



PARENTING FORUM NI
ALISON LOUGHLIN REGIONAL MANAGER

The Parenting Forum NI (PFNI) continues to work to support parents in bringing up their children and promotes the well-being of families. It recognises the diversity of parenting and aims to represent the needs and aspirations of all parents, and those working with parents, so that policy, practice and public opinion can be influenced effectively.

Activities have included:

- ◆ An Independent Evaluation on the work of the Forum was completed in November 2006, which demonstrated an increase of 25% in parents and of 40% in organisation membership over the year. Over 3,200 people received information on the work of the Forum. The Forum successfully met all of the objectives set out by the funding bodies.
- ◆ Dissemination of 4 Newsletters and 4 Fact Sheets for parents on topics covering Home-School Partnership, Planning for Summer Holidays, Enrolling your Child for School, Internet Chat Rooms and Smoke Free Places and Work Areas.
- ◆ Facilitated Consultation Sessions with parents – A Play Policy for NI and the Families Matter Document.
- ◆ Co-ordinated Parents' Week 2006 with over 160 events across the Province. The theme this year was Happy Families and was a great success.
- ◆ Parents' Week was launched with our first all Ireland conference co-hosted with Parentline Ireland. This took place on Friday 13th October at the Wynn's Hotel in Dublin.
- ◆ The National Occupational Standards For Working with Parents are taking off and we have extended our staff team by recruiting Emma Campbell who will be promoting the standards to those groups that work with parents. The standards have been written into a qualification that will be offered throughout the province in various Further Education Colleges from September 2007.
- ◆ Information seminars and sessions on the work of the Forum and Working in Partnership with Parents were held across N. Ireland with Sure Start Projects, Parent Support Groups, Fun and Facts days etc.
- ◆ Staff continue to represent the PFNI membership on various organisations and bodies in N. Ireland and lobby for positive change. PFNI leads on a number of UK wide initiatives through Parenting UK and Life Long Learning.

QUOTES ON PARENTING FORUM NI TAKEN FROM EXTERNAL EVALUATION 2006

'The Parenting Forum gives you advice on where to go if you have a problem. If they don't know the answer they find out and get back to you'

'The fact sheets are brilliant and easy to read'

'The National Occupational Standards will enhance practice. The Parenting Forum has a strategic role in their development'

'The newsletter provides information on topical issues that parents may not have thought about, it acts as a 'good parent' and is user friendly'

'Increased membership has raised the profile of the Forum, is a voice for parents and increases the scope for the development of local Fora'

'The consultation made me feel I had an input'

'Excellent at facilitating consultations.'

THE MEN'S PROJECT (TMP)
COLIN FOWLER REGIONAL MANAGER

The aim of The Men's Project (TMP) is to increase awareness of the issues facing men and boys in the north of Ireland and to promote their social inclusion. We focus, particularly, upon fathers and fatherhood. During the past year our work has included ...

- ◆ Providing a "signposting service" to 93 individuals looking for sources of help.
- ◆ Directing 162 external groups to appropriate resources, support, research and contacts in the field of men's work.
- ◆ Coordinating the development of new network bodies as well as contributing to the consolidation and expansion of existing structures.
- ◆ Expanding our online directory of groups interested in men's work and issues.
- ◆ Contributing a men's perspective to external Advisory Bodies.
- ◆ Facilitating training workshops and presentations for other agencies on working with fathers and engaging with men.
- ◆ Highlighting Fathers' Day 2006 and encouraging / supporting a wide range of events and activities to celebrate this day.
- ◆ Coordinating regional awareness-raising activities and events to mark Men's Health Week 2006 - including working with BBC NI to develop a new interactive website and contributing to the organisation of a major North-South conference.
- ◆ Supporting the development of new fathers' projects and men's groups.
- ◆ Organising, evaluating and presenting Kick Start 2006 (an eight month package of training, support, reflection and practical action for 17 organisations wishing to develop their work with fathers).
- ◆ Convening men's workers' input to "Gender Matters" (Gender Equality Strategy).
- ◆ Helping to sustain dialogue between local women's workers and men's workers.
- ◆ Maintaining a high level of coverage for men's issues in the media, and developing a new monthly electronic newsletter called "E-Male Matters".
- ◆ Providing regular updates on men's issues to key decision-makers and service providers.
- ◆ Maintaining and expanding the content of TMP's web site - an information portal and showcase for local men's work (www.mensproject.org).

