

## Early Intervention Project - priorities for change

CB-NSG, 12 March 2014

This workshop was run twice at the Challenging Behaviour National Strategy Group (CB-NSG) meeting on 12 March 2014, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We have combined the outcomes of both in this record of the CB-NSG workshops.

### Workshop aims

The aims of the CB-NSG workshops were to:

- Update participants on year 1 of the project, including key messages from family carers and professionals
- Consider key areas of change for the system
- Influence the work taken forward in years 2 and 3 of the Early Intervention project

### Presentation

Jacqui Shurlock, Early Intervention Project Manager gave a **short presentation** on findings from the project so far – in particular messages from family carers and professionals

The group then discussed some of the ways we can make change happen in the context of:

- The reforms brought in by the Children and Families Bill (<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/children-and-families-bill>) and
- the recently published core principles document for commissioners *Ensuring Quality Services* (<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/12137/L14-105+Ensuring+quality+services/085fff56-ef5c-4883-b1a1-d6810caa925f>)

### Key messages from discussion included:

- The importance of support for the whole family – not just the child or young person. Both practical and emotional needs.
- The role of parenting programmes in helping parents to develop skills and strategies
- The vital role of Key Workers
- Systems for continuity when there is a high 'churn' of staff so that training is ongoing, not just a one off.
- The current problem that no one professional group takes the lead for PBS or behaviour support meaning it is not "owned" and driven forward. There is a need for teams whose job it is to assess behaviour and respond appropriately
- Behaviour support should not just be about reducing challenging behaviour but about positive skills building
- There is a real need for financial evidence – cost effectiveness and cost savings – to make the case for early intervention
- There is a real need for pooled budgets and budget sharing to address the issue of passing the "problem" to another agency.

### **Examples of good practice included:**

- Sussex Family Intensive Support Service
- Cyclopaths in Kent as an inclusive leisure activity
- Early Years Developmental Journal - a practical tool used in Hillingdon
- Southampton - Behaviour Resource service uses multi-systemic therapy.

The groups then considered the following questions. Responses are summarised below.

### **What would it look like if professionals were working effectively in partnership with families raising children with learning disabilities whose behaviours challenge?**

- Family carers would feel listened to and content that their views were taken on board
- The relationship between family carers and professionals would be characterised by honesty and transparency
- Professionals would have/take the time to talk to children and young people and their families
- Plans would be developed together and best practice tools and techniques would be used – including circle meetings and person-centred reviews.
- Professionals would have the resources and skills to work with families and would know when to signpost elsewhere and when to bring in specialist support.
- Joint meetings would be outcome and action-focussed.
- Joint meetings would be led by a well-informed Chair with good understanding and knowledge of the options available and how to innovate where the right options are not currently available.

### **How would success be measured?**

- Regular checks of whether service users and families are content
- Surveys of family carers at regular intervals with the results acted on
- Surveys of professionals and CPD provided to ensure skills and resources to do the job
- Monitoring and reporting structure to include hard data such as:
  - Reductions in exclusions
  - Tribunal cases down
  - Out of area placements down
  - Reductions in acute admissions
  - Reductions in staff sickness levels
- All the above to be considered as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

### **What support and services do LAs need to include within the “local offer” to ensure better co-ordinated local support for children with learning disabilities whose behaviours challenge?**

- Key workers with key criteria for the job description including:
  - Demonstration of the values set out in the CB-NSG charter
  - Skilled in engagement/partnership working with families
  - Ability to communicate/engage with children and young people
  - Commitment to multi-agency working
- Local specialist behaviour support. This should be:
  - Evidence-based
  - Family-centred

- Led by competent, skilled staff
- Involve work across all tiers – including awareness raising/prevention among universal services as well as direct case work.
- Clear information for family carers about local support and services. This should include
  - Clear pathways
  - Mainstream activities that are inclusive and welcoming where families can spend time together eg leisure facilities, playgroups
  - Opportunities to link up/network with other family carers in similar situations
  - Whole family support to improve wellbeing, including support for siblings.
  - Respite/short breaks with staff skilled in PBS and well known to the child/young person.
- Joint training for parents and professionals. To include:
  - Understanding challenging behaviour
  - Positive behaviour support
  - Impact of diagnosis
  - Sleep
  - Total Communication (PECs etc)
  - Diagnosis specific training as appropriate eg epilepsy, sensory issues
- Specific training/support for schools in PBS, with a focus on their responsibility for development of skills/behaviour support.
- Awareness training for those working in universal services, but who will often be the first to encounter children when difficulties arise – GP,s Health Visitors, taxi drivers, receptionists, police.
- Pathways for those who experience aggression/traumatic incidents (both family carers and staff)
  - Debriefing
  - Risk assessments
  - Intervention where necessary

### **How should success be measured?**

- Development of an overall framework to measure impact of services. This should include
  - Clear standards
  - Measurement tools
  - Quality of life and outcome measures (for example friends, school, achievements, enjoyment)
  - Start with the strengths and difficulties questionnaire and the developmental behaviour checklist?

### **What action should be taken nationally (either by the Early Intervention Project or others?)**

- A piece of work to understand more about children with learning disabilities whose behaviours challenge who are also **looked after children**. This group are particularly vulnerable and some may be in residential schools. There should be a particular scrutiny of this area and work done to consider an enhanced offer for this group of children.

- Development of the **outcome measures and accountability frameworks** as detailed above to measure the success of local services and engagement with parents.
- Further work with the **Early Support Programme** to support improved information and support when children are very young.

At the workshop close, individuals filled in “pledge” postcards, with suggestions of actions their profession could take, as well as a personal pledge of action. The project team collected these in to record the pledges and will post to individuals to remind them of their commitments to early intervention.