

Kingston Parent Carer Consortium: Tuesday the 11th of January, 2023, 12:00-13:30
Meeting Minutes

Parent Carer Forum / Parent & Carers: Claudia Isaby (CI), Linda Ikwue (LI), Jo Thomas (JT), Karen Gale (KG)

Staff: Ashley Whittaker, Programme Director, AfC (AW), Councillor Stephanie Archer (SA), Rob Harris, Parent Carer Engagement Officer, AfC (RH), Alys Robinson, Inclusion Development Officer, AfC (AR), Megan Francis-Falkner, SEND Policy and Project Coordinator, AfC (MFF), Troy Hobbs, Head of SEND, AfC (TH), Samantha Scott, Head of School Admissions, AfC (SS) Gavin Spiller, Deputy Head of Children's Transformation for ICB (GS), Shaun West, Designated Social Care Officer, AfC (SW)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

AW welcomed everyone to the meeting and made introductions and apologies.

2. Parent Carer Forum update

CI gave an update on the PCF:

- The PCF recently had a steering group committee meeting. During this meeting, Jo Thomas was nominated to start working with AfC's Special Educational Needs (SEN) team.
- The PCF ran a successful event at a local wellbeing cafe in Surbiton for parents and carers. The focus of this event was an open discussion on parent wellbeing and mental health. The PCF are considering making these events more regular.
- The PCF have been in contact with the Healthy Parent Carer Programme. They will raise this at the next steering committee to see if anyone is interested in enrolling on the programme.
- Julie Sanders has been appointed as the new administrator for the PCF.
- Short breaks event will be coming up on the 25th of January. The PCF will be working on prompting this event to push up attendance.
- The PCF have continued to run Care to Share events.

KG also confirmed that the PCF will be running another event at Chessington World of Adventures in late February/early March.

RH noted a PCF steering committee meeting was happening on Wednesday the 18th of January for any other parents who wanted to join.

3. Follow up discussion on admissions processes for SEN children

SS gave an update on the admissions process for children without an EHCP:

- There are two types of applications; in-year process applications, which go on throughout the year, and phased applications, for children transferring into reception, or into year seven
- The phased application process starts on the 1st of September, where year six children are invited to make an application for the 31st of October. A national offer day is then held on the 1st of March which then allocates the schools.
- Parents are invited to name six schools on their applications.
- If your child has SEN but does not have an EHCP you must make an application, even if your child is under assessment.
- Under this normal admissions process, the admissions team can only allocate places in accordance with schools oversubscription criteria, meaning the admissions team has no discretion over how applications are allocated.
- Most schools in Kingston have an exceptional 'family, social and medical criteria', this is where a family would be able to evidence if there was a particular school they felt their child should attend. However

the fact that a school has an Specialist Resource Provision is not reason enough for a child to need to attend, there would have to be other exceptional reasons.

- Families also have the right to appeal to an independent panel.
- There is also information on the website demonstrating how places were allocated last year.

JT (Q): Where can parents find this information?

SS (A): All this information is in the [Primary School online brochure](#), and [Secondary School online brochure](#) and the [In-year Transfer online brochure](#) and it is on the application form.

RH (Q) (on behalf of Linda Nystrom): Where would one put additional information about a child's special educational needs in the secondary school application form?

SS (A): When you name your preference, there is an option there to add text, and we will then provide that information to the school. Even if information is in the wrong place, we will not disregard it. SS also clarified that it was individual secondary schools that made the decisions about the applications, not AfC.

TH gave an update on admissions for children with EHCPs (phased transfer):

- We follow the dates and timeliness prescribed by the Department for Education. You also have a different set of rules and criteria for children with EHCPs.
- In the summer term of year 5, we write directly to families inviting them to start thinking about where they would like their child to go for their secondary education.
- Families are requested to give two preferences by the end of July.
- They hold to this timeframe in order to ensure that families within the Local Authority get the preference they want as soon as possible, given that families from other Local Authorities can also apply for schools within the Kingston Borough.
- The next stage is to consult with the families preferred schools and any other schools the SEN team feel could be suitable. There is then a formal process of presenting EHCPs to headteachers and asking if they can approve these EHCPs.
- The Local Authority must issue a child's final EHCP naming by February the 15th (nationally prescribed date). The school we have named has to then get everything arranged for the child that will start in September.
- In some cases, we may have named a school which is different to the families preferred preference. In these cases, families will have a period of time to meet and discuss why a placement has been arranged. If they are unhappy with this, they can appeal.

CI asked about children who attend Independent Schools, and where this fits in with the application process. TH noted that parents could express a preference for an independent special school, or a non-maintained special school. We would then consult with the schools, to see if they are suitable for the child and of necessary value for money.

CI then asked if the list of available schools was published on the Local Offer, as finding schools was a difficult and time-consuming task. TH responded that all of the information needed by parents was available on the SEND Local Offer, link to which is [available here](#). The phased transfer link is [available here](#).

LI asked for clarity on the process when it comes to agreeing specialist places? Can you give me concrete timescales for agreeing specialist places? She also asked for clarity on when there was an amended EHCP as opposed to a new EHCP being made.

