

Attendees

Parent / carer representatives:

Kacper Rucinski (KR)

Louise Kearney (LK)

Elected member:

Cllr Diane White (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services including Education)

Staff:

Alison Stewart (Designated Clinical Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group) (AS)

Ashley Whittaker (Programme Director) (AW)

Chairs Penfold (Director of Education Services) (CP)

Geraldine Burgess (Short Breaks Operations Manager) (GB)

Ian Dodds (Director of Children's Services) (ID)

Karen Lowry (AfCinfo/SEND Local Offer Website Manager)(KL)

1. Specific questions from parents:

- a. Email from James Waugh: *The Phase Transfer brochure states parents of children with an EHCP will be asked to submit secondary school preferences within two weeks of the end of August. I am concerned that many parents are currently unable to visit schools for SEND open days and that, even if schools do re-open before the summer, schools may be unable or reluctant to arrange visits to minimise Coronavirus transmission risk within their school community. What consideration is AfC giving to consider flexing its current secondary school transition process? How is AfC planning to facilitate SEND school visits if/when schools re-open? Thank you.*

CP: SEN Team are planning arrangements around this. Year 5 children are now thinking about their move to secondary school in Sept 2021. They would normally be visiting secondary schools, talking to SENCOs in summer term, making an informed decision, and submitting preferences in the summer term / August. Important that this is done in a joined up / consistent way with other local authorities who may have children considering the same schools. The SEN team are liaising with other authorities and schools on how this can work best. Looking at extension to later in the autumn term but can't be too long as need time to collect preferences, liaise with schools and there are also statutory timescales that we have to meet. Schools / SENCOs have been asked to think about how they can offer a virtual tour / share information and **ACTION** when we have more detail on that, and the new timeline, we will advertise this via Local Offer website. On the upside we did have a very positive Y5 transition meeting prior to lockdown and so families have already had that, but next step will be more difficult.

LK: Have schools already started these virtual visits and are independent providers also doing this?

CP: Still in discussions (Sarah Herbert talking to SENCOs) and independent schools doing this also would be a much bigger piece of work. We're starting with the local schools.

2. Local Offer website / information to families:

- a. KL updated on additions / improvements to this. Lots added to COVID section e.g. activities being added all the time. Lots of national providers are adding great online SEND resources, plus local services eg Portage, and also lots in the mainstream section.
- b. Business as usual continues where it can and still improving website, eg Chatbot still being developed. Please **ACTION** try it out and feedback as per communications that have been sent out about that.
- c. Also going through different sections eg EHCP Golden Binder section has been reformatted to make it clearer and about to start on the PfA section. All feedback welcome!

- d. Document that Bev Pass (PCF) identified (from Wales) has with the original authors' agreement been adapted for local use and is now on Local Offer. Will be sent out via school network and **ACTION** also sent to Louise for sharing with the PCF network.
- e. Letter also being sent out from Ian Dodds and Tonia Michaelides (Managing Director of CCG) to parents and carers and also to children and young people. Aims to give clarity to families and also make sure there is a consistent message for schools and families on EHCP process.
 LK: How is the EHCP process meant to be happening e.g. assessments / annual reviews don't seem to be happening?
 CP: Central message is very much that process should be carrying on with acceptance that at times it will be difficult.
 LK: Understood and concerned / need to think about if little has happened between March and September, lots and lots of needs will have changed
 CP: Yes and planning for this and planning the reintegration and transition process now to help with this. Generic ideas / support for all schools and then bespoke support for those that need it.
 LK: a positive of this situation is that the use of technology and record of teaching and learning for those who may not be in the classroom is something that should be retained and could be a real positive going forward. **ACTION**, AfC to share this with school leaders.

3. Kingston Stronger Together

- a. Cllr White updated. Following lots of comments at the last meeting have not heard of issues with families accessing support.
- b. ID confirmed team working through shielding list. No specific issues have been raised.
- c. Cllr White highlighted the incredibly good and helpful support being offered by the voluntary sector at this time too. Good resources / links on the RBK site.
- d. LK has not heard of any issues, and nor has KR. LK sent text to PCF group to check.

4. Short breaks

- a. GB updated on individual support provided in homes over Easter. Some families and CYP found this difficult and have improved offer by offering 3 hour sessions at locations outside the home with cleaning inbetween sessions. Been going well over Easter holidays and now continuing for children not in school. Some provision now also being offered at Warren Park. DBS' being processed within 7 to 10 days which is good. Liaising with schools on who is in school and not. Team working well.

5. Health Services

- a. AS updated. Liaising closely with SEN Team.
- b. Your Healthcare offering as much virtual support as possible
 LK: question re speech and language assessments and whether they can happen online.
 AS: Certainly depends on the child. Some independent organisations are now marketing their online offering re assessments but not clear that these robust and main support being offered is re existing provision.
 LK: OK so links to previous point about EHCP process as eg how can they have an annual review if there is not an up to date therapy assessment?
 AS: working to directive of business as usual as much as possible. If child is known to therapist they may be able to feed knowledge in to the annual review but assessments for new children may be harder.
 ID: more guidance expected from DfE on 27/4 (but may be delayed) **ACTION**, provide update

6. Schools

- a. CP: much already covered. Schools are revisiting risk assessment after Easter break, linking in with other professionals eg health needs. Message is same that where safe children should be at home. Schools are becoming more confident about delivering remote support. OT sessions being delivered online and good feedback from families on this. Need to link in more with our severe learning difficulty

school (Dysart) to discuss option to have a rota of a larger number of children attending for less sessions rather than only those judged as “highest risk” being offered a place.

- b. CP: less contacts from families to CP raising questions and sense is that support is becoming more established and better and messages better understood.
- c. Action from last meeting re transitions / returning to school covered earlier in meeting.
- d. New SEND Advisory Service line for queries and questions into central point. Not sure of what demand will be for this but it is advice / signposting / guidance if the primary point of contact, which is the school. Advertised to SENCOs already and **ACTION** links sent for circulation to parent community.
- e. AW suggested that as the system becomes more used to the new way of working provision is improving and LK agreed that also her perception.

7. AOB:

- a. LK: are Educational Psychology assessments being done?
CP: they are doing what they can but they cannot observe child in school setting which is a key part of it.
LK: concern re backlog for September again.
CP: acknowledged concern. Trying for business as usual. Some activities just cannot happen. But the team are doing everything they can.
LK: although seeing child is part of the assessment, interviews with parents, SENCOs etc can happen, and personal experience has been that that has not happened.
- b. KL: links to Ed Psch support on COVID section and **ACTION** will send links to LK.
- c. AW: regularity of this meeting to be discussed, currently been weekly in term time. What would parents and carers like? LK thought every month given how much things are changing. LK to discuss with the rest of the PCF steering group and let us know. KL says there is one booked for next week with attendance confirmed and LK suggests we proceed with that and then review.

Next meeting: 12.30 1st May