

RICHMOND SEND PARTNERSHIP BOARD
Virtual meeting via Google meets
24 May 2021 – 9.30am – 11.30 am

Attendees:	
Ian Dodds (ID)	Director of Children’s Services, Richmond Council
Jessica Thom (JT)	Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, AfC
Anna Chiva (AC)	Associate Director of Special Educational Needs, AfC
Nigel Evason (NE)	Head of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Children’s Services (Kingston & Richmond)
Charis Penfold (CP)	Director of Education Services, AfC
Jonathan Rourke (JR)	SENDIASS Team Coordinator for Richmond and Kingston, KIDS
Ashley Whittaker (AW)	Programme Director, AfC
Claire Richmond (CR)	Richmond Parent Carer Forum
Cllr Penny Frost (PF)	Chair of the Education and Children’s Services Committee
Julie Hale (JH)	Divisional Manager Richmond Children’s Services, Hounslow & Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust
Alison Stewart (AS)	Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, CCG
Heather Mathew (HM)	Children and Young Peoples Voluntary Sector Strategic Lead Manager, Richmond CVS
Sara Doyle (SD)	Associate Director for Identification & Assessment, AfC
Alex Hardy (AH)	Independent Supporter, Ruils
Tracy Mabbs (TMa)	Early Years provider representative
Jade	Young person
Kelly Dooley (KD)	Headteacher, The Richmond upon Thames School
Kirsty Hogg (KH)	Commissioning Support Lead, Richmond Council
Minta Townshend (MT)	Richmond Parent Carer Forum
Nikki Craig (NC)	AfC Board representative
Toni Whitehouse (TW)	Head of School, Richmond upon Thames College
Ivan Pryce (IP)	Chief Executive, Auriga Academy Trust & Headteacher, Strathmore School
Michael Smith (MS)	Associate Director of Finance, AfC
John Street (JS)	Adult Services, Richmond Council
Grace Over (GO)	Participation Officer for Children and Young People with SEND, AfC
Martin Ellis (ME)	Director of Transformation, CCG
Janice Riley (JRi)	PA to Ian Dodds, AfC, minutes

Apologies:	
Claire Schneider (CS)	Clinical Service Manager for Paediatric Therapies
Laura Turner (LT)	CEO, Richmond Mencap
Zoe Bloomfield (ZB)	Clinical Business Unit Manager Wandsworth and Richmond 0-19 and Specialist Services
Natalie Douglas (ND)	Deputy Director Clinical Services for Richmond and Southwest London
Alison Danks (AD)	Associate Director of Health Services, AfC
Jason Jones (JJ)	Principal, Richmond upon Thames College

Tonia Michaelides (TM)	Executive Locality Director, Richmond and Kingston, NHS South West London CCG
Ian Hutchings (IH)	Headteacher, Sheen Mount Primary School

1. Introductions and welcome

ID welcomed everyone to the meeting and there was a round of introductions.

2. Children and young people update

GO introduced Jade and shared a presentation detailing Jade's own personal experiences. Jade talked through the presentation. ID thanked Jade and noted that it is extremely important that professionals do listen to young people's wishes and views. ID asked if there were any questions for Jade.

AW asked what would be the best/easiest way for young people to be able to share their views. Jade responded that general listening and asking is most helpful.

CR asked Jade whether she feels parents can get in the way and what parents can do to help. Jade responded that her Mum was quite good and always asked Jade what she wanted and how she could help. Just feeling listened to is very important.

CP asked how Jade has found home schooling. Jade responded that it has been more difficult and she has had to arrange exams through centres and fund them herself. Her Mum joined Facebook groups to seek advice from other families home schooling their children.

AC asked about challenges across the system and asked what had worked well when working with the Ministry of Justice or other partners that perhaps AfC could learn from. Jade responded that they were very open and discussions were held with young people where the adults left the room and then returned to take questions/listen to views. Listening and taking issues/views on board is key.

