

## EPCF Steering Group Meeting 08.11.2018

At the Lido Centre, West Ealing at 11am

### Minutes

**Present:** Matthew Jeatt (Chair & Parent), Nick Radclyffe (EalingHelp & Parent), Brigitte Bistrick-Bryan (EPCF Admin & Parent), Mariya Zlatinova (EalingISAID), Tom Quilter (EalingMencap), Helen Jackson (CONTACT Ealing), Gabriel Jones (EalingMencap), Ruby Sangha (Parent)

**Apologies:** Kirstie Ferrett (Parent), Sam Schmidt (Parent), Mary Doody (Parent); Sarah Theobalds (Parent), Rashid Wahab (Parent and incoming Treasurer)

<b>Action Points</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
To develop options for new legal framework for the EPCF and plan SG training accordingly.	Matthew & Rashid	Next SG meeting (16.1.19)
To develop relevant required policies	Matthew & Rashid	Next SG meeting (16.1.19)
<b>Open Action Point:</b> To speak to Gary R about additional funding for a Training Project as agreed by the SG in September	Matthew	ASAP
To insert paragraph on review / monitoring mechanism into the Participation Strategy	Matthew	ASAP
To organise workshop focusing on effectiveness of the Strategy and possible need for changes open to all parents	Brigitte	In the new year
To contact Tamara Quinn to establish if the Rainmaker consultation is still ongoing and who, if anyone, is currently being consulted with	Brigitte	ASAP
To invite councillors to the event at St Andrew's Church Centre on the 26 <sup>th</sup> November	Brigitte	ASAP
To explore support option for the EPCF / EalingHELP website	Ruby	Before next meeting

To meet to discuss the EPCF website	Matthew, Ruby and Nick	Before next SG meeting
To send SG meeting minutes to Nick for publication on the EalingHELP website starting with minutes of meetings in 2018	Brigitte	Ongoing
To arrange a date for the first planning meeting for the SEND Advice event	Brigitte	ASAP
To send the headings of the Issue Log to Helen and Maryia	Brigitte	ASAP
To send an update of Issue Log to Nick regularly for publication on EalingHELP website	Brigitte	ASAP

## 1. Introduction

Matthew (Chair) welcomed everyone, in particular the new members of the group, Ruby as a newly elected parent member of the Steering Group, and Helen as the new Project Manager of CONTACT Ealing.

Matthew informed the group that Rashid Wahab had agreed to become treasurer and would therefore also join the Steering Group.

Tom told everyone that he was leaving EalingMencap for a fantastic job opportunity. Everyone was extremely unhappy for Ealing and us but very happy for Tom.

## 2. Treasury Role

Matthew explained that he had spoken to Rashid the previous day and was due to meet him next week to start the handover. He felt certain that Rashid could contribute more than simply the treasury work and had already put in work to find out about various options for the legal format for the EPCF.

Q: Nick asked if there were national Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Parent Forums.

A: Matthew replied that to his knowledge there were none and that for the Ealing PCF the main KPI was continued existence and a further increase in membership numbers and representation work. Several new policies were also needed, for example a new Finance Policy. Rashid had pointed out to him that before undergoing a training session with the aim of re-constituting the Steering Group should be clear on our own vision for the Forum.

**ACTION: Matthew and Rashid to develop options for new legal framework for the EPCF and plan SG training accordingly.**

**ACTION: Matthew and Rashid to develop relevant required policies.**

### 3. Action Points from last meeting's minutes

- Proposal to Gary re additional funding for the EPCF

Matthew had not spoken to Gary about the project previously agreed by the SG yet. Brigitte asked if this did not mean that it was too late by now as Gary had asked for the project proposal to be given to him by October. Matthew responded that he was confident that there was still time and that he was hoping to speak to Gary soon.

#### **ACTION: Matthew to speak to Gary about the additional funding for a Training Project as agreed by the SG in September**

- Participation Strategy

Matthew and Nick had met with Chris Jones and Natasha Patten, Gary R and Tom had not been able to attend the meeting. They had gone through the draft strategy paper with focus on the Action Points. Gary had asked for the action plan to be formatted slightly differently to match other self-evaluation documents used by the LA. The strategy was now with Chris who had agreed to run it past Ealing's Legal Department before sending the final draft back then to be presented to the next SEND Executive Board meeting. Matthew pointed out that some of the chosen action points were identified as aims rather than actions and corrected.

Brigitte reported that a parent member had requested to see the draft participation strategy document as presented to the ESCAN / EPCF meeting in September. She had so far not done this and had simply responded that we felt it was impractical to send out draft strategy / policy documents to all members (over 800 now) for comments and that it had been shown to all elected parent members of the SG as well as partner organisations. The parent was unhappy with that response. Brigitte asked the SG for their views as to whether she should email out the draft Participation Strategy document that had been discussed in September.

