Termly SEND update for families with WBC & Health

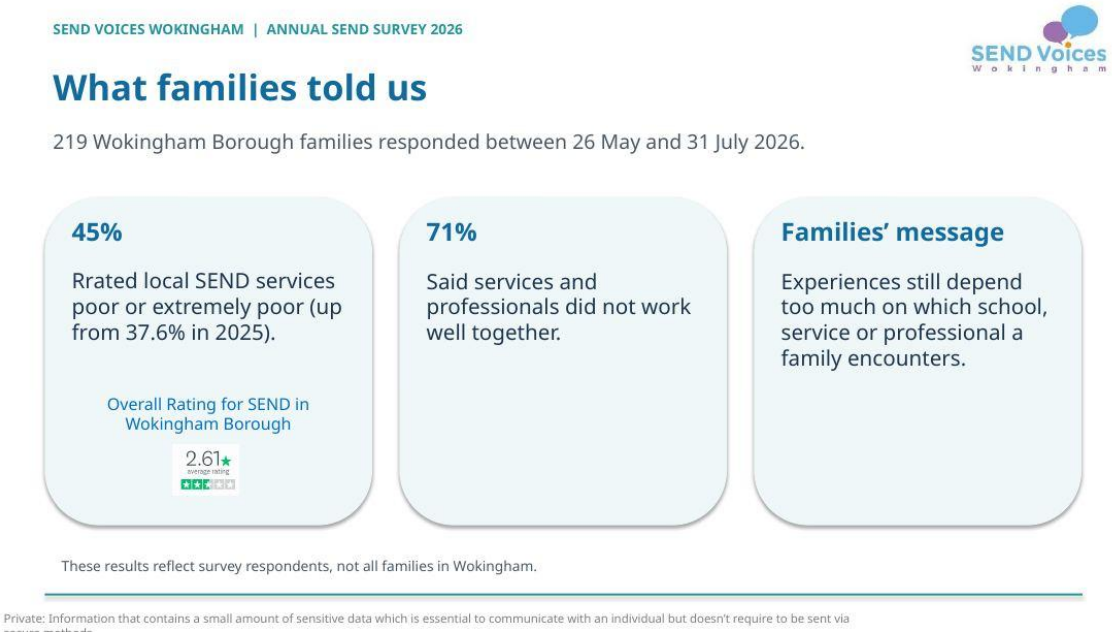
Meeting notes and parent carer questions | Wednesday 11 November 2026

Hosted by SEND Voices Wokingham (SVW), with representatives from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), Berkshire Healthcare and Thames Valley ICB. These notes bring together the presentation, meeting discussion and written chat. Parent carer names have been removed; questions from the chat are reproduced in their original wording, apart from removing names where necessary. Responses are summaries attributed to the relevant speaker, not new commitments. Where no answer was given, this is clearly indicated.

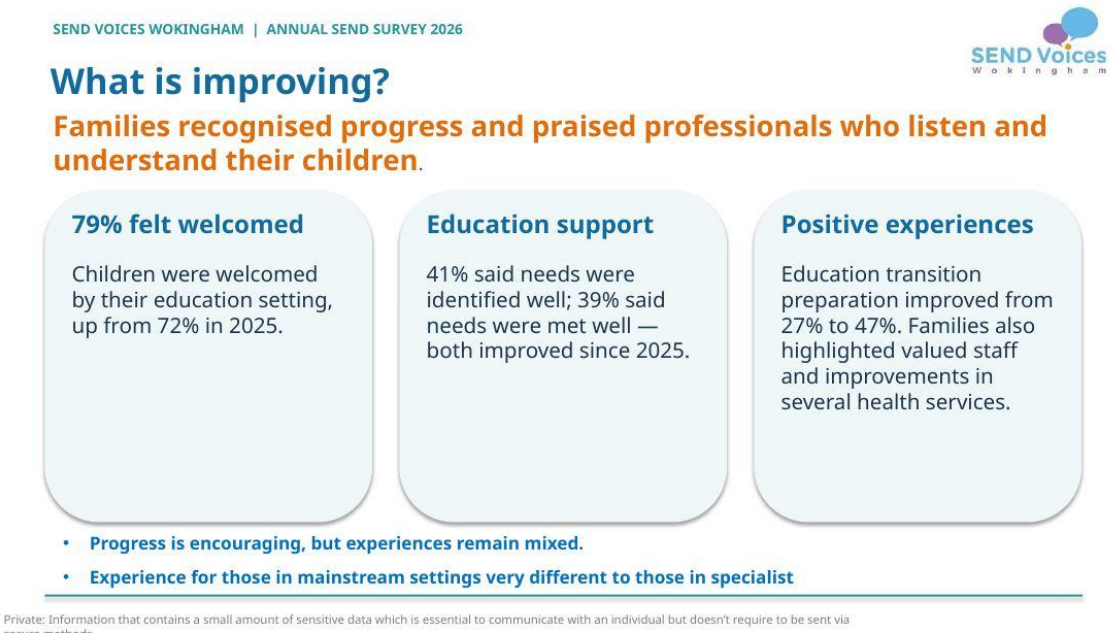
The presentation was structured around themes identified through SVW's 2026 SEND survey and feedback raised at previous family meetings. Individual circumstances were to be followed up separately through SVW.

