

Kingston Parent Carer Consortium: Wednesday 11th October 12:00-13:30
Meeting Minutes

Parent Carer Forum / Parent & Carer representatives: Bev Pass, parent and PCF chair (BP), Linda Nystrom, parent (LN), Jo Thomas, parent (JT), Rosie Fletcher-Brown, parent (RFB), Kacper Rucinski, parent (KR), Claudia Isaby, parent (CI), Kelly Harrison, parent (KH), Tracey Shepherd, parent (TS), Linda Ikwue, parent (LK) Chloe Davison, parent (CD), Arlette Wright, parent (AW).

Staff: Ashley Whittaker, Programme Director, AfC (AW), Helen Barnett, SEND Policy and Project Coordinator, AfC (HB), Megan Francis-Falkner, SEND Policy and Project Officer, AfC (MF-F), Alys Robinson, Inclusion Development Officer, AfC (AR), Caroline Roberts, Inclusion Development Officer, AfC (CR), Diane Sanderson, Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) for SEND, AfC (DS), Rob Harris, SEND Parent Carer Engagement Officer, AfC (RH), Jonathan Rourke, SENDIASS (JR), Councillor Archer, Portfolio holder for Children's Services including Education, Kingston Council (SA), John Wood, Head of SEN Transport Services, AfC (JW), Karen Lowry, AfCinfo and SEND Local Offer Website and Content Manager (KL), Alison Danks, Associate Director of Health Services, AfC (AD), Geraldine Burgess, Short Break Operations Manager (GB), Martel Atterbury, Physical Activity, Exercise and Sports Development Officer, Kingston Council (MA), Max Freedman, Leisure Commissioning Support Officer, Kingston Council (MF).

Apologies: Anna Chiva, Associate Director for SEND, AfC (AC)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

BP introduced the meeting and welcomed guest speakers.

2. SEND Futures update

AW advised that he is due to meet with BP and CI in the next few days to finalise the engagement summaries and surveys with a plan to publish in mid-November 2023. The draft SEF (Self-Evaluation Framework) document has been delayed due to the Richmond SEND Local Area Inspection but is now on track to be presented to the Partnership Board at the end of November and the draft updated SEND Futures Plan published early in 2024.

AW also provided an update on the SVA (Safety Valve Agreement) which is an agreement with the DfE (Department for Education) of an additional £30 million of funding for a 5 year period (2021 - due to expire at the end of March 2025). The council are adhering to the conditions of the agreement, including providing performance reports (the latest was issued in September with a follow-up due in December) however the activity is very close to the parameters of spending control.

BP raised the question of 'targets' for EHCPs and AW advised that there are no targets relating to the number of EHC plans in the terms and conditions of Kingston's SVA.

https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer/blog_articles/4217-safety-valve-agreement

3. Parent Carer Forum (PCF) update

BP gave the following update:

The PCF were joined by SA, Sarah Olney (MP for Richmond Park), Sarah Ireland (CEO of Kingston Council) and SA at their away day on the 20th September. The results of the PCF survey were discussed and from this the following three key priorities have been agreed:

- 1 - Therapies provision
- 2 - SEN support in schools including more training and parents' voices being heard
- 3 - Transition process within key stages and between different settings.

In addition, peer support for parents and carers came through as a priority in engagement work, and as a result the PCF will focus on this moving forward.

The PCF are considering ways of restarting the 'Care to Share' meetings as an opportunity to meet with more local SEND parents and carers.

RFB to join the PCF Steering Committee.

4. Deep Dive - SEND swimming provision in Kingston

MA and MF outlined their attendance at this meeting as an opportunity to hear the thoughts and views of parents and carers regarding swimming facilities in the borough. MF's role is to help inform the new leisure strategy for Kingston, by working with the current providers, Places Leisure, through bi-weekly and monthly meetings.

BP added that the issue of SEND swimming facilities in the local area has been a standing item on the PCF agenda and is causing much frustration for local families.

LN advised that her child finds accessing local pools difficult due to the sensory overload; however the Malden Centre has introduced a SEN swimming session, limited to 15 children. LN added this is a positive step but it was not very well advertised (the information was shared through word of mouth) and there needs to be more sessions available. TS advised that Dominic McGinty at the Malden Centre coordinates the timetables.

In response to this, RFB advised that as there is no public pool in Kingston, families are driven to paying a gym membership or for private lessons, both of which are costly. RFB added the idea of offering a percentage of private swimming lessons every term to individuals with SEND. The SEN swimming session at the Malden Centre only caters for 3% of residents registered in Kingston with SEND.

