



~ Working together to improve the lives of all of Devon's children ~

DAPH Autumn Briefing – 17th November 2010

The Tiverton Hotel, Tiverton EX16 4DB
9.00am – 3.30pm

Hosted by Paul Walker, Chair of DAPH

Panel Guests:

Phil Norrey	PN	Chief Executive, Devon County Council
Anne Whiteley	AW	Executive Director, CYPS
Judith Johnson	JJ	Director for Learning and Schools, CYPS
Rory McCallum	RM	Director Early Years and Families, CYPS
Bryan Smith	BS	Acting Portfolio Lead, Business Management and Resources, Learning & Development Partnership
John Barnard	JB	Head of Resource Strategies, CYPS

Briefing Agenda (am) - Summary of Content

Panel Session 3 : Collaborative Working

Anne Whiteley, Executive Director, CYPS

“More freedom and flexibility – a new approach for Children’s Trust Boards, children and young people’s plans, and the duty to cooperate”

DfE 3 November 2010 and DfE highlights the following:

Key Points

- evidence base and experience suggests stronger partnerships, greater integration and shared purpose for all those working with and for children and families lead to better services and outcomes – especially the most vulnerable;
- core principle of shared commitment to improve the lives of children and young people and families – enshrined in duty to co-operate on local strategic bodies – remains as important as ever;
- move from central prescription, bureaucracy and legislation to local freedoms and flexibilities in ways which best suit local circumstances.

From 31 October 2011

- no statutory duty to have a Children’s Trust
- no statutory duty to have a Children & Young People’s Plan (CYPP)

In Education Bill

- removal of duty to co-operate on schools
- removal of formal duty to have a Children’s Trust Board

Partnership working gets results and no plans to remove this principle enshrined in the ‘duty to co-operate’ section 10 of the Children Act 2004. LAs should continue to lead partnership arrangements that make sense for

local people and services.

Lead Members and Directors of Children's Services

There are no plans to repeal the legislation requiring LAs to appoint Lead Members and DCSs.

Local Safeguarding Children's Boards

Professor Eileen Munro has been given a free rein by the coalition to review child protection system.

Munro report is likely to be a leader in principles for wider Children's Services review.

No appetite for removal of statutory duty to have an LSCB.

Strong support across sector.

What's happening locally

CYPP for 2011 will be published.

- shift of focus to the most vulnerable
"The business of the Children's Trust in Devon is to safeguard and improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people. Particular focus will be in achieving a single view of the child and ensuring effective transitions for the vulnerable".
- it will focus on a smaller number of key priorities which can only be delivered in 'across system' partnership;
- a task and finish group led by Steve Brown (NHS) is working on the draft;
- progress is being reported to DCTB and it will be signed off by Board. Phase Associations and FE continue to be well represented at both DCTB and DSCB – thank you!
- the future of Devon Children's Trust Board will be reviewed in light of the scope of new Health and Wellbeing Boards and Devon Safeguarding Children Board.

NHS/Child Health

Huge policy shifts – **Liberating the NHS**

- a number of White Papers
- White Paper on Public Health expected December 2010
- LA will have increasing responsibilities for governance of 'Health and Wellbeing' and health improvement
- GP commissioning and Transforming Community Services.

Who is speaking up for Children's Health?

- The Kennedy Report 2010
- Review of Children with Additional needs – Minister Sarah Teather (LA conveners of integrated services – Education, Health and Social Care) Green Paper expected
- Stay Safe and contribution of Health (new Ofsted Framework)

In Devon

- Transforming Community Services – separation of commissioning/provider of function in INHS Devon by April 2011.
- Interim holding/hosting arrangements for the Integrated Children's Services being discussed/explored – first option via LA (includes all services for children with disability, learning disability, therapies, public health nursing – HVs and school nurses).
- Strengthening of single commissioning arrangements for children NHS and DCC – new Board established.

