

Contact a Family

Corporate Strategy 2005-2010

Introduction

Our strategic vision is:

That all parents and families of disabled children in the UK should be fully recognised by service providers and society as a whole; be respected and have access to appropriate support and services which meet their needs.

Our core organisational purpose is:

To support parents and families who care for a disabled child by:

- providing access to good quality advice and information, broad ranging appropriate support and contact with other families which will lead to positive outcomes;
- influencing changes in policy and practice in order to substantially improve the quality of lives of parents and families and their children.

Our core values are:

Contact a Family is an organisation that was founded on the principle of mutual support between parents and families caring for disabled children. In consequence we have built up an extensive network of local, regional and UK wide support groups which enable parents and families to come together, share information and offer support to one another. Our desire to influence change is informed by the direct experience of parents and families.

Contact a Family's work is based on the following values and beliefs:

- We seek to be an open and inclusive organisation, promoting diversity and equality;
- We support and welcome parents and families from all communities and believe they should be accorded equal worth regardless of disability, gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation and social class;
- We believe parents and families should be consulted by service providers and actively involved in participation so that they can help to develop local and national services. They should be listened to and treated with respect, as equal partners, by professionals and policy makers;
- We recognise that many parents and families who care for disabled children are excluded from participating in society at both an economic and social level;
- We believe that parents and families should be provided with a full range of relevant, up to date information and have access to high quality services;
- We support parents and families in making the choices that are appropriate to their child's needs;
- We believe that services should be inclusive and designed to maximise the independence and full potential of disabled children;
- We believe that the needs of parents and families are best served by a range of different organisations working together.

There is still much to do

Despite the achievements of all Contact a Family staff and volunteers across the UK who have been working towards objectives set for us by the Trustees in 2001, there is still much to do. We must recognise that over half of disabled children still grow up in or at the margins of poverty; that most mothers of disabled children are still unable to work; that parents still report a daily struggle to access the services and support they need; that minority ethnic families remain doubly excluded and marginalised and that we still only reach a small proportion of families with disabled children each year.

The Corporate Management Team and Trustees have identified five overarching aims that we must work towards during 2005-2010 to bring about real change for Contact a Family and more importantly, the families we support.

Our five aims

The five aims are:

1. By 2010, Contact a Family will be a leading provider of quality advice, information and support to families of disabled children across the UK;
2. By 2010, Contact a Family will have enabled parents' voices to be heard in shaping the policies and services that affect their lives at all levels;
3. By 2010 Contact a Family will have contributed to positive changes in legislation, policy and practice across the UK;
4. By 2010, Contact a Family will have long term financial security;
5. By 2010, Contact a Family will continue to have robust management and will have improved governance and infrastructure.

Aim 1 – to be a leading provider of advice, information and support in the UK.

The underpinning vision is that all parents and professionals will be fully aware of the services that Contact a Family offers and we become a key port of call.

In order to secure this aim, we will achieve the following sub-objectives:

- a) Maintain high standard of quality advice and information;
- b) Maintain high standard of quality support to families;
- c) Increase our reach to diverse groups of parents and families especially those living in areas of socio-economic deprivation;
- d) Publicise our services widely to professionals working with families;
- e) Explore development opportunities arising from new policy initiatives across the four nations eg, Children's Centres and extended schools;
- f) Develop the Family Support Service.

Key Performance Indicators

- 1) Measure satisfaction levels and impact across all services;**
- 2) Estimate the numbers and diversity of families reached by all services.**

Aim 2 – Contact a Family will have enabled parents’ voices to be heard in shaping the policies and services that affect their lives at all levels.

The underpinning vision is that Contact a Family will be seen as the UK’s centre of expertise on parent participation and be used as a resource by agencies wishing to actively involve parents in service planning.

In order to secure this aim, we will achieve the following sub-objectives:

- a) Provide tools and advice to parents and the agencies which support them to enable them to make their voices heard by service providers and policy makers;
- b) Ensure that Contact a Family’s practices what it preaches and fully involves parents in the organisation at all levels;
- c) Embed parent participation as a core theme of Contact a Family’s development and policy work;
- d) Carry out feasibility study to set up consultancy and training service on parent participation;
- e) Promote parent participation as a key theme through publications, media and public affairs programme.

