



**Minutes of Family Voice (Norfolk) Annual General Meeting
Held on 24th March 2010
At Dereham Town Football Club**

Present

Matthew Hall (Chair)
Karen Wooddissee (Vice Chair)
Anna Gill (Treasurer)
Michelle Mould (Steering Group)
Jason Myhill (Steering Group)
Linda Morgan (Steering Group)
Tracey Sismey (Steering Group)
Brenda Prendergast (Steering Group)
Faye Kett (member – co-opted to Steering Group)
Kay Daze (member)
David Sismey (member)
Delores Williamson (member – co-opted to Steering Group)
Andrew Colman (member)
Amanda Colman (member)
Amanda Frost (member)
Jan Kemp
Anne Ebbage (Independent, Minute taker)

Apologies

Stephanie Chapman (Steering Group)
Ros Boldero (Steering Group)
Marilyn Farrington (member)
Christine Murray (Steering Group)

Agenda Item	Notes
1. Welcome	Matthew Hall (Chair) welcomed everyone to the 3 rd AGM of Family Voice (Norfolk). He thanked Anne Ebbage for her help in organising the AGM. Matthew thanked everyone for coming.
2. Minutes of last AGM held 24th March 2009	There were no corrections to accuracy. The minutes were accepted as a true record. Proposed by: Tracey Sismey Seconded by: Michelle Mould
3. Matters arising	There were no matters arising.
4. Chairs Report	Matthew Hall presented his Chair's report, attached as Appendix 1 . Matthew added his thanks to Brenda Prendergast for her hard work on the website and to Kay Daze for the work she has been doing on membership. Matthew informed that some members of the steering group had stood down over the past year or would not be re-standing this year, as follows:- Karen Stitt – Founder member stood down during the year. Stephanie Chapman – not re-standing Christine Murray – not re-standing Kay Daze – stood down from steering group and administrator position during the year however has since done a lot of work on membership. All these people were thanked for their time and commitment. Matthew said that Anne Ebbage an Independent Facilitator had arranged meetings for parents and as a result new membership applications were coming in. Leaflets about Family Voice are being well circulated. Family Voice now has a structure in place to move forwards. Matthew introduced Jan Kemp the newly appointed co-ordination administrator saying very pleased to have her on board and everyone is keen to work with her. On behalf of the steering group Michelle Mould thanked Matthew for his last three years as Chair.

Agenda Item	Notes
<p>5. Treasurers Report</p>	<p>Anna Gill presented the Treasurer’s report for the year. Copies were circulated to those at the meeting. Copy of the treasurer’s report attached as Appendix 2. Also circulated were financial accounts spreadsheets – attached as Appendix 3.</p> <p>Anna added that now funding from Norfolk County Council has been promised Family Voice is in a more secure position and been able to employ Jan Kemp as administrative co-ordinator. Jan was congratulated on her successful appointment, as there had been a large number of high quality applications for the post. Thanks were expressed to Saffron Housing for the pro bono H.R. support provided.</p> <p>Membership has increased from 174 last year to 225 at present. This includes many couples and families. However compared to some other areas, Norfolk membership figures are still low. ACTION: Anna Gill will check with other Parent Carer Forums how they record their membership e.g. if couples are counted as one or two.</p> <p>Matthew informed that the new database should provide more accurate figures. The coming year will be the final year of TDC funding.</p> <p>Jane Durrell Charitable Trust will be main source of funding income.</p> <p>Anna informed that she had completed the TDC year-end monitoring report form and read this out. Anna explained that she has sent a copy of the Family Voice leaflet and screen shots of the website as evidence of how some of the funding has been spent.</p> <p>The TDC bid for next financial year funding has to be finalised by 20th April 2010. Anna informed that lots of other Parent Carer Forums have held extremely good conferences that included workshops.</p> <p>There were no questions from those at the AGM to Anna.</p> <p>Matthew thanked Anna for all the hard work she had done over the past year.</p>
<p>6. Financial Accounts</p>	<p>Financial accounts spreadsheets – attached as Appendix 3 Proposed: Linda Morgan Seconded: Jason Myhill</p>

