



Minutes of the meeting of the MILTON KEYNES SPECIAL NEEDS UMBRELLA GROUP held on THURSDAY 15 JUNE 2000 at 10.00 am

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| Present: | J Andrew-Barrett | - | Milton Keynes Council Special Educational Psychologist |
| | L Batty | - | Springfield School PD/CD Departments |
| | M Boyd | - | MK Network 81/MK Downs' Syndrome Association |
| | E Gifford | - | Headteacher, The Radcliffe School |
| | T Mabbott | - | Milton Keynes Council Committee Manager |
| | S Rowles | - | Buckinghamshire Health Authority |
| | H Saunders | - | Milton Keynes Councillor |
| | P Seymour | - | Milton Keynes Councillor |
| | S Wadsworth | - | Milton Keynes Council Pupil Services Manager |
| | | | |
| Apologies: | K Crowsley | - | Parent Partnership Service |
| | M Eastland | - | MK Autistic Spectrum Parent Support |
| | R Fraser | - | Redway School |
| | J Odeku | - | Senior Clinical Medical Officer Milton Keynes Community NHS Trust |
| | M Rowlands | - | Governor - Redway School |

ACTION

1.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Group agreed that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 March 2000 were an accurate record, subject to the addition of Councillor Saunders' apologies.

TM

2.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Committee Reports – SEN Statistics

It was noted that an item on the presentation of SEN statistics would be a major item on the agenda for the October meeting of the Group.

SW/TM

3.0 EARLY YEARS PROVISION

The Group received an update on Early Years Provision from Jackie Andrew-Barrett, and noted that this needed to be seen in the context of the overall work of the Childcare and Early Years Partnership. In particular, it was noted that the Partnership covered a large number and wide range of providers, all of whom were required to have regard to the SEN Code of Practice if they wish to receive grant funding from the government.

It was reported that the Partnership had a varied role in funding, monitoring and reporting on the various aspects of early years provision, and noted that many of the regulatory responsibilities lay completely with Milton Keynes Council.

Concerns were raised that the problems of late identification of children with SEN, picked up in primary schools, stem from lack of understanding of the issues involved at nursery level. It was noted that the issue was currently being addressed, and that the LEA's emphasis was upon developing good SEN practice at early years level at the same time as developing sound SEN policies.

Members also expressed concern at the lack of language and speech provision at pre-school level. It was noted that, although the issue was being addressed, this was because pre-school education was not part of the statutory guidance on SEN provision, and so needed to be funded and provided locally by the Health Service.

It was agreed that an explanation of the role of the guidance in implementing SEN policies be produced and distributed to Members of the Umbrella Group.

The Group welcomed the presentation, and noted that further updates on the development of such early intervention approaches would be given to future meetings.

4.0 SEN REVIEW UPDATE

The Group received an update on the SEN Review. It was noted that this was now in the public domain, and the challenge was to implement and develop in integrated approach which could run alongside the Education Development Plan.

5.0 PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE UPDATE

The Group agreed that the report on the Aparent partnership Group be deferred to the next meeting.

6.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Group noted that, as a consequence of the Council's decision to delay the implementation of the Cabinet system, there were currently no committee papers relating to SEN under consideration. It was agreed that, once available, such papers would be made available to future meetings of the group.

TM/SW

7.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Role of Head Teachers

Clarification was sought over the role of Secondary Head teachers on the Group, with the suggestion that another representative of Secondary schools, such as a SENCo, would possibly be able to contribute more to the two-way discussion of the Group.

It was agreed that this would be clarified and placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Group.

Inclusive Provision

Councillors Saunders and Seymour noted that, as a result of visiting some local Special schools, they understood there to be concern at the tendency of Milton Keynes Council to be sending increasing numbers of pupils into mainstream schools, threatening the viability of designated special schools.

It was agreed that there was a need to discuss the issue as it raised significant questions about the future role of special schools and other forms of SEN provision, in the light of parents increasingly expressing their own preferences.

DfEE Guidance on Young People in Care

Clarification was sought of the role of advocate under the new guidelines. It was agreed that this issue merited discussion at a future meeting of the Group.

8.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Group noted that the next meeting would be held on the following date:

ALL

Thursday 5 October 2000 at 10:00am, in Room 2, Civic Offices

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11:30 AM