

The Parent Carer Council (PaCC) Winter Bulletin

Welcome to our winter bulletin. We hope you are all well and that life is not too stressful in the lead up to Christmas. As ever, we are really keen to hear from you about any feedback you have about the following issues (or anything stories you have, positive or negative). Email us at pacc@amazebrighton.org.uk

Brighton and Hove tests SEN changes

You may have heard of the government's recent green paper on special educational needs (SEN) and the 'SE7', of which Brighton & Hove is part. But what does it mean and what are the implications for you?

What is the SE7?

The government's recent green paper outlined far-reaching changes to services and assessments for children with special educational needs. Brighton is one of seven councils in the southeast that will test out the new approaches. The SE7 (South East 7) incorporates Brighton & Hove, Hampshire, Surrey, Kent, West Sussex, East Sussex and Medway. The SE7 is the largest of 30 areas testing out the proposals across the country. Mooted reforms include a single education, health and care plan from birth to 25 years (replacing 'statements'), personal budgets for parents which will give families more involvement over acquiring services for their child and stronger relationships between local services, agencies and parents.

What implications does it have for our family?

None at the current time. This is a 'pathfinder', a testing period that will run for 18 months alongside the existing system. A small number of families will 'test out' the single plan and personal budgets but the statementing process will remain legally binding. Your child will still have a statement, if he or she has one. If you don't, you still have the legal right to initiate the statementing process.

How is PaCC involved?

Each council in the SE7 will 'lead' on one aspect of the green paper. Brighton & Hove is leading on parental involvement. Our parent participation worker, Debbie Collins, has been seconded (for one day a week) to work closely with Jacqueline Coe, Head of Learning Support, Pupil Support Services for Brighton & Hove, to look into this. We will keep you fully informed. Watch this space for further updates...

How can I get involved?

There will be lots of opportunities for you to feed into the pathfinder. Upcoming workshops include one about the Local offer (what does SEN provision look like in Brighton & Hove?) on January 5 and a workshop about the Single Assessment Framework (the proposed single plan combining education, health and care) on January 17 and 19 at Community Base. Please phone Amaze on 01273 772 289 if you would like to attend.

Health Event

March 7th 2012

Put it in your diaries! It is a **must-go-to** event.

As many of you know, Health is our new focus and we are holding a special event next March during which parent carers will have the opportunity to talk openly about the health services their children receive, whether it be their experiences of the local Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital, CAMHS, therapies such as speech and language or occupational therapy or their experience of their GP. As you know we looked at education last year and this proved very enlightening and the work from this project is still ongoing. A subgroup of PaCC members will be meeting over the next few weeks to organise the event and we would love to hear from you if you have any ideas.

Please contact Amanda on amandae.kelly@ntlworld.com if there is anything you would particularly like to feedback about.

All About Transition

There is lots of work going on around transition. One of our steering group members sits on the Learning Disability Partnership Board and they have been discussing the provision for young people with special educational needs who are in 'transition' (which starts at 14). You may have heard about the new volunteer transition support workers who are working as part of an Amaze project, The Volunteer Transition Support Project, to support parents whose children are not likely to be eligible for social care support (ie: children at Downs Park, Cedar Centre and those whose children have a learning disability and attend Patcham House School). Volunteers will support parents whose teenagers are in Year 11 initially and then Year 10. If there are any parents who are interested in being volunteers or who need support call the Amaze help line on 01273 772289.

See the Amaze website www.amazebrighton.org.uk for more information on transition

Also, look out for details of a 'Transitions Fair', which will give more information about what life will look post 18 for young people with SLD across health, social care and education.

Don't forget to join us on Facebook. We are a closed group and you can join us by searching for PaCC and sending us a message asking to join.