Agenda Item	Notes
<p>9. Family Voice representatives information sharing</p>	<p>A list of those who spoke at the AGM is attached Appendix 4. Appendix 5 contains a list of all groups etc that FV have been represented on over the past year and see appendix 6 for reports received from representatives.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Disabled Children’s Strategy: Family Voice reps are going to request that all information from meetings can be shared with FV parents. Anna will arrange for copies of the Disabled Children’s Strategy to be sent to Kay for circulation to any members of they wish for it.</p> <p>Short Breaks Operational Group: FV helped with recruitment of the 4 staff team. A wide representation of parents from across the County on the group and 3 parents will be on the Short Breaks Commissioning group. Jason Myhill has been on Commissioning interviews and was thanked for his involvement.</p> <p>Thankyou to all parents who participated with Short Breaks Tracking project.</p> <p>Learning difficulties and disabilities programme board: Anna will be Vice-Chair of this group following acceptance of FV’s nomination. Anna said she would be working on minutes from meetings to be cascaded to parents, as presently these are confidential.</p> <p>SEN Strategy Board: FV members are pleased plans for special schools to be redesignated as Complex Needs schools and a new build Complex Needs school for Kings Lynn have been completed. However, members expressed their extreme disappointment at the slow progress and lack of achievements in relation to SRB provision. After in excess of 5years since commencement of the SEN review this should have now yielded appropriate SRB provision and benefits being seen. Concerns were voiced as to whether SRBs will actually be set-up and if so how much longer before these will be available. Parents care and as a result put a lot of time and effort into attending meetings, groups, responding to consultations etc.</p> <p>Paediatric Network: Anna informed that NHS Norfolk are looking at how they deliver care to children with special / additional needs. They have asked that FV be a partner in a bid for innovation funding going in on Friday this week. Anna</p>

Agenda Item	Notes
	proposed that FV become a partner seconded by Jason Myhill. All at meeting agreed this action to go ahead.
10. Thank you and close	<p>Karen Wooddissee, as newly elected Chair, thanked all those present for attending the AGM. She went on to thank Matthew saying Family Voice has been brought a long way and said that she will endeavour to continue this.</p> <p>Karen urged non-steering group members to please come forward to get involved in what FV does. She assured that steering group members will help and support others to do this.</p> <p>Karen informed that on Monday, National Network of Parent Forums were announced for each region. Karen will be the Eastern regional representative. Anna through her work with MIG will also be involved. There will be 9 regional representatives who will meet on 19th April 2010 to draft terms of reference. 152 parent forums will be invited and each group will be a member of the Network, which will have high visibility.</p> <p>In conclusion Karen read out a comment about FV written by a parent.</p>
11. AOB	There will be a strategy day on 20 th April 2010 at the UEA Sportspark – 9:30am for 10:00 am start. 3pm finish.

The meeting closed at 20:45

Chair's report to Family Voice Norfolk AGM March 2010

This has been a full and active year for Family Voice, we have continued to expand our membership and participation in strategic decision making bodies, also building a sound support base for the future with healthy finances.

We have had a number of key achievements. We have been able to develop a new website with the use of Lottery funding, which will continue to grow and develop. It has been a difficult year to balance with asking too much of volunteers whilst ensuring everything runs efficiently with limited admin support, however we have emerged in a very strong position with the recent appointment of a part-time coordinating administrator. This has been the result of a long process but we are now in a sound financial position thanks to our various funding streams. We are thankful for the generous donation from a local trust fund, and that the local authority recognise the value of the contribution we make. Funding from central government is restricted in its use but has allowed us to push forward in the important area of increasing our membership. Our systems now in place are allowing us to increase at a faster rate. It is now important that we keep high levels of reserves in order to maintain our security and independence.

At Family Voice we have chosen the model of being the voice ourselves, rather than paying someone to speak for us; and the resources we have been given for administration will facilitate this. Articulate, organised, professional parents will always find it easier to contribute; we also particularly value the better understanding of the system that those parents bring who study or work in this area. Our challenge is to ensure that our systems and processes are such that anyone can sit on our steering group or be facilitated to sit on a strategy group. The criteria are a passion and vision for how things could be better, not the ability to contribute in a pre-determined way. We will continue to develop towards being a fully inclusive group of parents who facilitate and represent the views of all parents of children with special and additional need across Norfolk.

