"The Portage service is dedicated to the children and families with whom we work and from whom we learn”

National Portage Association
Foreword by Karen Taylor, Headteacher Sensory Support

It is a huge pleasure to contribute to my fourth and Portage’s Ninth Annual Report.

It has been an excellent year for the Portage team and my huge thanks to Mel Warren and the rest of the team for all the hard work, support and dedication they give daily.

The Parent/Carer Representative Forum is going from strength to strength with new members joining and I particularly thank them and the team for a very successful Portage Spring Party which, as you will see from the photos, everyone enjoyed.

This report, as in previous years, has a number of stories from staff and families themselves which give us a real insight into the work of Portage across Norfolk. It really embodies the Portage mission statement of ‘Listen, Plan, Play, Learn’.

We continue to work closely with the Children’s Centres and the new developments in the Portage Workshop (now the Portage Small Steps to Learning) ensures there is a very practical focus on the early years. My thanks to Julie Peach for joining Mel in delivering this workshop and it will be interesting to evaluate the new model next year.

Mel and the team continue to raise the profile of Portage by establishing good links with other professionals and agencies and providing training and awareness sessions around the County.

We continue to see the numbers of referrals rising and we are looking at ways of ensuring that families continue to receive the very high level of Portage service they deserve.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's annual report as much as I did, especially the contributions from our families which are amazing.

Karen Taylor, Senior Manager

I am so pleased that Portage is part of the new Education Inclusion Service and that we can all benefit from the dedication and expertise within this service and in turn that families who are supported through Portage will benefit from the new connections that will be made possible across our new broad service; with enhanced links to teams within Early Years, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and others.

Michael Bateman, Head of Education Inclusion Service

Overview from the Portage Strategic Coordinator, Melanie Warren

We have had another very busy year within the Education Inclusion Service, with a further increase in referrals and family contacts, as seen in the statistics at the back of this report.

The case for Portage services to be recognised and funded appropriately across the UK continues and a recent report by Jan Tregelles, chief executive of Mencap explains: “Early intervention services, such as Portage, are very important for children with a learning disability. Children with a learning disability often don’t get the same start in life as other children. Parents have told us that Portage not only gives their child the best possible start in life, but it is also a lifeline for them. It celebrates achievement and recognises that both the child and the family need practical and emotional support in the early stages. The first years of a child with a learning disability’s life are crucial – they shape
the brain development that is the foundation for future learning, behaviour and health. If early and effective support is not available for every child with a learning disability and their parents, it can be that the child can be significantly set back in their development. Every child with a learning disability needs to be empowered and given appropriate help along the way. That’s why Mencap are calling on the next government to commit to ensuring that all children with a learning disability get the right support at the right time to develop to their full potential”. The NPA (National Portage Association), our umbrella organisation supporting Portage services are committed and ready to work with all who share this agenda and will work closely with Mencap and the government to ensure that appropriate funding is obtained (and maintained). As further recognition of Portage services for families, there is mention of the benefits of our positive service within the new SEN Code of Practice 2015. It is an ongoing process to embed and grow the service, but I and the team are committed and determined to ensure that this is the case.

We were very lucky this year to receive some charitable funding from Mundesley Golf Club, which has enabled us to buy expensive specialist equipment that would usually be unachievable! Many thanks to the members there – we have invited the chairman to a team day and I send regular updates about how the equipment is being used throughout the county.

My continuing personal development training this year has included Rhythmic Movement Therapy training. This focuses on integrating the reflexes that we are born with and ensuring that the Triune brain is able to make neural connections linking up synapses in the infant brain. Whilst neurologically quite a heavy subject, it is fascinating and has proven benefits to both children and adults. Reflexes play a vital role in developing every child to ready them for learning and managing in life. Retained reflexes much past 4 years old has been shown to hinder opportunities to do well in school and later in life. The most important senses for linking up of the brain are Vestibular, Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Motor and Proprioceptor, which can help children with Autism, ADD, ADHD and many gross and fine motor issues. I have been using the work in my practice, with excellent results so far. I will continue to study and qualify as a RMTi therapist and have held an initial training session for the wider Portage team, including seconded workers from Children’s Centre. Mark Church delivered this initial training and it was very well received by the team. I will ensure that the practice is introduced and used where appropriate with our families – another string to the Portage practitioner’s bow!

