



PM/PG/AH

Mr Nick Whitfield  
Chief Executive and Council-appointed Executive Director  
Achieving for Children  
Civic Centre  
44 York Street  
Twickenham  
Surrey  
TW1 3BZ

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

Dear Mr Whitfield

**Re: PLSA Consultation**

I have been made aware that there is an on-going desire by Achieving For Children to close the above service, which offers specialist services to disabled/SEN and children with severe medical needs who require support so that they can be educated in main stream schools within Richmond Borough.

At the start of the consultation, it was raised to Human Resources and the responsible manager that the complexity of the service offered and the benefits, not only to the children but also to the parents, significantly outweigh the cost of disposing of the service, as it allows children the opportunity to be taught in mainstream schools, rather than be forced into a special needs school. This area is specifically covered in the SEN Disability Act 2001/amended 2010 whereby, should the parent wish their child to be educated in a mainstream school, then they have the right to do so. GMB members do not believe that Achieving For Children has considered the impact here.

I note that the staff who cover this area have bitterly complained that the parents were not made aware that this service was to close. I believe Achieving For Children had confirmed at the second meeting there was a problem with the post room, hence the reason as to why parents were not informed until after the consultation had started and Achieving For Children agreed to extend the consultation period because of this error. Our members believe they, along with the parents and residents of Richmond, have not been consulted with correctly as they would not be aware there are further school restructures in place within Richmond, along with reductions in staff. One school has now proposed a cut in the SEN budget and we expect this problem to increase over the next year because of the funding cuts the government has proposed in schools. In simple terms, if you have a child requiring help, they won't get it in Richmond.

I note there are schools which specifically cover SEN in Wandsworth, Thames Ditton or Central London. If parents were forced to receive help from outside the Borough, this proposal could also stop parents from gaining employment and cause financial and time detriment because, not only would they struggle to get their children to and from school, they are also unlikely to gain employment because of the time taken in travelling.

GMB BRITAINS GENERAL UNION

Regional Secretary: Paul Maloney General Secretary: Tim Roache  
Cooper House, 205 Hook Road, Chessington, Surrey KT9 1EA  
Tel 020 8397 8881 Fax 020 8397 1588  
info@gmb.org.uk gmb-southern.org.uk

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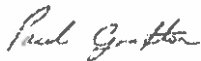
[www.unionline.co.uk](http://www.unionline.co.uk)

I am also aware the staff had requested minutes of the meetings but none have been supplied as none were taken. For such an important decision to be taken, our members believe this is inappropriate and wrong as there should be accountability. At the last meeting (billed as a general staff meeting and not a consultation meeting), I had asked the manager of the service if there was take up on the service and if there was a closing date for applicants of the service. It was confirmed there were some children requiring the service and that there isn't a closing date, as such, as children apply when the need arises.

I would also like to draw your attention to the job advertisement enclosed, which would appear to be one in line with the current PLSA workers, who you would appear to be making redundant. This is an obvious concern, as an employer should not be placing people at risk of redundancy and employing staff at the same time.

GMB members have asked me to upload a petition to our website and to contact the local councillors, as they do not wish this service to be stopped, as it will cause unnecessary difficulties as outlined above. I, myself, do not believe the staff or parents or, indeed, the children's feelings have been taken into account or, indeed, the wishes of the community. With this end, I urge Achieving for Children to reconsider their position immediately. I am, of course, happy to meet with you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



Paul Grafton  
Membership Development Officer and Regional Organiser

Enc: Job advertisement

Cc: GMB members  
Richmond Councillors

**Salary:**

AFC SCP 22 - 25 (£22,506 - £24,510 per annum)

**Working pattern:**

Full Time

**Employment Type:**

Permanent

**Location:**

Individual Pupil Support Service

**Proposed interview dates:****Closing date:**

05 May 2017 at midnight

[Send to a friend](#) [Apply online](#)

This is an exciting new role in a well-established and respected team, who provide a range of support for schools in relation to primary aged children who are finding mainstream school challenging. The post arises as a result of investment in the service.

The successful candidate will be;

- An outstanding classroom practitioner, with recent experience of supporting pupils with additional needs and who present significant challenging behaviour
- Able to provide quality coaching and modelling of good practice in support of the professional development of other teaching assistants, especially in relation to effective strategies for supporting children with social, emotional and mental health needs
- Able and willing to lead and deliver effective training sessions for other teaching assistants in the various aspects of behaviour management.
- Accredited as HLTA OR eligible for, and committed to, accreditation as an HLTA
- Resourceful, adaptable, resilient and dependable.

We offer;

- An innovative organisation that puts children, young people and their families first
- An ethos of embracing diversity and championing inclusion
- A commitment to valuing and investing in our staff to deliver innovative and quality services

Informal enquiries are welcome and should be made to David Kinsley (Manager of the IPSS), contactable on 020 8547 6678 or 07770 832802.