It is with pride in the achievements and passion of so many parents that I now stand down as chair and look forward to Family Voice continuing to seize the opportunities we have to make such desperately needed improvements for our children and families.

Matthew Hall

Chair March 2010

**Treasurer's report to Family Voice Norfolk
AGM March 2010**

This year has seen considerable growth in the activity with in Family Voice and the raising of our profile. Much of this has been accomplished on a purely voluntary basis and has called considerably on the good will of many of the Steering Group members.

I am very pleased to say that our financial situation has improved considerably since my report last year, with an agreement from Norfolk County Council to fund us to offer a part time Administrating Coordinator role on a self-employed basis two days per week. This role will be commencing very soon and will make up the bulk of our outgoings beyond all our usual travel claims, membership development and support and our marketing costs.

Our marketing plan has included support from the Lottery Fund for our website and from Together for Disabled Children (TDC) for leaflets to be distributed around the County. The next steps will be to fund professional standard stationary, posters, newsletters and advertising banners for exhibitions.

We have used this year's TDC grant to develop our work with our members, to ensure they have a chance to have their voice heard at several open meetings around the County, on our new website consultations and to encourage more members to join. We are making contact with all the members on our database and are considering how in the future we can ensure that all Norfolk's families where ever they live, can benefit from being members of Family Voice.

We are delighted to announce a very recent and considerable donation of £15,000 from the Jane Durell Charitable Trust and a second small personal donation from the Rev Jane Durell herself. This generosity ensures our security for some time to come in these difficult and uncertain financial times.

The end of year Account Summary is attached and the full accounts are available for any members wishing to see them.

Anna Gill

Treasurer March 2010

Family Voice Norfolk

Statement of financial activities from 20/03/2009-19/03/2010

	Restricted Funds £	Non-Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Incoming Resources			
Funding from Norfolk CC	-	9500.00	9,500.00
Earned income	-	2236.51	2,236.51
Donations	15368.90	-	15,368.90
Payment for consultation work (National Children's Bureau-Tracking Project)	188.80	-	188.80
TDC Grant Phase 1 (Balance)	1,520.83	-	1,520.83
TDC Grant Phase 2	10,000.00	-	10,000.00
Awards for All (Website Award)	3100.00	-	3,100.00
<u>Incoming Resources</u>			<u>41,915.04</u>
Refund received		56.18	
<u>TOTAL</u>			<u>41,971.22</u>
Resources Expended			
Unrestricted Expenditure (Admin/Travel/IT/Recruitment/Marketing)	-	12,560.26	12,560.26
TDC Grant Phase1	1,520.83	-	1,520.83
TDC Grant Phase 2	9,493.03	-	9,493.03
Awards for All	3,100.00	-	3,100.00
<u>Total Resources Expended</u>			<u>26,674.12</u>
<u>Total Funds at 19/03/2009</u>	<u>1,520.83</u>	<u>6,519.97</u>	<u>£8040.80</u>
<u>Total Funds at 19/03/2010</u>	<u>506.97</u>	<u>21,310.10</u>	<u>£21,817.07</u>

Family Voice Information Sharing at AGM March 2010**Some of what we have been involved with.**

Topic	Speaker
Disabled Children's Strategy Group	Anna Gill
Childcare Sufficiency Task Group	Michelle Mould
Short Breaks Tracking Project	Michelle Mould
Short Breaks Communication Strategy Group	Michelle Mould
Short Breaks Operational Group	Matthew Hall
Learning Difficulties and Disabilities programme board	Matthew Hall
Pupil Specific Funding Group & new monitoring scheme	Brenda Prendergast
SEN Strategy Board	Karen Wooddissee
Carers Information Group / Carers Council	Tracey Sismy

