

Kingston Parent Carer Consortium: Wednesday 8th February 2023, 12:00-13:30
Meeting Minutes

Parent Carer Forum / Parent & Carer representatives: Claudia Isaby (CI), Linda Nystrom (LN), Jo Thomas (JT), Bev Pass (BP), Kelly Harrison (KH)

Staff: Ashley Whittaker, Programme Director, AfC (AW), Jonathan Rourke, Kids, SENDIASS (JR), Rob Harris, Parent Carer Engagement Officer, AfC (RH), Sheldon Snashall, Associate Director for Pupil Support, AfC (SS), Megan Francis-Falkner, SEND Policy and Project Officer, AfC (MF-F), Alys Robinson, Inclusion Development Officer, AfC (AR), Sharron Nelson, Deputy Head of Transformation for Kingston and Richmond, ICB (SN)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

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

2. Parent Carer Forum (PCF) update

CI gave an update on the PCF:

- Members of the PCF met with the SEN team and have started to work with them.
- Had a meeting on the Autism Schools Project, which has gone into phase two, meaning they are offering the training to more schools in Kingston, however no schools have come forward to be part of this phase. CI also noted that Coombe Boys School had signed up to training from the Autism Education Trust in the first phase, however they have not yet accessed the training available.

There was a discussion around this point. AW noted that he had not been aware that more schools had been asked. LN noted that it was concerning that schools had not accessed this training.

Action: AW to talk to Charis Penfold about this, and what actions to be taken with schools.

PCF update (continued):

- The PCF held a successful short breaks event, the presentation for which will go on the website soon
- On the 21st of February Karen Lowry will run a session with parents and carers on how to navigate the Local Offer
- BP spoke about the outcomes of the meeting with the SEN team. It was noted that Anna Chiva and her team will do some mapping on when coordinators were engaging with parents on EHCPs, to try to lessen confusion amongst parents. BP also noted they had requested a deep dive on individual cases.
- BP also noted that she and RH had met with Lesley Moore to co-produce a new document for parents explaining the new banding framework.
- JT noted that she had sat on the interview panel for a new tribunal officer, this had gone well.

LN spoke about her personal experience of the tribunal process, having found it drawn out and stressful. She noted that the tribunal had happened in December, and that seven weeks had passed and they still haven't heard anything.

Action: AW and MF to follow up on this and come back to LN with a formal explanation as well as more information for the group if appropriate.

JR enquired if he could see the banding document going out to parents and carers.

Action: RH to send the banding document to JR.

RH informed the group that the PCF were holding a steering group committee on the 22nd of February and March for any other parents who wished to join.

AW explained the roles of Sharron and Gavin in the ICB. SN gave an update on her work background; having worked as a Speech and Language Therapist before going into commissioning. She then worked as a Children's Commissioner for Brighton, Hove and East Sussex before moving onto this role.

3. Children in mainstream education

SS gave the group a background on his previous job roles, and noted that his role now within AfC is to support pupils who are at risk of missing education.

SS gave a presentation on the Inclusion Charter and Toolkit, which you can [see here](#). In summary:

- This charter and toolkit is about keeping children in mainstream schools, given that with cuts to funding it is harder than ever for schools to meet that need.
- AfC collaborated with the PCF, Health, the voluntary sector and Social Care to develop an inclusion charter and toolkit, which gives a shared language on what inclusion means, and evidence-based advice and guidance - for professionals to use.
- The charter element is a commitment of what we are endeavouring to do, and the toolkit is the main part of the resource. This is about looking at inclusion both from a macro level, to an operational level, meaning that this can be used for classes or individuals.
- SS noted that they had successfully piloted a spark education project, delivered by the school improvement team, in order to try the Quality First Teaching (QFT) framework in schools.
- This had been a success in schools, and had demonstrated positive change with young people with additional needs. They have since launched a similar project in other schools.
- SS also noted that the toolkit addressed the importance of language for children with SEND, as some communication can be misconstrued as being rude.

CI (Q): In terms of doing the assessment, is the idea that the interventions will be accessible at the ordinarily available level?

SS (A): This depends on how a school is using it and at what level. If it is aimed at someone with complex needs that doesn't have it in their plan, I would expect the school to provide this in the first instance. If this doesn't work you would be expecting them to escalate beyond the targeted and seek specialist support.

CI (Q): Would that child then be put on the SEN register, with communication from the school so that the parent/carer knows what's going on?

SS (A): I never put people on the SEN register just from diagnosis, but if there is some kind of support we need to put in for them, then I would put them on the SEN register and inform parents.

CI noted that this is not always clear to parents, and this may be something to think about.

SS agreed and noted that schools should be communicating this.

Action: SS to take this back to the SENCO forum.

LN (Q): Is this work currently available to SENCOs?

