

# North Lancashire Directions Group

## Event Report 2010

**Background to group:**

The North Lancashire Directions Group formed in 2008 and our aim was to bring local services (statutory and voluntary) together in one place to provide information and support for parents/carers of children with additional needs and disabilities. 2008 was our first event.

**Member organisations:**

Cath Dennison from Lonsdale District Carers,  
Joan Bill from Lancshires Parent Partnership Service  
Kate Thompson who is based at Poulton Childrens Centre and is the local co-ordinator for Face2Face and the parent rep for Contact a Family

**2010 Activities and Awareness Event:**

On a much larger scale than the first, we wanted to engage with Lancaster City Council (LCC) initially to highlight the difficulties and barriers that some families within this group faced when wanting to access 'universal' activities.

LCC were keen to be involved, so we came up with an idea which not only addressed the difficulties for families, but would also raise the awareness of Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) within Morecambe and Lancaster as there were still many parents/carers who had not heard of AHDC or understood what it was all about - especially those within the mainstream settings.

Discussions with the group members and our new colleagues from LCC, Stuart Glover and Louise Taylor, took place and a collective decision was taken to hold an Activities & Awareness Event.

Invitations to attend the event were sent to all providers who are funded through AHDC, the idea being to use the event as a 'consultation' opportunity to talk with parents about what their service would be providing and to answer any worries some parents/carers may have.

**Event Market Place:**

Agencies and organisations who could offer information and support to parents/carers were also invited and we had a 'marketplace' of stall holders – parents/carers were provided with a plastic wallet to collect leaflets etc, the wallets also contained a list of attendees and a programme of the sporting activities available on the day provided by Lancaster City Council which were chosen from a selection suggested by parent carers.

All those who attended the event were asked to sign in and each family was given a questionnaire to complete. If they completed it before they left, their names were entered into a prize draw, and this acted as an incentive as we needed an assured feedback system in place to enable us to evaluate our event. The prizes were donated by the following local businesses:

*Cumbrian Property Services , The Hanging Basket florist's, Atkinson's Fish and Chip Shop Restaurant, BCS Northwest Ltd, Kieron Bassett Financial Services, Prestige Property Management, Mapp Estates, Wright & Lord Solicitors, Morecambe FC and Mrs. A. Moran.*

The Event was advertised in the local press and on Bay radio; local schools were also targeted by Lonsdale Carers and Lancaster City Council. The FIND sent out posters to all parents/carers on their database within Morecambe and Lancaster, it was also advertised in the March FIND and the group poster was advertised within local settings where the target audience were likely to see it.

### **Key Outcomes / Highlights:**

- Parent carers accessed information they previously did not have
- Parents were able to take part in some of the activities with their children
- We were able to gather information to help with future planning

### **What went well:**

- Good attendance
- The venue was central and accessible
- Parents/carers were able to collect useful information

### **What do we hope to do better in the future:**

- Ensure activities we hold are as accessible as possible
- Make sure we have enough 'setting up' time prior to the start of the event.
- Have more helpers / volunteers

### **Next Steps:**

- Meet as a whole group to discuss the event
- Plan ahead for another event – we need to give ourselves more time.
- Offer an informal feedback forum to address some points raised by parent carers for those who attended and to extend invites to those parent carers who were unable to come on the day

We now have contact details for many families who were unaware of the support available to them and the activities they could access and their comments will be integrated into future planning of our events.

We recognise that there is a need to ensure that facilitators of any activities provided at future events need to be trained in disability awareness to a level that would instil parental confidence.

The questionnaire asked if parents felt they were getting the support they felt they needed and what they felt would help, here are some of their comments:

***'More hands on help when going out with boys and some respite for me. I suffer with depression.'***

***'Staff at Longlands and Poulton Childrens Centre have been very helpful'***

***'More information/communication contact groups. Too many agencies at times'***

***'This has been great, lots of info for me to pass onto parents'***

***'Getting help with regard to support at nursery should be easier simpler and much faster'***

***'Yes, \*\*\*\*\* is on the LUFAP (Lancashire Under Fives Autism Programme) which has been utterly brilliant'***

***'More clubs and activities that I could afford for special needs and siblings in 5 - 6 year group'***

***'When I need help I attend Lonsdale District Carers or I phone for advice'***

***'More help in understanding what things might help'***

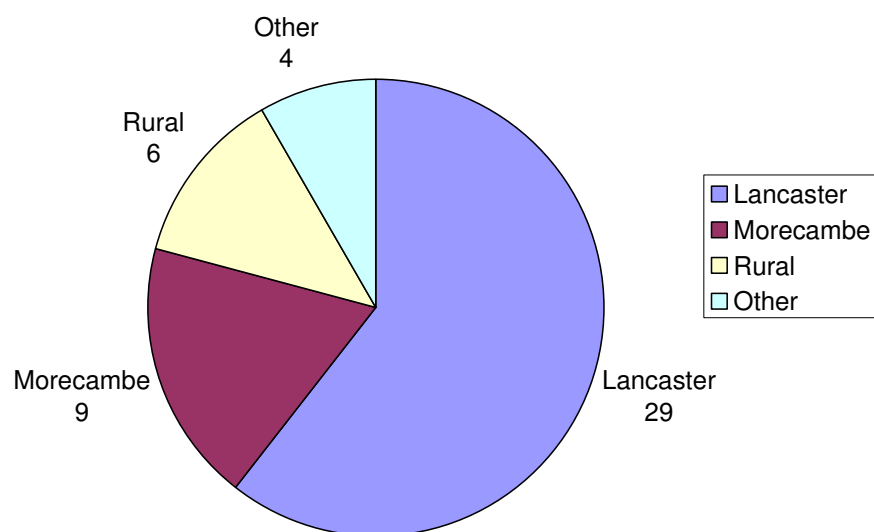
The following pages contain statistical information which indicates the event was successful and evidences the need to plan further events around the needs of parent carers and their families.

