



# Part 12 Children and Young People Act: Making it work for parents with learning disabilities

The Steeple  
23rd of February 2017

**Working Together With  
Parents Network**



Supporting professionals working with  
parents with learning difficulties



## Speakers

**Oonagh Brown (SCLD):** Provided a brief overview of the day and explained how Part 12 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 impacts on services for parents with learning disabilities, drawing on the National Guidance published at the end of 2016.

**Andy Miller (SCLD):** Provided an in-depth explanation of Supported Parenting Principles and the five key features of good practice as laid out in the Scottish Good Practice Guidelines for Supporting Parents with Learning Disabilities. This presentation highlighted the links between GIRFEC Principles and Supported Parenting Principles.

**Aberlour:** SCLD staff showed a video made by Aberlour called 'Alison's Story'. It gave a real life example of whole family support and long-term support.

**Lesley Cook (Children 1<sup>st</sup>):** Provided an example of family meetings through the model of Family Group Decision Making. This presentation highlighted how Family Group Decision Making has worked in practice.

**Joan Irons (People First):** Provided an overview of the work of The People First Parents Group in Edinburgh. This included taking part in staff training and helping to produce Easy Read documents. Joan also shared the experience of those in the parents' group which included, fear, judgment and having professionals making assumptions about

their ability as parents. The presentation ended on a positive example of parents' experiences.

### **Group Work Session One**

Ten minute session to ask individuals to start thinking about what is working well in their area and what is not working well regarding:

- Clear communication,
- Use of role play,
- Step by step pictures,
- Repetition,
- Providing / developing personalised props.

### **What is working well?**

Participants identified the following as working well in their area:

- Close working relationships across Midwifery, Social Work and Voluntary Organisations regarding parenting assessments,
- Some adapted information for parents,
- Relationships between professionals and parents,
- After formal meetings parents are verbally given summaries of information,
- Adult services using Easy Read leaflets and providing tailored support (From third sector provider).

### **What does not work well?**

Participants identified the following as not working well in their area:

- Feeling that some staff 'fell into' supporting parents with learning disabilities and therefore were not equipped to provide the right kind of support,
- Complicated processes regarding Child Protection system and Children Hearing systems,
- Meetings which are too large and therefore not suitable for parents with learning disabilities to engage with,
- Limited time and resources,
- Practitioners from a range of services picking up on pieces of work which are not part of their role,

- Practitioners not being aware of resources available to them,
- The interface between adult and children's services,
- Not including the people who are impacted by services in processes which are about them,
- Time restrictions on practitioners impacting their ability to create adapted resources or Easy Read versions of minutes for parents,
- Lack of clear referral pathways for parenting support,
- Links across adult and children's services as well as with third sector providers.

## Action Planning

Each group was asked to identify a maximum of three actions based on the five key good practice elements of Supported Parenting.

These actions could either be on a practitioner level (i.e. ensuing accessible communication in their everyday practice) or at an organisational level (i.e. pathways or processes). The actions individuals put forward should be ones which are achievable for them given their role.

Please see chart below which gives an example of the form that groups were asked to complete.

### Example

What we will do?	
1) (Name of organisation) will ensure availability of accessible information to all parents	Please circle on what level this action will need to take place.  Practitioner Level <input checked="" type="radio"/> Organisational Level

What resources will we use?
1) SCLD - Easy Read Training Staff time Training budget

How will we do it?
1) By identifying budget resources to provide staff with easy read training Identifying easy read training Selecting staff for training Working to produce accessible materials.

