

PaCC Connect Proposed Intergrated Provision of the Special Schools in Brighton and Hove

16th March 2016

Introduction

Regan Delf: The proposal is still in the engagement phase until 22nd April. There is still room for ideas and this session is less about asking questions and more about discussing ideas.

We want to bring schools together including colleagues from Health who support the schools. The idea is to create 3 hubs across the city. 2 for learning difficulties and 1 for SEMH. Currently the system is fragmented and difficult to set one plan for all. With staff working together and services working together it will be easier to offer more extended services as a result including more support at home. We will be proposing leadership arrangements to help facilitate this. It will be slowly phased in over a long period up until 2020.

Key Points and Questions Raised (Responses are marked in Red)

- Personalised Provision – having small schools like Patcham House works really well for the children there. If one of these children moves to a bigger school how will they be expected to adapt?
Regan Delf: No concrete proposals as yet – some schools aren't filled and some are over-subscribed and that balance needs to be met. Needs of each individual child are of paramount importance and each case will be discussed. Patcham House has a good link with Patcham High School. Parents need to talk to us about individual cases.
- Who decides which child will go to which school? Some children have significant learning problems coupled with SEMH so how will both needs be met?
- Timescales – there is concern about children taking GCSEs at Patcham House and how this will interrupt them.
- Travel – will children have to travel across the city? How will this be dealt with?
- SEMH will be affected the most and there seems to be no thought on how to cope with this in a large group.
Regan Delf: These children will not be put into large groups. Project Groups will be made up of parent reps, social health care etc. They will design what will work. Children with very different needs will not be mixed.

- With staffing numbers being reduced how can integrated support work better?
- There is a lack of detail in the proposals so far so it is hard for parents to give their opinions.
- Will the Hubs be geographical? **Regan Delf: Not sure yet but it shouldn't be much different to how things are now. Parents can have a choice of school but it needs to be affordable in terms of transport.**
- Who decides the 'need'? Parents or professionals. Who decides who is eligible for what? **Regan Delf: There must be a criteria – we will be happy to discuss needs but demand does outstrip supply**
- Provision should be needs lead – needs are being over-shadowed by resources. The council needs to feed back to the Government about this.
- Statutory Assessment – there is often disagreements among professionals about a child's diagnosis and children often end up with no diagnosis. The Panel is determining a major life-changing decision. Clear eligibility is needed. This is particularly cloudy with SEMH. **Regan Delf: We work on this on a case by case basis so this is something that is difficult to answer.**
- Benefits of small schools – how will this work when we are losing the benefits of our children being in smaller schools? **Adrian Carver; Downs View is the biggest special school in Brighton and it works very well. Parents should seize this opportunity. The only way to ensure that schools deliver is to be willing to change the way things are done.**
- Why are TAs and teachers not more involved in discussions? They should be given the opportunity to discuss and debate these issues without the presence of the Head. **Lalli Howell; we run a swot analysis with our TAs and regular staff meetings. TAs have a big part in this.**
- As a parent talking to TAs the feeling is that TAs don't feel they are able to voice their opinions freely. **Fiona England; the shared relationship between parents and TAs is a very important one and opportunity should be given for discussions between the 2.**
- How can we retain the existing excellence that is in practice in individual schools if the schools are going to be merged? **Rachel Burstow: Hillside has been consistently outstanding and adaptable to individualised learning. The merger will mean extending that formula out for other children.**
- How will the proposals to turn all schools into Academies affect these plans? **The Government have said SEND schools will not be included**
- How will this affect children who have mixed provision?
- Siblings groups – can this provision be mirrored across the city?
- How will the support increase with the amount of places? Will places be reduced? **Places will be retained not reduced and we anticipate that numbers will increase and places will increase accordingly.**
- Has thought been given to the impact on children in mainstream schools who need support from the special school's outreach services? **Lead partner schools will be the conduit between the Hubs. These schools will**

champion needs across the city. There will be more special facility places eg; The Swan Centre where therapy support is offered.

Further Questions and Comments from Parent Carers not addressed on the day:

- How much money are they going to save with out of county placements?
- There is £1000 extra money per pupil for Downsview places – there should be equality in spend across the city
- Can there be training for parents – in school courses?
- Concerns over potential negative impact – with more children on site, different needs more risk of bullying – wouldn't feel as safe if it was bigger and mixed.
- Importance of using staff experience and expertise in the right places – TA's in particular
- Will there be the finding and the commitment to adapt buildings so that they are fit for purpose for the diversity of needs
- Will this improve the caseload ratio and emphasis of direct contact with our children?
- Concerns about conflicting needs for clusters of eg; autism and challenging behaviour – how will their needs be upheld and supported in a central setting?
- How will pupils be organised – what will it look like?
- What is wrong with the current arrangement to require such alteration? Worried about hidden agenda.
- Who decides the child's diagnosis and therefore which school or placement?
- I think adopted and fostered children have a high risk of being in the intersection of the SEMH/SEND debate. My concern is that for various reasons attachment disorder is now a common diagnosis for adopted and fostered children, on the basis of their history, rather than necessarily being on the basis of their behaviour or needs. I would question how such a diagnosis would be treated by the panel when deciding where a child should go to school, given that professionals seem to have little agreement on it.
- Extended day: It needs to be well thought out and resourced to ensure it works. Many children need 1:1 or similar, and how will they get home after.
- One Patcham House parent stated they are more concerned about making school work than the extended day.
- Therapies could become too generic if they are all in one place
- SEMH: Does it make sense to lump together those with chronic issues and those with acute crises? Important there isn't a big turnover of staff
- Different modules in different schools hasn't worked in the CDP federation, so why is this being proposed? Important that proposals are realistic, not purely aspirational

Parent Carers' Council (PaCC), Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton BN1 3XG

• Tel: 01273 234 862 • email: admin@paccbrighton.org.uk • www.paccbrighton.org.uk

- Friends won't be local so more social isolation
- Written pathway for individual children is very important.
- One parent liked the idea of 'wings' of small units within a bigger school for central hub.
- What does a successful school for SEMH look like? Suggestions: small groups, need good role models, only access education in very small class with similar academic ability, no disruptive children.
- Concern over timescale of closure of Patcham House, and effect on current Y8s and Y9s who will be doing GCSE courses.

The Parent Carers' Council (PaCC) is a parent-led forum which represents parent carers with children and young people with any kind of physical disability, learning disability, complex or long-term medical/health condition, or special educational need. The group was formed to enable parent carers to work closely together to help improve services and support. It aims to help parents get more directly involved in the strategic delivery of services for disabled children in Brighton & Hove and now has about 270 signed up members. Our partner groups are; mASCot, Kaleidoscope, Barnado's Link Plus, Extratime, Pebbles, Sweet Peas and T21.