1. What families told SVW

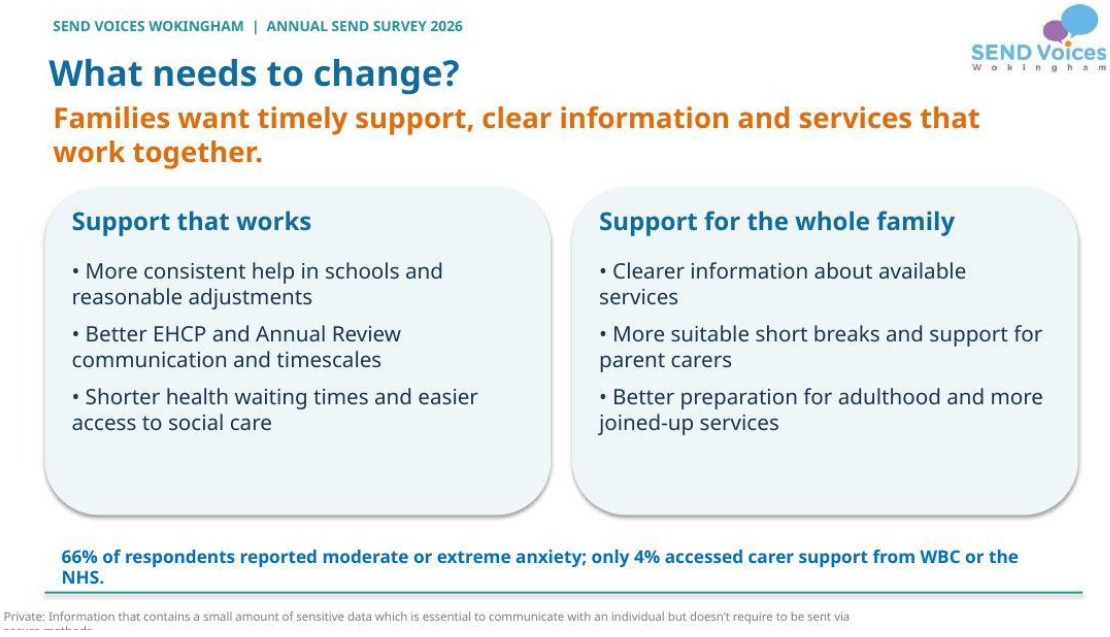
SVW reported 219 survey responses (26 May–31 July 2026). 45% rated local SEND services poor or extremely poor and 71% felt services and professionals did not work well together. Improvements included 79% feeling their child was welcomed in their education setting. Families prioritised more consistent school support, EHCP and annual review improvements, clearer information, suitable short breaks, and shorter waits.



