

Enquire within

THE NEWSLETTER BULLETIN OF ENQUIRE, THE NATIONAL ADVICE SERVICE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN SCOTLAND

Renewed focus on joined up working

The practice of joint working and co-ordination among different agencies in the field of additional support needs (special educational needs) is far from a new concept. Local authorities continue to work on improving systems and planning structures to enhance cohesion and effectiveness and New Community Schools provide a working example. The Draft *Education (Additional Support for Learning) Bill 2003*, emphasises the concept of joint working by proposing a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) to replace the Record of Needs for a number of children and young people who require services from agencies outwith the education department. The CSP requires co-ordination across a range of services and a comprehensive approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs. This issue of Enquire Within looks at joint working in practice, both here and abroad along with a person centred planning perspective.

ENQUIRE'S EXTENDED HELPLINE HOURS

Monday	9am-5pm
Tuesday	9am-5pm 7pm-9pm
Wednesday	8am-5pm
Thursday	9am-5pm 7pm-9pm
Friday	9am-5pm

STARTING MONDAY
11 AUGUST 2003
0845 123 2303

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The main proposals of the new Bill

The Draft *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill 2003*, is the first major revision of special educational needs (SEN) legislation since the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980*. The new Bill replaces the terminology "special educational needs" with the broader term "additional support needs" as well as introducing quite significant changes in assessment and recording practices.

Some key proposals include:

- the Record of Needs will be phased out and Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs) will be opened for children who require "frequent access to a diversity of services outwith services from the school and education authority". The CSP will be available to children or young people who have additional support needs arising from complex or multiple factors which are termed to be ongoing;
- the compulsory medical, educational and psychological assessments will be removed, with an emphasis on carrying out assessment only when necessary. Education authorities will be required to consult other agencies where appropriate and consider the views of the parent and child;
- education authorities will be required to provide a 'named contact person' to act on behalf of the authority to co-ordinate services, give information and advice and liaise with families. In addition to this, parents will be able to have a 'supporter' to act in an advocacy role;
- education authorities will be required to offer independent mediation services as a way of resolving disputes;
- the Future Needs Assessment will be replaced by a duty on education authorities to notify 'relevant agencies' at least six months before transition;
- the appeal route for all parents, children and young people who have a CSP will be via an independent tribunal. For others, appeals on exclusions and placing requests will remain with education appeal committees;
- the right to make a placing request to independent special schools will be extended to all parents of children with additional support needs and to young people with additional support needs.

Phone Enquire on 0131 22 22 400

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During the recent consultation on the draft Bill, these proposals sparked considerable debate and in some cases, controversy. The responses to the Bill will be available in the Scottish Executive library for public access and a report on the consultation can be viewed at www.scotland.gov.uk. The Bill itself is expected to be laid before the Scottish Parliament in the autumn. Peter Peacock (Education Minister) recently announced that there could be some changes to the Bill following the feedback received.

Co-ordination, contribution and cows

Steve Coulson, from Future Plans, the person centred planning project at Edinburgh Development Group, writes on a person centred approach to co-ordinating services.

Many recent policy initiatives aim to promote joint working and create seamless, well co-ordinated services. Person centred planning is not primarily concerned with how services are co-ordinated but focuses on enabling individuals to be clearer about the kind of life they would like to live and then helps them to organise themselves and their supporters to try and achieve this. In the process of doing this, planning meetings have brought together a wide range of professional staff and families and joint working and co-ordination have developed around the agenda set by the young person. At all times, young people have been given control of where and when meetings happen and who will be involved. We believe that the outcome of this kind of process will make it more likely that the support offered by services will be effective, helpful and co-ordinated in a way which respects the person's aspirations and potential contribution.

Our experience has been that young people respond well to being asked their opinion and given respect, patience and time to think

about their future. One young person decided, during the course of a person centred planning process, to attend his local authority review for the first time ever. His presence transformed the meeting. This approach implies much more than just being accompanied by a supporter, as proposed for the Co-ordinated Support Plan. Person centred planning is an opportunity to begin a genuine partnership with young people.

We are concerned by the continued focus on needs and deficiencies. We all need support and some of us need more than others – but as one young person recently put it, "Our greatest need is to be needed". There is a danger that the Co-ordinated Support Plan may become simply a new Record of Needs, where young people and their families have to list their deficiencies in order to "qualify" for any support at all. The young people we have met want to find paid work, expand their educational horizons, help other people and care about the environment and the world we all live in. Person centred planning rightly points out



that what is most important about a person is their passions, interests and contribution - crucially, what people love and like about them.

All attempts to remedy the many inconsistencies and incoherencies of services will be welcomed by families and workers but until young people are given the time and support they need to have their voices truly heard, such reforms will have a limited success. Person centred planning is not a panacea but may offer one way of letting young people start to take centre stage in their own lives and may enable thoughtful professionals to begin to shape services in ways that let people flourish. Without this shift in power, new policies will remain vulnerable to Herb Lovett's wry observation that "You can put a grass skirt on a cow but it still won't do the hula!"

Child locality teams

Monica McTurk of Dumfries and Galloway's child locality teams describes this exciting new initiative designed to relieve families of children with profound or complex disabilities from the stress of dealing with a variety of agencies.

