

ROTHERHAM PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE 2006

The Parent Partnership Service was established in 1994 and has been engaged in a 3 part cycle of evaluation since 1998. Part 1- an ongoing evaluation of parents' views, part 2- schools and professionals within Education, Health and Social Care, part 3-Parent support groups.

This report brings together the 3 strands of the evaluation. Some comparison between the different groups is possible as is comparison with the previous full evaluation report of 2003, although some questions have been changed to enable consideration of outcomes. Open and closed questions and value judgements have been used in all questionnaires.

Since the last full evaluation report there has been a change of Service Manager (0.6) and the appointment of two new Referral Officers (0.9). The Service Admin Officer also works part time (0.6).

To ensure that the Service is continuing to improve, an evaluation has been undertaken, which focussed on all client areas i.e.; Parents, Education Services, Social Services, Health Services and Voluntary Groups. Details of the target groups are included in Appendix 1, copies of questionnaires in Appendix 2.

This information is being made available via the Website and next newsletter in order to feedback the results to parents.

The Parental Analysis

A questionnaire was devised and sent to parents four months after referral to the Service. Data gathered over a period of 26 months (referrals made from February 2004 to March 2006) has been used to inform this part of the evaluation. The questionnaires were colour coded in order to monitor different time periods whilst maintaining anonymity.

During this period 536 were sent out and 116 were returned, a return rate of 22%.

The questionnaire was updated during this period but wherever possible results have been combined.

Reasons why parents contact the Service

Approximately one third of respondents said they contacted the Service for information and support in expressing their Views. Nearly three quarters wanted advice and one quarter wanted help in solving disagreements.

Most parents received contact details via school (33%) or education services (27%). Some schools give out flyers to all parents of children on the SEN Register and others give them out when a child's special educational needs are being identified. Other referrals are made via word of mouth, Social Services, Health Services, Service Publicity and Voluntary Organisations.

Value Judgements

Parents were asked about their experience when contacting the Parent Partnership Service. 98% of parents said their first contact was friendly and welcoming and they were well listened to. They found it easy to make contact.

95% said they felt better informed after contact and were treated fairly and with respect (96%). The information given in almost all cases was considered impartial, and in all cases, helpful, clear and easy to understand.

90.5% of respondents said they felt more informed and confident in dealing with issues about their child's education after contact with the Service and they had a clear idea of what the Service does and how it operates (95%). Most said that contact had resulted in a better relationship with the school, LEA or other staff (95%) and the written information received was useful (84%).

Nearly all parents said they were satisfied with the support they had received (92%) and that they would contact the Service again if needed

(97.4%). They would recommend the Parent Partnership Service to other parents (99%).

Parents were asked to indicate their response to particular questions using a range from 'yes very' to 'not at all'. The majority of responses were positive. Analysis of the 'yes very' and 'yes' categories show overall 47% reporting 'yes very' and 53% saying 'yes'.

A number of comments were received about how the Service can be further developed and improved. The majority of these involved improvements to publicity and information about the service. These suggestions have been incorporated into the Service Development Plan.

Comparison

A comparison has been made between February 2004 - Mar 2005 and April 2005 - Mar 2006. The results of the parents' responses remain very positive. More parents contacted the Service for 'Advice' and 'Help in solving disagreements' in the 05/6 period than 04/5.

Slightly more parents (55%) said that there was inadequate publicity as those who said it was satisfactory. This indicates an improvement on the 2003 evaluation report when 67% of parents reported it was inadequate. In addition an increase in the number of parents finding out about the Service through Schools, Voluntary Organisations and Service Publicity is seen in the period 05/6. This is encouraging and it suggests the Service priority to improve publicity to parents is having an impact.

Conclusions

Parents who responded found the Service friendly and welcoming and were very happy with the service provided.

Publicity has been a priority for Service development and a wide range of activities have taken place over this period aimed at schools, professionals and parents. While most parents hear about the service from school staff it is important that parents can access the Service with ease and not be reliant on schools.