BP added that individuals with autism have a much higher risk of drowning, supporting the need for swimming lessons in the borough.

RH agreed with BP's comment and parent and carer feedback cites swimming facilities in Kingston as their number one priority.

KH added that children with physical disabilities are unable to access public pools due to lack of hoists or other equipment; the hydro pool in Teddington is not convenient and the pool facility at Shooting Stars is difficult to book.

KR added that swimming for individuals with SEND should not be categorised as a medical requirement but a leisure option which should be available at any time. Generally speaking, public pools do not cater for SEND as the water is not at the correct temperature and accessibility equipment such as ramps and hoists are not installed. The Malden Centre is the only public pool in the local area but the changing facilities are not suitable nor is the temperature of the water.

AR and CR are working with local leisure services to build confidence and knowledge of an inclusive offer. AfC's Inclusion Development Team have started conversations with Bedelsford School and Dysart School around the possibility of using their hydrotherapy pools for SEND families to access on weekends. The hydro pool at Bedelsford School is currently only available to students attending the setting, however meetings are scheduled for the coming weeks to explore extending this offer. Following the Access All Areas event on 10th of October, the physiotherapy team at both schools are considering how they can widen their hydro pool offer across the borough.

MA concluded that the views heard in this meeting were very helpful in understanding the barriers that families face. Investment has been allocated to improve the changing facilities at the Malden Centre and support from AfC and councillors will help in developing a partnership with accessing hydrotherapy pools at

local schools. The views heard today will feed into the development of the new public leisure centre in Kingston. The Malden Centre will be consulted in increasing their offer of SEN swimming sessions.

MA referred to historical surplus funding from the Short Breaks being allocated to swimming provision in the area. GB advised that this is not currently possible due to overspend in the service.

BP asked for reassurance that the specification for the new leisure centre and swimming pool will be inclusive and accessible.

Action: MA and MF will provide feedback from this meeting to the consultancy group for the new leisure centre development.

Action: SA suggested organising an online discussion between the leisure centre consultancy group and the PCF. RH offered help to support this.

AW asked if an Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted for the new leisure centre and if not this should form part of the online discussion. SA noted that this would be included in the research and development of the centre.

BP added that if schools with pools are funded by public money they should be available to everyone in the borough.

5. Participation, Engagement & Co-production update

RH outlined activity in this area as follows:

- The monthly [Carers One Stop Shop](#) is a great way to meet local parents and carers - the session happens on the 1st thursday of every month at the United Reform Church in New Malden.
- The transition event Access All Areas took place on the 10th of October - the event was very well attended and gave RH the opportunity to engage with new families.
- Let's Nurture sessions take place at Old Malden Children's Centre, 100 Lawrence Avenue, New Malden, KT3 5NB every month - more details can be found [on page 3 of this document](#). The sessions are designed for parents and carers of pre-diagnosed children and Parent Champions are in attendance.
- Work is continuing with the Autism and ADHD Partnership Board and Kingston Council is developing a borough wide policy.
- RH attended the Kingston PCF away day on 20th September.
- The Parent Champions are building momentum due to a restructuring of the group including monthly in-person meetings and regular training sessions. KL to lead a session on the Local Offer in addition to a SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service) meeting with JR.
- A number of coffee mornings with parents and carers are being organised in primary and secondary schools across the borough.

6. Education, Social Care & Short Breaks update including:

Short Breaks:

- AR advised that the Short Breaks statement is in the final editing stage and will be shared with the PCF in the coming weeks. The statement is a Government requirement, detailing the team structure, what the service provides, providers names and contact details and is updated on an annual basis. [A link to the current statement can be found here.](#)
- CR and AR have developed an inclusion training programme for short break providers. Training sessions will be delivered at management level and then filtered out across their teams.
Q: BP asked what the impact of the training is.

A: AR advised that it is aimed at both existing and new providers who currently do not have a SEND offer.

- Short Breaks planning is underway for the October half-term and Christmas holidays - AR and CR are working with the F.U.E.L (Feed Ur Everyday Lives) team who will present their provision at the November meeting of the Consortium.
- KL is in the final stages of developing the Short Breaks leaflet.
- AR is attending a Parent Champion meeting to deliver Short Breaks training.

Education:

- AW updated the Consortium on the replacement for AC who leaves AfC at the end of October. Chike Nnalue, who was previously a Senior Leader in the SEND team at AFC, will take up the post in January 2024.
- The ICS (Integrated Care Service) has appointed a new DCO (Designated Clinical Officer) for SEND to begin in January 2024. This permanent role replaces the temporary part-time post. Due to recognition of the level of SEND in the local area, consultation for the restructuring of the ICS is underway which could result in each borough (Kingston and Richmond) having their own DCO.

