**Report from Complex Needs Working Group**

**Meeting held online 250723 at 2pm**

* The meeting was attended by 6 Family Advocates, 2 people from Adult Services, and 2 from Service Providers. 1 Service Provider sent apologies.
* We reviewed the notes from our previous meeting and a family member reported that she had contacted her MP to express concern that the current waiting time for a DOLS assessment is over a year despite the fact that they need to be reviewed annually. So far, she has not received a reply.
* The main agenda topic was the use of technology for people who have Complex Needs. Family members gave details of equipment that their relatives have been issued with or have bought to assist with daily living, help to keep them safe or provide stimulation.
* Alison, from Parity for Disability, spoke about some of the equipment used in their Day Service. Ann said she has personal knowledge of their Music Therapy Service but that Parity, which is based in Farnborough seems to be quite unique in providing a day service specifically for people who have profound and multiple learning and physical disabilities and who live in North Hampshire.
* Lee, from Adult Services, spoke about technical and digital support that can be accessed for people at home.
* Family members pointed out that most people cannot afford to buy some of the equipment mentioned, particularly that which can enhance lives or help with communication.
* Alison said that Parity has been able to obtain sponsorship and grants and a family member said that requests for items can be put to groups such as the Rotary Club and the Lions. It can also be possible to borrow or rent equipment to test its suitability before purchase.
* Lee also explained that Hampshire County Council has a contract with Argenti who supply equipment such as personal alarms. Information is available online. Chris from Advance Housing said Argenti provides in accommodation which they manage. Ann said that assistive technology must not be seen as a total substitute for actual care staff where the safety of people who have complex needs could be compromised.
* The meeting requested that Lee should investigate the possibility of an event where Self Advocates, Service Providers and families could learn more about what is available through demonstrations of specialised equipment. It was pointed out that Children’s Services and Special Schools will probably have more knowledge of sensory equipment that can provide stimulate for people who have complex needs.
* Under Any Other Business concerns were expressed about proposed cuts to the Adult Services Budget for next year, particularly for 18 – 65-year-olds. However, the period for consultation had recently closed.
* The working group felt there is a very strong need for a specific strategy from both Hampshire County Council and the Integrated Care Board for people who have profound and multiple learning and physical disabilities and cannot access many of the available services. It is our perception that there is a lack of awareness about the high and complex level of disability this group of people have and therefore their needs are not properly taken into account when planning and commissioning services. It was also pointed out that due to medical advances and the provision of education and improved care for all children the life expectancy of this group of people is now much greater than previously.
* Jenny asked “How do we ensure that the Partnership responds in a satisfactory way to the concerns this working group takes to them?” Ann said she would do her best to get this message across at the next Partnership meeting on 27th September.
* This working group will meet again on 26th September. Alison has agreed to give us a more detailed presentation based on her extensive knowledge of what help is available for people who have complex needs and we shall discuss further how we can influence the design of an event highlighting the use of technology and ensure it can be accessed by those it will most help.