QUOTES ON THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE MEN'S PROJECT TAKEN FROM RESPONDENTS IN EXTERNAL EVALUATION 2005

'They made us feel that there are things we can do.'

'We had difficulty attracting young fathers. We needed help. The Men's Project (TMP) was absolutely fantastic - supportive and approachable.'

'The Men's Project was very positive about women's role in men's work.'

'We couldn't do without TMP.'

'If they weren't there, we'd be struggling to have the confidence to do this work without specialist training in men's issues.'

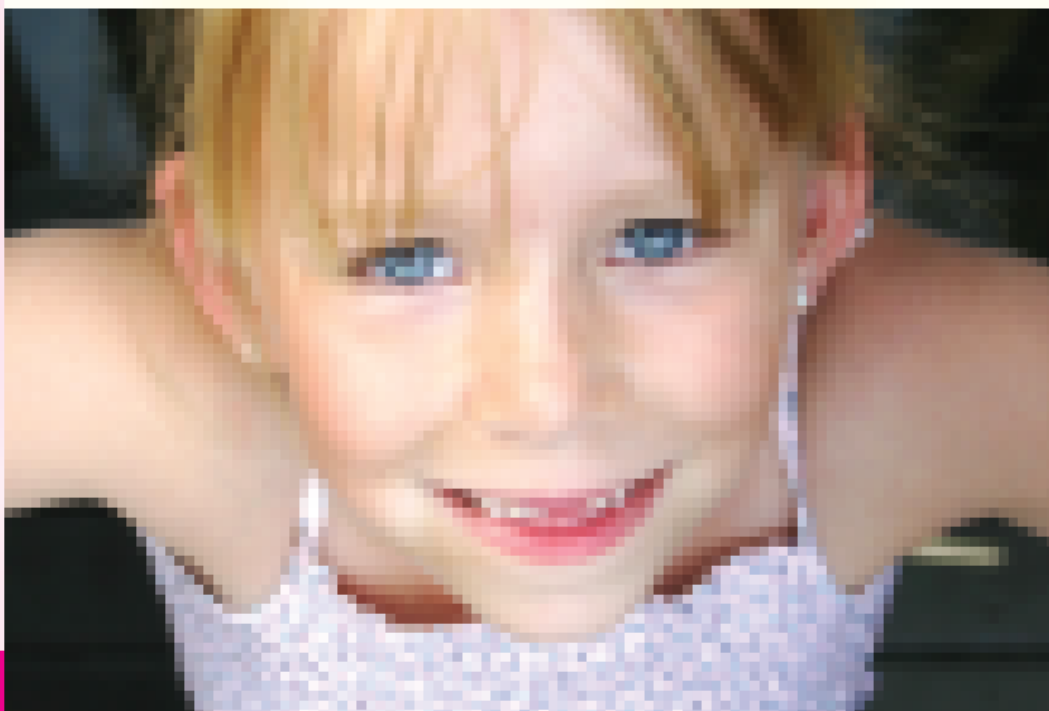
'We'd be lost without their vision.'

'They know so much. They're invaluable.'

'They are very good at coordinating and promoting what's going on.'

'They have an incredible amount of information.'

'There is nothing they can't find for you. They are a very good resource. You get access to facts, research, a directory, a bibliography. It's one place for everything; no matter what.'



PARENTING PROJECT
SHIRLEY HAYES / CHRISTINE CARLIN / SANDRA COUSER
PROJECT WORKERS

Under the banner of the Parenting Project the work spans a wide range of parenting programmes which are delivered regionally as well as the facilitation of the Preparation Courses for volunteers. The programmes are both generic courses and specialist programmes, and are delivered across Northern Ireland.

The generic programmes on Positive Parenting are bespoke to meet the needs of the participants in the group. The methodology used also reflects the manner of delivery best suited to the parents. These programmes have been delivered to groups such as Sure Start, Home-Start, YMCA, church groups, Extended Schools' Groups and Parent and Toddler Groups.

Specialist programmes are evolving in response to emerging needs. For example, one of the key themes is the difficulty of parenting at the time of separation or divorce. As the tensions between the couple can be played out through the children, the workshop which PAC has developed, 'Parenting Apart' considers the emotional needs of parents but with the emphasis that children's needs are the primary concern.

The PAMP (Parents and Anger Management Programme) has proved to be well received by participants.

There is a close connection between the Helpline and the parenting programmes as we can refer parents between these services. This link is made stronger as one of the Project Workers facilitates the accredited Preparation Course for volunteers ensuring that the key principles and messages about positive parenting underpin both aspects of the work.

