

Participation, Involvement and Achievement SWOT Analysis **Executive Summary**

Context

In January 2008, Paul Jamieson was appointed to the post of Inclusive Services Coordinator. The main remit of the Inclusive Services Coordinator is to identify and remove the barriers to the presence, participation, and achievement of disabled children and young people, through the effective development of partnerships and commissioning of universal childcare, leisure and cultural services.

Between mid-February and mid-April, the Inclusive Services Coordinator informally consulted with a wide variety of organisations and individuals throughout Stockport, across the statutory, private, voluntary and independent sectors, and also including parents and disabled young people. The aim of the approach was to identify the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the provision of inclusive opportunities for disabled children and young people in the focus areas of childcare, play, leisure and culture.

Strengths

- The recent Joint Area Review classified Stockport's provision for children and young people as 'good'. The JAR highlighted effective work targeted at disabled children and young people within Stockport in each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes
- There is a well trained, skilled and experienced workforce within Stockport.
- There is increased understanding of the benefits of voluntary work with disabled people
- The immense dedication of the volunteers and paid workforce within Stockport
- The range of types of provision is good within Stockport
- The content quality of information provision is good, and there is a good range of information channels which are used
- The history and experiences of Stockport as being early drivers of 'mainstreaming' is of benefit to current approaches towards developing inclusive opportunities.
- There has been a recent recognition of the importance of developing provision along the lines of what children and parents want to do, or feel is important
- This 'wrap-around' approach is also extended to parents and the family unit – many organisations have policy mechanisms for the involvement of parents and families
- There is increased involvement of disabled people in consultation processes
- Good variety and range of transport services available for both individuals and organisations
- Good availability of disability awareness training
- The number of differing national, regional and local policies and procedures in place illustrates the importance of disability access on the political agenda
- There is recognition of disabled people as an important economic group

Weaknesses

- High turnover of Disability Partnership Heads of Service has affected the stability of delivery and the promotion of the work achieved by the Partnership
- The Joint Area Review highlighted some areas in which Stockport can improve their provision of services to disabled children and young people (such as physical accessibility, participation in planning and monitoring and evaluation of services, and transition).
- Gaps exist in the communication pathway – awareness of opportunities is not always achieved – and greater coordination of information provision of opportunities is needed
- Professionals are not always aware of partnership working opportunities
- The wide variety of available communication mediums utilised within Stockport makes it difficult for providers to effectively communicate with all disabled children
- Many facilities within Stockport are not fully accessible.
- Many private businesses do not do more than their minimum legislative requirement
- A fear of the cost of adaptations is a factor in why many 'reasonable adaptations' are not made

- There are many issues which ensure that transport is a barrier to access – and transport providers are in competition with each other, affecting attempts to develop strategic coordination
- Many good projects are competing for the same funding
- Funding is more likely to be captured by bigger projects run by larger organisations – these tend to be for 'segregated' participation opportunities, therefore innocently propagating the 'social model' of disability
- There are many environmental barriers which prevent disabled children and young people from participating, especially in mainstream activity. Many of these barriers can be explained as a 'fear factor'. These barriers may not always be set by providers, sometimes parents and children/young people have a role in this
- Pictures of disabled children and young people are usually only seen in documentation or sections of documentation that are relevant to people with an interest in disability opportunities – this again perpetuates the social model of disability
- The many different understandings of the term 'inclusion' and what it means prevents a coordinated approach to delivering inclusive opportunities
- There are gaps in transition from children's services to adult services – and there is a drop off in participation amongst older young people
- There is little structured development of voluntary opportunities for disabled young people as part of an approach to vocational qualifications
- There is little structured strategic support available to small voluntary organisations
- The April 2008 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment highlighted a number of issues around childcare for disabled children and young people, and concluded that the market for childcare for disabled children and young people appears to be underdeveloped or functioning poorly.
- There are virtually no opportunities for disabled children and young people with complex needs to access opportunities that are not provided by their educational institution
- Sometimes a lack of adapted activity-specific equipment can hinder access to opportunities

Opportunities

- There are a number of opportunities within Stockport to develop the number of, and accessibility to opportunities for disabled children and young people. The SWOT Analysis highlighted ten considerations, and stated that in each opportunity, there would be the potential for strategic links, through the Inclusive Services Coordinator, to be developed in order to ensure that each opportunity is as inclusive as possible. The SWOT Analysis also highlighted that there is also the opportunity to develop a Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan, in order to develop a strategic structure for the engagement of partners within multi-agency implementation groups aiming to deliver specific pieces of work
- The SWOT Analysis recommended that the main aim of the Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan should, for the foreseeable future, continue to be 'the identification and removal of the barriers to the presence, participation, and achievement of marginalised and vulnerable children and young people', but that this main aim is supported by five simple principles which will shape the work of the Inclusive Services Coordinator and the delivery of opportunities within the Action Plan.
- The principles are to; increase the number and quality of mainstream opportunities, maintain current levels of 'dedicated' opportunities, increase the provision and quality of dedicated opportunities for children and young people with complex needs, target specific barriers to participation, and commission delivery which addresses these barriers, and involve disabled children and young people, and their parents and families in the planning, commissioning, monitoring and evaluation of delivery

Threats

- The SWOT analysis highlighted five threats to the development of inclusive opportunities for disabled children and young people, namely; the credit crunch, the 2012 London Olympics

and their impacts upon the funding environment, the ageing UK population and the diverting of resources to adult services, the short term funding of the Inclusive Services Coordinator role, potential distrust amongst disability societies that 'words will not be followed up with action', and finally, any periods of instability within the Disability Partnership in the future.

The Next Steps

Following the completion of the SWOT Analysis, a draft Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan was written. This Action Plan has been developed to provide the structural framework for the delivery of the Inclusive Services Coordinator's responsibilities within the Disability Partnership Business Plan. The 'five principles' run through all areas of the Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan.

It is hoped that on 12 June 2008, the Management Group and the Business Group of the Disability Partnership will recognise the SWOT Analysis as an evidence base to support future work, and will mandate the Inclusive Services Coordinator to deliver the Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan.

In addition, permission will be sought on 12 June to publish the SWOT Analysis and Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan. The Inclusive Services Coordinator will then promote these documents amongst all individuals and organisations involved in the informal consultation process. This will ensure accountability and transparency within the work of the Inclusive Services Coordinator.

As part of this process, the Inclusive Services Coordinator will invite individuals and organisations to engage with elements of the Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan that are of interest to them. Parallel to this, specific people will be targeted to be members of 'short-life' implementation groups tasked with delivering specific parts of the Participation, Involvement and Achievement Action Plan.