

Chorley SEND – Initial Review

Introduction

Chorley Council Communities Team coordinated a meeting involving all known providers of activities or support which target Chorley families with a child who has Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

Attendees included: Children and Family Wellbeing Service's new Targeted Youth Support for SEND, High Five, Lancashire TAAG, Chorley Wildcats, Barnardo's, Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley Leisure. The special schools were also invited but were unable to attend on this occasion, although they are included on the distribution list for further meetings, information, and opportunities for cooperative working.

The purpose of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the current situation for the organisations who offer support to children and families in relation to SEND, highlight any trends across the network, build better relationships, record the current opportunities available to families, discover gaps where provision is not available and consider what can be done to work together to a more positive outcome.

As the organisations represented have regular interaction with Chorley families, they are well placed to provide the points of view and details about the additional challenges they face, which may differ from families who do not have a child with additional needs or disability.

Findings

Strengths:

- Good social media reach across the SEND network. Most groups have good social media connections with their members, which means that cooperatively sharing information should reach those already known or involved with the groups.
- Council and Inspire have access to communications team to create and share information on future initiatives
- Network has wealth of knowledge and experience in creating and sustaining community-based groups and events
- Network has good knowledge of managing volunteers
- Network members have strong links to local sports and activity organisations
- Shared member base with many families accessing multiple opportunities across the network
- High level of training for staff at Barnardo's and a regional training provider who may be able to provide training for the network
- Parks and open spaces, particularly Coronation Park, Harpers Lane Rec and Springfield Park as good assets as they are contained and level, making them easily accessible. Children are less likely to become lost or move out of sight. Yarrow Valley and Astley Parks are not viewed as very friendly to families with additional needs.
- Leisure facilities; Inspire Youth Zone, community centre's, sports halls, swimming pools, cinema, bowling, crazy golf, Anderton Centre. These facilities are all great assets to Chorley, thought currently under-utilized. With consideration, cooperation and planning, Chorley families would find it easier to access them.
- Volunteers are keeping the provision afloat

- Activities available for 8-18 years primarily
- Activities available for children with less severe support needs are most commonly available

Challenges:

- Staff and volunteer recruitment difficulties are causing provision to be reduced across the network
- Only Barnardo's can offer personal care, toileting, feeding, gastro feeding and epilepsy
- Social impact on children with SEND / families has been greater due to the nature of online activities being unsuitable
- Planned events have been forced to cancel as many children have complex health needs
- Play centre's have closed leaving few leisure activities for families in Chorley
- Training is required to raise awareness of disabilities, deal with challenging behaviour, make reasonable adjustments in order to be accessible and inclusive.
- Difficult to advertise to new members as individually, the groups have small member bases and there is currently no one-point of contact where residents can find information and advice
- Major reduction in participation levels, possibly due to risk of transmission of CoVid to those with complex health issues
- DBS checking is a barrier for some groups / volunteers
- Insufficient provision of swimming lessons due to lack of qualified staff and an expensive, time consuming pathway to become qualified
- Trampoline rebound therapy course is expensive
- Staff resource and availability of suitably skilled staff have caused maximum occupancy levels to be reduced by approximately one third.
- Volunteers are experiencing lack of time to contribute due to the ongoing CoVid isolation requirements and demands on day to day life; supporting family and friends who are experiencing difficulties. Volunteers burn out may also be a factor affecting their willingness to commit time.
- Local community facilities unsuited to SEND activities due to changing / toilet facilities and room features causing challenges

Provision by age group

Target Age Range	Provider
0-5 years	NONE
5-18 years	Wildcats – Sport and physical activity
5-18 years	Barnardo's – Lancashire Breaktime
6-19 years	High Five – Multi disability group
8-18 years	Lancs TAAG – ADHD / ASD group
8-25 years	Inspire Youth Zone - Lancs Breaktime

Provision by care need

Care level	Provider
Personal care, gastro feeding, epilepsy, complex needs	Barnardo's – Lancashire Breaktime – respite – parent / carer not required to stay
Complex care needs	High Five – Multi disability group – parent / carer is required to stay
All welcome – if carer is required, they must stay on site	Wildcats – Sport and physical activity
Low level supervision needs	Lancs TAAG – ADHD / ASD group
Low level support needs, plus small number of places available for 1:1 ; 1:2 supervision	Inspire Youth Zone - Lancs Breaktime

Provision by day of week

Day of Week	Provider
Monday	TBC - Lancs TAAG – ADHD / ASD group – Peer support for parents & carers
Tuesday	NONE
Wednesday	Evening - Lancs TAAG – ADHD / ASD group – Trampoline, rebound therapy and activities
Thursday	4-7pm Barnardo's – Lancashire Breaktime – various activities
Friday	NONE
Saturday	9-11am - Wildcats – Sport and physical activity Variable - High Five – Events planned regularly for families to attend
Sunday	11-2pm Inspire Youth Zone - Lancs Breaktime – various activities 5-6pm Wildcats – Swimming lessons Variable - High Five – Events planned regularly for families to attend
Holiday Periods	Mon – Fri 3 hours per day - Inspire Youth Zone - Lancs Breaktime – various activities 10-4pm – Barnardo's - One day per holiday week – Lancs Breaktime – various activities Variable - High Five – Events planned regularly for families to attend

Possible recommendations and actions

- Create an agreement for the network which will include terms of reference and aims
- Review this reports' findings with the network to agree priorities and develop an action plan
- To agree a regular meeting schedule
- Improve the sharing of information throughout the network and community
- Create an online directory and flyer for circulation
- Develop training and awareness raising opportunities related to inclusion so that more understanding is held by customer facing venues and activities across Chorley, to improve the interactions experienced by families. This form of training could also help families to better understand the needs and behaviours of their children.
- Ensure consultation and consideration of the network is included when planning future new buildings, community centres or parks and open spaces, to ensure the needs of residents with additional needs are considered.