The Alternatives to Physical Punishment Programme (a partnership with Save the Children) is as popular as ever, with requests from statutory, community and voluntary workers seeking to increase their knowledge about alternatives. One of the highlights of the year for this programme was the evaluation. Key findings showed that 85% of participants stated that the course had helped them in their work and 71% stated that they were better equipped to share their knowledge with parents.

QUOTES ON PARENTING PROJECT
GENERAL COMMENTS ON PARENTING COURSES

'The course has given me more self confidence.'

'I have benefitted from meeting lots of new people. I have gained confidence.'

'It is good to know that I am not the only one who behaves like I do.'

'The course and the facilitator were absolutely brilliant.'

'The course helped me look at solutions to the problems.'

'The course was fabulous and helped parents to re-think their parenting skills as a result of it.'

'I found I was a better parent than I thought myself to be and I am more reasonable with my children now.'

Answers to questions on evaluation sheets

1) What changes, if any, have you found in your behaviour to your children?

- "I am much more able to listen to their views."
- "I can relate better and understand them better."
- "I am calmer in situations."
- "I am more tolerant of their ways. I listen to her much better."
- "I feel more confident."
- "I am more tolerant and calm."
- "I found I have a more positive attitude towards them."

2) What changes, if any, have you found in your children's behaviour to you?

- "I am surprised. I'm more relaxed about cleaning of room, etc."
- "I feel they are giving me more respect generally."
- "They can talk better to me."
- "Not just as much shouting."
- "A better level of good behaviour."
- "Respect both ways."
- "I have found them more positive and open."

3) What have you enjoyed most about this course?

- "The fact there's alternatives to being frustrated."
- "Sharing family experiences."
- "Learning to be more objective to situations within the home."
- "Meeting new people – talking over different situations – helping other people."
- "Interaction with other parents, the same as myself and talking about different issues."
- "Flexibility and the experiences of other parents."

QUOTES FROM EVALUATIONS ON ALTERNATIVES TO PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT COURSE

"Training was very useful and informative, will be easily applied in the workplace and at home – very enjoyable."

Family Support Worker

"We were a mixed group of professionals, excellent information and presentation suited to us."

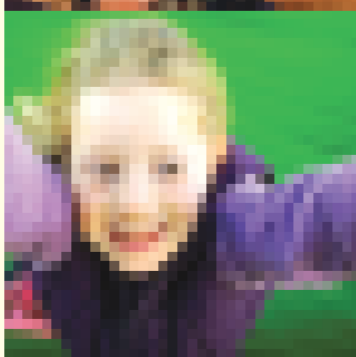
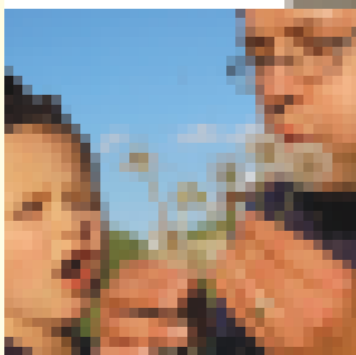
Nursery School Principal

"Thoroughly useful training and very relevant and beneficial to work and life in general!"

Women's Refuge Support Worker

"The sessions were very interactive, informative, eye-opening. It gave an insight into physical punishment and it's consequences."

