

Portage Annual Report 2017

Tenth Edition



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



Norfolk County Council
at your service

Mark Adams, Head of Education Vulnerable Groups Achievement and Access Service

I am delighted to be the Head of a new service – Education Vulnerable Groups Achievement and Access Service. It is within this service that Portage now sits and rightly so. I am really looking forward to working with this highly skilled team that engages the children and families who access the service and hope that by working closely together, all the different elements will enhance the access, opportunities and achievements of every child they work with.

Foreword by Karen Taylor, Headteacher Sensory Support

It is a huge pleasure to contribute to my fifth and Portage's Tenth Annual Report.

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

This report, as in previous years, has a number of stories from families themselves which give us a real insight into the work of Portage across Norfolk and the high esteem and value in which the team and their work is held.

Mel and Julie have further developed the Portage Training in the early years having secured funding for a new project by the DfE and we are hoping this will continue next year.

I am so pleased that the parties go from strength to strength. No-one should underestimate the benefit in families meeting and talking together in a secure, safe environment in which their children can have fun.

As ever there is an increasing demand on the Portage Service as referrals continue to rise and as ever the team rise to the challenge.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's annual report as much as I did.

Karen Taylor, Senior Manager

Overview from the Portage Strategic Coordinator, Melanie Warren

PORTAGE. A somewhat bizarre name for an early year's service and much misunderstood as a canoe-carrying procedure, or indeed, various versions of the French soup! We are, however, a world-wide intervention – Portage services began in Wisconsin, USA to support parents in rural areas in helping children in their own homes and has been established in the UK since 1976. There are now over 100 services across the UK and the National Portage Association (NPA) are asking for accredited trainers to assist in the set-up of services across Russia, Bulgaria and Dushane, Tajikistan via skype support and with one to one support physically within Russia and Tajikistan. Exciting times indeed.

Portage is an invaluable ethos for ensuring that children with additional needs receive the best start in life and that the early intervention, small steps principles are implemented for children with a learning disability. As such, in recognition of this unique, valued teaching, Norfolk Portage service have received funding from the Department for Education (DfE) and NPA, in order to train early year's practitioners across various settings within the county, with the understanding that Portage principles must be delivered in their day to day practice. We completed a three-day training course at the end of July for 24 practitioners, which is the

largest group we have trained so far. Feedback was very good and there will be further follow-up from the DfE and NPA for those delegates over the next months.



This year, we have developed a Norfolk Portage Checklist which ties in the EYFS headings, with elements of Portage Small Steps and is proving to be a fantastic evidence and outcome tool, as well as celebrating a child's progress and achievements. We are looking to copyright this and perhaps consider marketing it, if agreed with the NPA.

It is testament to the Portage service that the importance of those principles; inclusion, partnership, celebrating diversity, positivity, supporting the whole child, family and community, alongside several more, is recognised as a world-wide positive intervention that makes a real difference to families' lives and gives a child the best start possible; minimising disabling barriers that confront young children and their families. You will find evidence of how our service is viewed personally, from Norfolk parents later on in this report.

Our continuing personal development team training this year has included visual and hearing impairment awareness from our colleagues in Virtual School Sensory Support, speech and language therapy training from East Coast Community Health, physiotherapy training in body movement and shaping from our Norfolk Community Health & Care (NCH&C) colleagues and sleep counselling training. On a personal level, I have completed Rhythmic Movement Therapy (RMT) training in all three levels and am fully qualified to deliver this therapy as a trained RMTi practitioner. The focus 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 is key. Whilst neurologically 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, Attention deficit disorder (ADD), Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and many gross and fine motor issues, as well as prematurity.

During training, we include elements of Baby Brain training, so that there is an understanding of how vital those early play and learning opportunities, even antenatally, are. There is much ongoing research into parent/child bonding and how that can have an effect

on the child's life and as a team, we are mindful that parents are the best educators of their children. We are involved to support motivation of the child's self-improvement and this work is obviously best carried out by parents, who know their child best and in the supportive home environment, until such time as the child is ready for their formal pre-school education. Portage delivers this service, enabling the child to make a smooth transition into their next, exciting stage of life.

