

## Attendees

### Parent / carer representatives:

Annabel Fitzpatrick / Saunders (AS)

Agnieszka Czerwinska (ACZ)

Bev Pass (BP)

Kacper Rucinski (KP)

Christine Flowers (CF)

### Apologies:

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

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

### Staff:

Jonathan Rourke (SENDIASS Team Coordinator for Richmond and Kingston)(JR)

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

Anna Chiva (Associate Director for SEND)(ACH)

Ashley Whittaker (Programme Director) (AW)

Geraldine Burgess (Short Breaks Operations Manager) (GB)

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

## 1. Planning for phase transfer

This is regarding planning for moves from primary to secondary schools. ACH explained that work is already being done to plan for this given that physical visits to potential secondary schools are not currently possible. AfC have held various online sessions with SENCOs to discuss how to support parents with providing them with information. Decisions include:

- a. There will be a webinar for parents and carers to talk through the statutory process for those with EHCP plans and then a panel of experts including SENCOs and others from the local SEND community to take questions. Will be advertised via Local Offer and recorded and posted.
- b. Secondary schools will record a 3 min clip of their SEND offer which would then be posted on the Local Offer (and their own website) for families to view and compare.
- c. Will also be a couple of online "drop in" sessions that people can join to ask questions

Aiming for mid June onwards for all these. All posted on Local Offer for families to watch when they have time as having time to do these things is often even more challenging for parents and carers during lockdown than it normally is. This is all on top of activities that can continue as normal, for example emailing and calling the school SENCO and discussing their situations directly with them. SENCOs are very keen for parents to know that they can be contacted directly about this, and contact details are on their school websites. Also encouraging secondary schools to decide when they might be able to offer socially distanced visits to school for example in September. Realistically, with all the other things schools are doing at the moment, aiming for more certainty on this by mid June.

If parents have specific questions they or their children would like to ask, from both EHCP and SEN Support perspective, please send them in so they can be addressed in the materials being produced. AfC will share them with schools.

Regarding timelines, 15th Feb 2021 remains the statutory date for when final decisions re preferences have to be confirmed, and this unlikely to change. We've been working back from then, and thinking about what the latest date we can give parents and carers to provide their preferences is, that will still give us time to share with secondary schools, give them a chance to respond, and still meet that deadline of 15/2/21. We've extended the deadline for parents to give their preferences to 30th September (previously start of September). Hopefully also having September will allow families to visit schools and speak to SENCOs.

JR: been working with ACH and team and has been asking for the extension to the deadline to end September and pleased that that has happened. JR also explained more about the role of SENDIASS and operations in Kingston.

[https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local\\_offer/organisations/25475-kids-richmond-and-kingston-send-information-advice-and-support-service-sendias?term=sendias](https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer/organisations/25475-kids-richmond-and-kingston-send-information-advice-and-support-service-sendias?term=sendias)

ACH: Many materials applicable for SEN Support as well as EHCPs e.g. videos of schools provision etc. Asking primary school SENCOs to link with secondary school SENCOs on particular children for whom transition made be hardest. Differences exist between schools, and working on consistency.

AW: this topic already shared via email with the circulation list and lots already received with comments on e.g timing. Please send in questions as they arise.

ACH: other boroughs are not delaying timeline and that means we have to be mindful of them consulting with our local schools on their EHCPs and making sure we don't put Kingston children at a disadvantage in obtaining a place at a school of their preference.

ACH: seem to be benefits from current way of working as increased dialogue about particular children seems to be picking up health needs in a more systematic way eg consideration of manual handling needs around transition.

ACZ: what is the process for manual handling training as currently it seems that there is no local system for training staff in schools of manual handling and sometimes schools lack enough staff with correct training.

ACH: since last week we have a new process as a result of these recent conversations, being lead by Alison Danks, Associate Director of Health Services. Gap is acknowledged and training provider now in place. Need to make sure this is known by schools

ACZ: need to make sure gender specific staff training as personal care is part of manual handling.