Presentation slide 1



Presentation slide 2



Presentation slide 3

2. EHCPs, annual reviews, quality and disputes

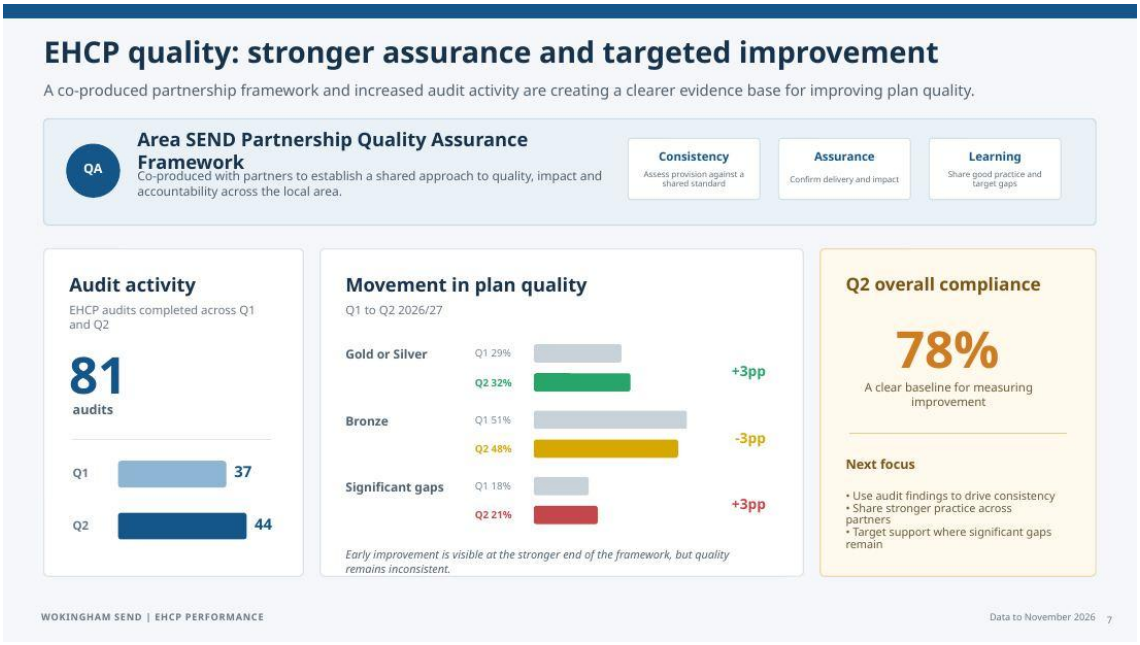
Sam Philo (WBC Acting Head of SEND) reported 2,624 EHCPs in November 2026 and 79% average 20-week timeliness during 2026. **Annual review recovery work** includes dedicated staffing; reviews completed within 12 months rose from 32% to 53%. Communication of annual review decisions within four weeks remains a concern and may temporarily worsen in the data as overdue cases are cleared. The new EHCP co-produced quality assurance framework will check whether provision in plans is actually being delivered, including contacting families, young people and settings. WBC also reported fewer mediation and tribunal notifications in Quarter 2.



