



Annual Report

1st April 2010 - 31st March 2011

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Introduction

Welcome to the Devon Parent Partnership Service (which we will refer to in this report as DPPS) Annual Report for 2010-11.

This has been a year of changes for the UK following the change of government in May 2010. By the contributions in the annual report we hope to give you an insight into how this has affected DPPS and what we have been busy doing over the last year. We will use data from our records to show how the service has grown and changed during the year, celebrate successes and highlight areas for improvement. Action plans for 2010-11 are reviewed and new plans for 2011-12 made.

There are contributions from all the staff, from some of our volunteers - Independent Parental Supporters(IPS) and from some of our service users.

DPPS uses the national document 'Exemplification of minimum standards for PPS and Local Authorities' as the tool for evaluation and planning service delivery. The benchmarking statistics are collected in October and the national statistics quoted in this report relate to the data for 2009-10.

These standards were revised in October 2010, following the Lamb Enquiry Report recommendations. DPPS was involved in the national working party that developed the new exemplifications and is committed to raising the standard of provision in Devon to meet at least good practice in all eight areas:

- Funding and budget
- Management
- Working with parents
- Information and publicity
- Training, advice and support
- Networking and collaboration
- Informing and shaping local policy
- Location



Our team is small but we are enthusiastic and committed to serve the parents of the **20,382** children with Special Educational Needs who attend the **368** schools in Devon by providing independent and impartial information, support and training.

A year with DPPS

Here are examples of events, achievements and work done over the three academic terms from April 2010-March 2011

Summer Term April- July 2010

- IPS training delivered in South and West
- Confidentiality and Impartiality policies written and on website
- DPPS manager voted chair of regional PPS network, giving voice to Devon views regionally and nationally.
- Training for Governors in Parental Engagement developed and delivered in collaboration with Governor Services.
- DPPS logo revamped, new strap line written
- Terms of reference agreed for joint Monitoring group with Choice Advisors
- Additional post requested for DPPS
- Enabled participation of parent in 'Working with parents' training for County Special Ed team
- 222 parents supported



Autumn/Winter Term Sept – Dec 2010

- Involved in national revision of Exemplifications for PPS
- Support for PCV administration during changes to parent forum support
- IPS provided with 'Blue Box' of materials for school visits
- Banner displays designed and printed. Improved publicity of DPPS information
- New transition leaflet printed and distributed.
- DPPS speaks at SEN regional hub conference as rep for PPS from SW region
- DPPS poster sent to every school
- Working with Parents training for new SENcos
- DPPS leaflet colours revised
- Rise in referrals despite reduced workforce
- 204 parents supported



Spring Term Jan-Mar 2011

- SEN conference for Devon – PPS proposed 'Working effectively with parents' topic and was involved in development, planning and delivery
- PCV conference for parents – PPS contribute to main speakers
- IPS training delivered in North Devon
- Website uploaded with feedback questionnaire for parents
- New Leaflet written, designed and printed - What does your Child think?
- New transition training delivered to parents
- IPS undertaking school visits to promote service
- DPPS representation at national SEN Green Paper consultation.
- 188 parents supported



Area reports



**East & Mid Devon,
East Exeter**

Debbie Wheeler

Debbie Wheeler – Annual Report Contribution March 2011

This year has seen the service grow from strength-to-strength and the overall increase in parent enquiries has been matched by a significant increase in cases in my area. The variety of work has been interesting and challenging but the volume of work has meant that I have had to pass up some networking and training opportunities which would have enhanced both my own skills and the work of the service as a whole.

Working with Parents

I have directly supported over 244 families with children who have additional educational needs. Many children are diagnosed with more familiar needs such as autism and ADHD but I have also worked with parents who have children with rare medical needs and this has been a new learning curve for me. In addition not only has the number of cases risen, but also their complexity. I find that I am undertaking a lot of research – either through other DCC services, voluntary organisations or external advisers - in a bid to help parents to find answers to their questions.

There continues to be a definite move towards multi-agency work and I am finding that more school/parent meetings are also attended by external professionals. This helps to extend my knowledge of how other services work with parents and I am a firm believer that such partnership working can achieve stronger outcomes for children. I have supported parents at a number of Joint Agency Team meetings as well as Common Assessment Framework meetings.

This year I have also supported a family with significant hearing impairment and have had to adapt my working practice to include more texting to aid communication. Meetings were always facilitated by a BSL interpreter and this added a new dimension, requiring a very different approach by all the professionals – no interrupting or talking all at once!

In a similar way, I linked with the school and Ethnic Minorities Achievement Team to support Mandarin-speaking parents. This case involved a lot of independent research and signposting.

Training, Advice & Support

I have started the NPPN legal training but have been unable to complete the course due to capacity. Other training I have undertaken includes safeguarding, mediation, help! (run by the National Autistic Society), Lamb Enquiry and Advisory Centre for

Education (ACE) training on their Step-by-Step manuals which we are now using to enhance the service we offer.

Independent Parental Supporters

I currently have two active IPSs in my area with two more due to join in May. The active IPSs have each provided strong direct parent support and I am confident that they are able to add a valuable extra layer to our service. We now have a detailed IPS manual which sets out all our volunteer policies and working practice to ensure consistency across the county.

Networking and Collaboration – Forming and Shaping Local Policy and Practice

I have had to send apologies to networking meetings because of my caseload. I attend AXS and Parenting Network meetings, PCV forums, parent groups, SENCo forums and Children's Trusts meetings whenever I can as I find them really valuable.

I have been able to forge very strong working partnerships with a number of services on the back of a lot of multi-agency parent support work and attendance at a number of conferences including: transition, SEN, dyslexia, Children's Trust. A day spent with other PPS from across the South West was invaluable in learning how other regions work, what training they offer and what materials they produce.

Information and Publicity

Publicity

I continue to provide copy for a number of publications including DiscPlus newsletter, Early Years newsletter, SENCo Update, Devon Governor and Checklist. Ideally I would love to expand this role to ensure that changes in SEN legislation and new developments are communicated quickly and accurately to other services. The publication of the schools white paper and the new green paper on SEN mean that there will be lots of changes ahead for anyone who works in the education arena.

Web Site

The web site continues to be 'work in progress' but I am in regular contact with the designer to make small changes, add new copy, include new leaflets etc. We now have a very user-friendly feedback form online which, when completed by a parent, is automatically forwarded to our own mailbox. We hope that lots of parents will use this system to let us know what they think of DPPS and help to inform service developments in the future.

We have now set up a new system which will allow us to make our own copy changes on the web site and I hope that this will better enable me to keep the site up-to-date.

Leaflets

I worked on the new Transitions leaflet and the new Child's View leaflet – both of which have now been printed and are in circulation.

Term	Summer 2010	Winter 2010	Spring 2011	Total
No. of cases	74	91	79	244

School Support	School Action	School Action Plus	Full Statement	No additional help recorded
No. of cases	46	26	128	44

School Age	Pre-School	Primary	Secondary	Further Education
No. of cases	10	151	81	2

Debbie has worked with parents from 90 different schools

North Devon

Karen Horsnell



Karen Horsnell – Annual Report Contribution March 2011

Overview

The service continues to grow, with the number of referrals and a more distinct profile with which to show parents and professionals what we do and what we can offer. As ever this is a double-edged sword as the amount of time to deal with these enquires does not increase to accommodate this need. Devon is seeing a lot of major changes in the way services are going to be delivered which make both parents and professionals uneasy. This makes our statutory service even more invaluable as getting accurate, impartial information and keeping communication open is going to be more crucial to get the best outcome for children with additional needs.

