

ESCAN / EPCF Team Meeting

5th October 2017

St Andrew's Church Centre, Ealing, 10am – 12o'clock

Action Points	By whom	By when
To suggest representatives for Health Services and School Effectiveness team	Natasha P and Debbie G	Next meeting
To set up a Focus Group of parents to review SEN funding and provisions in Ealing, including ARPs by November / December	EPCF (lead Matthew and Brigitte)	By December 2017
To continue to work on a map of all ESCAN boards / groups in Ealing detailing their interactions and the flow of information between them	Helen G and Matthew J	By next meeting
To re-run the EHC plan survey in January	EHCP (Brigitte to lead)	January 2018
To share SEN attainment data with EPCF	John M	ASAP
To ensure scrutiny of SEN attainment data is on the agenda for the next meeting and that a representative from the School Effectiveness team is invited to the meeting	Co-Chairs (Debbie G and Matthew J)	For next meeting
To review data and feed back views	EPCF	For next meeting
Subgroup to meet to consult with legal department and agree on a model for parent representation on SEN Panel	John M, Michael B, Charity G, Sam S, Natasha P, Chris J, (John M to lead)	For next meeting
To follow up on option of leaving anonymous feedback on Local Offer website	Helen G	ASAP
To set up Task & Finish Group to review EHCP processes	John M	Before next meeting
To invite a representative from Adult Services to the group	Matthew & Debbie (Co-Chairs)	For next meeting

Present:

Co – Chairs: Debbie Grey (Assistant Director ESCAN)

Matthew Jeatt (EPCF-Chair)

Other members: Manjit Bharna (EalingISAID); Brigitte Bistrick-Bryan (EPCF- Administrator); Michael Bonello (CWD Team, ESCAN); Rachel Burton (Clinical Lead Physiotherapy); Mary Doody (EPCF); Charity Gondwe (PESTS Outreach Worker); Helen Green (SEN Strategy & Inclusion); Chris Jones (CWD Team); Gabriel Jones (EalingMencap); John Miller (EP); Mita Mistry (Clinical Lead Speech & Language Therapy); Natasha Patten (CCG); Nick Radclyffe (EalingHelp); Gary Redhead (Assistant Director ESCAN); Sam Schmidt (EPCF); Anette Steenkamp (Clinical Lead Occupational Therapy)

SEN Transport presentation: Tamara Quinn (Strategic Lead Schools Planning & Resources)

Apologies: Kirstie Ferrett (EPCF); Sarah Theobalds (EPCF); Tom Quilter (PfA Manager EalingMencap)

Minutes: Brigitte Bistrick-Bryan

1. Welcome

Debbie G welcomed all as the Chair of this meeting.

2. Terms of Reference

The group's Terms of Reference (ToR) were reviewed and agreed unanimously with the following amendments:

- a) The ToR will be reviewed annually in the autumn term meeting.
- b) The group will continue to meet once a term.
- c) Under paragraph 1 (Purpose) the part sentence "SG Partners and individual parents/carers as required (EPCF)" will be taken out. The sentence now reads: "*To be a forum for discussion and consultation and to agree actions between ESCAN Service Leaders and Ealing parent and carers as represented by the Ealing Parent & Carer Forum Steering Group.*"
- d) Under paragraph 2 (Membership) EalingHELP will be added as a separate Partner Organisation.

A brief discussion was held about including the Specialist Health Visiting team, School Nursing Team and a representative from the School Effectiveness team. Natasha P and Debbie G agreed to think of the best people to represent those services in the group for the next meeting.

ACTION: Natasha P and Debbie G to suggest representatives for Health Services and School Effectiveness team at next meeting

Under paragraph 2 (Membership) “if agreed by both Co-Chairs” will be added to the last sentence. It now reads: “*Members may agree to invite others to contribute to the meetings from time to time so that we may access specialist knowledge or experience to support our discussion / debate / actions if agreed by both Co-Chairs.*”

- e) Under Paragraph 2 (Membership) the name “Contact A Family” will be changed to “Contact” as the organisation recently changed its name.