Who will be involved?
Managers at (Name of organisation) Staff at (Name of Organisation) SCLD

## Action Planning Themes

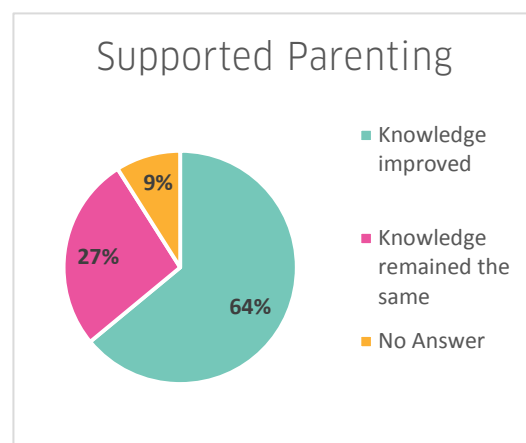
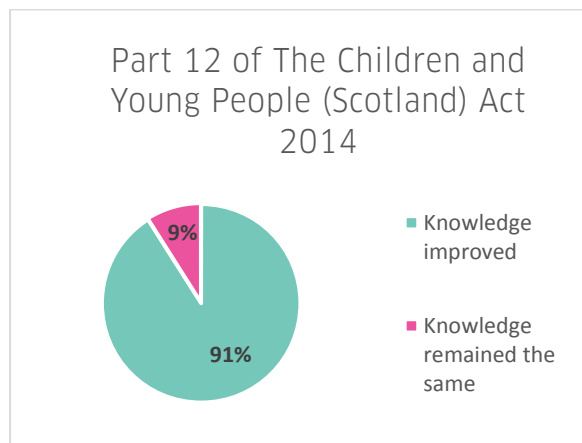
The following key themes emerged:

- 1) **Accessible information:** One group identified the needs for more accessible resources for practitioners to use when supporting parents with learning disabilities. The group felt this could be addressed through a range of methods including engaging with parenting networks and promoting wider use of the supported parenting guidelines. Additionally, the need for accessible information was highlighted with regard to the production of a good practice resource library for professionals and the use of visual timetables.
- 2) **Staff Resources:** One group highlighted the impact that losing a worker in the New Beginnings team had on support for parents. There was a feeling that a specialist Learning Disabilities worker was required in this team.
- 3) **Awareness raising and challenging attitudes:** Both groups identified a need for staff training around the needs of individuals with learning disabilities to help achieve better outcomes for individuals when they become parents. One group discussed how discriminatory attitudes impact parents and the defensive practice of child protection Social Work. The three month assessment process was also viewed as not allowing enough parents enough time to learn.

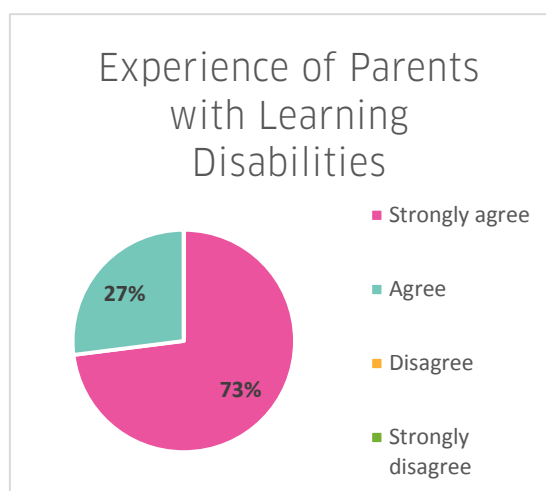
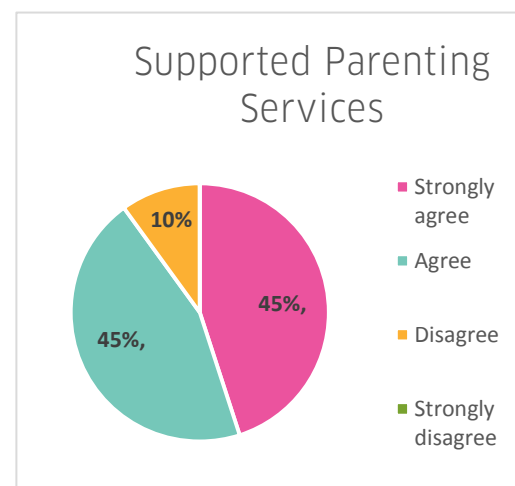
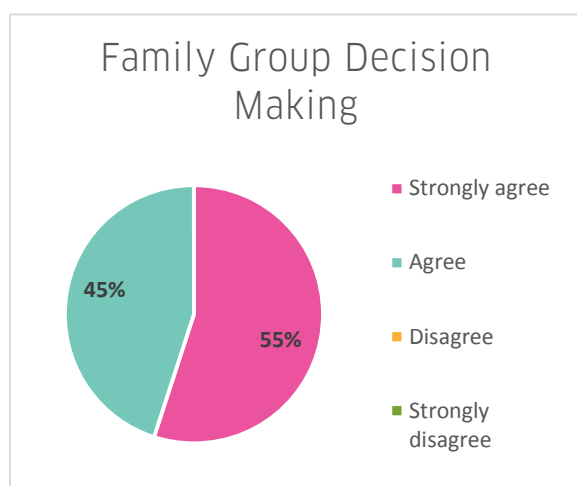
The full copy from the Action Planning Session is available in Appendix 1.

