

Brighton & Hove Parents' Forum

Newsletter

*Connecting the parents and carers of
Brighton & Hove together*

What are Cluster Groups?

You might start to hear about the new cluster groups which have been set-up across the city by the CYPT (Children & Young People's Trust). Their aim is to help local schools, professionals and other interested parties (parents, young people, community and voluntary organisations) to work together to improve local children's services in and around schools. They can assist in improving the lines of communication between different services and try and address gaps in provision where suitable.

It is hoped that parents will be able to sit alongside other providers of services to give their views and be part of the decision making locally. The parents' forum is getting involved in helping to support these parents with induction, mentoring, training and networking events. We feel very strongly that parents who offer to

get involved with these new groups need proper and appropriate levels of support for them to be able to join others round the table on an equal basis.

The CYPT will also be arranging for parents involvement at a group level as well, so if parents already attend a supported group then some of the cluster group issues and priorities could be discussed in these groups that parents are already attending to get their views in a more accessible way for them.

If you think you might be interested in joining one of the cluster groups or would like to know more about them, please contact Tasha on (01273 294391) or email her at tasha.barefield@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Regular updates will be available on the parents' forum website.

May Fun Day

On Saturday 12th May 2007 the B&H Parents' Forum held a free family fun day at the Hove Town Hall. The children and young people that attended were entertained with a variety of activities such as face painting, games, entertainers, circus skills and many more. Parents

attending had the opportunity to discuss and comment on how they feel about being a parent living in the city and how they could be better supported in their role as parents. On the day we met over 180 children and 120 parents from all over B & H. Some of the main themes that

parents talked about were: friends and family are their main source of support, the needs for better information about what's available and help at key transition points. All this information will be included in the parenting support strategy now available in draft form.



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You might like to know that -

- we now have over 100 families on our mailing list
- we have had over 5000 hits on our website
- there are over 25 people already registered for the online discussion boards
- we have places for parents available on our Core Strategic Group who manage and develop the forum
- the draft parenting support strategy is available for comments





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The parents' forum is an independent voluntary organisation and is open to all parents and carers of children aged under 19 (under 25 for children with special needs) using children's services in Brighton & Hove.

To receive more information about the B&H Parents' Forum please send us your contact details, we can also send you details about future events and our termly newsletter.

The Brighton & Hove Parents' Forum is supported by the Children & Young People's Trust.



Current Core Group Members -
Ray Gold (Chair), Linda Hodgson (Vice Chair),
Carrie Potter, Eleanor Davies and Andrew Jeffrey.



We're on the Web! www.bhparentsforum.org

We have recently launched our online discussion boards on our website please have a look and try them out! The boards are provided to encourage parents to talk to each other wherever they live in the city bringing down the barriers of time and travel. You can post topics when YOU want to about things that matter to YOU! We are hoping parents will feel free to discuss issues, give advice and ask questions on areas specific to them and the city we live in.

Interview with Carrie Potter by Tasha Barefield

- Core Strategic Group member of the parents' forum

Carrie came to the first meeting of the parents' forum in April 2006, she decided there that this was the organisation for her to start her first experience in volunteering.

Carrie was originally born in America and immigrated here over eleven years ago, she has lived in Brighton & Hove since then.

Until recently she worked doing Project Management for a national utility but now is a full-time, stay at home mum, of two lovely boys. Her youngest son was born with bi-lateral talipes (clubfoot on both feet) she decided that his care needed more time than she could give working full-time. When she left work she found this allowed some time for her to get involved in volunteer work for the first time.

Carrie says "I chose to be part of the Brighton and Hove Parents' Forum because I believe in the family. Over the years the traditional family has all but disappeared and the days of tight communities that assisted in raising a child are gone. Parents do not have the support that they used to and don't always know that they can influence the decisions made by the government and local council that affect their families. I want to be a part of helping other parents find and use their voice."

Since volunteering for the parents' forum Carrie has been instrumental in setting up and developing the website for the forum, she has also been a parent representative on the new parenting support strategy group helping to give a 'parents' view on

the creation of a city parenting support strategy. Carrie is also an active member of the forum's events group who help to plan and organise the events that the forum arranges.

Carrie would be happy to discuss any of these activities with other parents, you can email her on carrie@bhparentsforum.org.

