
SCHOOLS ENGAGEMENT

General Schools
Engagement and Schools
Offer

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SCHOOLS ENGAGEMENT AND FUNDED OFFER WORK

Introduction

During 2019 to 2020 Financial Year Family Voice Peterborough conducted a range of activities to facilitate engagement with settings and also ensure delivery against a small grant for work entitled 'Schools Offer'. The work entailed coffee mornings, SEN information report work, training, sign posting, involvement in the SENCo Network and provision of information and advice to settings and parent carers.

During the period of work covered in this report FVP have engaged with 11 different settings. This engagement has taken place across two main formats:

- Firstly, as a part of our "Schools Offer" Pilot.
- Secondly through the core schools work, this is carried out as a part of the forums regular participation activity. The main aims of which are increasing parental awareness of FVP, as well as enabling parents to participate on local issues pertaining to SEND.

Schools Offer

The schools offer was a funded pilot devised to explore ways of developing sustainability for the forum, by way of utilising forum expertise across a range of areas as a costed model with income generation built in. Schools were targeted to be part of the pilot to access the services on offer at a zero cost in return for helping to develop the services to be income generation ready and providing testimonials of the impact of the services on setting level parent carer and professional relationships and participation.

The premise behind the original proposal was built on anecdotal evidence that kept on re-occurring through forum work with parent-carers. The forum has seen a growing number of parent-carers who are dissatisfied with their relationships with the school their child or young person is attending. Schools in Peterborough are experiencing considerable financial difficulties in being able to meet their statutory duty to children with SEND due to a decrease in revenue support from central government. The impact of this is that trust and relationships are breaking down between parent-carers and educational settings to the point that the systems are being viewed as more adversarial and parents are increasingly feeling the need to fight to gain resources for their children from an ever shrinking pot. The position of the forum has been one of concern about the breakdown of these relationships, at the same time as also facing an internal need to achieve sustainability.

The pilot was broken down into three elements training, SEN information report guidance and coffee mornings/ micro-forums. The settings were able to choose which elements that wanted to gain access to. The schools offer programme can be found on the FVP website www.familyvoice.org

The pilot has proved difficult to get off the ground – with numerous settings agreeing to take part, however due to time and operational difficulties, failing to follow through. Over the past

year FVP has successfully embarked upon delivery with three other settings (Nene Park Academy, Arthur Mellows Village College and Hampton Gardens), the sessions completed with each are detailed below. Sessions had been planned in to complete training, additional coffee/information sessions and SEN Information Report co-production work with the three settings, however due to the recent unfolding serious situation relating to the COVID-19 Pandemic and national guidance relating to social distancing, and school closures these have been unable to go ahead and have been postponed. FVP has also developed a relationship and agreement with Phoenix School whereby we were due to hold our first family engagement and participation session at the setting during March, with a view to agreeing dates for training and SEN Information Report work moving forwards, however this has also gone on hold due to the global pandemic.

Table of sessions held at settings in schools offer

Setting Name	Session Type	Date Held	Total Number of Parent Carers
Nene Park Academy	Coffee/Information Session	21 st June 2019	4
Nene Park Academy	Coffee/Information Session	15 th October 2019	3
Nene Park Academy	Coffee/Information Session	6 th December 2019	2
Hampton Gardens	SEN Information Report Co-production	26 th February 2020	9
Arthur Mellows Village College	Coffee/Information Session	5 th April 2019	5
Arthur Mellows Village College	Coffee/Information Session	21 st May 2019	3
Arthur Mellows Village College	Coffee/Information Session	31 st January 2020	6
Arthur Mellows Village College	Coffee/Information Session	3 rd March 2020	3
Arthur Mellows Village College	Challenging Behaviour Workshop	31 st March 2020	12
Totals			47

A total of 44 parent carers were engaged, over 9 sessions. During each session, attendees were asked to complete a register, and feedback forms so that FVP could manage attendance, and gather opinions on how to tailor future sessions to meet the needs of Peterborough parents.

SEN Information Report Work

Part of the offer Hampton Gardens showed interest in was the SEN Information Report guidance. Two sessions took place in one day with 9 parent carers in attendance. The parents were selected by the settings and the sessions were structured by FVP. Ahead of the session a form was developed that was designed that had two functions:

1. To enable the parents to provide direct feedback on the settings current SEN information report.
2. Provide input in to the development of the settings SEN Information report.

