



ParentingNI



**Regional BME Parents Reference Group report  
CYPSP BME action plan consultation event  
Parenting NI, Great Victoria St, Belfast  
23<sup>rd</sup> February 2013**

**Who attended?**

The Regional BME Parents Reference Group consists of 64 parents from BME Communities across Northern Ireland. This was the first time that such a group has been formed and includes Chinese, Ghanaian, Irish Travellers, Indian, Lithuanian, Pakistani, Polish, Portuguese, Quechuas, Sudanese, Russian and Vietnamese. This group of parents also includes a number of asylum seekers.

Parents are offered travel and child care expenses in order to help them attend the meetings which are held in Belfast.

**Key messages**

The views and experiences of parents are very important in the new planning framework which has been set up to improve the lives of all children, including BME children, who live in Northern Ireland.

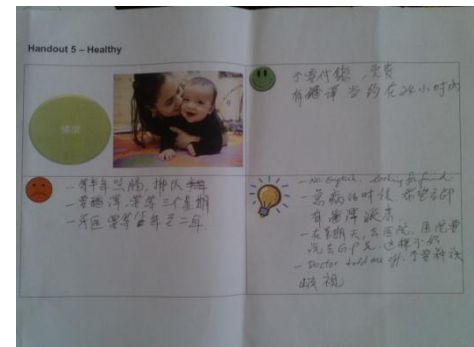
This participative process which is facilitated by Parenting NI, enables parents to share their views and experiences and to take part in a two way process between the BME Sub Group and the Regional BME Parents Reference Group. This process aims to improve the lives of BME children and young people by ensuring that services, facilities and opportunities are more accessible to all families.

Parents have welcomed the opportunity to have their voices heard and have already seen evidence of their views being represented in the draft Action Plan which is currently out for consultation. Parents are delighted to be part on an ongoing process that seeks to ensure better outcomes for their children and all children living in Northern Ireland.

## The purpose of the event

The Regional BME Parents Reference Group has recently responded to the Consultation on the BME Children and Young People Draft Action Plan.

Material prepared by Parenting NI provided parents with information on the context in which they were being asked to participate, including an overview of the structure of the CYPSP which includes the BME Sub Group and the link to the BME Parents Reference Group.



At their first workshop parents were asked to share their experiences about the six key outcomes, and to give their views about how children's lives could be improved with a focus on each outcome. These suggestions were shared with the BME Sub Group who incorporated many of these ideas into their draft Action Plan.

This draft Action Plan was then presented to parents at their second workshop. Three specific questions were asked about each outcome such as:

- Do you agree or disagree that the proposed actions and milestones will ensure BME children and young people will be healthy? Can you explain your reasons?
- From what you've heard, will these actions and milestones be enough to ensure that BME children and young people enjoy, learn and achieve?
- Do you have other ideas or suggestions that would help to ensure that BME children and young people will live in safety and feel they belong here?

Interpreters worked hard to ensure that parents understood the questions. In this way, all parents were given opportunity to have their voices heard.

## **Outcomes from the event**

Parents gave their considered views on the proposed actions and milestones developed by the BME Sub Group on each of the six high level outcomes. These considerations were made taking into account what parents had already shared at their previous meeting.



Parents were pleased to see that many of their initial suggestions from the previous meeting were incorporated into the draft Action Plan. They reiterated some of their key concerns and made further comments and suggestions about how the lives of children living in BME communities could be improved.

## **Additional information**

For more information about the event or to join the BME Parents Reference Group please contact Maria Herron on 02890 310 891