

April 2006/ March 2007

**Introduction:**

The Rotherham Parent Partnership Service (the 'Service') was established in April 1995. It has been funded at different times through GEST and Standards Fund but is now funded from the base budget in recognition of the statutory responsibility on LEAs to provide parent services:

*All LEAs must make arrangements for parent partnership services. It is essential that parents are aware of the parent partnership service so that they know where they can obtain the information and advice they need. LEAs must therefore inform parents, schools and others about the arrangements for the service and how they can access it.  
(SEN Code of Practice 2001)*

**The mission statement of the Rotherham Parent Partnership Service:**

Our aim is to provide flexible services for parents and carers whose children have, or may have, learning difficulties, disabilities and special educational needs in order to empower them to play an active and informed role in their child's education.

Our target is to help parents, carers, professionals and schools work together to raise the achievement of children with learning difficulties, disabilities and special educational needs.

**Staffing:**

Pip Wise -Service Manager (.6)

Ros Needham - (.9)

Kerry Taylor - Referral Officer (.9)

Kath Horsfield- Clerical Officer (.6)

Students from Newman School had a successful work experience placement with the Service from 26.3.07.

The LEA is committed to providing a service at 'arms length' to ensure impartiality of the Service. The Service budget is managed by the PPS Manager, separate letter heads and logo are used. The Service is line managed by Clair Bailey, Policy, Planning and Partnerships Manager and is part of the Performance, Information and Planning Service, led by Julie

Westwood. An action plan has been developed which reflects local need and changing national policy and guidance. It was reviewed termly at the Service Development Days held on 17.1.07 and 17.7.07. Service staff have regular Team Meetings approximately every 2 weeks. The Service is based in Norfolk House.

The service is expected to meet minimum standards as detailed in the Code of Practice for the identification and assessment of SEN. The Service's work is based around the five core activities of Working with Parents; Information and Publicity; Training, Advice and Support; Networking and Collaboration; Informing Local Policy and Practice. The Service Action Plan and administration within the Service reflect these priorities.

A Joint Area Review of Services for Children and Young People was carried out in June 06. The Parent Partnership Service contributed to the Review (20.6.07), the subsequent review advised "Advice from the parent partnership service is satisfactory, although a small number of parents say that they are unclear about how to access information and guidance to help identify their child's learning needs". The service has been engaged in a number of activities to improve publicity, these have been extended and raised as a higher priority on the Service Development Plan.

The Service Handbook, detailing the Service policy and procedures, has been updated in May 06.

## Working with Parents

	2006/7 financial period	2005/6 financial period
Number of new referrals	<b>208</b> Of these: 18 Nursery/preschool 123 Primary 64 Secondary 3 No data available	<b>208</b> Of these: 39 Nursery/preschool 97 Primary 67 Secondary 1 post 16 4 No data available
Number of contacts	<b>114</b> ( <b>28</b> contacts which have involved provision of information from resource boxes)	<b>141</b> ( <b>93</b> contacts which have involved provision of information from resource boxes)
How did parents hear about the Service	29 - School Staff 7 -Publicity Projects 15 - Health Authority Staff 6 - Voluntary Organisations 70 - Education Services 23 - Other Parents 2 - Social Care Staff 53 - Previous involvement 23 - Word of mouth 50 - no data available	41 - School Staff 0 -Publicity Projects 11 - Health Authority Staff 5 - Voluntary Organisations 70 - Education Services 20 - Other Parents 16 - Social Services Staff 51 - Previous involvement 41 - no data available
Nature of referral	17 -Information 179-Advice 41-Support in representing views 10 -help in resolving disagreements 8 - no data available	16-Information 162-Advice 68-Support in representing views 7-help in resolving disagreements 2 - no data available
Number of referrals SA	23	18
SA+	54	45
Statement	57	101
Area of need	60-Cognitive and Learning 48-Behaviour, emotional, social development	52-Cognitive and Learning 62-Behaviour, emotional, social development

	90-Communication and Interaction 11-Sensory /physical 46 - no data available	76-Communication and Interaction 26-Sensory /physical 39 - no data available
Gender	64-Female 191 -Male	64-Female 191 -Male
Level of commitment  Recording of level of commitment has changed during this period and is now recorded retrospectively	47 -level 1 (Telephone contact and posted information)  29- level 2 (1-1 meeting Drafting representations Gathering information)  19- level 3 (Liaison with others - via phone/meetings Preparation and support at school, meeting (including formal multi agency meetings), mediation)  1- level 4 (Preparation and support at SENDIST)  159 - Cases still open	145 -level 1 (Telephone contact and posted information)  53- level 2 (1-1 meeting Drafting representations Gathering information)  93- level 3 (Liaison with others - via phone/meetings Preparation and support at school, meeting (including formal multi agency meetings), mediation)  11- level 4 (Preparation and support at SENDIST)  43 - Cases still open

### **Ethnic Minority Monitoring**

75% of referrals to the service concern children who are described by their parent/carer as White British. 10 referrals (5%) have involved children from ethnic minorities including Pakistani (6), Any other Asian Background (2), Black British (1), White European (1) Any Other White Background (1). Information was not available for 46 referrals (18%).