Support Worker



PARENTS ADVICE CENTRE NI

HELPLINE FREEPHONE
0808 8010 722

www.parentsadvicecentre.org

BELFAST

Franklin House, 12 Brunswick Street,
Belfast, BT2 7GE

Freephone: 0808 8010 722

Local Helpline: (028) 9023 8800

Admin: (028) 9031 0891

Fax: (028) 9031 2475

Email: belfast@pachelp.org

BALLYMENA

75 Wellington Street, Ballymena, BT43 6AD

Freephone: 0808 8010 722

Local Helpline: (028) 2565 0099

Admin: (028) 2565 0102

Fax: (028) 2565 0102

Email: ballymena@pachelp.org

DERRY

65 Clarendon Street, Derry, BT48 7ER

Freephone: 0808 8010 722

Local Helpline: (028) 7126 6663

Admin: (028) 7137 2006

Fax: (028) 7137 2824

Email: derry@pachelp.org

DUNGANNON

1 & 2 Feeny's Lane, Dungannon, BT70 1TX

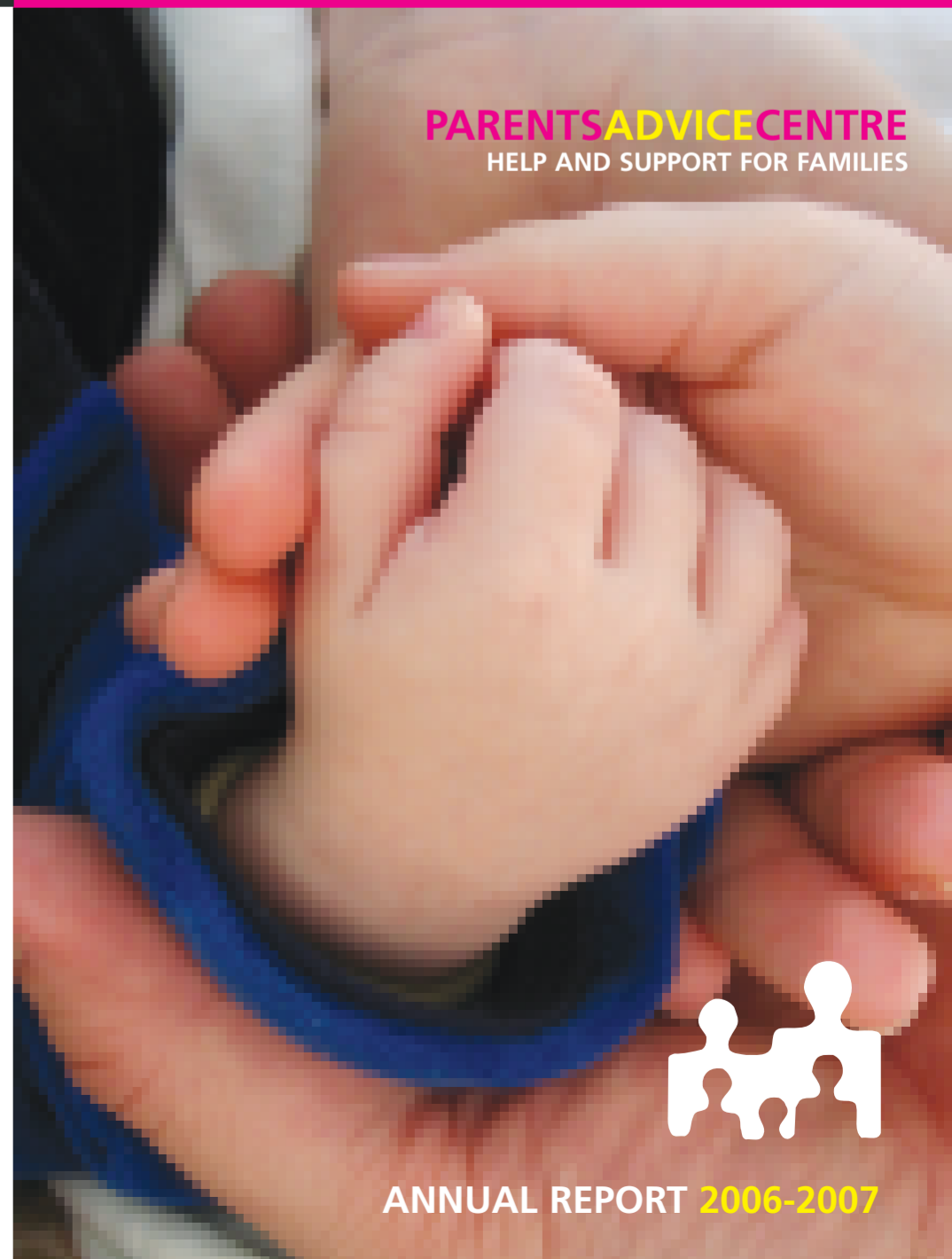
Freephone: 0808 8010 722

Local Helpline: (028) 8775 2900

Admin: (028) 8775 3630

Fax: (028) 8772 6782

Email: dungannon@pachelp.org





CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES VALERIE MCGUFFIN CHAIRPERSON

For Parents Advice Centre this has not only been another productive year, it has also been frustrating and exciting. As you will see from the Chief Executive's report PAC has not only maintained the Telephone Helpline, delivered Parenting Programmes and training on Alternatives to Physical Punishment, provided leadership in promoting work with men – particularly fathers - and enabled parents to make their voice heard through the Parenting Forum, it has expanded and developed in response to emerging needs. This has been in spite of very severe financial restrictions.

