

VALUED PARTNERS TOWARDS A PARENT CHARTER

A Consultation and Service Information Framework

**For parents of children and young people
with a learning difficulty or disability.**

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1 PURPOSE

The Children & Young Peoples Department and Primary Care Trust have sought to work with parents and carers across Wirral to establish a Wirral Family Consultation Forum.

The Forum has confirmed its terms of reference, to underpin its work along with a Statement of Expectations. (Appendix 1)

This Charter provides further guidelines to inform agencies and organisations working across Wirral (Children's Services), about good practice that involves engagement, involvement and participation activities with parents and carers of children and young people who have learning difficulties and or disabilities. The participation of children and young people in our view is interwoven with that for parents and carers, and both should equally shape service design and direction.

The aim of producing this charter is to lay out a set of guiding principles to support all partner agencies in the process of engaging and working with parents and carers who use services for children, and to enable their effective participation in service development and decision making. It is hoped that these principles will be of assistance in ensuring that parents and carers feel valued as equal partners. All the principles will be explored with parents and carers to ensure it reflects their views and enables them to inform policy and strategy processes.

Definition of participation

Participation is the process that enables individuals and groups to influence decision making and bring about change. Parent and Carers participation is just as relevant to individual decision-making (for example, relating to a child's health or education) as it is to strategic decision-making.

Meaningful participation requires that Parent and Carers have access to information which is readily understandable and relevant to their circumstances. They may need advice and support to develop their views and ideas for making change happen. It requires decision-makers to be open and honest, committed and persistent in their communication and who respond quickly to proposals, requests, questions or demands.

In collective participation, parents and carers will also benefit from the opportunity to meet and discuss their views and experiences with others in similar situations. Participation often enables children and young people to hold decision-makers to account.

Consultation

Is the process by which parents and carers are asked their opinions: this can be on a specific issue (e.g. what times are best for this meeting?) or it can have a broader agenda (e.g. what is needed in this area to help improve transition?).

In undertaking consultation we will seek to evidence that we are listening and giving due weight to the views expressed. We will also aim to ensure that consultation activity is systematic across services so that ideas expressed in one place are readily shared across services.

We also recognise that consultation is informal and a part of care planning and the everyday co-ordination of services – we will aim to ensure that the professionals who work within services readily share this activity to ensure we continue to provide better services.

Parents or Parent Carers.....

Within forming the Forum there has been discussion of the terms parent and carer.

Many parents do not necessarily see themselves as being carers and do see themselves as parents. Sometimes this reflects that their child does not have a physical or severe learning disability – yet still have a child with a range of additional and or complex needs.

There are also carers who are not parents or may have or not have full parental responsibility, grandparents, kinship carers and or foster carers.

The significant issue being that the child or young person who needs support is aged between 0 and 19.

The aim of **the guiding principles** in section 3 of the Charter is to enable everyone to work together in an environment of respect, openness and commitment.

It is recommended that agencies and organisations working across Wirral providing services to children and their families adopt these principles and values to support the effective engagement of parents and carers.

These principles are flexible and generic and can be adopted by agencies and organisations working across a wide range of service delivery including the following areas:

- Children & Young People `s Department
- Schools – special and mainstream
- Health Services – PCT and Provider Trusts
- Connexions
- Learning Skills Council
- Voluntary and community organisations
- Parent and carer support groups
- Regeneration & housing associations
- Leisure services

This document is designed to compliment:

- The Young Carers Strategy
- The Charter for Participation for Young People
- Comprehensive engagement strategy

2 THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 The National Context

There are now a range of government initiatives and documents promoting the involvement and participation of parents and carers, as well as children and young people themselves.

These now culminate in the National Core Offer.