Themes

- 'more for less'
- risk areas: emotional health and wellbeing (CAMHS) and Public Health nursing

Heads Liaison Group

- Phase Associations: Chair and Vice Chair + DAG
- Executive Director, CYPS and Director of Learning & Schools
- meets monthly with full agendas and Terms of Reference
- critical importance at such a time of turbulence, transitions and managing and changing relationships
- no plans to change in foreseeable future, but as everything else subject to review in light of purpose and effectiveness.

Slide 11 - Quote:

"Children grow to fill the space we mark for them: if it is big, they grow tall"
(Chief Rabbi Sachs)

How do we ensure we continue to create that space through a shared endeavour?

What is our legacy from ECM into the future?

How can we strengthen resilience in the system?

Rory McCallum, Director Early Years and Families

Collaboration is the stuff of growth. It's also the stuff of safety.

Slide 12 – Definition of Partnerships

As professionals from a variety of different backgrounds, we all share a common thread, whatever our field of expertise. Put simply, we're all involved in trying to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Indeed, I don't intend to stand here today and "wax lyrical" about collaboration between different professionals, nor do I intend to lecture you on the importance of working together and forging meaningful partnerships across disciplines. This case is

already made.

What I do intend to do is highlight some of the existing initiatives that I believe demonstrate our capability at collaboration - capability we must not lose.

Money, or the lack of it, is an obvious driver to what seems to be an increased focus to improve collaboration, both within and outside of the public sector. The *Comprehensive Spending Review* had one simple message - get "more bang for your buck".

However, it is also worth reminding ourselves about the events that took place a decade ago, which to me, provide a stronger incentive for collaborative working.

In 2000, a young girl called Victoria Climbié died at the hands of her carers after an extended period of horrific mistreatment. What made Victoria's death particularly distressing was that she was known to a range of Local Authority and other children's agencies - housing departments, social workers, the police, hospitals and a charity - who between them failed to arrive at co-ordinated effective action to save her.

The subsequent independent statutory inquiry, chaired by Lord Laming, concluded that Victoria's death was the consequence not simply of the actions of her carers, but of "a gross failure of the system". (Laming, 2003: par. 1.18).

"I am in no doubt," Lord Laming stated, that effective support for children and families cannot be achieved by a single agency acting alone. It depends on a number of agencies working well together. It is a multi-disciplinary task.

(Laming, 2003: par. 1.30)

This holds true now, perhaps more than ever. In a climate of uncertainty, it is vital that we collectively hold our nerve and seek improved ways in which we can work together across the system more effectively. Perhaps the easiest solution would be to retrench, move back into the traditional parameters of our respective functions and take a "not in my job description" strategy towards how we approach our support to children and young people.

I'm sure all of us would agree this would be a backward step.

So, what are some of the key issues from the Early Years and Families branch of CYPS that link to this theme of collaboration.

MASH - the multi-agency safeguarding hub - co-located professionals, all contributing to information sharing and improving our safeguarding response at the point of concern / referral. Phase 2 and 3 rolling out over the next few months. Longer term plans to incorporate adult safeguarding into MASH functions.

Project TEAM - a key focus on social work remodelling and an improved infrastructure to support the social work task. We have phased a number of social workers into level 2 in North Devon and we are scenario planning to release more of this resource across the system to sustain early intervention, support CAF/TAC processes and provide a social work response prior to the "traditional" threshold of specialist services.

Family Support Review - significant review of family support functions, scoping where family support can be rationalised, where it should be delivered from and the types of evidence based intervention to be used. Models of family support based provision include delivery from schools / children's centres, YES Centres and

specialist provision attached to level 3 services. Opportunities to link with adult support provision – Devon Strategic Partnership support.

Child Protection – Part a of the Munro review into child protection published. Refers to well intentioned reforms not achieving required changes in practice. Heavy on professional judgement and highlights the impact of increasing targets and process on hindering this.

Munro’s review is looking at the whole system – so watch this space for collaborative recommendations for all organisations aimed at “ripping up the rule book” to reduce bureaucracy for front-line workers and improve the system’s response to protecting children from harm and maltreatment.