It has been frustrating to see the Chief Executive and Senior Staff team diverted from their main focus of delivering quality service to parents by the challenge of achieving sufficient funding to enable PAC to survive. At the beginning of the year we were faced with a potentially unmanageable deficit for the year. However, due to the commitment of superb staff and dedication of an outstanding team of volunteers who were extremely diligent in making savings wherever possible, and the skill and perseverance in making numerous funding applications, PAC has arrived at the end of the year with a much smaller deficit than the Board would have believed possible. There has been no gain without pain, as the staff have been stretched to the limit. The Board would like to acknowledge their contribution in working cheerfully and loyally within an extremely restricted budget.

There is good news, however, and the promise of an exciting future for parents. Funding from Atlantic Philanthropies enabled us to consult externally and internally about the future direction of PAC. It was a privilege as Chair, to be part of the Senior Staff team in their deliberations in the planning of the future structure and systems needed to ensure that PAC can provide leadership in developing government policy which addresses the needs of parents. It is exciting to see parenting taking a step closer to becoming central to government policy, after many years of lobbying and advocating on behalf of parents.

This is my last report as Chair, and it has been a pleasure to be part of such a dynamic and forward thinking organisation, which has kept faith with the role of being voluntary but not amateur. I would like to record my appreciation of the support of a very committed and involved Board of Trustees. It has been a privilege to work with the Chief Executive and the Senior Staff team who have managed the organisation with integrity and diligence.

We are grateful once again for the funding received from the various government agencies, along with generous donations from a variety of Trusts and Charitable bodies which are listed in the financial report, without which we would not have survived.

Our children are our future and if we are to provide the nurture and environment needed for them to develop to their full potential, we, as a society, must provide the support, information and guidance needed for parents to bring up their children in this fast changing world. We cannot depend totally on funding to meet all our needs to develop. Steve Forbes has written: *"The real source of wealth and capital in this new era is not material things ... it is the human mind, the human spirit, the human imagination, and our faith in the future."* -- Steve Forbes

What I have seen of the staff and volunteers of PAC gives me great faith in the future of PAC and I wish them well as they continue to provide much needed support to parents throughout Northern Ireland.

HOW USERS SEE PAC TAKEN FROM EXTERNAL REPORT 2007

"I see PAC as professionals providing advice for parents in a confidential and respectful way."

"PAC is a positive, welcoming, encouraging, open, supportive organisation that provides opportunities to meet parents."

"PAC is an organisation that is about parents giving advice to parents and a great help for new parents."

"PAC is somewhere to get confidential advice on family matters if a parent has a problem."

"PAC means support, guidance, confidence building and good practical advice."

"PAC is an organisation that has the answers on how to be a parent. They are there to help and to listen."

"PAC is an organisation that offers advice and help to parents. It is confidential, non-judgemental, open, flexible and friendly."

"PAC helps parents feel better about themselves and that this has a spin off in how they parent."

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007

CHIEF EXECUTIVE PIP JAFFA OBE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Recent government policy initiatives which have focussed on the family and parenting have given a strong message about the importance of family support and early intervention. As we in PAC continue to extend our activities in response to demand, it is encouraging to know that policy reflects the need to offer support at the earliest opportunity.

We were delighted that PAC was the location for the launch by Minister Maria Eagle of the Families Matter Strategy and the funding package to resource it. The strategy was explicit in acknowledging the crucial role of parents and the need to resource support services. In due course the proposals within the strategy will be implemented and we look forward to being part of those initiatives.

We are extremely pleased that as a result of funding from Atlantic Philanthropies, we have been able to undertake a comprehensive consultation exercise to look at the future development of PAC. The conclusions will map out the direction of PAC and form the basis of a further proposal to Atlantic Philanthropies.

Our application to DSD Modernisation Fund was successful. This has enabled us to rebuild our website and completely revise our statistical database.

Overall, we have exceeded targets on most fronts including record numbers of parenting courses, increased partnership working regionally, nationally and internationally and leading on important new initiatives such as the National Occupational Standards for Working with Parents and the qualification based on the standards.

As our core business is to empower parents, (whether that be through specific services or by influencing policy) this continues to give PAC the scope to champion parenting as the inextricable link to the well-being of children.

The team has worked incredibly hard over the last twelve months, juggling work-load on very restrictive budgets and with limited administration support.

There is no shortage of requests from external groups and parents for our services and I look forward to the next phase of PAC during which we will be planning and implementing the expansion of those services.



