



Minutes of the meeting of the MILTON KEYNES SPECIAL NEEDS UMBRELLA GROUP held on THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2000 at 10.00am

- 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
  - K Crowsley - Parent Partnership Service
  - M Eastland - MK Autistic Spectrum Parent Support
  - R Fraser - Redway School
  - E Gifford - Headteacher, The Radcliffe School
  - A McGrath - SEN Officer
  - J Marshall - Milton Keynes Council Committee Manager
  - M Rowlands - Governor - Redway School
  - S Rowles - Buckinghamshire Health Authority
  - S Wadsworth - Milton Keynes Council Pupil Services Manager
- Apologies:**
- J Odeku - Senior Clinical Medical Officer Milton Keynes Community NHS Trust
  - P Seymour - Milton Keynes Councillor

**ACTION**

**1.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Group agreed that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 December 1999 were an accurate record. **JM**

**2.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Committee Reports – SEN Statistics

With regard to comments made about the lack of provision for children in the early years, it was reported that creative solutions were being sought.

AGREED –

That J Andrew-Barrett produce an item for the next meeting of the group on the topic of early years provision including current and **JAB**

future provision, as well as information about the Buckinghamshire County Council's 'Early Bird Programme' which aims to empower parents.

### **3.0 PARENT PARTNERSHIP FEEDBACK**

The Group received statistics on the Parent Partnership Service. It was noted that there had been increases in telephone calls to the service, requests for support at stages 1-3 and requests for support in choosing a school. It was reported that there was a shortage of volunteers, but that a new accredited Named Persons course would take place on 4 May 2000.

The Group felt that this was a very positive report on the Parent Partnership. Areas for action were seen to be increased involvement in schools and working with the parents of excluded children.

In answer to a query from M Boyd officers stated that the guidance on the SEN procedures followed by Milton Keynes Council had been inherited from Buckinghamshire County Council and needed to be reviewed. However this would not be possible until the Department for Education and Employment's new SEN Code of Practice had been published. It was emphasised that all interested groups would be consulted when this work was carried out.

AGREED -

That statistics on the numbers of appeals lodged would be produced for all future meetings of the Group.

**SW**

### **4.0 SEN REVIEW**

The Group received an update on the SEN Review (discussed under Committee Reports).

### **5.0 CONSTITUTION OF GROUP – REPRESENTATION OF TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

The Group discussed the possibility of expanding its membership.

S Rowles asked the Group to consider extending an invitation to a member of the Milton Keynes Primary Care Group in anticipation of it gaining Trust status and therefore gaining some functions previously overseen by Buckinghamshire Health Authority.

R Fraser asked the Group to consider the need to include a representative from the Neighbourhood Services Directorate who could highlight post 16 issues, which tended to be underrepresented.

The Group discussed the request from Teachers Professional Associations to be represented in the group. It was felt that this was not necessary at this stage.

AGREED -

1. That the following be asked to join the SEN Umbrella Group as co-optees:

JM

(a) Jenny Williams - Director of Development, Milton Keynes Primary Care Group

(b) Deborah Cooper - Economy and Learning Manager, Milton Keynes Council

2. That all members of the Teachers Professional Associations be put on the distribution list for the SEN Umbrella Group in order that members could identify any issues of concern and, if agreeable to the group, could attend for a specific meeting.

JM

## 6.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Provision for Secondary Pupils with Severe Communication Difficulties

The Group considered this report which had been discussed by the Education Committee. It was reported that Members had enthusiastically supported the report and this meant that there could now be formal provision for individual students with severe communication difficulties within Milton Keynes.

Some members of the Group expressed concern that the provision was within a Catholic School, which although should not pose problems for admission, may cause problems of inclusion for non-Catholic children. The Group noted this concern, but emphasised that this should be considered to be a very positive step towards enlarging choice.

The Group discussed the terminology used by different agencies with regards to special needs. It was felt that there was a plethora of terms which caused confusion for all interested parties. It was noted that new descriptors would have to be produced for the new funding regime to be introduced in April. Although the Group

expressed concern about which descriptors should be used, there was general agreement that there was an urgent need for a set of helpful descriptors which could be used by all agencies in Milton Keynes.

It was suggested that work to formulate a set of terms should be carried out in consultation with Secondary Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, as well as taking account of Department for Education and Employment terminology.

### SEN Statistics

The Group considered this report on the latest SEN Statistics. It was noted that some of the statistics were not totally accurate, partly due to the introduction of a new IT system. S Wadsworth provided an update so amendments to paragraph 4 should read as follows:

“Of those drafted without any exceptions, 37% were completed within the 18-week time limit, by comparison to 27% in the last financial year. The proportion of all Statements drafted within 18 weeks is similar to last year (27%).”

It was reported that A McGrath had undertaken an investigation into the statistics, and discovered that the poorest statistics were a result of statements which had been in the system for a long time. There was also retrospective work underway to find the origin of late reports, in order that the problems could hopefully be addressed.

A McGrath reported that quality control would be highlighted as this had previously been a lower priority due to the sheer quantity of work.

R Fraser queried how many referrals had been accepted or refused. S Wadsworth responded that these figures could not be provided now but the possibility of providing this information could be considered for future reports.

AGREED -

That A McGrath explore the possibility of providing statistics on the numbers of referrals which had been accepted or rejected during the year for future reports.

**AM**

That A McGrath investigate whether Table 2 to the report contains data on special schools.

**AM**

### Review of Special Education

The Group considered this report which was discussed at the Community Learning Committee. It was reported that there had been a disappointing written response to the consultation on the Education Development Plan, and that the final draft was currently being produced. It was noted that this was only a summary document and that in the near future there would be a Development Plan which would go out to consultation in the Summer, for final publication in the autumn term.

It was noted that the Special Education Development Plan would support the Education Development Plan. It was felt that health issues needed incorporating into this process, and a meeting between S Wadsworth and S Rowles would be arranged.

Officers reported that parallel work needed to take place on social inclusion, and that legislation to be put in place in 18 months time would assist in linking these two strands of work.

S Wadsworth stated that this document would be presented to the next meeting if manageable progress had been made.

## **7.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Group noted the difficulty in defining Specific Learning Disabilities, and discussed the process for defining individuals as being 'dyslexic' in Milton Keynes. The possibility of having a discussion on this at a future meeting was considered.

## **8.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Group noted that future meetings would be held on the following dates:

**ALL**

Thursday 15 June 2000 at 10:00am, in Room 2, Civic Offices  
Thursday 5 October 2000 at 10:00am, in Room 2, Civic Offices

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11:30AM