

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING 19 NOVEMBER 2015**

### **Public Questions from Marion Burgess, Chair/Trustee, Bournemouth Parent Carer Forum**

- 1. "How are the joint working processes, and further plans being implemented, and how are they working within the Send Policy as the result of the new Education Act? "**

(Note: This is with reference from the letter that Edward Timpson sent out to all Local Authorities urging them to work closely with the parent/carer forum so that they can continue working, informing parents, carers and young adults, and that they are key partners in the local decision making.)

- 2. "How are you engaging with your parents to monitor the SEND policy?"**

### **Reply from the Vice Chair, Cllr Susan Phillips**

Both questions are closely linked so a single answer that covers both would seem appropriate: -

A year on from the start of changing over to Education, Health and Care Plans, the process is now fully in place and well understood. We are constantly looking at and developing and improving the current arrangements to make sure we continue to make a positive difference to children, young people and families while also making sure we comply with the legal requirements.

The Borough has always recognised that parents, carers and young adults are our key partners and will carry on working closely with them. Parents, carers and young people helped us develop plans across Dorset for putting into practice everything around Education, Health and Care Plans. Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Authorities are continuing to work closely with Parents, carers and young people to continually improve all that we do.

Bournemouth is part of a participation and engagement group which works across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole with which Marion Burgess will be familiar as she is the chairperson. Under Marion's leadership this group has had a considerable role in shaping how the Borough works with

key partners to develop and improve processes and services. The future of this group in its current format is being looked at and other related across Dorset groups have been asked to include participation on their agenda's as a standing item.

The Borough is taking part this term in a Department for Education pilot (known as POET), which looks to directly gather the views of children, young people, parents/carers and professionals who have been involved in the new Education, Health and Care Plan statutory process. Bournemouth has been recognised by the Department for Education as being good and a leader in getting back responses. Results from the pilot carried out this term will be available early in the new year. It seems likely that Bournemouth will continue to use a similar method to gather views after the end of the pilot.

To improve further participation from parents, carers and young people, the Principal SEN and Disability Officer (Phil Saint), is proposing to have termly meetings with SENDiass (Special Educational Needs and Disability information advice and support service), and Bournemouth's Parent Carer Forum starting in Spring 2016 to share experiences, knowledge and learning. Those meetings could also be used to agree who can represent parents for specific new developments to make sure that we are continuing to involve them in everything we do.

In January the Borough will start writing a new Special Educational Needs Strategy and Policy that will include our learning from our experiences during the first year of working within the Education, Health and Care Plans legislation whilst also looking forward to the future. Involvement of parents, carers and young people in its development will be essential to make sure that we have the best services possible.