The Service's independent Website continues to be developed and improved with links to the Area of Need Information Guides. Each guide has links to information within a particular field. A Parent/Carer Discussion Forum has also been made available. The Newsletter remains to be a very popular medium for information sharing with circulation increasing each term.

The Health Service Analysis

Approximately 150 questionnaires were circulated to members of the Health Service. The target groups were Chatham House, STEPS, Child Development Centre, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, physiotherapy and School Nurses. In addition the Health Education Nurse Adviser and Moving and Handling Co-ordinator were contacted.

11 evaluation forms were received from Health professionals. Between them they had recommended approximately 65 parents contact the Service. Of these they were aware of only 4 which had actually been in contact. 7 respondents said they gave parents copies of the Parent Partnership Service flyer or forwarded contact details, 3 did not. 1 said the flyer was available to parents on a notice board.

The main reasons for suggesting that parents contact the Service were:

- ❖ Neutral advice and information
- ❖ Support at school based meetings
- ❖ Support in discussions with the LEA.

Other priorities included:

- ❖ Explaining procedures and jargon
- ❖ Conflict resolution

81% of health professionals said they would suggest parents contact the service in future. 17% said information had been successfully provided by the service. 45% said they didn't know or didn't answer the question.

When asked if Parent Partnership understands the concerns of the Health Professional, most responses were neutral but it had been useful to have the Service involved. Most respondents said they were satisfied with the range of support provided and that it is important to know if the Service is involved with parents.

Three related areas of interest were highlighted. These were:

- ❖ Satisfaction with the involvement of the Parent Partnership Service
- ❖ Satisfaction with the level of contact with the Service, and
- ❖ Involvement has enabled parents to take an active role.

2 responses indicated these things were successfully provided, 6 said they were not sure. No one suggested they hadn't been provided.

Respondents said the best thing about the Service was:

- Independent Support
- Approachable and accessible to parents
- Prompt attention and honesty re timescales

9 said they would suggest parents contact the Service in the future, 2 said they were unsure about making referrals to the service because they didn't know enough about it.

6 people indicated their level of agreement with key statements. Their comments indicated agreement to fully agree. The statements gaining highest scores were:

- Parents are better informed after contact with the Service
- Information from the Service is presented in a way that is accessible to parents
- Parent Partnership staff understand the issues and concerns faced by schools
- I am satisfied with the support provided by the Parent Partnership Service
- Involvement with the Parent Partnership Service has enabled parents to make an active role in supporting their child
- Parents have been able to make use of information from the Parent Partnership Service

There were a number of suggestions regarding the way respondents would like to see the Service developed. These included feedback on outcomes of referrals (2), closer working with Child Development Centre (1), higher staff levels (1) and increased publicity (1)

Suggestions regarding ways we could improve our publicity to parents included

- Leaflets given when name on school waiting list
- Notice boards in school with leaflets
- Links with Linda Adcock- information officer

While 7 of the 11 respondents were aware the Service provides confidential, impartial advice and information on SEN and 5 were aware of the range of information available only 3 were aware of the website and only 2 were aware of the Parent's Information Sharing Workshops, the range of information leaflets available and that training was available to both parents and professionals

Respondents felt the Service should prioritise the following areas:

- ❖ Parent Information Sharing Workshops
- ❖ Information available in wide range of mediums - video, audio & languages
- ❖ Conflict resolution work
- ❖ Links with voluntary groups, Health and Social Care
- ❖ Support for parents with English as second language

Slightly less emphasis should be placed on:

- ❖ Fact sheets on SEN policy & practice and aspects of SEN
- ❖ In-service training on working in Partnership with parents
- ❖ Increased links with schools

Comparison

A similar level of return was achieved in the 2003 evaluation. There is a significant change in the reasons for suggesting parents contact the Service. Priorities identified in this evaluation:

- ❖ Neutral advice and information
- ❖ Support at school based meetings

were not identified as priorities and low priority respectively. Support in discussions with the LA has remained a priority.