A series of questions were developed to match the must and should elements of what a SEN information report is meant to incorporate as defined in the SEN Code of Practice (2015)

The responses to the form were collated using google forms and the data was then shared with the setting SENCo for use in further developing the SEN information report. The tools developed in this element of the schools offer work are available to the forum for use with other settings and to ease any future work.

Feedback collated:

100% of Parent Carers in attendance would recommend the coffee/information sessions to other parents

	Information Provided	Session Structure	Session Content
Average score across all coffee/information sessions	8.87/10	8.67/10	8.53/10

As displayed above, the average score given by parent carers relating to coffee/information sessions is above 8.5/10 across the board. This indicates a high level of parental satisfaction with the way the sessions are run, and the information shared within.

Reason for attending coffee/information session	Number of parent carers selecting option
Wanting more information	14
Concerns about child's service	4
To meet other parents	10
Speakers	2
Topic	3

The most common reason declared by parent carers for attending is that they wanted more information, closely followed by wanting to meet other parents. This feeds into FVPs Topic

of Importance relating to communication and information sharing, and highlights the isolation that parent carers can feel.

Attendees were also asked which parts of the sessions they found most useful. Responses included:

“Being able to express our concerns and being given pointers and direction”

“Information about Local Offer”

“Hearing from other parents, how similar my struggles are to theirs”

One parent training workshop has taken part thus far during the pilot – “Managing Behaviours That Challenge” at Arthur Mellows Village College. 12 parents were in attendance – the highest number throughout the pilot thus far, indicating that there is a real need amongst parents to access additional training.

Parents were asked to rank their knowledge on the topic out of ten at the beginning of the session, and again at the end. At the beginning of the session the average response was 5.2/10 which rose to 9.3/10 by the end.

Parents were asked to note which areas of the workshop they found most useful. Responses included:

“Calming strategies, escalation tips and consistency”

“Different ways of dealing with certain behaviours but also how the brain works and why they react the way that they do”

“Sharing experiences with other mums. The presenter is very good at presenting the course, lovely attitude. Very Knowledgeable and able to adapt presentation as the course went on”

Feedback was being gathered from the settings, but had to be put on hold due the developing situation relating to COVID-19 so is unavailable right now. Feedback on the training is explored more specifically in a separate report written by the training lead for FVP and can be found on the participation page of FVP’s website www.familyvoice.org

Core Schools Work

In addition to the Schools Offer pilot work, FVP have continued to maintain links with numerous local settings, in an effort to raise awareness of the organisation, share information, and enable parents to participate on local issues. Again, with the current national lock down, and previous social distancing guidance, planned sessions during March have been postponed. Sessions attended are displayed below:

Table of schools engagement sessions

School Name	Session Type	Date	Number of Parents
Nene Park Academy	Parents Evening	4 th April 2019	7
William Law	Coffee/Information Session	24 th April 2019	1
St John Fisher	SEN Information Report Co-production	3 rd May 2019	3
Nene Park Academy	Parents Evening	30 th April 2019	4
Dogsthorpe Infant School	Coffee/Information Session	13 th May 2019	2
Nenegate	Coffee/Information Session	25 th May 2019	4
St John Fisher	Parents Evening	4 th June 2019	4
Dogsthorpe Infants	Coffee/Information Session	27 th June 2019	4
Woodston	School Fete Information Stand	7 th July 2019	30
Middleton	School Readiness Event	9 th July 2019	4
Welbourne	Transition Event	9 th July 2019	3
Jack Hunt	Coffee/Information Session	11 th September 2019	12
Jack Hunt	Coffee/Information Session	13 th November 2019	9
Hampton Gardens	Parents Evening	5 th December 2019	9
Total:			96

A total of 97 Parent Carers have engaged, over 14 sessions at 10 different settings. The settings engaged with are a mixture of mainstream and specialist, including Hub provisions and are split across primary and secondary age ranges.

Discussion

The work with schools has been at times difficult and had capacity and resource implications which has been helped by the funded schools offer element. It has been felt by the team that more should have been done and that the level of work could be improved. It is worth noting that there have been factor outside of the forum though that have impacted on the delivery; from schools signing up to the offer and then not following through to the current pandemic that has greatly affected the delivery of many services especially with schools being closed until further notice.

Moving Forwards, it is the intention of FVP to continue to solidify relationships with settings, through our in school sessions, and via networking and presentations at the SENCO

Network. Schools are the front line in providing support to children and young people with additional needs and as such provide a conduit for parents to engage and ask for help whilst in an environment in which they feel secure.