Ruby agreed that sharing documents with over 800 people for comments was not practical. Matthew reminded the group of the need to treat every member equally and that documents would therefore either have to be made available to all rather than simply one member or not at all.

Tom suggested that it would be unfair on the professionals involved to publish a draft document as it was not final. He thought it might be a compromise to send out the strategy part of the document but not the action points. He added that it may be a problem to publish a draft document that had not been checked by Ealing's legal department.

Nick stated that this raised the bigger question on how we consulted with our members on any action / document or strategy. Brigitte suggested an open Focus Group meeting for anyone wanting to comment on the Participation Strategy in the new year. However, she acknowledged that any criticism or new ideas coming out of such a meeting would only be able to contribute to a review of the Strategy rather than its first version which would by then have been agreed.

Gabriel acknowledged many parents' anxiety that any document or plan for participation could be stage managed by the LA. Brigitte suggested inserting a yearly monitoring / review mechanism into the strategy document to ensure all, including parent members, would have a way of influencing the strategy going forwards. That way comments and criticism voiced by individual parent members would be able to influence the Strategy long term.

Matthew reminded everyone that the Strategy had been developed with our partner organisations and asked if / how they had consulted with their members.

Tom reiterated that the Participation part of the strategy was based on national policy and definitions with little need or room for changes. The only part that parent members, young people or adults with disabilities could suggest changes for was the Ealing specific part of the Strategy. He suggested for that part to be the focus of a focus group or workshop open to all interested parties.

The SG agreed for Matthew to insert a paragraph into the Strategy on how and when the document will be monitored and reviewed once he receives the draft back from Chris. A workshop on the Participation Strategy would then be organised in the new year to establish if and how the Strategy was working, i.e. if anything had changed as a result of it. This workshop would be open to all members.

**ACTION: Matthew to insert paragraph on review / monitoring mechanism into the Participation Strategy to enable parent members to contribute to the strategy in future**

**ACTION: Brigitte to organise workshop focusing on effectiveness of the Strategy and possible need for changes open to all parents after a suitable time in the new year**

- Rainmaker Consultation

Brigitte summarised the background of the consultation as discussed at the last meeting. Matthew, Tom, Mariya and Brigitte had attended a feedback session by the Rainmaker Consultancy on their findings so far. She was still unclear as to the timeline of their review, as conflicting messages had been sent out with regards to the length of the consultation. Mariya confirmed that EalingISAID had not been contacted again despite previously being asked to meet. Neither had Tom / the Young People's Power Group.

**ACTION: Brigitte to contact Tamara Quinn to establish if the Rainmaker consultation is still ongoing and who, if anyone, was currently being consulted with.**

She reported that the feedback itself had highlighted points that the EPCF and others had highlighted as well and had contained honest criticism. Problems with the EHCP processes, particularly in relation to the IT systems being used, were identified. Rainmaker proposed various solutions around new IT systems and changes to the role of the EHC Coordinators but when questioned which of these changes would now be implemented neither Gary R nor John M (who were both at the same presentation) responded with any clarity. Any outcomes of the review now seem dependent on funding.

Nick pointed out that any changes to the IT system would most likely not work on the existing Ealing IT system, a problem he had frequently come across when trying to influence the Local Offer website. Mariya added that she had attended various London wide meetings on IT systems designed to support the EHCP process as other boroughs were struggling with similar issues.

Brigitte summarised that the results of the Rainmaker consultation as far as we knew so far had in her view been fair and accurate but that it was not clear if there was going to be any outcome of it. She did acknowledge the fact that for the first time, representatives from the EPCF had been invited to receive feedback on such a consultation.

Nick asked what people thought this should mean for our working relationship with Rainmakers. He also highlighted as one continuing flaws in the EHCP process, e.g. that

videos produced to show the Young Person's view were frequently not shown or included in the documentation the plans were based on.

Matthew pointed out that the EPCF's role was to hold Ealing to account and suggested for us to continue to monitor if the consultation would result in any changes to the system at all.

Ruby asked who the new Councillor or Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services was and suggested to contact her to highlight the problems in the system. She had had very positive experiences with involving councillors in her own children's EHCP process when nothing had worked until she involved the local councillor which had an immediate effect on the work around her children's EHCPs. She also reminded the SG of the very successful and inspirational Heller House campaign where parents had convinced the Cabinet to send Ealing officials back to the drawing board.

Matthew agreed that this could be helpful. In the past individual councillors have supported the EPCF's work, lastly Theresa Mullins as part of the work with the Bladder & Bowel Service. Nick suggested to invite interested councillors to one of our Steering Group meetings. Ruby added that they could also be invited to one of the EPCF's open events for parents to give them the opportunity to see and hear for themselves about the issues faced.

