

Gingerbread – Victoria Benson

The organisation are currently moving offices in 6 weeks, to just down the road, so they are a bit all over the place at present. Debbie would like to meet with Victoria when it suits and agreed to meet a variety of single parents with different needs, so they can talk about their experiences etc. Debbie talked through her portfolio and Victoria listed some issues they are presented with regularly, below:

- LP in work progression, what can employers do to help LP's get a job and stay in work to progress.
- Childcare responsibilities, LP's are forced into low paid work to fit in with child-care even if they are more skilled they have to take work that fits around child-care.
- Most parents want to work but juggling childcare, inset day, wrap around care. Victoria mentioned the "Flex Appeal" and **Victoria agreed to share information on this.**
- UC, single parents have moved over from legacy benefits and are adversely effected by it, less money and obligations to return to work.
- Issues finding childcare as it can cost £1000 per month. There is some subsidised childcare but not enough, if a child is unwell they need understanding employers
- Upfront costs of childcare and the 5 week wait, impacts single parents more, LP's are more likely to be disabled and from BAME background.
- Debbie asked if they have a breakdown of the profile of parents, **Gingerbread to send a breakdown.**
- LP's are a complicated group, twice as likely to be in poverty and their children more likely to be poverty
- Gingerbread are the only national charity to deal with single parents.
- Concerns that poverty is a growing element for single parents,
- Discussed the Child maintenance report on direct pay, published in May – **Debbie would like to read this**
- Experiences ex's evading paying and an unfair % that they lose money to get direct Pay
- Issues with DWP enforcing arears effectively, very happy to learn more as we don't think it is.
- Issues in sharing information xgovernment, not enough advice on who to phone, always pushed onto direct pay