Shortcut to:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/8C6C272B2B76A4E6FE6E8408DED7A2EC.pdf>

These include;

- **Standard 8 National Service Framework (NSF) for children, young people & maternity services.** (Oct 2004) makes it clear that local areas need 'services and staff who are able to respond in a sensitive way which encourages engagement and provides high quality support for young people'. A marker of good practice being that "Disabled children and young people and their families are routinely involved and supported in making informed decisions about their treatment, care and support, and in shaping services."
- **Special Educational Needs Code of Practice** (2002) One of the fundamental principles that inform the Code is that 'parents have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education. To make communications effective professionals should acknowledge and draw on parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their child. The guidance also outlines the requirement for the Council to make provisions for Parent Partnership Services, and inform parents, schools and others about the arrangements for the service and how they can access it. The (*SEN Toolkit 2002*, DfES 558/2001, Department for Education and Skills 2001, S.1) explains how schools, Councils all who support pupils with SEN should actively seek to work with parents.
- **Together from the Start** (2003) Regarding provision of services for the early years, this guidance states that: Professionals should approach work in this area with the expectation that they must work in partnership with families, with parents fully involved in any decision-making processes effecting the provision of support to their child.
- **Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN** (2004) This strategy emphasises the need for local services to work in partnership with parents of children with SEN. It refers to the section in the SEN Code of Practice, which states the expectation that all professionals will work actively with parents and value the contribution they make. This document is further endorsement of the case for increasing levels of parent participation across services.
- **Early Support Programme** – a piloted programme to support families with young disabled children & the professionals who work with them. Covering all disabled children below the age of five, it provides parent carers of disabled children with condition-specific information and enables them to gain knowledge about other important areas such as education and financial help.

- **Audit Commission report 'review of services for disabled children' (2003).** One of the key principles is that 'disabled children, young people and their families are involved in assessment and planning at all levels'.
- **Aiming Higher for Disabled Children 2007.** Highlighted that agencies locally must work together in listening to parents and carers. Within the roll out programme in 2008 a National Core Offer has been published. It will require all services to develop a core offer focused on 3 key elements of information and transparency ; assessment; participation and feedback.
- **Our health, our care, our say(2006),** announced a New Deal for Carers. This has been followed in June 2008 by Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities. This provides further expectations that recognise parents and carers having multiple responsibilities which may be towards different generations in the extended family. These frameworks put information carer training and support in response to emergencies.
- **The NHS Operating framework** (October 2008/09), which sets out the specific business and financial arrangements for the NHS in any given year, has made specific references to supporting carers for the first time this year.

2.2 Key Legislation

The Government has supported two major pieces of legislation and introduced two more which have impacted directly on carers' lives.

- **The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000** made four principal changes to the law:
 - councils were given powers to support carers by providing services to carers directly;
 - carers were given the right to an assessment independent of the person they care for;
 - local authorities were enabled to make direct payments to carers;
 - councils were given options to support flexibility in provision of short breaks through the short-break voucher scheme.
- **The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004,** which made three main changes to the existing law around carers' services:
 - there is now a duty on councils to inform carers, in certain circumstances, of their right to an assessment of their needs;
 - when assessing carer's needs, councils must now take into account whether the carer works or wishes to work, undertakes or wishes to undertake education, training or leisure activities;
 - there should be co-operation between authorities in relation to the provision of services that are relevant to carers.
- **The Disability Discrimination Act(s)** recognises the right of people in society to equal citizenship, which will benefit both carers and the people that they care for and support. Placing a duty on the Council and schools in particular to actively promote the position of disabled young people.

2.3 The Local Context

A number of events involving parents and carers have been held from 2002 onwards in building towards the framework of local involvement.

2.3.1 The first event led by Social Care at that time identified why involving parents of disabled children is so important:

- Parents and Carers of disabled children are experts in their own right.
- People use services over a long period
- People have their own ideas which professionals should not attempt to second guess

That parental involvement was important to:

- Reinforce the positive regard for and social confidence of the child
- Ensure informed decision making for the child becomes more accountable
- Ensure service design and delivery is appropriate
- Stimulate learning and professional development
- Challenge discrimination and increase equity

2.3.2 From this event a number of consultation and information events were held over subsequent years initially on a single agency basis involving social care staff, and from 2004 onwards drawing in staff from across all agencies. Throughout 2005 and 2006 a series of 6 multi agency Partnership Information Events were held which provided parents with information and opportunity to help shape the Council `s Joint Area Review.

2.3.4 A "Partners in Policymaking" course was run locally to support local parents to develop their confidence to help shape the agenda.

Parents were at this time invited to join the new Strategy Group for children with Learning Difficulties and children with Disabilities, which it was agreed locally should take forwards planning for this group of young people. It was felt important that the parents who joined this group should be there from the off set.

