An Evaluation of Services 
Delivered by the Integrated Disability Service 2010/2011

By Lynne Barton, Michelle King and Emma Smith

Lynne Barton
Assistant Head of Service

Lynne Barton is by profession a qualified teacher and has worked extensively in the public sector in Education, Health and more latterly an integrated service. She has worked in the Voluntary Sector, with the playgroup movement whilst her three children were small, and in later years in a Director capacity with a National Charity supporting disabled children, young people and their families.

In her role as a Service Development Manager she led on Aiming High for Disabled Children: Short Breaks, all Commissioned services and is responsible for the engagement of families in the development of provision.

She is currently the Assistant Head of the Integrated Disability Service in Warwickshire, a jointly funded post, aimed at bringing together services for disabled children across Education, Health, Social Care and Connexions.

In a voluntary capacity she Chairs Cruse Bereavement Care: Coventry and Warwickshire.

Michelle King
Senior Strategy Officer

Michelle has a first class honours degree in Social Sciences focussing upon children, young people and families. During her time at university she also managed a number of volunteering projects supporting vulnerable families.

She joined Warwickshire County Council in 2007 and worked for the Commissioning Support Service for three years. During this time she was responsible for a number of research projects undertaken on behalf of the Children's Trust, worked to develop Warwickshire's Children and Young People's Plan and led the statutory social care data returns to the then DCSF.

Michelle joined the IDS in March 2010 as a Senior Strategy Officer and has applied her quantitative and qualitative research skills to her role.

Michelle is an active volunteer for the IDS Volunteer Service.

Emma Smith
Operations Manager

Emma Smith is a qualified Social Worker of some 15 years standing. She has significant expertise in children’s services having previously worked within the voluntary sector for Action for Children and SCOPE as well as within Warwickshire County Council as a Social Worker and Team Leader.

Since February 2005 she has worked for the Integrated Disability Service (IDS), initially as a Team Leader developing the Key Work Service and Early Support, then as Operations Manager for the South, Social Care Team.

Since October 2009 Emma has been the Operations Manager for the Short Break Service within the IDS.

Emma is also a Community Governor for a Primary School in Warwick.
Executive Summary

Introduction

The Integrated Disability Service (IDS) unites specialist provision from Health, Education, Social Care and Connexions. Established in 2006, co-located teams adopt a holistic approach to service delivery, engaging with universal and enhanced provision including early years, youth, early intervention networks and children in need.

The Parent and Carer Steering Group ensure that the family voice is at the heart of all planning, commissioning and future investment. This is complemented by the Countywide IDS Parent and Carer Forum, Children and Young People’s Wacky Forum, Young People’s Participation and Friendship Groups and individual family engagement within staff teams.

Aims and Methodology

This document details the results of a robust evaluation of all IDS provision utilising a range of approaches to capture the views of parents, carers, children and young people. The research has been conducted over a period of twelve months from April 2010 to March 2011. The intention was to listen, learn and act upon the results of the evaluation to further enhance our service delivery. We were keen to understand what services were considered effective, successful and delivering the desired outcomes for families as well as delivering value for money.

A wide variety of information gathering strategies were employed to glean these views. They included:

- Family Survey Questionnaire, sent to all families known to IDS
- Aiming High Evaluation Sheets, given to families, children and young people who received a service under the banner of Aiming High
- Semi Structured Interviews, exploring both the Key Worker and Short Breaks Service
- Case Studies, completed by professional IDS staff teams and individuals
- Telephone Poll, conducted with families who are receiving a service but had no opportunity to comment via an interview
- Unsolicited Qualitative Data, including ‘thank you’ letters and cards sent to the IDS by parents, carers, children and young people.

Key Findings

The evaluation endeavours to distil learning from the reflective collation of information from families and their experience of on-going service delivery as well as statistical data to provide evidence of our impact. We highlight the following:

Family Survey

- Out of a possible 1,912 questionnaires to all IDS families a total of 324 were completed and returned. This equates to a response rate of 17%.
- An independent specialist adviser collated the evidence and found that, in overall terms, services provided by the IDS are rated either ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’ in 80% of responses.
• It is acknowledged that ‘getting it right’ in the early years has a bearing on outcomes in later life and it is instructive to note that the early years service received the highest satisfaction level, at 76%, of all IDS provision.