Working with Parents

I have supported more families this year. It has been interesting to see where those referrals come from and what issues are key. I do not have many Early Years referrals and I think this is because of the strong Portage team. I have noted that I have received more cases from infant/junior schools as when Portage support goes, families are finding themselves a bit adrift. If I had time it would be good to visit more infant/junior schools to highlight our service.

I have also had a higher number of post 16 referrals. This has been affected by the local college cutting back on the courses they provide and two post 16 units have been cut. This has left parents feeling vulnerable and the local Connexions worker hours have been cut so availability is limited.

Our statistics show the level of ASD cases is quite high. The strong parent forum for ASD has been extremely welcoming to our service and proactively refers families to us. I have also learnt a lot more about Autism and related behaviours and been able to offer more in-depth knowledge to other families as well as signposting to the group.

Termly reports show a higher level of referrals around statementing than any other category. This gives cause for concern that parents, schools and other agencies are still not aware that we don't just work with families whose child has a statement; that our remit is much wider.

Training, advice and support

I have undertaken training on Safeguarding, Supervision, Mediation, The Lamb Enquiry and the SEN Green paper as well as gaining information around exclusions, home tuition, governor services, person centred planning, all of which enhance my knowledge.

Independent Parental Supporters

At the beginning of year I had one IPS in the Barnstaple/Bideford area who worked really well visiting schools and promoting our service. She was also able to do some direct parent work, though her time was limited. As I had parents who wanted support at a meeting that were held in Exeter, I enlisted the help of an IPS who

covers that area. The work undertaken was quite complex but the IPS supported the parents really well. The parent reported that although they did not win the appeal it was invaluable to be able to have support at the appeal and time to talk things through after.

In February and March we delivered IPS training in Barnstaple which means that I should have some active IPS available next term. Being able to supply them with a professional looking box to keep all their information in is great; it gives them the tools to do their job.

Networking and collaboration

The increase in case work has meant that I have not been able to attend as many meetings. In the past an IPS would attend but this has not been possible over the past few months. With new IPS coming on board I hope our presence will be seen at more meetings and events.

My links with PCV continue to be important though there have been a few difficulties at times due in part to changes in their structure and funding, as well as parents becoming very concerned about changes in local services because of budget cuts. This has led them to access support, including SEN support, through the personal links they have with PCV personnel. This has been discussed and a new and supportive agreement has been reached, with both services defining our roles and working together to support the parents in the area.

The Parenting Network meetings were an excellent way of giving and receiving local information. Since the demise of the Extended Schools Services, AXS coordinators and PSAs this specialist knowledge will be lost, which will have an impact on informing what works for Northern Devon and its families.

I was asked to attend an open meeting at a local school to talk through parental concerns about their child's additional needs and how they were being met. Working alongside the Local Authority SEN advisor as well as the Head Teacher and SENCO was productive, not just that it offered parents a range of services to talk with but also gave good feedback from the parents that communication was key to most issues; not a new concept but always worth reiterating.

Information and publicity

This year has seen a further update of our leaflets and publicity material, including banners and flyers. Information and questionnaires sent to schools and SENCOs has also highlighted our service and in my area given me links to more schools. These links, as well as the loss of PSAs, has increased the interest in people becoming Independent Parental Supporters.

I have sent information about the service, including the training we offer to various meetings and groups, including the Children's Trust, Parent Carer Voice and the North Devon Autism Forum.

Term	Summer 2010	Winter 2010	Spring 2011	Total
No. of cases	38	38	25	101

School Support	School Action	School Action Plus	Full Statement	No additional help recorded
No. of cases	23	0	67	11

School Age	Pre-School	Primary	Secondary	Further Education
No. of cases	2	56	38	5

Karen has worked with parents from 48 different schools



**South Ham & West
Devon**

Cath Butland

Cath Butland – Annual Report Contribution March 2011

This year has been a mixed one for South Hams and West Devon which is a large area and impacts on my ability to attend meetings. Two very active IPSs in Okehampton and the South Hams are making our service more accessible to parents – there have been more enquiries as a direct consequence of their work. My health meant that I was unavailable for the autumn term and while parents had access to telephone and email support, there was no one available to support them at meetings or go to network meetings. I'm very pleased to be back.

Working with parents

It's great to have statistics from our confidential data base which will help me to target my work with parents for next year; they show that through this year the numbers of parent enquiries dipped during my absence and are now increasing again and that not enough enquiries have come from parents of children at Early Years or at School Action or School Action Plus.

Increasingly I find that parents are comfortable exchanging information via email and value being signposted to information about a range of services specifically for them. At times I find it useful to explain our impartiality policy when parents ask me to advocate for their child. The policy means that we don't take sides and therefore don't advocate for a child because we empower parents to do this for themselves; in the long term this has the effect of staff and professionals, as well as parents, trusting our information and support.

Working this year with parents who have dyslexia or learning difficulties, I have developed ways of making sure information is understood. I find our new leaflet 'What does your child think' a useful tool to support parents in bringing their child's view to meetings as well as their own.

Information and Publicity

Our updated publicity materials have made information about our service stand out at events which has also added to the number of enquiries. I've developed the new 'What does your child think?' leaflet. I've written a newsletter article for schools own newsletters and revised our list of training available to parents and professionals – also available on our website. Our revised logo better describes the service we provide, "Support for the SEN journey". So that as many parents as possible know about our service I distribute leaflets to schools, Children's Centres and support groups via IPS who are also on hand to take referrals by word of mouth. Two additional IPS will be visiting schools and groups from next term in the Tavistock area and South Hams.

Training, Advice and Support

My own knowledge has been supported by accessing the new legal NPPN training, attending Safeguarding and Lamb Enquiry training and team meeting speakers which are keeping me up to date with changes. Through providing regular supervision I have ensured IPSs have information to support their current work. I've written training, linked to our new leaflet, which one of the parent support groups have asked me to deliver next term.

Networking and Collaboration

During the year I've either attended or sent detailed apologies to Parent/Carers Voice meetings, Children's Trust meetings, Children's Centre meetings, Parent Network meetings and Senco Network meetings so that information about DPPS's current emphasis is emailed to everyone. Conferences have proved a useful way to meet parents and professionals.

Informing and Shaping Local Policy and Practice

Through a parent enquiry I've arranged for a joint Devon PPS, Plymouth PPS, Cornwall PPS and Torbay PPS letter to be sent to a senior Plymouth NHS (Hospitals) professional to ask their staff to tell parents about PPS when their child is diagnosed. Our new parent questionnaire (available on the website) means that parents can tell us what they think of our service, giving us a chance to change our practice where necessary; we always hope to improve.

With our banners, display boards, additional leaflets, mobile phone, IPS boxes with supporting materials and IPS Handbook I feel the best equipped I've ever been and it makes a difference to my ability to provide a professional service as well as (personal) confidence when presenting information.