The coming months and years will truly be our strongest test of how we measure up to jointly thinking through and finding solutions to making life better for the children of Devon and whether facilitated through elements of structural reorganisation or not, the history of multi-agency collaboration suggests that it will be fraught with difficulties.

This does not mean we should not try, nor does it mean that all ideas for collaboration will be any good – but as leaders, we are all charged with becoming “good collaborative partners”

Why? Simply because in the long run, the best partners will attract the best opportunities and the best opportunities will mean the best for the children we are responsible for.

Question & Answer Session on Collaborative Working

The following questions on Collaborative Working were taken from the audience:

1. Since the CAF process has come out we have actually seen quite a positive response in getting agencies round the table and getting people to work more effectively together. I know you said about the duty to co-operate might not be so bad that its gone and for me it’s really understanding what that means for me at a local level, because what I don’t want to do is to return to the days where as a school you were struggling to get the agencies to cooperate and find that level of support. And it is really whether that message is clear to all the other agencies. If you have got to do this at a Learning Community level, are we going to have that cooperation still from all other agencies?

Rachel Shaw, Ashburton Primary School

2. I have some quite grave concerns over the safety of some of our children in the process of changing over, how are we going to ensure their safety? There is a reduction in the number of workers at JACAT. At the moment there is a waiting list of 4 or 5 months for a child to be seen. Social Services at the moment, the threshold seems to be so high that you can’t actually get any case heard. The Parent Support Advisors who have worked so well are overrun and are due to go, the Extended Services Coordinators which have been working really well for the Learning Communities are set to go, the Educational Welfare Service is stretched to breaking point and I haven’t actually seen by EWO this term. CAHMS – I can’t get a look in, and the inclusion officer that I did have at school; yesterday who had come to do a PSB, informed me that her job is now on the line as many are. It’s then going to be the requirement of our Behaviour Support Workers and the Educational Psychologists to pick up that workload and the list goes on. I have some very vulnerable children in my school and I can’t get the help for them. So how are we going to ensure as people of Devon that the help and support is there for our children.

Jeremy Doyle, Redhills Community Primary School

3. I think the previous speaker’s said exactly what I was going to say, it is really I

don't want it to happen to any child in my school but I can see in the future where the same will happen as in the past as it is still not linked joined up thinking here. We still have problems contacting local services and we still don't get information back about children who have been involved in issues, which we should be, particularly to do with the Police and particularly to do with local community services. We just don't know what is going on with children that are in our care.
Nick d'Agorne, North Tawton Primary School

AW

This is where I think the role of the Devon Safeguarding Children's Board is really important and coming to the December Board are two pieces of work. One is – we had, via the Independent Chair, sent out to all the organisations and agencies right across the public sector in relation to duty to cooperate, a template to ask them how the comprehensive spending review is impacting on their agency and what are the implications in relation to their activities with regard to child safety and child protection. The first thing we have got to do is understand across the system, how those agencies are responding. So we are on the case, if you like. That is our December meeting and we are also doing a self assessment again, across the agencies about commitment to CAF, to establish what those agencies responses are to CAF going forward: very important questions, but we need to find out because obviously everyone is in a fair amount of turmoil at the moment. What we do need to move away from though, and this is where it links in with Eileen Munroe's report, she was very interesting in listening to her the other week, is again we have become, and I hear it in Devon as well, almost that the CAF becomes the end in itself. It is not the end in itself, its another bit of process and unfortunately, we even develop a language around it i.e. to 'CAF' children. We have all these verbs developing and it is all around a process, actually it is not about the process, it is about coming together around children, with children and their families to look at solutions. So I think Eileen Munroe will have a lot to say about how we approach some of these issues in the future. But bottom line in Devon, we have got to establish in the first instance, how the Comprehensive Spending Review is impacting across the public sector.

