

## Attendees

### Parent / carer representatives:

Louise Kearney (LK)

Annabel Fitzpatrick / Saunders (AS)

Agnieszka Czerwinska (AC)

### Apologies:

Christine Flowers

Bev Pass

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

Charis Penfold (Director of Education Services)

### Staff:

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

Ashley Whittaker (Programme Director) (AW)

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. Communications to families

Letters from the Director of Children's Services and the Managing Director of the Clinical Commissioning Group went out at the end of last week to all children and young people with EHCPs and their families. The letters are available here:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/covid-19-updates-and-resources/communication-updates>. Parents have asked about communications to the wider SEND community and think these should be sent too i.e. including e.g. SEN Support but also those at nursery and college. Agreement that this would be a good next step.

Although schools are an important part of the mechanism to reach this cohort, need to also think about early years and college children and the networks and support services available via therapy services, children's centres etc. Plus social media. In terms of what the messages would be, key ones would be that we appreciate the scale of current challenges, signpost to resources and highlight how to contact AfC / services if needed. Also need to be careful about sending out too much as parents and carers may not have time to wade through it all / be overloaded. Helpline (so far limited use of SEN Advice Service (SAS)) and where to go for help would be good. Practical things that parents can do, eg structuring your day, and being realistic would be useful. Also specific issues e.g. toileting need support signposting (e.g. Portage, health visiting). Lots of resources from [Portage on Local Offer](#). **ACTION:** AfC to work on draft and share with this group next week.

## 2. Eligibility to exercise more than once per day

AW: Feedback has been that some parents are concerned about being challenged when exercising more than once per day as permitted by guidance issued by Government in early April for those with additional needs / where there are health benefits in doing so. Since then issue raised with police and online application route set up to receive standard letter from Ian Dodds confirming eligibility. About 50 families from Kingston have applied in the first 24 hours. Link is here:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/covid-19-updates-and-resources/about-this-section/evidence-of-eligibility-form>. Whilst some families using alternative identification eg ASD Awareness, letter also clarifies what the guidance is so that if challenged by someone who does not know this aspect of the guidance they can be enlightened. **ACTION:** link to be shared widely (NOTE: from Wednesday 13th May the official guidance allows everyone to exercise outdoors more than once a day)

### 3. SEND Partnership Board

Will go ahead on 15th May with COVID only agenda. Expecting that Bev will represent PCF at that. All parts of the system, starting with children and young people and then families will be able to share information, "hot" topics and challenges and aim is for the Board to work together to identify solutions. Key themes arising at these meetings will be included. **ACTION:** additional items should be sent to Ashley or Bev.

### 4. Temporary changes to SEND legislation

ID: Certain aspects of the Children and Families Act were eased as of yesterday afternoon. Locally there will be no blanket adoption and staff and services will continue to adhere to provision and timescales as much as possible. Statement on this now available on the Local Offer at link below. Will only use on case by case basis, and in consultation with parents and carers. Online workshops being delivered with schools next week to make sure local expectations and practice are aligned. **ACTION:** KL to add link to Local Offer

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/covid-19-updates-and-resources/frequently-asked-questions/services-for-children-and-young-people-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-in-kingston-and-richmond-during-covid-19>

AC requested more information about how this will be applied locally and also asked about how families will be contacted, with the suggestions that SENCOs are used to distribute.

### 5. Feedback on multi agency support

AC updated. Different routes of support. From central government, families can register online. Some then receive a message to contact local GP, and that process results in being sent an electronic letter which is good as it reduces risk of infection. But took over a month. Other families received letters after the first stage of applying centrally. Very practical food delivery support. Supermarket has approached family (from local system, Kingston Stronger Together) plus received box of food from the government resulting from initial application. Comes with good letter about allergies. Hard to opt out of central government system, which may not now be needed if also receiving local support. Agreement that is easier to coordinate things like this locally rather than trying to do centrally. Possible additional efficiency if could opt out of central delivery directly with delivery person but they drop off and depart quite quickly.

### 6. Education provision and best use of technology

Example of taking 6 weeks for school to agree to face to face communication online with EHCP young person. Lack of clarity about safeguarding policy (school / AfC etc). If no policy should be policy of case by case consideration. AfC confirmed they often use online means to contact children to make sure they are safe. If schools concerned could add another adult into the conversation. This is what the school did after a request for reasonable adjustment was made. Families should be included in these decisions. Recognition that the system has been learning and online delivery of services is improving for schools but also e.g. therapies. Next step should be to continue discussing with schools. Peter Cowley from AfC continues to provide advice to schools on home learning. A limited supply of laptops, with internet connectivity, have been allocated to the borough and these will go to children most in need of access.

Advice on online safety provided by Peter Cowley can be viewed here:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/covid-19-latest-information-and-advice/learning-activity-and-welbeing-support-resources-for-families/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe-online>

### 7. Access to mental health support and therapy provision

South West London St Georges do have an emergency line, plus Kooth (<https://www.kooth.com/>) is available for online support. Question on suitability of mixed child and adult ward for crisis situation. Contrary to general practice in NHS where aims seem to be to not have children and adults together. **ACTION:** AS to investigate and revert. Therapies are increasingly being delivered online. Questions about children being discharged from therapy due to scheduling

problems not because aims / outcomes had been achieved. This was taken offline for discussion with AS. **ACTION:** AS to follow up offline and any other families impacted should contact AS.

#### **8. Frequency of this meeting**

Consensus that fortnightly and alternate between daytime and evening. Not Friday, Thursday or Monday evening. Karen to do a [Doodle Poll](#) to the wider parent group.

#### **9. Risk assessments**

Risk assessments have been going on since 18th March and explained in the letter in 1 above. Ongoing. Schools are conducting them. Question about why parents have sometimes not been contacted. Guidelines have been issued to schools on the process around the risk assessment and school improvement partners are quality assuring the assessments. If not happening, first action should be to contact school to discuss the risk assessment / request to see the risk assessment. **ACTION:** AW to write up the process of the risk assessment for inclusion on the Local Offer.

#### **10. AOB**