Term	Summer 2010	Winter 2010	Spring 2011	Total
No. of cases	34	2	14	50

School Support	School Action	School Action Plus	Full Statement	No additional help recorded
No. of cases	11	6	26	7

School Age	Pre-School	Primary	Secondary	Further Education
No. of cases	3	25	22	0

Cath has worked with parents from 31 different schools

Teignbridge, Totnes and West Exeter

Liz Batchelor



Liz Batchelor – Annual Report Contribution March 2011

As the work of the DPPS has increased over the last year the challenge has been to make creative use of the experience, expertise and resources we have within the team to continue to deliver a high quality service to support parents to help their children reach their full potential.

Parent support

Now that the IPS in my area have evolved into a strong team I am able to delegate some parent enquiries to individual team members who will contact parent/carers, arrange their own visits and support and send back a report when they have completed a piece of work. This has left me free to concentrate on some of the more in depth pieces of work like checking a proposed statement, preparing for meetings with CSET staff and occasionally discussing a potential appeal to the SENDIST tribunal – and to keep the records up to date!

Networking

The IPS have made a start on contacting schools to make sure they are aware of the full extent of the DPP service and ask them to advertise the service to their parents. I've also made some good contacts with schools in the past 12 months and hope to continue to build on this in the coming year.

As a team we met with other parent partnership teams in the region and were able to compare practice and learn from one another.

Publicity and information

Another way we've found of maximising our potential is to offer DPPS leaflets, display boards and banners for events. In this way we can have a 'presence' without using up valuable man hours and hopefully spread the word to even more parents about the service we can offer.

Training

I continue to be able to make use of my own mediation background by offering mediation based training to the rest of the team, the IPSs, parent support groups and other professionals. Few of us like conflict, but thinking about our own responses in a safe environment can give us the confidence to tackle some of the situations we would rather not tackle. This year we were able to lead a short session on 'stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination' which appeared to be well received.

Plans for the coming year

- To offer further training in the statementing process to our IPSs, to include requesting a statement, understanding the statement, annual review and requesting changes
- Recruit and train more IPS
- Continue to identify and visit parent support groups, step by step groups, schools and children's centres to highlight and explain the support we can offer

Term	Summer 2010	Winter 2010	Spring 2011	Total
No. of cases	76	87	70	224

School Support	School Action	School Action Plus	Full Statement	No additional help recorded
No. of cases	37	22	135	30

School Age	Pre-School	Primary	Secondary	Further Education
No. of cases	12	127	81	4

Liz has worked with parents from 68 different schools

**Central Office/
Telephone Enquiry
Line**

Georgina Cridland



Georgina Cridland – Annual Report Contribution March 2011

As of the 1 April 2011, I have worked for the Devon Parent Partnership Service (DPPS) for just over two and a half years. A lot has changed in that time, particularly the first 18 months when we moved office and introduced electronic record keeping via our ONE database.

Enquiries and Database

The last year has been a year of stability with no major staff changes, no office moves or introduction of new databases! However, it has meant that we have been able to master writing and recording all of our parental contacts on our database, and have got used to the foibles of the system! The database has improved the ability for all members of the team to be able to pick up a case and have all the latest contact details to hand. This is particularly important as we have three members of the team either based at home or at another office in various locations across Devon. A major part of my role has been to support the team with any queries they have on the database, and to make new records and update existing records with the information gathered from parents via our enquiry line or e-mails from our mailbox.

During this last year there has been a rise in enquiries. The Service is showing a growth in enquiries, year on year. Some enquires can be dealt with quite quickly but others take longer. Initially parents often just want to talk and need someone to listen to their concerns and problems.

With the increase in my knowledge of SEN and confidence in this area, I have been able to give parents basic information and signposting. This has helped especially when Parent Partnership Officers (PPOs) are away or they are very busy and unable to get back to parents for a few days.

Marketing and Promotion

We have been very busy this year with the production and design of two new leaflets and the updating and re-printing of three new leaflets and the folder for the leaflets. In addition we have produced two new banners which we can take to exhibitions and events. My role has been to liaise with the designers, proof read the leaflets and information, and deal with the finances for these projects. I also organised the distribution of leaflets to schools eg, posters to all schools across Devon and the transition leaflet to all secondary schools across Devon.

One of the most successful promotional aspects of this year has been to provide some materials such as pens, coasters, fridge magnets and post-it notes that we can use to promote ourselves with parents and professionals. These have been well received and are useful reminders of our service and, most importantly, our

telephone number. I obtained quotes from companies on the DCC procurement list, ordered the goods and liaised with regard to the designs, artwork and delivery.

Independent Parental Supporters (IPS)

During the year I helped organise the IPS Training in Tavistock and Barnstaple, the IPS Day at Larkbeare House in December and Safeguarding Training at Great Moor House, Exeter in January. As part of my on-going training and development I attended the IPS Day and also the two-day IPS training in Barnstaple. Both of these events have given me the opportunity of meeting our volunteers face-to-face rather than over the phone. Additionally, they have helped with my understanding of what is expected of our volunteers, and increased my knowledge of SEN and the skills required to work with parents.

One area of work which we have encouraged the IPSs to get involved in this year is the promotion of the DPPS through visits to schools. I have supported this by purchasing and filling blue plastic file boxes with leaflets and information that they can take with them when they visit schools.

Misc

Throughout the year I have managed the day-to-day finances for the Service including entering invoices and payments onto the FINEST finance system, carrying out a monthly check on income/expenditure and filing invoices. In addition I ordered stationery and equipment either externally or through our e-biz system.

Throughout the year we had nine team meetings or team days which I helped to organise and took the minutes for. The meetings give the team an opportunity to get together to discuss current work, issues, and cases; for Sue to feed us information; for training; and for information sharing with other services and organisations.

During part of the year, Jess Goddard, from the Aiming High team, was based at Great Moor House (GMH) and I helped her to find her way around the building and settle into her new desk.

Overall

The main role of my job is to answer the enquiry line and talk to parents on the phone, and maintain our database. I try to fit all the other tasks around these two crucial areas of work. In June 2010 I completed a 4 week analysis of my working week and I found, as I anticipated, that the majority of my time was spent handling enquiries from parents and entering and updating this information on our database. In fact these two interrelated tasks took up 41% of my working hours during those weeks.

I'm looking forward to the next year and I know that there will be some challenges ahead including the move to a new version of our database, the recruitment of a new member of staff to cover the North Devon area and also the possible refurbishment of our current office space. However, one thing that is very clear from my time with the DPPS is that although we are a small, geographically spread team, we are supportive of each other and help each other out.

Manager's Report

Written by Sue Brealey

The DPPS response to the Minimum Standards

Funding and Budget

With the change of government last May there has been a significant alteration in national direction which has affected us all. The news of budget cuts and the impact of this on Local Authorities cannot have escaped anyone's notice. Devon has not been exempt and although DPPS has complete autonomy over how they spend their budget the amount is set by the local authority and they have put restrictions on spending. The most significant of these for DPPS in the past year has been the Vacancy Management Policy which came into force during the year. Last April, DPPS was very pleased to have been allocated funds within the budget 2010-11 for an additional post to cover Exeter and provide IPS co-ordination and support. Unfortunately before the post could be advertised the vacancy management restriction came into place and DPPS was unable to recruit additional staff. This had significant impact on staff that currently covers Exeter (see PPO area and working with parents reports). Monies allocated to the funding of IPS, however, were very valuable as this has allowed development of this area of work.