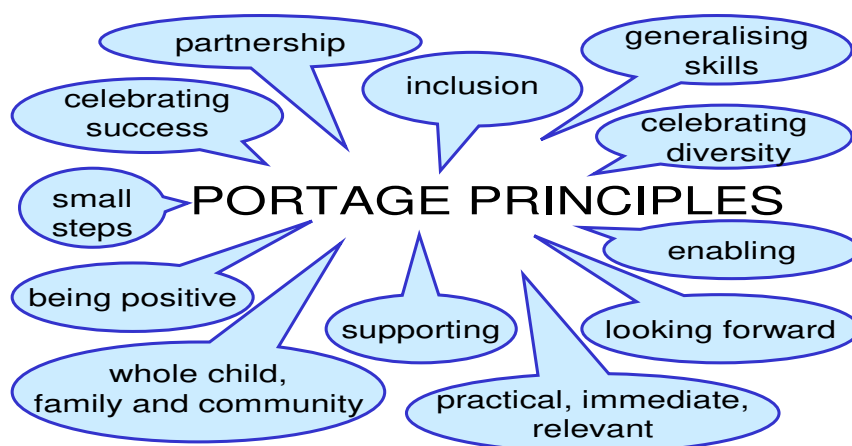
At the core of the service, is of course, our families who understand how valuable and vital Portage is. As a team, we appreciate the great privilege of being welcomed into their homes and lives and as such, develop a strong and trusting bond over time. I have evidence that Portage have eliminated feelings of desperation, isolation and at times, potential safeguarding alerts. Portage awareness continues to be a priority, although referrals have increased year on year. As mentioned earlier, we have greater links with the Speech and Language service across Norfolk, 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 will continue to work closely with our colleagues in health and education and to that end, I am involved in the Early Notification process; ensuring that the local authority are aware of children with additional needs and their potential future educational requirements. Our service level agreements with Children's Centres across Norfolk continues successfully and we currently have around 39 seconded staff visiting 2/3 families per cluster.

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 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 2016-17 has evolved for the Portage service.

“Portage has been really useful and we are seeing the benefits now. I would recommend this service to anyone; it is a great support for both parents and child. From a personal point of view, it couldn't have been any better.”



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 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, early education 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 2016 to April 2017.

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/carers. 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 winter themed party was planned for February – details later in the report. They have also suggested further opportunities to link families and we are looking at feasibility and costs involved
- 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 and also to provide greater access to one-to-one support for other parents – this is under development currently
- The web site now has a link to the Annual Report and a referral form
- Facebook continues to be a good source of information sharing and parents and colleagues report that they have found it helpful

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 8 and Eli who is 3. 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 34 year old mum of three gorgeous boys Brandon 12, Jayden 9 and Mason 3. Mason has Down Syndrome which was diagnosed a week after birth. I had personally never heard of the Portage service, but two weeks 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 additional 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 had Portage intervention for around two and a half years. 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 year's 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's 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 5 and Daisy is 4. 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.