Presentation slide 5



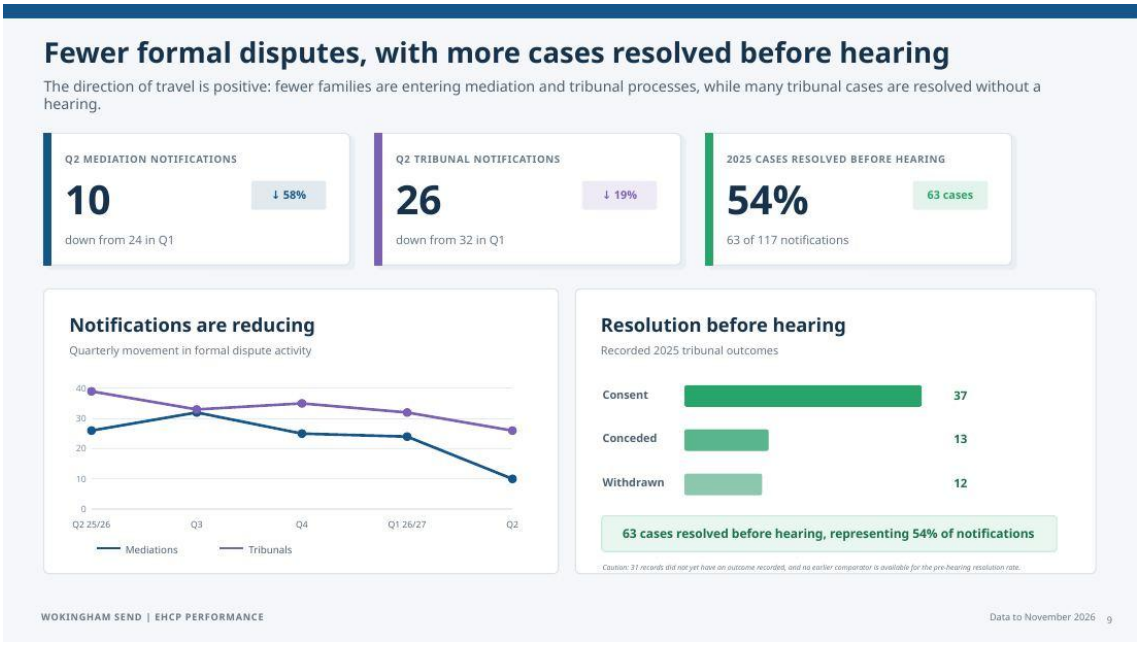
Presentation slide 6



Presentation slide 7



Presentation slide 8

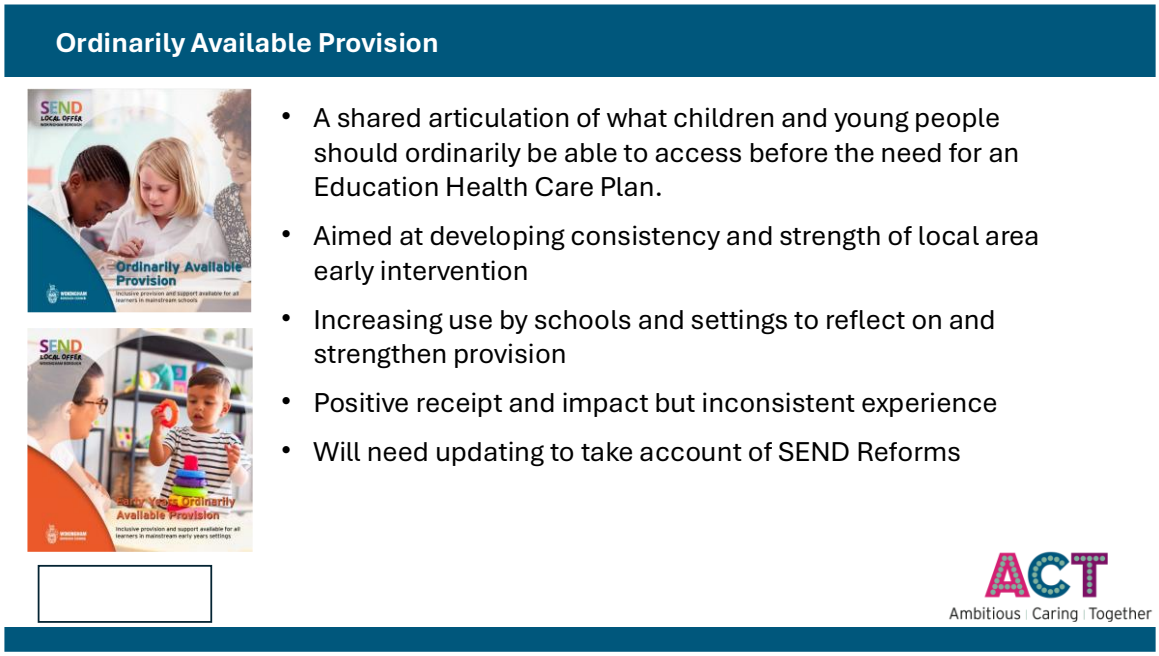


Presentation slide 9

No specific parent carer question on EHCPs or annual reviews was raised during the dedicated Q&A pause. The discussion reiterated concerns raised at earlier meetings about whether provision specified in EHCPs is delivered in practice.