The 2003 evaluation indicated few health professionals had experience of or information about the Service. While this seems true for 2 respondents from the current evaluation others are familiar with the service.

Conclusions

Although feedback is positive the small number of respondents is concerning as is the limited knowledge about the Service amongst health professionals. Priorities with regard to publicity and awareness which were highlighted on the last evaluation need to be continued. These results correspond with information from parents, in the period 1.6.05-31.5.06 only 4.4% of parents contacting the Service reported hearing about it via Health Service colleagues.

There is a noticeable increase in the amount of joint working between Health and Education Services following the formation of Children and Young People's Services and the move to integrated services. Referral Officers regularly attend the multi agency case work meetings at Clifton and Thrybergh Education Action Zone.

As with the 2003 evaluation Service users are satisfied with the Service and would use it again. This continued level of satisfaction indicates a good foundation on which to build Service development.

Voluntary Groups Analysis

18 questionnaires were sent to local support groups, 2 were returned, an 11% response. These 2 respondents had recommended approximately 24 parents contact the Service. Of these they were aware of only 2 who had actually been in contact.

Respondents said they did not give parents copies of the Parent Partnership Service flyer, 1 said the flyer was available to parents on their notice board.

It was hoped that these families would gain help in the following ways:

- ❖ Explaining procedures, services and jargon
- ❖ Neutral advice and information
- ❖ Support at school based meetings
- ❖ Support in discussions with the LEA.

Other priorities included:

- ❖ Support through Statutory Assessment
- ❖ Information about voluntary groups and services
- ❖ Support at other meetings

1 respondent said they were not sure if these things were successfully provided. It was the only respondent for this question.

1 respondent said the best thing about the Service was "Neutral balance between school and home". It was the only respondent for this question.

Both respondents said they would suggest parents contact the Service in the future.

Only 1 respondent indicated their level of agreement with key statements. The majority of responses indicated agreement, there were no responses indicating disagreement or strongly disagreement. The statements gaining highest scores were:

- Parents have been able to make use of information from the Parent Partnership Service

- Parent Partnership staff understand the issues and concerns faced by schools
- Parents are better informed after contact with the Service
- Involvement with the Parent Partnership Service has enabled parents to take an active role in supporting their child
- Information from the Service is presented in a way that is accessible to parents
- I am satisfied with the support provided by the Parent Partnership Service
- Parent Partnership Service staff have made a significant contribution to resolving disagreements
- Parents continue to take an active and informed role when Parent Partnership staff are no longer involved

There were no suggestions regarding the way they would like to see the Service developed.

Suggestions regarding ways we could improve our publicity to parents included

- Attending Support Group Meetings
- Using Community Languages

Both respondents were aware the Service provides confidential, impartial advice and information on SEN and were aware of the website. Only 1 respondent was aware of the range of information available from the Service and that training was available to both parents and professionals.

Levels of Priority

Respondents felt the Service should prioritise the following areas:

- ❖ Fact sheets on SEN policy & practice and aspects of SEN
- ❖ Links with voluntary groups, Health and Social Services
- ❖ Increased links with schools
- ❖ Parent Information Sharing Workshops

Slightly less emphasis should be placed on:

- ❖ In-service training on working in Partnership with parents

- ❖ Information available in wide range of mediums - video, audio & languages
- ❖ Support for parents with English as second language
- ❖ Conflict resolution work

Comparison

There seems to be a significant increase in the number of parents who have been suggested to contact the service (24 in 2006, 3 in 2003) although what they hoped parents would gain from the Service remain much the same.

The 2003 evaluation shows the support groups placed emphasis on the provision of information; this remains a priority but is joined by links with partners in schools, voluntary support groups, health and social care.

NSPCC had been included in 2003 and was not in the 2006. The next evaluation should consider the inclusion of Voluntary sector groups in addition to special interest support groups.