The National Portage Association has reviewed the Basic Workshop training and renamed it ‘Portage Small Steps to Learning’. Whilst encompassing the values and principle of Portage delivery, it is aimed at a wider audience of Early Year’s Practitioners, to improve and maintain good practice within both mainstream, and complex needs settings and children’s centres across the country. Julie Peach is working towards becoming a Portage accredited trainer and we delivered the first part of the training to early year’s professionals from various settings in July, with good feedback so far. We have included elements of Baby Brain so that there is an understanding of how vital those early play and learning opportunities, even antenatally, are. Signalong courses are offered regularly to both core and seconded staff and parents/carers and feedback received is constantly positive.

At the core of the service, is of course, our families who understand how valuable and vital Portage is. However, Portage continues to need publicising within a wider forum amongst other professionals and we will continue to achieve this by delivering bite-sized training to GP surgeries, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Health Visiting teams and other professional colleagues. Portage are now working closely with the Hamlet Centre in Norwich, following delivery of Portage Awareness training. Development Delay Awareness evenings for parents/carers presented alongside health colleagues have offered invaluable information at the early stages of diagnosis. We have greater links with the Speech and Language service across
Norfolk as they are now funded by East Coast Health resulting in joined-up working practices and greater emphasis on Portage being able to deliver some of the interventions. We were pleased to be joined by Clare Taylor and Edie Masirara at a Team Day to hear how valuable Speech and Language therapists view Portage’s work in the development of speech and communication. We will continue to work closely with them and of course, other health professionals such as Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy services.

From the moment we initially assess a child until the completion of smooth transition, the Portage service are there to guide, educate and nurture families through those early years – hence our new mission statement of ‘Listen, Plan, Play, Learn’.

Evidence of how valued our service is can be found on the following pages and I would like to thank all of the dedicated Portage staff for their initiatives and innovative practice to develop this vital role and ensure that every child, regardless of need, is able to achieve.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and how 2015-16 has evolved for the Portage service.

“Portage is a fantastic service and we look forward to visits every week (as does our child). It’s great for giving us ideas for play to support our child’s development and it is brilliant also to receive the update sheets and see another perspective on our child.“

PORTAGE PRINCIPLES

partnership

inclusion

generalising skills

celebrating diversity

celebrating success

small steps

being positive

whole child, family and community

supporting

practical, immediate, relevant

enabling

looking forward
Introduction

Norfolk Portage Service offers a countywide home based educational service for pre school children with additional support needs. The service works directly with children and their families. It is delivered by core Portage practitioners who are employed by the Norfolk County Council and staff trained in the Portage model who are employed by Children's Centres and infant schools across the county; we refer to these Portage practitioners as secondees.

The aim of Portage is to support the development of young children’s play, communication, relationships and full participation in day to day life. This is within the family and with their inclusion in the wider community. Support offered through Portage is based on the principle that parents are the key figures in the care and development of their child and Portage aims to help parents to be confident in this role whatever difficulties they and their child may face. The following report covers the period of service delivery from April 2015 to April 2016.

Parent/Carer Representatives Forum

The Parent/Carer Rep role is to provide families with a pathway to share their thoughts regarding the service they are receiving and if need be to talk to another parent/carer. The Reps have a responsibility to pass on all information to the Coordinator under Norfolk County Council confidentiality policy.

If you feel you would like to contact a Portage Parent Rep, please do- whether it is to share an idea, or that you have a compliment or a concern.

At present, to contact, please call 01603 704049, at which time your call will be diverted confidentially to the appropriate Parent Representative.

Parent/ Carer Representatives Voice

From the meetings held over the year the following service changes have been actioned;

• The Representatives were keen to hold another party, following the success of the years before and a Spring party was planned – details later in the report. They have also suggested further parties and we are looking at feasibility and costs involved

• The Representatives have initiated a peer support coffee morning for parents and children – these will be held monthly at the Hive, Hamlet Centre in Norwich and a large supermarket have kindly offered to supply refreshments. We look forward to supporting this new group

• The Portage Budget reflects how the money is spent as opposed to where the money came from – transparency regarding budget spend is essential

• Parent Representatives are actively involved in where the service needs to develop such as input into the Portage Local Offer, Mission Statement and Development Plan, which continues to be crucial as the world of early education is a constantly changing picture
The Representatives have discussed a parent advisory group – this may tie in with the coffee mornings – this is under development currently