## Evaluation

Eleven participants from the event completed an evaluation form. The form asked participants if their knowledge of certain subject areas had improved as a result of the day's session.

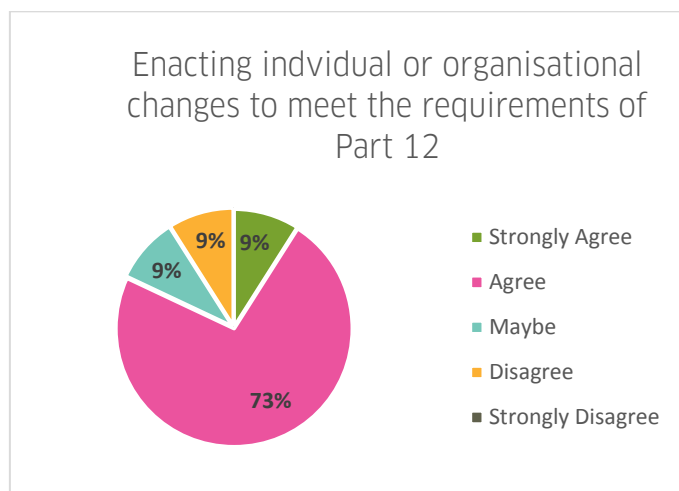


The form asked if individuals felt their knowledge had improved on in the following areas. Participants could state they; strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed that their knowledge had improved.



## Taking Learning Forward

In the evaluation participants were asked if following the event they felt they could make individual or organisational changes to meet the requirements of Part 12.



There was a mixed response regarding to what extent individuals could enact change. The majority stated they could enact some form of change. Comments from the evaluation forms said,

- That understanding Part 12 would allow staff to challenge others in their own practice,
- That an individual will discuss the needs of parents with learning disabilities at strategic planning group level and will get contacts to attend the Parenting Network meeting.

Despite some individuals feeling that knowledge from the day could present them with an opportunity to enact change. Other comments stated that limited funding and resources would stop them enacting any change.

The limited attendance from within Children and Families Social Work staff at the event was highlighted and was viewed as a barrier to enacting further change. Additionally, a need for more engagement with senior management about the issues discussed at the event was highlighted.

## Summary

- Fifteen individuals attended the event. Twenty individuals had booked on. Attendees were made up of, two NHS staff, six social work staff, five third sector staff and one member of staff from education.
- Presentations covered; Part 12 of The Children and Young People Act, the principles and good practice features of Supported Parenting, Supported Parenting Services, Family Group Decision Making and the experiences of parents with learning disabilities.
- The groups identified a number of areas working well in Dundee. This included:
  - Services working together on parenting assessments,
  - Some adapted information at pre-birth/post-birth,
  - Relationships between some professionals and parents.
- The groups identified areas working less well in Dundee:
  - Not all staff are equipped to support parents with learning disabilities,
  - Complex and large child protection panels,
  - Child protection case conferences
  - Limited time and resources,
  - Lack of clear pathways and role definition in Children and Adult Services,
  - Limited awareness of specific needs of parents with learning disabilities,
  - Communication across services (Between adult and children's services, as well as statutory and third sector providers),
  - Limited individual care packages put together with parents.