Family Voice

Table of Representatives for year ended 19/3/10

Project /Board/Group	Brief description	FV Representative(s)
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Steering Group	A multi agency and parent group to improve all areas of life for children & young people who have an ASD and their families. This group is also a reference group to the County's SEN Strategy.	Karen Wooddissee Michelle Mould
Carers Council	Generic council – area carers' groups being set up to feed into the council – will become a commissioning body.	Tracey Sismey
Carers Information Group	About the Norfolk carers emergency plan.	Tracey Sismey
Childcare Sufficiency Task Group	A group looking at childcare for families with children/young people with special or additional needs	Michelle Mould
Complex Needs Schools Implementation Group	Facilitate the changes from special schools to Complex needs schools over next 10years	Anna Gill Delores Williamson
Disabled Children's Strategy Group	A multi-agency group that is a sub-group of the County's Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership.	Anna Gill Matthew Hall
Disability Joint Register		Ros Boldero
Equipment Group	Not been very active this year.	Christine Murray
Integrated Services project (ITCHY)	Joint health and social care project looking at having integrated teams for children with disabilities.	Anna Gill Matthew Hall Clare Godfrey Delores Williamson Lisa Harvey Sarah Dewhurst
Learning difficulties & disabilities programme board	A group set-up in response to the JAR a year ago when it was identified that the Local Authority needed to have an overarching group that has an overview of what is happening so that things do not get missed but does not replace any existing groups.	Matthew Hall
Paediatric Network	Overarching paediatric group looking at acute & community care for all children	Anna Gill Sarah Dewhurst Claire Godfrey

Project /Board/Group	Brief description	FV Representative(s)
Parent Partnership Steering Group (PPSG)	Oversees the work and development of Norfolk Parent Partnership, a statutory body supporting parents of children with special and additional needs on education related matters.	Matthew Hall Karen Stitt Jason Myhill
Positive Handling Group (PHG)	A multi agency and parent group looking at policies and training for proactive approaches to behaviour.	Linda Morgan Stephanie Chapman Michelle Mould
Pupil Specific Funding Group & new monitoring scheme	Set up by the local authority to review how schools are funded for pupils who have special and additional needs and to develop a monitoring scheme.	Brenda Prendergast
Residential Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision	Looking at development of boarding facility for the new Churchill Park complex needs school in King's Lynn. Now named Morley House will be used as a respite facility during weekends and school holidays.	Tracey Sismey Ros Boldero
Short Breaks Communication Strategy Group	Set up to form a strategy on how to communicate to all sectors about short breaks and the changes that Aiming High should make.	Michelle Mould Matthew Hall Brenda Prendergast
Short Breaks Operational Group	Oversees the delivery of the Short Breaks program to achieve the full service offer by transforming existing and developing new short break provision for children and young people with disabilities	Matthew Hall Tracey Sismey Michelle Mould
Short Breaks Tracking project	Instigated by Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) to track changes in short breaks and the core offer within Aiming High for Disabled Children.	Michelle Mould
Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy Board	A multi-agency project board set up to ensure that the recommendations of the SEN Review are implemented. This has included overseeing the implementation of Complex Needs Schools & Specialist Resource Bases	Karen Wooddissee Brenda Prendergast
Transition Strategy Group	Development of systems, structures and strategies around transition to adulthood including person centred planning.	Ros Boldero
Continence	An issue taken up by Family Voice on behalf of its members.	Michelle Mould

Project /Board/Group	Brief description	FV Representative(s)
Family Voice Website	Development of new website	Brenda Prendergast
Nelson Lodge Forum	Supports the work of Nelson Lodge. Currently looking at possible additional uses of this facility including use by those home educating their child(ren)	Michelle Mould
Norfolk County Council Children's Services recruitment	On interview panel for new SEN tribunals officer for Norfolk.	Tracey Sismey
SEN Provision		Ros Boldero

Disabled Children's Strategy Group

Members: Anna Gill and Matthew Hall

This multi agency group is made up of senior staff and Commissioners from Children's Services, NHS Norfolk, Norfolk Community Health Care, the Voluntary Sector and parent reps from Family Voice.

