

## Parents Participation Grant – Questionnaire Evaluation Report

March 2009

**1) Do you feel as a parent or carer living in Barking and Dagenham that you are involved in the decisions, which impact on you or your children's lives?**

Yes - 138

No - 148

**2) If the Council, Police, education or health service wanted to understand your views about services or issues in the borough, what is your preferred way to give these views?**

- By letter - 147
- Attending regular meetings – 98
- By phone - 70
- One to one discussion - 66
- By email - 48
- Website – 26

**3) Would you use an on-line chat room/discussion forum for parents/carers?**

Yes – 91

No – 185

**4) Do you think you receive enough regular information about what's available the borough for disabled children?**

Yes – 84

No - 205

**5) As a disabled parent or parent of disabled children or who have learning difficulties, do you receive enough information about the support that is available to you or your children?**

Yes – 95

No - 180

**If no, how can we improve this? Suggestions included the following;**

- 1) Making information more accessible – for example utilising libraries, GP surgeries and the Citizen magazine. The council website should have a dedicated page about support with related links.
- 2) Information that is available should be easier to find.
- 3) Information that is given is sometimes inconsistent making the process frustrating – Professionals such as social workers are sometimes not well

informed and so need to have more training. (this was mentioned by 2 parents)

- 4) The booklet received this year detailing summer activities for children was very useful – it would be useful if there was a booklet detailing all disabled associations and what services they provide.
- 5) A central help point would be beneficial to access all information.
- 6) Not cutting back on funding for organisations providing support – giving more consideration to the impact of such closures not just on the parents but more importantly on the children affected.
- 7) Providing more face to face meetings.
- 8) More engagement with parents.
- 9) Emailing information directly to parents.
- 10) More information leaflets through schools/college through school/college for transition into Adult Services.
- 11) More respite provision such as overnight stay; more after schools and summer clubs.
- 12) Regular annual/6 monthly meetings with SENCO or another knowledgeable person.
- 13) Texting, writing and phoning parents about what is going on and what is available locally.
- 14) At least a page for disabilities of all ages in the Citizen
- 15) Set up a mailing list for any families who would like to give their details and post information to them directly.
- 16) Newsletter.
- 17) social workers need to be better informed.
- 18) Better information for parents whose child/children is an out of borough residential placement
- 19) Use the register of disabled children/adults to send out information

## **6) How can we ensure that all disabled parents and parents/carers of disabled children or with learning difficulties have a voice?**

- 1) Asking more parents. One parent noted there is not enough communication not just with the parents but also with the children including primary school children.
- 2) Information needs to be in a format that is easy to understand e.g. plain English, not too wordy and utilising picture text for people with learning difficulties.
- 3) Give carers more official recognition – responding to their views and involving them before a decision is made.
- 4) Giving parents choice about how they have a voice and allowing them a voice in their preferred way.
- 5) Asking more parents.
- 6) Having more face to face meetings.
- 7) By providing a forum, acting on information received through, for example questionnaires and importantly letting people know the outcome!
- 8) There should be more local forums. It was noted the Barking and Dagenham Carers Association is excellent and they run a lot of workshops.

- 9) More regular meetings are required with professional advisors present.
- 10) Maintain regular contact with parents – if you don't know about something how can you ask for it?
- 11) Instead of attending meetings, more home visits to get parents views.
- 12) Using on-line forums for parents.
- 13) By going to places where parents and children are, rather than expecting them to come to you.
- 14) Providing forums for real life experiences of parents and carers to be scrutinized and heard.
- 15) Small conferences for parents in the same borough where questions can be answered.
- 16) Have a register of all disabled adults and children and write to them about proposed improvements or decisions that are made.
- 17) A single point of contact at the Council so we don't have to 'hunt' through council departments.
- 18) Being invited to discussion forums with professional decision-makers.
- 19) Provide respite while having meetings, even a room next door for the children to participate in something, as getting a sitter is not always possible.
- 20) Interpreters where English is not the first spoken language.

**7) Barking and Dagenham can bid for £10,000 to be spent from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 to**

**'develop the active involvement of parents in the service planning and decision making processes within each local authority area. The results of this strategic involvement by parents should be visible changes to the development and delivery of services, making them more focused on the needs of families with disabled children'**

**Some ideas suggested so far include, please tick your top three choices;**

1. Improving communication through newsletters and a website – **165**
2. Running a family fun day or other event to attract families and give them basic information about getting involved - **159**
3. Training for parents and carers to get involved in decision-making - **152**
4. A conference for parents and carers of disabled children to discuss common issues and services – **121**
5. Run a meeting of interested parents to begin the conversation about how they would like to have their collective voice heard in their area – **101**
6. A buddying scheme for parents of a newly born disabled child/learning difficulties – **53**

Other ideas

- 1) To make available a social/youth club for 18-25 years of age.
- 2) Pay for respite care to allow parents/carers to attend meetings or consultation events