SS (A): Yes, I have spoken about it with headteachers, and it is now live on the SENCO zone. SENCOs will have this same slideshow after half term. Some have been using the QFT element already.

LN (Q): Can we as parents access these resources as well?

SS (A): Yes, I think that everyone has access to the SENCO zone, which can be [found here](#). The reason it is not up on the Local Offer is because the language used is quite technical.

LN and JT both noted that the guidance around the importance of language with children with SEN was very useful.

JT (Q) What feedback have you had from the schools that you have tested this strategy with?

SS (A): This work has yielded very positive feedback, and SENCOs have said it has saved them time, so they can get on with the specialist work that they need to be doing.

JT also questioned if there could be some work that the PCF could do to alert families that this work was happening.

SS noted that whilst we weren't trying to hide this work, there was a need to manage parental expectations, so as not to put overt pressure on schools to complete every recommendation.

However, the intention was to put the link to this in the Ordinarily Available Document.

SS also noted that they had developed an information sharing protocol, in order for primary and secondary schools to share information more effectively.

4. Participation, Engagement & Co-production update

RH gave an update:

- RH worked with the Home Start charity and met up with new parents through this.
- RH was invited by the Korean society to the Chinese New Year celebrations in New Malden, to spread the word about SEND.
- The SEND parent champion scheme is continuing, and they are looking at inviting a new cohort of parents.
- Corum has set up a SEND network, of which there are now seven groups; they meet monthly to discuss best practice.
- Working with parents: Linda Nystrom has been helping out with the beyond fussy course with AfC, and Rosie is helping to set up the Alexander School coffee morning.
- RH alerted us that Social Care has a scheme called the Parent Champions Network, which sounds similar to the SEND Parent Champions, therefore RH is working with social care to avoid confusion on this.
- RH has been working with health colleagues, such as the Early Help team and the Post-diagnostic team, to ensure those teams have the right information to pass on to parents.

LN noted she had created a google form to see what parents wanted to know more about from these meetings. She noted parents wished to know more about the following:

- The EHCP process, who needs one, what is the process of applying for this
- Young people's transition to secondary school
- How to choose secondary schools when your child is in mainstream schools without an EHCP
- Parents with children with SEND not knowing what to do about homework

AW suggested that either the PCF or schools hold an event to discuss and brainstorm topics such as homework for children with SEND, and noted he was happy to make a plan collaboratively to do this.

JR also noted that these were topics that the SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Services) could work with the PCF and schools to deliver.

AW noted that there was also ongoing work between AfC and parents and carers to provide better information on the Local Offer about the different schools available that families can consider if their child has an EHCP.

A conversation ensued around who would be best to present the information on the EHCP process.

Action: JR to present on the EHCP process to the PCF.

5. Update from Health, Education and Short Breaks

AR gave an update on Short Breaks:

- AR had presented a Short Breaks session to Kingston parents and carers, and is now thinking of doing this quarterly.
- AR gave an update on the over-extended waiting list (up to six months) from the provider Challengers: they did have delays in getting first visits due to staffing issues. However, everyone on the waiting list should now have their first initial visit before Easter holidays. All Richmond families have now had their first visit booked within the next two weeks, and they are now moving on to their Kingston cohort.
- AR has put in a meeting with the head of service to discuss further development, as there may be a need for a rota system.
- AR is preparing for the February half term.
- AR also noted that an action from the previous meeting around the accessibility of playgrounds in the Borough had been completed. AR had given Claudia the contact details for RBKA who are running a scheme called community parks program around accessibility.

AW gave an update on Education:

- 92% of children going through phased transfer (from primary to secondary) have had their places confirmed and the family have been notified. The number of children that don't have a place yet is less than 15.
- The Spring School is on track to open in September 2023. There will be 36 children attending altogether, some of them at primary and some in years seven and eight.
- For those children going into years 6, 7 and 8, their parents have been notified. For the children going into key stage 2 and 3, their parents are in the process of being notified.
- There are only two children at the Spring School who will be from out of borough.
- There is currently a lot of work going on around transition pathways into adult services. AW noted that if there are any parents interested in being involved in that piece of work, then to let AW or Anna Chiva know.

Sharon gave an update on Health:

- Noted that as she was now in post, she will be able to pick up more things.
- They have a new DCO starting later in the month

6. Actions from previous meetings

- The PCF noted that they wanted to have a bespoke event on the application process for EHCPs, therefore we will wait to hear from the PCF on this.
- Short breaks actions - dealt with by AR.
- Ideas on forward plan - completed.

7. AOB

JR gave an update on SENDIASS: The embargo for consultations on the service is now lifted, they will now be moving to a new provider called Polaris Childrens Services Ltd. **Action:** JR to talk to the group about this in the meeting next month.

Action: Everyone to think about what they would like to focus on for the next meeting deep dive.