3. ESCAN Update on spending pressures and transport

Debbie (Co-Chair) suggested a change in the order of agenda items to enable Gary and Tamara Q to contribute now.

a) Spending Pressures

Gary explained to the group that, as part of changes the government has made to the way schools are being funded, the dedicated school grant was now delivered in separate blocks e.g. Early Years, Schools and High Needs (funding for ARPs etc) and the LA’s ability to move funding around between blocks had been reduced. In the past money had been moved from the Schools block to the High Needs block which was now no longer possible and resources were tight even within the schools funding. Overall there was a £750,000 increase in the high needs funding block, however, this fell short of the approximately £2.2 million increase in required funding to meet increased needs. He added that whilst the Council could carry forward a deficit for a short period ultimately all deficits had to be paid.

Q: Matthew (Co-Chair) asked if the £750,000 was a similar amount to the funding previously moved from the school block to the High Needs funding.

A: Gary replied that the £750,000 only made up about one third of the money previously taken from the school funding.

Tamara added that there would be a consultation on School and Early Years funding. The £2.2 million was mainly linked to planned expansions and did not take into account the rising pressures in special provisions such as rising salaries, pensions, inflation etc. She was due to meet with the specialist provisions, Helen and John at the beginning of the commissioning cycle to establish the exact need, it could be in excess of £2.2 million. The issue would then be taken to the Schools Forum in November and a decision on shifting funding was likely to be taken at the Forum’s January meeting.

Gary told the group that he intended to ask all schools to transfer half of their money received for SEND provision back into the High Needs funding block. He added that the LA was also proactively reviewing children’s placements to see if some children could be accommodated in small groups in mainstream schools rather than in special schools. In his view there was also scope to expand ARPs to reduce costs for specialist provisions. He was planning to work with schools to achieve a more even and consistent provision across schools, particularly for children with a diagnosis of Autism

with support from Springhallow and Castlebar schools via the Autism Education Trust program.

Gary stated that some Local Authorities had decided to reduce the level of top up attached to EHC plans but that Ealing did not want to take this approach. The biggest growth had been in children with substantial needs attending mainstream schools. There was a need to look at how the LA was spending money on the mainstream block whilst balancing parents' expectations.

Gary explained that the SENASS team in charge of the EHCPs was funded by the council, not the school grant.

Q: Brigitte asked how likely it was that mainstream schools would voluntarily give some of their money to the high needs block considering the immense financial pressure all schools were now under.

A: Gary replied that as half of children with an EHCP now attended mainstream settings the schools realised in his view that the high needs funding benefitted the right children. The LA had lobbied the national government strongly not to ring fence the money as they needed the flexibility. Together with Julie Lewis he had met with the Ealing school Sencos the previous day and had started the discussion on that occasion. He felt confident that schools would agree to contribute to the high needs fund.

Q: Sam asked when and how way parents would be involved in the discussions if the LA was talking about substantially changing the way it was funding special needs support in schools.

A: Gary pointed out that this was the reason the item had been put on the agenda as he had wanted to start the discussion with the Ealing Parent Carer Forum. He had also highlighted the need to work with the EPCF at yesterday's meeting with the school SENCOs. He told the group that he was happy to engage with parents as a group when these choices would be made.

Matthew (Co-Chair) pointed out that parents had in the past often been consulted when all decisions had been taken and that real parent/carer engagement could only take place if they were consulted at the beginning of any review and decision process. He pointed out that the EPCF had worked hard to reach out to more mainstream schools both via the school SENCOs and parents and that the Forum would be happy to take part in a focus group on the discussions around changing of school funding. Gary replied that some SENCOs had at the meeting expressed willingness to participate on this and create a hub for the review and decision process.

Q: Matthew (Co-Chair) asked if the agenda discussed at the meetings of the Schools Forum would deal with the funding for 2018/19 or 2019/20.

A: Gary replied that the School Forum's meeting in January would decide on the funding for 2018/19.

Matthew pointed out that this did not leave a lot of time for parents to be consulted and the EPCF to gather parents' views. He agreed for the EPCF to set up a focus group of parents concentrating on SEN funding and provisions, including ARPs which would feed back to the LA regularly.