Aiming High Support Funding presentation:

GB presented the current financial situation regarding the Short Breaks offer - [a link to the presentation can be found here.](#)

- AD advised that the needs in the local area are increasing but the budget is not reflecting this growth. The Short Breaks service are unable to spend money that is not available and face difficult decisions regarding allocating funds and deciding which families are able to access the service.
- JT asked what the funding figure is based on and have we researched any learnings from other local authorities and is sponsorship an option?
- AD advised that the figures are based on historical needs relating to statutory services. Once statutory funds are allocated, any surplus is then made available to non-priority services. If there is an overall shortage of funding then services such as Short Breaks can suffer. AD added that some local authorities have disbanded their non-statutory Short Breaks offer while others are offering a limited range of services within a restricted budget.
- AW advised that securing corporate sponsorship is difficult as companies sometimes view this as compensating for a shortfall in government funding. An alternative route is to work with our partners in the voluntary sector as they have access to other external funding sources such as grants. Approaching charities and asking for advice on fundraising channels is another option.
- RFB acknowledged the complexities of the situation and suggested a skills swapping scheme or partnering with local schools both in the state and private sector.
- BP explained that asking the PCF for options is compromising and asked if there were options currently in discussion by the Short Breaks team.
- AD added that today's conversation is about offering transparency about the situation and co-producing a forward plan. Options being discussed include means testing, 'first come first served' approach, redirecting the Activity Fund into the Additional Support budget or making the Aiming High fund only available to families without an assessed needs package.
- BP expressed concern for means testing and cited another local authority as using a model of allocation based on a combination of funds and hours. Families do pay towards short breaks but with heavily discounted fees. BP added that SEND children should have access to mainstream activities.

Action: GB to contact BP regarding alternative LA's short breaks offer.

Action: AD to investigate options outside of those currently in consideration and invited parents and carers to offer any further ideas or suggestions - these can be sent to helen.barnett@achievingforchildren.org.uk

RFB suggested inviting an external source with more of a business perspective to help widen the current offer and increase fundraising opportunities.

Karen Lowry added there are external grant providers that families can contact which support this type of application. <https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/information-for-carers/charitable-grant-and-funding-to-help-families>

7. Actions from previous meetings for further discussion

Blue badges update - AW advised that Nkem Obianyor (Head of Customer Experience for Kingston and Sutton) will attend November’s meeting and provide an update on Blue Badges in the borough.

There was insufficient time to address the actions from the previous meeting.

8. A.O.B

Due to technical difficulties CD was unable to raise the issue of SEND Transport which she had asked to be added to the meeting’s agenda. JW and RH are aware of the issue which relates to late arrival of children on SEND transport due to traffic flow and road works in the local area. JW added that routes are being replanned to compensate for these disruptions along with a 5 year plan reacting to the increase in demand without the funding and resources to match it. JW and his team met with the Kingston transport dept earlier in the week and the start time of 7.30am can not be brought forward but an update on the situation can be provided at November’s meeting.

Action: HB to make contact with CD to ensure her concerns are addressed/answered by the relevant professionals.

Next meeting: Tuesday 7th November 2023, 12:00-13:30

Forward plan of deep dive topics:

Meeting date	Deep Dive Topic	Owner
Tuesday 11th July	Mental health services	Sharron Nelson, ICB
	Blue Badges	Nkem Obianyor – Head of Customer Experience for Kingston and Sutton
August – no meeting		
Tuesday 12th September	Transition to secondary school for children with send	Sheldon Snashall, AfC
	Graduated response & ERSA*	
	CAMHS Tier 2*	Jo Steer
Wednesday 11th October	Swimming facilities in Kingston	Martel Atterbury – Sport & Leisure Development Officer, Kingston Council.

Tuesday 7th November	Blue Badges	Nkem Obianyor - Head of Customer Experience for Kingston and Sutton
	F.U.E.L (Feed Ur Everyday Lives) project	Seema Sehgal, Policy and Projects Officer-FUEL Lead, AfC
Wednesday 13th December	Neurodevelopmental pathways for 0-18 year olds inc post-diagnosis support	Sharron Nelson, ICB Karen Gale, member of PCF
January 2024	Health Services - current challenges relating to resources / budgets	Alison Danks, AD of Health Services, AfC

* Items to be carried forward to a future meeting