It has been meeting for many years and is now a sub-group of the County Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. It oversees, the Disabled Children's Strategy, the Integrated Teams project, the Short Breaks Pathfinder Programme and is involved with the roll out of all the aims of Aiming High, the National Service Framework and Norfolk's response to the Every Child Matters outcomes for all Children and Young People with disabilities and their families.

Parental involvement has been at the core of this group since 2001 when it was set up after the Best Value Review, which in turn was undertaken in partnership with children, young people and their families.

It has been driving forward considerable change that is summarised in the Norfolk Disabled Children's Strategy that can be seen on the Family Voice website at <http://www.familyvoice.org.uk/s13/Multiagency.html>

Anna Gill

Steering Group Member

March 2010

Complex Needs Schools Implementation Group

Member: Anna Gill (handing over in March 2010 to Delores Williamson)

This is a small 'task and finish' group that is a sub group of the SEN Strategy. It is currently looking at the change of designation of Special Schools to Complex Needs Schools and identifying the training needs to encompass the changes that will happen slowly over several years.

It has met and reconvened several times over the life of the SEN Review and subsequent SEN Strategy and will continue to do so as and when needed.

Both members are Governors of different Complex Needs Schools.

Anna Gill

Steering Group Member

March 2010

Childcare Sufficiency Task group

Norfolk County Council completed an assessment of childcare 'sufficiency' in the county. This involved a survey of parents of children with special and additional needs which has identified some gaps in provision and take up of childcare for children with special and additional needs (Watson and Lucas, 2007).

The task group was formed as part of an action plan to address some of the gaps identified. Family Voice had two parents on the task group.

Several recommendations in the following areas came out of the report that Family Voice pulled together:

- Workforce development
- Information and Communication
- Review of Joint Disabled Children's Register
- The Family Information Service and Family Services Directory
- Support for parents
- Provision and flexibility
- Funding
- Equipment

The report has been central to many Early Support Steering Group meetings and this piece of work will be ongoing and integral to the work of the Early Support Steering Group. There has been progress in many areas and progression is being tracked within the meetings.

A definition of Childcare was agreed and noted by the Disabled Children's Strategy Group.

A more detailed report is available on the Family Voice Website www.familyvoice.org.uk

Michelle Mould
Steering Group Member
March 2010

Short Breaks Tracking project

Aiming High For Disabled Children (AHDC) the governments programme to make disabled children a national priority includes transforming short breaks services. Every Child Matters (EDCM) is doing a tracking exercise in 4 local authorities with the aim of demonstrating the impact of AHDC. Two local authorities are pathfinders in that they have been given the job to lead the way, Norfolk being one, and two are local authorities who did not receive the early funding. The short breaks tracking project draws on evidence from parents via a local parent forum. In this case it is Family Voice Norfolk. This is then fed into an annual progress report and a final report in 2011.

We are now in the final year of this project. We would be grateful if new parents would like to join this group. Reports from Family Voice Norfolk have been shared with the Disabled Children's Strategy group and with the Short Breaks Operational Group and have led to transport help for Short breaks and also more choice for our children (not just sports but art and dance that are being worked at the moment). Issues such as those around assessment have been tackled.

Norfolk is now looking at transparent eligibility criteria.

There is also the new short breaks website www.time-for-me.org.uk

Michelle Mould

Steering Group Member

March 2010

Short Breaks Communication Strategy Group

Family Voice have 3 parents sitting on this group. The group has developed a strategy to communicate the work and progress of the short breaks pathfinder team to parents and carers as well as providers and professionals. This has involved the development of a newsletter, a short breaks booklet and the www.time-for-me.org.uk website. It has also involved the development of an ideas pack for providers and in the future is looking at a magazine. These are just a few ways in which Family Voice has been actively involved in the short breaks arena. It is hoped that these communications will help to share information about short breaks across the statutory sector, voluntary sector and parents and carers.

Michelle Mould

Steering Group Member

March 2010

Pupil Specific Funding

Schools requested that how the Local Authority funds pupils who have Special and Additional Needs is changed. These changes went through and came in force in September 2009.

A pupil-specific funding group was set up by the Local Authority around the implementation of this, which then split into smaller parts. I became involved in 2 sub-groups; (1) how the information should be communicated to schools and parents, and (2) how the scheme should be monitored.