7.7 % of Rotherham's population are from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority of these describe themselves as Asian/ Asian British - Pakistani. Referrals to the service indicates parents from BME communities within Rotherham are accessing Parent Partnership Services at a lower than statistically appropriately level.

The Service has placed emphasis on ensuring translated copies of Service Flyers and information is accessible to parents. Schools with an EAL population over 50% have been provided with a supply of copies of all

translated documents produced or held by the Service. Schools with an EAL population over 5% have been provided with copies of all translated documents produced or held by the Service and schools with an EAL population below 5% have been advised in writing of the range of information available. Copies of documents have been forwarded to community support groups and Local Authority services.

### **Equalities and Diversity**

The Service Equality and Diversity Action Plan was reviewed in June 06.

### **Looked After Children**

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.

### **Referrals to Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal**

17 referrals to SENDIST have been registered against Rotherham LEA, the Service has had involvement in the preceding 6 months with 12 of these (70.5%). Of the cases with PPS involvement 92% were resolved prior to an appeal hearing. While there is a clear requirement for Parent partnership Service staff to advise parents of their rights in terms of appealing to SENDIST emphasis is placed on disagreement resolution between parents/ school and or LEA.

### **Independent Parental Supporters:**

We have two Independent Parental Supporters working with the Service, Sue Watts and John Gilling.

Sue Watts comes into Norfolk House for 2 hours each week, she takes 1-1 casework and provides an independent telephone service to parents during these 2 hours. John Gilling comes into Norfolk House for 2 hours each week, she takes 1-1 casework. They have made a significant contribution to the service taking 25 cases for the Service (12% of total case load) and being available to support any parents wanting additional reassurance of the 'arms length' from the Local Authority.

### **Case work development**

Case work development meetings have taken place on 8.6.06 and 1.3.07. These opportunities for Service staff to review and share good practice in case work during this period have been replaced by a more informal arrangement. The close proximity of service staff have enabled case work discussion to take place on a frequent and fluid way with discussion taking place on an informal once or twice weekly.

Service staff have tried to increase the number of parents accessing the Service by placing emphasis on the provision of information via the website and resource boxes. The number of 'Contacts' has remained high during this period, there has been no decrease in the number of 'referrals'.

## **Information and Publicity**

Following requests from parents the service has produced and distributed information for parents at 'point of diagnosis' based on our 'Rotherham Area of Need Guides'.

A credit card size Service flyer has been produced and widely distributed to schools and units, SEN Governors, early years settings, support groups, services within Children and Young People's Services, Health Services, doctors surgeries and council buildings such as swimming pools and libraries

Training for newly qualified teachers alerted Service staff to the need of basic information on SEN among class teachers. A postcard 'Information for Class Teachers' has been produced as part of the 'Area of Need' series. These have been distributed to all schools and units with copies of the SEN Parents Guide and information providing an overview of sources of help and information and a basic overview of practice.

### **Translated Material**

Translations of Service information sheets in Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, French and an audio version in Mirpuri have been widely distributed and are available to download from the website.

### **Website**

Information available through the web site was updated and reviewed on 31.1.07. And extended to include the parents version of the 'Inclusion Works' series.

After a very slow start parents have started to use the Parent's Forum to post messages and comments. National Benchmarking show Rotherham is one of only 8 Parent Partnership websites nationally with this facility, it also shows no other service in the Yorkshire and Humberside region had more things available through their website.

Data gathering on use of the website has been introduced and shows the website was averaging ..... visits per day/ per month..... It has also raised awareness of periods when the website has been unavailable.

The Service continues to actively publicise the website as a means of empowering parents through the proactive provision of information. A presentation loop demonstrating its use and the range of information available on it was used at the Rotherham Show, copies have also been provided to the Educational Psychology Service. The Website is seen as a 'good source of information' which would be 'useful' to parents/carers and has been made available through information kiosks sited in the Children's Centres.

### **Resource Boxes**

Service staff have continued to publicise the Resource Boxes when providing information about the service to parents and professionals. Additional resource boxes have been produced covering Adoption & Fostering, BME, Legislation & Legal Advice, Medical and Community Groups.

### **Newsletters**

2 newsletters for parents were produced during this period in Spring 06 and Autumn 06.

Copies are circulated to parents, schools and professionals within Health and Children and Young People's Services. The booklet format seems to be highly regarded and the print run further increased to 2,350 copies following requests from Kelford and kilnhurst schools for copies to be made available to all parents. The service has received several compliments from professionals and parents regarding the Service newsletter and website.

### **Publicity**

Parent Partnership Service has been publicised in the S Yorkshire edition of Primary Times with an article on Parent Partnership Services.

### **Displays and Presence at Conferences:**

This has included:

Feb 06	SENCO Meeting - Demonstration of PPS Website, distributed 'Progress' Magazine
April 06	Brampton Corton Wood -Parent's Drop in - display materials
18/19.4.06	Display and Demonstration of Website at Central Library
2.5.06	Children and Young People's Single Plan and Well Being Strategy Launch Event -Display and Demonstration of Website

3.5.06	Town Hall Open Day -Information, Support and Services within Rotherham for Families of Children with SEN and Disabilities. Town Hall, Rotherham.
29.9.06	RMBC Reengagement Day for 14-19 age group, information on PPS provided, Unity Centre
27.9.06	Display of information for Foster Carers Group
9/10.9.06	RMBC Rotherham Show -3 PPS staff attended for part of both days, display and information available throughout both days
21/28.2.07	SENCO meeting - Information available from the Service and Resource Boxes

## Training, Advice and Support

### Parents Information Sharing Workshops:

A workshop on School Action, School Action Plus planned in the last period had cancelled due to the very small take up. Feedback from parents suggested many parents were not familiar with the terms and the course will be advertised again under the title of Help in school for children with special educational needs. Despite alterations to publicity the Parent Information Sharing Workshop planned for 17.11.06 was cancelled due to poor take up.

### Praise and Play Workshops:

This 1 day workshop has been developed by Kerry Taylor (PPS) and Wendy Eyre (STEPS) and looks at using play, praise and rewards with Primary age children. It is suitable for any parent interested in relationship building between them and their child and is particularly targeted at KS1 age children.

In an attempt to make events more accessible to parents in different areas of Rotherham it was offered to the Rockingham cluster. The workshop on 7.7.06 was not well attended and replaced an earlier workshop which was cancelled because of poor take-up.

### Training Delivered

17.5.06	Introduction to Parent Partnership Service VIPs Parent Support Group. Arnold Centre, Rotherham
6&8.6.06	SENCO Training
7.7.06	Praise and Play Workshop, Rockingham Cluster
From 4.10.06	8 session Families United Programme delivered to group of 6-8 parents, Wath
20&31.10.06	SENCO training
27.11.06	Early Years SENCOs Training - Introduction to Parent Partnership Service, Rockingham PDC
15.12.06	Introduction to Parent Partnership Service delivered to ASAP (Chatham ASD Parent Support Group)
2.2.07	Behaviour Improvement Service - Signposting Services

5.2.07	Introduction to Parent Partnership Service delivered to Chatham ADHD Support Group
21.2.07& 28.2.07	SENCO Training Day, Rockingham PDC
26.2.07	Adoption Support Group -Introduction to Rotherham PPS
7.3.07	Introduction to Parent Partnership Service delivered to Early Years SENCOs Rockingham PDC

There has been very positive feedback from training provided including "Content: Very informative, I feel better equipped to cope with the issues discussed" (Feedback from 7.7.06 Praise and Play workshop.

### **Training Accessed by Service Staff**

Staff have accessed training organised by local and national groups including RMBC, Rotherham Primary Care Trust and MIND.

Training Accessed by PPS Staff has included:

12.4.06	Children and Young Peoples Mental Health - Everybody's Business. STEPS, Rotherham
8.5.06	Negotiation - D.Ridgeway, UNISON. Rotherham
5.10.06	Disability Equality Training, RMBC
8.2.07	Common Assessment Framework, Rotherham
23.2.07	Bereavement -Rotherham MIND, Rotherham

## Networking and Collaboration

### **Consultation with Parents**

The Service Monitoring Group met on 14.6.06 and 10.11.06. During these meetings the group looked at Publicity, Equality and Diversity Action Plan, Service Development Plan and feedback on the Service Evaluation. Suggestions from the group have been included in the Development Plan. Suggestions which have been actioned include the production and distribution of information for parents at 'point of diagnosis' based on our 'Rotherham Area of Need Guides'.

The Service helped to identify parents to meet with inspectors as part of the Joint Area Review. These parents and representatives from parent support groups have been invited to be part of a Parent's Forum working at a strategic level providing consultation on developments within Inclusion, Voice and Influence and to improve communication between IVI and parents/ carers.

Service staff have been involved in a number of discussions with Ruth Bastin and Emma Heyes re opportunities to engage in consultation activities with parents.

### **Strategic Planning and Working Parties**

Local:

Kerry Taylor has worked with colleagues from Educational Psychology Service in producing guidance and good practice in challenging schools. Information regarding children on part time timetables is shared with the Educational Welfare Service and Learning Support Service to alert services to unofficial exclusions and ensure emphasis on returning to full time education is maintained. Pip Wise has worked with Extended Schools staff on 'Involving Parents with Learning Difficulties' (27.10.06)

Service staff have attended each session of SENCO/ Inclusion Manager meetings in June 06, October 06 and Feb 07.