ACH: yes will pass that on to Alison Danks.

## **2. Outcomes (in EHCP) Framework**

Update on CDC workshop on 11th March and interest in volunteers for next stage.

AS: outcomes commissioning framework day on 11 March. This was first stage and second stage was to be session on writing outcomes for advice givers ie those writing reports for EHCPs. Second stage postponed due to COVID. Will reorganise as soon as we can. Aim is to make sure that when outcomes are written into EHCPs by schools, educational psychologists, paediatricians and anyone else who is contributing, that they are written in a way to reflects the wishes of parents and carers and the hopes and aspirations of children and young people. Richmond PCF was represented on the day, and excellent input and helpful for all to hear. Themes of outcomes similar to Preparing for Adulthood framework, ie development of independence, community and friendships, leisure, employment etc. Thinking about how we use the PFA framework alongside the CDC structure. Coronavirus delayed things but looking to form a working group. So please volunteer if you would like to be part of this. Grace Over and her Participation Group are also involved to make sure the voice of children and young people is captured.

ACZ: Where can we read more about this?

AS: will share output via email.

## **3. SEND Partnership Board, actions arising**

AW: Aim is to make sure the system is being as flexible as it can be during these times to respond to needs that families have and the particular pressures they are under.

GB: The Activity Fund has been changed to broaden the scope of how the money can be spent. This is because many activities on which this is usually spent e.g swimming and horse riding, are currently not possible. Voluntary sector raised this last week at the SEND Partnership Board (e.g. can it be used for musical instruments and a computer keyboard). AW investigated and turned out a review was already underway and now implemented. Full information here:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/short-breaks/aiming-high-short-break-schemes/activity-fund>

Also thinking about how resources could be deployed longer term to support children currently unable to access mainstream clubs. Cannot not be used for "consumables" such as colouring pens as too short lived. Needs to be something with longer term durability.

AW: Helen Green, Kingston Centre for Independent Living, had raised flexibility on personal budgets at the same meeting and whether even more flexibility can be applied than has already happened. The reality is that the law is clear about certain specific things eg paying parents to provide care for their child, and this is not possible within the law as it currently stands.

#### 4. Returning to school update

ID: Latest is from 1 June, if government tests met, some of Nursery, Reception and Year 6 will be returning. At secondary aim is some kind of Year 10 and Year 12 contact. Current focus is primary. Workshops with Headteachers last week to understand concerns. Some sites less helpful than others. Some schools may offer part time return or bring back prioritised year groups over a number of weeks not straight way. Schools are doing risk assessments of their sites and planning eg flow around school, manage classrooms. They will send a "readiness rating" to AFC. Unclear how many parents will send their children, so schools are likely to have to flex their plans over time.

KR: how does transport work? What about sharing with other children and what if I say no to return to school now and yes at a later date?

ID: schools will contact parents and discuss. Risk assessment for that child will include transport. May be a bus but may be taxi, PPE etc. Case by case. This will need time to arrange so if you say no to return now and yes later than will need time to plan at that later date too.

JR: from parents we've spoken to seems like 50:50 on return : not return.

ACZ: will therapists be returning to schools?

AS: community health services still waiting on guidance. This will guide face to face delivery. Need to balance resources between having children in and out of schools. Having more people i.e. also therapists going into schools is a concern for some schools about increasing infection risk.

BP: asked about a letter that has gone out to some schools but not all parents have received it.

ID: letter only done this afternoon to schools. Going to schools and governors.

CF: We received letter at 2pm this afternoon and this is the first and only letter we've received via school from others.

Have not received any other wider borough / other agency schools comms from school

AW: links to other item on the agenda about communications with the wider SEND community. Recognise we need to improve the wider comms as currently some schools always send these out and others do not. Thank you for the example of this not working.

#### 5. Risk Assessments

Opportunity for parents to ask questions / share views after previous discussions.