BRANCH NEWS

- ◆ Volunteer accredited Preparation Courses were held in all four branches and resulted in 26 new volunteers joining the helpline.
- ◆ Supervision meetings and training on a wide variety of topics were well attended by the volunteers.
- ◆ Staff Supervisors participated in three training "Away Days".
- ◆ Administration staff attended various training events ranging from a three day Dreamweaver Course, to a half day Marketing meeting.
- ◆ This year saw the launch of the Volunteer Forums. Each branch has their own meetings which are organised and conducted by the volunteers. This has proved to be very popular with good attendance at each meeting. The volunteers also enjoy the lunch provided when they can chat to each other!
- ◆ Two volunteers have joined the Board of Trustees as volunteer representatives.
- ◆ Belfast and Ballymena continue to support the Bryson House Family Christmas Appeal. Belfast supported the Katangi School Building Project in Kenya and Ballymena volunteers bought a well in Africa via Trocaire.
- ◆ Derry volunteers held fundraisers at Christmas and Easter to help with the refurbishment of the building.
- ◆ Each branch was represented at the launch of the Family Policy Unit 'Families Matter' Consultation that was held in Franklin House.



FUNDING HILARY MORROW FINANCE MANAGER

The past year was very challenging in terms of finances. We started the year with a large budget deficit. A number of substantial funding streams came to an end and despite enormous efforts we were unable to replace all of them.

As a result of this pressure there was constant scrutiny of budgets, consequently, considerable savings were achieved with maximum effort made by everyone to achieve this.

We continued to make applications for funding to both Statutory Bodies and Charitable Trusts with reasonable success. This process is time-consuming with a long lead-in time before knowing the outcome. In spite of all our efforts we ended the year in deficit. This is an indication of how precarious funding is even for the most well established organisation.

We would like to thank everyone who supported us financially during the year.

PARENT SUPPORT SERVICES CHARLENE MOORE REGIONAL MANAGER

It has been both a demanding and exciting year for Helpline Support Services. Although the recruitment of volunteers continues to be a challenge we have been successful in recruiting and training 26 volunteers this year. We now have a team of approximately 70 volunteers working across the province. Volunteers have been involved in a range of activities in addition to their role on the Helpline such as attending conferences and workshops as well as organising social events and fundraising activities.

The Helpline Support Services continue to offer a high quality service through telephone, face-to-face appointments and emails. This year has seen the uptake of face-to-face support services continue to increase. Almost 25% of all contacts in this year were face-to-face contacts, a 7% increase from last year.

We have been continually striving to expand and develop our services to meet the increasingly diverse needs of parents and families. Hence the additional opening hours in Belfast (Tuesdays open until 7pm) and the addition of membership to Language Line. We look forward to further developments of our provision during the incoming year.

The quality of the service goes from strength to strength, as is evident from the excellent feedback from a recent survey of Helpline clients (March 2007). Virtually all those interviewed mentioned this service as one that should continue. There were many personal testimonies from parents to the usefulness of the help they had received either in face to face interviews or telephone contact with Helpline volunteers. Parents are quoted as saying the service is "very helpful", and "very beneficial". As quoted by one parent:

"The person I see is a parent like me. PAC really listens to parents."

Credit for this is due to our extremely dedicated volunteers, and to their equally committed Supervisors, who deliver this unique service to parents and other family members. For its part, the organisation is wholly committed to providing the highest standard of training and support to Helpline staff and volunteers, to help them meet the ever-changing demands of the work.

CLIENTS' COMMENTS TAKEN FROM SURVEY SHEETS AND EXTERNAL REPORT 2007

"That has been very helpful. I'll now look at the problem from a totally different perspective."

"After talking to PAC I felt able to handle my difficult son with confidence."

"Feel that coming and talking has really helped."

"Lovely to have someone impartial to listen to me, I feel calmer and a lot better."

"Recommended by a friend who has used PAC Ballymena."

"I received more help from PAC than anyone else."

"You have been a light to me today."

"It's a good foundation to rebuild relations with my son – could not have achieved this without the support of PAC."

"A life saver – was at my wits end when I contacted PAC."

"The person I see is a parent like me. PAC really listens to parents."

"There was a feeling of comfort from knowing that there is somewhere you can go for help."

"The volunteer I saw was super: I had been to a trained professional counsellor yet I got a better service from PAC: I realised I didn't want a counsellor: I wanted advice on raising my kid."

"Keep the Helpline going as it is extremely good."