Four locality teams have been formed within Dumfries and Galloway and are based on a strong foundation of multi-disciplinary and inter-agency working. Teams meet monthly and the agenda is clinically focused. There are regular opportunities for parents to participate in formulating specific care plans for the children. Membership of the teams comprises a community paediatrician, educational representative, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, community children's nurse, social worker, health visitor and school nurse. The teams are already taking cases and links have been made to

National Care Co-ordination networks to enhance best possible practice. The management of all four teams is co-ordinated by a facilitative chair-person.

An open referral system via the chair of the locality teams operates and parental consent is sought prior to referral. A key feature of the care plan for each child is to encourage the parents to nominate a co-ordinator/key worker whom they can approach for advice about any problem or concern relating to their child. This person is invariably a professional already involved with the family who maintains regular contact with them and has responsibility for collaborating with professionals from a range of services as well as co-ordinating family support.

The starting point for this new strategy is the quality of each individual family's experience of caring for a child with complex difficulties in a local community and the inter-agency co-ordination of support required in order to enhance the family's quality of life.

How it works...

- the team members involved carry out an assessment, and compile a multi-disciplinary report. The report contains a summary of the main issues and recommended actions by particular people. Members of the team and the family can add notes to the report during meetings. The Chair checks the report before everyone involved is sent a copy;
- the professionals and the family also meet to formulate a care plan, based on the family's priorities and needs. Discussion between professionals takes place before this meeting in order to prepare. Care plans address the issues of common goals, consistency of involved parties and resources;
- it is entirely up to the family concerned who their co-ordinator will be. Some families choose not to have a co-ordinator. If the family is unsure about who would be an appropriate co-ordinator, they are given options and can negotiate to suit their particular situation.

Co-ordinating support in New Zealand

Doug Watkinson, Primary School Head Teacher in Christchurch outlines New Zealand's procedures for co-ordinating support and acknowledges the difficulties of joint working, showing that concerns here are shared abroad.

- The Children's, Young Person's and their Families Service (CYPFS) is a government department which can call family group conferences for children who have multiple agencies working with them. This would involve CYPFS' own social workers, school representatives, possibly the police, specialist education services representatives (for example psychologists, therapists) and a co-ordinator (normally from the organisation that has called the conference). All parties share their knowledge and work towards common goal setting and co-ordinated programmes and approaches;
- Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) are attached to groups of schools in certain areas. They are empowered to call different agencies together;
- Field Workers in Schools service a range of schools and can co-ordinate agencies, particularly if there are family based difficulties or issues.

Doug Watkinson identifies the pitfalls for these services as:

- difficulties establishing common goals;
- large caseloads eg the CYPFS social workers have 60 cases at a time;
- limited resources for the people charged with co-ordinating roles.

re:solutions 2003 – Enquire’s mediation conference

Enquire held its second national mediation conference on 23 June in Stirling. The event gave delegates a valuable opportunity to consider the role of child focused mediation within the additional support needs framework. Over 100 delegates, from a diverse range of backgrounds, were enlightened by Brendan McAllister, Director of Mediation in Northern Ireland about some of the current issues in mediation. Robert Brown, Convenor of the Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament, encouraged discussion surrounding current and proposed legislation and the implications for mediation, and spoke of the need to enshrine parent and child involvement in decision making.

NOTICEBOARD

Enquire training

We have developed a set of four workshops which aim to promote and develop partnership working between parents and professionals. If you or your colleagues are interested in developing your skills in this area, you can attend one of the planned training events, purchase the training pack which will be published this summer, or commission tailored training for your organisation. Details of all these options will be available shortly in the next *Children in Scotland Training and conference guide*. Alternatively, you can call Enquire’s Training and Development Officer, Harriet Grant on 0131 222 2422, or email hgrant@childreninscotland.org.uk.

Mediation: people talk

The first Scottish Mediation Network conference is shaping up to be an exciting event. Chief Judge Robert M Bell, the head of the judiciary in Maryland and Rachel Wohl, the charismatic Executive Director of their Mediation And Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) have agreed to come and speak. There will be 150 places at the conference so that experienced mediation practitioners will have space to discuss the important issues for mediation with opinion formers and policy makers. A variety of pre and post conference events have been arranged.

Diary date: 12 September 2003, Stirling.

Contact Julia Berry at Scottish Mediation Network to reserve your place at julia@scottishmediation.org.uk, 0131 556 1221.

New services, new workers: early years in Europe

29 August 2003, Edinburgh

This special one-day Children in Europe conference offers an opportunity to examine new developments in early years services, and changes in the workforce and workforce relationships. Speakers are from Denmark, Spain, Belgium and the UK.

Contact Elizabeth Sykes on 0131 222 2411, esykes@childreninscotland.org.uk.

Support group for parents with children at special needs schools

A support group for parents with children at special needs schools in Edinburgh now meets monthly at VOCAL. A programme of speakers has been arranged covering a range of topics such as sleep disturbances, education law and challenging behaviour. There is also an opportunity to have a chat and exchange information with other parents.

For more information contact Jess Rogaly on 0131 622 7625 or Jane Greenacre on 0131 622 6666.

Ask the right questions; get the most for your child's schooling

The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) has produced a checklist for parents called *Top marks for good practice: getting the most for your child's schooling*. It highlights some of the good practice that takes place in schools and has been written to help you understand what you can expect from a good school. There are also some ideas for the right kind of questions to ask when visiting schools for your child.

For your free copy contact: Jan Murdoch on 0141 418 5420 or email administrator@sclcd.co.uk.



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