



## **Hampshire Children and Families Forum**

### **SRN PARISHES BRANCH**

(covering West End, Hedge End, Botley, Bursledon, Netley and Hamble.)

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c/o Wyvern Technology College, Botley Road, Fair Oak SO50 7AN

### **Minutes of Branch Meeting Held 20<sup>th</sup> September 2005 10 a.m.–12 noon at Freegrounds Infants School, Hobb Lane, Hedge End**

#### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

Present:

Jane Parker (Chair)

Linda Knowles (HCFF Co-ordinator)

Debbie Ravenscroft (Contact a Family)

Stephen Spacagna (Eastleigh Community Services)

Karen Etheridge (National Childminding Association)

Apologies:

Pat Statham, Anne Stevens, Hannah Plom, Lorraine Tate, Min Partner, Debra McAndrew, Sara Rinaldi, Jacqueline Rolls

#### **2 Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising not dealt with in the rest of the agenda.

#### **3 Speaker: Debbie Ravensdale, Contact a Family:**

Debbie introduced Contact a Family, a UK wide voluntary organisation providing information and support to families of disabled children. In December of last year C a F merged with The Lady Hoare Trust, which supported children with specific limb disorders. In contrast to CaF, which is parent-led, The Lady Hoare Trust is staffed by qualified social workers. These now have the title 'Family workers'.

As CAF has no offices south of London, a pilot scheme, the Family Support Service has been launched to work with families who have a child aged 0-19 with diagnosed or un-diagnosed disability or long-term condition. They don't want to duplicate the work of other services (hence the pilot) and the scheme is primarily for families slipping through the net; short-term pieces of work consisting of intervention and withdrawal rather than long-term support.

Debbie covers Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight. Families can self-refer or be referred by an organization and there is a national helpline.: 0808 808 3555 and a website [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk).

Debbie also showed the Directory and the mass of available publications. SS requested leaflets to pass around, especially at the Carers' Centre. JP agreed to pass on details of a recent 0-5 early intervention conference from which it was clear that Contact a Family could pick up families that fall outside the criteria of other agencies.

Debbie is looking for opportunities to go into children's centres etc. as a clinic to take parents' enquiries. JP suggested the Carers' Centre and the Young Carers. LK suggested contacting Parentline Plus and SS suggested contacting the ECS Home Information Service and Care Needs Co-ordinator. Wildern Opportunity Pre-school and Eastleigh Family Nursery were also suggested.

HCFF will do all they can to help, specifically by publicising the project in the next Newsletter. SS asked for a copy of the newsletter article for the ECS Network newsletter.

#### **4 Current Work plan:**

Next term's work plan was not set in time for the meeting, but LK gave an overview of work currently in hand.

Consultations: 10-13 consultation is complete and will be available on [www.hcff.org.uk](http://www.hcff.org.uk) along with other consultations. JP pointed out that the legal background was well checked out before the consultation was sent out and that the survey showed up the gap in provision for children around 11-12 years old. SS has had a lot of queries about what is available for 12 year olds, etc. Eastleigh Youth Council has involved young people with a particular interest, but once their need has been met they tend to lose interest in the council. Solent Youth Action's Millennium Volunteers is aimed at the 14-18 year olds and doesn't catch the younger ones.

The current consultation into leisure activities for families with special needs children has had some problems with design. People found it very long and complicated to fill in. It needs a word document to accompany it to explain the difficulties and log comments.

LK is planning a Big Draw activity in conjunction with the Pumpkin Festival at Royal Victoria Country Park.

Extended schools: LK has met with Simon Stocks, the Extended schools co-ordinator at Wyvern Technology College and will be co-ordinating publicity and offering advice, consultation, as required.

Eastleigh Family Nursery have been supported through the trying space of time when it seemed they would not be able to make a smooth

transition from their venue at the Point to the new Nightingale Children's Centre. LK also attended a CYPP Workshop which proved a good opportunity to promote HCFF.

The Under Fives Fun Days in June were a great success and a committee has been formed to fund-raise and plan a permanent series of fun days. The next meeting will be on October 21<sup>st</sup> at Wessex House.

LK is also working with JP and others to set up Playschemes for next Spring and Summer to replace those cut by Eastleigh Borough Council.

## **5 Newsletter:**

The deadline for the next newsletter is 7<sup>th</sup> October. Debbie Ravenscroft agreed to provide an article about Contact a Family.

## **6 Information Exchange and Any Other Business:**

LK referred to current research which shows that stress hormone levels are elevated in children in starting nursery and do not return to their normal level even five months later. JP wanted to know where childminders fitted in to the picture. SS pointed out that nurseries had to be 'one size fits all', where childminders could attend to different needs.

The discussion ran on to consider extended schools and the possibility that parents will feel they no longer have a reason to start work late and will miss out on valuable contact time usually spent in walking their child to school. SS reported an anecdote in which a father who had tried sending his child to school via a 'walking bus' found that the child didn't like it because 'we just walk, nobody talks'. The child missed conversations with the father on the way to school.

Karen Etheridge reported on a scheme whereby childminders are used as a support for 'at risk' children. The child minder can help child development and also (gently) pass on childcare tips to the parents. For children who can't go to nursery an early years qualified childminder can do things with the child to fill the gaps. In a scheme launched in Gosport and Fareham last year childminders are paid by Social Services to cover school exclusions.

## **Date of Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January, 10a.m. -12 noon, Freegrounds Infants School.**

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