The web site now has a link to the Annual Report and a referral form

Facebook page is up and running and parents and colleagues report that they have found it a good source of information sharing

We have five active Parent/Carer representatives who were asked to share their understanding and experience of what the Portage service is and what they can offer. Here are their stories:

Emma

My name is Emma Taylor. I am a mummy to two amazing boys, Logan who is 7 and Eli who is 2. Eli has Down Syndrome which means he has a little added extra chromosome. Portage was one of the first services to be offered to us after Eli was born and diagnosed. At the time I had no idea what an invaluable and important part of our lives it would become. Our first Portage visit was when Eli was just 6 months old and the progress he has made in a year and a half is immense. We receive Portage visits fortnightly at home or sometimes at nanny's house, in these environments Eli feels relaxed, safe and completely at ease. Eli is set small achievable targets by his Portage practitioner Julie, which we work on after and in between sessions. These then feed into the larger picture of more long term goals. Eli adores Julie and she has his full trust. They have developed an amazing bond and she is often able to encourage him to do things when I'm not! The uniqueness of Portage means that each visit is flexible enough to meet Eli's needs and go with his interests. Portage is also about the whole family. Julie will ask about important family events, ask after Logan and include him in sessions if he's around. I wanted to become a Portage Parent Rep to help other families understand the importance of Portage and how much of a positive impact it can have in their lives. I would like to be able to offer help and any advice I can to other parents should they need it. I feel privileged to receive such support in our own home. I am so proud of the cheeky, adventurous, funny and stubborn little man that Eli has become and I have to thank Portage, and Julie, for encouraging him to be the very best he can.

Zoe

I'm a 33 year old mum of three gorgeous boys Brandon 11, Jayden 8 and Mason 2. Mason has Down Syndrome which was diagnosed a week after birth. I had personally never heard of the Portage service, but two week after mason was released from NICU, we were referred by our specialist health visitor and it was one of the most amazing services. Not only do we get weekly to two weekly visits in the comfort of our own home from our wonderful Portage practitioner (who Mason adores ) she supports his development. She focuses on Mason and who he is as a little person with no negatives. Julie helps Mason hit his milestones at his own rate and she is always amazing. If I have any worries she will refer us quickly to whichever medical profession is needed. Not only is Julie there for Mason, she's there if ever myself as a parent has any worries or problem - she's always there with a listening ear and that, sometimes, is all you need.
I wanted to become a parent rep to offer support to any parent with a child or children with addition needs. I know how hard it can be to accept and adjust to a new diagnosis with different appointments and support groups thrown at you all at once - it's not only frightening and frustrating, it can also be a lonely place. I'm looking forward to not only raising more awareness of Portage services and all the work they do with their amazing team, but to help support other parents on their life journeys with their very special little people in their lives.

Edie

Portage is a unique service that helped our family through one of the most difficult and challenging periods of our lives. Clara, our daughter has brought so much joy to us, more than I thought possible when going through the shock of her being born with Down Syndrome. The first couple of years felt a little bit like an emotional rollercoaster with seemingly never ending medical and therapy appointments, all of which we are truly grateful for. However, Portage was able to offer something different; a Portage worker builds a special bond with your child and family through weekly home visits.

Sam, our Portage worker was absolutely brilliant and Clara loved seeing her each week with her big bag of toys! I lent on Sam for support – she listened to me cry, laugh, moan, and rant and she celebrated Clara’s developmental successes with us. Sam was always a great support with the right amount of empathy and positivity. She was a wealth of information about other services that Clara and our family could access and helped with liaising with Clara’s nursery, health professionals, charitable groups and EHCP etc. Initially, our son joined in the sessions before he started school a year later and I believe this helped him build a great relationship with Clara and begin to understand how and why she finds some things difficult. Again, Sam was able to suggest some lovely resources for helping siblings who have a person with complex needs in their lives.

By becoming a Portage parent rep I hope that I can give something back to Portage and offer support to families going through similar situations.

