

4<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Parent or Carer

## Listening to the Views of Parents: Parent Consortium

As you may know, Contact, the charity for families with disabled children, is leading the process for establishing a new Parent Carer Forum in Kingston. You may already have been involved in discussions with Contact.

At present it seems from Contact that it may take some time to establish the Parent Carer Forum.

The views of our parents/carers are very important; so the Council and Achieving for Children are keen to ensure that we have a route to hear the views of parents and carers of children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). To do this, I propose to establish an interim Parent Consortium to help guide and support our communication and consultation with parents and carers, and to help the Council and Achieving for Children understand the needs of the wider SEND community.

We have a 3 year SEND Transformation Plan on which we have consulted. It will become increasingly important, as we make decisions about how to deliver services and how to respond to the current financial challenges of SEND provision, to have an effective and constructive way to consult with parents and carers in the SEND community. We do not want to wait for the Parent and Carer Forum to be set up and become well established to do this and hence my proposal for an interim Parent Consortium in the meantime. The new SEND Partnership, a multi-agency group overseeing the delivery of the SEND Transformation Plan, fully supports this proposal.

The proposal is that the Parent Consortium is representative of all children and young people with SEND in Kingston, broadly based on the prevalence of special needs and disabilities we have in the borough. The current prevalence is set out in the attached annex. We are keen to have wide representation so that views can reflect the experience of parents and carers, both of their children's needs and the services which are offered, and in turn might be offered.

We are approaching voluntary sector organisations, schools and parent-carer support groups to highlight this opportunity to join the Parent Consortium. It is open to individual parents and carers and not a requirement to be part of an organisation. If you are interested in hearing more about the Parent Consortium, or have any questions, or would like to register your interest in joining, please contact [sendlocaloffer@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:sendlocaloffer@achievingforchildren.org.uk) and title your e-mail Kingston Parent Consortium.

Some schools will be inviting parents and carers of children with special educational needs to regular information and consultation sessions. We will also be arranging wider events - the wider consortium - for members of the Parent Consortium and parents and carers from these school sessions to meet, discuss and consider issues relating to all children with special needs in the borough.

The detail of how the Parent Consortium will work will be produced alongside the consortium's membership; however we would hope that it would be facilitated or chaired by a parent or carer with administrative support from Achieving for Children, and would meet bi - monthly. Unfortunately we are currently unable to offer remuneration to Parent Consortium members but plan to review this in coming months.

I am deeply committed to working with parents and carers and would welcome a wide spread of contributions. I hope that you will be prepared to consider putting yourself forward for this interim consortium so that the voice of parents and carers remains strong in our delivery and development of SEND services.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Diane White  
Portfolio Holder for Children's Services including Education

**Annex**  
**Parent Consortium: Prevalence of Need**

Type of need	Prevalence	Representatives
Speech, language and communication needs, including ASD, ADHD and ADD	47%	Up to 9
Social, emotional and mental health needs	15%	Up to 3
Severe learning difficulties	14%	Up to 3
Moderate learning difficulties	11%	Up to 3
Physical difficulties	3%	Up to 2
Hearing and visual impairment	3%	Up to 2
Other conditions	7%	Up to 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Up to 24</b>