RM

Picking up on the issue around thresholds, a lot of the work that we are doing at the moment, I think Munroe will also pitch out on this and she's hinted at it already. We need to try and create an environment where the threshold doesn't become the most important thing and the initiatives that we have managed to launch in North Devon at this first phase with social workers existing at Level 2; I came to the DAPH Executive yonks ago but was talking about exactly that sort of initiative. This is about how you get the right professionals around the child, in the right area at the right time. So you can get a social work response without it needing to cross the higher threshold to actually get that social worker involved. The challenges that we are facing at the moment, is that we have had 120 extra kids subject to protection plans across the county, and extra 130 kids have come into the care system and the demand is, and this is a national picture as well, since baby Peter the demand has just been going up and up and up. I don't think there are going to be any easy solutions to this, but I think the answer lies in looking at the whole system, looking at what delivery we have got coming out of Children's Centres, what we've got based within schools, what we've got within level 3 children's Social Care, and

how we can mix that together and deploy staff in the right place, where those children and young people actually are, so we can provide a more efficient and productive response. We are always going to be facing challenges of capacity; we are always going to be facing challenges of the financial envelope, waiting lists etc. I think we can make some headway into this but it is not going to be easy and the only way that we are going to be able to do it, is if we do it collaboratively and together. Certainly no one single agency is going to be able to solve the capacity issue on its own.

PW Can I pick up on the point around safety of our children and the services that we want to use, like our EWOs, EPs and so on and maybe from an LDP perspective, where some of those services can be provided by them. Are those services the same as they were level-wise, have they been reduced? Are they going to be reduced further? What is the position with those services?

BS We need to look at all the service provision which we make. We are in the position of acting as a business unit. We need to make sure that as we move into 2011/12 and beyond, that the services we provide not only are good quality but affordable and within the budget which is available. As far as Education Welfare and Education EPs are concerned, we are not looking at a significant reduction because they are clearly focussed on the most vulnerable. We are looking at different ways however of delivering work so that we can be as efficient as possible.

AW I would just like to pick up another point really, because Phil was talking this morning about localism and there is work currently going on looking at the local context for children services and the Local Government Association (LGA) have got a number of work strands looking at what they are calling, Play Space Budgeting and looking at Children's Services and what toolkits can be available in localities. We are beginning to look at in a very different way about how we are spending our money across all the agencies. The best way I can describe it to you is, you have talked about looking across the local learning communities, about how that money is being spent in relation to delivering education. The same sort of approaches are beginning to be thought about, debated and discussed in relation to other services. So how do we look differently at how that money is being spent : to what effect and to what impact? This is a real challenge because what we are shifting from is traditional ways of working which have been very much organisationally driven. As much as we have tried to get integration across the piece, they are still organisationally driven and that's going to be part of the challenge. There will less money in the system, but I think we will begin to see other ways, other things coming in. I have signed off a big lottery bid yesterday with a partner, so there will be other things however I do think there is going to be a gap, there will be things that will stop which we will regret because they have made a difference. Over the next few months it is going to be very tough and very difficult.

PW I'm just picking up on that last point about information flow and difficulty contacting

agencies – what work is going on there?

AW

I suppose it is really quite worrying to hear that you are still experiencing that. I do know certainly with the Multi Agency Service Hub (MASH) that things are improving and they have improved certainly in North Devon where we have got much more of a whole system working. Where information is coming into the MASH, better decisions are being made at that point. I have to say that we do not have very good technology which draws information together, so actually it's a very labour intensive process. We will pick up those issues and take them back again; I heard the Police mentioned, and these are the sort of issues that need to be raised by your reps at the Devon Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB). Let's get some sense of what the scale is that we are talking about, scoring out from 1-10, how bad is it? Is it different in different parts of the county? What is difficult in terms of anecdote, we need to have a bit of hard fact and if that could be raised through the Safeguarding Board, that would be enormously helpful.

PW

Just to clarify that our rep on the Devon Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) is Helen Nicholls, South Brent Primary School.