National Benchmarking

There is a national audit every October which collects and analyses data from Parent Partnership Services. This National Benchmarking provides DPPS with data which enables a review of our performance in comparison with other PPSs. The results utilise data from April 2009-March 2010 from which we are able to make the following comparisons on staff and funding levels for other PPS and with data for DPPS from the previous year:

- Service funding per head 0-19 for DPPS is still well below the national mean and median. Placed at 106 from 130 responses but an improvement from the previous year of 117 from 130 responses
- Service funding per SEN pupil, including those on School Action, School Action+ and Statemented pupils, shows DPPS significantly below the national mean and placed at 109 from 130 responses this compares with 115 from 130 responses in the previous year.
- Service funding per service user was below the national median and the national mean, DPPS placed at 75 from 128 this is a worsening from the previous year 63 from 127 responses. This change was a result of the improved performance of DPPS with an increase in parent referrals from 430 in 2008-09 to 551 in 2009-10 without a matched funding increase.
- Staffing levels per 1,000 pop. 0-19 comparisons show that DPPS has improved from 115 from 130 to 109 from 130 but it is still significantly below the national mean and median
- Parent/ Carer service users per 1,000 populations (0-19) were 87 from 131 responses below both the national mean and median. Indicating that DPPS is not reaching enough parents in Devon.
- Ratio of staff to service users shows DPPS at 50 from 129 and between the national mean and median. This shows that DPPS is providing good value for money with the efficient use of staff resources and that to improve the parent carer users per 1,000 DPPS would require additional staffing.

**Annual Report Financial Data
01/04/10 to 31/03/11**

Income		£
DCC		150,594
Other income – supervision & parenting w/end		270
Total Income		150,86
Expenditure		
Salaries		112,847
Staff expenses		5,461
Staff training		1,351
Disagreement resolution		5,950
Stationery/postage/telephone/office expenses		7,911
IT		1,471
Recruitment/CRB checks		0
IPS volunteer training		3,734
Total Expenditure		142,339
Income less Expenditure		8,525 not spent

DPSS has, by careful monitoring, making systems more efficient, restriction of travel and other spending cuts kept within budget. The under spend of £8,525 is explained by savings on staff costs through not being able to recruit through vacancy management. The salary for the post was taken from the budget but the allowance for travel and on costs remained.

Concerns about increasing caseloads and capacity of staff to meet parent support needs has been raised with management.

Management

Monitoring and Evaluation Group – One of the key areas for development identified in the DPPS action plan for 2010-11 was the establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Group. This would be formed from parents and professionals meeting termly in order to monitor the work of DPPS, enable compliance with exemplars and through monitoring, provide support and direction for management decisions for the service.

Considerable work was done on the development of a joint Monitoring and Evaluation Group with the Choice Advisors, both being small services with a remit to provide support and information. This was seen to be a more efficient use of parent and professional time.

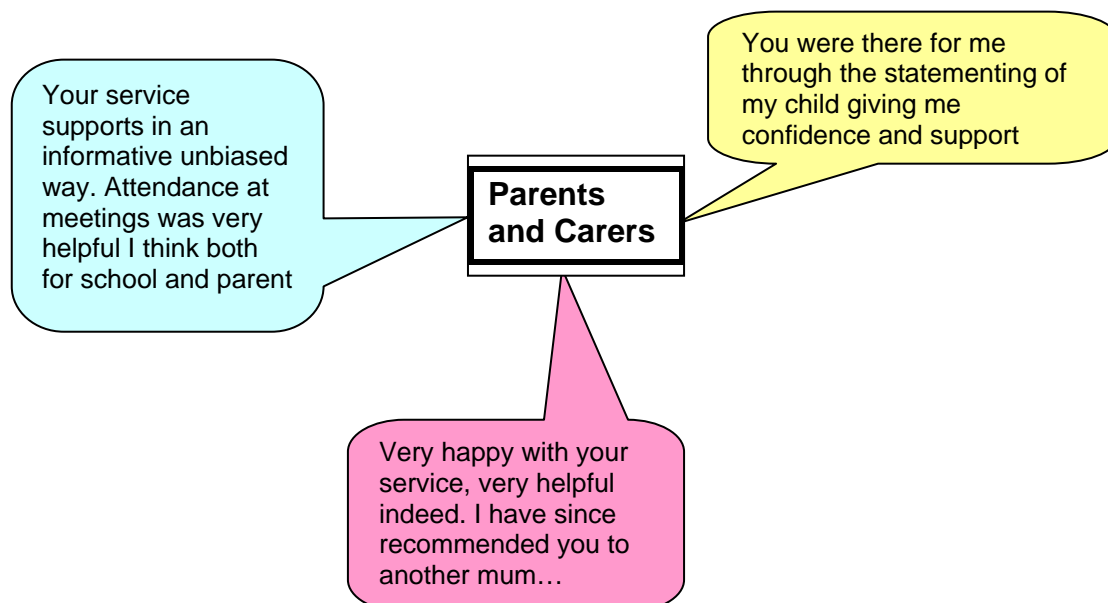
The terms of reference were finalised, parents identified who were interested to participate and a professional group was about to be approached when the project had to be put on hold. This was due to government changes in funding and as a result the Choice Advisor service has been withdrawn from April 2011. With the state of flux in services it was decided to wait until there is more stability following the redundancies and reshape of services before re embarking on setting up the Monitoring and Evaluation Group. It will be made a priority in the DPPS Action Plan 2011-12.

It is interesting to note that lack of a Monitoring and Evaluation Group is an issue nationally as 23% of the PPS in the benchmarking did not have one.

Monitoring and Evaluation

During 2009-10 we used a parents' questionnaire to monitor feedback. It was decided that this would not be sustainable every year and we have, during this year had the parental questionnaire put onto the DPPS website so that parents have access to providing feedback at all times. This was not enabled until March 2011 and the responses received to date are not adequate to provide enough representational feedback. The team is tasked with asking parents to complete the questionnaire when they have completed a piece of work and this should hopefully provide an evaluation of parent support and other aspects of DPPS by the end of 2011-12.

What parents have said about DPPS



IPS work is monitored by parental feedback:

“Please pass on my heartfelt thanks. I found I was more focused and more confident as a result of the IPS being in attendance, which led to a favourable outcome. I was able to guide the meeting towards X’s benefit and on the whole feel a good start has been made where the staff are becoming more aware of X’s SLCN and more willing to address them in context.”

Feedback on DPPS from schools

The plan for 2010-11 was to focus effort on gathering feedback from schools. The intention was to utilise the IPSs to visit schools to promote DPPS but also to gather feedback by completing a survey for professionals. To do this we have equipped the IPS with a ‘Blue Box’ full of the DPPS leaflets and all the materials they need for the job. This has taken some time and, together with the demands of the promotional work related to the Lamb Enquiry report recommendations and reduced staffing, through long term sickness, we have not achieved as many returns as we had hoped. However this way of working will continue for the coming year with the planned addition of a questionnaire for professionals to be put on the website. (See comments from IPS section)

What schools have said

Thanks **SO** much, Debbie, for all your support for the X and us. It's definitely above and beyond the call of duty. The X are just such a vulnerable family, who so desperately need help. It's also been HUGELY helpful for me to have someone to turn to, to take some of the strain off me and share the load!! – (Head teacher)

What Governors have said

"Our involvement with Devon Parent Partnership Service has been extremely positive. The Parent Partnership Officer has undertaken a proactive role in bringing together key representatives from different organisations to ensure a swift, practical response to a situation where progress had been slow. Without doubt the expertise, skill and guidance demonstrated by your area officer contributed to a solution focused approach which has helped the matter move forward with multi organisation and parental agreement."

