

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 4

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

15 JANUARY 2013

CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS – EVIDENCE FROM *CONTACT A FAMILY & PARENTS 4 CHANGE*

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To introduce representatives from *Contact a Family & Parents 4 Change*, in attendance to speak with the Panel about a family's experience of having a child with complex needs and their experience of the services on offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That the Panel notes the information supplied and incorporates it into the overall review.

Consideration

3. As the Panel is aware, a great deal of evidence has already been gathered by the Panel, related to Children with Complex Needs. A lot of that evidence, however, has been from professional sources. Whilst the views of health and social care professionals are an important part of the Panel's investigation, it is also crucial for the Panel to consider the views of those who speak from the perspective of a specialist charity, or a parents group.
4. As such, representatives of *Contact a Family & Parents 4 Change*, will be in attendance at the meeting today, to outline their views on the experience of Children with Complex Needs, being part of a family with a child with complex needs and the services aimed at them. According to its website, Contact a Family says:

"One in 20 children in the UK is born with a disability. We are there for all of them. We are there for you."

Contact a Family is the only national charity that exists to support the families of disabled children whatever their condition or disability. With over 30 years of experience, our vision is that families with disabled children are empowered to live the lives they want and achieve their full

potential, for themselves, for the communities they live in, and for society. It's why we offer support, information and advice to over 340,000 families each year and campaign for families to receive a better deal.

Contact a Family is committed to ending the poverty, disadvantage and isolation experienced by families with disabled children across the UK. We support families whatever their child's disability or health condition with a wide range of life-changing help and class-leading services¹."

5. In addition to *Contact a Family*, the Panel will also be hearing from Parents 4 Change, which is a Middlesbrough based group. According to its website², Parents 4 Change describes itself as follows:
 - 5.1 **Who are we:** *GrandParent/Carers, Parents/Carers, Sibling/Carers, Foster Parent/Carers and Adoptive Parent/Carers, of children with disabilities in Middlesbrough*
 - 5.2 **What are we doing:** *Developing ways to include families in the process of influencing change in Childrens Disability Services in Middlesbrough.*
 - 5.3 **Why are we doing it:** *To ensure that any changes being made to Childrens Disability Services are meaningful for Disabled Children in Middlesbrough.*
6. In line with Members' wishes, representatives of Contact a Family & Parents 4 Change have been invited to attend the meeting today, to outline their views and experiences, both of services and the challenges faced by children with complex needs and their families. As a starting point, they have been asked to consider their views on the following questions:
 - 6.1 What sort of demand does Contact a Family/Parents 4 Change experience from Parents/Carers seeking assistance of some sort, in a given year?
 - 6.2 What are the most common issues/questions that are raised with Contact a Family/Parents 4 Change by clients and their families?
 - 6.3 What sort of services does Contact A Family/Parents 4 Change offer?
 - 6.4 What, in your view, are the biggest issues facing services for children with complex needs?

¹ <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/what-we-do>

² <http://www.parents4change.co.uk/about-us>

- 6.5 What, in your view, will be the impact of a public sector recession on services for Children with Complex Needs?
7. It is suggested to the Panel that it initially invites the representatives of *Contact a Family & Parents 4 Change* to outline their initial views, before holding a discussion with them and making any enquiries about the issues they raise.
8. The Panel is asked to note the evidence submitted and incorporate it into the overall review.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

9. Please see the websites of Contact a Family & Parents 4 Change, should Panel Members wish to read further about the organisations and their work.

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