

Attendees

Parent / carer representatives:

Agnieszka Czerwinska (ACz)
Annabel Fitzpatrick / Saunders (AS)
Chris Campbell (CC)
Christine Flowers (CF)
Louise Kearney (LK)
Rosy Ahmad (RA)

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

1. Welcome / intros / apologies

2. School's readiness for opening in September

Guidance out from the government and schools working hard to implement this for when they return after the summer holidays. The principle is all children full time. Emotional wellbeing will be a significant focus in September. Key docs are:

What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term

Guidance for the full opening: special schools and other specialist settings

Schools submitting readiness ratings to AfC by end of this week. They will also need to prepare for local lockdowns so home learning offers will need to remain available. Considerable work going on to support children and young people who may find the return particularly difficult.

Families thinking about children remaining at home after the start of next term should be aware of the regulations around elective home education. Information available [here](#).

Temporary easements of SEND legislation though to end of July only (at this stage).

Q: people who were using public transport pre lockdown to go to school may not be able to use it for the foreseeable future. Is there planning to support these children to travel to school?

A: Guidance is clear that transport for children and young people with SEND needs to be provided by the local authority as per regulations and planning is going into what this could look like going forward. Government has also removed free travel for some under 18s from Sept to reduce use of public transport during peak times. AfC / RBK lobbying the government to not do this. Future assessments for SEN Transport will include the current circumstances

Q: does readiness score include SEND

A: yes, several things, including SEND

Q: letters from school about returning in September come across about "a bit harsh". Letters including references to fines and same for reception children. There is a general feeling across several year groups that the wording could be softer

A: official government guidance also includes wording about fines.

Q: What about PPE in September in mainstream schools? Government is still not acknowledging that some mainstream schools have children with same risk issues as in special. And if risk assessment is used to plan for a specific child, in special school a nurse would be advising them on health but who is advising them in mainstream school?

A: The named nurse involved with the young person. Collaborative piece of work including family, school and other professionals ie the medical team attached to that young person would be first port of call. School has to have competent health and safety advice and they can commission this from a number of places. ID is satisfied that all schools have this in place. Part of the risk assessment will be to contact relevant health professionals. Schools will be working on this during the summer holidays. AS will check in with nursing team to make sure they in communications with schools. There is no specific date by when schools must present their conclusions of risk assessment / actions to parents.

3. Short breaks over summer holidays

Summer Activity Fund launched 2 weeks ago and big take up. £20,000 initial allocation all used up and great that families identifying lots of things to do that meet criteria. Currently seeking additional funding. Looks like Challengers aiming to work for 3 weeks over holiday in one of the primary schools, booking not yet open and finalising risk assessments and with Ofsted. Yorda also running. For assessed need children and young people, 75% of allocation will be delivered. Using Bedelsford School, extra rooms at Moor Lane, and will run over 6 weeks not 4 weeks plus smaller groups to allow more social distancing and people will get 6 out of their 8 sessions. Direct payments will receive their full 8 sessions. Thanks to Geraldine and team for the work on this in such difficult circumstances.

Q: is there more money coming for the Activity Fund or is that now over?

A: there will be more as have reallocated money from other budgets that have not been spent (eg where clubs have not been open during lockdown) plus other sources. Apply as soon as possible [here](#)

4. Therapy review working party

Project manager started today to coordinate next stage of implementation. Would like a PCF representative on the oversight group. Workstreams include:

- Workforce development group / training needs
- Service model / balanced system
- Finance and contracts
- Communications and engagement
- Estates, equipment and facilities

3 year development plan. We have additional funding through early years, and CCG and revisiting with schools in Sept.

Q: can we have something written down about these workstreams? AC is keen to be involved and would like more information.

A: yes (AS) and great

Q: how will you know if this is working? How will you measure success?

A: this is one of the first things the project manager is working on and will have this in the coming weeks.

Q: how does the outcomes work link to this?

A: CDC support includes linking outcomes based commissioning for therapies.

Q: what therapies are in scope and are they all being equally considered?

A: speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physio. Also discussing emotional health service and CAMHS but not core at this stage.

Q: PCF has been running a survey amongst parents and CAMHS and emotional wellbeing / mental health has been one of areas of greatest concern, both pre and during lockdown. Clear that this is a priority issue. Need a plan for parental involvement on redesign of this service also.

A: (AS) very aware of issues in these services. Not a quick fix but we are working with CAMHS Transformation Lead on this. Challenge within Emotional Health Service re. two posts supporting children and young people with mental health and SEND, and working on how this can best be delivered going forward. Also using dynamic support register to monitor those at risk of hospitalisation and / or placement breakdown. Packages being considered on a monthly basis. Recognise this is a significant area of need.

Q: given how significant these challenges are have you checked in enough with families on latest state of play with emotional wellbeing and mental health?

A: currently more focused on case by case basis as matters arise. We do need to set up more systematic approach going forward. Planning for 20% increase in demand for CAMHS as result of recent events. Also very clear that need an offer for those where online offer is not appropriate, and where traditional talking therapy is not suitable.

Would be useful for insights from PCF survey to be fed into thinking when possible / agenda item at future meeting. Mental health and emotional wellbeing certainly at top of agenda, and was also discussed at SEND Partnership Board last week.

Q: Can the CAMHS Transformation Lead be invited to a future meeting?

A: Yes of course. And also need wider system work on implementation of findings eg training of professionals and families. Also 16th September is the next workshop (online) for outcomes. Looking for parent volunteer for this.

Q: example of play therapy being needed but unavailable. Tried art therapy instead and did not work and then given a list of private providers. Other examples too of resources being applied in inappropriate situations and not good use of money.

5. Richmond Park

Gradually reopening. Kingston Gate open to access car park during weekdays only. GB followed up re parking at Warren Park during weekends and yes this can be arranged on limited basis by emailing GB on geraldine.burgess@achievingforchildren.org.uk to request one of three available slots for weekend by previous Friday morning. Gratefully received by parents.

Holly Lodge opening from 1 August on very restricted basis. AW to connect manager at Holly Lodge with PCF to discuss placements, and will do this via email tomorrow morning.

Q: can AfC contribute to the access discussions going on at Richmond Park.

A: yes AW to take this forward.

6. Transitions from primary to secondary

Destination Year 7 resources now online [here](#). Optimistic that autumn physical visits will be possible. Would also encourage families to contact schools directly.

Feedback from SENDIASS that would be good to add special schools.

7. SEND Futures Plan

Draft updated SEND Futures Plan now on Local Offer [here](#). Easy read version should be posted by end of the week. Looking for feedback over next two months. Going to Schools Forum in September and then Health and Wellbeing Board and committee in autumn. Please read and feedback.

Q: In joint commissioning there is a lead for AFC but nobody else. What is happening there?

A: There will be a senior CCG person and just confirming who that will be.

Q: RA has already reviewed the document and interested in the BAME opportunities. Highlighted in document and interested in if this has started. Keen to be involved.

A: anonymised data has been shared with PCF but not yet acted on. Great to have volunteers with particular interests in this.

8. Future meetings

Discussion about whether the next meeting would be in two or four weeks. Many from AfC will be away on a/l in coming weeks and particularly in two weeks. Parents and carers keen to hear more about schools' preparations for September and how therapies will be delivered. Maybe that more is known about this in four weeks than two weeks. AW to discuss with BP / PCF and confirm next date in due course.