Conclusions

A central database of groups has been set up and information shared with Linda Adcock, Children's Disability Information Officer. The groups have been included in information /publicity mail shots from the Service; the high level of awareness of the website indicates this has been successful. The limited number of responses suggests improving our links with the groups should continue to be a high priority for the Service

Social Care Analysis

20 questionnaires were sent to Social Care teams including the Children's Disability Social Work Team. Only 1 was returned, a 5% response. Several questions were unanswered.

The respondent did not give parents copies of the Parent Partnership Service flyer. They responded neutrally to all key statements and suggested improving our publicity to parents through child care courses at FE.

Levels of Priority

The respondent felt Service should prioritise the following areas:

- ❖ Conflict resolution work
- ❖ Increased links with schools

Slightly less emphasis should be placed on:

- ❖ Fact sheets on SEN policy & practice and aspects of SEN
- ❖ In-service training on working in Partnership with parents
- ❖ Support for parents with English as second language
- ❖ Links with voluntary groups, Health and Social Services
- ❖ Parent Information Sharing Workshops

Comparison

There were no responses from Social Services in the 2003 evaluation; a single respondent in this period suggests problems in communication still exist. Social work teams had been reorganised immediately prior to the evaluations being sent out this time so the poor response may be the result of the evaluation taking a low priority at a time of change.

Information from parents in the period 1.6.05-31.5.06 shows only 4.4% of parents contacted the Service after hearing about it from Social Care colleagues. Service staff work alongside colleagues from Social Care although the proportion of looked after children Service staff have been involved with (0.48%) is lower than the 0.56% within the Rotherham population.

There is a noticeable increase in the amount of joint working between Social Care and Education Services following the formation of Children and Young People's Services and the move to integrated services. Referral Officers regularly attend the multi agency case work meetings at Clifton and Thrybergh EAZ. It is hoped this level of involvement will be extended through the proposed locality teams.

Conclusions

Problems with distribution of the questionnaires and reorganisation of the Social Care teams may account for the poor level of response however low response over 2 periods suggests improving our links with social care should be an increased priority for the Service.

Schools Analysis

Questionnaires were sent to all primary and secondary schools, also special schools, Pupil Referral Units, units attached to mainstream schools and early education settings.

72 evaluation forms were received from schools a 51% response. Between them they had recommended approximately 177 parents contact the Service. Of these they were aware of 78 who had actually been in contact. 58 respondents said they gave parents copies of the Parent Partnership Service flyer, 7 did not. 2 said the flyer was available to parents on a notice board.

The main reasons for suggesting that parents contact the Service were:

- ❖ Neutral advice and information
- ❖ Explaining procedures, services and jargon

Other priorities included:

- ❖ Information about voluntary groups and services
- ❖ Support at school based meetings
- ❖ Support through statutory assessment
- ❖ Support in discussions with the LA.

50 respondents indicated these things were successfully provided, 2 said they were not sure. No one suggested they hadn't been provided.

Respondents said the best thing about the Service was:

- Independent Support
- Neutrality

6 respondents had not suggested parents contact the service their reasons included:

"Not been appropriate"

"Parents have been happy their child's needs were being addressed and have not seemed to need further advice /support about SEN"

"I just forgot"

"No parents have apparently needed the Service or have been getting support via other agencies e.g. Behaviour Support Service"

59 said they would suggest parents contact the Service in the future, no respondents said they wouldn't.

Response to key statements suggested showed a significant proportion in the respondents indicated agreement/fully agree with the statement

- Parent Partnership staff understand the issues and concerns faced by schools
- Parents are better informed after contact with the Service
- Involvement with the Parent Partnership Service has enabled parents to take an active role in supporting their child
- Parents have been able to make use of information from the Parent Partnership Service
- Information from the Service is presented in a way that is accessible to parents
- I am satisfied with the support provided by the Parent Partnership Service

A higher 'Neutral' response was given to the statements

- Parent Partnership Service staff have made a significant contribution to resolving disagreements

- Parents continue to take an active and informed role when PPS staff are no longer involved

