



SNAP Parent Carer Forum CIC Report June 2018: Our Response to the Satisfaction of SEND Services Survey in Central Bedfordshire.

SNAP Parent Carer Forum CIC has put together this report to reflect the current level of parental satisfaction with SEND services in Central Bedfordshire. It should be read in conjunction with the survey which details the responses from 175 parent carers. The survey was opened to inform the Forum of how parents feel about local services, following the implementation of the 2014 SEND reforms. We have invited representatives from the Local Authority and Health Authority to a strategy meeting to discuss the findings of the survey and will use this information for OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission when they carry out the local SEND Area Inspection of Central Bedfordshire in the future. It is essential to appreciate that all the parents responded to the survey alone, whether at home or at an event and it makes for potent reading. These are the raw views of parents in Central Bedfordshire to be valued and addressed and we urge all parties to consider the results as an opportunity to positively address the issues raised. The results of this survey will inform the current and future priorities of SNAP PCF.

Parent Participation with the Local Authority and the Health Authority has changed dramatically over the last couple of years. Originally workstreams were set up and overseen by the Support and Aspiration Board. SNAP Parent Representatives were an equal part of these workstreams and fed into their progress. Over the last year the workstreams have mostly been disbanded, except for Preparing for Adulthood and the Local Offer. The Support and Aspiration Board has also ceased to exist and has been partially revived in the form of the SEND Delivery Board which currently meets infrequently but is expected to become more established.

SNAP Parent Carer Forum has altered to reflect the new participation model of the Local Authority. Our Participation Manager and Director attends strategic board meetings and we have set up Parent Panels to share parental expertise with officers from the Local Authority. Parent Representatives have now become Participation Representatives whose role is to increase membership to further inform our work and improve services for families. We are ambitious and strive to reach as many families in Central Bedfordshire as possible. Our recent conference, to inform and empower parents, was supported well by families and practitioners in equal measure and we will continue to reach out to families in this way.

SNAP PCF have continued to press the need for a more robust and useful Local Offer (this should be a 'one-stop shop' sharing information for parents, professionals and young people) and this is now gaining traction. Many parents still do not know what the Local Offer is and those that do, find that the information that they seek is hard to find (see survey questions 19 and 20). We believe that the Local Offer should not ever be seen as a 'done thing', it must be seen as a live site, frequently updated and improved by all parties, Education, Health and Social Care.

The employment of a Designated Clinical Officer has been a positive step and great strides have been taken to ensure that Health involvement in the EHCP process has improved. SNAP PCF and Bedford Borough PCF jointly co-produced and presented Outcomes training with representatives from Health, Education and Social Care, for the benefit of practitioners and parents. It has proved valuable.

Parents tell us that challenges remain with joint-working (Question 15), a view shared by all parties. SNAP is committed to helping overcome barriers to effective joint-working for the benefit of families. 97% of parents surveyed believe that they understand the needs of their children either well or very well (Question 10) and this should be celebrated. Despite this, parents throughout the survey have commented that they would like more training, and many have paid for this privately. However, parents are divided as to how well they believe that Health, Education and Social Care understand the needs of their children (Question 11).

Parental input into targets and outcomes makes interesting reading, with parents feeling that, on the whole, Education are seen to be adopting the Section 19 principals (Children and Families Act 2014). The comments left by parents show that there is still work to be done all round.

Question 21, 'Do you feel your child/young person has the support that they need to achieve their best possible outcomes?' has had the most dispiriting response. When measured against the confidence that parents hold in their own understanding of their child/young person's needs, there is clearly a disconnect. Parents want more support, more training, more information. The comments make for sobering reading.

When parents were asked to give advice to others in their situation, it was sad and yet unsurprising to read how often the word 'fight' was mentioned. In fact 'fight' was prevalent throughout the survey. SNAP PCF would like to remind all those to whom this survey is being presented, that parents do not seek out or enjoy battling for that which we feel our children and young people need. Joint-working, co-production, communication and strong and respectful relationship-building can go some way to removing the perception and the expectation that we have to fight.

SNAP PCF has also used the survey to reflect upon itself. It is clear, from the results of the survey, that we do not have enough members who have older children and young people. Work has already begun to redress the balance and SNAP are co-producing events including a mini-conference and roadshow with the team from Preparing for Adulthood. From Autumn 2018 SNAP PCF will be co-producing training for parents with the Local Authority SEND Team around SEND Support and the Annual Review process. We continue to forge closer links with the voluntary sector in order to access the views of their members and encourage them to feed their experiences in to SNAP PCF.

SNAP Parent Carer Forum are proud to present this report as an honest reflection of the views of 175 parents in Central Bedfordshire. We urge all parties to consider the data within to inform, celebrate and improve their practice and we look forward to further co-production. SNAP PCF thanks every single parent who took the time to participate as we strive to use their views to inform and improve services for families. We look forward to presenting the same survey next year as a comparison. We urge parent carers to join our membership; for further information and a short on-line application form, go to <http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MembershipformtojoinSNAP>