

Attendees

Parent / carer representatives:

Agnieszka Czerwinska (ACz)
Bev Pass (BP)
James Waugh (JW)
Louise Kearney (LK)
Noreen Ahmad (NA)
Christine Flowers (CF)

Staff:

Anna Chiva (Associate Director SEND AfC) (ACh)
Alison Danks (Associate Director Health Services, AfC) (AD)
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)
Jonathan Rourke (SENDIASS)
Karen Lowry (AfCinfo/SEND Local Offer Website Manager) (KL)

Apologies:

Geraldine Burgess (Short Breaks Operations Manager) (GB)
Cllr Diane White (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services including Education)

1. Welcome / intros / apologies

2. Update on planning for EHCP transitions from primary to secondary (ie current Y5 children)

ACh updated on the latest planning for supporting families with children in Year 5 with an EHCP in their choices for secondary school starting in Year 7 in September 2021. Normally families and children and young people would be making physical visits to schools during the summer term of Year 5 and then selecting their preferred destinations at the end of the summer holidays / early September. There is also normally a "Destination Year 7" event hosted by one of the mainstream secondary schools, to which all families and children and young people with EHC plans are invited and at which presentations are given by AfC's SEND team plus all secondary schools are represented and host show stands for families to visit, ask questions etc. This event is also not possible this year. To replace these activities, a "virtual Destination Year 7" event is being prepared, made up of a filmed version of the AfC presentation and short film presentations from each school. To be hosted on the Local Offer website for families to watch at a time convenient to them. The materials are expected to be uploaded onto the Local Offer at the end of this week / early next. The date that parents need to submit their preferences to AfC has also been delayed to the end of September, so that families have more time to make their choices and possibly take advantage of opportunities to visit schools in September. Families were also encouraged to use the materials on the schools' own websites, for example their SEN Info reports. Discussions included access to information on the accessibility of school sites, size of rooms, manual chairs vs self propelled chairs etc. AC confirmed she would take these points forward and include as much as possible in the school presentations.

LD asked about supporting current Year 6 children at EHCP and SEN Support and what support they are receiving with their transition to secondary school. ACh and CP described the support these children are being given, which is especially important this year given that many of these children have been accessing education over recent months less

than their peers without additional needs. Lots of process, support and materials supplied by AfC to schools on this but relies on schools implementing.

ACz gave feedback on their own transition experience from Year 6 to Year 7 last year, and highlighted issues arising from the therapy team changing from primary to secondary and linkage being lost. Would suggest that changing therapists at same time as school is a bad idea as continuity is crucial at this point and this makes it harder. So suggestion is do not change the team around the child at the same time as school changes.

(Online materials now available [here](#))

3. Update on return to school

CP updated. Special schools continue to increase numbers of children and things going relatively smoothly. Primary increasing attendance well since June 1. Guidance remains to take prioritised year groups N, R, Year 1 and 6, and where schools have capacity can include others plus key workers and more vulnerable in all years. Schools have different abilities to do this as issues around sites, staffing etc. Acknowledge very hard for those still not able to attend, and also when you can see children in your year group going back in other schools and not yours. Schools are working hard to get as many children back in as possible before end of term even if only for a couple of days. Secondary schools have been doing their face to face for years 10 and 12, working well. Different models again depending on staffing and buildings and what can be adapted. They looking also to offer something to years 7,8 and 9 and differences between schools are again hard for to families to see.

CP said lots of feedback from parents in years 2,3,4 and 5 saying / complaining that their children are not being given places. Big change from a few weeks ago when most families were saying they would not be sending their children in. Confident that schools are doing all they can but may not be everything that parents and carers seek.

CF questioned the point about schools doing everything they can to bring children back in years 2,3,4 and 5. Her experience is that their school has already said "not on the cards" until September. Although government is reducing 2m rule, school is not. So main concern is that how do we go 6 months without "one ounce" of physical contact with school? Both her children have not been invited back in. She is / was under the impression that it must be possible to have at least a small amount of physical contact before the summer hols but seems not. Thinks transition will be a disaster. Eldest child has completely switched off from school, wants nothing to do with anything to do with school. Couldn't even get into school to pick up some workbooks recently. For someone who is already struggling with school, this period of complete detachment without any emotional and physical contact / attachment with school has made needs a lot worse. Feel very strongly that all children should be given at least one day in school before summer. Even if just to see what schools look like now, half an hour with the teacher. State of limbo and need a way to move on.

CP confirmed that all points raised by CF on impact of lockdown and school absence on children are understood and valid. Acknowledge it is difficult. Believe that all schools are addressing as much as they can. But there is no national statute that schools have to do this, and schools are juggling staffing, maintaining distances, number of contacts staff have with different children (eg morning and afternoon sessions). Wellbeing of children has to be balanced with staffing situations. SEN Support is a particular group of concern. Schools should be identifying children of particular concern whether they have an EHC plan or not and seeking to create opportunities where they can. CP will discuss again with schools. Need to use the limited resources and opportunities we have for those who need it most.

