

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY REGIONAL TASK FORCE NEWSLETTER

Issue 2: February 2007

Since Issue 1 of this Newsletter, the Task Force has met on 12 January and 9 February 2007. The outcomes of these meetings are updated in this issue.

Consultation with Children and Young People

The Task Force is planning a consultation workshop with children and young people with speech and language difficulties across Northern Ireland on 7 February 2007 in the Park Plaza Hotel, Antrim.

The purpose of the consultation is to get the views of children and young people and their carers on the positives and negatives of the existing service, their ideas for the best possible service and how this might be achieved.

The consultation will be outcome focused and will provide a unique opportunity for children and young people to give their views of the service they receive. Feedback from the workshop will be used to inform the thinking of the Task Force in developing its final recommendations.

As places are limited, they will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. However those who are unable to take part in the consultation will be given an opportunity to provide their views at a later date.

Sub-groups

In order to deliver on the timescales, a number of subgroups have been set up. These groups are made up of members of the Task Force as co-opted members identified as having relevant expertise. The key areas of work to be taken forward are outlined below:

- ICT and Admin Support
- Training and Workforce
- 0-4 years
- 4-11 years
- 11-19 years
- Strategic Context

These subgroups are currently scoping issues relating to their particular remit and are evidencing existing models of good practice

that are in place in Northern Ireland and elsewhere.

Best Practice Study Visits

The Task Force has identified that many of the solutions to the issues raised in the review by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People are not yet mainstream practice in Northern Ireland.

In order to ensure that the appropriate level of information is available to Task Force members to fully inform their considerations, study visits to Cardiff and Edinburgh have been organised for a representative group of the Task Force. Many of the issues facing the Task Force have been explored in these regions and they are currently engaged in delivering solutions. Members will examine models of good practice during the visits and will report back to inform the thinking of the sub-groups.

Membership of the Task Force

Since the last issue, there have been some changes to the membership of the Task Force. Mr Billy Tate, Principal of Belvoir Primary School, has had to withdraw from the Task Force. Mrs Judith Liddel, a Speech and Language Therapy manager in South and East Belfast Trust has joined the Task Force.

Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 21 March 2007