3. Inclusion, schools and Whole Education

Helen Jackson-Brench (WBC Area SENCO) outlined the Ordinarily Available Provision guidance and the Whole Education programme. Twenty-one schools joined the first Whole Education cohort; the next cohort is planned for January 2027. The aim is stronger, more consistent mainstream inclusion and earlier support.



Ordinarily Available Provision

- A shared articulation of what children and young people should ordinarily be able to access before the need for an Education Health Care Plan.
- Aimed at developing consistency and strength of local area early intervention
- Increasing use by schools and settings to reflect on and strengthen provision
- Positive receipt and impact but inconsistent experience
- Will need updating to take account of SEND Reforms

Presentation slide 11

Supporting schools to strengthen universal provision

WHOLE EDUCATION

OAP – what should be ordinarily available

Whole Education – how we strengthen the conditions for delivering it

- 21 schools signed up to first cohort, currently completing self-evaluation
- Support for all schools to complete action plans
- 6 coaches trained in supportive conversations
- Access to a library of training resources
- Access to peer group support leading to peer review
- Analysis of the data across the system
- Next cohort January 2027

ACT Ambitious | Caring | Together

Presentation slide 12

Aiming for a consistently strong experience

EARLIER SUPPORT	Identify and respond before needs escalate
STRONGER MAINSTREAM	Design inclusion into everyday provision
GREATER CONSISTENCY	A reliable experience across settings

The question is no longer whether we have the foundations for stronger universal provision. It is how we make that experience consistently strong for children and young people across our system.

ACT Ambitious | Caring | Together

Presentation slide 13

Parent carer question: are the schools volunteering, 21 schools across Wokingham is not very much

Response — Helen Jackson-Brench: The 21 schools are the first voluntary cohort. Helen hoped the January cohort would bring participation closer to 40–50 schools over time, ultimately involving all schools.

Parent carer question: Helen - the 21 schools that have signed up - are they primary schools, secondary schools or mix of the 2?

Response — Helen Jackson-Brench: A mix of primary and secondary schools, with more primaries because there are more primary schools in the borough.

Parent carer question: Why is Whole Education not compulsory for all schools?

Response — Helen Jackson-Brench: The council cannot compel all schools, particularly academies. Helen also explained that voluntary engagement is intended to encourage meaningful self-evaluation rather than a tick-box exercise.

Parent carer question: how many schools do we have?

Response — Helen Jackson-Brench: Approximately 69–70, depending on how linked infant and junior schools are counted.

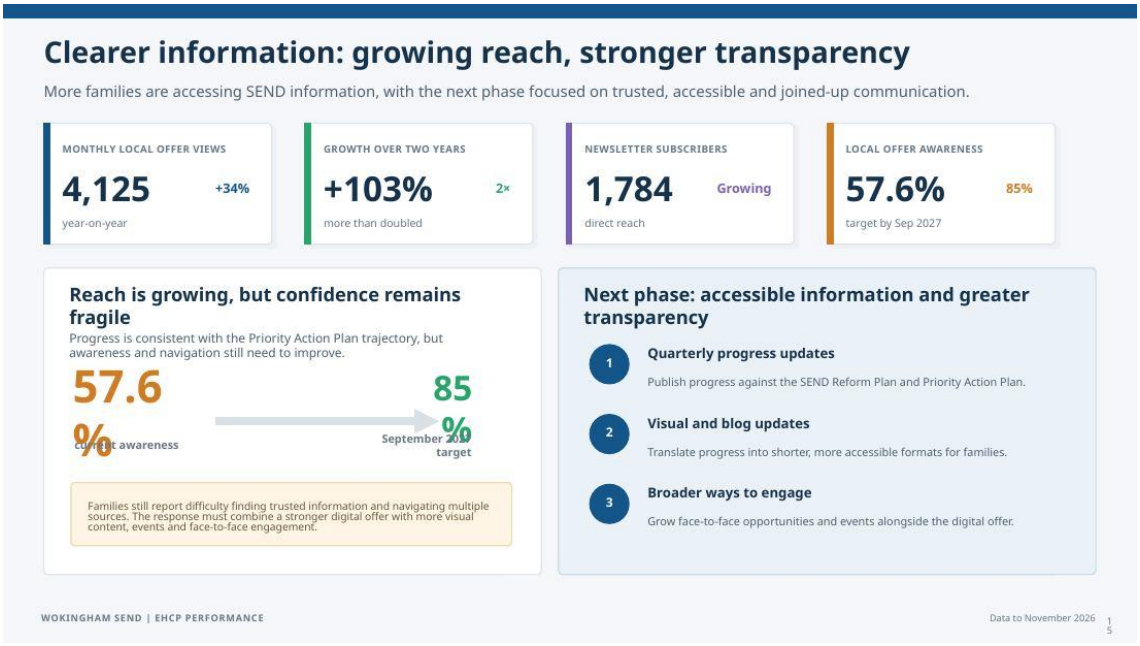
Parent carer question: Are Trusts are the same as Academies & not under direct control of the LA?

