

Brighton & Hove Keyworking Scheme

2010 Report



'I was struggling and it was stressful before her – She takes all that off of me'

Parent

'I had no idea on a lot of the services, her guidance has been enormous'

Parent

[The Keyworking role] supports family with lots of appointments and advocates for the family – Mum has repeated the same things for years, but hasn't felt listened to by some agencies, she now feels she has been heard.

Health Visitor



Keyworking in Brighton & Hove, September 2010 report.

The Keyworking Scheme has been put in place in Brighton & Hove to achieve coordinated, family- centred, supportive services for disabled children 0-19 and their families.

The Brighton & Hove Keyworking Scheme officially began in January 2010 with designated staff coming into their posts; some Keyworking had been taking place before this in the form of non-designated Keyworkers. Funding for the scheme is through Aiming High, due to end beginning of April 2011.

Keyworking Scheme Staff Team



From left to right: Karen Parker – Keyworker, Sarah Henry – Keyworking Coordinator, Amelia Wilton – Keyworker, and Sasha Kydd – Team Administrator.

The Keyworking team is a multi-disciplinary team with backgrounds in Education, Specialist Nursery Nursing, Family Support, and the charitable sector. The Keyworking team is joined by a team of non-designated Keyworkers (carrying the role out in addition to their main position) who come from a wide range of disciplines. There are currently 9 Non-Designated Keyworkers across health and education including Health Visitors, Nursery Nurses, Early Years Teachers, and Speech and Language Therapists. Social workers and Social Work Resource Officers (SWROs) are Keyworkers for the families of children with disabilities they support.

Background to Keyworking

Studies have found that families raising a disabled child with severe physical difficulties or profound and complex difficulties are typically supported by more than 10 different professionals on a regular basis. The number of different professionals involved with these families leads to difficulties in co-ordination between services and problems for parents in knowing which needs are more appropriately dealt with by which services (Sloper and Turner, 1992). In addition families report difficulties in getting professionals to understand their situation and needs, and delays and bureaucracy.

A consistent recommendation of research is that families need a 'key' or 'link' worker to provide a single point of contact to guide them through their relationships with services.

For many years families in Brighton & Hove have requested a Keyworker service which provides them with this link and enables them to have easy access to information, support and services that meet their needs.

Benefits of Keyworking

Research shows the effectiveness of Keyworking services. Beresford (1995) found that having a Keyworker resulted in improved parent-professional relationships and fewer unmet needs. Glendinning (1986) found positive differences for families with a Keyworker compared to those without, including an effect on family relationships, stress levels and satisfaction with services.

Policies

The importance of providing Keyworker support has been emphasised by the **Every Child Matters (ECM): change for Children programme:**

‘Children known to more than one specialist agency should have a single named professional to take the lead on their case and be responsible for ensuring a coherent package of services to meet the individual child’s needs.’

The **Children’s Act 2004** placed a duty on local authorities to promote cooperation between different agencies and on key partners to take part in cooperation arrangements. Keyworking schemes are one part of this general shift towards an increased focus on interagency collaboration.

The **Children’s National Service Framework** specifically recommends that local services should ensure that families caring for a child with high levels of need have a key worker and that key worker services are provided in line with guidance in **Together from the Start** (Department of Health/Department for Education and Skills, 2003).

The **Children Act 1989**, places a duty on local authorities to ‘safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need’. Local authorities can provide a range of services for children who are ‘in need’. Such services are intended to provide support and help to families, including families of children with disabilities and other special needs. Keyworking provides this support to many families of children with disabilities and other special needs.

In addition **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)** gives guidance on interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Although not specifically a safeguarding role, the coordination of services by a Keyworker ensures the integrated working of professionals around a child and therefore keeps that child safer, as children are more at risk when services are not coordinated.

Service Delivery

Families being supported by Keyworkers in Brighton & Hove

Designated Keyworkers are currently working with 41 families, Non-Designated are working with 14 families and the families of 131 individuals are supported by Social Workers and SWROs carrying out a Keyworking role. Referrals continue to come into the scheme.

Criteria

Families meet the criteria for the scheme when a child has complex needs or multiple disabilities and has a large number of professionals/ services involved in ongoing care. There may be other factors taken into account, such as siblings or parents with additional needs. As this is a family-led service, a family must want a Keyworker.

Keyworker Implementation Group

Keyworker Implementation Group meetings occur monthly. Referrals are passed through this meeting, which is attended by representatives from health, social care, and education.

What does a Keyworker do?

In negotiation with the family, a Keyworker can:

- Be the first point of contact.
- Offer information and practical and emotional support.
- Visit or call regularly, not just when there is a problem.
- Listen to the family's views and ensure that other professionals are aware of them.
- Arrange multi-agency Family Service Planning meetings. Professionals and the family meet to share information and create a Family Service Plan.
- Monitor the working of the Family Service Plan and keep all involved informed of progress made and any changes to the plan.
- Provided family with an Early Support Family Pack. This contains a file designed for families to keep information about a child held in one place. The folder contains a record section for professionals to complete, national information on services and developmental journals.

Peer Support

Regular Keyworker Support Group meetings are held, where Keyworkers can attend to receive peer-support, share good practice, standardise practice and paperwork and identify training needs.

