

1. AIMING HIGH PARTNERSHIP GROUP SUMMARY REPORT (December 2010)

1. Aims/Objectives

- To deliver the Government-funded Aiming High for Children with Disabilities Programme
- Transforming the transition process for young people with disabilities
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Oversight of Special Educational Needs strategy

2. Progress against milestones

Aiming High Partnership Group

- The Group reviewed its membership, and agreed to invite representatives from the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum and Medway CVS, and to increase the number of representatives from the Parent and Carers Forum from 1 to 2.

Short breaks

- Short breaks provision has recently been extended to working with black and minority ethnic groups – the Shishu Kishor Bengali group, and the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum
- The regular series of seminars for short breaks providers and disabilities services organised by Medway's Aiming High team is receiving positive feedback, especially in relation to the networking opportunities it affords
- The Government has published its Short Breaks regulations, which will underpin the new statutory duty to provide short breaks from April 2011. This extends beyond a simple duty, to include the provision of a range of short breaks, and more than an 'emergency' service, to include short breaks for families who would benefit from them, rather than those at risk of breakdown
- The Group received a report on Medway's DCATCH¹ programme for 2010-11, which focuses on improving information to families, and workforce development for early years and childminder services.

Transition Transformation

- Medway has undertaken to trial regional performance management/quality standards for post 16 providers – the aim being to provide an evidenced self-assessment of how well post 16

¹ Disabled Children's Access to Childcare

providers are meeting the needs of young people with disabilities in transition

- Work has been proceeding on the establishment of a database to hold information on young people in transition, which can be shared between agencies. A Database Task and Finish group has been established and is looking at options in terms of where the database should be based and the software configuration
- As part of the Kent and Medway Children's Palliative Care Strategy, a series of workshops is being held on the development of a Kent and Medway approach to continuing care for children and young people who have high level support needs.

Medway Parent and Carers Forum

- The Group commented on a draft Parent Partnership Agreement between the Medway Parent and Carers Forum, the Council, and the PCT. The aims to ensure that parents will be actively and systematically involved in the commissioning of services for children with disabilities, through the Forum.

Speech and language therapy

- An enhanced 'train the trainers' programme for school staff is being provided to support them in helping children with speech and language therapy needs. This will help address the lack of provision which has been the subject of concern at consultation meetings with parents.

3. Outcomes Achieved

- 3.1 The interim evaluation of Medway short breaks provision provides evidence of the significant impact that short breaks can have, both in terms of benefits to the young person and family, and also in helping to prevent the need to access higher level services, including residential special school provision or becoming Looked After.

4. Risks

- 4.1 The main risk with regard to the short breaks and transition transformation programme is that the progress made will not be sustained after the current funding ends in March 2011. Options for sustainability and meeting the Council's Short Breaks duty from April 2011, will be considered by the Board in coming months.