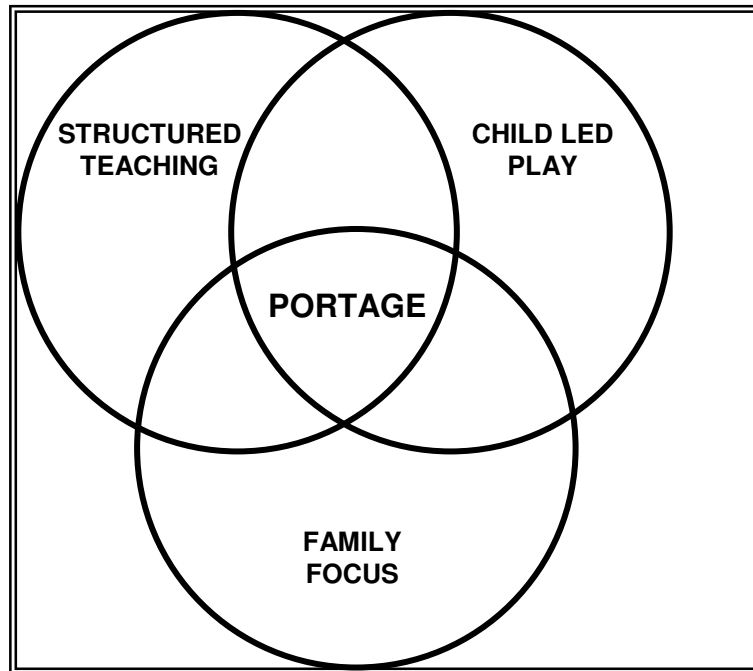
Thank you to all our Parent Representatives – we really value your input and support.



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



The 'interlocking circles' approach to the Portage Model of Intervention



Meet some of the Team – Core and seconded Portage Practitioners at a recent team day

Family Experiences of Portage

Love Note to Portage

My daughter has cerebral palsy. This is not a disaster.

We became parents eleven weeks earlier than we should have, when Alice and Mary were born spontaneously at 29 weeks. We weren't allowed to hold them. They were rushed straight to NICU, where they remained for six weeks. About halfway through their stay, we were told Alice had PVL (Periventricular Leukomalacia) and that the chances were high for a future diagnosis of cerebral palsy.

I wept. I loved my daughters. I knew very little about cerebral palsy, but all I could think was that it would make Alice's life unbearably hard.

We were lucky. We had incredible support from a team of medical professionals supplied by the NHS. But naturally many of these early appointments were stressing the things Alice would be unable to do. They wanted us to be realistic, and what they were saying seemed to confirm my worst fears.

Alice's development was a foreign country. The 'normal' developmental milestones did not apply to her. We had to wait and see. We loved her, but there were things we couldn't understand.

Then Amy arrived, and things changed.

Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families. It's a registered charity and its services are provided free-of-charge by our local authority.

Amy Puttock comes to our house every other week with a bag of toys and songs and activities. She used to come every week before Alice started at nursery. She focuses completely on Alice and it is all about what Alice *can* do, not what she can't. What looks like play, is really much more. Amy has grown to understand and care for Alice. She really sees Alice's sweetness, her cheekiness, and her determination. She challenges her with games and smiles. She has taught us all so much. Alice loves her – and so do we.

This all sounds deceptively simple, doesn't it? An hour of play with someone she loves and trusts. But this in itself was a big step for Alice. Amy was the first person, outside of family, Alice really bonded with.

Alice has always been shy with strangers. Her disability affects her sensory processing and, anyway, those coming to the house to see her were usually – from her perspective – coming to pull her about or fit her for a new piece of equipment. Amy was different.

It really has been beautiful to watch their growing bond. Amy was the first ‘stranger’ Alice allowed to hold her without signs of distress. In fact, that first time, she turned her head and looked up at her with a smile.

Developmentally, Amy and Portage and Alice have made incredible strides. Amy emails us a report after every visit to highlight her progression and future goals. Even when I’ve been at the session, reading the report is always a surprise. Alice *did* use her right hand, didn’t she? She *did* know all her colours. She *can* tell the difference between the animals in the song. And all this from an hour of playing and singing and fun.

Amy has also helped us, the parents and family, enormously over the years. She’s been there for EHCP meetings, starting nursery, form filling and funding requests. She’s been there when I’ve despaired; when I didn’t know if I could cope; and when I felt I had no one I could talk to.

Mostly though, she’s helped to teach us, alongside Alice, how remarkable, clever, funny and determined our daughter is.

