7 October 2013

Our Ref: FOI.13.DGS0082

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 received on 9 September 2013 by NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group. The information you have requested is listed below together with the response:

Action for Sick Children is the UK’s leading children and young people’s healthcare charity. As such we are contacting all Clinical Commissioning Groups to ascertain whether or not they have a specific Children and Young People’s advocate, to this end we would be obliged if you could let us have details of the relevant person within your Clinical Commissioning Group.

NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley CCG does not specifically commission advocacy services, however, the CCG does commission the following which includes advocacy as part of the service model:

Early Support designated Key Workers (as part of the KCHT ITACC contract)

Each of the seven CCGs in Kent, including NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley invests in the highly successful Early Support designated Key Worker service model working with severely disabled children with complex needs aged between 0-7 and their families. The designated Early Support Key Worker not only provides practical advice, information and support to disabled children and their families, but also acts as an advocate to ensure the right support is offered at the right time and the right place, overseen through a single multi-agency Early Support Family Plan. Early Support, as a national programme has been so successful that it now wants the approach extended to a 0-25 age range. The SE7 SEND Pathfinder (which Kent’s CCGs are a part of) is helping to lead the way on new approaches to delivering key working functions to a broader age range, whilst also maximising the benefits of specialist staff such as designated key worker.

Specialist Community Children’s Nurses
Specialist Community Children’s Nurses as part of an integrated community children’s nursing service model offer a care co-ordination approach (similar to Early Support Key Workers) for disabled children with complex health needs, children with long term conditions. This approach will include an advocacy element to their professional practice to ensure the right support for the child and family is identified (either as part of a wider discharge planning process, or through support that is required in the community and at home).

**Jointly commissioned Kent Portage Service**

CCGs in Kent jointly commission with Kent County Council the Kent Portage Service. Portage Workers as part of the support offered to a disabled child and family also advocate on their behalf to ensure that the right level of support is available at the right time. Portage workers work closely with other members of the team around a child and family including nursery staff, Early Support Key workers, OTs, SLT, physiotherapists, social workers, specialist teachers, paediatricians and educational psychologists to ensure that the child’s developmental and educational needs are supported to ensure a smooth transition to either early years childcare or primary school provision.

**Virtual Schools Kent (VSK)**

Virtual Schools Kent is a service for looked after children that is jointly commissioned by CCGs in Kent and KCC. It also provides an advocacy function for looked after children to ensure that they get the right services at the right time and in the right place.

What we do not have is separate advocacy services for children which only work with the child / young person and not the parents. Professionals often have to manage the potential conflict between the views of the young person and those of the parent carers as part of their wider case load.