Communication

I emphasised the need for parents to be informed, requesting that a letter be sent to all parents of children with statements. The Local Authority decided that the Parent Partnership newsletter was to be the primary contact with parents and the newsletter mailed to those on the Joint Disability Register would also carry this information.

Monitoring

Work developing a previous monitoring scheme was abandoned when the new funding scheme was agreed. Discussions around the monitoring of this scheme are on-going and over the last year have been over:

- What a monitoring scheme should look like
- Who will do the monitoring
- Where the funding will come from

Brenda Prendergast
Steering Group member

March 2010

SEN Project Strategy Board

This year has seen most progress around the issues relating to Special Schools, following a delayed consultation period, they were finally designated as Complex Needs Schools. Morley House, the residential provision attached to Churchill Park, which is a partnership project with the voluntary sector (BREAK) opened in January and will also be offering short breaks for families in the area.

Project Board are currently in the process of agreeing how plans for Specialist Resource Bases will be taken forward in the light of the need for funding cuts. It is unlikely that the full plans as were originally envisaged for 59 Bases will be realised in the short to medium term. An outreach model has been agreed for Dyslexia provision, but this was not felt to be appropriate for other specialisms. We will shortly have updated proposals for the way forward and we will communicate these plans once they have been shared with us.

Karen Wooddissee
Vice –Chair of Family Voice Steering group

March 2010

Paediatric Network

Members: Anna Gill, Claire Godfrey and Sarah Dewhurst (covering 2 places)

The Network 'provides a forum to find local solutions to service change, development and service redesign'. It reports to the Women and Children's Programme Board of NHS Norfolk and consists of senior managers/Commissioners /Doctors and Nurses from all the community and acute trusts. There is representation from Children's Services and 2 parent reps from Family Voice.

Much of what the group discusses is very clinical and is about all children's care not just disability, which is a very small part of the remit. However the whole Strategic direction of more joined up services, of equality between the areas of Norfolk and the need to keep children out of hospital as much as possible are all core topics covered by this group. All three parents are frequent users of both the Acute and Community Health Trusts and have children with Complex Health Needs.

Anna Gill

Steering Group Member

March 2010

Continence

This is an issue that Family Voice has taken up on behalf of its members. It is now on the website www.familyvoice.org.uk under the feedback section. At present we have had responses from 15 parents. The key issues that have been raised so far are:

Not being able to get pull-ups

Storage

Absorbency

Glue on nappies

Not breathable/scratchy/bulky nappies

Feminine nappies for boys

Not knowing about the continence service

The badly worded letter about the changes to the continence service

The answerphone

Disrespectful attitude of a member of staff over the phone

Being sent around the houses for assessment

We do need more responses so if you haven't already given us your thoughts about the service please look at the website and give us your views. Thankyou.

Michelle Mould

Steering Group Member

March 2010

The Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Steering Group

Four parents who are members of Family Voice regularly attend the Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Steering Group. The chair of this group was until January this year Karen Wooddissee (Family Voice Vice Chair) with the new chair being Michelle Mould (Family Voice).

The steering group provides a multi-agency forum for statutory and voluntary organisations as well as parents to share information and good practice, work collaboratively on relevant projects, provides a point of reference and contributes to local, regional and national consultations relevant to children and young people with an ASD. The steering group also acts as a stakeholder reference group for ASD related proposals within the SEN Strategy and has the status of a subgroup of the County Strategic Partnership. It is the only disability forum to have this status.

Michelle Mould
Steering Group
March 2010

Positive Handling group

The overarching objectives of this group are:

- Identify gaps or difficulties in the provision of services and resources and made recommendations to the appropriate authority.
- Parents to be actively involved in the decision making and planning with regard to the positive handling of children / young people.
- Develop multi-agency co-ordination and support with regard to positive handling of children / young people.

The outcomes are:

- To prevent the inappropriate use of restraint, keeping children/young people safe.
- Maintain the respect and dignity of the child/young person involved and enables them to participate, enjoy and achieve without risk of harm and injury.

