

Kingston Parent Consortium 8th March 2021, notes of online meeting

Attendees

Parent / carer representatives:

Bev Pass (Chair of PCF) (BP)

Christine Flowers (CF)

Kelly Jones (KJ)

Staff:

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

Anna Chiva, Associate Director of SEND, Achieving for Children (AC)

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

Charis Penfold, Director of Education Services, Achieving for Children (CP)

Geraldine Burgess, Short Breaks Operations Manager, Achieving for Children (GB)

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

Sarah Herbert, Lead School Improvement Adviser (SEND), Achieving for Children

Sheldon Snashall, Associate Director for Pupil Support, Achieving for Children (SS)

Apologies:

Agnieszka Czerwińska (ACz)

Jonathan Rourke, SENDIASS Team Coordinator

Rosy Ahmad

Sophie Jones (SJ), Head of Service Disabled Children's Team

1. Welcome / intros / apologies

Agreed that this meeting will be in two halves, first being updates and second being a deep dive into the local approach to supporting SEN Support cohort

2. Education

CP and AC updated. Significant day today with all children returning to school unless still shielding. So far so good. Huge logistical operation in secondaries on testing. In primary clear approach is focus on wellbeing, enjoying being back, friendships, and start of assessing needs. AfC will be monitoring these assessments of need and attendance and responding to particular concerns eg those families not returning so that support can be provided. Particular focus on differentiation for those with SEND returning, both SEND Support and EHC cohorts. SEND Advisory Support line remains relatively quiet.

Clarification from parent about differentiation for SEND Support. Examples given of the online experience of differentiation not being great and when parents had provided differentiation themselves school had not commented / provided feedback on what had been submitted. Acceptance by AfC that differentiation in online learning is very hard. Schools have tried different things and better in Jan / Feb than in 2020, but none of it is ideal and why it is so good that children are now back in school. The differentiation provided at home will have made a difference to his progress and hope is that that will show in performance over coming weeks and months.

3. Health provision

AS updated. Therapists also delighted that more and more children are now back in school. Speech and Language / Your Healthcare almost back to business as usual. Some issues around logistics of staff visiting more than one school. Occupational and physiotherapy moving back towards normal although more impacted by those still shielding with some alternation between online and face to face home visits. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list, currently at 44 Kingston children still shielding and therapists approaching them directly.

Parents and carers highlighted the sub optimal experiences some families had had re accessing COVID vaccinations at GP surgeries and how the lack of understanding of SEND matters amongst not just some medical professionals but reception staff also has made this harder than it needs to be. These comments resemble similar ones in the past and reaffirm the need for and importance of widespread SEND training for the wider health workforce. AS requested specific examples so that she could follow up and these were supplied.

4. Social Care

GB on short breaks. Planning for Easter holidays is advanced. Moving from 1:1 to small groups so looking at up to three children and three adults. Children attend different schools and it is not possible to replicate the sizes of school groups. Families may not receive full allocation of assessed need short breaks. Hope to do larger groups in the summer but focused on staying safe. Activity Fund for 2020/21 closed today after an extended deadline and large number of applications in recent days and weeks which is great. Perhaps a response to GB attending SENCO / these meetings. Bicycles, trampolines etc still popular and great that many are for outdoor activities eg tennis club membership.

Short breaks consultation will be starting soon. Contracts with commissioned providers have been extended to end March 2022, and new providers should be in place for start April 2022. Enhanceable will be provider for overnight short breaks at new Moor Lane facility, currently working through contract and registration.

Written submission from SJ: continuing to liaise with families on a case by case basis with regards to support needs both for those shielding and for those who cannot access their usual short breaks for whatever reason. Working closely with the CCG wherever possible to ensure no gaps in support provisions.

5. Actions from last meeting not already covered

- a. Absence of EHC plan child from school being the result of parental choice or school not being able to meet need. Very few examples of school saying unable to meet need. Where has happened, raised by parents and SENDIASS with AfC and have addressed these directly with schools. But rare (single figures). Much better than in 2020, schools have managed much better (CP/AC).
- b. Attendance of EHC children at independent special schools outside Kingston. Have worked through South London SEN Commissioning Partnership to monitor this (AC).
- c. Suggestion by parents that delays to annual reviews would be a pragmatic approach if some professional reports lacking, but response remains as per last meeting that we

must adhere to statutory duties and annual reviews specifically highlighted re. this in a recent meeting with the Department for Education.

- d. Direct Payments and KCIL, GB has followed up and family support worker already involved in supporting the family.

6. Other questions:

Q: Submitted in writing by ACz: *“Is Kingston CCG provided with a list of children and young people with EHCP reviews in the forthcoming term, as required by SEN CoP? If so, what is the procedure for passing this information to relevant therapist?”* (CoP = Code of Practice)

A: (AS) process is not yet embedded within the CCG, and reality is that therapists work with schools to plan the annual reviews. But we are looking at that element of the process at the moment. AC added that we also looking to have a similar process for Educational Psychologists and education providers to embed similar protocol. **Action:** AC to connect with ACz as the PCF rep on Workstream 5 / this area of annual reviews.

Q: KJ asked how parents and carers can check if child on clinically extremely vulnerable list

A: AS confirmed that she is the person to ask. Email: Alison.Stewart@swlondon.nhs.uk

7. Focus on SEN Support

BP introduced the item and shared how for the Parent Carer Forum it's a priority to ensure this cohort is considered equally with those with an EHC plan.

Sarah Herbert explained her role at the lead school improvement partner for SEND and Sheldon as the Associate Director for Pupil Support, which includes a significant focus on SEND students who do not have an EHC Plan.

Parents and carers raised the following matters as being representative of their discussions with the wider parent and carer community:

- Whilst mostly the feeling is that SENCOs are “amazing”, there is also a sense that for children at SEN Support level “their hands are tied” by funding constraints and capacity issues given the number of children they are supporting, including at EHC plan level (who may be prioritised).
- Some teachers do not seem to be working as closely with SENCOs as they could and teamwork and understanding across the wider school staff body is important.
- More information would be helpful about what happens if the parents and carers do not agree with the support offered by the school, for example if they think the support is insufficient, or if the school does not commission assessments that the parent / carer thinks are necessary.
- There is still considerable talk, including from some professionals, that the way to receive adequate support is to “apply for an EHC plan”.
- Given that with SEN support the `buck stops with school` when accessing/requesting assessments and support, it is challenging that there are examples of assessments (eg

Educational Psychology assessments) that professionals agree are needed but that take a long time to happen or indeed are perpetually postponed.

Sheldon co-leads WorkStream 4 of the SEND Futures Plan. The objective of the early intervention and transition workstream is to support families and all agencies including education providers, to where possible prevent additional needs occurring, and where they do arise, to be competent and confident in supporting children and young people with SEND, from the early years to post-16. This will mean that children and young people will have the best possible experiences and their needs are met early without the need for an EHC plan. This requires teamwork across all relevant agencies and the development of a strength and capability focused approach to SEND rather than a deficit-focused model.

Current priorities for this work:

1. Prioritise early identification and intervention of students requiring additional support
2. Helping reduce the need of issuing EHC plans through effective provision
3. Reducing the number of children missing education through an evidence based graduated response built upon a Quality First Teaching approach

Specific ongoing actions:

1. Upskilling workforce, including through a focus on Quality First Teaching
2. Planning for and improving transitions from primary school to secondary school and on to college placements
3. Monitoring of performance across all schools (using data) and acting where we perceive practice may need supporting. Whilst some schools deliver outstanding support for SEN Support cohorts, we will continue to work with those that do not to help them improve.
4. Initiatives to support attendance, such as nurture groups and emotional related school avoidance training
5. Intervening alongside schools where a multi-agency approach would benefit the child or young person.

More information can be found in Workstream 4 of the [SEND Futures Plan](#) (page 48).

The majority of children and young people with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream early years' settings, schools or colleges, without the need for an EHC plan. Education providers are provided with funding for this purpose.

A graduated approach to understanding the child or young person's needs and removing their barriers to learning is used - the "Assess, Plan, Do, Review" cycle. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of children and young people. Schools and colleges must use their best endeavours to ensure that such provision is made for those who need it. Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and "is compromised by anything less".

Moving from nursery to primary school, and from there on to secondary school and to college can cause additional challenges for children and young people with SEND. Well planned

transitions between phases of education is key to preventing needs from increasing.

More information on the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle can be found here in the [Threshold Guidance](#) for Years 1 to 11.

AfC thanked parents for their constructive challenge and questioning, as well as their insights into the reality of life for SEND Students and their families, and look forward to working with the PCF on this area in the future.

Next meeting: 13th April at 7.30pm.