Next week is our last session with Amy. We will all miss her so much. Alice is settled in a wonderful nursery and doing more and being more than anyone had ever expected. She will continue, through her brilliant life to come, surprising everyone.

But, we will always have Amy to thank, for helping us to hope.



A huge thank you to Alice and her family for sharing your story so far – and to Amy Puttock, our senior Portage practitioner for competently showing families the benefits of Portage.

Each year, a selection of families are contacted for their honest opinions of the Portage service. Below are a small selection; their words verbatim:

“Portage has been really useful, particularly as she's got older, and visits were once per week. Seeing the benefits now, good to be able to chat to Julie, learning ways forward, is very good at keeping in contact, keeps family focussed and how to encourage her forward. Particularly at the beginning, was all about C and the visits came to the house ... would recommend the service to anyone, a great support service, for both C and parents. From a personal point of view it couldn't have been any better.”

“D really loves Julie, has a nice relationship, it is quite relaxed. Pay for private SaLT, more intense and expensive. Julie takes on board what D likes and will work around her interests, working on sensory play, signpost and advice is invaluable. Wish it didn't stop in the holidays! Consider running a group during the holidays please? With children's centres?”

“It's been brilliant with my daughter as she's always been fussy with strangers. Having Portage, she has built up a good relationship with Sarah and it's been brilliant for her development; she has become very cheeky and playful and before Portage she was more reluctant to socialise and develop. It breaks it up from all the appointments and it's nice for her to have that little break, we don't get out that often as there is so much medical equipment, so being a home visit is comfortable.”

“Portage has been really helpful. R is developmentally at the age of 12 months old. Linda gives confidence to the whole family, basically doing age appropriate activities, makes me look and think back; he is coming on leaps and bounds. Once per week, really helpful and is able to put you in direction of other services. Regular visits are brilliant.”

“I have nothing negative to say, except I wish it was more frequent! He had a really good time, was once a week, only had about 5 sessions as he will now do his 15 hours. I was signposted to other services, Z has issues with sleep, so I was given forms to self-refer to sleep counselling and told about other services. Couldn't be happier. Sam was happy to attend the multi-disciplinary meetings, which was good as she knew Z so well. Z absolutely loves it... makes me well up watching him interact! The sequined cushion is a favourite!”

Olivia's story

Olivia has been having Portage for the last 2 years. You can tell when Emily turns up to play that she is excited and extremely happy to see her and to see what toys Emily has brought that week with her as Olivia is straight in the bag emptying everything in there.

We have good days and bad days, but Emily will always take Olivia's lead and it's great to see her lead the session with some direction from Emily when Olivia loses her focus. Emily also uses the toys and activities that excite Olivia to keep her attention - also we have gotten some great ideas of activities to do with Olivia and fun bits to make.

We have been working on a number of different things with Olivia but mainly has been her communication as Olivia is non-verbal so we have been trying different ways to get her communicating what she wants to do. Emily has also been working alongside Olivia's nursery so that we are all working together to reach the same goal for Olivia. It's always a fun session and this is what keeps Olivia focused (as much as she can be).

I can't thank Emily enough for all her help, advice and support, especially through the EHCP process. Also just being able to have a vent to her about some of the day to day things that happen in our lives. So I'm very grateful to Emily for all the help and advice she has given to me as well as playing a very active role in Olivia's development and progression and finally the transition into school.

Olivia's younger sister Emily also looks forward to the session and takes an interest into what is going on and will try to copy what we are doing with Olivia- she also is included.

Portage for us is amazing. We all look forward to the session as it's great for me personally just to be able to take a back seat and watch Olivia interact with another familiar adult and watch the relationship between Olivia and Emily develop into something extremely fun alongside the fact she is constantly learning!



Huge thanks to Olivia and her family for sharing your thoughts about Portage and well done, Emily!