During the last year there has been a pilot scheme funded for parents and carers to assist parents in the use of restraint difficulties, this also helps with working along side the professionals between home, school and other services provided.

As from January 2010 Team Teach will be replaced by Norfolk Steps which Norfolk County Council has promoted in house. There is obviously a cost saving to this but the overall aim is to be able to tailor the needs to suit the purpose. The Trainers will be able to carry out some independent assessments if requested and approved.

Linda Morgan
Steering Group Member
March 2010

Family Voice Website

The steering group applied for lottery funding for a website to reach out to parents. The purpose was to engage with parents/carers of SEN/disabled children, to explain why Family Voice exists, what we do and for parents to give feedback to current topics of interest. It is there to inform and enable participation.

The site needed to be easily accessible to those who are not used to using the Internet and easy enough to navigate from a public terminal.

It became clear very quickly that the funding was inadequate for the task; the original bid was based on quotes received that, with further investigation, could not meet our criteria.

Family Voice was advising Short Breaks on their website so we approached their web company and they agreed to assist and work to our budget.

Sarah Thomas, Communications, designed our leaflets, which also formed the basis for our web design. After a number of false starts, a theme was agreed which incorporates quotes from relevant government guidance that promotes parents working together with service providers, to improve services they receive.

The Family Voice website will always be work in progress, as services change so will the needs of our members. As we have retained total control of the site, we will be able to evolve to meet the need of our members as they arise.

Brenda Prendergast
Steering group Member
Lead Person for Website Development

March 2010

Short Breaks (Pathfinder) POG (Programme Operational Group)

This multi agency group is made up of senior staff and Commissioners from Children's Services, NHS Norfolk, Norfolk Community Health Care, the Voluntary Sector and parent reps from Family Voice.

The government considerably increased funding for Short Breaks for families of children with disabilities under an initiative called 'Aiming High for Disabled Children'. Family Voice has been at the heart of the process and providing input into how this money is spent, and interviews for the team. The POG was set up to review the progress of the team and the process and set the priorities.

Family Voice have recently been asked to provide reps to sit on the commissioning group for Short Breaks which will increase the level of parent input in this area.

Matthew Hall
Steering Group member

March 2010

Nelson Lodge Social Group

Nelson Lodge is a short break facility for children with special and additional needs after school, weekends and during school holidays. Children stay over-night to give parents a break and to give the children opportunities to do activities and share time with other children.

During the day facilities like Nelson lodge are unused and most have sensory rooms being unused.

A pilot study to use this facility during the day as a venue for parents and their children with special and additional needs who are home educated had some success.

3-4 parents and their children have attended doing many activities such as making puppets, making cakes, outdoor play in the well equipped garden, card making and use of the sensory room to name but a few. It has involved several sessions where an Occupational Therapist trained in sensory integration has been available for parents to talk to. The children had the opportunity to play with staff from Nelson lodge and thereby freeing up the parents to share information and ways of helping their child to learn as well as just be parents and talk about the latest fashion or other children that we have that are without special needs difficulties.

Due to the very low numbers this has been put on hold for the present. A questionnaire has been sent out, although reaching those who home educate can be difficult, in order to ascertain how a group like this needs to adapt or change in order to meet the needs of the home educating families who have children with special needs. (see questionnaire available on Family Voice website)

The social group was a way to help our children interact and on the other hand provide a place where parents could meet and share concerns/ideas when you home educate.

Perhaps this is something that children who only attend school part –time might like to be part of or might be something that would be beneficial for a child who attends school full-time but would benefit from a social group with their parent/carer to help to build friendships.

I would be very grateful to hear about your ideas and also be grateful if you could fill in the questionnaire which we have available in order that we can truly represent your views.

I am sure that there are many other possibilities so please do contact me.

Michelle Mould

Steering Group member

March 2010

LDD (Learning Difficulties and Disabilities) Programme Board

This multi agency group is made up of senior staff and Commissioners from Children's Services, NHS Norfolk, Norfolk Community Health Care, the Voluntary Sector, Schools, Governors and parent reps from Family Voice.