- The groups identified key areas of action which would help them to Support Parents with Learning Disabilities. This included:
  - Improving provision of accessible information and tools for practitioners,
  - Increasing availability of specialist learning disability staff,
  - Staff training around the specific needs of parents with learning disabilities.
  
- 77% of the group had improved knowledge of Part 12 of The Children and Young People Scotland Act and Supported Parenting following the session,
- 25% strongly agreed their knowledge of Family Group Decision Making had improved,
- 45% strongly agreed their knowledge of supported parenting had improved,
- 73% strongly agreed their knowledge of the experience of parents had improved.

### **What happens next?**

We will send those in attendance a six-month follow-up survey to assess what actions,if any, have been taken forward and what areas may still need to be developed.

Thank you for your participation.

## Appendix 1: Group Action Plans.

### Group 1: Identified three actions they would like to be taken forward

Due to time restraints not all sections were completed.

What we will do?	
Provide accessible information for professionals working with parents with learning disabilities to use as a resource.	Organisational and individual level.
What resources will we use?	
The Working Together with Parents Network, Dundee Parents Network.	
How will we do it?	
By engaging with the Parenting Network, By using the Supported Parenting Guidelines more widely, Better multi- agency communication.	
Who will be involved?	
Alternative Augmentative Communication Co-ordinator.	

What we will do?	
Producing Good Practice Library to help professionals to support parents with learning disabilities.	Organisational level.
What resources will we use?	
Awareness raising of staff regarding which organisations can offer support.	
How will we do it?	
Better / extensive training for workers in children services around learning disabilities, By producing audio material as well as written material.	
Who will be involved?	
N/A	

What we will do?	
Produce a visual timetable to support parents day to day.	Individual with organisational buy in.
What resources will we use?	
Awareness raising of the needs of parents with learning disabilities, Bring support services together.	
How will we do it?	
By engaging with the Parenting Network, By using the Supported Parenting Guidelines more widely, Better multi- agency communication.	
Who will be involved?	
Easy Read trainer.	

### What we will do?

Develop a care pathway for Dundee prenatal and post-natal strategy. This pathway should be for everyone but that meets the needs of parents with learning disabilities.

Organisational level.

### What resources will we use?

Find out what existing pathways other localities use.

### How will we do it?

This should be part of a National Strategy,  
Using the Pathway for Involvement,  
Discuss parenting at the Equality and Improvement Group which is Tayside wide,  
Developing links at all service levels.

### Who will be involved?

Health and Social Care,  
Multi Agency working between child and adult services,  
Arlene Mitchell (Adult Services),  
Diane McCulloch (Adult Services),  
Jennifer King (Children Services),  
Glyn Lloyd (Children Services).

Parenting Network, to start a pathway and link children's services into it.

George Ireland, Accessible information.

## Group 2: Identified three actions they would like to be taken forward

What we will do?	
Address the need for New Beginnings Learning Disabilities Worker.	Organisational level.
What resources will we use?	
Budget.	
How will we do it?	
Will require buy in from Social Work Department.	
Who will be involved?	
New beginning manager and Social Work Service Manager.	

What we will do?	
Challenge discriminatory attitudes of some practitioners regarding parents with learning disabilities.	Individual level with organisational buy in.
What resources will we use?	
Engagement with a learning disability service to provide training.	
How will we do it?	
By providing staff training and awareness regarding learning disability, By encouraging joint working, By encouraging creative practice and support packages.	
Who will be involved?	
Children's services managers, Adult learning disability social work managers, Learning disability services, Third sector agencies.	

What we will do?	
Preventative care and work with families.	Individual level with organisational buy in.
What resources will we use?	
Staff training/ learning disability awareness, Budget.	
How will we do it?	
Through partnership work between third sector agencies and social work departments.	
Who will be involved?	
Professionals, Close families, Extended family networks, Managers in social work children's services.	