

Richmond SEND Parent Panel

Grimwood Road Training Centre , Twickenham

Date: Tuesday 3 March, 6.30pm – 8pm

Attending

Parents:

Ana Daruwalla, parent and chair of meeting

Ann- Valancha O Brown, parent

Claire Richmond, parent and Richmond PCF

Dave Leeman parent and Richmond PCF

Kevin Sears, Richmond PCF

Kirsty Bainsfair, parent

Minta Townsend, parent and Richmond PCF

AfC/Council:

Ian Dodds, Director of Children's Services

Ashley Whittaker, SEND Programme Director

Kathryn Thomas, Richmond Council Community Engagement

Karen Lowry, AfCinfo/SEND Local Offer Website Manager

Apologies: Anna Chiva (Assistant Director SEND), Kristina Dale (parent)

Heading	Main points
Introductions and welcome	Ian Dodds (present for first 5 minutes of meeting due to requirement to attend Council meeting), thanked Ana Daruwalla for her contribution to the Parent Panel and work to help the Parent Carer Forum establish. ID would contact Kristina Dale separately to thank her for her contribution to the Parent Panel. AD thanked ID and wished him luck in continuing the work initiated by the Parent Panel and with the future relationship with the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) (this was the last meeting of the Parent Panel) .
Next steps with the Parent Panel and Parent Carer Forum	Minta Townsend and Claire Richmond explained that the infrastructure for the Parent Carer Forum was becoming more established. An administrator, Farmeen Kapadia based at RUILS, was in post and had already made contact with KL. The Steering Group was due to undertake training in data protection and Level 1 Safeguarding. This should be completed before the PCF launch event planned for 25 th March. More details to come on the launch but it would be held at Skylarks in Twickenham. There would be two

times, a pm session which would be family friendly and an evening one aimed more at parent carers. Invites would need to go out via voluntary organisations, schools, SENCos and Children's Centres etc. AW said that AfC are happy to support advertising the events by offering the PCF use of established communication channels such as school news letters if PCF wished. PCF would make their communications plans and would come back to take up offer if needed.

PCF have started making plans to attend events in the community such as the May Fair. They intended to have a stand at the SEND Futures conference in June.

Next steps with therapy review

AW explained that a full report would be published in April. There was positive news about funding. Schools Forum had agreed to contribute £235k more than the current financial year for therapy for provision for 0 - 5years.

In addition, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has agreed an increase of £250k for the next financial year 2020/21. The CCG has also agreed in principle to increase funding in the following two financial years so that their additional investment by 2022/23 would be an additional £735,000.

The Council has agreed to fund an extra Occupational Therapist at a cost of approximately £50K.

However it was unclear where additional education funding for therapy provision for children aged 5 + would come from. Schools Forum had not agreed a transfer of funds from the Schools Block for this purpose. This was further complicated by the Department for Education changing the rules preventing the use of council general funds for education purposes.

Tonia Michaelides (Managing Director, Kingston & Richmond Clinical Commissioning Group) and Ian Dodds had written to head teachers about a solution to this. This could be a Service Level Agreement (SLA) asking schools to commit to funding a borough wide therapy service. This would cost an additional more than £400k when established. Any SLA would need

to ensure that funding would be split equitably between schools.

Immediate priorities include:

- Recruit a lead for the implementation of the new therapy model. The ideal candidate would have a combination of SLT/therapy background and project management skills.
- Campaign to recruit therapists – this would be joined up across CCG, HRCH and AfC.
- Reorganisation of the CCG. Doreen Redwood, Lead Children’s Health Commissioner, had left the CCG. Nigel Evason is in post as an interim for 6 months. Aim is to have a permanent replacement in place by September. Jessica Thom has joined AfC as Director of Commissioning and Partnerships and would line manage the Lead Children’s Health Commissioner both interim and permanent when recruited.

CR (PCF) said it was important that AfC and health worked well together. She asked how it would be established whether a therapy was a health or an education need. AW said that a standard split has been agreed. AD agreed that this simple approach was good to ensure a workable system.

There were also plans to recruit a pre diagnostic support role which would be based at Ham Clinic.

Senior officials from D of E had met with AfC at the end of January to discuss deficit recovery and conversations had taken place about the current funding challenges.

SEND Futures

This was planned for 30th June with the theme of: Connect. AW said that any parents would be welcome to get involved in planning the day.

Responding to feedback from previous events, the day would have less speeches and more workshop time.

There would be a dual timetable to allow “paid” professionals to attend for a longer day (9 – 4pm) with a shorter core day for parents (10 – 2pm). Although any parents able to make all or part of the longer day would be welcome to. A shorter keynote (Christine Lenehan of Council for Disabled Children) would start the core section of the conference when all would come together.

A selection of workshops and facilitated “World Café” sessions would take place. A question and answer session would happen after lunch ensuring that parents would have the chance to take part in the q and a and still leave at 2pm. AW ran through the list of suggested workshops. AD asked if a planned workshop on speech and language therapy could be expanded to include all therapies.

KB suggested a workshop on IEPs and SEND Support would be welcomed by struggling parents who saw this as a huge gap in consistent support and knowledge. How do families access or know what their child is entitled to at SEND Support level? Parents would engage with their child’s school first to find this out but responses were reportedly inconsistent and concerning.

AVB commented that this was a common experience amongst families in her group (SEND Carers Coffee and Chat in Barnes). SENcos were being seen as gatekeepers who were putting families off applying for assessments for EHCPs and that this experience seemed to be increasing.

AW pointed out that the AfC survey on SEND Support in schools is ongoing. KB pointed out that she hadn’t received it from her school so it might not be going out consistently. MT suggested that the survey should go out to all parents in schools.

Updates on workstreams AW reported that:

Annual Reviews – new forms had been signed off.
New School – provider would be announced late spring/early summer.

Transition – Post 16 Maze parent group were meeting Senior AfC staff and Adult Social Care in March to discuss this further.

Assessment Planning – No update available at meeting but all pointed to reports for [SEND Partnership](#) which includes regular updates

Update on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman report

AW read out an update on behalf of ID. MT (PCF) said that the PCF wished to report conflicting information being received by parents regarding the consideration of actions or decisions taken by AfC before April 2018 ie that they will only be considered if a decision taken then still affects a child now. MT suggested this would be almost impossible to measure, to understand where a child might have been at any point had a different decision been made.

Also the letter from Cllr Roberts to parents had suggested that a template was being issued by the PCF. It was stated that the PCF had not approved the template and work remained to be done to get communications back on track.

Also there was a concern regarding question 4 of the audit survey being sent out where it suggested that the EHCP coordinator add information. This could be seen as comprising the independence of the review from a parent/young persons' point of view. MT and CR said that they would write to AfC about these matters and in the meantime did not require AfC / the Council to contact them further about this.

Actions from last meeting not otherwise covered (10 mins)

AW presented a pie chart showing representation of the child needs of the parents who had been actively involved during the life of the Parent Panel. The group compared this to the breakdown of need across children with EHCPs (the breakdown across the full cohort including SEND Support was not available).

It was noted that there was a good representation and that the two charts compared positively.

Staffing updates

This had been covered under earlier points in the meeting.

AOB

AW told the group about a study “Improving wellbeing through nature “ that was looking for views from families of children with SEND to understand the barriers to those families in getting out and about in outdoor natural settings. AW to forward link to be added to Local Offer

Next meeting

This was the final meeting of the Richmond SEND Parent Panel