ACTION: EPCF to set up a Focus Group of parents to review SEN funding and provisions in Ealing, including ARPs by November / December

Gary added that there was money for 2 additional ARPs as well as a grant of approximately £1 million for improving the school learning environment. Discussions could be held around ARPs for other needs rather than Social Communication Delay. Many children with moderate learning difficulties were now attending mainstream schools. He suggested that parental feedback on these questions would be very useful.

b) SEN Transport

Tamara reported that money had been used to put additional staff into the SEN transport department. There were currently 3 transport officers who managed routes and passenger assistants. The assessment for eligibility for SEN transport was still carried out by the SENASS team in ESCAN.

All passenger assistants were now being given mobile phones to make communication easier for parents and school staff. They had also undergone additional training which had been well received. The department was currently recruiting a transport manager as well as 2 more permanent staff members.

Q: Brigitte reported that a parent had been told by a member of the SENASS team that SEN transport was only available to children in specialist provision and asked if this was correct.

A: Tamara and John replied that this was not correct. Distance to the provision as well as need were the two eligibility criteria for SEN transport, not the type of placement.

Q: Natasha asked if the training for passenger assistants included managing health issues.

A: Tamara replied that some health training was included but that it was mainly around awareness and procedures, not actual medical training. Passenger assistants were directed to dial 999 in emergencies. However, the PAs should be getting a list of each individual child's medical needs and sometimes more bespoke training could be arranged.

Natasha explained that she was currently trying to get nurses more involved in the EHCP process and that it should always be clear to everyone working with a child who was responsible for what and what the child's needs were.

Q: Mary asked if there was a specialist transport officer for young people with SEN aged 16-25.

A: Tamara replied that currently college transport was sitting within the team and that she was working with her colleges to improve this. The assessment could be brought into the ESCAN travel assessment service. John added that at the moment SEN transport for further education was still dealt with as part of adult social care. Matthew highlighted

that some parents were still being told that there is no transport provision within adult services.

Chris asked if parents would tell him who gave out this information because it was incorrect.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

5. Action Points arising

- a) Helen and Matthew were still due to produce a map of all ESCAN boards and groups in Ealing detailing their interactions. They agreed to bring this to the next meeting.

ACTION: carried forward as per previous minutes

- b) The EPCF had carried out a survey on the quality of EHCPs in Ealing. The survey was still open for another week but 52 responses had so far been received. The results of those responses had been circulated to all and Brigitte read out some of the individual comments parents had left (a summary of the survey is attached to these minutes).

John asked if surveys could in future give parents 5 options for each answer to give a more realistic picture of their rating choices. He did, however, thank the EPCF for the valuable data received through the survey and asked if the same survey could be carried out again in three months' time to see if there were any improvements.

Parental feedback on the issue of communication had been very negative. John responded that communication was now part of the Action Plan for improvement. He also told the group that the EHCos had received more training on listening and communication skills including bespoke training for individual EHCos. With new staff joining in he had now allocated specific time to the more senior EHCos to train new staff in communication skills and pointed out that this was currently work in progress.

All agreed that the survey should be repeated in January to show any changes or trends.

ACTION: EPCF to re-run the EHC plan survey in January

c) SEN in mainstream schools

John presented some new data which indicated an improvement to previous assessment data available. In the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) as well as in KS1 and KS2 children with SEN in mainstream schools in Ealing had been achieving age related expectations on par with the national average for SEN support. There was no secondary data available yet. Children with a statement / EHCP were also on par with the national average except in reading (10% vs 15% national average). John explained that this new data suggested that things were not as bad as previously thought.

Matthew (Co-Chair) pointed out that the EPCF represented parents as they experienced their children's achievements in mainstream schools and the expectations should be higher than the national average. John agreed that the aim should be higher. Helen

commented that there had been progress in that the weaknesses had been clearly identified and could now be addressed.

Q: Nick asked if Ealing was looking at individual schools to find out where children with SEN were underachieving and why.

A: Helen confirmed that individual schools' data had been reviewed at the recent meeting with Headteachers.

All agreed that more time should be dedicated to review the attainment data more closely at the next meeting with members of the school effectiveness team present. John was asked to share the data with the EPCF for parents to be able to look at it in more detail before then, including data for the secondary schools once he receives it.