Stacey

I have a little girl who has had Portage intervention for around a year and a half now. Portage were one of the first to help her on her journey. As a parent, I found it very hard to understand why she didn't want to play and couldn't hit milestones like her eldest sibling. A child with additional needs changes the whole family. Portage are not only there for the child but for the whole family. When Amber first started showing signs of ASD, I often wondered how we would get through it as a family. I welcomed any help we were offered as I knew the early years' support is so very vital to a child leading up to nursery or school. Portage made me look at my daughter in a more positive way; that the way she learns is acceptable, and that the things that motivate her can be used as tools in her development. The small steps approach is the way forward and the achievements are celebrated. Without portage we wouldn't have come on as well as we have. Amber may be
a late developer, however she now does things I never imagined she would be doing a year ago.

**Portage is the best thing that happened in Amber’s journey so far.**

I decided to become a portage parent rep so I can give something back for the fine work they do. I want to be there for other families who are starting out their own journeys, and to give ideas and my time to the service.

**Tania**

My name is Tania and I have adopted two wonderful children. Harley is 4 and Daisy is 3. They both have Global Developmental Delay and Sensory Processing Disorder. When they first joined our family we weren’t sure of exactly what their special needs would be but it was obvious they were not meeting their milestones, particularly Harley. Our specialist health visitor put us in touch with Portage and Amy and Julie have been our Portage workers. Having Portage has made such a huge difference to our lives. Activities were carefully thought out as to which areas of development needed working on and the fun way they were done kept Harley and Daisy's interest and we have seen huge steps in their development thanks to the kind, caring, gentle, and oh so patient way that Amy and Julie worked with them. Celebrating each and every tiny step with us as a family. We became friends and I felt able to share and off load onto them at times and for this I'm truly grateful. Now our Portage sessions have stopped I don't want to lose touch with such amazing people and want to be able to give back some of what I've gained from their help. Therefore, I wanted to become a parent rep so that I could support and help other parents too and to promote the fantastic work that the Portage workers do.
Thank you to all our Parent Representatives – we really value your input and support.

Our Parent Representatives from L to R Emma, Zoe, Edie, Stacey and Tania

The three pronged approach to the Portage Model of Intervention
When Portage is first suggested to a family, very often it comes at a time when emotions are raw; diagnosis news sinking in. They may have not heard of the service and have no idea what it entails. It is difficult to understand what the service offers purely by its name. From experience, when we first knock at a door and enter a family’s life, they have little or no idea what to expect. Our training ensures that Portage practitioners immediately put the family at ease, so that we can begin a positive working relationship as soon as possible. The Portage Principles, taught consistently through training are embedded into the Portage practitioners' delivery. The following family experiences highlight how these principles are put into practice:
**Dillon and Emily**

When our health visitor recommended Portage to me I didn't really get it. Dubious, I agreed to try anything to help Dillon. After five minutes of Emily entering our house (lives and hearts!) I GOT IT!

We have fortnightly visits and for an hour we forget Dillon has Autism and Emily takes him and my younger son Eoin to an amazing world where no one has ASD and everyone is non-verbal and they just communicate with smiles, giggles and lots of bubbles.

Dillon’s speech, eye contact and imaginative play have come on leaps and bounds since starting his play dates with Emily and most importantly for us as a family he is learning to play with Eoin in a safe way, being gentle and less frustrated with him.

Portage for us is a small but very welcome relief from the daily struggles we face, we look forward to Emily's visits and can't thank her enough for her support and complete faith that Dillon can be or do anything he wants in life.
Hayley Goleniowaska – founder of Downs Side Up, blogger and mum to Natty

Hayley was the keynote speaker at the NPA Conference in September 2015. This is an excerpt of her speech, an inspiring and emotive account of their journey, which highlights the importance of Portage from a parent perspective. There was barely a dry eye amongst the entire conference.

“…. Enter our Portage worker. Calm, experienced, wise, gentle and never anything other than positive. Someone to teach us. Because having been a teacher, this was the first time in my life, I didn’t know what I was doing - we had been cut adrift. I thought I knew it all, but here we were, completely clueless. For me, it wasn’t about the activities, the toy with the bobbles, or how she taught us to get organised and keep our folders, the brightly coloured toys she loaned us; it was sharing a cup of tea with a kind face, who told me that Natty was doing well, that we were doing well, who listened to our worries. That is what kept me afloat, that’s what Portage did for me”.

A huge thank you to Dillon and family for sharing your story so far – and to Emily Hardy, our newest Portage practitioner for competently showing families the benefits of Portage. Fantastic proprioception work, Dillon!
Isla

Isla is five and has just completed her Reception year at a local mainstream school. She has had a ball!