AW

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) was mentioned – can I just say something about CAHMS because some of you will know recently – again we've had huge pressures on that service where spikes in referrals of children and young people who have acute mental health problems, dramatic increase across the county, we've had real problems in recruiting Psychiatrists, we've had other issues going on as well and basically there is not enough money in that service which has been an on-going debate with the NHS. We have recently had a visit from the national support team (Emotional Health and Wellbeing – CAMHS National Support) down into Devon; they are actually disappearing at the end of March but they are giving us some assistance at the moment and you need to know that it is very high on the Risk Register on the radar of the NHS locally and we have got an action plan but again – challenging.

However, we also know that we have got programmes running like in North Devon, we have got THRIVE, we've got ENABLE in South Brent, we've got Tim Norton coming tomorrow to and he is going to be looking at what those sorts of programmes in schools are doing and delivering for children's emotional health and wellbeing.

PN

On Child and Adolescent Mental Health; I said this to the support team when they came down, of all the services that are provided across the county that we have an involvement in, that is the one that gives me the most concern. Generally we provide pretty good services within a tight resource envelope, we've got very few services which are at risk of failure. Child and Adolescent Mental Health is a real indictment on public services in this county and we have got to sort that out. Particularly because things are going to get even tougher in terms of the environment in which our children and families are living. We have been looking at our environment and saying that is going to be tough, but actually

there are going to be some pretty significant changes coming around the corner that are going to make families' lives a lot more difficult. Levels of unemployment we can only speculate on, we don't know quite how it is going to pan out over the next two months, but we know that nothing puts strain on a family like long-term unemployment. Huge changes to the benefits system and we have absolutely no idea at the moment on the sort of societal impact this may have from those benefit changes. We might guess, but clearly if you are having families displaced as a result of changes to benefits, will mean that we actually have much more turbulence in the population. We might well see as a result of the housing benefit changes, a lot of movement in our population. We might be seeing in Devon some in-migration from inner city areas where housing is no longer affordable, particularly into some of our seaside towns, so there will be other impacts that will life that much more difficult. This will require us to perform that convening role, whatever that means, incredibly skilfully. Just on the health side, one thing in which we are debate at the moment with the NHS is the management of children's health services over the next couple of years, at the moment all the providers of children's health services are within primary care trusts – they are required to be moved out by next April and we are talking to Health about the possibility of this being moved to the Local Authority, hosting those services for at least a couple of years and preparing for some sort of social enterprise, so actually in management terms, this might be an opportunity if that is what is agreed, for Local Authority to get a greater degree of handle on the management of children's health which is we've been sort of itching to do for some time. Not withstanding Anne's comments regarding the PCT now is at last putting a greater focus on that area of activity.

PW

Time for one more round of questions, I know Gary's got a question:

1. It seems to me that perhaps 6 months ago I felt I had an understanding of the jigsaw of Devon and I could see the big picture and its like the jigsaw's fallen off the table and the bits are all over the floor and we've probably lost some of the bits and we may never get them back. It may be some years before the picture of Devon in terms of provision and delivery is effectively there for us. So in the meantime one of my big concerns is about children's safety and how that could possibly fall through the gaps. I just want to tease out the whole concept of learning communities and local leadership. Phil's talked an awful lot about localism and I'm not really sure what is local – how local is local? What the leadership capacity at a local level is really like, because learning communities are a mixed ability group in terms of the way they deliver and the way they work. Some colleagues here will say my local community is great, others will have a slightly different view and I think to hang a lot of our strategies on local learning communities is very risk and I actually think there is a big role for DAPH here in the future and this group of people here and how we shape and change things. To use Tier 2 and Tier 3 as an example, because Rory was talking about and I totally support personally, the concept of early intervention as we would in schools in

