

Kingston Parent Carer Consortium: Wednesday 14th December 2022, 12:00-13:30
Meeting Minutes

Parent Carer Forum / Parent & Carer representatives: Claudia Isaby (CI), Linda Nystrom (LN), Jo Thomas (JT)

Staff: Anna Chiva, Associate Director of SEND, AfC (AC) Ashley Whittaker, Programme Director, AfC (AW), Councillor Stephanie Archer (SA) Jonathan Rourke, Kids, SENDIASS (JR), Rob Harris, Parent Carer Engagement Officer, AfC (RH), Karen Lowry, Communications Officer, AfC (KL), Megan Francis-Falkner, SEND Policy and Project Coordinator, AfC (MF)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

AW welcomed everyone to the meeting and made introductions and apologies. AW noted that KL would be joining the meeting at 12:45.

2. Parent Carer Forum (PCF) update

CI gave an update on the Parent Carer Forum:

- The PCF held an in-person meeting this week, where they discussed their key future priorities, as well as their main areas of concern.
- One area the PCF wanted to focus more on was short breaks, and what it means for parents and carers. In particular they wanted to focus on the importance of short breaks, and on how the language and terminology used could be better communicated to parents and carers.
- CI noted that Karen, a member of the PCF, had arranged a Q&A session on the 25th of January for parents and carers to query the Short Breaks Team.
- CI also noted that the PCF wanted to focus more on parent/carer emotional and mental wellbeing and on increasing support for parents/carers with SEND children. This was an area of concern for the PCF, given the strain many parents and carers are currently under.
- The PCF also spoke about the need for better and increased communication between SEN Coordinators and parents and carers when it comes to EHCP needs assessments and the delivery of EHCPs. According to CI, parents and carers want more clarity about what's accessible, how they can get information and how they can find out what stage they are at in the process of getting an EHCP.
- The PCF are currently conducting interviews for a part time administrator to join their team. It was also noted that the PCF played a key role in the recruitment of the new head of service for sensory impairment, with JT representing the PCF on the hiring panel.

AC noted that she was keen to develop the continuing professional development (CPD) of the team, and that she and Troy Hobbs would be keen to co-develop some training on this over the next year as well as a shared vision on how the SEND team can work closer with parents and carers.

Action: AC to speak to CI to discuss who the best person to lead on this work would be.

AC also noted that the SEN team had recently recruited four new assistant coordinators, hopefully leading to an improvement in the co-production and communication abilities from the SEN team.

CI (Q): When could this be put into practice?

AC (A): In the Spring Term, from February to March we intend to have a face to face session. Then we can lead on to some consolidation pieces in the summer. This would be separate from the training that coordinators would have.

RH offered to be a link between the SEN team and the PCF for this work.

3. Participation, Engagement & Co-production update

RH gave an update on participation, engagement and co-production in Kingston:

- RH has been holding new coffee mornings with Parents Champions at Alexander School, Burlington School and Strathmore School.
- The PCF is re-organising, and there is now a leadership group that meets weekly and a steering group that meets monthly.
- There is a continued effort to increase the number of SEND register signups.
- There is also an initiative to improve communication and outreach with ethnic minority groups. RH has been in touch with the Magpie Project to increase links with the Korean community.
- Meetings are taking place with [Kingston Voluntary Action](#) to discuss closer working ties with other charities.
- RH is due to run a session with ADHD Embrace in the new year.
- Rob Dembrey is working on ASC diagnosis pathways, RH is getting parental input for this.
- There is continued work within AfC on transitions into college and on the EHCP banding tool and getting information out to parents.
- Andy Novak (headteacher) will be giving a presentation on the 15th of December on the new Spring School.

SA (Q): How do we disseminate information around schools? Do we have SENCOs who deliver information to make sure parents are hearing about all these events?

RH (A): Earlier in the year we did training with SENCOs on this. KL has set up a page for SENCOs on the Local Offer where they can pass information on to parents. We are currently speaking to all the specialist provisions around information sharing. We have also created a leaflet with the Social Care and SENCO teams to try to disseminate information.

SA (Q): To what extent are events sign up only, or can parents just turn up?

RH (A): They are organised through the school. SEND Parent Champions also share information amongst themselves, and disseminate this out to their communities. We have currently ten engaged Parent Champions and we are aiming for many more.

LN added that the Parent Champions are currently trying to organise their own coffee mornings and make themselves more visible to parents e.g. through group chats.

AW (Q): Did you have any headlines from the coffee morning at Burlington that we as practitioners should be made aware of?

LN (A): Lots of people weren't aware of the Disability Register, and some parents didn't know about the Local Offer. There is also lots of anxiety from parents about what happens if they don't get an EHCP, and whether they need one.