With Mel's help, we were able to get Isla support for all the time she is at school. Although Isla was five in November, we were able to get flexible schooling written into her EHCP so that Isla could continue to attend part-time once she turned five and we have gradually increased her hours over the year, in tune with Isla's needs.

Mel helped the school and Isla's one-to-one understand where Isla was at developmentally, so that they could pitch her learning at an appropriate level. She told them all the things Isla liked doing in Portage so that they knew how best to engage Isla, as she is easily distracted when she isn't enjoying an activity.

We are very lucky to have such a supportive and flexible school. In Year One, Isla will attend two full days and three days until end of lunch initially. This will be a mixture of Year One learning, Nurture room, Forest School and an afternoon at a Complex Needs school in their sensory room. School has also said that Isla can access Reception facilities when Yr 1 work isn't suitable.

Isla had heart surgery at five months old and life was tough back then, with lots of worries about her health and the future. Mel was always there to listen, and reassured us that everything would be ok. We don't know where we would be without Portage. I always recommend it to everyone.

Thank you, Mel and Portage. We hadn't heard of it before Isla came along but couldn't imagine life without it, now.

We thank our parents and carers for their contribution to this Annual Report. It is often very difficult to put into words the struggles and complex feelings which affect daily life, so personal perspective is hugely appreciated and we marvel at your strength and stoicism. Thank you.
Enabling families to spend time together

Portage Spring Party - held at Swanton Morley Village Hall on April 23rd 2016

Following requests from the Portage Parent Representatives and families who had attended the May bug ball in 2015 – a Spring Party (costumes optional) was arranged.

We were very lucky to receive donations of sweet goodies and fruit bags from Tesco and McDonalds.

Listening to valuable feedback from parents and carers, we chose the same venue for this year’s event as the separate rooms enabled us to have a quiet sensory area, which again proved very popular, the main hall where parents/carers and children could meet and interact with craft tables of sparkling, scented playdough and a chance to create your own Portage mask, a messy play room with bug jelly and beautifully artistic face painting and a chill-out zone for older siblings, showing the film ‘A Bug’s Life’. Lunch was provided in individual smiley lunch boxes, with plenty of goodies inside and parents/carers were offered a range of delicious ‘grown-up’ sandwiches!

Welcome to the Portage Spring party! Smiling faces all round.

As families began to arrive, some in party finery, it was a joy to see so many meeting up and sharing their stories. Very soon, dark dens with sensory lights were being explored, bubbles popped, playdough moulded, masks designed and happy faces abound. An important element of the party is to negate the feeling of social isolation that some of our parents and carers experience and, judging by the evaluation feedback received, this was achieved. It was suggested previously that name badges are worn, so that interaction between families is easier and we took that on board this year – certainly families were still chatting and socialising as the team cleared away, which was super to see.

We were lucky again to have a visit by Johnny Jaffacake, Children’s Entertainer, who presented magic and balloons for us for the third year running – many thanks to him. A special prize balloon model was given to one magician’s helper and the children left with balloon dogs and
sweet treats. Following that was lunch and then a session by Musical Keys, with parachutes, trains and many instruments – not to mention some excellent singing by both parents and children.

Feedback from some of the evaluation forms were:

“...my family enjoyed the sensory area - both my children loved exploring......

...our family enjoyed meeting other families with the same condition as our son....

... thank you Portage, you are a fab team...

... ... We absolutely loved the portage party - we're sad we won't be able to come next year as Lilly will start school in September - we will really miss Portage !

...Johnny Jaffacake was brill., my children really enjoyed and Musical Keys were great... “

And ‘how could we improve’ ?...

“Christmas party, summer picnic... more parties !”

Portage Wessex Checklist:

Soc 30: Actively explores environment
Cognitive 32: Points to big and little on request
Lan 12/L42: Laughs, chuckles and squeals aloud in play

Sensory bug jelly delight

Thanks go to all the dedicated Portage staff and our wonderful Parent Representatives, who gave up their precious Saturday (and many days previously to organise) and ensured the day was the success that it was.
**Funding**
The Norfolk Portage Service is funded by several routes; Norfolk County Council allocation of Early Years Intervention Grant, Great Yarmouth & Waveney PCT and additional income raised from service development initiatives.