**ACTION: Brigitte to invite councillors to the event at St Andrew's Church Centre on the 26<sup>th</sup> November**

Helen told the SG that CONTACT continued to receive some calls from parents who struggled with their EHCPs. Mariya added that ISAID received so many calls from parents that their capacity was stretched and that she was greatly concerned about parents who did not receive support before the draft plan.

Helen was surprised to hear that there were problems in Ealing with EHCPs as she had worked as an EHC Coordinator in Hertfordshire previously where things had worked well. Everyone confirmed that there continued to be problems with EHCPs in Ealing, including timeliness and quality of outcomes set. Matthew pointed out that his daughter's EHCP had taken 3 years to be finalised.

- Training for SG

Matthew confirmed that he and Rashid would take this forward (see action point above).

- Hounslow Cooperation

Brigitte informed the group that the work with Hounslow around a joint Parent Information session had been postponed for now. The next joint Dads Group meeting was due to take place the following week.

#### **4. Preparation for Ofsted Workshops**

Matthew summarised the information sent out per emails already. Ealing had instructed a consultant to run pre-Ofsted workshops with services. Originally the EPCF had been asked to chair one of the workshops focusing on participation but that we had argued for parent representation to be included in all the groups set up. This had been agreed.

There was some concern expressed about supporting the LA in showing participation at a more advanced level than we feel it is but all agreed there was value in attending the workshops to learn more about the Ofsted inspection and how parents could contribute once it

takes place. Matthew explained that he had been told the expectation was for everyone to raise three things that are going well, three that could be better and three topics of our choice.

Tom pointed out that there may be other groups which were not chosen for the preparation workshops but may not have parent representation on them. Brigitte agreed to follow this up with Julie Lewis. The group of young people had already met with SEN officers to prepare for the inspection and would meet with Ofsted inspectors in due course without any additional workshop.

**ACTION: Brigitte to follow up with Julie Lewis if there were other groups without parent representatives**

Nick pointed out that he could attend meetings on the Tuesday (20<sup>th</sup>).

## **5. Transparency of EPCF**

Due to the impending closure of the EalingHELP website at the end of March next year the group discussed how the current transparency could be continued and improved. Nick explained the hopes of possibly hosting the core site of EalingHELP which might enable us to continue to show minutes of meetings there but this needed to be clarified. The operating system for the website is old and may not last much longer.

Matthew acknowledged that the EPCF website was very basic and in need of developing. Ruby told the group that she may have contact to organisations that would be willing to host the website for no charge and agreed to explore this.

**ACTION: Ruby to explore support option for the EPCF / EalingHELP website**

Matthew and Nick and Ruby agreed to meet to look at possibilities for developing the EPCF website in the future.

**ACTION: Matthew, Nick and Ruby to meet to discuss the EPCF website**

Brigitte asked if the SG could decide to publish the SG meeting minutes from this year (2018) onwards to increase our transparency. All agreed that this should happen from now onwards.

**ACTION: Brigitte to send SG meeting minutes to Nick for publication on the EalingHELP website starting with minutes of meetings in 2018**

## **6. SEND Advice event 2019**

Brigitte told the group that the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 had been agreed with John Miller and Gary Redhead for a repeat of last year's SEND Advice event which had been very well received. She asked if other SG members would be happy to join a planning meeting soon. Nick agreed to attend, others if they were free.

**ACTION: Brigitte to arrange a date for the first planning meeting for the SEND Advice event**

Brigitte asked if the LA had paid for the hall hire last year. Matthew confirmed that some additional funding had been given for this at the end of the financial year last time.

## **7. Any Other Business**

- a) Mariya told the SG that EalingISAID continued to receive a high number of referrals and were inundated with case work. A lot of work resulted from parents taking the LA to tribunal. Often the cases were resolved through mediation and ISAID contributed to tribunals being avoided, however, this created a lot of work and necessitated more than one meeting. She agreed to pass on more exact numbers and percentages of cases resolved before tribunal to the group when available.
- b) Matthew reminded everyone of the need to pass on any issue to Brigitte for inclusion in the Issue Log. Helen asked to be sent the headings of the log to be clearer about the structure and content. Nick asked if an update of the Issue Log could be sent for him to put on the EalingHELP website regularly.

**ACTION: Brigitte to send the headings of the Issue Log to Helen and Mariya**

**ACTION: Brigitte to send an update of Issue Log to Nick regularly for publication on EalingHELP website**

## **8. Date for next SG meeting**

16<sup>th</sup> January 2019, Brigitte to confirm location.

Brigitte told the SG about her meeting with ECIL management and suggested to meet at their location. She added she thought it could be a good idea for them to become an EPCF partner organisation as they now offered services to children and carers of children with disabilities, too. They will also attend the social with partners that she had planned for the 11<sup>th</sup> December at the Carer Centre.

All agreed for the next meeting to take place at the ECIL premises if possible and explore the possibility of working with them.

The meeting finished at 1.15pm.

*Minutes taken by Brigitte Bistrick-Bryan*