

# Kent Parents Action Group

## **A supportive journey**



Presenters:-

Zoe Davies

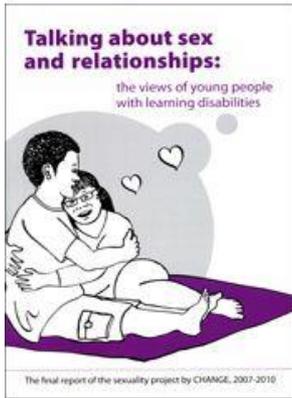
Becky Pendlebury

Louise Allen

Brian Flynn

# What is the Kent Parents Action Group?

- The Kent Parents Action Group (PAG) works to provide support, change attitudes and improve services for parents with a learning difficulty/disability.
- Resource library
- Support groups
- Training
- Working with statutory and community organisations



# A Supportive Journey

- ✓ Pre-pregnancy support and **family planning**
- ✓ **Accessible and informed** antenatal care and support
- ✓ The **right agencies** involved from birth, if not before
- ✓ Support and workshops **before** assessment is necessary
- ✓ **On-going** workshops, support and reviews to meet developmental needs



Parenting Workshop

# Working with Kent County Council

- The PAG received funding from Kent County Council (KCC) to produce a report on what works well and what needs improving in terms of support and services for parents with a learning difficulty/disability in Kent.
- Louise Allen, Coordinator for the Parents Action Group, interviewed parents individually and in focus groups. This report documents the experiences of 6 parents with a learning difficulty in Kent. We also included feedback from professionals.
- We are currently gathering statistics to support our report and show the number of parents with a learning disability in Kent.

# What we found out

- **What works well?**
- Good relationships with foster carers and high involvement in child's foster placement
- Solicitor involvement – very supportive and encouraging
- Symbol support – in particular the community based support and peer support from other families
- Support within Mother and Baby Unit in Tonbridge and Malling
- Consistent Chair at reviews
- Practical, home-based support with bills, letters, appointments, hospital visits
- When families are involved in decisions and support plans (with the consent of the parent and if regularly reviewed)
- Children's Centres promoting groups and activities for families of under 5s within their networks
- Volunteer community support for families with additional needs from Children's Centres
- Co-delivered training to student midwives from parents with a learning difficulty helps raise awareness of good support and challenge misconceptions
- When easy-read parenting information is given and used, parents find this helpful. This is available through Change.
- Community engagement events to bring professionals and parents together to raise awareness and address any provision gaps – more needed.
- Children's and Adult Services are communicating about how they can work together to improve services for parents with a learning difficulty.

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- The Commissioners for Adult Social Services (Learning Disability) and Children's Services have met with us on several occasions.
- They are proactive in involving Policy Managers and Heads of Service in our discussions – we all agree that there needs to be a better system in place to get the right support for parents early on.
- Policy Officers have been developing a new protocol to inform Council Officers in how to work together to support families with additional needs.
- The report we have been putting together has been used to support this protocol.
- This is currently on hold as the new Care Act comes into effect.

