

Forum on Issues for Disabled Children and Young People

June 2009

Presentations

[Employment Project at Mencap](#)

Simon Stranks from the Campaign Team at Mencap gave a presentation about the Employment Project that is aiming to increase awareness of the good qualities of people with learning disabilities as an employee - they tend to be loyal workers and take less time off sick. The main aim is to increase the number of people with learning disabilities who are employed by statutory bodies and the aim is to get 220 extra people into employment by the end of the Campaign which will last two years.

Pressure is being put on the Welsh Assembly to increase the number of people it employs with learning disabilities and they are going to draw up a list of reasonable adjustment for employing people with learning disabilities. Other firms could then use this. The need for paid jobs and not just voluntary jobs for people with disabilities was highlighted. It was pointed out that all Local Authorities have disability quotas but fill this with people who have diabetes etc.

It was pointed out that both RNIB and RNID have employment advisors and there are Disability Employment Advisors based in Job Centres.

Disabled Children Matter Wales

Zoë Richards from Learning Disability Wales reported that representatives from the Disabled Children Matter Wales Campaign had met with Jane Hutt Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills as part of the bi monthly meeting on 1st June. An [update on various Welsh Assembly Government initiatives](#) was given and this has now been shared.

Zoe and participants at the meeting added the following comments on various issues.

- Key working . Some discussion is taken place about having a Legislative Competence Order (LCO) to give every young disabled person a right to a key worker.
- Inclusive play – Members queried how the play money is being spent in each other's local authorities and is the money going to be made available to pump prime extra places in referral schemes.
- Changing Places – the mobile changing place unit has been used in Swansea Winter Wonderland. Retro fits will be installed in Oakwood Park, St Fagans, Museum in Cardiff and the Royal Welsh Show.

The Disabled Children Matter Wales Campaign has secured some positive asks in the first two years of the Campaign. We are now going to concentrate

on securing funding for disabled children from the next Comprehensive Spending Review in 2011 to 2014. The Campaign has been approached by the Bevan Foundation to see whether we would find it useful for them to undertake an independent research project on services for disabled children.

Discussion on the Proposed Education (Wales) Measure

A Measure is a new type of legislation introduced by the Government of Wales Act 2006 and it can make provisions in Wales in a similar way to an Act of Parliament. The purpose of this particular Measure is to extend children's entitlement by providing them with rights to make special educational appeals and claims of disability discrimination to the Special Education Needs Tribunal for Wales. It will amend the law that gives parents the right to make appeals and claims to the Tribunal.

A consultation has been opened on the above Measure. Cath Lewis distributed a copy of the response that she has completed on behalf of Children in Wales. The response is available to download from the Members section of this website.

[Communicating with Disabled Children](#)

Gabrielle Eisele works for Tros Gynnal as an advocate for disabled children and she is also an independent trainer for Triangle, an independent organisation that works directly with children and families and also does a lot of training on how to communicate with disabled children. She pointed out that all disabled children can communicate, however severe their disability, but accepted that this view is not shared by everyone. Gabrielle added that if a person believes a disabled child cannot communicate, it is very difficult to change that view. During her talk Gabrielle highlighted several resources and ideas that can be used to communicate with disabled children and ascertain their wishes and feelings. She pointed out that whatever their disability everyone can indicate yes or no. Some people say that the main obstacle in communicating with disabled children is time. This excuse can be seen as discriminating against disabled children.

Networking

Attendees completed an [Information Exchange Sheet](#) that asked them to share "What they were doing at the moment?" and "What do you need?" with contact details. This will help members continue to network and support each other after the meeting.