

Children with Disabilities and Learning Disabilities Partnership Forum (CWDL)

Tuesday 19 June, 6.30pm – Terrace Room, York House, Twickenham

1. Apologies and Introductions

Attendees: Councillor Percival (Chairman), Councillor Allen, Councillor Eady, John Doherty (Richmond Parents and Carers Action Group (RPCAG)), Paul Leonard (Strathmore School), Becky Powell (London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT)), Stewart Jones (LBRuT), Emma Maffre (Parent Partnership Worker), Keith Tysoe (LBRuT), Judy Weleminsky (Three Wings Trust), Michelle Williams (LBRuT), Kieron Travers (LBRuT)

Parent Observers: Mireille Khair, Joanne Kemp, Ian Hendy

Apologies: Jan Tellick (Three Wings Trust), Simon James (LBRuT), Anne Breaks (Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust), Councillor Chappell, Barry Woodward (RPCAG)

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17th April 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

Matters Arising

It was agreed that there were no matters arising from the last meeting that were not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

3. SEN Transport Update

The forum received a verbal update regarding the procurement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport routes to external providers. Brian Castle was in attendance to deliver the update to the forum and he highlighted in particular the following information:

- (i) Due to the need for the Council to reduce spending, sixty per cent of SEN transport routes were to be contracted out. The remaining forty per cent related to adult services as it had been ascertained that the council would provide a more cost-effective service in house.
- (ii) The contract tenders were assessed on cost and quality to ensure that the experience of those using the service was not compromised.
- (iii) Following the tender process it was thought that there would be nine providers serving approximately 120 transport routes. However, an organisation that was to be awarded less than ten routes had claimed on the day of the partnership forum meeting that they had made mistakes in their tender despite being given full details of the routes, the number of children to be collected and the frequency. The report detailing the selected contractors was to go to Cabinet the same week as the Partnership Forum and Mr Castle hoped that if the organisation that had made mistakes did not quote a much higher

rate the problem may be resolved relatively quickly.

In response to questions raised and comments made the forum received the following information from Mr Castle:

- (i) If a new provider needed to be found to replace the provider that had made mistakes in the tender process it was possible that not all transport routes would be live by September 2012. This would affect less than 10 routes.
- (ii) The provider that had made mistakes in the tender process was an existing provider of SEN transport and was popular with parents and the council shared a good working relationship with them.
- (iii) Most children would have a new transport provider by September 2012. This change would need to be well managed and parents would need to be kept well informed throughout the transition.
- (iv) Prior to the routes going out to tender Price Waterhouse Cooper looked at the routes to see if efficiency savings could be made and it was concluded that the routes were already largely optimum.
- (v) The contracting process was a like for like procurement that would not affect the journey times or quality of the journey for the young people that used the service. Savings were made due to two factors:
 - The long length of the contract.
 - The routes had been offered for tender in small groupings rather than looking for one provider to service all routes which allowed for the inclusion of small and medium sized providers to tender for the routes thus creating more competition between providers.

4. Green Paper Update

The forum received a verbal update from Michelle Williams regarding the progress pathfinder authorities had made in implementing the areas of the Green Paper. The Government had sent out next steps for the Support and Aspiration Green Paper. The three priority areas that pathfinder authorities had been working on were:

- (i) A more single assessment process
- (ii) An integrated Education, Health and Care Plan
- (iii) Personalised budgets

The estimated timescale for the Green Paper passing through legislation to the point of Royal assent and implementation was Spring 2014.

In response to questions raised and comments made the forum received the following information from Officers:

- (i) The pathfinder authorities had only just begun identifying families to work with to implement the priority areas.
- (ii) Richmond should aim to develop alongside the pathfinder authorities due to the tight timescale.
- (iii) Officers wanted to hear the opinions of parents in the planning stages and were in discussions about how to consult with a cross section of parents of disabled children and young people in the borough.
- (iv) The challenge of delivering the vision of the Green Paper could not

be underestimated. However, Officers were positive that once the transition had been made, the system would be more streamlined and parents would have more opportunities to be consulted on issues.

It was RESOLVED:

1. Ms Williams would liaise with community groups to identify a cross section of parents to consult during the planning stages
2. Stewart Jones would report back to the forum at the next meeting from the conference he was due to attend on the Green Paper.

5. Transition Action Plan

The Transition Action Plan had now been completed. At the time of the forum it was waiting to be signed off by the transition board, therefore the forum were informed that it was possible that slight changes could be made.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Transition Action Plan was to be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.

6. Ofsted Report

Kieran Travers presented to the forum the report of the recent Ofsted inspection carried out of services for looked after children and children with special educational needs in Richmond. Kieran Travers highlighted the following information to the Forum:

- (i) The process of the inspection was very rigorous with 700 hours of inspection. Five inspectors at Senior Officer level or above in Children's Services carried out the inspection. The Inspectors received a list of children by profile (not name) and selected a sample of case files to inspect.
- (ii) In the record of main findings, LBRuT received 'good' (meaning the service exceeded minimum requirements) for all areas except 'Making a Positive Contribution' where they received 'outstanding'.
- (iii) The final report gave areas for improvement and timescales by which the improvements should have been implemented. The safeguarding board were responsible for monitoring the progress of improvements.

In response to questions made and comments raised, the Forum heard the following information from Officers:

- (i) The Inspectors looked at three CWDL cases closely. They also visited the Croft Centre, Heatham House and met with both Officers and the Safeguarding Inspector.
- (ii) The Inspectors were particularly impressed with the provisions at the Croft Centre, the work around transitions and partnership groups such as this forum. Inspectors thought disabled children received a good service in LBRuT.

7. Richmond Parents and Carers Action Group Update

John Doherty provided the Forum with an update from RPCAG. The Forum heard that:

- (i) The funding of RPCAG had been reduced from £15 000 to £9 000.
- (ii) The focus of RPCAG would be workshops rather than fun days and information days. RPCAG had been working with Me too and Co on developing workshops.
- (iii) The group had met with Nina Bantoll from Access about providing information to Parents about the services they could access such as short breaks and grants.
- (iv) RPCAG had decided to focus on providing support to families with children in the early years of disability or learning disability. It was important to reach these parents as soon as possible to give them support and explain to parents what happens.
- (v) RPCAG had been working closely with Keith Tysoe regarding partnership programmes.

8. Any other Business

Development of Special Schools

Keith Tysoe provided an update to the Forum on the progress towards multi-site special schools. The Forum heard that:

- (i) Following the SEN task group report a consultation document was sent to local schools, social services and RPCAG to gather views on the development of special schools and the potential for multi-site special schools in the borough.
- (ii) The multi site proposal was for continued SEN provision at the purpose built Strathmore School and the unit at Russell School and for the addition of SEN provision at Greycourt school and the new Clifton Road site, with the latter to include sixth form provisions.
- (iii) The consultation deadline was 3 August 2012 and a report was to be presented to Cabinet after that time.

Mencap Campaign

Councillor Percival fed back to the Forum the key messages from a Mencap conference she had attended at the House of Commons. Mencap had launched two campaigns one centred on Hate Crime and the other on Mate Crime (exploitation of vulnerable people).

Transport Working Group

Paul Leonard updated the Forum on the progress of the transport working group report. The group had been looking at public transport and the lack of understanding of some staff running the transport. The group had found that the unsupportive attitude of some staff put off young parents from becoming carers.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the transport working group report be brought to the next meeting.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

It was RESOLVED:

1. The next meeting would be moved to Monday 15 October at 6pm in the Terrace Room, York House.

The meeting which started at 6.30pm ended at 7.30pm.