides advice to parents of all children with Special Educational Needs, including those without statements and where parents suspect their children may have additional needs, prior to any assessments being undertaken. The service applies the Bath & North East Somerset policies for equality and diversity, social inclusion, and planning to meet the needs of children and young people as set out in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2004)* and the *Children Act 2004*.
- 1.2 The service comprises 1.61 FTE members of staff, who through careful time management, strive to provide a service of excellence. The Service is supported by a team of volunteer Independent Parental Supporters, who are trained to provide support to parents/carers.

2. Aims of the Service

- 2.1 The aim of Bath & North East Somerset Parent Partnership Service is that school and Children's Service staff will treat parents as partners with respect to their children's education. This will be achieved through empowerment of parents of children with additional needs through providing access to information, advice and guidance, in relation to the special educational needs of their children, so that appropriate decisions can be made with respect to their education. Through providing impartial information, the service will help parents to:
 - Recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as parents and play an active and valued role in their children's education;
 - Have knowledge of their children's entitlement within the Special Educational Needs legislation.
 - Make their views known about how their children are educated;

- Have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making process about special educational provision.

SEN Code of Practice (2001:16)

- Additionally, the service will ensure that the views of children are considered with respect to any decisions that affect them, wherever possible.

- 2.2 The Service will ensure that parents can access impartial and accurate information and support via the telephone helpline, information leaflets, website, contact with support groups (both local and national), volunteer Independent Parental Supporters (IPS) and Parent Partnership staff.
- 2.3 The service will endeavour to meet the statutory minimum standards of quality for Parent Partnership Services as defined in the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001)* and the DCSF Exemplification of Minimum Standards (2007, revised 2010).
- 2.4 The Service will demonstrate independence, impartiality and neutrality in the information, advice and guidance it gives to parents and others.
- 2.5 The Service will act as a channel through which consultation with parents takes place, in collaboration with other agencies, enabling them to consider issues and concerns with respect to national and local policy and for such views to be recorded and for them to inform local practice and procedures.
- 2.6 The Service will work with staff and governing bodies in schools and a range of other settings to inform and develop parent friendly policies and promote effective partnership working with parents.
- 2.7 The Service will work strategically and collaboratively with other agencies to enable the voice of parents/carers to be represented at multi-agency forums to inform the development and monitoring of services to children and families.
- 2.8 Where necessary, the Service will work with members of the Advisory Group to ensure that its independence and impartiality is seen to be credible by service users.
- 2.9 To present an Annual Service Plan to the Advisory Group that evidences implementation of these aims in an accountable and monitored practice.

3. Service Delivery Model

- 3.1 Bath and North East Somerset Parent Partnership Service meets its statutory requirements under Section 2 of the *SEN Code of Practice (2001)*, the DCSF *Exemplification of Minimum Standards (2007 revised 2010)* and Regional standards implemented by the South West & Wales Regional Parent Partnership Network (SWRPPN).

3.2 The annual Team Development Plan specifies how the Regional Standards and the Five Outcomes under Every Child Matters are achieved in relation to service activity.

4. The Advisory Group

4.1 **Aims and purpose:** The Advisory Group will ensure that Bath & North East Somerset Parent Partnership Service delivers a high quality 'arms length' service that is responsive to local needs, taking into account best practice both locally and nationally. Meetings will be held twice during the academic year.

4.2 **Functions:** The primary functions of the Advisory Group are to:

- Monitor the performance of the Parent Partnership Service in relation to changes in services for children.
- Monitor the independence of the service.
- Receive reports from the Manager – Family Information and Parent Partnership Services.
- Receive reports from the Senior Case Officer.
- Receive parental feedback regarding SEN education and the Parent Partnership Service.
- To meet with representatives of the Local Authority to communicate areas of concern and influence local policy and practice.
- Promote the interests and concerns of the Parent Partnership Service.
- Identify ways of supporting and developing Parent Partnership work.

4.3 **Membership:** The Advisory Group will comprise representation from statutory services (health, social care, education, the voluntary sector and parents of children with Special Educational Needs, with a maximum membership of 15 (NB: we have 19 on list) people.

4.4 Members have been selected to represent key stakeholder groups with the expectation that if a member represents an agency or constituency interests they will:

- Give feedback to the Parent Partnership Service on issues being raised in their own settings.
- Raise issues for Bath & North East Somerset Parent Partnership Service to consider.

4.5 Parent members are asked to represent their own views and where possible to represent the views of groups of parents they have contact with.

4.6 Members are chosen on their ability to make an effective contribution, the stakeholder group they represent and their willingness to be active in promoting the interests of the Parent Partnership Service and influencing the views of others to recognise the importance of the work of the Service.

4.7 **Meetings and Terms of Reference:** Approximately three weeks before each meeting, members will be invited to contribute Agenda items for the meeting.

The Agenda and associated papers will be distributed at least one week in advance of the meeting. Meetings will be chaired, in turn, by a member of the Advisory Group on a rolling programme. Minutes will be taken by the Administrative Assistant assigned to the Service. Circulation of the Minutes will take place within two weeks of the meeting being held.

- 4.8 Issues raised are reported to the appropriate Divisional Director for further consultation with the Children's Leadership Team.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 This is addressed under the separate Confidentiality Policy.

Manager – Family Information and Parent Partnership Services
November 2007
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