



SPECIAL NEEDS ACTION PANEL
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

NEWSLETTER, Autumn 2016

A parent participation Forum creating opportunities for parent carers to work with service providers to improve the delivery of Social Care, Education and Health Services

What is Happening Locally?

Short Breaks

SNAP held two Focus Meetings in the summer, the purpose of which was for parent carers to discuss cuts in short breaks funding. Through *Listen Ear* (see below) many parent carers contacted us with concerns that funding was being cut from the charities that support their families and asked us to help. It was this contact that drove the forum to organise the Focus Meetings. The feedback we received through *Listen Ear* alerted us to the fact that on this occasion the forum had not been involved in co-producing a strategy to manage local changes in funding. The forum was able to discuss this with the Local Authority and from that moment on, parent carer views were included and respected in the process. SNAP invited The Head of Children's Social Care, Ken Harvey, to attend our Focus Meetings in order to discuss short breaks and families' concerns, helping to influence services in the future. From our Focus Meetings we collected many parent carers' opinions and views, which we are now able to use to work with the Local Authority, to convey the fears and concerns of our families and the real life implications of these budget cuts. A survey will be sent out to parent carers in October from the Local Authority regarding the budget cuts. This survey has been co-produced with the forum as parent carers and is a vital opportunity for us all to have our say. SNAP cannot stress enough the importance of all parent carers, regardless of their child or young persons' needs, completing this survey - if we do not tell the Local Authority what we want and need, they cannot work with us to provide the services that we deserve.

Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs)

Parent Carers have been telling us through *Listen Ear* (see below) that they are frustrated with the lack of information they are receiving about the transfers from a statement of education to an EHCP. SNAP has communicated this to the SEND team within the Local Authority and they have agreed to send a letter out to parent carers and schools with an up-to-date timeline of the transfers. Please contact SNAP if you have any feedback, whether positive or negative, about the process.

SNAP held an Education Health & Care Plan Workshop in Ampthill during September; it was well attended and we received great feedback. It was clear from the workshop that there is still a lot of work to do to inform parent carers of the process and their rights. Here is what some of you said: 'excellent information given, in a professional yet relaxed manner' and 'informative and supportive'.

The Local Offer

SNAP has worked with the local authority to co-produce the Local Offer - the aim of this website is to offer parent carers a 'one stop shop' to find information about services you may need if you have a child or young person with SEND. The website is a work in progress, therefore please take a look at its content and hit the feedback button if you see anything that needs to be added or updated. You can find the Local offer here:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/children/sen-disability/landing.aspx>

LISTEN EAR



As a forum we represent the views of parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from birth to 25. Our parent representatives meet with the Local Authority, Health and Education to feed into the services that are being delivered. We need to ensure we are capturing as wide a range of views as possible.

Please let us know what is working well and what needs to be improved – we, like you, want the very best services for our families. We now have a real opportunity to make a difference as we are at the heart of the decision making and want to make sure your views are being represented. Contact us at yoursay@snapcentralbeds.org.uk and let us know your experiences.

All the information gathered as part of this campaign will be recorded anonymously and used to influence and drive SNAP's priorities as a forum. We record trends and use this information to improve local services.

What is SNAP?

SNAP is a pro-active group of parents who all have children or young people with additional needs or disabilities. We have come together as a group of parent carers to work with other individuals and organisations to help influence and improve the local services that are provided for our children and young people within Central Bedfordshire.

We focus on helping to raise the standard of social care, education and health services within the county, to ensure that these services are provided in a way that meets the needs of all disabled children and their families in the county.

As parents of disabled children and young people, we bring a real-life perspective and experience to the planning and development of the services that our families use. We constructively challenge decisions that are taken by our local council and health authority about the future planning of services; we work in partnership with our local council and health authorities to make decisions about services they deliver.

How to contact SNAP

Our Participation Manager, Kirsty Green, can be contacted either by email talk2us@snapcentralbeds.org.uk or call 07805 002163

For administrative or membership queries, please email info@snapcentralbeds.org.uk or call 07984 545044

Please follow us by liking our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SNAPCentralBedfordshireParentCarerForum/>

Website: <http://www.snapcentralbeds.org.uk/>

Watch our video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2UkrMq5Lpc&feature=youtu.be>

How to become a member of SNAP?

It is easy to do, please contact info@snapcentralbeds.org.uk

You will be added to our database and receive our newsletter and details of our events.