



Working Well Together

Thursday 7th December 2017



central
ADVOCACY
partners



Falkirk Council



This meeting was a follow up to Part 12 of The Children and Young People Act: Making it work for parents with learning disabilities held on the 23rd of June 2017. At this initial event staff from Falkirk Council had developed action plans to develop support for parents with learning disabilities.

At the follow-up meeting staff from Falkirk Council met with a number of parents and staff from Central Advocacy Partners Parent's Network to discuss the following:

- 1) What is important in working with parents and children?**
- 2) To work in a person-centred way, what needs to change? / what can you do?**
- 3) Following today, what are we doing to do?**

You can read a full summary of what was discussed on the following pages.

What is important in working with parents and children?



**Being honest about concerns
and help parent agree on a safe-**



**Be supportive
when offering
support**



**Giving support to
fathers at the same
time as mothers**



**Consistency of
social worker**



**Recovery time when
emotions are raised**



**Someone to ask
questions**



**Good and
understanding
relationships**

To work in a person-centred way, what needs to change?

**Simplifying reports from
Children and Family Social
workers**

Don't treat parents with
learning disabilities like
children

Balance parents and
families strengths with
concerns

**Keeping meetings small would
make them less intimidating.
If there are lots of people in the
meeting parents might not feel able
to speak.**

**Using plain
English
in reports**

Think about attendance
at case conferences.
It should only be people
who are involved with
the family who attend.

**Using language
everyone understands**

**Don't always focus on the negative or the past - but focus
on the things parents are doing well.
It is upsetting to be continually reminded of the past if it is
not balanced with the present.**

Balance parents and families strengths with concerns

Break up complicated language.
Getting to know people, understanding and taking the time to find out what works for them.

A team around the child, case conferences, and core group meetings should be smaller.

Stopping meetings regarding a child's well-being at different points and recapping.

Think about if we need reports at meetings

Doing a summary of a report for the parents prior to any meeting

What can you do?

- Build trust through ongoing relationships with parents
- Commit time - to allow for better communication with parents
- Don't always use words in reports, use words, colours and symbols
- Use fewer words in the reports
- Chairperson at meetings taking time to explain thing and introduce themselves (5 minutes at the start of the meeting)
- Accessible resource training for staff
- Make reports Easy Read
- Have smaller meetings
- Think about words and language used
- Use visual tools
- Use of role modelling
- Think about actions following the meeting and provide a summary of the meeting
- Good relationships between professionals and parents, professionals giving patience, time and quality information
- Give parents time to prepare in advance of the meeting

- Give parents breaks during meetings
- Use plain English in reports
- Use traffic lights to show worry/strengths
- Make reports shorter
- Use the name that the person wants to know as in reports
- Use past information as a tool, as a comparison to show progress
- Produce balanced reports with backed up evidence for allegations
- Plan for conversations with parents and give parents time to plan
- If something has been disproved this should be recorded in the report
- Recognise the good stuff (strengths of a parent and family)
- Include everyone's views
- In reports avoid using the term 'The Writer'
- Use bullet points in reports - if these are helpful
- Explain your decision

Following today, what are we going to do?

**Make sure reports
don't include irrelevant
historical information**

**Apply the same
standards to both
mothers and fathers**

**Try to say yes to
requests for help
where suitable**

**Make sure parents
don't hear new
information for the
first time at meetings**

**Ask parents more:
what do you think?
What would help?
How are you
managing?**

**Make referrals to Central
Advocacy Partners for all
parents with a learning
disability**

**Prepare parent for
bringing up hurtful
things in a meeting**

Make sure reports don't include irrelevant historical information

Prepare the parents for the meeting. Including details like who will be present and what will be discussed

Better manage sensitive information

Consider the parent's role in meetings

Be consistent and accountable

Support the whole family

Produce balanced reports, written in plain English and using bullet points

Be understanding of the circumstances of parents in relation to absences at meetings.

Using language everyone understands

Have shorter meetings with fewer people and agreed set breaks

Look at the best way to communicate with parents: use bite-sized chunks of information and use texts instead of letters

Consider the level of detail in minutes of meetings


General points



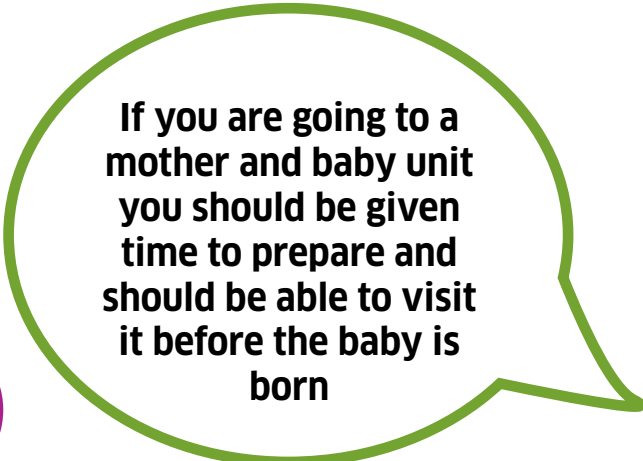
Parenting is a steep learning curve.



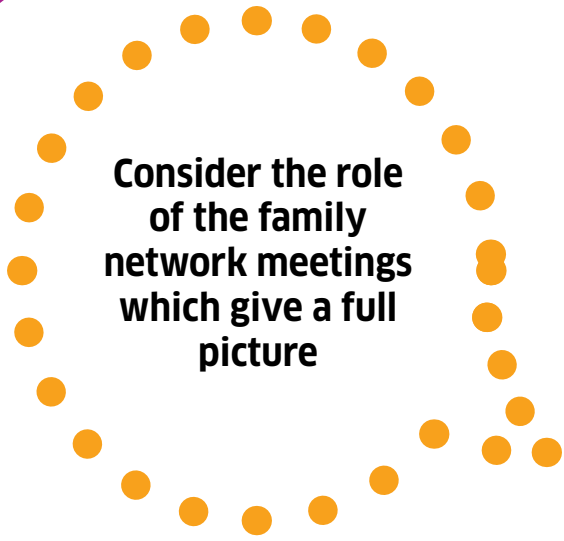
Sometimes it is hard to be a parent



Sometimes parents can feel ganged up on in meetings (particularly if advocacy is not involved)



If you are going to a mother and baby unit you should be given time to prepare and should be able to visit it before the baby is born



Consider the role of the family network meetings which give a full picture

Key Themes / Areas for Development

- 1) Routinely make referrals to advocacy for people with learning disabilities (Including, Central Advocacy Partners)
- 2) Structure of meetings: time for preparation, smaller groups, and breaks
- 3) Reports: Balanced, plain English and relevant
- 4) Provision of whole family support.