

# Somerset Parent Carer Forum

## Weekly update



### New for 2018 weekly updates

Following feedback from families the steering group met on Monday 12th March to discuss our plans for this financial year.

As a group we felt we need to improve the way and amount we feed back to our members and to be clearer about how we use the information you share with us. To assist with this we are going to trial the following-

- weekly updates which will provide a snap shot of what the forum has been doing.
- Reports from surveys and engagement events will be posted on the website
- The website will include a section on how data is used and we are developing postcards to go to every new family that joins us to ensure they are clear (due May 2018)
- Introduction newsletter, booklet and Health watch survey (inc freeport return) to be sent home to parents via special schools (April 2018)
- A myth buster on the role of Parent Carer Forums is being developed (due May 2018)
- Participation training event for individuals interested in becoming more involved.
- Develop a clear volunteering offer so people can be clear how they can get involved.

If you have any other suggestions or would like to become more involved in the forum then please email us at [help@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:help@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk).

#### LOCAL AREA INSPECTION NETWORK

The aims of the group were reviewed and this multi-agency group looks at the key areas Ofsted and Care Quality Commission will look at during the inspection. Asking does Somerset know itself and how are they addressing areas of weakness.

#### SPEECH COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE NEEDS

- The group are currently working on a strategy to support the speech and communication needs across Somerset. Key areas discussed
- Support post 16 as SEND code is clear 0-25
- Early help as an increased number of children are arriving at school with communication needs.

#### EARLY YEARS

This was the first meeting of the group. A lot of the discussion was around challenging if what we think is the picture of support for this age group is accurate - How do we know? This is across education, health and social care.

The forum is keen to hear from parents of children 0-5. Your experiences will help us to ensure that we can feed back what its like.



#### Short Breaks workshop Chard

This week we were joined by Laura from short breaks to discuss what is working well and what could be better. Report will follow early next month.



#### Coffee morning Yeovil

We also ran our monthly coffee morning at Yeovil with 7 attending. We are currently looking at our coffee morning and hoping to expand them while joining up with other groups.



## New Assistant Director For Inclusion

This week we met with the newly appointed Assistant Director for Inclusion Annette Perrington. Annette comes to Somerset from Bristol City Council where she was Head of Specialist Education and Access. Annette has over 20 years experience in working with children, young people and their families with Special educational needs and disability and is committed to supporting children and young adults achieve the very best outcomes .

We were able to talk to her about services that parents feel are working well and to discuss some of the challenges families are having. Topics included:

- The need for timely EHCp and of a good quality
- Clearly developed and transparent pathways
- Access to good quality, timely and transparent information
- Joined up services that deliver good outcomes for children and young people
- Importance of children, young people and their families being involved from the start in any designing or reshaping of service.

We look forward to working with Annette and continuing to provide constructive challenge while ensuring services that are working for our families are maintained.

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

This group is part of the priority groups which meet to address the areas from the May17 peer review. There was an update on SEND information packs sent to schools and planned next steps. The group are going to be focused on transitions next and want to put a pack of good examples to help show what good looks like. Please contact us or drop into one of our coffee mornings and share your experience good/bad to help shape transitions moving forward.

### ONLINE LEARNING MODULES

The forum has previously helped to create online learning modules on SEND. All Somerset County Council staff are expected to do these as part of their induction. We spent Friday with the young peoples champions looking at the modules and refreshing them to include up to date links. If you would like to access the modules please email us.



### CARERS VOICE SOMERSET

This week the forum attended the Carers Voice Somerset Roadshow to support raising awareness of local provision for carers. We spoke to both carers and service providers about what the forum does and its role in helping to shape services.



### Coffee mornings coming up

Taunton Wednesday 10-12.

Wincanton Friday 10-12



### CAOT's Ollie the Flamingo project

The fundraising through Tesco's Langport blue token scheme is going well.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us and CAOT so far. There is still time as the collection does not close until 30th April.

Once we have received the funding we will share further details of how you can get involved in the project moving forward.

## SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EDUCATION

We have run 3 events this week for parents of children who use the support services for education. We have present information about the proposed changes and the reasoning behind this. The presentations have been a mixture of public information, data sourced from Somerset County council and research. This will be published on our website once the final session is complete.

We have a further 2 events to go; one in Frome Monday 10:30-12 and Yeovil Tuesday 10-11:30. We have also created an online survey for feedback. This is purposefully left very open so families can share their views without external influence or feeling led. We will be preparing a report to share with scrutiny on the 20th April and with cabinet next month.