As the LDD group supported by the parent representatives contribute to the development of the Children` s Plan and LDD Plan. It was agreed that effective scrutiny arrangements should include the development of a regular Forum in which parents would receive full briefings by lead professionals from the key agencies.

2.3.5 The Special Educational Needs Advisory Committee (SENAC) was established by the Wirral Education Committee over nine years ago to monitor the implementation of Wirral's Special Educational Needs Development plan for Special Educational Needs. SENAC meets 3 times a year, with a member from each political party. It originally comprised a variety of interested parties who had a professional interest and/or responsibility for developing more effective SEN provision across the borough. The group still involves key stakeholders from health, social care and education services. It still seeks to actively listen and respond to the opinions of pupil and parent representatives. The committee is currently looking to re-define its purpose and membership in this next year, in order to best fulfill its intended scrutiny function.

2.3.6 The Wirral Family Forum was formally launched in May 2006. Terms of reference were agreed, name of the forum and logos, expense payments have been worked through within various meetings. The Forum over an 18 month period had several periods of operating more effectively, though with changes of support staff lost focus. The decision was taken to re-launch in November 2007, with strengthened links with the Parent Support Group Forum and plans to develop a web site presence.

DRAFT

3 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES IN PARTNERSHIP WORKING

3.1 The principles of partnership working

Parents within the Wirral Family Forum have the view that the following principles should guide how professionals work together with parent carers:

- to be recognised as equal partners
- to have a choice
- to be treated fairly
- to be consulted
- to have access to information
- to provide practical help
- to ensure joined up service responses
- to promote inclusion and challenge discrimination

3.1 Working together in practice

The following values are proposed as being important for services to adopt if they are wishing to work in partnership with parents and carers.

- To develop a culture of mutual respect and trust, sharing information and promoting openness that enables parents and carers to meet with professionals on equal terms
- To build relationships between people that enables the and development of honest and open dialogue, with no hidden agenda enabling the development of trust between all parties
- Working in partnership means working together with the needs of the child and family as the central focus
- Working together involves **really** listening to each other whilst acknowledging different perspectives and respecting each others views and ideas
- Working in partnership means valuing the expertise, knowledge and skills of parents, carers and professionals, and demonstrating **how** this is valued
- All people that are involved need to be committed and to demonstrate this by attending meetings and groups, and acting responsibly and respectfully

- Taking the involvement of parents and carers seriously and recognizing the value of each individuals input
- Ensuring parents and carers involvement is part of a continuing process that 'one off' consultation does not support effective partnership working
- Working in partnership means that parents, carers and professionals are jointly involved in decision making processes
- Professionals need to provide adequate time when they seek to engage with parents in structuring information and consultation properly
- Professionals need to ensure that they confirm what they will do and explain if there are limitations to what can be done
- Professionals need to report back to parents on how there views have shaped the service.
- Professionals need to learn how to support parents and be open to learning from parents

3.2 Supporting parents and carers involvement.

The following principles are proposed as being important for services to adopt if they are wishing to support parents and carers effective involvement in service development:

- Parents need opportunities to develop confidence and skills in order to fully participate, across a range of services. This requires access to resources and training opportunities
- Parents will need access to support from advocates, development workers and voluntary organisations
- Professionals need to develop skills in working in partnership with parents and carers, and attend joint training events for parents, carers and professionals.
- Parents and carers should always be offered travel expenses in a timely and no intrusive manner. This demonstrates recognition of their valuable input and a commitment to an ongoing process.
- The Wirral Family Consultation Forum is part of network of groups – all of which are vital to developing effective consultation and communication.
- There needs to be active partnership working between key Officers of the Council, PCT , key voluntary organisations in the field to actively promote the involvement of parents and carers in service development.