ACTION: John to share SEN attainment data with EPCF

ACTION: Co-Chairs to ensure scrutiny of SEN attainment data on the agenda for the next meeting and that a representative from the School Effectiveness team is invited to the meeting

ACTION: EPCF to review data and feed back views.

d) Follow up short breaks survey

Debbie (Co-Chair) told the group that a follow up survey would be carried out in the next year. Matthew (Co-Chair) suggested that this should be done sooner rather than later to ensure any feedback could be taken into account before decisions were taken for the summer short break scheme Action EPCF to liaise with DGV

e) Parental representation on the SEN Panel

Helen and John had looked into the models used in other London boroughs. The problems of confidentiality and data protection in particular around health contributions seen by the panel remained. Gary pointed out that there would be no need for a parent representative to contribute to each case as the presence of a parent was more about transparency. Charity suggested consulting with the organisation "Involve" which provided guidelines around parent involvement in health services.

Debbie (Co-Chair) suggested that the discussion had already taken a lot of time and that there was a principle agreement that parent representation on the SEN panel was desirable but that there needed to be confirmation from Health and Social Care how it could work for them. John suggested a separate meeting between Natasha, Chris, himself, Gary and the EPCF to consult with the legal department and come up with a solution. Chris pointed out that there was carer representation on the Fostering & Adoption Panel.

A subgroup was agreed to consist of John Miller, Michael Bonello, Chris Jones, Natasha Pattern, Charity Gondwe and Sam Schmidt.

ACTION: Subgroup to meet to consult with legal department and agree on a model for parent representation on SEN Panel.

f) Helen to clarify anonymous feedback option on Local Offer

Helen agreed to chase this up.

ACTION: Helen to follow up on option of leaving anonymous feedback on Local Offer

All other action points had been completed.

6. EPCF Steering Group Update

a) Brigitte distributed an update on the EPCF. She highlighted the increase in communication and interactions between the different services and the ECPF. Specifically she referred to the small consultation group between Speech Therapy and 4 parent members, communication between OT and the EPCF about phrasing of letters to parents, the involvement of parents on all levels of the Building My Future Project and the connection Natasha P had initiated between the EPCF and the CCG to start to address the grave problems with the Paediatric Bladder & Bowel Service in Ealing. The increase in communication and cooperation was seen by all as a direct consequence of this group.

b) Brigitte also presented the Issue Log which was dominated by the feedback from the two recent surveys (Bladder & Bowel Service as well as EHCPs). She explained that the Forum had wanted to bring an updated version to avoid repeating previously raised issues. Gary pointed out that it would be helpful to have data from the Issue Log on a yearly basis

c) Nick reported on the Listening Event which had taken place on the 20th September under the lead of Tom Quilter from Ealing Mencap. Representatives from the Young People's Champions Group, the Adult Power Group, the EPCF as well as the LA had taken turns to talk about why participation was important and how being listened to can contribute to better outcomes for all. Helen confirmed that the LA would like to repeat this event annually to continue to highlight the value of participation.

Nick explained that all points raised at the event would feed into the Participation Strategy. The small group working towards a Strategy consists of Tom Quilter, Nick Radclyffe, Deborah Dent, Mathew Jeatt, Helen Green and Brigitte Bistrick-Bryan.

d) Sam reported on the EHCP progress / SEND Review group she had participated in over the last 4 years. She reported that the group now had a flowchart any EHCP was supposed to follow, however, she expressed concern that the flowchart did not reflect what the group had agreed on with parents previously. She also reported that there had been many staff changes and staff capacity in the SENASS team continued to be a problem. She emphasised the need to now focus on where the work needed to progress to as enough time had been spent on reviewing what had taken place in the past.

Gary replied that the council was looking at its work processes generally. He pointed out that there could not be a situation where staff had unworkable work-loads. A meeting of the group had been arranged for November where the processes would be looked at and a way to match expectations and resources. He agreed that work needed to be done to put parents at the centre of the process. Sam replied that these discussions had taken place previously and that various solutions had been discussed before.

