



# Self Assessment of our SEND Implementation

February 2019

*A new approach to special educational  
needs and disability*



## Torbay Portage Service – Parent Training

### What was the issue?

Families referred to the Portage Service were without support whilst waiting to be allocated to a Home Visitor. Service capacity had reduced which meant that the wait had increased.

### Our journey so far....

Parents were able to attend a weekly support group held in the local Children Centres specifically for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability. We asked the parents at this group for:

- Ideas and thoughts about what they wanted the group to offer (this then informed subsequent changes and developments)
- Their thoughts around attending a specific Portage training course for parents currently waiting for Portage. The overwhelming response was positive.

### What have we done?

#### **Family Information and Play for Children with Additional Needs (FIPCAN)**

Following parent feedback the weekly support group had a name change which parents felt actually described what the group offered to FIPCAN and this continued to be held weekly at alternating Children Centre's in Paignton and Torquay.

FIPCAN offers:

- A place for parents to meet and share their experiences
- Targeted activities to support children's attention, communication and interaction skills modelled by Portage and Children Centre staff using a small steps approach
- Explorative play and sensory based activities
- Information around local services for children with SEND including benefits such as DLA and Carers allowance
- Regular timetabled attendance by partner agencies e.g. Health Visiting team (sleep advice), Makaton training (Early Years Advisory Teacher) and Educational Psychology
- Information regarding the processes around Education Health and Care plan assessments

FIPCAN is advertised through a maildrop of the flyer to all parents, Early Years nurseries, Children Centres, Health Visiting teams and Health therapists based at the Child Development Centre. Parents have been signposted to FIPCAN by all of these services including the Targeted Help panel.



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## **Portage Parent Training course**

A training course was devised specifically for parents using elements of the National Portage Association Workshop and initially all parents waiting for a Home Visitor were invited to attend. The first course was delivered in October 2016 and has been delivered twice a year since. Course feedback has informed the content, length of sessions and the venue. A crèche is now available as this was identified as a major barrier for parent's attendance and Health therapists now jointly deliver some sessions which parents felt were important to cover.

The course sessions are limited to 2 hours and cover the Portage modules; 'Using clear language', 'a small steps approach' and 'understanding your child's behaviour'. In addition the Speech and Language Therapy Service jointly deliver sessions covering Total Communication and Improving child-parent interactions, Occupational Therapy jointly deliver a session on Sensory processing and the Health Visiting team jointly deliver a session on improving your child's sleep.

## **What difference has this made?**

- An increased number of parents have been able to access information and individual support through parent Training and FIPCAN at the earliest opportunity
- Parents who have attended the training often require reduced Home Visiting once allocated, which has increased the capacity of a small team
- Joint training with Health and Children Centre colleagues is an efficient use of limited resources and has helped to develop a more seamless offer to parents using a 'tell it once' approach
- Joint training has helped improve partnership working between Education and Health colleagues
- Joint training has improved the signposting of parents to the training and FIPCAN from partner agencies
- Parents who attend training and/or FIPCAN can develop their own support networks with other parents
- Parents can access specific information at FIPCAN as and when they need it
- Parents can access FIPCAN without needing to have been referred to Portage, this has increased our parent 'reach'
- Early Identification of SEND and future planning of support can be identified through a child's attendance at FIPCAN
- Training opportunities have been developed for Children Centre staff in SEND



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## Areas for further action

Recent attendance at a coffee morning event arranged by Torbay SENDIASS group by the Portage Service led to some parent feedback requesting access to training specifically in improving their understanding of children with social communication difficulties. These parents may have a child waiting for an autism assessment and therefore would not be able to access the EarlyBird/Cygnets programme or may have a child with an autism diagnosis but attended training a long time ago and would like a refresher.

### Plan

Work with SENDIASS and the Parent Carer Forum to identify the training needs of local parents and help plan a programme to deliver this using a multi-agency approach especially as the parents will not be limited to those with children aged 0-5yrs.

## Immediate next steps

- Joint delivery in the Summer term 2019 of 'Understanding children with social communication difficulties' to the SENDIASS group by the Portage Team Lead and the Early Years Advisory Teacher for SEND
- Consult with parents at SENDIASS around their future training needs

## Author

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