Keyworker Training

Keyworker training was delivered in May 2010 for individuals new to Keyworking and interested in the Non-Designated role. This training covered background to the role, a parent's perspective, working in partnership with parents, and the processes and procedures involved in Keyworking. A parent kindly gave their time in order to provide us with the all important parent's view.

How are we doing?

At the time of writing this report, evaluation forms have been sent out to all families with designated and non-designated Keyworkers and to professionals working with these families. Responses continue to come in and full evaluation results will be compiled at a later date. Evaluation results below are based on the responses gained before 14 September; at this point the response rate was 33%.

Benefiting families

95% of families responding to our scheme evaluation strongly agreed or agreed that having a Keyworker had benefited their families. 5% commented that they didn't know if the scheme had been of benefit as they had only been receiving the service for a short period of time.

100% of professionals responding to our scheme evaluation strongly agreed or agreed that having a Keyworker had benefited families that they worked with.

Comments from families and professionals in Brighton & Hove:

'Things were very difficult before we had a Keyworker'

Parent.

'I was struggling and it was stressful before her – She takes all that off of me'

Parent.

'The Keyworker Scheme is a fantastic idea and has helped to ease the stress and strain of bringing up a child with special needs.'

Parent.

[Keyworking] definitely benefits families, forming an important link between family and professionals.

Speech and

Language Therapist

When asked about the area of service that families valued the most, families listed such things as having someone to talk to when they needed it most, support and understanding, alleviation of stress and pressure, organisational skills, someone who understands their needs, family service planning meetings, easy access to services, familiarity, constancy and advice.

'The kindness, respect and consideration she shows me and my family always. Nothing is too much trouble.'

Parent.

Only one family listed something that they would like to change about the service:

'I would like other departments to take them more seriously and so that they get more of a response and keep the keyworker informed of new information.'

Parent.

Providing information and practical and emotional support to families

'Together from the start' states that services for disabled children and their families should aim to provide families with:

- the support they need in bringing up their child including providing information they need to understand their child's situation, to make informed choices, and access sources of help;
- emotional and practical support to enable them to adjust to their situation and provide the support their child will need.

100% of families responding to our scheme evaluation strongly agreed or agreed that their Keyworker provided them with information on the services available.

100% of families responding to our scheme evaluation reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that their Keyworker provided emotional support and was sensitive to their feelings about having a child with special needs.

Comments from families and professionals in Brighton & Hove:

'She is like a good friend- she listens and is there for me'

Parent.

'My Keyworker provides information all the time when I need it most'

Parent.

Families with Keyworkers have frequently talked to me about the positive impact that the role has had in both practical and emotional terms. The service is valued by families and I have particularly noticed the positive emotional effects for them of having a Keyworker.

Psychotherapeutic counsellor

Coordination of Services

One of the main aims of the Keyworking Service is to ensure joining up and coordination of the professionals and services working to support a family, in line with the duty placed on local authorities by Children's Act 2004.

100% of families responding to our scheme evaluation reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that their Keyworker co-ordinated the various services supporting their child.

One form this coordination takes is the Family Service Planning (FSP) meetings. These multi-agency meetings bring professionals and parents/carers together to look at how things are going and what the main needs are for the family at the time. A plan is put together to take actions forward. Keyworkers work with the family to encourage them to put together a plan for the meeting and their questions form the main part of these meetings. Professionals unable to attend are invited to feed in to the meetings via written reports. These meetings may be carried out as stand alone meetings, or may be held as part of a review meeting in order to maximise on professionals' time.

15 FSP meetings were organised by Keyworkers in Brighton & Hove between February and July 2010. 9 FSP meetings are planned for September/October 2010.

86% of families who responded to our scheme evaluation who had a Family Service Plan developed reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that it was useful. 14% reported that they did not know with comments that it was too soon after the meeting to tell.

94 % of professionals responding to our scheme evaluation reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that the Family Service Planning meeting was useful for a family they worked with. 6% responded that they did not know, again commenting that it was too soon after the meeting to tell.

Family-led Service

100% of families in Brighton & Hove reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that their Keyworker made sure that they had a chance to say what was important to them.

100% of families in Brighton & Hove reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that their Keyworker took into account the needs of other family members.

'She always asks how we all are and if we need help'

Parent

All families registered with Brighton & Hove Keyworking Scheme have a level of contact agreed in negotiation with the family. 100% of families strongly agreed, or agreed that this agreement met their needs.

'We have arranged a routine interval for contact and visits, but this is entirely adjustable'

Parent

Recommendations

The Keyworker Scheme continues to be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is meeting service outcomes and improving services for disabled children and their families.

Continued evaluation of the scheme will also ensure consistency of the service delivered, and reduction of duplication of information and services.

The Keyworker training sessions have been positively received by professionals, and it would be important to continue this training within Brighton & Hove training programme. Continuing Keyworker training would also allow for the development of training for parents, and parents as trainers.

It has been evidenced that Keyworking is a valued and much needed service for families. Keyworking is part of the Children and Young Peoples Plan for Brighton & Hove and provides very cost effective and efficient support. It is recognised however, that there remain families of children with complex needs and

disabilities not receiving Keyworker support, and therefore a potential gap in service. We would like to see Keyworking continue to develop and embed into the service that Brighton & Hove provides to all families of a child with complex needs and disabilities.

Report compiled by Sarah Henry, Keyworking Coordinator,
Brighton & Hove.

References:

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