And this, from one of our Portage Practitioners:

Thank you for all the opportunities with portage and your time, energy and encouragement guiding me on my portage journey. I have really loved working with the families. You have been great to work with and the Portage families are so lucky to have you.
Seconded Practitioner – Action for Children

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 daily at your strength and stoicism.

Enabling families to spend time together

Portage Winter Party - held at Swanton Morley Village Hall on February 5th 2017

Following requests from the Portage Parent Representatives and families who had attended the Spring Party in 2016, a Winter Wonderland party was organised, to be held in the depths of a wintery February afternoon. Olaf welcomed families to the icy party!



Listening to valuable feedback from parents and carers, we chose the same venue for this year's event as the mid-county location works well for families and separate rooms enable 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 winter spiced playdough and a chance to create your own Olaf snowman, a messy play room with

'melting' snowmen and beautifully artistic face painting and a chill-out zone for older siblings, showing the films 'Ice Age and Frozen'. This year, we offered children, parents/carers a range of delicious snacks and drinks as we changed the time to a post-lunch party.



Design your own snowman!



Calming sensory exploration

As families began to arrive, it was a joy again to see so many meeting up and sharing their stories. Very soon, dark dens with sensory lights were being explored, bubbles popped, playdough moulded, snowmen designed and happy faces abound. An important element of the party is to negate the feeling of social isolation that some of our parents, carers and siblings 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. There was a musical finale, with parachutes, trains and many instruments – not to mention some excellent singing by both parents and children.

Norfolk Portage Checklist:

Physical Development – Fine Motor
(M&H) B-11

Reaches out for, touches and begins to hold objects

Communication & Language –
Understanding 8-20

Developing the ability to follow others' body language, including pointing and gesture

Expressive Arts & Design – Exploring
Media and Materials

Explores and experiments with a range of media through sensory exploration, and using whole body.



'Melting' snowmen

Thanks go to all the dedicated Portage staff and our wonderful Parent Representatives, who gave up their precious Sunday (and many days previously to organise) and ensured the day was the success that it was.