Ways in which they would like to see the service developed included:

- More PP staff members
- Information events
- Work more closely with schools at Parents Evenings and support the Learning Support faculty
- Direct contact with parents in school e.g. at annual meeting
- Bilingual support and literature
- General Info aimed at new SENCO's/NQT's
- Possibly drop in sessions for clusters of schools

Suggestions regarding ways we could improve our publicity to parents included

- Notice boards/ materials in school
- Attendance at Parent's Meetings
- Information provided through school prospectus, newspapers, Rotherham Matters
- Link on RMBC home page
- E.forum
- SENCO training

While 93% of respondents were aware the Service provides confidential, impartial advice and information on SEN. 79% were aware of the range of information available from the Service 60% were aware of the website, 42% of Parent's Information Sharing Workshops and 53% that training was available to both parents and professionals

Levels of Priority

Respondents felt the Service should prioritise the following areas:

- ❖ Support for parents with English as second language
- ❖ Increased links with schools
- ❖ Links with voluntary groups, Health and Social Services
- ❖ Fact sheets on SEN policy & practice and aspects of SEN
- ❖ Conflict resolution work
- ❖ Parent Information Sharing Workshops
- ❖ Information available in wide range of mediums - video, audio & languages

It was suggested medium level priority should be placed on:

- ❖ In-service training on working in Partnership with parents

Comparison

Responses from this group in the 2003 evaluation suggest a similar high emphasis placed on information to parents and improved links with partner organisations. This time a significant change can be seen in the emphasis on parents with English as an additional language. Shortly after conducting this evaluation the Service launched a range of information sheets which had been translated into local community languages. The information is available in written and audio format and has been widely distributed through schools, support groups and services.

Conclusions

It was gratifying to see SENCO's were satisfied with the Service provided by Parent Partnership. Many of the suggestions regarding ways to increase publicity to parents were already being carried out by the service or had been incorporated into the Service Development Plan. Emphasis over the last 12 months has been on publicising the website, the success of this can be seen in the fact that more respondents were aware of this than the Parent Information Sharing Workshops or of training available for parents and professionals. Corporate publicity regarding training available schools has taken some time to embed and several services have found reduced awareness of courses. However the Parent's Information Sharing Workshops have been running for several years and are publicised through the service newsletter, letters to individual parents. Posters and accompanying flyers are sent to school SENCOs with a request that they publicise it in school.

A significant proportion of referrals to the Service come following a recommendation from school staff. In the period 1.6.05-31.5.06 (17.5%) of parents contacting the Service reported hearing about it via school staff. If, as feedback suggests, SENCOs are not always aware of the range of services available they are not going to be in a position to pass this on to parents. The Service needs therefore to place priority on not only getting

additional information to parents via SENCOs but also increase the ways of getting information directly to parents.

This is an area which is being explored by the Parent Partnership Service Monitoring Group and has been identified as a priority for Service Development.

It is concerning that some schools are not giving parents information about the Service since they have a statutory duty to do so. The Service reminds schools of this on an annual basis when sending schools copies of the flyers and includes this in all training to schools, SENCOs etc.

Education Services

Service leaders and all the major departments within Inclusion, Voice and Influence were asked to complete questionnaires. 115 were sent out, 9 (8%) of these were returned.

Those that did respond recommended approximately 30 parents contact the Service. Of these they were aware of approx 14 who had actually been in contact. 3 respondents said they gave parents copies of the Parent Partnership Service flyer, 2 asked school staff to do this, 2 did not give flyers and 2 provided telephone contact information.

The main reasons for suggesting that parents contact the Service were:

- ❖ Explaining procedures, services and jargon
- ❖ Neutral advice and information

Other priorities included:

- ❖ Information about voluntary groups and services
- ❖ Support at school based meetings
- ❖ Support through statutory assessment
- ❖ Support in discussions with the LEA.

Recommendation to the Service for assistance in resolving conflicts was less likely.