• By January 2011 the Early Years Team had delivered 95 courses to over 1,300 professionals and 45 parents. Feedback is overwhelmingly positive.

• For most families, it is notable that the quality of life for both the child and the whole family has been improved as a result of IDS intervention with over 63% of respondents feeling that they had been listened to by helpful IDS staff and as a result the child’s quality of life has improved. A further 53% or above felt that they did not have to repeat their story, received sufficient information and as a result family life has improved.

• Between April 2010 and December 2010, 213 individuals were trained to promote Communication Friendly Environments (in relation to the Symbol Inclusion Project). All, 100%, of those who have received this training reported an increase in knowledge and skills as a result.

• The training on ‘Disability Awareness’ delivered by a team of Parents and Carers and the empowerment programme ‘Stronger Together’ for parents and carers has consistently scored five out of five for the content, knowledge and skills gained by participants.

• All these experiences directly contribute to our identified outcomes that families will report an: increased capacity to sustain family life, improved well being, and a reduction in crisis, and indeed this is the case.

Aiming High for Disabled Children: Short Breaks

Short breaks provide opportunities for disabled children and young people to spend time away from their primary carers.

• In the financial year 2010/2011 of the Aiming High Programme a total 2,414 Children and Young People received a service. Although some children will have had more than one service, because of their level of need, all of these youngsters are part of wider families, with parents and often siblings and so the reach of our services has been phenomenal.

• The Aiming High investment allocation in 2010/11 was £1.6m and therefore it is reasonable to say that excellent value for money was delivered with the cost per child being £662 per year; while this may be considered a rudimentary calculation it is, by anyone’s standards, extremely reasonable.

• We learnt that for 95% of families were ‘pleased’ or ‘very pleased’ with the Aiming High service they were receiving.

• In addition to a reduction in the number of referrals to Social Care and a reduction of the number of families in crisis needing high level care and support (from 25 Looked after Children to 16) there were also unexpected softer outcomes, namely better family communication and reducing social exclusion.

• The impact of a short break has been reported as overwhelmingly positive with, on average, a total of 88% respondents scoring Aiming High services as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’. Undertaking this review has demonstrated that families are reporting improvements in family life increasing their capacity to sustain their quality of life without the need for crisis intervention from Social Care.
• Children and Young People were reported to be demonstrating enhanced self esteem, increased social interaction and participation in new activities.

• Families are expressing a feeling of increased control of resources and choice. More families able to access an enhanced short break which can be adapted to meet their needs.

• The overwhelming majority of families participating in the Aiming High Programme have not reported a conflict with service staff or providers which does not support the received wisdom which states that many parents and carers feel that they have to ‘fight for services’.

Key Worker Service

A Key Worker is a named person who is both a source of support for the family and a link by which other services are accessed and used effectively. They have responsibility for working together with the family and professionals from their own and other services to ensure the co-ordinated delivery of a plan for the child and family.

• A total of 90% of participants stated that they could rely on their Key Worker to respond when a message was left and appreciated this good level of communication as a significant contributor to a successful working relationship.

• Seventy five percent of respondents reported improved relationships with other professionals since having a Key Worker involved with their family.

• In total, 88% of those interviewed reported that they had accessed new services following the input of their Key Worker including Aiming High Services, Direct Payments, respite care and access to funding.

• The Think Family Agenda remains a key policy thread and the ‘whole family’ approach was highlighted positively on a number of occasions by respondents as being refreshing and much appreciated. A number of instances were reported whereby the Key Worker’s efforts had significantly benefitted the wider family.

• The key impacts of Key Workers are reduced stress levels and increased quality of life for the whole family, greater co-ordination of services, increased resources, better information, advocacy and a reduction in the number of times families were required to ‘tell their story’.

• This service has been operating for five years but is still able to demonstrate the consistently high level of satisfaction and improved outcomes for children, young people and their families. An overwhelming majority of participants (95.7%) reported a very positive experience of the Key Worker Service, describing themselves as either ‘very pleased’ (88%) or ‘pleased’ (8%).

This evidence of impact and user satisfaction levels is significant and pleasing to hear but the IDS will not ‘rest on its laurels’. We will continue to strive to learn and make improvements in our service delivery. We will particularly focus on areas where it was noted by families that we could do better namely, communication and information.