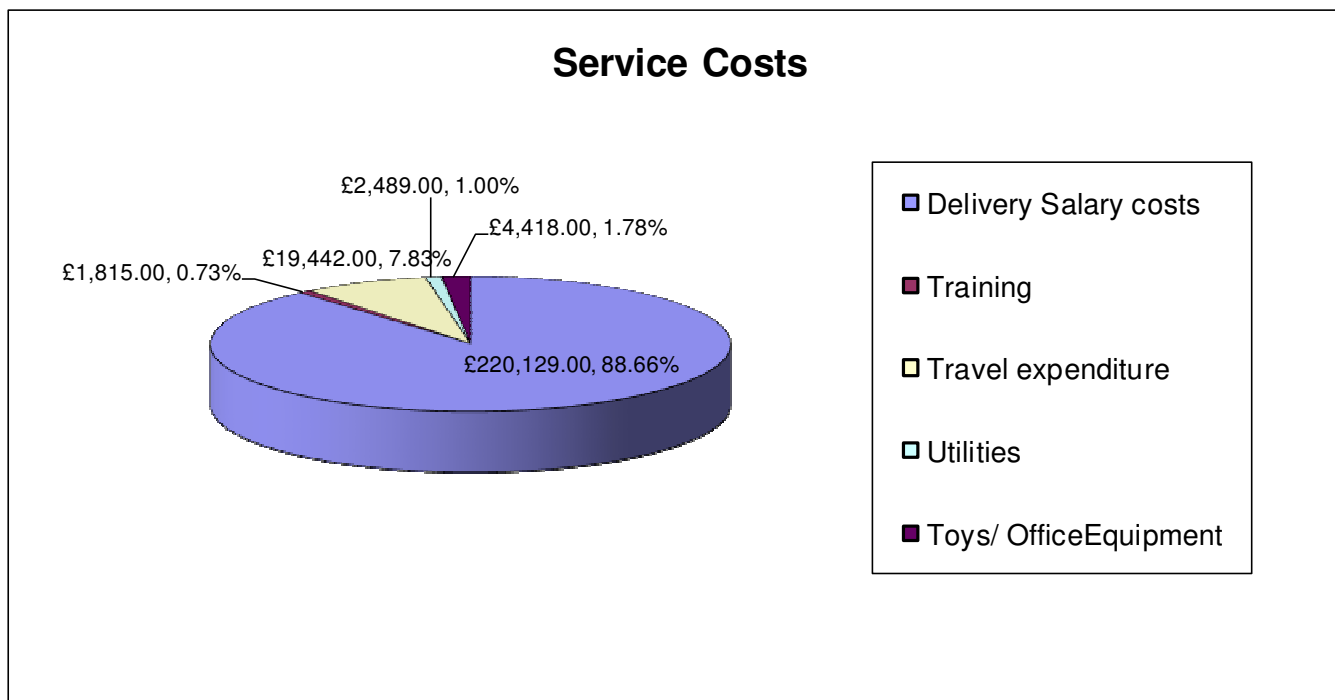
Funding

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

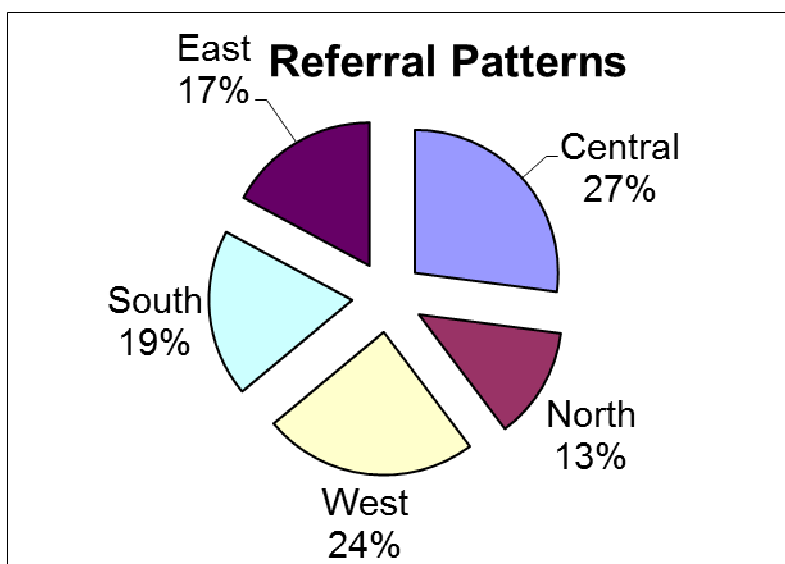
- Norfolk County Council £235,820.00
- Great Yarmouth & Waveney PCT £10,625.00

The following diagram gives a breakdown of the expenditure over the year. The actual numbers of contacts from families to the Portage service was **380**, with a total discharge of **172** from caseload from April 2016 – April 2017.



