

## Kingston Parent Consortium 1 June, notes of online meeting / conference call

### Attendees

#### Parent / carer representatives:

Agnieszka Czerwinska (ACZ)

Bev Pass (BP)

Kacper Rucinski (KP)

Noreen Ahmad (NA)

Rosy Ahmad (RA)

#### Staff:

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

Ashley Whittaker (Programme Director) (AW)

Charis Penfold (Director of Education Services) (CP)

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

Jess Thom (Director of Commissioning and Partnerships) (JT)

#### Apologies:

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

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

Annabel Fitzpatrick / Saunders (AS)

Geraldine Burgess (Short Breaks Operations Manager) (GB)

### 1. Welcome and introductions

Welcome to Noreen and Rosy who are joining this meeting for the first time.

### 2. Returning to School update

CP: updated on developments on returning to school. From today mainstream schools opening to Nursery, Reception, Years 1 and 6. Almost all have been open for key workers and vulnerable children since March, from now 36 out of 40 opening more widely for these year groups. Offer will vary depending on eg how their buildings can allow children to come back safely. For special schools, Dysart expecting up to 2/3 of children back this week in some form (ie not necessarily full time, very few are full time), St Philip's anticipating going up to about 44 children over next 2 weeks and Bedelsford going from about 22 to 48. Complicated process, eg transport routes. Need to see how this week plays out / who will turn up.

ACZ: question about risk assessments and who is monitoring their quality and school readiness to welcome children back.

CP: working through SENCOs and school improvement team to support schools. We don't QA individual risk assessments but lots of support on implementing guidance. Lots of training. If there are issues with individual children it should be a conversation with the school or SENCO. Lots of clarity with schools on principles of what risk assessment should look like. AS often involved from health perspective.

ACZ: can the PCF steering group see the written guidance that has been sent to schools?

AW: things not perfect but are getting better. It is a huge task for schools, and if there are issues then route for follow up is to speak to school.

CP: SENDIAS also involved in training.

ACZ: latest guidance less helpful than before. Talks about updating risk assessment and skips over whether it was done properly in the first place. Schools and parents should be having the same information so everyone knows what to expect. And can we have a case study? The key thing is consistency of what goes to schools and parents.

AW: on Local Offer it is a summary of process and link to national guidance

CP: we can share the document shared with schools with the PCF Steering Group. Not sure that case study would be helpful as children are so different. Would reiterate that schools are dealing with a huge workload at the moment.

ACZ: would be good to have a template for parents to complete so they know what information is needed.

AW: will share the document with the PCF steering group. Will need to monitor how this develops throughout this half term

AS: updated on therapy provision. Still significant use of telephone and online appointments, but now up to about 70/80% of speech and language therapy, 95% of physiotherapy and 95% of occupational therapy.

ACZ: question about therapy being delivered remotely only.

AS: support in home still waiting for guidance update. Physio and nursing going into special schools. Working with schools on delivering therapy whilst schools also dealing with all other issues and questions about additional staff going into school re increased infection risk etc.

ACZ: Is COVID testing and PPE available for therapists going into schools.

AS: same guidance as schools so PPE for intimate care / exchange of fluid. General PPE available. COVID testing dependent on individual organisations, and anyone with symptoms can be tested.

### **3. Emotionally Related School Avoidance (see attached document)**

CP: Lots of very helpful previous discussions with this group about returning to school and importance of planning for this. Document shared with this group this morning is a parent guide that is part of a toolkit being developed to support school attendance. Consistent guidance to support families, schools and young people. This document originates from before COVID but has overlap / relevance.

NA: shared personal experience of CAMHS and e.g art therapy. Waited long time for referral, and then when received lots of inconsistency in delivery. Eg meant to be every other week but lots of cancellations due to staffing issues. For children and ASD routine is very important and because of the inconsistent way this is delivered this can be very problematic. Suggestion is that the therapists should train staff in the school so they can then deliver. This could be cheaper and reach a larger number of children.

AS: working to improve the support for those with learning difficulties and delivery of non talking therapies. Current COVID situation has exacerbated demand for these services. Need to also support emotional needs of these children and young people within schools. Work in progress as part of the CAMHS Transformation plan.

RA: reported that ERSA guide looks useful and accessible

### **4. SEND Legislation update**

ID: Extension to temporary changes of Children's and Families Act to end June. Will continue as we have been in May with doing everything we can. Flexibility and reasonableness at the heart of the approach. Some families have asked for extension to timescales (e.g. families asking for longer to comment) and these are being agreed where we can. Discussing these on case by case basis.

ACZ: question about difference between / definition of reasonable and best endeavors.

