

DEAF PARENTING UK ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2008

DEAF CULTURAL CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM

WORKSHOP CONTENTS

- **Workshop A:** Parenting & Early Years (Department of Health)
- **Workshop B:** Parenting Implementation Project/ Department for Children, School and Families. (Implementation & Research Ltd)
- **Workshop C:** Future of Disability Equality & Human Rights (Equality & Human Rights Commission)

WORKSHOP A

“Parenting & Early Years”

*Deborah Jamieson, Programme Director for Health-Led Parenting and First Years of Life,
Department of Health*

Points raised by Deaf parents:

- As Sure Start centres in the UK will have 2,500 – 3,500 centres by 2010 and 30,000 parents to become trained by 2012. There is a need to have better resources for Deaf parents, around health, pregnancy and children's development.
- Lack of awareness – need to reach Deaf parents
- Conflict of views with breastfeeding
- Sure Start for Deaf adults/children...? need more information
- Parenting Skills courses – CHPP willing to fund for new pool of DPUK trainers?
- DPUK play a crucial role, will Community Health Promotion Partnership (CHPP) work/liaise with DPUK to build health model/professionalism?
- For parents to become trained by 2012 - Is funding dependent on quotas as we are a 'minority'

Pledges:

1. We talked about better resources for Deaf parents around health, in pregnancy and children's development and the possibility of a DVD and other tools that might help.
2. We also talked about Sure Start children's centres and having a better engagement with Deaf Parenting UK to ensure Deaf parents' needs are met and for midwives and health visitors to communicate better and ensure there are interpreters available when women are accessing services during pregnancy and other key times.
3. We talked about Parenting practitioners and making sure that if there are Parenting practitioners for Deaf parents, to find out if funding is available to have those services locally through Sure Start and better Parenting support. I will take back to check on the Sure Start funding and local needs for Deaf parents.
4. I will make sure Deaf Parenting UK is one of our parent focus groups for new things we are doing in health and around children's centres.

WORKSHOP B

“Parenting Implementation Project/ Department for Children, Schools and Families – supporting local authorities on parent support services to meet the needs of Deaf parents?”

Lyn Frith, Director Children’s Services Police, Implementation and Research Ltd

Points raised by Deaf Parents:

- Pacesetters (Bristol PCT/NHS) are funding Parenting skills course for Deaf Parents, living in Bristol. The Parenting Skill course using Deaf Parenting UK materials which meets Deaf parents needs. There is a need to clarify to Deaf Parents that these courses is not ‘mental health’ issue but part of everyday life skills training.
- Statutory services provide Parenting support for parents of Deaf children, none for parents of hearing children. Services are needed for Deaf parents to support their hearing children.
- Need to identify, establish good practice and promote/publish the support required for Deaf parents to help the local authority to move forward.
- How can we reach Deaf parents locally?
 - Need BSL Forums, but postcode limitations...?
 - BSL users cannot use ‘normal’ forms of consultation
 - Deaf representation on Parenting Commission – BSL is 4th indigenous language in the UK
- Local Authorities need to:
 - Establish outreach support using DPUK as the ‘outreach agency/services’.
 - Put forward names to join local commissions and represent through DPUK. Names of commission contacts will be given to DPUK
 - Are Local Authorities implementing the BSL charter in order to implement Parenting Strategy?
 - Access and use of interpreters are still very limited or misunderstood by the local authorities themselves and parents.
 - Schools needs to have a better understanding culture of “CODA’s”
 - Need to improve access to BSL interpreters
 - Look at using alternative forms of telecoms, not just use ‘type talk’
 - Look at ways to prevent re-generation of barriers after a ‘new’ provision is provided.

Pledges:

1. It is clear that the key point is communication. Using BSL and using interpreters. People don't know how to use interpreters and Deaf people don't know their rights in terms of using interpreters. So we want local authorities to publish that they support the BSL charter and we want that included in the Parenting strategies that go out in local authorities.
2. The consultants will be providing Deaf Parenting UK with the names of the contacts in the different regions, the Commissioners, the Parenting Commissioners so that DPUK can send a representative or contact those Commissioners.
3. We talked about the local authority need to set up outreach work to Deaf parents because the normal modes of communication with parents does not suit or work with the Deaf person so we said that we needed a Deaf person to go out and do that outreach work.
4. There seems to be plenty of support for Deaf parents who have Deaf children, Deaf parents with hearing children are the ones that experience the gaps; there is very little service for them and little focus for them. So that is a need. May be one way of providing that is for Deaf Parenting UK to identify good practice and disseminate that good practice amongst the local authorities so that they are almost shamed into doing a good job in future.
5. This may be is linked to what the other workshop had to say. PCT and the health authority in Bristol offered funding for training for Deaf parents so that training was delivered in the Bristol area but the problem was that the Deaf parents felt that they were stigmatised because it came through the health trust but via mental health services so we need to make sure that we don't stigmatise Deaf parents in any way when that training is delivered.

WORKSHOP C

“The Future of Disability Equality & Human Rights”

Jackie Driver, Head of Policy, Equality & Human Rights Commission

Looking at the new equality landscape, what equalities look like now, what human rights look like, what the law says and what the new commission can do to make the lives of Deaf parents more bearable?

Points raised by Deaf parents:

- Children interpreting in schools, hospitals and other places – need to make sure they provide interpreters on request as part of the human rights.
- Audiology departments see Deafness – not a person – need to change their attitudes
- Human rights / Children’s rights on issues particularly around cochlear implants.

Pledges

1. We are concerned about children interpreting in schools, hospitals and other places and there was a request for the Commission to work with its partners to make sure that they understood the legislation around this, that children shouldn't have to interpret for parents in any situation.
2. We also talked about particular services, specialised services we talked a lot, for example about audiology departments and how audiology departments don't see the person, they see the Deafness. They can't see around that. What we can do to try and help audiology departments in the health service more generally start to understand that we are actually a whole person and there is more to us than Deafness and that they treat us with more respect, understand that they need to change their attitudes.
3. We talked about Deaf children's rights, particularly around cochlear implants and there is a possibility, particularly now with human rights legislation to consider some of the issues around children's rights and one of the this is that we do as a commission is we take strategic legal cases so there may be an opportunity to take a strategic legal case in that area. I cannot promise that but it is certainly something we can look at.

4. We also talked about parent's rights as well as Deaf children's rights, particularly parents that did not understand - hearing parents that did not understand about cochlear implants and were only getting a very medical point of view on that.
5. We discussed about schools, mainstream schools verses Deaf schools and rights of choice and whether that choice was actually meaningful or not and we agreed we would talk to some education bodies and perhaps some of the education Inspectorates to look at what the issues were around segregated education, particularly for Deaf people and people choosing schools for their Deaf children.
6. We agreed that we would review are:
 - helpline to see if our own helpline was accessible enough for Deaf people, if enough Deaf people were accessing us and
 - our communication strategy, so that Deaf people understand that we are there and what we are there for. One of the quick win is talking to Sabina about making a link on the website of Deaf Parenting UK so people know they can contact us.