JR also noted that the awareness of SENDIASS isn't big enough, and that a lot of people want help with that area, so that needs to be communicated with SENCOs.

CI also noted that in her discussion with Peter Gray (a consultant looking at SEND children in mainstream schools) that communication from SENCOs had come up as an issue.

AC highlighted the need to involve workstream 4 when looking at communication through early intervention points as part of a graduated response. AC noted that Workstream 4 should be doing a specific piece of work on this.

Action: AW to speak to Sheldon Snashall about this.

4. Health, Education, Social Care & Short Breaks update

AW gave an update on health:

- Alison Stewart has started a new role working across the whole of South West London. Her DCO role for Kingston has been partially recruited, and there will be interim arrangements for the next couple of months which AW will keep everyone updated on.

- Two commissioning posts have been vacant, but there have been two appointments made and both people will be starting early in the new year.

SA asked if she could meet these two people once they start their roles.

Action: AW to ask for a meeting with SA be included as part of their induction schedule.

AC gave an update on education:

- AC noted that work on phased transfer for students transitioning between year six and seven was going ahead.
- There had been some concerns from SENCOs about the very specific provision in some of our EHCPs plans and how they will work to deliver this. AC is holding a multi-agency forum on the 11th of January to look at how they will deliver this.
- The Spring School admissions panel will be held on the 16th of January. Andy Novak (Spring School headteacher) will be prioritising seeing families with children in years 6 and 7, and will be trying to ensure parents get their first preference.

JR (Q): Is there a timeline on when parents will be informed on this?

AC (A): We are hoping to get EHCPs amended this side of Christmas. The aim is that by mid January we will have issued the majority of their plans.

LN noted that she had found it difficult to choose a secondary school for her child, given that they do not have an EHCP but still have additional needs. She felt that it would be helpful to receive more comprehensive information about the application process in these instances.

Action: AC to talk to the admissions team and come back to LN about this.

JR (Q): Is there a box on the admissions form where you can write about any special circumstances?

LN (A): Yes there is but this is worded in an unhelpful and confusing way.

MF presented Alys Robinson's update on short breaks:

- The new Inclusion Development Officer post has been filled, and will start in February 2023.
- Staffing continues to be a persistent issue within short breaks leading up to Christmas.
- FUEL places are quickly filling up, however there are still a few FUEL placements available for over Christmas. 15% of SEND specific FUEL placements are going to children who have SEND but not receiving benefit related free-school meals. Parents/ carers were encouraged to speak to the FUEL providers about this, which are listed on the Local Offer if they are interested in a space.
- The Policy and Project Officer for FUEL has agreed to come along to the January or February PCF to talk about FUEL and answer any questions parents and carers have.
- The Short Breaks presentation for Kingston parents and carers will be held on Wednesday the 25th January at 10am.

RH noted that there had been some confusion from parents about whether they could access FUEL if they were on free school meals, and that some clarity was needed on this.

KL clarified that there were a smaller number of places available for children who were vulnerable for other reasons. KL suggested that parents contact the FUEL team directly if they wanted to add their child to the list. She also noted that there were more private providers with spaces than youth services.

5. Forward Plan

- AW asked the group to think about what topics they wanted to cover in future meetings, as these can then be placed in a formal forward plan.
- **Action:** Everyone to think about this and then communicate ideas with MF and AW.

- CI suggested the SEN team lead come along and talk about how things are going and the numbers around EHCPS. She also suggested the SEN team give an update on admissions to secondary school.
- JR suggested meeting with the PCF and SEND to explain the transition process (with EHCPS) for 23/24 year olds, as well as a possible shorter session for those in transition without EHCPS.

SA asked if a face to face Kingston Consortium meeting could be planned for the new year.

AC suggested using face to face meetings for when more nuanced and complex topics need to be discussed. It was decided that at least one face to face meeting would be planned for the new year.

6. Actions from previous meetings

- Ashley spoke to CI about Christmas cards - action resolved.
- CI to identify PCF members for the transitions board as pathways into adult services. CI currently does not have anyone formally identified, however she will be advertising this in the new year. AW suggested approaching other voluntary sector organisations to find someone. CI noted that this was a possibility as the PCF had funding available for co-production.
- AS to circulate information - action carried forward.

7. A.O.B

- AW noted that the Council for Disabled Children were advertising the [Healthy Parents and Carers organisation](#) in their newsletter, which may be helpful for parents and carers looking for support with their emotional and mental well being. The organisation delivers a 12 week training programme for parents and carers which costs £2500, and allows parents and carers to then provide further support to others. **Action:** PCF to consider if this is something they might want to take forward.
- AW also noted that the SENDIASS process has been going through recommissioning, and a new arrangement will be coming in in the beginning of April. This is on track and we expect the announcement to come out just before or just after Christmas.

End of meeting.