

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Children's Hearing Services Working Group

Annual Report 2011

Introduction

The Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary forum of parents, and professionals from health, education, Social Care and the voluntary sector involved in the delivery of Audiology services to children and young people living in Dorset, including Bournemouth and Poole. The East Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole CHSWG and the West Dorset Audiology Group merged in early 2010, and this is the second Annual Report.

Activity

1. Two well attended CHSWG meetings were held in 2011. Efforts to influence Commissioners of services continue, but in the current climate of change within the NHS, both locally and nationally, progress is slow. Representation from service providers and users is good, and from Commissioners is improving.
2. The QA visit in early 2011 highlighted the concerns about the 2nd tier service in East Dorset, with recommendations for a comprehensive service review. Emily Youngerman, from the Primary Care Trust, will be undertaking this in early 2012.
3. The Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP) continues to meet all targets for children with bilateral hearing loss. There is ongoing work to meet the targets for children with unilateral loss.
4. Speech and Language therapy input for children with hearing loss continues to be a concern, and a meeting was held in October 2011. An increase in specialist SALT input was agreed, and promptly provided. Work to ensure that the increased level of provision continues is underway.
5. A clinical review of case notes for all children diagnosed with a bilateral sensori-neural hearing loss (SNHL), either via the NHSP or later, takes place annually and is presented to the CHSWG. Numbers are generally small, and no specific management issues have been raised. As

would be expected, the mean age at diagnosis has fallen significantly since the introduction of the newborn screen.

6. Clinical care pathways have been reviewed in both East and West Dorset, with clear guidance in place for investigations for children with PCHI. Audit of the pathways will be possible in the future.
7. The three Local Authorities of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole have agreed to recruit a social worker with specialist responsibilities for children who have sensory impairment. The new postholder will operate on a part time basis and under the management of Dorset's HVSS. The remit will be to support the wider social needs of the young person and the family, with close links to health and education. Agreement has been reached to fund the post jointly from April 2012.

Recommendations for 2012

1. Review of Terms of Reference
2. Re-audit targeted 8 month distraction test, across Dorset.
3. Thorough review of 2nd tier service in East Dorset