4 respondents indicated these things were successfully provided, 1 said they were not sure. No one suggested they hadn't been provided.

Respondents said the best thing about the Service was independent support.

5 respondents said they would suggest parents contact the Service in the future, no respondents said they wouldn't.

Response to key statements suggested showed a significant proportion in the respondents indicated agreement/fully agree with the statements. The statements gaining highest scores were:

- I am satisfied with the support provided by the Parent Partnership Service
- Parent Partnership staff understand the issues and concerns faced by schools
- Involvement with the Parent Partnership Service has enabled parents to take an active role in supporting their child
- Information from the Service is presented in a way that is accessible to parents
- Parents are better informed after contact with the Service
- Parents have been able to make use of information from the Parent Partnership Service
- Parent Partnership Service staff have made a significant contribution to resolving disagreements

'Agree' and 'neutral' responses were given to the statement

- Parents continue to take an active and informed role when PPS staff are no longer involved

Respondents advised ways in which they would like to see the service developed included:

- Increasing the number of PPS officers (2)
- Varying the communication methods to raise awareness of the Service
- Closer working with professionals to enable greater uptake up of the Service
- Evaluative summary of the types of concerns raised by parents, common issues, nature of support and advice given.

There was one suggestion regarding ways we could improve our publicity to parents via Child care courses in FE.

While 6 respondents were aware the Service provides confidential, impartial advice and information on SEN and 5 were aware of the range of information available from the Service, 4 that training was available to both parents and professionals. Only 3 were aware of the website and no respondents indicated awareness of the Parent's Information Sharing Workshops.

Levels of Priority

Respondents felt the Service should prioritise the following areas:

- ❖ Support for parents with English as second language
- ❖ Parent Information Sharing Workshops
- ❖ In-service training on working in Partnership with parents

It was suggested medium level priority should be placed on:

- ❖ Links with voluntary groups, Health and Social Care
- ❖ Information available in wide range of mediums - video, audio & languages
- ❖ Increased links with schools
- ❖ Fact sheets on SEN policy & practice and aspects of SEN
- ❖ Conflict resolution work

Comparison

Responses from this group in the 2003 evaluation suggest a similar high emphasis placed on information to parents and improved links with partner organisations. As with schools, a significant change can be seen in the emphasis on parents with English as an additional language.

It is interesting to note that although the majority of issues coming into the Service involve a disagreement many respondents place less emphasis on work in disagreement resolution

There was significant correlation between responses from schools and educational professionals.

Conclusion

Educational professionals report satisfaction with the Service provided by Parent Partnership. Many of the suggestions regarding ways to increase publicity to parents have been actioned or have been incorporated into the Service Development Plan.

There was limited awareness of the full range of services provided particularly regarding the web-site and Parent Information Sharing Workshops. The highest proportion of referrals to the Service comes following a recommendation from education professionals. In the period 1.6.05-31.5.06 (27%) of parents contacting the Service reported hearing about it via education professionals. Emphasis has been placed on publicising the website as a way of empowering parents through the provision of a wide range of high quality, accessible information while also managing the increasing numbers of parents contacting the Service. Professionals unaware of this resource will not be in a position to direct parents towards it. This is being addressed through the Service Development Plan,

Summary

The vast majority of respondents indicated they placed a high value on the Parent Partnership Service. They advised the needs of those being referred to the service had been met and said they would use the service again.

Main reasons for contacting the Service varied between groups and may be seen as reflecting the priority of the particular service e.g. schools placed high priority on increased links with schools while education professionals placed emphasis on training.

A higher 'Neutral' response from professionals was consistently given to the statements

- Parents continue to take an active and informed role when PPS staff are no longer involved
- Parent Partnership Service staff have made a significant contribution to resolving disagreements

While the first is not particularly surprising it is an issue for the Service as Empowering parents is a key principal of Parent Partnership. 90.5% of parents advised they felt more confident and knowledgeable in dealing with issues about their child's education after contact with the Service.