Referral patterns across the County

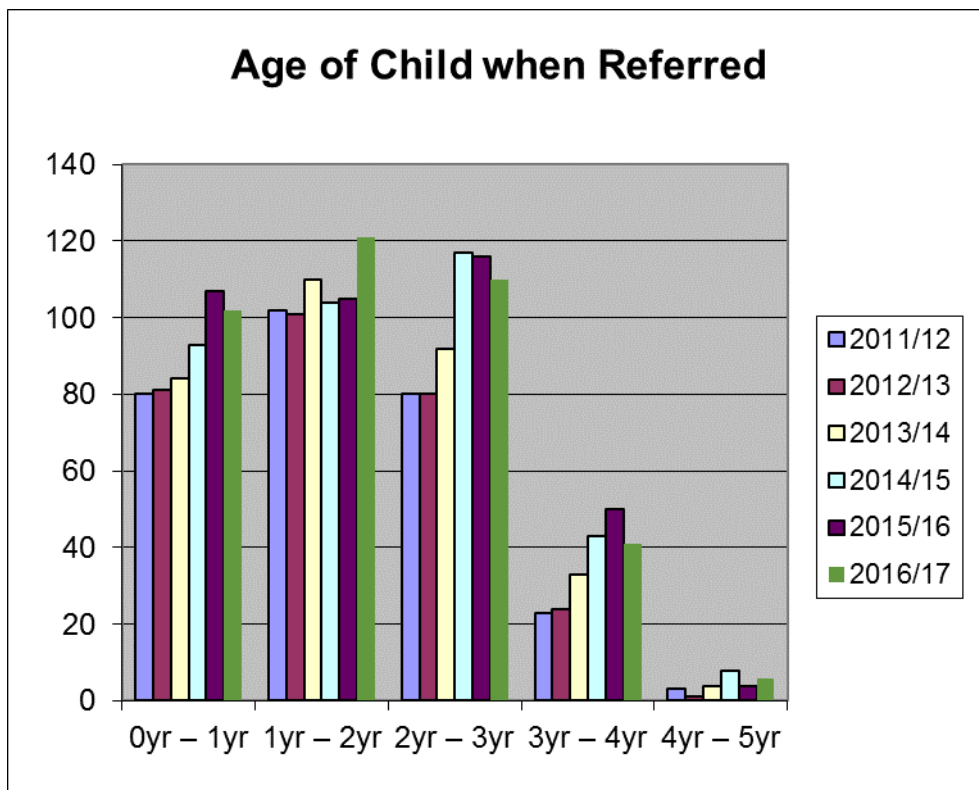
Referrals have remained steady over this year. The pie chart below shows the percentage of referrals in each division of Children's Services (rounded).



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 1-2 and under and there is marked evidence that this is a changing statistic; this year again was the highest for the years 1-2 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.

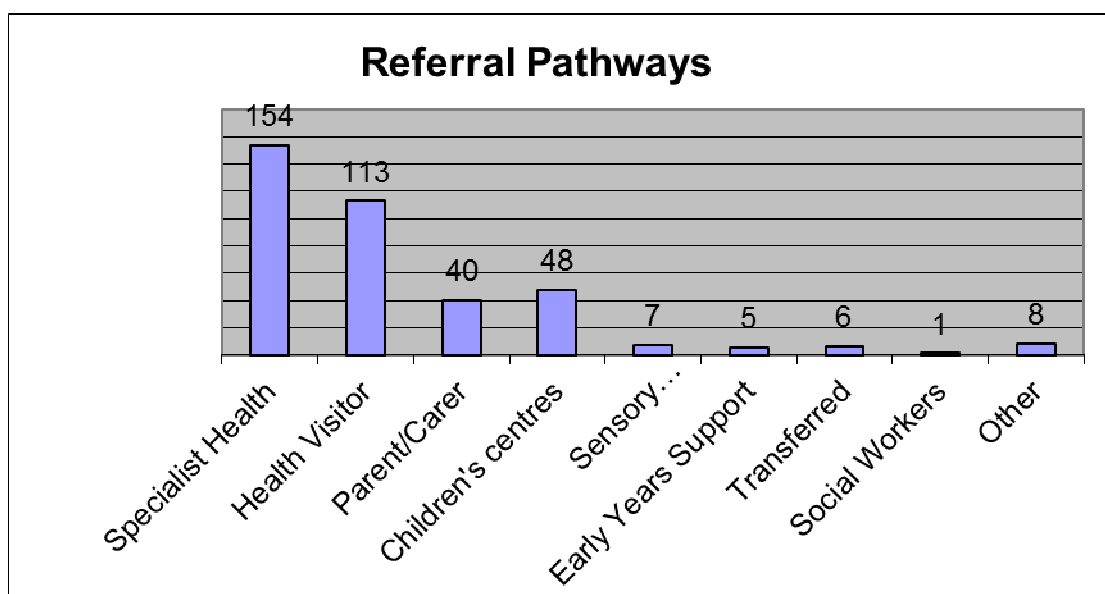


Referrals Pathways

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.