What other professionals have said

“Following a break down in communication between a school and a parent, Parent Partnership became involved and through skilful negotiation organised a meeting with a senior manager from the school, the Chair of Governors, SEN adviser, Educational Psychologist for the school, the parent and a member of Parent Partnership. The meeting was initially chaired by the member of Parent Partnership. Through careful discussions and clarification of various issues the parent and the school found a way of working together to support the pupil. Following the meeting the parent and school are now regularly and actively engaged in discussions on how best to put all the suggestions in place. It does appear that they are now working together to meet the needs of the pupil.” (School Advisor)

Thank you for all your efforts on their behalf. This is a clear example of services working together effectively to achieve better outcomes for a vulnerable family. (AXS co-ordinator)

The Lamb Enquiry Report

The report was the result of a Government enquiry into SEN, entitled 'Improving Parental Confidence in SEN', it came out early in 2010, and most of the recommendations were upheld by the new government. This was of significance for Parent Partnership Services as they were identified within the recommendations and tasked with ensuring the impartiality and quality of the information and support offered to parents.

The recommendations included

- development of a national legal training for staff
- revision of the Exemplification of minimum Standards to bring all PPS up to Good Standard
- requirement to promote the service so that it is made known to all parents who want SEN support.

DPPS response to Lamb

DPPS made a plan with the headings

- Revamp
- Revise
- Relaunch

This enabled us to focus our energies within achievable targets and here are some examples of what we have achieved.

We have **revamped the DPPS logo** to include a strap line "Support for the SEN journey". We wanted it to be clearer what our purpose was. We also noticed that our logo would fit in well with the idea of relaunch!



We have **revised our publicity materials** and used photos of our IPS for the banners and DPPS poster. The posters have been sent to every school. Have you seen one in your school?

We are **changing the colour of our leaflets** so that they are easier to distinguish while still maintaining our colours of blue and red. This was in response to feedback from parents and professionals. New leaflets are printed in a palette of colours and others will change when reprinted. We have kept the style and wording the same. What do you think?



National legal training has been made available to staff. Completed by only one member of DPPS team. A capacity issue due to increased parent support work. This was an impact of not being able to recruit an additional post for Exeter.

We have also been letting parents and professionals know about our work through regional and county wide conferences, news articles and visiting groups.

Working with Parents Conference for SENcos and other education professionals across Devon. DPPS proposed the idea, invited Brian Lamb to speak and was very involved with the planning. On the day we provided sessions:

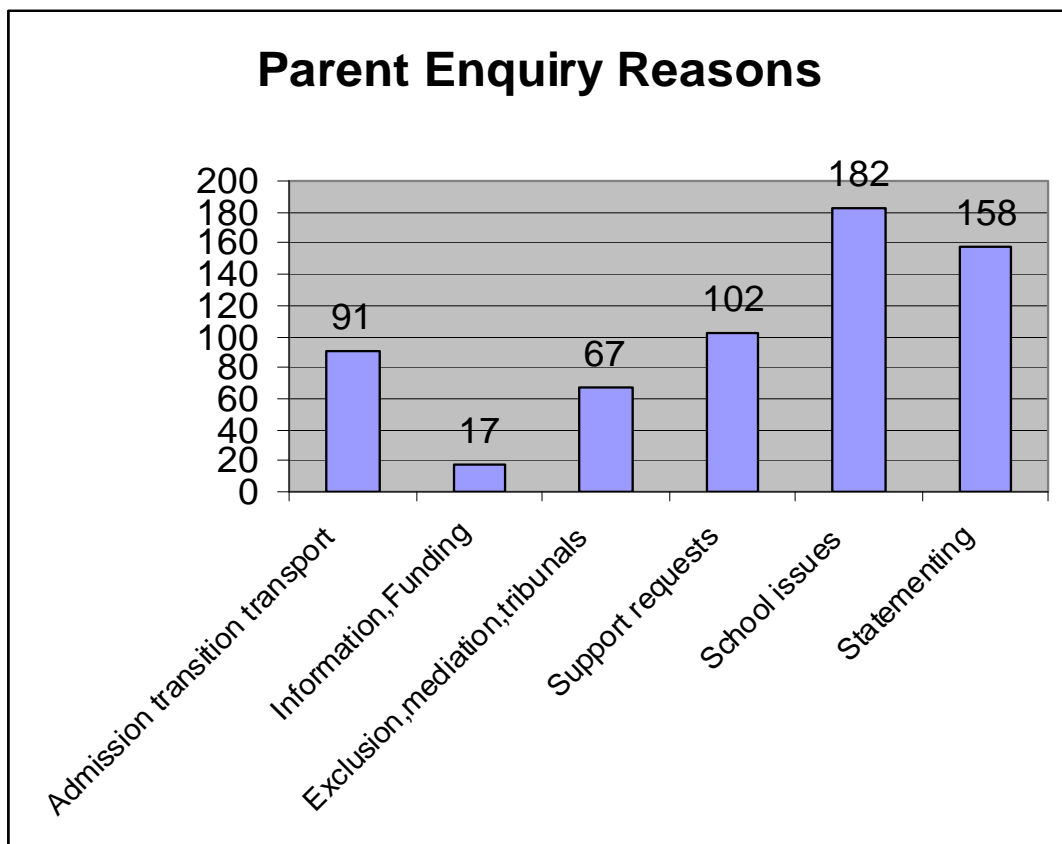
- how we support parents to work in partnership
- managing Conflict
- understanding statements

Thank you so much to all of you who were involved in making Friday's conference such a successful day. I think it was one of the most useful and enjoyable conferences I have attended and I know just how much work goes into making these events seem so smooth and seamless.

Working with parents

We have not grown in size with regard to capacity but the impact of more efficient working systems and more accurate recording of what we do on our data base has enabled us to show the work we have done in supporting yet more parents this year. We were very frustrated that we were not able to expand our team using the increased budget that was allocated for this in 2010-11.

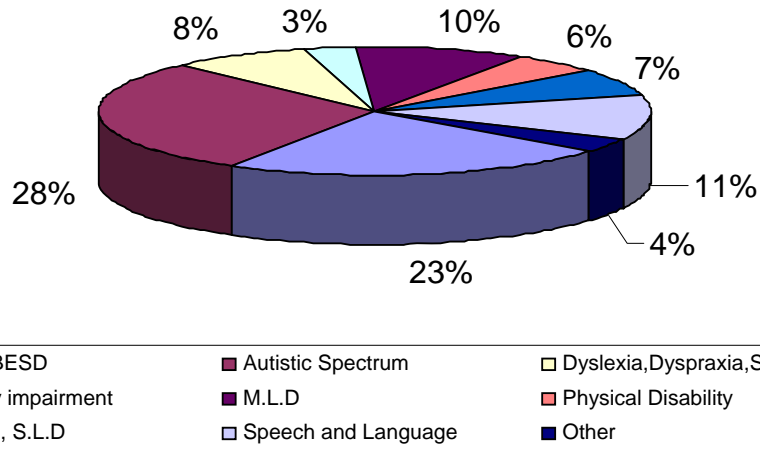
For over a term we had one area without a Parent Partnership Officer. This had a direct impact on the number of parent enquires in that area however it was mitigated in some measure by the work of two new IPS in the area who we supported to pick up the gauntlet. Despite the reduced staffing the enthusiasm and commitment of the small team has yet again shown a growth in parent carer referrals and it is encouraging to see the number of schools that this represents, 214 from 368 which is 59% of all Devon schools.