Funding streams
- Norfolk County Council £220,740.00
- Great Yarmouth & Waveney PCT £10,625.00

The following diagram gives a breakdown of the expenditure over the year. The actual numbers of families who received the Portage service was **281**, this equates to **£858** per child per year to deliver this model of intervention. This represents an increase of **51** families this year.

**Referral patterns across the County**
Referrals have increased over the last two years by 34%. The pie chart below shows the percentage of referrals in each division of Children’s Services.
Age of Child at Point of Referral

The chart below shows a change in the age of referral, with a slight increase this year in the 3-4 year age range.

It is our priority to encourage more referrals for children age 2 and under and there is marked evidence that this is a changing statistic; this year again was the highest for the years 0-1 and appears to be an ongoing picture, which collaborates with the vision of the National Portage Association of the earliest possible intervention. We anticipate ongoing increase in this age group now that we have a partnership agreement with every Children’s Centre across the county.

Referrals Pathways

The Norfolk Portage Service works closely with the specialist health providers for children with additional needs and this is why they are our most consistent referrers. There are four Child Development Centres; Bury St Edmunds, the Newberry Centre in Gorleston, the Upton Road Centre in Norwich and the Roxburgh Centre in King’s Lynn. These host the ‘Pre School Liaison Groups’, which are regularly attended by the Portage team.

We continue to receive an increase in referrals made by Health Visitors, Children’s Centres and Parent/Carers. A new referral pathway from Sensory Support Teachers and Special Educational needs Coordinators in settings was developed. We have noticed an increase in referrals from Children’s Centres this year, from 46 to 55 and a marked increase from Health Visitors from 59 to 80; evidencing the success of collaborative work. This highlights the success of Partnership Agreements with Children’s Centres and our close links with Health colleagues. Since moving to our base at Woodside Road and being located within the Virtual Sensory Support School
service, Early Years’ professionals are working even closer with Portage practitioners in providing a wrap-around service for our children.

The bar chart below shows the amount of referrals made by the variety of agencies and individuals we work closely with. It is encouraging that parents feel able to self-refer and this has been made more accessible through the hyperlink on the Portage website and social media awareness, culminating in an increase from 28 to 40 self referrals.

### Referral Pathways

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<tr>
<th>Referral Pathway</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>Specialist Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Visitor</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Carer</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s centres</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory Support/SENCO</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
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### End of Service Pattern

The chart below identifies where a child moves onto once leaving the Portage service.

### Moving on from Portage

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<th>Count</th>
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<td>No longer meets criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>No parental context</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred without exam</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special School</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Nursery</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not work up</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developments

We have identified the following areas for development in the past year;

- Partnership agreements with all 53 Children’s Centres are now in place
- Accessibility to our Web site to include referral form, Annual Report and development of the Local Offer has been improved
- Complete National Portage Association Part 1 & 2 training of all new Secondee Portage practitioners from Children’s Centres - all new staff are taken through core competencies during regular supervision
- Increase parental involvement with the Parent/Carer Rep forum, at present there are five active members, with two more potentially willing to participate in 2016/7
- Use of iPads in home delivery of structured play is now active – all core staff have iPads, with further training scheduled and seminars available at the National Portage Association annual conference
- Facebook page has been initiated and has proved popular with parents/carers and professionals

And to the future

- To continue positive partnership agreements with partner organisations and commissioned service providers to ensure that the service is embedded and result in an improvement in the quality of Early Year’s Education Inclusion, care and protection, resulting in a wider reduction in potential safeguarding issues
- To ensure that families are offered help when needs or concerns are first identified, which will improve children’s circumstances
- To develop an improved information service for families and early year’s professionals to ensure that local response time to children is timely and appropriate
- To continue Portage input into the Family Support Process and the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), to ensure a greater cohesive partnership approach to outcomes for children
- To assist in the development of Peer Support Groups within Children’s Centres, to ensure greater cohesive working partnership and support
- To develop the Early Steps support group in conjunction with the Clare School, Norwich to better support families at the early stages of diagnosis and acceptance
- To offer bite-sized Portage training/information to GP’s, NICU, Junior medics and other Health professionals and settings to ensure multi-professional approach to children with SEND
- To continue to develop Facebook, offering easier access to information for families and professionals and to encourage information sharing opportunities
- To monitor the child’s progress more robustly including the use of aggregated data across the service and develop assessment checklist appropriate to the child and our service via the National Portage Association
- To raise Portage Awareness throughout the county and beyond