Similarly responses from health, voluntary groups, schools and education professionals indicate parents are better informed following involvement of Service staff. Ways of sustaining parental confidence and reducing dependency need to be developed by the Service. The second comment and the correspondingly medium or low priority given to disagreement resolution was surprising particularly as this is a significant number of referrals to the service require an element of informal disagreement resolution work.

Overall training regarding Working in Partnership with Parents is not currently seen as a high priority although this is central to a number of significant new government initiatives.

Feedback demonstrates a high level of satisfaction with the service provided by Parent Partnership There were no negative comments. One respondent advised that the member of staff they wanted to speak to was not always available but did acknowledge calls were always returned. There

were calls to increase the level of staffing, this came particularly from schools and education professionals. In addition comments were made advising the Service had been of help to both parents and school staff e.g. "Parent Partnership Service has not only supported the parents but the SENCOs in school and "Very professional and helpful service for both parents and schools". It is particularly heartening to hear this and has not been seen on previous evaluations.

There were a number of suggestions regarding the ways respondents would like to see the Service developed. These were grouped into broad categories with publicity and more staff being seen as significantly higher priority than extending the service to include attendance at parents evenings or 'drop-ins', greater links with schools, CDC and health services etc. There were requests for information on the impact of Inclusion with case studies.

Overall responses to key statements showed the majority respondents indicated agreement with the statements in the following order:

- Involvement with the Parent Partnership Service has enabled parents to take an active role in supporting their child
- Parents have been able to make use of information from the Parent Partnership Service
- Parents are better informed after contact with the Service
- Information from the Service is presented in a way that is accessible to parents
- I am satisfied with the support provided by the Parent Partnership Service
- Parent Partnership staff understand the issues and concerns faced by schools

Significantly lower scores were received for:

- Parents continue to take an active and informed role when PPS staff are no longer involved
- Parent Partnership Service staff have made a significant contribution to resolving disagreements

Respondents felt the Service should prioritise the following areas:

- ❖ Support for parents with English as second language
- ❖ Increased links with schools

- ❖ Parent Information Sharing Workshops
- ❖ Fact sheets on SEN policy & practice and aspects of SEN
- ❖ Conflict resolution work
- ❖ Links with voluntary groups, Health and Social Services
- ❖ Information available in wide range of mediums - video, audio & languages

It was suggested medium level priority should be placed on:

- ❖ In-service training on working in Partnership with parents

These results may have been particularly affected by the higher number of responses from school compared to all other groups. Emphasis on information for English as a second language may reflect the greater number of asylum seeking families entering Rotherham and the impact of increased migration within the EC.

School staff made a number of suggestions regarding ways to improve our publicity to parents and ways of developing the Service. Some suggestions are regularly carried out by staff i.e. contributing to new SENCO training, some activities have been identified by the Service and are currently being actioned i.e. copies of flyers to libraries and Resource Centres. Areas not previously included on the Service Development plan have been incorporated into it.

This evaluation indicates improvements to publicity are having an impact but this continues to be a high priority for the Service. Many respondents are unaware of the full range of services. Termly mail shots to schools and voluntary groups have been introduced and an annual mail shot to other groups including social care and education professionals has been included on the development plan. The increased circulation of the Parent Partnership Service Newsletter also enables groups such as foster parents to be made aware of the Service.

The poor response from Social Care needs to be investigated particularly as this impacts on looked after children. The high response from schools is the result of taking the questionnaires personally to SENCO meetings where 10minutes is allocated to filling it in. A similar arrangement may be helpful in the future. In addition Social Care teams and foster carers will be included in information /publicity mail shots from the Service.

The request for greater involvement from one of the parent support groups is gratifying. A termly mail shot has been introduced and representatives from the groups have been invited to attend a strategic Parents Forum re. Learning Difficulties/Disabilities. Representatives are also to be invited to become involved in the Parent Partnership Service Monitoring Group. Greater involvement with groups will be explored through the Monitoring Group and included in the Service Development Plan.