12% increase in parent referrals

- 2010-11 parent carer referrals 619 compared with 551 in the previous year.
- 214 schools from 368 - Parents or schools may have referred (parents may not tell school about PPS involvement)
- Referrals from 35 learning communities
- 84 enquiries from professionals
- CAF and team around the child work has increased with more complex casework and increased staff knowledge required on health and social care aspects.

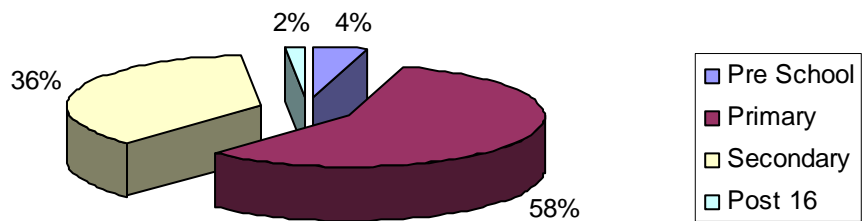
Number of cases by identified need



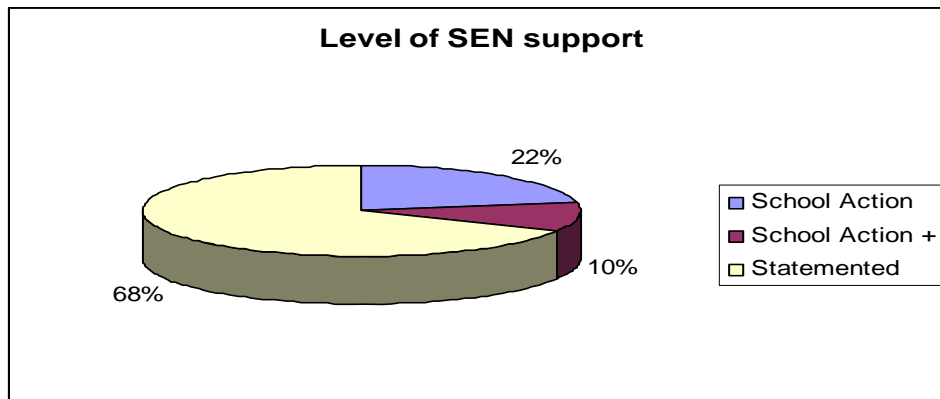
(‘Other’ category included range of lower incidence conditions such as cerebral palsy, Downs Syndrome, Epilepsy, mental health)

- ASC and behaviour difficulties continue to be the highest areas of concern

Referrals by age group

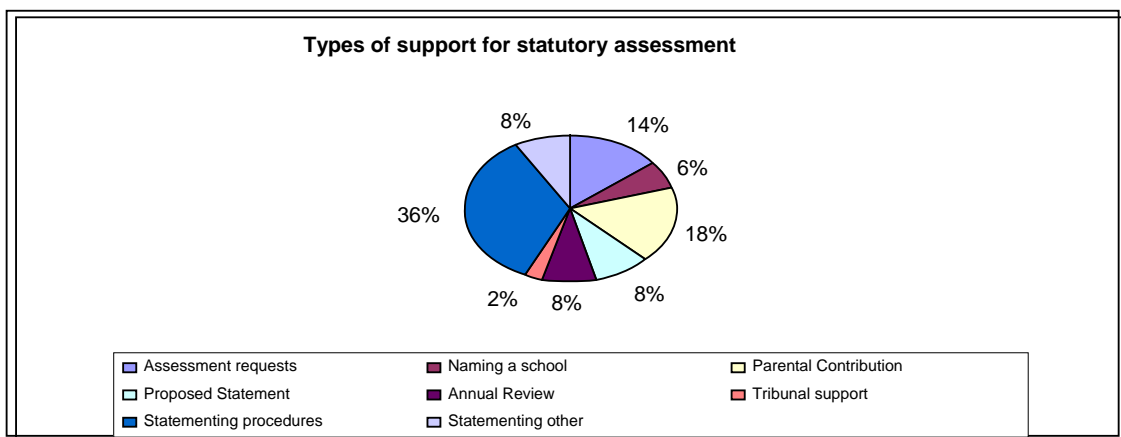


- There has been a rise in early years and post 16 referrals
- Primary continues to be highest area for referral. Parents are more closely involved with school at this age and SEN more likely to be identified in primary years

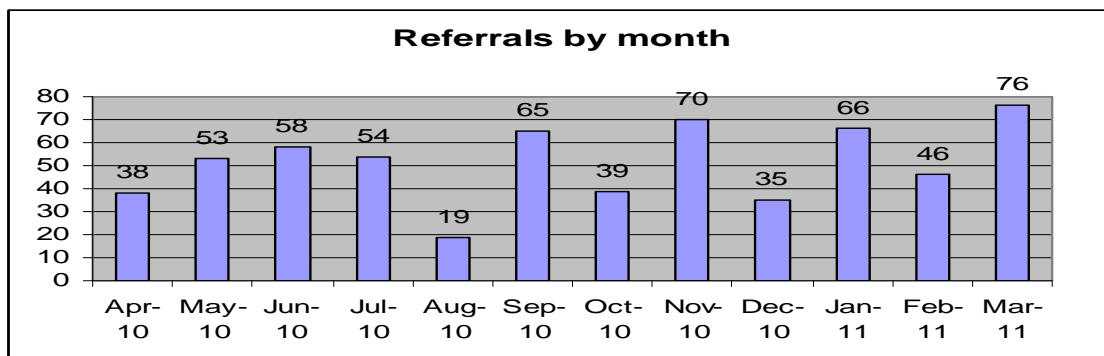


Support for parents of statemented pupils remains the highest. This could be because

- this is more complex and requires the DPPS expertise and advice on the SEN Code of Practice and education law
- parents at school action/action+ are not aware of DPPS
- schools are not aware of their responsibility to promote our service
- parents are happy with SEN provision and not needing DPPS support



Legal training for staff on the SEN code of practice and law was identified by the Lamb Enquiry as essential to support parental confidence and enable appropriate expertise in support offered. This demonstrates the range of knowledge needed. This would also extend to disability discrimination, exclusions and admissions legal advice for SEN.



Lower referrals in April, August and December explained by school holidays

Our Volunteers

Independent Parental Supporters

Independent Parental Supporters (IPS) are volunteers who have been trained, CRB checked and are monitored and supervised to provide support and information to enhance the service offer of DPPS. At the beginning of 2009 we had no IPS but now, as a result of successful recruitment, rigorous training and much hard work by all, we are very pleased to begin to see the fruit of all our labours. Some volunteers have already moved on to paid employment as a result of their experience or moved out of the area and we have areas that are better covered than others. By March 2011 we had 16 active IPS. Liz Bachelor's area has the best coverage of IPS and the following report shows a flavour of what difference they have made for the parent in her area.

IPS support from a Parent Partnership Officer's perspective

I went to a networking day with other PPS in the South West Region and realised how fortunate I am to have such a great group of people to work with.