### **5. Phase Transfer planning (see attached document)**

AW: Thanks for the input from the past couple of meetings. Latest document shared. Supporting Year 5 students starting secondary in September 2021. Normal events eg Destination Year 7. Target date is 15 June to have live on Local Offer. EHC plan focus as statutory deadlines but relevance for all children with SEN as emphasis on schools to share information. Key is 15th Feb deadline from DfE unlikely to change, so we have to work back from that. Other local authorities will seek to place some of their children with EHC plans at schools in Kingston and if we delay too much we may be putting our families at a disadvantage. Normal Destination Year 7 event with presentation on process followed by visits to stands staffed by individual schools replaced by video presentation and Q&A session of submitted questions (thanks for these!). Every secondary school has been asked to produce short video about their SEND offer, to be posted on their website and Local Offer. Also worth emphasising that schools can be contacted directly, details on the school website, and we would encourage parents and carers to contact the schools and to do their own research on top of the centrally arranged resources. Date by when families have to submit their preferences has been moved to the

end of September. Hope is that in Sept tours of school will be possible. Other local authorities are not doing this and are still asking families to submit preferences during the summer holidays. Please keep feedback coming.

NA: individual appointments for families would be good so that they can tour schools. Need very individualised approach and period of high anxiety and choosing a secondary school is a significant decision. With social distancing.

AW: may be possible but will probably depend on resources. Will raise with schools as a possibility.

CP: still lots of uncertainty about September. Will have to see what things look like then. They will do everything they can for families who would like this but will depend on resources.

## **6. Actions from the previous meeting:**

### **a. Community Health guidance update**

AS: still waiting for this guidance which relates to what can and cannot be done face to face.

### **b. Communications / newsletter**

AW: still waiting to sign off final text of newsletter. BP submitted text and picture.

### **c. Emotional Health update**

Have circulated one side flyer aimed at families and professionals summarising where to go for support ie one stop shop. Please circulate to your networks.

### **d. Outcomes Framework**

Circulated before and seeking parents to be involved in the working group to develop action plan. One of two virtual meetings like this during summer term and then bigger launch in autumn (depending on COVID etc). Two elements to this, one around how we use high level outcomes framework to commission services in more strategic way, and another about working with advice givers on how to write these outcomes into EHC plans.

ACZ: keen to be involved if online meetings as still shielding. Also would be good to recruit a parent of a non verbal child. Important to gather information on this from families. Need to adapt data collection methods for this cohort.

AS: working with Participation Team on capturing the voices of this groups and all groups of children and young people.

NA: would like to volunteer depending on circumstances. Also suggests Dysart parents and their active parent group.

ACZ: Will CDC remain involved or in house?

AS: in discussions, not decided. They may support in the set up stage but longer term likely to be "inhouse".

### **e. Activity Fund + Family Fund (<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>)**

AW: Update on the increased flexibility and several applications made. Positive feedback on Twitter. Also worth considering Family Fund as DfE has put more money in.

ACZ: question about funding for access to laptops. Can families apply for this or how are the laptops distributed?

ID: schools submitted numbers needing laptops and dongles. Still waiting for the DfE to deliver. We may have some spare. Taking longer than we hoped for them to arrive. Maybe another 2 to 3 weeks.

### **f. Parent Champions (deferred)**

## **7. AOB**

- a. ACZ: On 31st of May the governments updated shielding guidance. "People who are shielding remain vulnerable and should continue to take precautions but can now leave their home if they wish, as long as they are able to maintain strict social distancing." This is a welcomed development for children who have been locked in their homes for 10 weeks, without an opportunity to go out. The challenge now is to find a safe space

where strict social distancing is adhered to. Are there any plans to facilitate access to safe local outdoor spaces for vulnerable children? Could Moor Lane outdoor area be booked by one family at a time? Could AfC liaise with Royal Parks to arrange Blue Badge access to Richmond Park so that disabled children can go for a walk where paths are wheelchair accessible and wide enough to practice social distancing, like Pembroke Lodge garden? Walkers and cyclists are allowed to access Richmond Park, so the only group excluded are disabled residents who can't walk or cycle. Perhaps Isabella Plantation could be booked for one family at a time on hourly basis? Also one way routes could be signposted to avoid people coming from opposite direction.

NA: Yorda already giving individual sessions to children

AW: Yes we are already looking at this. Similar discussions in Richmond. Royal Parks, Council owned facilities, plus others we more in control of eg Moor Lane accessible playground. AW looking at this with GB.

Operational issues with this but we looking at it.

ACZ: first step should be providing access to safe spaces as less complicated than playgrounds where people touching things. Less staff time on disinfecting, just need an area to be outside after 10 weeks at home. Need to give equal access to residents (Equality Act).

AW: Agree and need to think long term about this e.g. summer holidays.

NA: Moor Lane playground used for holiday clubs but very minimal use, and maybe can adapt schedules to give families more access. Many families need these short break. Should also contact Companion Cycling and discuss safe arrangements to access quiet spaces in Bushy Park. Plus collaborate with organisations like Challengers. May not be as much as normal but something would be better than nothing.

- b. BP: Open spaces. Most schools have sports facilities that they not necessarily using. May also be potential here. Also childcare support is sparse and less available than normal. Need to think about support for families needing support over the summer who would not normally need it but will do as so many things not happening / closed.

## **8. Next meeting**

15th June at 8pm.