TH noted that when writing an EHCP for the first time, we follow a statutory 20 week timeframe. We issue a draft EHCP in week 16, which we invite families to comment on and consult with schools. The law says that those schools then have 15 calendar days to get back to us. TH also noted that when it came to an EHCP that was being reviewed as part of an annual review, this would need to be concluded as soon as is practical. You should be given a notification four weeks after the annual review noting if we were going to keep the plan or change the

plan. Then AfC gives themselves eight weeks to issue a draft of a new plan, and a further eight weeks to confirm this new plan, but this is not a statutory need.

JT (Q): What happens if an independent school isn't listed in Section 42 of the SEND regulations?

TH (A): We aren't under the same obligations to consult with those schools but we may do regardless. If we can come to an arrangement between the family, LA and school then we can do this.

JT (Q): How much of this work is nationally subscribed?

TH (A): Everything that we do within the application process is in the code of practice and the legislation, meaning that it has to be done.

JT (Q): Is there a way of having a page listing all the possible schools and bullet points listing their admissions criteria, to save parents time?

TH (A): On our Local Offer and on the form that you will fill in, we will list what is available for families, but I am always happy to look at this.

GS (Q) what do you do when you have a higher volume of applications for a certain school than there are places?

TH (A): We take a fair share approach, meaning that we look at (1) the percentage of children with an EHCP we have in the borough, (2) what percentage of children with EHCPs do the secondary schools have, compared to other secondary schools in the borough. If there are large discrepancies between schools then this will be something to factor in.

KG asked who the SEND Panel were, and how they made their decisions. TH noted that the SEND panel was a multi-agency, advisory panel, attended by heads of service and deputy heads of service, along with representatives from education, social care and health who are experts in their fields. The case officer will come and present each case at the panel meetings, and we always ask for parents contribution

Action: PCF to hold a bespoke event for parents and carers in Kingston to understand this application process better. PCF to keep AfC updated on dates and staffing requirements.

4. Participation, Engagement & Co-production update

RH gave an update:

- SEND Parent Champion scheme is still progressing well. They will be advertising shortly to get the next cohort of Parent Champions, with training commencing in next few months.
- Conducting outreach with ADHD Embrace and at Dysart school coffee mornings
- Coordinating work with colleagues to get parental input on transitions post-18 into apprenticeships/independent living
- Work has been done on getting parental input on AfC projects such as one on early stage diagnosis on autism and communication on the new banding system
- Continuing to reach out to hard to reach communities such as the Korean community.

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

SW gave an update on social care:

- Conducting a quality assurance of social care advice in EHCPs. Currently working out how to deliver training and advice for managers.
- Plan to re-introduce the SEND social care training. It is thought this will start around February or March.

KG (Q): Who are you training?

SW (A): Originally we were going to give the same training to everyone within the workforce, but now we are thinking we will offer training structured for different groups such as social workers and social care practitioners, as they are dealing with different demands.

AW added that there would be a push moving forward to make sure SEND is seen as everyone's responsibility, regardless of the team they work in.

AR gave an update on Short Breaks:

- Holiday support went very well. The team hired an inclusive pantomime at Moor Lane which was a success.
- FUEL winter clubs: overall this went well, however there were a number of SEND places which were not taken up. Moving forward the team will need to think more about how the clubs are advertised. Grace Mizrahi will attend the February consortium meeting to clarify the eligibility criteria for FUEL.
- Starting to plan February half term short breaks. They will also be putting on a short breaks presentation for Kingston parents and carers. **Action:** AR to contact Karen about participation to ensure she gets a good number of parents and carers.

JT noted that she had tried to get her son enrolled on the FUEL Next Thing Education programme, however was told that he was not within the age range allowed (he was three weeks past the cut off point) and cut off the conversation immediately. **Action:** AR will bring the issue of enrollment up at the next steering group meeting.

JR also noted that there was currently a six month waiting list to get an assessment with Challengers. **Action:** AR to bring this forward to Geraldine at the steering group meeting.

AR suggested that parents contact AR directly in these situations.

AR's contact details: Mobile phone: 07523300911 Email: alys.robinson@achievingforchildren.org.uk

AW suggested that the providers put an action plan in place to bring the waiting list down. **Action:** AR to report back on these discussions and what is being done to bring this waiting list down.

CI noted that the PCF were going to have a wider discussion on recreation and access, and asked if playgrounds and areas of recreation came under AR's remit.

Action: AR to discuss any updates on playgrounds at next steering group meeting and bring information back on this and raise this with CI.

JT asked for clarity on GS's role. GS noted that someone had been recruited to the Designated Clinical Officer role two days a week, and Sue Lear and GS will be thinking more about how to fill the other three days. GS also noted that in his role he would be working closely with AfC colleagues, looking at commissioning activities, working closely with provider organisations, looking at how peoples plans are being met. He will also be looking at our mental health as well as the wellbeing offer and pathways into adult services.

KG (Q): Would the gap of services for 16-25 year olds be your remit? What about those who do not have an EHCP but they need access to some mental health services?

AW (A): Different services are provided by different people for different ages. We therefore need to make sure that pathways exist and any gaps are filled. We are currently looking to identify exactly what the gaps are in mental health provision. Also looking at exactly what the gaps are for mental health provision. Overall this work will be completed by Health, Adult Social Care and Education/Vocational Pathways under a Transitions Board which is being set up. There is also a specific action plan for this that is trying to fill these gaps.

Actions from previous meetings

Ideas for the Forward plan:

- Short breaks
- FUEL
- Communications around early intervention - support that is out there for young people without a plan

Action: CI to email AW after the PCF steering group committee with ideas.

End of meeting.