Most other services seem to feel they don't have enough time to train and supervise IPS so they are missing out on the opportunity to share out the work, increase their capacity and learn from their IPS at the same time.

I thought you might like to know the type of work my IPS are doing in the area.

This term an IPS has continued to support parents of young people who are in the transition from children's to adult services and looking at life choices for the future. She has loads of experience in this area, and writes great reports that I can just copy and paste into the recording system, which is great. She even tells me how long she spends on the phone as this is a piece of data we can record on the system.

Another IPS has visited the Asperations support group for those with Aspergers and has supported a parent at a governors' exclusion panel. We are waiting to hear what the next stage of this will be.

An IPS has visited 2 Step by Step groups. These are for parents and pre-school children with special needs and usually take place in Children's Centres. From these regular visits she is sending in referrals and has then gone on to support parents to write their parental contribution for the statementing process. She says that by attending the Step by Step groups regularly she meets more parents and is becoming known to staff who will then make suggestions of who might need her support.

Following an enquiry to DPPS an IPS has made contact with a parent, met at school and then gone on to support at a school meeting, with a follow up meeting next month, as well as continuing to visit the office to do filing and sorting.

I think we've managed to cover a great deal of work between us all. We now have the task of contacting schools and raising our profile in line with the extra personnel we have in all of you.

I wanted to say what a great team you are to work with and that I very much value your contribution to our team.

Thank you
Liz

IPS training

This year we have delivered initial training for IPS in South and North of the County. In addition IPSs have been offered training on Safeguarding and Conflict Resolution.



Enjoying the sun in coffee break during IPS training in May 2010

IPS undertake a variety of tasks. Here are reports from IPS

IPS Report; Vanessa (West Devon area)

I've found it rewarding to be making contact with local schools. I find if the SENCo has had direct working experience with DPPS in the past they are very positive and happy to ask parents to contact us. Even if they have not had direct experience they are still happy to display our new leaflets, put a link to our website from theirs and even put an article in their school newsletter. It's rewarding to know that more parents are making contact with the service because of my work.

I've visited a Parents Support Group for pupils with ASD who are interested in having some DPPS training at one of their meetings.

I attended a Children's Trust Conference this spring and found myself comfortable to be working with the sixty professionals who attended.

I've also been helping in the central office; partly to transfer the paper, leaflet and book Library of information for the Parent Partnership Officers onto an excel sheet so that they can access it from wherever they are working and partly to put together the IPS blue boxes that have copies of all the leaflets, pens, coasters and fridge magnets to give to schools as well as copies of letters and paper work that makes visiting schools much easier.

IPS Report: Laura (West Devon area)

I trained to become an IPS for Devon Parent Partnership during 2010 and was keen to get going with some work in the New Year despite being very busy with a job and a disabled child of my own.

We decided that a useful role for the Partnership and a good introduction for me would be to visit some schools in the area to introduce them to or remind them about DPPS. It was decided that I would visit 3 secondary schools and a number of their feeder primary schools.

I felt the training I had received on the IPS course had equipped me very well to take on this role and this was further supported by the helpful paperwork provided by the Partnership for all elements of the visit.

I visited the first rather large school (feeling a little bit nervous!) but needn't have worried as the SENCO, who was fairly new in his role, was very pleased to be given the information about DPPS. The school was not regularly using DPPS at that time and agreed to put some information about us both on their website and in their prospectus pack for year 6 students. They also agreed to leave leaflets in the main reception area. A couple of weeks later I visited a slightly smaller secondary school who was already more in contact with DPPS and already very praising of the service. They were also very happy to be given the material and invited me to come back to speak at a year 6 transition evening in the summer term. They agreed to put information about the service in their reception area, on their website and in their school newsletter and asked if I would be happy to contact them on a 6 monthly basis to see if they wanted any more leaflets.

My final secondary school visit was to a much smaller Academy that covered both secondary and primary schools. I was given a full tour of the school and introduced to some of the SEN staff. Again this school was already familiar with and positive about any previous contact they had had with DPPS but were not publicising the service very widely. They agreed to put information in public areas and on the website and in newsletters. I offered both to contact them in 6 months which they were very happy about and also asked if they would like me or another DPPS officer or IPS to speak at any parents events they may have and they were very keen to explore this idea further.

Becoming an IPS for DPPS has been a very interesting and rewarding experience and I feel I have been very well supported with written material, training courses, face to face, email and telephone support.

IPS Report: Nick (East Devon)

Training as an IPS was interesting, informative and enjoyable.

I have found working as an IPS challenging and varied, and it also offers a very flexible form of volunteering.

I have found the Devon PPS staff very approachable, well informed and ready to provide the information and support I need to enable me to fulfill my role as an IPS. This all helps to make you feel part of the Devon Parent Partnership Service

What other professionals have told us about IPS support

Verbal feedback following an exclusion meeting

"I observed one of your IPS support a parent in a meeting I attended. The support for the mum was very good, she did not speak instead of the mum but sat next to her and gave support and prompting. She did speak on behalf of the parent later in the meeting but checked with the parent beforehand as the IPS was aware that the parent had not said all she wanted to." MK

Information and publicity

- DPPS wrote the 'Working with Parents' section for the LA SEN guidance
- Articles were produced for Governors, SENco, Early Years, Disc+ Newsletters
- 3 DPPS leaflets have been revised and printed with changed colour palette
- 2 new leaflets have been written – Child's View, Transition to Adult Services
- More information is now available on the website

Training, advice and support

What we have delivered

- 2 core IPS trainings in South Devon in May 2010 and North Devon in February 2011.
- 2 IPS trainings - sharing practice and conflict resolution.
- Parent Engagement training for Governors developed and delivered in conjunction with Governor Services in Exeter and North Devon to over 60 governors.
- Working with parents training for new SENcos
- Transition training written and delivered to parents



What people told us about our training

- Maybe a bit longer with more info on meetings - what to get out of them and good questions to ask, written down on sheets. Great course – thanks.
- Emotional aspect of transition – great as all feel similar emotions. Can get practical help but no one thinks about the emotions.
- I could have done with this course sooner. Before year 5 maybe.
- Good to have opportunity to share, discuss and meet people
- I felt it was very much selling DPPS but as I had no idea they existed, this will now be helpful (Early years worker)
- Pace good - took into account group's abilities and competencies
- Good mix of information giving and interactive sessions

What we have learnt

All the PPOs have skills at delivering training but increased parent referrals and reduced staffing has meant less time for promotion and delivery of training. We have reviewed the IPS training and now deliver a shorter 2 day initial training which covers the core elements of impartiality and working with parents with follow up, individual and group, training termly, more tailored to fit IPS needs. Although we can tailor our training to meet requests, when these come from individuals we have not been able to offer a course in their area.

Staff training

- NPPN legal training - one member of DPPS team has completed the course and is now accredited
- DPPS arranged and attended the Regional Sharing Practice day for PPS staff.
- Safeguarding training for IPS and staff.
- PTLLS training certificate achieved by member of the team. This provides evidence of quality standards for training that we deliver

Networking and collaboration

There is a tension for staff in managing increased parent referrals whilst maintaining links with professional and parent networking links. Ability and opportunity for networking locally, regionally and nationally is part of the core offer of DPPS, as specified in the national exemplars. The purpose of this is to raise awareness of the offer of a small service, raise the concerns and needs of parents, challenge working practice of other professionals and provide staff with the knowledge they need to provide up to date support and information for parents.