3.3 Promoting access to Information

The following principles have been developed to enable agencies in the provision of information to parents and carers:

- Parents and carers are very busy people
- Parents want information to be accessible and be provided in a range of ways and formats, easy to obtain, relevant to them, joined up and informative.
- Parents, carers and professionals need to have access to the same shared information in order to promote partnership working, whether this be information on service developments, and or involvement in key strategic meetings.
- The use of a variety of methods of communication support the engagement of a wide number of parents and carers
- The provision of a meaningful and accessible directory that provides a range of information on services for disabled children and their families will support parents and carers to access and engage with services
- The use of jargon and abbreviations should be avoided so that no one is excluded from participating.
- Providing information is not sufficient in itself parents often need support and time to explore the best options for themselves
- Supporting opportunities for parents for networking with other parents is a vital component of any information approach ; in so far that other parents will have a greater appreciation of the emotional support parents may require and pressures they experience
- Professionals should take time in explaining things and seek feedback on the usefulness of information.
- In supplying information to parent carers, services should use a variety of channels including newsletters, web-sites, support groups, e-mail and direct mailing.
- Schools have a key responsibility as the lead service provider in most children `s lives in the forwarding of information on behalf of different services

4.0 NEXT STEPS

The following next steps have been set out to guide developing the Strategy over the next 12 months and will be reviewed and a new action plan agreed.

No.	Action	Outcome	Who - Timescale
1.	<p>Consultation on guiding principles.</p> <p>Review with all stakeholders via web site , key groups and an Information event</p>	To consult on a Consultation Strategy with a view to the formal adoption by the Children & Young People Strategic Partnership and PCT Boards	<p>1/ JJ/ Wirral Family Consultation Group</p> <p>2/ Any other comments to CG</p>
2.	<p>Development of service specification for support services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender proposals confirmed • Review with interested providers / parties 	Tender specifications produced which brings together existing activity in a co-ordinated manner	<p>CG/ JW/TM</p> <p>4/12</p> <p>January 2009</p>
3.	Review of LDD plan 2007/8	Parents will receive feedback on service development	<p>JW</p> <p>December 2008</p>
4.	Feedback report on consultation activity undertaken in 2008	Parents will receive feedback on service development and their own contribution	<p>CG /JW</p> <p>February 2009</p>
5.	Production of plain English version of the LDD Plan	<p>Parents will receive information which is more readable.</p> <p>The plan will confirm the role of the WFF in providing for effective scrutiny of the LDD Plan</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>February 2009</p>
5.	Confirmation of scrutiny activity with Wirral Family Consultation Forum.	The WFF Consultation Group will identify 3-4 areas for increased scrutiny	<p>JJ/ Wirral Family Consultation Group</p> <p>March 2009</p>
6.	Further day with external facilitator to develop the Forum	Plan for developing the Forum is published	<p>JJ/ Wirral Family Consultation Group</p> <p>May 2009</p>

7.	Identification of a group of parents who will be prepared to receive information, documents and plans with a view to providing comment on accessibility	Documents circulated to parents are easy to follow	JJ/ Wirral Family Consultation Group March 2009
8.	Confirmation of funding bid for 2009/10 from Together for Disabled Children and moving forwards the areas of activity in 2008/9	Forum will continue to develop in partnership with parents, support groups	JJ / JW/ CG / TH March 2009
9.	Parent Support Group Forum – to extend the network of groups that are linked.	Increased circulation of information to groups.	
10.	Jargon busting information on SEN web site to be reviewed	Information to be understandable and its availability on different web sites made known	JJ/ AM/ GS March 2009
11.	Step by step guide to be put on WIRED Parent carers website.	Parents feel able to use web site to seek information and discuss issues of interest	JJ March 2009

Appendix 1 : Wirral Family Consultation Forum Terms of reference

Terms of reference for the Forum were agreed with parents and officers of the Council in 2007.

The terms of reference mirror those set for the LDD Strategy group.:

- In developing a shared vision for services for children and young people who have a learning difficulty and/or who are disabled.
- In being one of the primary means of ensuring that parents/carers and children and young people are fully engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of service.
- Support to the LDD Strategy Group in advising the Strategic Partnership Board and Every Child Matters Strategy Groups on actions that need to be taken to improve outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Advising on models of inter agency work and assessment procedures for children & young people with learning difficulties and disabilities
- supporting policy development and commenting on guidance for staff / services
- promoting the professional and cultural development of staff .
- helping to promote inclusive processes and challenge discrimination

Appendix 2 : Wirral Parent Support Group Forum – Terms of Reference

AIMS

- To promote working and information sharing amongst voluntary and statutory groups concerned with families of children with disabilities and/or additional needs
- Support to the LDD Strategy Group in advising the Strategic Partnership Board and Every Child Matters Strategy Groups on actions that need to be taken to improve outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Being one of the primary means of ensuring that parents/ Parent Carers and children and young people are fully engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of service.
- To ensure that family views are being represented and to influence local policy.
- Helping to promote inclusive processes and challenge discrimination

