Case Studies

Family A: Reciprocal Nature of Mutual Support

Mother A who has been attending the PSFSG for some time reported that when she first attended the group, she welcomed the support offered by other parents with longer experience of deafness. Now, as one of the more long-standing members of the group she feels she can offer support to other families with more recent diagnoses:

> *And so now we are kind of some of the more experienced parents. And it's really nice being able to just ask people how they are, and that kind of stuff. So not really going into anything deeply technical or anything like that, but just empathizing that it's a bit of a bad time and it's hard getting to all of the appointments and getting your head round everything, and if you haven't got any history in the family or if you don't have any contact with anybody who has it has a hearing loss or deafness you just don't know really what to expect. I think I quite like going now to be able to support other people.*

Family B: Importance of meeting other d/Deaf children within the PSFSG

Mother B reflects on the importance of being able to meet with and observe other d/Deaf children with cochlear implants children within the context of the PSFSG.

> *I always remember the first ever group that we went to, there was a little boy there who was about 4 at the time, and obviously my child didn't have Cochlear implants at this time. We were just thinking of going down the road of cochlear implants and I was just like dead worried about how he would be, and like would he ever talk, and what the outcome would be. When we went to the 1st session there was a little boy there and he had cochlear implants, and he was just talking dead normal, and he was really like clear and doing really well with them, so I think that just it just put me at ease because I just thought that's what my child could potentially be like. It just felt like I didn't have nothing to worry about then. So obviously just to see kids and see they can talk and know that this is how they can come along, it's just nice, it's just that piece of mind knowing that they will get there in the end.*

Family C: Opportunity for d/Deaf child to meet other d/Deaf children

Father C reported that in daily life his child rarely has opportunity to meet with other children who are d/Deaf and wear hearing aids. For him this is one of the main benefits of attending the PSFSG:

> *To see other people with hearing aids you might be waiting quite a long time, so we kind of want to make sure that our daughter had as many opportunities as*

> *possible to see other kids like her. Even from a very young age. Just so it's as normal as possible.*

Mother D: Opportunity to meet with Professionals

For Mother D attending the PSFSG is an important opportunity for her to meet with the staff who are working with her child:

> *To be honest now he is in nursery I don't really get to see his Teacher of the Deaf and his speech therapist, so I like going as it's like a little kind of meeting once a month, a little catch up where I can see what they are happy with, what we're aiming towards. Before he started nursery it would always be they would come out to the house to see me but obviously they don't really come out much. He's in nursery most of the time so they see him there, so I like just having a little chat with them there and a catch up.*

Family F: Importance of Social Events

Grandfather F highlighted the value of social activities provided within the PSFSG, which enabled the wider family to attend and encouraged families who may not attend on a regular basis to come along and meet other families.

> *I really value the opportunities for myself and our granddaughter of one-off more relaxed party style activities such as summer outings and Christmas parties, visits to Santa etc.*

Service A: On-line Component

Service A noted that the number of families attending the face-to-face PSFSG sessions was declining. In response they trialled a new system of less regular face-to-face meetings interspersed with on-line information sessions for adult family members. Each on-line sessions had a specific focus e.g. understanding the audiogram and was led by a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD) from the team. Family members had opportunity to attend the session, receive information from staff, ask questions and share their experiences with the other families in attendance. Family members who were unsure about attending the sessions were encouraged to join the session with their camera off to enable them to observe the session without needing to engage in the discussion if they preferred not to.

Every on-line session was repeated, with a session delivered during the working day and in the evening to accommodate the needs of parents who may work in the daytime or prefer to attend at this time. This model has proved successful with increased numbers of attendees at both the face-to-face and the on-line sessions.

Service B: Venue

Service B considered a range of potential venues prior to choosing to use rooms within the local Deaf Centre.

This had several benefits:

- The location was central
- The location was on well-used bus routes
- There was parking available
- There were local shops and cafes for families to use before and after the session
- Storage was available for equipment
- It enabled families to informally meet and engage with members of the local Deaf community and become aware of the resources available within the Centre
- It enabled easy access to provision of interpreting services who were co-located in the building
- The Deaf Centre were willing to offer a discounted room hire rate to support the provision of the PSFSG

Service C: Funding

Staff in Service C have developed strong links with the local NDCS group and attend committee meetings. They have obtained regular funding for the PSFSG from their local NDCS group which has provided a source of regular funding for snacks and additional input to the sessions e.g. from a pre-school music provider. In return the PSFSG stage a sponsored event each year to raise funds for the local NDCS group.

Service D: Provision post 5 Years old

Service D noted the need to continue to provide opportunity for children and family members to continue to meet once the d/Deaf child became of school age. They established a social group for families of children aged 7 years + initially and then extended this offer to 5 years+. The groups are held half-termly and starts in the late afternoon/early evening after the end of the school day. The staff initially found that catering for a wide age-range of d/Deaf children was challenging and established more age-specific groups. The staff who run and attend the sessions are offered time in lieu for working outside their contracted hours.

Service E: Provision of BSL support for families

The PSFSG is run by the Total Communication Tutor, who is a d/Deaf adult and is employed by the Specialist Support Service. Each term there is a theme to the PSFSG sessions, and the Tutor can teach the relevant signs for the specific topic to the family members in attendance. The tutor is also able to model use of BSL within informal play activities and is on hand to enable families to request and practice signs that they would find useful in the home.

Service F: Provision of input from Clinical Audiology

A member of staff from the local audiology department attends the PSFSG on a fortnightly basis. This provides opportunity for family members to have ear mould impressions taken for their children without the need for an additional clinic visit. The audiology staff are also able to help with ongoing maintenance and trouble-shooting of equipment for families. The opportunity to access audiology services at the PSFSG encourages families to attend to access this support and also the other provision on offer within the group. This also provides opportunity for audiology staff to meet with family members and children in a more informal setting which is different to the clinical setting where they may more typically see families.

Service F: Use of Social Media

At each PSFSG, the family members are given a take home task with a language development focus to undertake if they wish to do so. Families, who choose to do so, can take photographs and provide commentary on the activity when they do it at home and upload this to the PSFSG’s Facebook page. This provides opportunity for the content of the session to be transferred to and reinforced within the home context and for the family members to share this with their peers and the service staff. This helps to build a sense of community amongst family members and enables the staff to see the progress made at home.