

## **Kingston SEND Parent Carer Consortium: Wednesday the 19th of April, 2023, 12:00-13:30**

**Parents and Carers:** Linda Nystrom (LN), Asif Mullan (AM), Karen Gale (KG), Jo Thomas (JT), Claudia Isaby (CI), Kelly Harrison (KH)

**Staff:** Ashley Whittaker, Programme Director, AfC (AW), Jonathan Rourke, Coordinator of SENDIASS (JR) Andrea Ferns, Designated Clinical Officer, ICB (AF), Caroline Roberts, Inclusion Development Officer, AfC (CR), Rob Harris, SEND Parent Carer Engagement Officer, AfC (RH), Alice Robinson, Inclusion Development Officer, AfC (AR), Julie Saunders, Kingston PCF Administrator (JS), Anna Chiva, Associate Director of SEND, AfC (AC), Karen Lowry, Manager of the Local Offer, AfC (KL), Megan Francis-Falkner, SEND Policy and Project Officer, AfC (MF)

**Apologies:** Councillor Stephanie Archer, Sharron Nelson

### **1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

AW thanked everyone for coming and conducted welcomes, introductions and apologies.

### **2. Parent Carer Forum update**

CI gave an update on the PCF:

- PCF had a steering group committee and decided they will be conducting focus groups with parents and carers which will help with engagement for the new SEND Futures Plan. The planning process for this has been started with AfC colleagues, and it is hoped the workshops can be run in May and June 2023, with an additional survey sent out to consolidate people's thoughts.
- The PCF will also be looking at getting publications out and how to access schools and community groups. They will be working closely with AfC on this.
- PCF commissioned a consultant to help with the governance and set up of the PCF. The paperwork has now been produced, in addition to training around this, and they will be taking it to the steering group on wednesday, to agree on what's there, clarify roles ect - they are hoping that this will expand their membership.
- They have made the decision to pause learning events moving forward - except for the one next week on challenging behaviours.
- They have also said that they can't do the healthy parent carer programme - not in a position to staff this offer.
- The PCF are hoping to be involved in the SENDIASS handover. They have discussed the issue around benefits advice, and are waiting to hear back.

AW thanked the PCF for their continued work. AW also noted that in relation to the issue about the new SENDIASS contract not containing benefits advice in the way it did, he has been researching this, and whilst advice is available elsewhere, we need to find out more about capacity.

**Action:** AW to conclude his research on this and respond formally to the PCF on this matter.

**Action:** MF to add this to the agenda for the next meeting

AW also gave context on what the SEND Futures Plan is, and noted that it needs to be updated by the end of the calendar year, hence the need for engagement with parents and carers.

The workshops the PCF will be conducting are as follows:

2 hour workshop on:

- Early Years
- Workshop on primary school age

- Secondary age
- 16-25
- Diversity
- Neurodiversity
- Profound and multiple learning disabilities

LN (Q): Is there a way of sending this information around so I can pass it on?

CI (A): The plan is for these events to be in person, and then an 8th event to be held in the evening online for more general feedback session. Information sheets and posters about these events will need to be created, and then CI will send this information to LN.

KG noted that, in relation to the change in the SENDIASS contract, most parents and carers she knows have had help from that service with their benefits forms, and reiterated the importance of this service.

JR noted that the change in the benefits advisor in SENDIASS was across both Local Authorities. JR also noted that another organisation was advertising for a benefits advisor.

**Action:** JR to email this to AW

**Action:** JR to forward information on the Local Offer about Polaris to AF.

### **3. Participation, Engagement & Co-production update**

**RH gave an update having done the following:**

- Conducted outreach to Malden Oaks and ran a talk to the Rotary Club in New Malden.
- Recruited five new SEND Parent Champions, who were due to start training tomorrow.
- This month training was going ahead for the Social Care and Early Help teams on how to approach and help SEND families.
- Conducted outreach to Kings Oak Primary School and St Philip's, a special school in Chessington to hopefully set up a parents coffee morning.
- Currently working with the commissioning team around the work that was done on SENDIASS recommissioning. Wanting to also have involvement with the PCF on this, looking at lessons learnt, and a framework for how that process could be smoother in the future.

AW noted that it would be great to have a session with all the parent champions later this term to give feedback.

**Action:** MF to include this in the engagement plan

AW also noted that the number of parent carer needs assessments being done now are higher than in the past, and a lot of this is about awareness. This is partly as a result of this work.

- AC: We are doing a lot of work with Adult Social Care around transition pathways, mapping them ect, and want to work with parents and carers about where would be the best point to get feedback and engagement from parents. Flagging this as the next activity over the next 3 to 4 months.
- CI noted that parents have found the support arising out of a parent carer needs assessment fairly limited. The assessment perhaps needs to join in with other services to back this up with real action, rather than being in a silo. Sometimes parents need more practical help around being referred or filling out forms etc.
- Are we also joining up with the services that could be available as an adult? This could be linked in with some mental health services for parents having a difficult time.

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

### **AR gave an update on short breaks:**

- Just had Easter, which meant we held both the inclusion and in-house group, had companion cycling, pantomime, did lots of visits to all the settings.
- Staffing is however a struggle, still a prevalent issue.
- Received good feedback from the agencies that were used for short breaks.
- Continuing with commissioning activities, and went on a visit to Challenges, one of the companies commissioned and discussed the long waiting lists, however work still needs to be done around how allocations are made.
- Have been making contact with some new mainstream providers
- Activity fund applications are now live
- Take up for the Social Group which meets every month has not been the best - therefore please spread the word.
- The Social Group is for children struggling in mainstream settings to go around in the community and do various activities. Link: [AFC Info website - Kingston and Richmond :: Local Offer / Information And Advice / Short Breaks / Aiming High Short Break Schemes / Social Club](#)

JT(Q): I'm just wondering why the take up isn't as good? Could it be that you need to have a re-think about adjusting the structure of the club?