HM asked Jade what is next for her and whether there is support for her and her Mum in the process. Jade advised that she is doing A levels with one of her tutors and applying for an EHCP. She went on to say that she was considering attending a college in Kings Cross but there was no support available and she felt the commute would be too much. She will be doing online courses and is also waiting to hear regarding medical support.

ID thanked Jade again and wished her good luck with her exams. ID added that he hopes we are able to support Jade in her future.

3. Parent and carer update

CR noted that she will be presenting on the DME item later in the agenda.

4. SEND Futures Plan update report and dashboard

AW thanked contributors to the draft update of the SEND Futures Plan. Healthwatch gave some very useful commentary as well as valuable input from RCVS and the PCF. Data has been released from the DfE which is the first since the pandemic. In England in 2020 the total increase in the number of EHC plans is 10.4% compared to 2019 and there is an 11%

increase in new plans which is similar to the increase in calendar year 2019. Full details are available in the report shared with the agenda. AW highlighted a couple of items below:

Workstream 1 – great input from young people at the social care away day in April and social workers felt it was the highlight of the day. The SEND Register has been well received and 39% of people who signed up do not have an EHCP which is very helpful as we have been trying to reach out more to this cohort.

Workstream 2 – good to have Karel on board. AW thanked JT and wished her luck as she is leaving AfC. MS will be taking JT's place on the SEND Partnership Board and as co-lead of Workstream 2 on Joint Commissioning.

Workstream 3 – AW thanked school colleagues and welcomed Toni Whitehouse to the Board representing Richmond upon Thames College. Jason Jones from Richmond upon Thames College will also be attending future meetings.

Workstream 4 – AW noted some good multi agency work.

Workstream 5 – output from the workshop on outcomes which took place on 16 March are being used to further develop this work.

Finance – the percentage of total spend in our local schools as opposed to outside the local area in for example the independent sector has increased which is positive as it exemplifies the improvements in the local offer. The increase in the total number of EHC plans is lower than national although the average cost of an EHCP has stopped decreasing which is a concern.

Dashboard - AW noted that this will be the last time the dashboard is published in its current form as it is being updated to reflect updates in the plan and the new reporting requirements of the Safety Valve Agreement. The next dashboard we share will be in its new format.

CR asked how we account for the increase in plans being lower. AW advised there is further detail in annex 1 of the SEND Futures Plan which breaks down the figures into new plans and those which have ceased. In 2020 quite a few plans ended as they were no longer required. MT asked why a plan would cease. AC advised that data cleansing has taken place and there were some plans which were no longer required for a variety of reasons. Some young people had gone on to higher education, are now working, have left the borough or have achieved their outcomes. AC added that this should be seen as a positive for many young people who have achieved their goals and no longer need an EHCP. ID noted there has been an increase in home education across the board for young people and asked if there has been an increase in EHCPs alongside this. AC responded that there has not but there is discussion around parents/young people not wanting to attend school although this has not lead to an increase in home education.

AW noted that when speaking to other local authorities many do say that on an annual basis there will be data fluctuations. AH noted that a useful indicator would be how many applications for an EHC Needs Assessment are received in a quarter and how many are not successful. AH added that he is experiencing reluctance from schools to submit

applications. AW responded that there is nothing in the DfE agreement which changes thresholds, it is asking for better scrutiny. We do monitor this data and it can be added to the dashboard. AC noted that the numbers do fluctuate based on academic and calendar year.

Action: AW to add number of EHC Needs Assessment applications and how many are not successful to the data dashboard.

MT stated that it does feel as though there is a change to thresholds from the DfE agreement. AW responded that it is more about working with schools to identify needs as early as possible and putting in support as early as possible which will hopefully create a positive outcome for the young person and avoid the need for an EHCP.

CR asked whether we are able to track young people with SEND but not an EHCP who are being home educated. AC responded that we do track the number of young people with the Education Welfare Service. CP added that it is difficult for us to monitor achievements or outcomes as the oversight becomes the family's responsibility. CR clarified that she was simply asking for numbers. CP responded that we do get monthly figures and we feel they have settled and are looking more encouraging.

