

Welcome to the first SEND Voices Wokingham newsletter and Chair's Report for 2018/19. We were all so excited to have launched our new name and look in May 2019. Although, many of our members have been with us since the start and helped to create and raise awareness of REACH Wokingham, we listened to our new families who were struggling to identify with what we do. We hope that the new branding and website will make 'getting your voice heard' easier. The positive feedback we have received so far has been overwhelming. Please do come along to our Membership Day on 29th June, as we are giving away MAX cards to **all** our members, further details below.

This year's AGM was a hive of activity with Paul Doherty, WBC Assistant Director of Education, presenting the new draft 0-25 SEND Strategy, where we had frank and open discussions about the implications of the policy. Unfortunately, Paul Doherty, has now left WBC and as yet there is no permanent replacement. However, we will keep you all updated with any information we receive. We were also pleased that, Sal Thirlway, Service Manager for Disabled Children and Early Help who had recently joined WBC, also attended the AGM and took the time to talk to our members and listen to their issues. Lots of our members present, commented on how good it was to have a face to face conversations with members of the council. The announcement that the OFSTED/CQC SEND Local Area inspection was to take place, also occurred the same week as our AGM. This enabled us to speak directly to families at the AGM and enable as many members as possible to attend the meetings requested by OFSTED/CQC. The OFSTED/CQC Inspection was an extremely busy week for all those directly involved, and I would like to say a huge personal **Thank You**, to all of our members; those parent reps that attended the Focus group meetings, the open parents meeting and those who fed back your experiences. As a forum we received wonderful feedback from OFSTED/CQC on how professional and constructive our representatives were.

As I am sure you are all aware, the outcome of the OFSTED/CQC inspection was that WBC and Health are required to produce a Written Statement of Action to address areas of concern identified in the inspection.

Plans are currently being developed by WBC and Health in response. We are delighted that our views are going to part of that process as SEND Voices Wokingham will be on the SEND Improvement Board, overseeing the changes.

Our committee has seen several changes too this year. We sadly said goodbye to three long standing and dedicated committee members; Julie Monahan, Rebecca Kirby and Sandra Stubbs. We are so grateful for all their hard work and wish them well. The good news is that we have welcomed three new committee members who bring a variety of new talents and experience to the committee. So, a big welcome goes to Emma McKeever, Jacky Mackenzie and Kathy Rzyzsko.

Although we are a small group of volunteers, we believe whole heartedly in our children and their potential and with the right provision so much can be achieved by our young people. We are passionate about improving services and experiences of our families, but we can only do this with your help. Please continue letting us know about your experiences, what is going well and where things can be improved.

Your voice shapes what we do. So, please keep talking to us.

Last but by no means least, I would like to thank the whole committee for all their efforts this year, you are an amazing team. It's also vital to thank our support team, Martin Jones who ensures our finances are balanced and Terri Walsh our participation co-ordinator who keeps our world spinning.

Sarah Clarke

Chair SEND Voices Wokingham