# Midwifery Teaching



A good start in life

# Midwifery Teaching

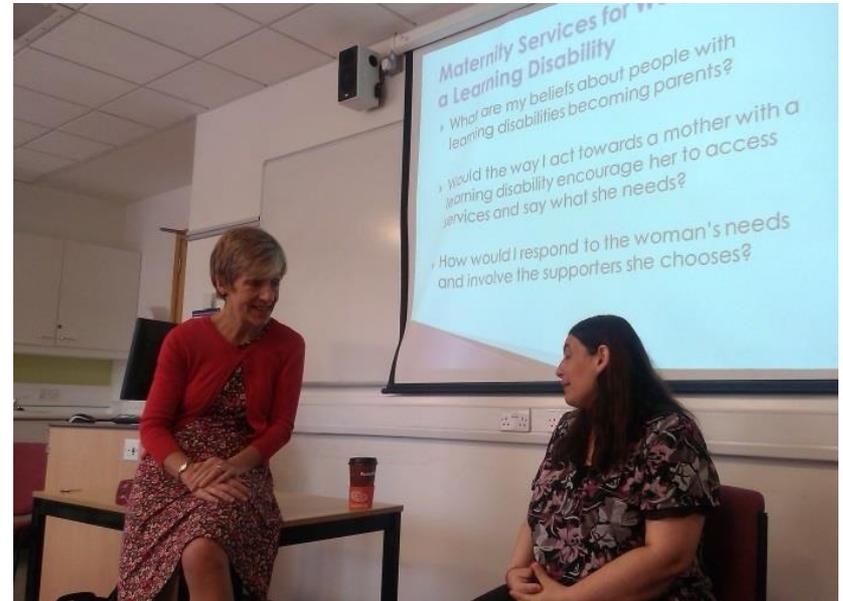


We work with Canterbury Christchurch University to help co-deliver Learning Disability Awareness teaching to student midwives.

The University pays us for this training (we co-deliver with one parent with a learning difficulty/disability and one without). This means we can pay people for the work they do. This helps build skills in communication and presenting.

We help the students think about what it means to have a learning disability and the kind of support people might need. Midwives are often the first professionals working with a parent who might notice that they need additional support.

- I am involved in delivering the midwife training because I want to help student midwives see people with learning difficulties as people.
- I feel that by sharing my story it will help improve the support that other parents get from their midwives.



Zoe and Cathy (Senior Lecturer in Learning Disability at CCCU) co-delivering training

# Feedback from students

- “Shows collaborative working”
- “Having different presenters helped keep our attention”
- “The videos and questions helped engage us”
- “It was interesting to hear your [Zoe’s] story from a professional point of view”
- “It helped us think about our practice before we are qualified. I think you should run this session every year”
- “In my placement I found that there were blanket referrals to social services. The training made me think about how this could be a good thing but how it could also fuel prejudice”
- “In my placement it was generally felt that a learning disability was seen as a problem, now I have had this experience it has given me a different approach”

**S**ymbol –  
Community  
Woodlands

Support for independence

# Symbol – Community Woodlands

- Symbol is a private organisation.
- Referrals for Symbol assessment and support are made through the courts when a parent is considered unable to look after their child(ren). A viability assessment is made to see if Symbol is suitable.
- Initial assessments for families are carried out in Newington and Snodland. This hopefully leads to an independent living assessment.
- If people pass the assessment Symbol gives support with finding somewhere to live independently.
- There is then on-going community support through Symbol.
- All of the families help make the Woodlands Community friendly and supportive. This is really important because this give us the opportunity to help each other and share what we are going through with people who understand.
- Not all of us have family near us. The other families involved with Symbol become our family – the children can play together and support each other as well.

# Becky's story



- When I was pregnant everyone told me that I would never be able to look after my baby myself. My mum was the only one who believed in me.
- When my son was 6 months old he was taken into foster care until he was 9 months old – I missed him starting to crawl.
- I was assessed and got support from Symbol and now live in my own house with my son who is now 9.
- I get 12 hours support per week (8 hours child support and 4 hours adult support).
- My son is currently being taken off the Care Order.
- I help the other parents with babysitting and looking after their children.

# Brian's story



- When my 3 children were 4 (I have twins) and 2 (my youngest daughter) I came to Symbol with them for a family assessment.
- I worked hard with Symbol to get custody of my children.
- I now live in a house with all three of my children. I am a single parent and love it!
- I help the other families with babysitting and taking their children out, decorating and DIY.

Healthy diet  
Meals Planner &  
and Shopping list

Liaison with  
with meetings

Holidays

Planning  
trips out

Planning  
travelling

Symbol Support

Budgeting

Support  
in the  
House

assessment  
to become  
independent

helping with  
medical  
appointments

Child  
behaviour

helping  
with  
routines  
decorating



# Thank you for listening



# Any questions?

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**Join our Facebook group – “Kent Parents Action Group”**  
[www.skillnetgroup.co.uk](http://www.skillnetgroup.co.uk)