AR (A): This could be the case and is something we are willing to consider.

KL had received feedback that she had included a lot of information about mainstream activities and not specialist activities in the SEND newsletter. She is aware that there are big waiting lists for a lot of SEND activities and therefore doesn't want to advertise something that is not readily available to families.

**Action:** Alys and Karen Lowry to meet before the next newsletter goes out to do some work around how to describe activities and clubs and when to plug what.

### **AF gave an update on her role:**

- AF noted that she was the new Designated Clinical Officer for Kingston and Richmond, however she only worked in this role two days a week.
- Currently working with Alison Stewart to look at what the priorities are. Currently she is supporting the tribunal team, looking at quality assurance, e.g. if holistic outcomes are embedded into EHCPs, looking at transition pathways and mental health support and working with colleagues in CAMHS. AF is also working on training and making sure that health colleagues understand what work they are doing, and looking at any gaps in training.
- AF noted that she will also be doing a lot of drop in sessions to focus on case work or any challenges, and attend panels where she can.

LN noted that she had a list of questions that came from a whatsapp group with Burlington School, which AF could either answer or take to someone else for an answer.

The first query was around CAMHS Assessments being refused: a large number of assessments are being refused, causing parents to go private for assessment, which is then not necessarily recognised through the system. LN noted that parents had been told their child had to be presenting in two areas in order to get an assessment.

AF noted that she was happy to take this out of the meeting and come back with LN when she had an answer, and that she wasn't aware of any guidance around a child presenting in two areas.

LN also fed back the following:

- One parent had said that they were just told that there was a four year wait for an assessment for CAMHS.
- EHCP needs assessments were being refused, and parents were having to re-apply which means they miss the admissions process and end up with their child in a school that cannot meet their needs.

- The issue of children not having an EHCP needs assessment was based on the fact they are not two years behind academically

**Action:** AF to get back to LN about these points once she has made enquiries.

JR noted that he agreed if issues need to be seen in two areas, for children who mask this will be difficult. JR also noted that he had some sheets that they can go through with families to help them in filling out those forms.

AC noted that schools would welcome more support and advice when it comes to CAMHS. Often schools do make referrals to CAMHS and don't get any support, and then they are holding a lot of risk. Mental Health Support Teams in Schools are helping with this.

AC also noted:

- that the biggest growing needs are around Social Emotional and Mental Health needs.
- We are not saying you have to be two years behind in learning to put in an application for EHCP. We do say that there has to be an educational impact, but it does not say it has to be two years behind.

**Action:** AC to take this forward with Sarah Herbert to communicate with SENCOs. AC also noted she was happy to have a chat with Burlington SENCO about this.

AC also noted that if the school thinks that an EHCP is needed then the school themselves should put that application in as opposed to parents, as parents don't have the same information and evidence to hand a school would.

There is also now a bolstered assessment panel, now jointly chaired with the Emotional Mental Health Team, Social Care, the Autism Spectrum Condition Service, Early Intervention Team and Educational Practitioners, to try to make sure we are making good decisions.

CI warned that even once young people are in the CAMHS service, the ability to access that service can then become a barrier.

RH also noted that from conversations with parents, quite often, speech and language therapy comes up a lot, for example on getting that support, and on why their children aren't getting those services. RH noted that it may be useful to have Jo Steer come to the meeting to do another deep dive on what is available.

AC gave an update on education:

- Everything is now going ahead with Spring School - and there will be an open session on May the 20th for anyone with questions or concerns.
- Transition for the older cohort: we have been able to complete 94% of those transitions by the 31st of March. There will still continue to be some more challenges to continuing healthcare, as there has been a lot of change and staffing challenges with the Continuing Healthcare team.
- It has been tough for some schools in terms of retention ,for example in relation to speech and language therapists, meaning we have had to think more creatively about how we can still give that support given staffing difficulties. For example, speech and language therapists provide training to other school staff.

There is currently no Social Care update as Shaun West has left his post and recruitment for his replacement is still ongoing.

JR gave an update on SENDIASS:

- The phone number will be changing, the new number is 08081645527
- Email to [info@RKsendiass.co.uk](mailto:info@RKsendiass.co.uk)
- The page for SENDIASS on Local offer updated with new number, and can be found here: <https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/information-advice-and-support-ias>
- Slowly getting the service up to speed, but we may still struggle with IT etc for a while as many of the systems are different.

#### **5. Actions from previous meetings for further discussion**

AW went through the previous actions, most are now completed.

- Date in the diary for a follow up meeting between Jonathon Rourke and Rob Harris and lists of schools - this remains outstanding

#### **6. AOB**

CI noted that Julie will be getting in touch with colleagues to get a list of all the areas that they will be working on or have been working on, as they want to be tracking what they are doing.

KH asked what was happening with the therapies oversight meetings.

AC noted that they had met on Monday and discussed representation and were thinking about how they will move forward driving changes. Gavin Spiller is now chairing those meetings

**Action:** Anna Chiva to link Kelly with Gavin and get her back on the invite list.

It was also noted that at the last SEND Partnership Board Bev Pass had come up with an idea about thinking ahead which relied on regular communication with parents about the next things they will need to think about when it comes to their child's transition.

**Action:** AC noted that she wants to work with Rob Harris, Jonathon Rourke and Andrea Ferns on moving this forward.

**End of meeting.**