The role and work of the Liaison Officer has become more pivotal in ensuring that this work is not neglected but the focus has had to be Devon-wide rather than locality driven through the PPO.

2 key opportunities

-The SEN conference for SENcos and other education professionals in Devon was a very valuable opportunity for promotion of the service and networking. DPPS was instrumental in the planning and organisation of the conference. We also delivered a workshop and a session on the main stage to inform professionals about what DPPS can offer.

- The Parent Forum (PCV) Conference for parent carers in Devon 'Participation through learning'. DPPS delivered an interactive session on 'Effective participation'

PPOs prioritise attendance at parent forums and support groups. Where IPSs are available and willing to attend as DPPS reps this has been very helpful to ensure that parents are kept informed.

Contact with Schools – DPPS has attended area SENco network meetings and training events. Feedback was that this had raised awareness and profile of service.

Informing and shaping local policy

- Input to SEN Communications Group, a meeting of heads of SEN departments. DPPS provided parental perspective. Communication through this group also enabled DPPS to be aware of development, direction and any difficulties relating to SEN within LA
- Feedback to LA on School complaints process for parents with the LA. DPPS raised that there was no mechanism for passing on information to the school improvement service about schools causing concern. Some parents felt frustrated by the lack of accountability for heads when governing bodies and the LA did not appear willing to provide adequate or prompt challenge.
- Feedback and input to LA on School Admission process and information for parents of children with statements. DPPS provided advice on working in Next Step booklet on admission guidance, after consultation with parents.
- Feedback to CSET on communication difficulties for parents trying to contact Statementing teams. This was most notable during the ICSAT pilot.
- Feedback to SEN advisors on parental feedback highlighting poor practice in schools. School SEN advisors made visits to schools identified and provided support and guidance for improvement or to challenge practice.
- Arranged parent consultation working group to start work with CSET on redrafting LA statement layout

Location

- Central Office is sited at Great Moor House(GMH), Exeter, in a separate building from the County Special Education Team(CSET). This enables DPPS to meet exemplar requirements. This has enabled the building of good links with Governors, Exclusions and Ethnic minority support services. 3 DPPS staff are based here. Parking has been a problem.
- An IPS has catalogued the library in GMH.
- 2 PPOs are home based. This produces some difficulties with IT but reduces travel when working in area.
- North Devon post is co-located with the Portage Service in Barnstaple. This has enable the building of good links with this service but the office building has maintenance problems; location of new office premises are being investigated.

Evaluation and Recommendations

Plans for 2010-11

The plans for last year which were published in the Annual Report 2009-10 are in bold type below. Evaluation of priority tasks for last year are highlighted in red. More information on all these comments is made throughout the body of this annual report.

- **To set up Monitoring and Evaluation group with terms of reference, job descriptions, accessibility and links with the LA's decision making process**
Not achieved - Terms of reference written and agreed to set up joint Monitoring and Evaluation group with Choice Advice service. Abandoned when Choice Advice service withdrawn
- **To increase staffing capacity to enable effective networking and to support increased casework**
Not achieved - Post for Exeter applied for but vacancy management policy for LA implemented, permission refused
- **To plan and implement DPPS re-launch as response to Lamb Report recommendations**
Achieved - Proactive and successful implementation by DPPS evidenced in the annual report
- **To review publicity of DPPS including leaflets and implement findings**
Partly Achieved - More newsletters written, leaflet colours revised. Identified need for more factsheets but lack of capacity to implement
- **To support the establishment of a team of IPS volunteers across all of Devon**
Partly achieved – More volunteers recruited but not equitable across county
- **To seek feedback from schools and other professionals about their promotion of DPPS.**
Partly achieved - mechanism for feedback set up but lack of capacity to implement due to rise in parental referrals

Recommendations

DPPS is required to meet the standards for parent partnerships set out in the SEN Code of Practice and National Exemplars. The key areas that we still fall short on are:

- establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation group to monitor DPPS impartiality and practice
- capacity sufficient to provide equity of support for parents across Devon

Parent referrals to the service increased by **12%** this year and have increased by **45%** since April 2009. Parent support work is prioritised within service delivery and this has a significant effect on the ability to carry out core duties in relationship to training, provision of information and networking. In addition the move towards a multi-agency approach through CAF and Team Around the Child has meant that casework has been more complex and wide-ranging. It takes more staff hours and requires wider knowledge of health and social care provision and law. An additional post to meet rising referrals is now urgently needed.

DPPS has made notable progress on the IPS volunteer programme but this needs to be co-ordinated to ensure best practice and efficient use of resources and knowledge gained.

Training has been delivered but this has tended to be reactive and ad hoc. It has been hampered by capacity and needs to change to a planned and proactive approach.

Information provision through website and email is rising and more work needs to be done on improving the range and availability of information in paper and electronic format.

Feedback from professionals mechanisms need to be set up on the website as well as further development of using IPS to visit schools.

Plans for 2011-12

Priority projects:

- **Set up monitoring /Monitoring and Evaluation group with terms of reference, job descriptions, accessibility and links with the LA's decision making process**
- **Increase staffing capacity to manage increased caseloads and enable effective networking**
- **Develop and deliver training plan across county**
- **Review DPPS website - create and upload improvements**
- **Support establishment of 8 IPS volunteers per PPO area**

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

We welcome feedback from service users and others about the work of DPPS so that we can continue to monitor, evaluate and improve the service we provide. This includes feedback on the Annual Report.

Once you have looked at this report, if you would like to let us know your views, please contact us so that we can use the information to shape the way that we formulate our report in the future.

How to Contact Us

If you or someone you know would like any of the following:

- to receive some support
- information about SEN
- information about training courses
- to know how to become an IPS
- any other information about DPPS
- Give feedback on the service

Please contact us by phone or email.

Telephone: **01392 383080**

Email: parentpartnershipservice-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

More information about DPPS can be found on our website

www.parentpartnershipdevon.org.uk

GLOSSARY

The following abbreviations are used in this report

SEN	Special Educational Needs
PPS	Parent Partnership Service
DPPS	Devon Parent Partnership Service
IPS	Independent Parental Supporter (volunteer)
PPLO	Parent Partnership Liaison Officer
PPO	Parent Partnership Officer
LA	Local Authority
DCC	Devon County Council
CYPS	Children and Young People's Services
CSET	County Special Education Team
PCV	Parent Carer Voice (Parent Forum)
CRB	Criminal Record Bureau
SLT	Speech and Language Therapy
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
JAT	Joint Agency Team
EOTAS	Educated Other Than At School
AXS	Devon process for identification of need at an early stage
PSA	Parent Support Advisor
EP	Educational Psychologist
EY	Early Years
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
TAC	Team Around the Child
HV	Health Visitor
CC	Children's Centre

Appendix 1



Devon Parent Partnership Service Annual Report Data 2010/11

	08/09	09/10	10/11
Total number of parent enquiries	430	551	646
Total number of professional enquiries	71	86	84
Total number of IPS enquiries	117	48	29
Total number of enquiries	618	685	759
Number who have attended IPS training sessions	35	12	28
Number of IPSs who have been interviewed & CRB checked	0	22	7
Training sessions delivered	25	12	12