ACZ: obtained risk assessment from school and felt could be significantly better, with particular points about health and education. Now doing her own risk assessment. Thinks parents and carers may need to do their own risk assessment as if schools are not asking enough about home life then there will be gaps. Government guidance says parents and carers must be consulted and sometimes they are not, and social workers are meant to be included, and ours has not. Input from family is crucial e.g family dynamic, mental health. Worried that schools do not seem to be following government guidance. Need better multi-agency and family approach.

ACH: more training and guidance has been provided to schools on this and I will follow this up with your school. Clear that schools should be leading on this in partnership with parents and carers.

AW: schools were very pleased with the additional training recently provided and this is probably an area where practice is improving over time.

ACH: need to make sure Equality Act is considered in risk assessment

AS: also encouraging schools to consult with paediatricians or school nurses or whoever is relevant to make sure that medical view is captured in the risk assessment and included.

JR: social workers have been involved but more on the social care side of things than the disability side of things.

#### 6. Communications

Firstly, general points about the need for a robust mechanism to contact all SEND families in the borough. Still need to make this better.

Secondly Kingston Council planning a maildrop to every household in the borough. BP has input into a letter to all SEND families, jointly signed by Bev, ID, Cllr White and Tonia Michaelides from the CCG.

BP: steering group have contributed. ACZ keen that Participation Team contact details included in the letter. A positive step that going to every household.

ACZ: re Participation inclusion, letter aimed at parents and carers but we should be encouraging same for children and young people also. Also daughter has more time as not in school and may be others too who would like to join including the weekly drop in session.

AS: Thanked all for making the letter happen. Great to have this included in the maildrop and to promote the SEND helpline which is a great idea.

AW: PCF advert also included.

## 7. Actions from previous meeting

- a. One pager re accessing emotional wellbeing and mental health will be shared shortly (attached). Will try to add to newsletter.
- b. Following Doodle poll, frequency of this meeting will be fortnightly on a Monday alternating between 11.30 am and 8pm.

## 8. Corum Parent Champions (deferred)

## 9. AOB

- a. ACZ: when can therapists providing hands on support e.g. physio attend children's home?  
AS: depending on community prioritisation document. Case by case basis and therapy services will discuss that with families.  
ACZ: shielding letter does say support can be delivered to shielding families in home  
AS: yes case by case basis. Acknowledges issues with lists. Aiming to link the various lists together.  
ACZ: can workers be tested for COVID before they come to the house?  
AS: will investigate that.  
ACZ: Does Moor Lane have enough PPE to send people to homes.  
GB: yes masks, gloves and aprons.
- b. CF: may be many families who are struggling with the lack of differentiation of work sent home. Does not seem to be tailored. Our family is fine but many families may not be. Concerned for some families and how they might be struggling, either not doing it or doing it and really struggling. Have heard from school that from next week there will be some differentiation.  
ACZ: agree with this, and some teachers don't know how to adapt as 1:1 normally does it. Lots of issues / problems arising that if EHCP was being followed would not be  
AW: thanks CM for raising. This whole process has been a huge change for schools and think that things, whilst not perfect, are certainly getting much better. Eg recent comms from your school about differentiation. Schools also face challenges of different family approaches and desires on how this should work eg lots vs little vs insufficient IT access.  
ACH: lots of work has been undertaken with SENCOs seeking to improve this. Thanks for raising this.  
CM: all in this together and understand hard for school. Very difficult for everybody. Need to remember those who are struggling most.
- c. KR: agree with issue of quality of teaching. Needs improvements. Not enough interaction to keep engagement. Schools are not just about teaching but also social development. Schools can be better at this. Need to engage them in group work, not just doing homework. And group work could be happening and it's not. Council should maybe spend money on buying computers for kids without and not on letters
- d. JR: If anyone would like to join my advisory group would be good to have one or two volunteers. Please email [Jonathan.Rourke@kids.org.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Rourke@kids.org.uk)  
BP: we will be back to you in due course when we have more time.

## 10. Next meeting: 1st June 11.30am.