LD asked about risk assessments for SEN Support children as many of them will be in urgent need. CP confirmed that schools should be looking at these. If schools can't be having whole year groups back, need to look at particular children who need something bespoke for them.

CF shared experiences of online Zoom circle times and whilst welcome it is difficult. Needs to be an enjoyable time and this actually just causes more anxiety. ACz highlighted importance of right of passage to end of year activities. In her

case doesn't think EHC plan has makes any difference - still not in school. ACz asked again about numbers of EHC plans in school. AC / CP said would look up latest and revert.

4. Update on risk assessments

All families should have had letter via post or email updating them on the risk assessment process. ACh shared info on additional work with SENCOs last week, which specifically highlighted potential for risk assessment process to be used for SEN Support. Emphasised collaborative process. Needs to be revisited as and when needs change.

ACz now has risk assessment paperwork and thinks schools need to include ways of managing risk not just listing what the risks are. These needs to be documents with solutions in it, and if schools aren't planning now for how they will manage these risks they won't be ready for children to go back to school in Sept. Including input from health professionals and parents and children themselves. Needs much more emphasis on solution and problem solving. Doesn't think schools looking at how to make things safer. AC gave more information on sessions with schools, including adherence to Equality Act etc. AC also asked for ongoing feedback on experiences. ACh said training includes problem solving and JR confirmed this has been the message. JR also said some issues with children who have issues with social distancing, and how that is managed. ACz flagged that another example is children with physical disability who needs 1:1 support where social distancing is never going to be an option and so a solution needs to be found to manage this risk long term. BP summarised by saying that from a parents perspective, may be working in special schools, but in mainstream schools "this is not working" and this is the 4th meeting we have told you this and things don't seem to be improving significantly. So we need to think about how we can do things differently. Four weeks of term left and a document that is meant to be helping is not. AW agreed that there is still a way to go but said he thought progress has been made.

5. Update on delivery of therapy provision, EHCP and SEN Support

AD updated. Recovery planning for face to face asap. Eg opening up Moor Lane. Staff in special schools throughout. If a child needs to see someone they are now looking to arrange this. Whether in home, school or Moor Lane. Child by child planning on e.g PPE. e.g. spreading out appointments with cleaning in between. Care re shielding. If virtual delivery is working then there will continue to be some of this, but latest guidance means can do face to face if necessary. ACZ asks if therapist not available, will there be a back up therapist if original not available? AD alternatives will be looked at, and could have one doing face to face and one doing online if consistency / knowing the original therapist important.

6. Short breaks over the summer holidays

AD, planning ongoing. We want to deliver as much as possible and aware needs are probably higher than ever. There are still lots of moving parts:

- government guidance has changed again about what is / is not possible / allowed
- this will impact on whether we can run groups or whether we will have to stick with 1:1
- this impacts staffing needs and availability
- we're recruiting more sessional staff and need to see how that progresses
- the short breaks team are going through the process of calling families and speaking to them about what we can offer and might be able to offer and asking them about what they would like to access
- we're speaking with commissioned providers about what capacity they will have e.g. Yorda.
- we're thinking about how open spaces that are now opening up can be used
- we're planning how schools and Moor Lane can be used over summer holidays

7. Short breaks planning for recommissioning of contract from April 2021

AD and JT : Recommissioning process for April 2021 about to start. Need to identify gaps and what provision needs to look like going forward. Want to work with families from across the whole spectrum of need to make sure all needs are covered. Communications will come out inviting families to be part of this.

9. Improving communications with families

Letter from PCF, AfC, CCG and Council written in May did go out with the council's Your Kingston magazine from last week. Went to every household in borough. Good news that all families with SEND have this. Lovely advert for PCF also included in magazine. Problem with the way the pack was printed / distributed meant some confusion resulted in non- SEND community. Being investigated. Apologies to PCF for any non relevant email / Facebook traffic generated. SEND profile raised. BP: from PCF perspective generally positive, but have had some negative communications from residents thinking does not apply to them and think the Council will have missed their target audience as some will have discarded magazine thinking does not apply to them. Also spelling mistake on front of magazine. Need to feed this back to Council. Good that the comms went out but several errors. Apologies from AfC and Council for the errors

10. Dates of next meeting(s) 13 July at 8pm, plus plan for school summer holiday period

Agreed to have meeting on 13/7 (8pm) and then 27/7 (11.30am) to make sure more clarity on summer holidays. Subsequent meetings to be confirmed on 13/7.