



## **SNAP PARENT CARER FORUM**

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017 SNAP held its third Strategy meeting with local authority and NHS colleagues. Strategy meetings are organised by SNAP approximately once a year in order for us to bring together local providers and discuss what we see as the priorities for families living with SEND in Central Bedfordshire.

This year's meeting was held at the Rufus Centre in Flitwick, attendees included the Designated Clinical Officer, The Head of Service for Children with Disabilities, Clinical Service Manager Children's Community and Specialist Nursing Services, The Assistant Director of Operations for Children's Services and Councilor Amanda Dodwell. Among the many attendees were also members of the SNAP steering group and Parent Representatives. The diversity of professionals in the room provides an unique opportunity to discuss how services interlink across families' lives and gives SNAP an opportunity to emphasise the importance of integrated working and how that can have positive impact.

This year SNAP presented two topics at our Strategy Meeting and then facilitated discussions to see what could be done locally to improve families lives. Our first topic was "Grey Children (those at SEND support)" it highlighted the great numbers of children being supported at this level and how they often don't receive the level of support they require. The following discussion focused on how early intervention to identify need and provide support is crucial, the role of school nurses and health visitors was noted in this process. It was also noted that identification and support becomes much harder as the child progresses through the education system into middle and secondary schools. The room acknowledged the fact that professionals need to be working in a more joined up way, across services and also within schools, especially middle/upper and secondary schools where pupils have contact with numerous teachers throughout the day.

The second topic presented at our Strategy Meeting was "Holistic view of the child (those who have an EHCP or Statement)" this focused on the often disjointed approach of services when supporting SEND children and that professionals are often not considering the views and needs of the child and family in the way that the SEND reforms intended. The discussion following this presentation recognized the fact that Education, Health and Social Care are still struggling to work together in producing cohesive EHC plans. The room discussed the issues around the plans being very education focused and that there are currently a number of varying formats in which reports and advise etc. need to be submitted. The need for training and standardized reports and paperwork was acknowledged.

While SNAP values the opportunity to get such a variety of professionals in one room and highlight the difficulties faced by families our aim is for these meetings to make a real difference. For this reason we always aim to create targets and objectives on the day everyone can agree to and timescales in which the agreed actions can be completed by. The key point to be raised at this meeting was that Education, Health and Social

Care measure themselves at only 30% toward full implementation of the SEND reforms. This is why families are not feeling and seeing the changes at ground level. SNAP believe passionately that by working together to co-produce we can all improve this figure quickly. Therefore, SNAP PCF will run a mid-term Strategy Meeting at the end of September to see how far we have improved the 30% figure.

We look forward to continued and increased co-production with our local authority and NHS colleagues. We have established strong working relationships which we wish to harness to ensure we can make a real difference to families. The September meeting will review the topics presented by SNAP at this meeting and also include a presentation from the Designated Clinical Officer for Bedfordshire. SNAP are committed to ensuring the SEND reforms are implemented locally to benefit SEND families. We will use our meeting in September to again challenge our colleagues and where necessary get professionals to agree targets to ensure we all continue to work to improve the lives of our children and young people.