The photographs were taken with the permission of the subjects and parental signatures were obtained where children were involved.

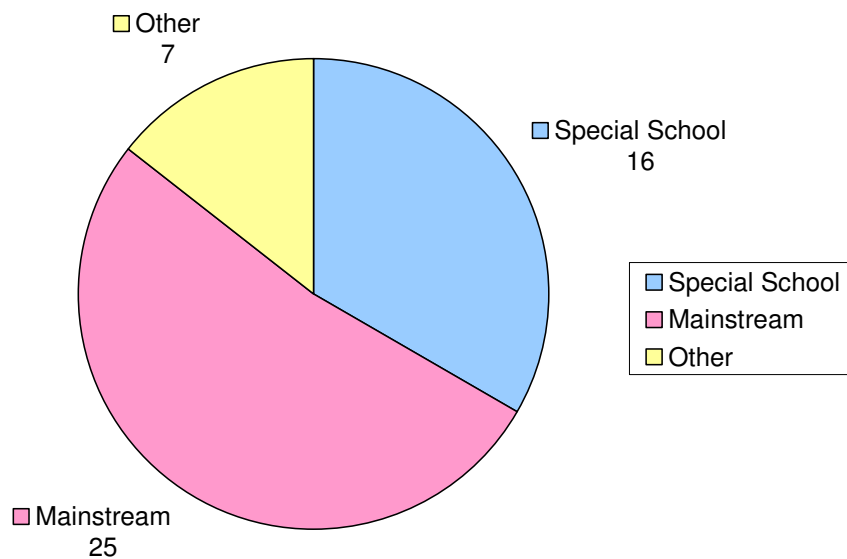
This report was compiled by North Lancashire Directions Group  
Cath Dennison  
28<sup>th</sup> May 2010

# Feedback Results

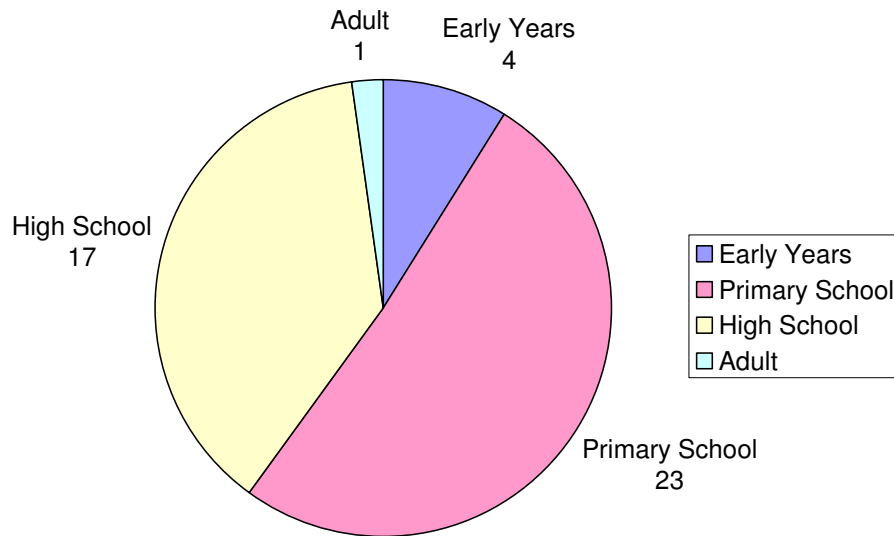
**NLDG Attendee Location**



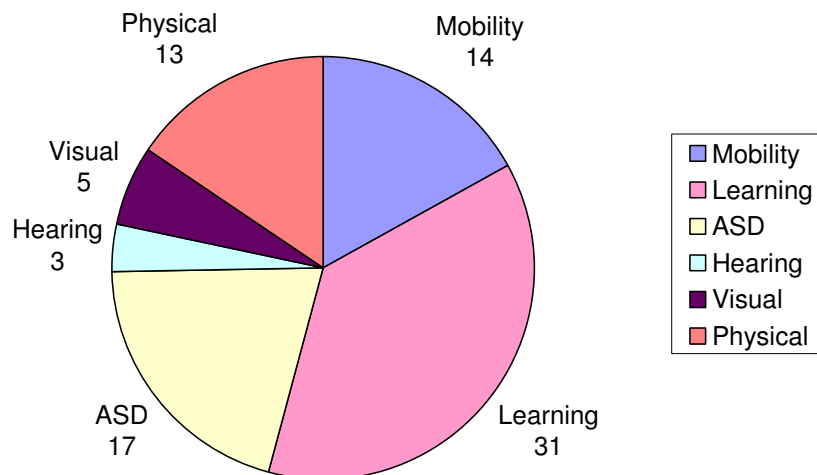
**School Type**



### Child Age Profile



### Additional Need or Disability



## Photography courtesy of Doug Armitage

