

'Shaping the future - meeting children's language and learning needs' RCSLT/NICCY Conference

In October, 2005 representatives from RCSLT; NICCY; Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts; ELBs; the DHSSPS; DE; parent representatives from the Foyleview action group, Afasic and a Principal from a Special School met together to plan a conference to address the recommendations from the NICCY Review Report into Speech and Language Therapy Provision.

The aims of the conference were:

1. To share a vision of children's speech and language therapy services.
2. To identify learning from best practice.
3. To develop collaborative approaches to take forward recommendations arising from the NICCY report.
4. To manage the strategy going forward.

We have evaluated the conference and the report on the evaluation can also be found on www.niccy.org and www.rcslt.org

Outcomes of the conference:

1. Participants developed action plans that support the implementation of the NICCY recommendations and these have been forwarded to Maria Eagle MP Minister for Children.
2. A Task Force has been set up to review Speech and Language Therapy provision in Northern Ireland and membership of the Task Force includes representation from the NICCY/RCSLT group.
3. The Task Force may convene sub groups to consider individual SLT service issues and these may involve additional representation from conference delegates.
4. The roles of NICCY and RCSLT have been defined in order to clarify the contribution of each organisation to the 'Moving Forward' agenda.

5. The planning group has agreed to stand down in order to support the work of the Task Force.

The Role of NICCY:

- Continue to actively lobby and press government to implement the recommendations made in the NICCY Overview of SLT Services (04/05 and 05/06).
- Continue to take individual cases through NICCY's Legal and Complaints team.
- Sit outside the Task Force in a critical and supporting role to ensure recommendations are actioned.
- NICCY to request Task Force's Action Plan, quarterly reports and TOR for comment.
- NICCY will lobby to ensure AHPs representation is equitable.
- NICCY will send the action plans from the SLT Conference Breakout Groups to the Task Force as a baseline to springboard their work (a "starting point").

The Role of RCSLT:

- RCSLT has selected NI as the first area to participate in the implementation plan for the Children's Services Position Paper that defines Best Practice around Service Delivery.
- RCSLT has invited Marie Gascoigne SLT to work with SLT Managers and others (ELBs; Principals) to support the implementation and share the document in more detail. The ethos of the document defines the different principals in delivering a service to meet the needs of the child depending upon their environment. This includes training parents and others to support and deliver therapy programmes as well as working 1:1 when appropriate.
- SLT Managers will be invited to participate in a one day workshop which will include a presentation on the strategy and a master class in service redesign.
- RCSLT will also be hosting an evening reception to launch the Position Paper and will invite key political influencers and organisations to support the paper.
- RCSLT will continue to work with members and organisations to drive and share good practice.
- RCSLT will continue to raise awareness through press and public affairs work and to maintain good communication with colleagues across the Sector.
- RCSLT will continue to support the workforce planning agenda in NI by supporting the implementation phase of the RCSLT workforce pilot project

The Planning Group

- It was agreed there was no further role for the Planning Group at present due to the forthcoming implementation of the Task Force – Some members will be participating in the Task Force so there is no requirement for the Planning Group to exist in parallel to it.
- RCSLT will facilitate emails to the Planning Group for their views on the Task Force Terms of Reference.
- RCSLT and NICCY will keep delegates and parents informed of progress of Task Force.
- NICCY/RCSLT to issue joint press release at appropriate time to welcome the establishment of the Task Force.

There is considerable work necessary over the coming months to ensure equitable and adequate service provision for all children and young people who require speech and language therapy. It is our aspiration that the Task force will proactively address the range of issues highlighted in NICCY's overview reports of 2005 and 2006.

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