5. Learning from the Kingston SEND LGA Peer Review

ID explained that there was a recent LGA peer review in Kingston. There was a wide variety of professionals from various backgrounds reviewing services including PCF members, schools and other local authorities. ID presented the recommendations and suggested we think about whether any of them also apply to Richmond.

We have been advised that we should receive the finalised report in 4 to 6 weeks and we will share with the group once received. ID asked the group for any feedback in terms of whether we feel any of these issues relate to Richmond.

KD noted in relation to recommendation 3, our prediction on growth is higher than GLA but we are using a wider range of data so we believe ours is more accurate. Annex 1 of the SEND Futures Plan breaks down the projection and gives more detail including age profiling of plans currently in the system. We are comfortable with our projections and they are published on the Local Offer website.

ME asked whether there were any health elements identified in the review. ID advised that we will need to wait for the final report to give details but there was positive feedback in relation to the DCO role. There was a question around strategic partnership and buy in but we will have more detail in the final report. They also identified issues around waiting times and it was agreed this was in common with Richmond.

6. Children and Young People Missing Education including consideration of Dual or Multiple Exceptionality

This was identified at a previous meeting and agreed that we would look into what we can do to try and make some improvements. CR shared a presentation regarding DME which is included with the minutes for information. Early identification is really important although this is often very difficult and alternative methods of tracking/monitoring should be used. JR noted that they see large numbers of young people with this issue. PF noted that it is really important that schools understand their young people and would like to see more screening carried out in schools. There is an online tool available to help

with this. AC would be keen to hear from schools to see whether they feel this is a problem. KD responded that she would need to discuss with the SENCO but would be happy to share the slides with other headteachers and SENCOs in order to gain some feedback.

Action: KD to take forward with Headteachers.

TW added that this is a real challenge for colleges if the condition hasn't been picked up prior to this stage.

ID noted the request for a working group to take this forward and responded that it should be taken forward through Workstream 4 – Early Intervention and Transition. KD added that it could be included as part of the Quality First Teaching conversation which takes place at Workstream 4.

GO added that this is very much parallel with the views of young people so would be good to bring them into the conversation. AC added that we will need to ensure health partners are part of the discussions. It was also agreed that we need to do some work with older young people who have hit crisis point after school years.

Action: AS to be invited to Workstream 4

AW advised that we will now complete an exercise using a jamboard and explained how to use this. The completed jamboards are included with the minutes.

ID noted there are a large number of comments around anxieties in relation to attending school so we need to look at what more we can do to help with this. There is an important question around how we are defining these young people and whether some are those who don't have a named school. CR added that it is important to address why young people are feel anxiety. ID agreed and added that this goes back to looking at early intervention and support. MT stated that sometimes it is the parents who are not happy with the school that has been identified. ID responded that this exercise has highlighted that we don't know enough and this needs more investigation. Earlier partnership working is key and can make a significant difference. It was agreed to pick this up again at the next board once we have scoped out the presentation on findings and had further discussions at the Early Intervention and Transition workstream.

Action: AW to add as an agenda item at the next meeting.

7. Previous minutes/actions

AC updated on the request for data from other boroughs. AC has contacted 8 partners across South London and is waiting to hear back. Some were more receptive than others.

The graduated response / Threshold Guidance is in the Golden Binder but Sheldon Snashall is doing some further work and the updated information will be shared once completed.

PCF to share feedback – MT noted that they are in the middle of a survey at the moment so didn't want to detract from that. CR advised that the guidance is comprehensive but does need to be more parent friendly. Two key issues below:

- Plan applications which are declined but then go on to be accepted. Question raised around the decision making process and whether this is where the problem lies.

- Where plans have been declined, what happens next and what support is available for schools and parents.

AC noted that Workstream 5 is setting up a panel to look at this process and will include an after step discussion. We are also looking at how parents are involved in panels.

8. Forward Plan

Children Missing Education item to be discussed again at next meeting once work has been carried out as part of Workstream 4 with clarity about which groups of young people we want to consider.

9. AOB

None