Pip Wise attends Engine Room Meetings and PIP Extended Service Managers Meetings. There is involvement with Inclusion, Voice and Influence groups including ASSENT Management Team, Schools CPD - SENCO training and conference planning, ICT Communicationa Group,

Service staff have contributed to Implementing the Common Assessment Process, SEN & Disabilities task groups and the National Service Framework for Children Standard 8 task group, Young Carers Stakeholder Group and Economic Wellbeing Group. The service is involved in Schools of Concern/ Good Practice, ICT Communication Group also 'Retention and Destruction of Files' and 'Website Development' sub groups.

#### Regional:

The service is actively involved with the SEN Regional Partnership Pip Wise is PPS representative to the Yorkshire and Humberside SEN Mediation Service and has contributed to termly meetings. Service staff have attended 3 Regional meetings (25.4.06, 18.1.07 and 18.10.07) and has been involved with SEN Regional Partnership Events on 16.11.06 (The Year Ahead) and 22.11.06 (Parenting)

#### National:

The Service has again taken part in the national benchmarking activity coordinated by the NPPN (86% of services nationally contributed). Benchmarking data has enabled comparison with national and regional services, also statistical neighbours. Reports and analysis of national, regional and statistical neighbours is available.

#### **Multi Agency Working**

The service has been keen to make use of opportunities for multi agency working through case work practice and attending MAST meetings for Thrybrough and Clifton Areas.

Kerry Taylor has facilitated the Families United Parenting Programme with colleagues from KISS (from 4.10.06).

The Service is actively involved in the production of a resource for schools to support the development of Working in Partnership with Parents in Rotherham Schools.

Information is shared regularly with Linda Adcock- Information Officer (Children's Disability) regarding contacts to support groups and voluntary organisations, through sharing material for newsletters and Parent Information Sharing Workshops.

## **Networking**

Sharing of information and opportunities for collaborative working have taken place with Gill Black (6.10.06) and Elenor Fisher (17.11.06) Service staff have attended the Maple House Open Day, Pip Wise regularly attends the Investment in Excellence Facilitators Support Group.

## **Contact with Voluntary Organisations**

3 mail shots have been provided to groups with current copies of PPS newsletters, new information sheets/ flyers produced by the Service,

## **Databases Contributed to**

Children's Information Service Database

Directory of Services for Children and Young People in Rotherham Database

Rotherham Health Advice Centre Database 5.6.06

Contact a Family Directory of Services Providing Support to Families

Special Education Directory

Children's Education Advisory Service

MENCAP Database

## Informing Local Policy and Practice

### Parent Evaluation:

23 Evaluation forms have been received so far (August 07) covering this period. The overwhelming majority of responses from parents are extremely positive.

*"It's a great Service"*

*"They advised me the best way to approach school"*

*"I felt more confident in giving my views to school and the LA"*

*"Information provided was very helpful and insightful"*

*"The advice given to me helped me to fill out the forms correctly and contact the necessary people to help me"*

*"The Service is very helpful and informative and I was very happy with the service I got from you"*

Parents frequently said they value being able to meet with PPS staff face to face but also indicated the written and telephone contact had been valuable.

*"I just feel sometimes I wish I could see someone face to face"*

*"Face is the best way and more helpful"*

*"I found emails great with back up of the telephone calls to clarify things I didn't understand"*

A number of parents advised they had limited knowledge of the Service

*"Had not heard of Parent Partnership until school got involved"*

*"I'd never heard of it until recently"*

*"I didn't know about the Service until my sister told me"*

*"Heard of it but didn't know its function"*

Publicity has been established as a priority of Service development however comments such as:

*"More staff available for consultations. Advertise your Services more in schools using posters or a short newsletter/pamphlet etc"*

*"I think school should inform parents of your services"*

indicate there are difficulties in getting publicity to parents via schools. Actions to provide parents directly with information have been incorporated into the Service Development Plan.

Information in 2 evaluation forms were critical of the Service.

*"Sided with school Decision"*

*"The outcome was not what I wanted"*

In both cases the parents had requested follow up and have been contacted by the Service Manager

There were 5 suggestions about how we could develop and improve the service. 4 of these involved greater publicity, 1 involved increasing staff numbers to enable more face to face work.

In 87% of cases the question 'Did we help you to feel more confident/knowledgeable in dealing with issues about your child's education after your contact with the Service?' was answered with 'yes' or 'yes very.'

### **Prize Draw**

The Prize draw has not been used in the 2006 and 2007 calendar years. The number of returns did not increase during the time this was in place.

### **Complaints**

There were no complaints about the Service during this period.