MEMBERSHIP

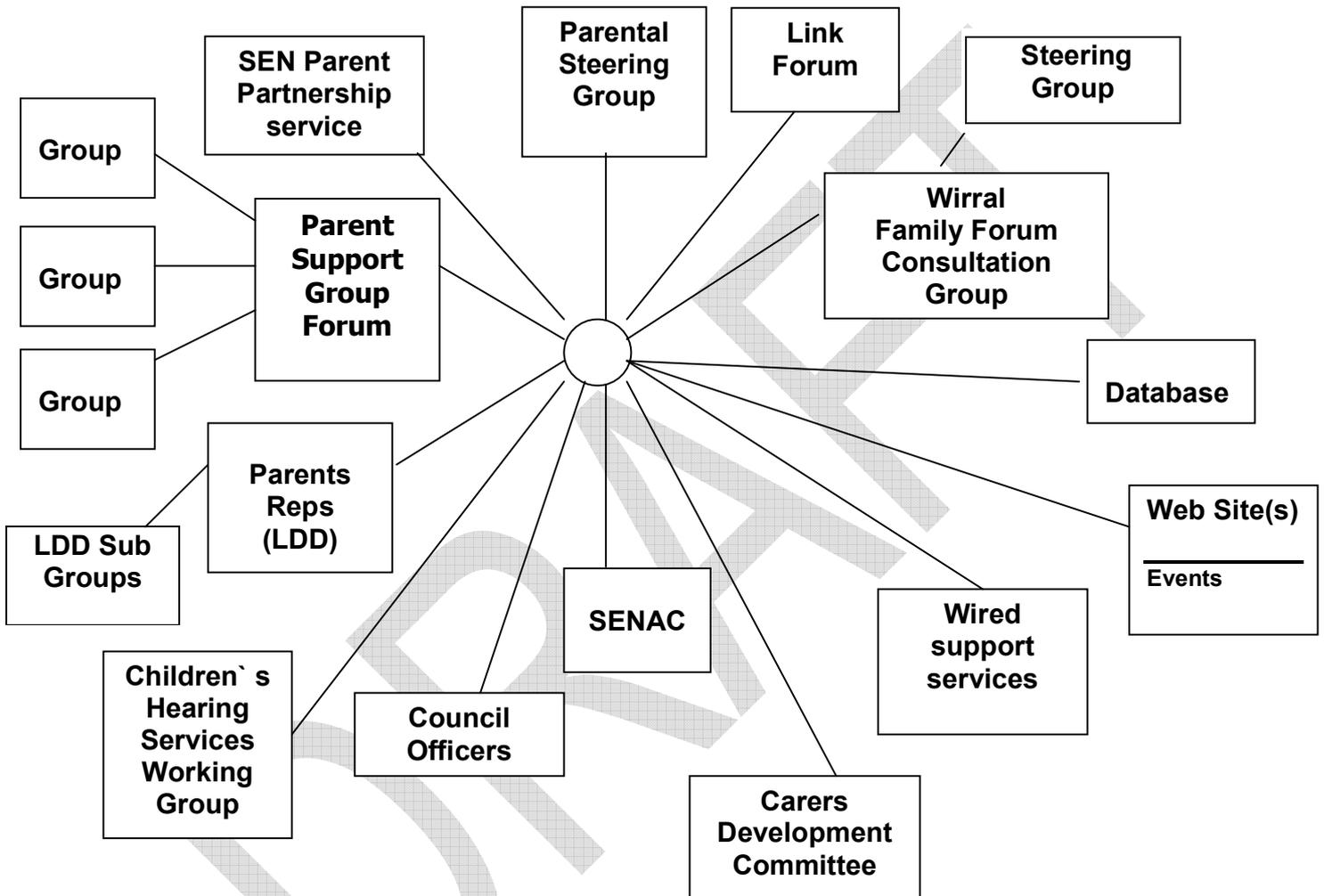
- Membership is open to voluntary organisations concerned with families of children with disabilities and/or additional needs.
- Each support group shall be represented by one person from the group at each forum meeting.
- The forum reserves the right to include statutory agencies as appropriate. At this time this will include nominated officers of the Council and Primary Care Trust.
- Members attend the forum to represent the interests of their individual organisation and as such must feedback any information received through the forum.
- Members can only represent the forum at other meetings if previously nominated to do so.

