

Zoom SEND Update for families with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Health

2nd July 2025, 7pm-8.30pm via Zoom

WBC Attendees:

Ming Zhang – Director Education and SEND

Jamie Conran – Head of SEND

Hayley Rees – Children Services Commissioner Director

Julie Monahan – SEND Customer relations manager

Nicola Vine – for Kelli Scott, Children's Social Care

Health Attendees:

Miranda Walcott – Designated Clinical Officer for SEND (0-25) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB)

Helen Alderman - Service Director for Universal and Specialist Children's, Family and Neurodiversity Services. Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Apologies:

Emma Cottrell – Director of Children Services

SEND Voices Wokingham (SVW) Attendees:

Terri Walsh and Sarah Clarke – Joint CEO's

Number of Parent Carers attending: 12

Q&As - Colours indicate which organisation the response was from

- [Wokingham Borough Council](#)
- [Health](#)
- [SEND Voices Wokingham](#)

Welcomes and Introductions

Presentation from Miranda Walcott – Berkshire Neuro Inclusion Early Help System Change

See slides

The system is changing to support children earlier both at home and in school without the need for a diagnosis. This will not replace the need for a diagnosis for those who wish to obtain one.

There is Berkshire wide programme to support being created currently to ensure the support is at the right time, at the right place.

Working with the Berkshire Local Authorities, Health Partners, Young People, Parent Carers and Parent Carer Forums.

Monday 7th July – Zoom engagement session with Wokingham Parent Carers.

Presentation from Julie Monahan – on SEND Complaints

See slides

Role created in April 2024; to monitor how complaints are responded to and the learning from those complaints. Reports on themes on complaints and compliments.

2350 EHCP's in Wokingham Borough

3000+ Children and young people on SEN Support in Wokingham Borough

159 Complaints this year. Communication and timeliness of EHCP's are the main complaints.

Information is also requested, and issues are raised by local Councillors.

82% of Stage 1 complaints have been upheld, mainly due to legal timeliness.

Often complaints contain more than one concern. Moving forward, complaints will also be classified as partially upheld to reflect when some aspects are upheld but not all.

27 Compliments received this year from families and from schools. Communication and feeling supported are the main topics for compliments.

Learning and Impact – 81% responses within the complaint's timescale. Policies and information have been refreshed. SEND Team Communication Promise on the Local Offer: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-families-and-young-people/send-local-offer/help-learning/education-health-and-care-plan-ehcp/send-service/communication-promise>

Range of training for the SEND team. Starting to see improved practice and relationships with families and schools.

The work continues to feedback into the system for improvements. To support a more holistic approach to the SEND system approach in Wokingham.

Complaints/compliments are received via a variety of ways, direct emails and via the website are all logged by Julie. Please see slides for the website link and an email address to use.

There is also additional information on the Local Offer:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-families-and-young-people/send-local-offer/help-learning/education-health-and-care-plan-ehcp/send-service/compliments-and-complaints>

Please do always speak to your case worker in the first instance if you have a concern.

Q – What processes are in place to ensure funding is allocated to particular children is being used correctly and how do you ensure that the EHCP's provision are being met and measured?

A - Jamie – in terms of funding there is a banding tool which allocates the funds to a school and is more equitable funding for schools and children. Accountability is an interesting question, we have partnership working with the schools and visiting the schools, including meeting some children.

In terms of the provision delivery and the impact, this is reviewed via Annual Reviews. If a family has a concern about delivery of a plan, please raise with the school and the Local Authority (via your caseworker). Schools also have reviews such as Ofsted Inspections, which will now include a review of the SEND provision. WBC is also undertaking training for SEND Governors to support schools and the delivery of provision and accountability. The system isn't perfect at the moment, but we are hoping that the Schools White Paper (due in the Autumn) will improve some accountability across the system.

Any concerns with individual cases can be escalated through SEND Caseworker then their manager (as per SEND Teams email footers). If families are still not happy then this can be raised through the complaints process (see Julie's slides)

Q - How many complaints do you receive from parents, where SEN support or EHCP support is not being provided by a school, how do these concerns and complaints get resolved?

A - There have been some complaints regarding provision in Section F. We would look at what is not being provided and work with the school to ensure that it is put in place.