terms of children's special needs and supporting children's progress. PSAs are an example, the idea is that the money is going to bypass Rory's decision because it's a grant and it will go straight down to the local level. That local level could be academies, federations or a total hotchpotch of people who no longer form quite such a cohesive, if indeed they ever were, learning community. They also contextually have different drivers; one of the schools I am involved with, would want PSAs because they are always in the school and are making huge differences. At the other schools it is not such a driver. So is the decision going to be made on the greater good of people or are they going to make it on individual schools and their academy? There are real risks involved in the way we work in partnerships. I think local could mean contextual; schools in challenging circumstances within a 20 mile radius could actually say that they will pay for a PSA to work more cohesively. There has got to be a range of partnerships and I just worry about this predicating our strategy to heavily, and I'm not saying it has come from the Panel, but I'm getting a sense that the local learning communities seem to be a vessel that we are going to place all our hopes. That's very very risky and I think DAPH need to be quite strategic in a way that they bring colleagues together in different ways and areas and the way we move things forward. So those are my observations and a question around the Panel's view on that and leadership locally.

Gary Chown, Children First Federation

2. I am one of two governors that come to DAPH meetings and I am very glad to do so, this is a good chance to ask the proprietors of the schooling system in Devon who are in front of us now, what view they have of the role of proprietor in the schools to be. Are you conscious that governors, as I see it, that we are friends squeezed in a sandwich between headteachers and phase advisors and whatever, trying to help, trying to support, trying to challenge. We are going to turn into proprietors if we have academies, and you guys run the risk, because you have to have proprietors, of losing your Local Authority as proprietor, losing possibly many boards of governors who are incompetent to be proprietors and moving straight in to the hard management systems of private commerce. Have you got a view about it and how can we get it right?

Rupert Butler, Chair of DAG

3. Leading on from Justin's comments and Nick's and Gary's. I think everyone here is committed to the joint working and importance of early intervention without a doubt and it has not always been easy, along with the commitment from other agencies and its something that coming from South London, I have been really impressed and I should say on a really positive note, about the functioning of the hub where I am now the head, and its been an excellent model of joint working with the Parent Support Advisor, the Coordinator to the access pathway, and follow-up CAF meeting. Everyone was clearly committed to safeguarding vulnerable young people and finding a solution. Obviously I was very alarmed to

find that that was all going to be gone at Easter because I saw this as a model that was really working, and having spent the last 15 years in London where they were really struggling to work closely with agencies. I know we should be really positive and looking at this as a new opportunity, and I am very keen that there is more working with health. Is this an opportunity then for us as a learning community to now engage now with for example the GP consortium. Do we need to be looking at sharing these costs, because I believe that early intervention has huge savings for the health service if we get it right. I'm not sure that we in Education should be picking up the bill, when actually this should be shared with Health. Is this an opportunity for us to invite joint working with Health so that we really are working together with one vision.

Mrs Rees-Stephen, Chagford Primary School.

AW

Can I link Gary's question to the last question as well because in terms of my response, it was so well put Gary, about different levels. We can't look at one model. The reason why we've been putting so much emphasis on the learning communities is that we have travelled a long way together in relation to the local learning community and at the local level we will and we are through TEAM remodelling how the social workers will be deployed and we are also about to start talking to GP consortia who will also be at your local level. So when we've been pushing and talking about the local level, that's why. There will be some new opportunities for connectivity in a different way. Talk with GPs is only just starting, they are very interested in children's health – they are saying that they don't know a great deal about commissioning in terms of children's health, we're interested, we want to contribute and we don't necessarily want to run the show. So there is something about how we work out this Child Health thing at a local level, but there are other levels as well and we do need to be recognising. We've talked about the role of boards that work, boards which may have run their day, and talked a bit about DAPH. So we have got to start drawing up what we think are the key bits of that new landscape that we want to put effort and energy into. It is really important that we are looking at what is going on around us in terms of other opportunities.

Just back to this Play Space Commissioning again because it does link with the last question, a toolkit is going to be launched and I think it is going to be in December, for Children's Services, in terms of what works, how we can increase more effectiveness and efficiency, if we were looking at it across the system in terms of our spend.