Key Performance Indicators

- 1) Numbers of publications with a focus on parent participation distributed;
- 2) Percentage and numbers of parents represented on Contact a Family committees and advisory groups.

Aim 3 - Contact a Family will have contributed to positive changes in legislation, policy and practice across the UK.

The underpinning vision is that policy makers, service providers, voluntary sector partners and opinion formers across the UK will regard Contact a Family as a leading authority on the key issues impacting on families with disabled children and families themselves will see measurable improvement as a result.

In order to secure this aim, we will achieve the following sub-objectives:

- a) Monitor and respond to relevant policy and legislative developments in all four nations;
- b) Continue to lobby policy makers and opinion formers;
- c) Develop strong evidence based arguments to bring about change.

Key Performance Indicators

- 1) Carry out a survey of opinion formers/policy makers to gauge their view of Contact a Family’s effectiveness and credibility;
- 2) Develop impact tool which can measure improvement on the ground as a result of policy development;
- 3) Numbers of policy submissions made to Government
- 4) Numbers of research reports produced and disseminated

Aim 4 – Contact a Family will have long term financial security.

The underpinning vision is that Contact a Family will be financially secure and robust in the long-term and will plan and implement a two year revenue and capital spending cycle.

In order to secure this aim we will achieve the following sub-objectives:

- a) Increase income and minimise expenditure to create an annual surplus;
- b) Diversify Contact a Family's funding base across the UK;
- c) Increase income annually;
- d) Increase ratio and amount of unrestricted income to restricted income;
- e) Implement full cost recovery;
- f) Improve budgeting system across the organisation;
- g) Improve and review systems of financial reporting and monitoring for all offices;
- h) Monitor use of City Road asset;
- i) Monitor investment policy and performance;

Key Performance Indicators

- 1) **Level and performance of reserves;**
- 2) **Percentage and level of unrestricted income;**
- 3) **Balance on Annual and Net assets;**
- 4) **Breakdown of core costs recovered from funders.**

Aim 5 – Contact a Family will continually improve its Governance, Management and its infrastructure.

The underpinning vision is that Contact a Family will be viewed by trustees, staff, volunteers, parents and external stakeholders as well governed, and well managed.

In order to secure this aim, we will achieve the following sub-objectives:

- a) Ensure implementation of recommendations of the Governance Review;
- b) Produce a robust annual management plan, which ensures implementation of the Corporate Strategy;
- c) Monitor the effectiveness of new governance arrangements;
- d) Ensure that Contact a Family has infrastructure appropriate to the needs of the organisation and monitors changes to requirements each year.

Key Performance Indicators

- 1) **Level of staff turnover;**
- 2) **Level of staff sickness;**
- 3) **Number of volunteer days;**
- 4) **Numbers of formal complaints and written compliments received;**
- 5) **Level of Trustee attendance at meetings.**

Reviewing and Supporting the Strategy

Reviewing the Strategy

This Corporate Strategy will be reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and updated annually between November and February prior to the annual budget being set. The Board of Trustees will monitor the implementation of the strategy through agreed key performance indicators.

Supporting the Strategy

It will be underpinned by the following specific management strategies and operational plan for the following areas:

- External Affairs;
- Media;
- UK Operation;
- Volunteer Local Area Representatives scheme;
- London;
- Scotland;
- Wales;
- Northern Ireland;
- England;
- Family Support Worker Service;
- Parent Participation;
- Paediatric Project;
- Finance;
- Fundraising;
- IT;
- HR;
- Facilities Management.

These will be reviewed and updated annually.

Tools to implement the Strategy

We will use the following tools to implement and monitor the impact of the strategy:

- Staff Intranet;
- National Information database;
- Staff Handbook;
- Trustee Handbook (to be developed);
- Supervision and Appraisal.

Francine Bates
Chief Executive
June 2006