GENERAL MEETINGS

- Meetings will be held bi-monthly.
- The forum will be facilitated by a voluntary group individual.
- Minutes will be taken at each meeting and distributed as soon as possible. (Support to be provided by the Council at this time)
- All members will be expected to give due consideration to confidentiality of all matters discussed.
- Terms of reference will be reviewed annually or as otherwise appropriate

Appendix 3: Wirral Forum Virtual Map

The map was produced in November 2007 to represent the different elements of the consultation processes.



1. SENAC – Special Educational Needs Advisory Committee

The group was formed as a key scrutiny process for monitoring of SEN provision and the LDD Plan. Meets every term. Meetings are co - chaired by Councillors from each political party. Group is serviced by the Inclusion Project Manager CYPD 5-6 parents are invited to attend the group .

2. Parents Support Group Forum

Have agreed new terms of reference and is facilitated by Wired. The Forum will meet for a Networking Day twice a year – and receive a bulletin monthly Membership list available from WIRED

3. Wirral Family Forum Consultation Group

Have agreed new terms of reference and receives facilitation by Wired. The group meets monthly – an each second month receives an update report from key officers within the Council and PCT. Membership list maintained by WIRED. Chair and vice chair are parents of young people with a LDD.

4. Parent representatives

Joined the LDD group at its inception in June 2005, during this period several parents have joined and left the group. The Wirral Family Forum is the key group which will guide Officers in relation to new representatives joining the group.

5. Children`s Hearing Services Working Group

Includes parent representatives working alongside professionals. 3 monthly meeting

6. Link Forum

Provides a representative onto the LDD Strategy Group – elected by voluntary organisations within the area

7. Web sites

Are maintained by Wired and SEN Parent partnership.

Appendix 4 : Wirral Family Forum Consultation Group Statement of Expectations

Purpose	To ensure that all meetings and processes within the Forum reflect the following values
Principles	<p>The Forum is based on the principles of partnership working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to be recognised as equal partners ▪ to have a choice ▪ to be treated fairly ▪ to be consulted ▪ to have access to information ▪ to get practical help ▪ to receive joined up service responses ▪ to promote inclusion and challenge discrimination
Values	
Openness & Honesty	It is a shared responsibility to ensure that all able to express opinions in safety
Participation & Equality	Anyone's contribution is to be recognised and valued
Open to Challenge	Everyone attending the Forum may be challenged in order that we should learn and change
Fairness	All must ensure that everyone involved has an equal voice by whatever means are appropriate
Accountability	The Forum is ultimately accountable to the people of Wirral , via the LDD Group of the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership Board ; to work to the best outcomes for children and young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.

Ground Rules

- Respect and accept other people's contribution, even if you disagree
- Listen, you may learn something
- Be patient, recognise and accept differences in people's ability to communicate
- Use clear, simple English
- Make sure that everyone has the support they need in order to contribute fully
- Explain processes clearly
- Recognise and record minority views

Support

- Parent Support co-ordinator
- Travel expenses
- Officer support
- Administrative support
- Information from and to LDD groups

Quality

The processes and meetings conducted within the Forum will be measured against this statement of expectations. Responsibility to ensure they are adhered to lies with us all

Appendix 5 : What is participation

1.0 Participation

Participation is one of those words that can have many different meanings.

In 1969 Sherry Arnstein first attempted to draw out the different 'levels' of participation in her Participation Ladder, this is represented in relation to parental involvement below. It has been used to consider the links between service commissioners and providers, parent and carers in the review, planning, development and monitoring of services. In essence, the further up the participation ladder services climb, the more power and responsibility they devolve to people. It is important to consider that different types of involvement and participation are valid for different people at different times, according to their own wishes as well as what is possible for the service. It will be apparent that reaching 'the top' is not achievable or indeed appropriate in all cases, whilst the bottom 3 positions are not appropriate in a modern society. It is also clear that you may choose to adopt any position on the ladder rather than having to 'climb it'. Positions toward the top of the ladder will be marked by the existence of processes and mechanisms that ensure greater levels of participation.