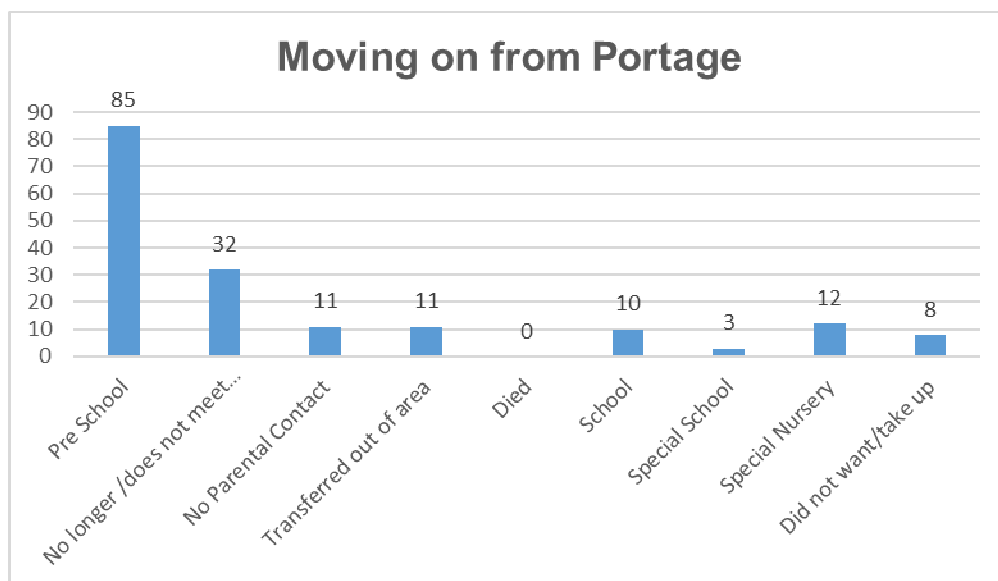
We continue to receive an increase in referrals made by Health Visitors, Children's Centres and Parent/Carers. A new referral pathway from Sensory Support Teachers and Special Educational needs Coordinators in settings was developed. An increase in referrals from Health Visitors from **80 to 113** illustrates our strong links with health colleagues and a growing awareness of our service within Cambridge Community Health service. 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 a steady **40** self-referrals.



End of Service Pattern

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



Developments

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

- We continue partnership agreements with Children's Centres and continually assess Portage involvement within new NCC structure and develop further links with Early Help Hubs across the county
- We have implemented a new Norfolk Portage checklist with small steps approach links to EYFS which has been well received and provide good evidence for reporting (EHCP etc.)
- We monitor child's progress more robustly including the use of aggregated data across the service and implementation of Portage Intervention Records
- We ensure that the Voice of the Child is considered across the service
- We complete National Portage Association Part 1 & 2 training of all new Seconded Home Visitors from Children's Centres
- We advocate being champions for SEND children and ambitious in our hope for improved outcomes for those children and their families who will be the focus of the work of the Education Inclusion Service.
- We support parental involvement with the Parent/Carer Rep forum, at present there are 5 active members
- We have developed 'bitesized' training opportunities for health professionals, as well as the new 2.5-day workshop to embed Portage practice in Norfolk

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 continue to offer support to parents and families where there may be escalating concerns and issues and 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 support group in conjunction with the Clare School, (Central), John Grant, (East), Churchill Park (West) and Woodfields (North) 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 involvement with health partners to ensure that early identification of the child results in better outcomes as they move towards formal education
- To monitor the child's progress more robustly including the use of aggregated data across the service and checklist appropriate to the child and our service via the National Portage Association
- To raise Portage Awareness throughout the county and beyond