Debbie (Co-Chair) pointed out the need to work within the KPIs, the budget and parental expectations. John agreed to set up a task and finish group for the processes

to be finalised. Gary, Debbie, Tamara, Helen and John would be members of the group. The group would also discuss if the SEND Review Board should continue to meet in its current form.

Matthew (Co-Chair) asked if a parent presentative could be in the group but John replied that this would be an internal management review only. Matthew (Co-Chair) emphasised again the value of engaging parents as early as possible in review processes.

ACTION: John to set up a Task & Finish Group to review EHCP processes.

At this point Debbie G had to leave the meeting and Matthew J took over the role of Chair.

9. ESCAN Service Leads Update

a) Speech & Language Therapy Service

Mita reported that there is now one Speech Therapist allocated to each maintained school in Ealing. She had met with a small group of parents to discuss ways to address waiting times and was meeting them again in a few days' time.

b) Physiotherapy Service

Rachel reported that the Physiotherapy Service was working with the Wheelchair Service and Mediquip to address continuing issues around supplies, timelines and communication. She was also working with Helen on supporting education in mainstream schools including training for mainstream school staff. The training was designed to ensure the therapy provision was more holistic and applied throughout the whole school day. Matthew (Co-Chair) pointed out that parents were often concerned about a child being excluded from lessons for therapeutic input and that many parents would welcome a more inclusive therapeutic approach.

c) Occupational Therapy

Anette informed the group that the OT service had moved to a new referral process. Parents can now refer themselves but have to use a specific referral form which will be available on the Local Offer together with explanations for parents on how to complete the form.

The new OT workshops were working well and were fully booked. More groups would start after half term.

Q: Sam asked how long the referral form was.

A: Anette replied that the whole form was 4 pages long but that parents only needed to complete the first page if they self-referred. Parents also needed to sign the form. There was no need for the school to agree to the referral but it would help.

Q: Sam referred to the very high staff turnover in OT services and asked if this could be managed in a way to limit the changes for individual children. She pointed out how disruptive the constant changes in therapists were for a child's development.

A: Anette acknowledged the staff turnover but pointed to the shortage of paediatric OTs nationally as well as their mobility. Out of the 21 therapists currently working for Ealing's OT team 3 were British. She told the group that all contracts were for at least one year and any new therapists coming in would have access to all records and background information from a previous therapist.

Q: Matthew (Co-Chair) asked how the self referral worked for young people between 16-25 years old.

A: Anette explained that the paediatric OT service can only accept referrals for children up to 18 years, young people would then move into adult services.

Matthew (Co-Chair) pointed out that this was a continuing problem. Parents had mainly been pleased with the change of SEN support from 4-16 to 0-25 under the SEND reforms, however, in practice many services still only supported children up to either 16 or 18 which lead to disruptions in the education and support processes. Mita explained that this was the same for Speech & Language Therapy as the service specification by the CCG requested the delivery of a service from 0-18, not to 25. She agreed to raise this again with the CCG.

Charity pointed out that adult OTs do not attend school or education settings. Mita suggested inviting adult services to this group to get more clarity on the transition processes. Chris added that the adult social care team in Ealing was currently undergoing change and agreed that it would be good for someone from the adult services to attend this meeting to explain the changes. He suggested that the meeting should be broader than ESCAN services. Matthew agreed to speak to Debbie about inviting adult services to the meeting.

ACTION: Matthew and Debbie (Co-Chairs) to invite a representative from Adult Services to the group

Helen pointed out that one of the key actions of the PfA SEF action plan was to overcome this barrier between Children's Services and Adult Services.

10. AOB

- a) John informed the group that there was a staff shortage in the Educational Psychology department. Locums had been drafted in to cover. He explained that there was a shortage of EPs nationally.

Q: Sam asked if Educational Psychologists would continue to attend private nurseries to see children with SEN.

A: John confirmed that they would

- b) Chris told the group that there would be another meeting between parents and the LA as part of the planning process for the new Ealing Overnight Respite Service facility the following day. Matthew (Co-Chair) and Brigitte would both attend the meeting.
- c) Mita reminded everyone that the Speech Therapy website was now live. She would send out the link which was already published on the EalingHelp website.

The meeting ended at 12.10pm.