

Exeter, East and Mid Devon
Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)
Annual Report 2016-17

The Children's Hearing Services Working Group comprises a multi-agency group made up of parents and professionals working to improve provision for children and young people with hearing loss in this area. The group works to agreed terms of reference. This group, along with other groups in Devon and Cornwall, also feeds in to a more strategic Devon and Cornwall Children's Hearing Services Forum. The group has met four times over the past year, with representatives from health, education, social care, voluntary sector and parents attending when possible.

At the beginning of 2016 objectives were discussed and agreed by the CHSWG meeting. During the year we have met regularly as a group to make progress in these areas. In addition members of the team have worked to improve specific areas of practice.

To increase the level of parental involvement in the CHSWG and value the parent voice in shaping the future of hearing services.

The CHSWG flier/ poster has been reviewed and is now available on noticeboards and websites and as a handout for parents.

Information about the group has been published in the DiscPlus Newsletter for parents

To improve multiagency working

Following the withdrawal of school entry hearing screening in Sep 2015 information has been shared with public health nurses by audiology and education to help raise concerns about awareness of undetected hearing loss in schools. We remain concerned that there is still an unmet need to increase awareness. We aim to address this by seeking further information about the strategy that Somerset County Council took for parental and public health nurse awareness to refer for hearing assessments.

Transition to adult services has been discussed at CHSWG meetings and currently pathways and information are being revised and we continue to work to improve these services. We will endeavour to foster closer links with social care and to review the new Devon County Council strategy on post 16 transition for children with disabilities.

Support for children with HI in special schools has remained a focus over the past year with a meeting to look at improving identification of and support for children. We continue to work within our multi-agency group to improve services.

To look at accessibility of information for deaf children, young people and their families

An information pack has been devised by audiology to be given to parents at the point of diagnosis of deafness

Information from local audiology service performance has been included in a regional report and shared via the CHS forum

In 2017-18 we are planning to:

- Continue to review the transition support; establish revised pathways and provision of information
- Summarise and review the key documents used by all areas of service provision to maintain a quality service over the next two years.
- Ensure we are updated on changes in Devon SEND provision including closer links with social care.
- Improve input to CHSWG and communication with NDCAMHS (National Deaf Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and social care sectors
- Seek ways to increase parental and public health nurse awareness of the need to refer for hearing assessment

The group values input from all members and is particularly keen to try and increase parental involvement in the CHSWG meetings. We acknowledge that meetings may not be accessible for some parents but are seeking alternative ways to gain ideas and feedback from parents about service provision and areas for development. We are looking for opportunities to publicise more widely the aims and achievements of the CHSWG within the Exeter, Mid and East Devon area.