

Kingston Parent Consortium 15 December 2020, notes of online meeting

Attendees

Parent / carer representatives:

Agnieszka Czerwińska (AC)

Claudia Isaby (CI)

Liz Smith (LS)

Louise Kearney (LK)

Noreen Ahmad (NA)

Rosy Ahmad (RA)

Apologies:

Bev Pass (Chair of PCF)

Staff:

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

Anna Chiva, Associate Director for SEND, Achieving for Children (ACh)

Ashley Whittaker, Programme Director, Achieving for Children (AW)

Karen Lowry, AfCinfo/SEND Local Offer Website Manager, Achieving for Children (KL)

Troy Hobbs, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability Service (TH)

1. Welcome / intros / apologies

Included introduction of Troy Hobbs who has joined AfC from Hampshire County Council and is the new Head of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Service

2. Findings of survey of parents and carers conducted since the meeting in November

AW presented the findings as per the attached presentation. The survey followed the work completed at this meeting in November with the aim of capturing a larger number of voices. 29 responses, 22 with EHC plans. The survey is arranged around the four areas in the Written Statement of Action. The survey remains live and will continue to the end of the Xmas holidays.

Questions:

NA asked if the survey distinguished between mainstream and specialist placements and was supported by others when she said that she felt this was really important to do in the future if not done here. Everyone agreed this would be a useful addition in the future. **ACTION:** AW to speak to the digital team who put the survey together to make sure this included in future data collection.

RA suggested it is better to have a wider range of options for people to respond to as per the workshop at the November meeting where we had 1 to 5 to work with whereas the presentation had just two categories. AW confirmed that the actual survey has four categories and have just been combined to two for simplicity tonight.

3. Education Health and Care Needs Assessments and Annual Reviews.

TH and AC presented the attached presentation.

NA asked about personal budgets and said she thinks schools and everyone needs more guidance on these. Also linked to previous discussions about the “matrix funding” and the need for parents to understand more about how this works.

AC was involved in the SEND reforms in 2014 and notes that the personal budgets guidance have not been updated since then and needs to be reviewed. Flagged need to talk to Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL). TH confirmed this is work in progress and that he is talking to KCIL.

CI asked about the statutory timeline picture, and whether this is looked at against the school year as their 15 days fell within half term holiday making meetings difficult. This also needs to be considered.

LK asked about advice for parents whose children can cope at primary but struggle to deal with the inherently different experience of secondary school. TH flagged the importance of primary school and secondary school staff working together, sharing information and planning. An EHC plan may or may not make a difference with this and lots of things can be done that do not need an EHC plan eg extra transition days, buddy systems etc. LK responded that even with an EHC plan this transition can be problematic so and EHC plan is no guarantee. TH flagged that all schools have funding to support children without EHC plans and can be used for this purpose.

NA raised the financial challenges that schools face and how she and others feel the financial support for SEN Support is unclear and greater transparency is needed. Used examples of several children with ADHD on SEN Support who not receiving sufficient support at school. TH described statutory obligations schools have to support SEN Support.

KL shared link re. [information on SEN support on the Local Offer \(opens a new window\)](#) and how in process of being added to:

RA said 'Best endeavours' can be interpreted in different ways, and how it would be good if all schools were provided with examples of best practice, examples of schools that implement this fully, not just providing the minimum requirements.

NA agreed with this point too as it's very important to show theory in practice

TH re suggestion about providing schools examples of best practice. [The Education Endowment Foundation meta-research is the exemplar \(opens a new window\)](#):

RA Thank you Troy, seen this report. I was referring to practical examples (not theoretical) otherwise the SEND provision can be dependent on the Senco. And this can vary dramatically from one school to another.

CI I do agree with @Rosy with this, some real disparities

AS highlighted importance of working with all health providers on improving outcomes also

AC if outcomes are not being met because insufficient provision surely this should be considered at annual review. TH confirmed that if outcomes not being met then should be picked up at annual review. AC says she doesn't think this happens although TH pointed to survey results suggesting otherwise

CI said she appreciated the ambition of these changes which will improve EHC needs assessment process but appealed that AfC are transparent with parents because it feels like you are being held back to even apply, sets up this adversarial position from the start! **ACTION:** ACh to contact C to discuss

ACh We are looking at developing quality assurance for Annual Reviews if people also wanted to get involved that way. **ACTION:** Please let ACh or TH if you would like to be involved in this. AC confirmed she would like to be.

CI Interested to know if inclusion best practice includes extra curricular. ie school trips, playtime, joining in activities such as school plays. So important that inclusion means inside the group not just alongside.

TH re inclusion in wider sense...An inclusive school would already take those 'social' aspects of learning into account.

AC I have noticed a discrepancy in the timeline on the health / therapy assessment template and the annual review and **ACTION** will send this to AS.

AC where are we with the annual review improvement, and we've not yet had an opportunity as a PCF to be involved in this? When can we do this?

ACh we have been focused on the IT system improvements and we are nearly ready to take this forward - probably February. Would be useful to split this into mainstream and special schools, and link to outcomes.

AC very keen to look at different approaches to annual review process as started last Feb and still not finished. Can we use this as an example of how this can be done better in a mainstream school. **ACTION** ACh absolutely yes we can do this

NA raised concerns about the funding for changes at annual reviews.

ACh money will continue to be a challenge but with an improved IT system we will be in a better position to monitor progress. Need to clear the backlog and start a new cycle.

AW **ACTION:** all to send in any other comments via email

3. Emotional wellbeing and mental health for parents and carers.

We've circulated a link to new [videos that have been published by the Emotional Health Service for children and young people and also for parents and carers \(opens a new window\)](#). All feedback welcome. If you think helpful do please circulate to your network. These are in recognition of and a response to feedback about the additional challenges that many families are facing during the ongoing pandemic.

4. Short breaks consultation

Some of the short breaks provision will be reprovioned in 2021 and a consultation will be launched in January to inform the recommissioning process. Aim is to appoint the new provider in August 2021 and new contract to start in October 2021. COVID has delayed.

AC asked if there will be one provider or more than one.

AW confirmed that this would be determined by the recommissioning process and could be one or more than one.

NA flagged that she is on the list and asked to be contacted.

5. ASD Pathway numbers

AS explained how the data is difficult as there are three different providers and contractual terms vary. She went through the slide in the attached presentation.

LK what advice should be given to parents of young children eg pre 5 when waiting for the diagnosis to come through?

AS even without diagnosis there is lots of support out there and available at universal level prior to diagnosis being given. Chat and play sessions, EY inclusion fund, voluntary sector, health visiting. Information on Local Offer eg parenting groups. If 2.5 years old health visitor a good place to start. Chat and play via children centres and if at nursery tap into their expertise (AfC EY consultants can support plus they can apply to early years inclusion fund).

KL shared relevant link to Local Offer:

[0 - 5 guidance \(opens a new window\)](#)

6. EHC Plan funding matrix

Carried forward to January meeting

AC requested that the template for the Kingston matrix is shared with the PCF by the end of the week.

ACTION ACh

7. AOB

AW thanked everyone for their helpful and constructive contributions this evening, the PCF for their work this year, and wished everybody a restful, calm and healthy festive period.

Next meeting: 11th January at noon