8	Parents & professional share decision making
7	Parents lead and initiate action
6	Professional initiated, shared decisions with parents
5	Parents consulted and informed
4	Professionals decide – Parents informed
3	Parents tokenised
2	Parents therapised
1	Parents manipulated

2.0 Hear by Rights

Hear by Right offers tried and tested standards for services across the statutory and voluntary sectors to map and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people and to encourage continual improvement in the service.

There are seven standards for organisational change: **Shared values, Strategy, Structure, Systems, Staff, elected members and trustees, Skills and knowledge, Style of leadership**. Each relies on the other to move forward. They all link back to the shared values and require self-assessment at three levels of performance, emerging, established and advanced. Each level builds on the previous one.

The standards were used to support the development of Wirral `s Charter of Participation for Young People.

Appendix 6 : What parents want – a research article

Bryony Beresford, Parvaneh Rabiee and Patricia Sloper from the Social Policy & Research Unit, (2007), identified a number of outcomes parents wanted for themselves, including:

1. Personal identity

Work, interests, and personal relationships were the 3 main areas identified by parents as reinforcing their sense of personal identity. Having some free time and access to high quality care and support for their child being what they felt helped them

2. Physical and emotional well-being

Physically back injury and coping with sleep deprivation impact on well being and capacity to cope. In relation to emotional well being the impact of adjustments to the disabled child, distress or ill health of their child, difficulty in getting the right support and quality of services were the main things parents found difficult.

3. Feeling skilled and informed

Positive outcomes in this area were helping parents to feel more competent and in control, which in turn helped their ability to planning and make decisions. Parents want professional support as they acquired and then use new skills. The need for information was on-going and needed to be available when parents needed it.

4. The balance between caring and parenting

Parents want 'quality' time with both their disabled child and their non-disabled children. Having fun, and a relaxed time with their children and to develop their relationships.

5. Maintaining family life

In maintaining family life, developing shared experiences and activities, and do things as a whole family was seen by parents as important. Keeping the mother-father relationship 'intact', and the involvement of the father in the care of the disabled child was seen by some parents as needing extra effort to maintain.

6. Positive adjustment of siblings

Parents wanted their other children to lead ordinary lives and enjoy everyday childhood experiences, and a positive relationship between the disabled child and his/her siblings.

7. Practical and financial resources

Advice and support to meet the additional costs to the family created by the disabled child were significant.

8. Experiences as a service user

Being ; a sense of working in partnership with services and having confidence in the services being used by the child.

The full article is available at : <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/pdf/priorities.pdf>

Appendix 7 : Useful web sites

CONTACT A FAMILY: A UK-wide charity which provides support, advice and information for families with disabled children, including information on transition.

www.cafamily.org.uk

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN: Provides a national forum for the discussion and development of a wide range of policy and practice issues relating to service provision and support for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs.

www.ncb.org.uk/cdc

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (DFES): The website has information about the department, including departmental records and strategy.

www.dfes.gov.uk

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: The website has information about strategy, policy, guidance, publications and more.

www.doh.gov.uk

DISABILITY RIGHTS COMMISSION: Gives advice and information to disabled people, employers and service providers. It also supports disabled people in getting their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act.

www.drc-gb.org

HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE (HMSO): Full text of Acts of Parliament.

www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts.html

MENCAP: Provide a range of information and support for people with learning disabilities and their families.

www.mencap.org.uk

PARTICIPATION WORKS : Provides information and resources to support the development of participation of young people. www.participationworks.org.uk

ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND (RNIB): Provides information, support and advice to people with visual impairments.

www.rnib.org.uk

ROYAL NATION INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF (RNID): Provides information about hearing loss. It also campaigns and lobbies government to change policies.

www.rnid.org.uk

SCOPE: Provides information and advice about cerebral palsy. It also campaigns and undertakes research projects.

www.scope.org.uk

SEN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: Set up to help local authorities and providers work together to share experience and knowledge and to plan services as a region rather than individually.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/regional

TRANSITION INFORMATION NETWORK: An alliance of organisations and individuals with the aim of improving young disabled people's transition to adulthood. It produces a magazine "My Future Choices" for young people.

www.myfuturechoices.org.uk

VALUING PEOPLE: The website of the Valuing People support team. It includes information, resources to download and links to regional pages.

www.valuingpeople.gov.uk