**Exeter, East and Mid Devon**

**Children’s Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)**

**Annual Report 2019**

The Children’s’ Hearing Services Working Group comprises a multi-agency group made up of parents and professionals working to improve provision for children and young people with hearing loss in this area. The group works to agreed terms of reference. This group, along with other groups in Devon and Cornwall, also feeds in to a more strategic Children’s Hearing Services Forum for the southwest peninsular. The group has met twice over the past year, with representatives from health, education, social care, voluntary sector and parents attending when possible.

At the end of 2017 objectives were discussed and agreed by the CHSWG meeting. During 2018 and 2019 we have met regularly as a group to make progress in these areas. In addition members of the team have worked to improve specific areas of practice.

**To increase the level of parental involvement in the CHSWG and value the parent voice in shaping the future of hearing services.**

* The CHSWG flier/ poster has been reviewed and is now available on noticeboards and websites and as a handout for parents. It is now within packs handed out by audiology at the time of first hearing aid fitting
* All professionals are aware they can offer to report the parents’ concerns back in their stead for consideration at the CHSWG

**To improve multiagency working**

* Key documents used by different services have been presented and discussed eg graduated response tool used by TOD’s; annual paediatric hearing services audit by audiology
* A presentation was given to the CHSWG on Devon SEND provision and how to access support.
* Links between TOD’s and NDCAMHS (National Deaf Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) have improved following training
* The work to improve audiology clinics at Mill Water School has now been duplicated at Ellen Tinkham School and is in the process of roll out at Vranch House
* The group completed the NDCS quality standards audit tool for children aged 0- 5 years
* The Public Health Nurse Lead attended a meeting to give information on Early Help available to families through the health visitor service and how to access this
* National guidelines have been reviewed and discussed including changes in cochlear implant referral criteria & battery safety

**To look at accessibility of information for deaf children, young people and their families**

* New transition resources have been developed by audiology for children as they move through high school with an appointment offered with the hearing therapist in year 11
* Happy Hands groups have been extended effectively with groups now meeting in North Devon and Torbay areas

**In 2020 we are planning to:**

* Continue to investigate ways to improve provision of ALD’s for younger children and keep track of changes to this process, including changes in hearing aid technology
* Work towards closer links with the Public Health Nursing Team with more referrals for support from their service
* Monitor the provision for highest needs deaf children due to changes in specialist educational provision
* Seek input and involvement from other services to the group eg ENT/ ERADE/ social care/ local Deaf Children’s Society
* Review the Graduated Response Tool and how this is working out in practice
* Monitor potential changes to the way Newborn Hearing Screening is implemented in this area and the impact of planned changes to commissioning of speech and language therapy
* Benchmark against the recent NDCS/NHS England ‘what works – for CHSWG’s’ document particularly the annual report and parent engagement sections
* Merge with the North Devon CHSWG

The group values input from all members and is particularly keen to try and increase parental involvement in the CHSWG meetings. We acknowledge that meetings may not be accessible for some parents but are seeking alternative ways to gain ideas and feedback from parents about service provision and areas for development. We are looking for opportunities to publicise more widely the aims and achievements of the CHSWG within the Devon area.

Due to the COVID19 outbreak in 2020 and subsequent lockdown the group’s activities have been restricted and progress against objectives has been limited to date