It was established a year ago in response to the Joint Area Review of Children's Services (Ofsted for authorities!) to improve the co-ordination of strategies and areas of LDD work. The board has an over-arching responsibility, it did not replace any existing groups, but its function is to pick up any areas that are not being covered and ensure they are not missed. Part of the activity is to look over data and statistics from education and pick up trends that need addressing or planning for. The board directs the work of the LDD project team.

The board was originally co-chaired by the two deputy directors of children's services from the local authority, but from the next meeting a parent from Family Voice will take over the co-chairing. This is an exciting development and will ensure that parent's views are at the very heart of the larger decisions in our county.

Matthew Hall
Steering Group member
March 2010

Parent Partnership Steering Group

This multi agency group is made up of senior staff from Children's Services, NHS Norfolk, Norfolk Community Health Care, the Voluntary Sector, Schools, Parent Partnership staff, Independent Parent Supporters and parent reps from Family Voice.

The aims of the group are to:

- Support, promote and develop the Norfolk Parent Partnership Service (NPPS)
- Ensure the impartiality of NPPS from the Local Authority by providing an 'arms length' oversight of the management of the Service and contribute to the wider Quality Assurance Process
- Promote a partnership approach by involving representatives of a broad range of stakeholders
- Provide feedback to the Local Authority to influence decisions on Special Educational Needs policies, procedures and practices

Over the past year as parents we have begun to learn more about the way parent partnership operates and our contribution is now becoming more effective as a 'critical friend'.

Matthew Hall
Steering Group Member
March 2010

Norfolk Transition Strategy Group (TSG)

The Transition Strategy Groups meetings are held every 2 to 3 months.

Sharon Fradley is the Person Centred Transition Lead and co-ordinates the meetings with Rachael Parker Inclusion Admin Connexions.

Amongst others, Norfolk Children's services, Connexions Health service managers, Commissioning managers, Active Norfolk, City College, Jobcentre plus are present at the meetings.

Michael. Bateman came to talk about the LDD board.

The Joint Area Review (JAR) of Children's Services highlighted a need to improve the co-ordination of provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The outcome of the JAR inspection gave a rating of adequate and this needs to improve.

To help in achieving this, the Children and Young People's Partnership Trust Board agreed to the development of a Learning Difficulties & Disabilities (LDD) Programme. This will feed into the TSG.

Leisure representation on the TSG has been requested as leisure was felt by all to be an integral part of any package being put together by Connexions PA's

Sharon will be working with NCODP to develop working with school councils so that they can engage with peers in school to feedback to TSG.

Transition Course – transition network to be implemented and Transition champions will link directly to Sharon Fradley.

Transition planning meetings well established in the East, but more resources needed.

Local Operational Partnerships (LOPs) came into being in September. All High Schools, Complex Needs Schools, PRU's and Colleges are members. Some LOPs have formalised a link with Norfolk Work Based Learning provider network. Each LOP has drawn up a Plan for funding and ways that LOPs are moving towards 14-19 entitlements for learners.

The current situation around LSC funding (which will transfer to Local Authority from 1st April 2010), a steering group is looking into the changes. Report due out now, I will receive this shortly and circulate it.

Jan Munn from Norfolk Local Authority 14-19 Development Team thought it might be possible to talk to FV about what the teams are doing.

Getting A Life project nationally 30 young people have signed up.

Person Centred Reviews have begun and results will be fed into TSG to enable decisions to be made on what is working and if changes need to be made.

I fed back some of the views expressed in the Transition meetings that FV held around the County and the response was really positive. Clare Jones Connexions manager offered slots for Autistic Spectrum Conditions awareness to be added to the Professional Practise Day for PA's in April.

Ros Boldero Steering Group Member March 2010

Carers Council

The Carers council is generic for all carers. To achieve tasks quickly Rapid Action Teams (RATs) are formed when needed. There are currently five RATs looking at various areas including one for Respite and one for Governance of Carers Council.

The Rapid Action Teams report back to Carers Council.

A Carers Emergency Plan pack has been developed and receiving good response. To date no plans have had to be called upon.

A lot of people do not realise that the role of the Carer is huge and for some long term or life-long.

The Carers Council will become a Commissioning body in the future.