

AGM 2020 Q&A's with Kelli Scott and Sal Thirlway

The presentations given by Kelli and Sal ahead of the Q&A's are available on our website www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk

Kelli Scott - WBC Interim Service Manager, CWD and Early Help

Q. How many social workers are now in the team

A. During the improvement work and to clear backlog there have been 8 SW (from 4), from May 2020 the team will be Team Mngr, Assistant Team Mngr, 4 social workers and 3 short breaks co-ordinators (currently 1)

Q. Social worker didn't come for appointment today which caused a lot of anxiety for my child (and me)

A. Kelli to speak to parent directly about this

Q. David Green is brilliant, but there is a significant lack of clubs/respite for children with SEMH in Wokingham.

A. The Short Breaks Steering group will be looking at this and how gaps in service can be addressed

Q. Money is being given for Short Breaks, but I can't find suitable services

A. Short Breaks Steering group is looking at this. SEND Voices Wokingham (SVW) asked parents with SB direct payments to complete the recent survey which is helping with this work.

Q. Thames Valley Adopt cannot attend CIN meetings. CWD team do not have experience with attachment disorder. Consistency needed in SW team

A. There is a recruitment and retention programme ongoing, which is looking at additional incentives to attract and retain staff.

Q. Clarity on what Short Breaks Direct Payments is needed

A. The Short Breaks Steering Group is looking at this too.

Q. What do you do when you don't fit into one of the boxes? There is a big team around the child, but they don't talk to each other it just goes around in circles.

A. SVW to speak to this family to use as case study of how process/communication can be improved.

Q. Are locum staff going to continue?

A. There is now a permanent Senior Management structure across Social Care and Education, heads of service are mostly permanent. There is ongoing recruitment and retention programmes ongoing (as above)

Sal Thirlway – WBC Assistant Director Children’s Services

Sal updated the meeting to explain that he covered School Improvement, Early Help and the SEND Team

In February 61% of EHCP’s due to be completed met the 20 weeks timeframe, this is predicted to be 76% in March

Q. What are the figures for Annual reviews?

A. This will be part of the ongoing improvement plan

Q. What is the quality of the plans like? Is the speed at the detriment to quality as there seems to be a variability in quality?

A. SVW asked that any parents who have recently completed the EHCP process complete the SVW survey about their experiences of the process that will be sent to them by the SEND Team so that quality can be monitored and fed back to the SEND Team and the SEND Implementation Board.

Q. How many appeals are there?

A. Data not available at the meeting, Sal to send on to SVW.

Q. What is the structure of the SEND Team?

A. Some permanent and locum staff have left due to new ways of working. There are a number of new locums in post and the team is currently being reviewed for permanent positions

Q. My initial EHCP was poor (not SMART). How are you working with schools as the current poor paperwork leads to poor info and poor plan for another year?

A. We need to co-produce new paperwork with parents and are currently looking at the paperwork used by other LA’s e.g. Portsmouth

Q. How quickly will schools see this new paperwork?

A. There is no finished product yet.

Q. A year on and nothing has moved or changed, there are no improvements – why reinvent the wheel, learn from others and implement it.

A. We must make sure it is the right thing (paperwork/process) for Wokingham. This is work that is being developed and co-produced with SVW as part of the WSoA.

Q. Someone needs to support Schools with EHCP’s and make SENCO’s attending meetings like the SENCO Forum and SENCO Training courses compulsory.

A. We have schools represented on the task & finish groups to get them on board with the changes that are happening.

Q. There has been no mention of Transition in young persons annual review for Yr 9 and 10

A. This will be fed back to the Service Manager

Q. There is no response to emails, phone calls, nothing is ever resolved

A. This will be fed back to the Service Manager

Q. It needs to work differently to capture the voice of the child

A. WBC are visiting Portsmouth to learn from their good practice. There is a change in culture within the SEND Team and job descriptions are being updated. We are reinvesting in the team to bring numbers back up to where they were in 2014. There are still some locum staff in post at present, but there are plans for permanent staff to be in that team

Q. How important is the Child's voice? Professionals do not listen

A. The child/YP must be included

Q. Is there any ongoing training of staff?

A. A training plan is being developed for both the LA and Schools; this is planned to be rolled out from April onwards (new financial year)

Q. How are you assessing the quality of EHCPs?

A. Selectively through the Berkshire West EHCP Audit (part of the Berkshire West SEND Implementation Group).

SVW also explained they were monitoring quality through their EHCP Process Survey which goes out to families on completion of their EHCP process and this would be feedback to the WBC/SVW Operational meeting as well as the SEND Implementation Board.