

Exeter, East and Mid Devon

Children's Hearing Services Meeting

Annual Report 2015

The Children's Hearing Services meeting 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 Devon and Cornwall Children's Hearing Services meeting. The group has met four times over the past year, with representatives from health, education, social care, voluntary sector and parents attending when possible.

At the beginning of 2015 objectives were discussed and agreed by the CHS meeting. During the year 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 group continues to link with the SW Facebook group www.facebook.com/group/swedcm. This is intended for parents and professionals in the south-west as a means of providing information and also signposting parents to other sources of information both locally and nationally. It is also used by parents as a forum for discussing areas of concern.
- There has been regular parental representation at meetings; however the group recognises the need for more feedback and input from parents.
- Feedback via questionnaire has been obtained over the course of the year on services offered by the Paediatrician following diagnosis of hearing loss and on Audiology services.

To improve multiagency working

- This local group continues to link with the strategic CHSWG. Through this, audiology services in Devon and Cornwall are collaborating to produce a regional report of services as part of the national accreditation system.
- There continue to be regular MDT (multi-disciplinary team) confidential slots linked to the quarterly CHSWG meetings and aetiology MDT meetings 3 times a year to allow team working to discuss individual cases or problems with process.
- We have worked to improve the audiology clinics in special schools with the aim of increasing awareness of the staff and support for deaf children in these schools. Changes have been implemented at Mill Water School with a designated teacher taking the lead for children with hearing impairment. Feedback from parents attending appointments at the school and on the Individual Management Plans received has been good.

- The morale within the Education Team has improved and regular meetings with Audiology have been re-established.
- The group has challenged the withdrawal of school entry hearing screening via the strategic CHSWG and through dialogue with the PHN leads.

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

- Individual Management Plans are now issued by Audiology for all appointments and include the views of parents and child wherever possible. These are copied with parent's agreement to all involved in the child's care.
- Audiology has published a booklet for children explaining the hearing test process; this is available on the Chime website and is sent out with appointment letters for hearing assessments.

In 2016 we are planning to:

- Raise the profile of the group by publishing aims and meeting minutes more widely on websites and social media and via posters and flyers
- Continue to monitor the impact of school entry screening changes. Dialogue with the Public Health Nurse leads to be maintained with a proposed future audit of children referred via targeted screening and further input from audiology/ education to help raise awareness of undetected hearing loss in schools
- Review Transition services to ensure we meet the needs of young people transferring to adult services
- Continue to focus on the needs of children with mild hearing loss. Further training to SENCo's is planned.
- Work towards improved communication (including electronic)between different professionals to support ease of information sharing and facilitate the DAF process
- Review the information given to parents at the point of diagnosis by Audiology and create an 'information pack'
- Extend the changes implemented at Mill Water School to cover other schools in this area; Vranth House, West of England and Ellen Tinkham

The group values input from all members and is particularly keen to try and increase parental involvement in the CHS 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 Exeter, Mid and East Devon area.