RM

Just to pick up on that last point, I think it is so important that we are clear about what we mean by early intervention and again Munroe cites this in her report, talking about the primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary intervention levels that you can engage in and the blunt reality, and the Coalition have certainly sent out this message, is with Surestart and the children's centres, that they will be focussing on the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children within society. There is a lot of activity now which you could badge under an early intervention umbrella but actually it's just been targeted at

the wrong set of kids and actually I think that's where we are going to have to be quite clear about how much we can afford in terms of early intervention and whether its that primary very early universal type intervention or whether we are just going to be able to afford to deal with it later down the line with a smaller cohort of kids.

JJ

Can I just pick up on Rupert's question about the governors, and I think it is probably a question for the heads in the room rather than the authorities in the room. Rupert often has the knack of getting to a really challenging perspective on things for the future and he does that quite a bit through the DEF scenario as well, which is good. I think proprietors of a school is quite an interesting concept as we are all holders of the educational experience, and we want to leave a good legacy of that. But there is a real technical, commercial and accountability aspect for the running of a school which will increasingly move from the Local Authority as employer into trustees or governors of the new school system. That does bring some of the challenges which Rupert has highlighted in terms of some governing bodies don't want that, some are not skilled enough for it, and some don't see that its their role, because they came into the role to make a difference at a local level, and I think its that sort of governor that we could be losing in the scenarios of the future. As we get more academies and as we get smaller and more commercialised governing bodies with trustees, with bringing a small group of professional expertise, we lose some of that local accountability. We will be losing it as Phil has already talked about at the Regional level; that tier of government office going, we are losing it at the Local Authority level with the changing role and we can see it changing at school level with the change in governors. Whether that's for the better or worse, only time will tell. It will mean that something local could be lost at a time when localism is the new flavour and I think that puts an added responsibility on schools, either through the leaders or the governors, to look at how they can replace that. If they are not having governing bodies coming together with that focus, how else are they finding out what their local customers want, what are the needs of their area, if they are not working in this partnership way we have been talking about.

PW

That brings us nicely to the end of the morning. Before we go to lunch can I first of all say a really big thank you to our six colleagues, because to get all six of the colleagues in one room at the same time together I think is really nigh on impossible in their day jobs at the moment, and we are greatly appreciative that they have managed to make this time and keep this time this morning. The pressures that we are facing in schools may seem high, but I think we can only imagine the pressures being faced at County at the moment and all that we are hearing about cuts left right and centre; obviously these people are the people that are having to do that and I don't envy that at all. We greatly appreciate the openness and honesty in the things you have told us, it's nice to see some old faces that we haven't seen at Briefings for a while and we do appreciate that. May I just ask everyone to show their appreciation?

I think one of the things that is coming out loud and clear today is that the government

haven't necessarily got a massive road plan for the future and possibly being made up as they are going along – that is how it is being perceived by some people. It does give us as headteachers an ideal opportunity to lobby and I think the message which is coming through from other Phase Associations around the Peninsula and around the country is that we have an opportunity to influence public policy. We can do that as individuals, and as an association and our work this afternoon, and I am encouraging you to stay, is to actually think that we have listened to all of this and now is just us headteachers, and to be honest in a few years' time there may not be all these different roles. We have very few people as Local Authority Officers coming to talk to us. It may well be just us. We want to make sure as an Association that we are taking the right messages the right way to the right places. So this afternoon, we are going to follow a very similar structure to this morning, but thinking what have we got to do to take that forward. What have we got to do to make the difference?

Just one reminder about filling in Evaluation forms to let us know what you think of the day.

One more message about Language Link, which has been in the schools communications for a couple of weeks as well. You will remember that we managed to secure this funding for LanguageLink which is the early identification of speech and language difficulties and there is training happening next week. Currently just over 50% of schools that could have the training have booked onto it. It is short notice but for the rest of you who haven't booked on please do so as soon as possible but they are very keen to get us trained up – it is free training so please do book – it is under the Just For Schools part of the County website.

Morning Session close at 12.45.