Comment from parent - The accuracy of the AR reporting will be important will be important for this.

Q – What's the process of how to escalate complaints for families?

A – the SEND Team all have a footer on their emails with how to escalate complaints. Tribunal Officers should also have the same information on their email footers. In the first instance please contact the Tribunal Officer directly, or email Sam Philo (sam.philo@wokingham.gov.uk)

Presentation from Hayley Rees on PINS (Partnerships Inclusion for Neurodiversity in Schools) and an update on the new Resource Bases and SEND units

PINS

See slides

Collaborative national project targeted at primary schools. Based on breaking down barriers to ensure children obtain early support.

33 Primary Schools in Wokingham are taking part. Approx. 50% of primary schools.

5 days of support for schools which is developed with the area and what support the school needs. Based on a whole school approach.

The programme includes coproduction with families via SEND Voices Wokingham and each individual school.

Both families and schools have completed a survey to support the needs of the schools in Wokingham.

Children masking and a whole school approach for interventions and support have been key themes. The data is still being analysed ready to commission the support required for September/October start. The learning is also going to be shared with all schools in Wokingham, including learning from other areas who took part in PINS last year.

There is also information on SVW website on PINS if you would like more information and to know which schools are taking part: <https://www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk/pins>

SVW will also share updates via our email half-termly updates to families.

Parent comment - PINS project sounds very positive. Well done

New Resource Bases & SEND Unit Update

See slides

Now open - Resource Base at Loddon Primary School and SEND Unit at Radstock (which will have a new building opening in October).

Currently in discussions with 2 secondary schools to open 1 SEND Unit and 1 Resource Base for September 2026. This will be a phased opening.

Funding has been secured for another Resource and SEND unit for primary in September 2026.

Looking at other options to increase placements both in primary and secondary. Timelines will be shared with families as soon as they are available.

The secondary provision will be in addition to the units at Maiden Erlegh to give 3 secondary provisions in total.

Q - How certain are the open dates for the new secondary bases? Last year I was told announcement was imminent and would be open from Sept 25, then it was Jan 26, now it is Sept 26...When will the resource bases be announced?

A – We are waiting for schools to go through their Governance process. As soon as we have any further information on dates we will share this with families.

Q – What are the plans for the 2 new Specialist Schools?

A – there are delays to the build which is being led by the DfE. Currently WBC are still waiting updates from the DfE as WBC have no control over the building of the schools.

Q – New provision for 16-18 provision on target?

A – Yes, it is still on target for September 2026 in the old library building in Wokingham town centre. Currently designing curriculum.

Q – Where do private/independent SEND Schools fit in?

A – They are a private business and can set up wherever they would like. WBC have no control over where they set up or the need that they will meet.

Q – When does WBC consider the use of an Independent Setting?

A – WBC consult with the most appropriate schools. Maintained settings are consulted first. We consult for most suitable provision that can meet need with regard to the cost of the setting and use of public funds. We follow the SEND Code of Practice:

“If a child’s parent or a young person makes a request for a particular nursery, school or post-16 institution in these groups the local authority must comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:

- the school or other institution is unsuitable for the age, ability aptitude or special education needs of the child or young person.
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources

General Question & Answers

Q – Concerned raised about the banding process which has reduced that amount my school has received. So how does this work?

A – There is a process of moderation, to ensure that the funding is correct and suitable. The banding funding is very similar to the previous method. We are working closely with schools to reflect on how the system is working and the schools can raise these concerns. The process will evolve with the feedback.

Q – How is the Banding process being rolled out. Is it going to be applied to all Annual Reviews and new EHCP's?

A – This is a phased process. It is applied to all new EHCP's and at EHCP Annual reviews at phase transfers eg from primary to secondary as it is a new school.

Q – What do I do if a school isn't follow the EHCP?

A – It is important to work with the school as much as possible in the first instance. Please do also look at the slides from Julie Monahan and use the Annual Review process to raise issues.

Q – When is it appropriate to ask for an Emergency/Interim Annual Review?

A – When a school says, they can't meet need, or the needs have changed very quickly. SENDIASS are also a useful resource about raising concerns with a school.
www.sendiasswokingham.org.uk/

**Parent comment - Thanks all. So many interesting and good developments happening.
Thanks for sharing**