Response — WBC response in chat: Multi-academy trusts oversee academies and are not under the council's direct control.

4. Local Offer and accessible information

Julia Bedser (WBC SEND Local Offer Coordinator) described growing use of the Local Offer, with monthly views up 103% over two years. Awareness was 57.6%in SVW Annual Survey, against an 85% target for September 2027. Priorities include more accessible progress updates, joined-up digital information, clearer transition information and more face-to-face events. Ming Zhang (WBC Director for Education & Lifelong Learning) emphasised that access to information should also happen through family hubs and other routes, not just a website.

The Latest SEND developments including the Priority Action Plan and SEND Reform Plans are available on the Wokingham SEND Local Offer here: Latest SEND Developments



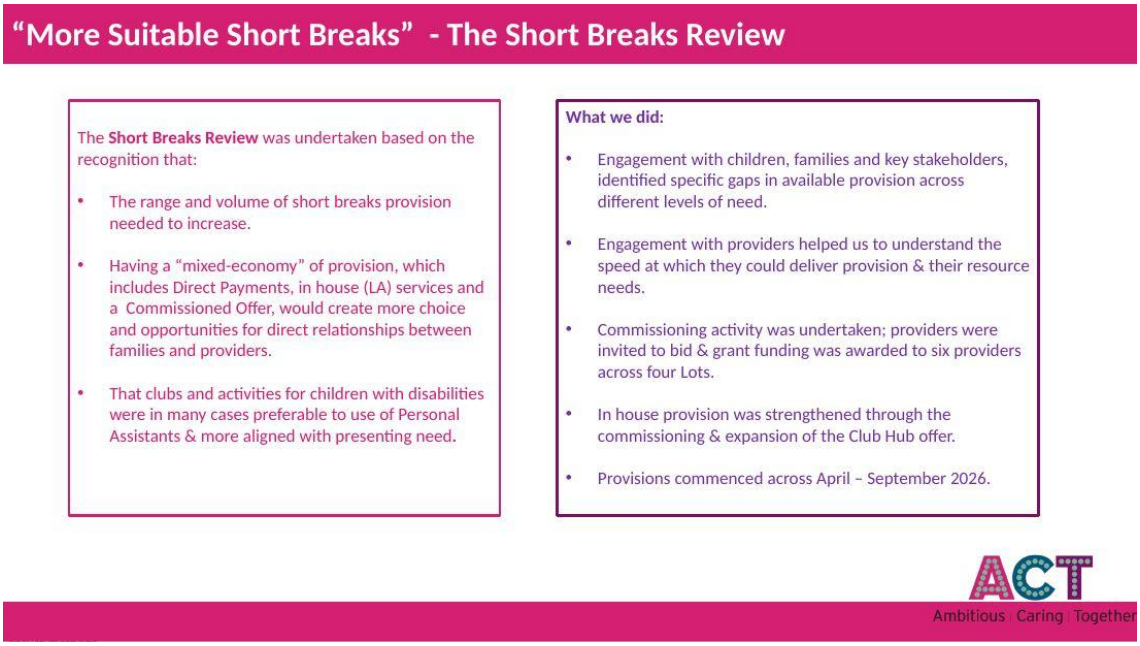
Presentation slide 15

5. Short breaks, Family Hubs and HAF

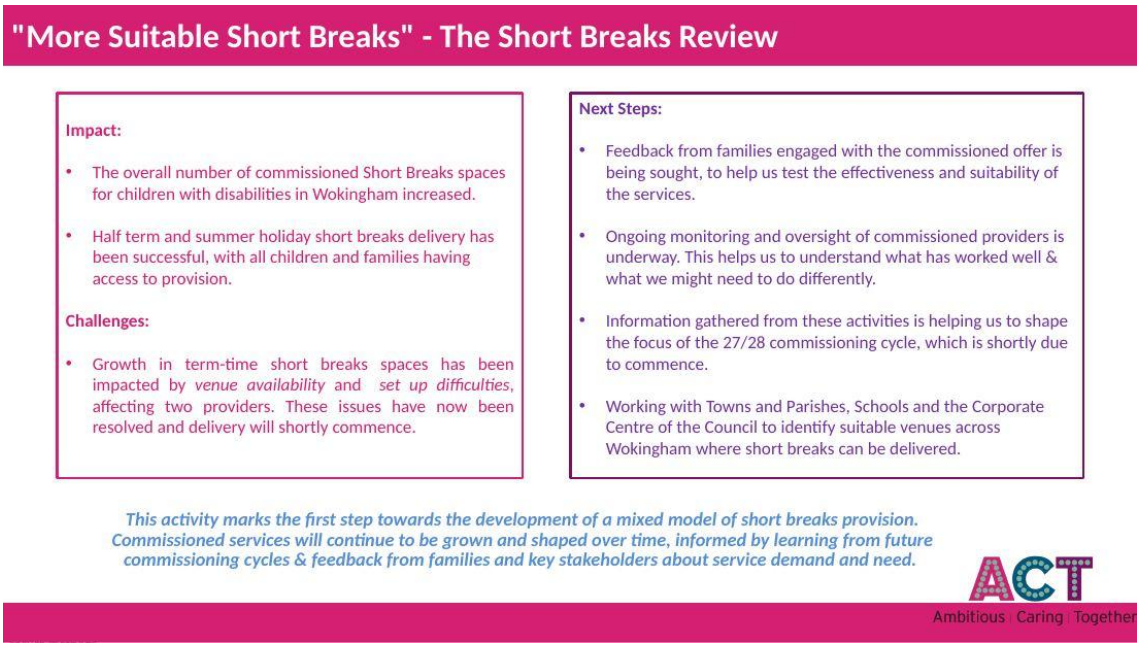
Kelli Scott (WBC Head of Service for Children with Disabilities) described the short breaks review, commissioning six providers to address four different areas of identified need, expanded holiday places and challenges with some term-time provision due to venue and set up difficulties.

She also discussed how the commissioned offer would grow and develop over time, informed by learning from commissioning activity and feedback from children & families.

Jonathan Wilding (WBC Head of Service Best Start in Life) outlined Family Hubs, SEND drop-ins, early-years support, new inclusion practitioners, parent support and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. Several families raised concerns about accessibility, continuity and eligibility.



Presentation slide 17



Presentation slide 18

"More support for parent carers"

Best Start in Life - SEND Activities and Family Support

Family Hubs provide a warm inclusive welcome for families across the Borough – including for children with SEND.

Family Hub Launch events over October half term - over 500 children attended with near on 300 individual families attending to find out more about the support and activities on offer.

We are hosting regular SEND Drop-Ins providing opportunities for families to build their networks of support and link in with more specialist advice and support where that is required.

Follow our Family Hubs Facebook page for the latest activities, events, services and support: Just Search: **Wokingham Family Hubs.**



Red Kite Family Hub Launch Event

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods

Presentation slide 19

"More support for parent carers"

Best Start in Life - SEND Activities and Family Support

In the process of appointing 3 Best Start Inclusion Practitioners to increase access to early networking and advice around SEND

Portage - SEND Support for under 5's advice and support. Referral required contact: Portage@wokingham.gov.uk

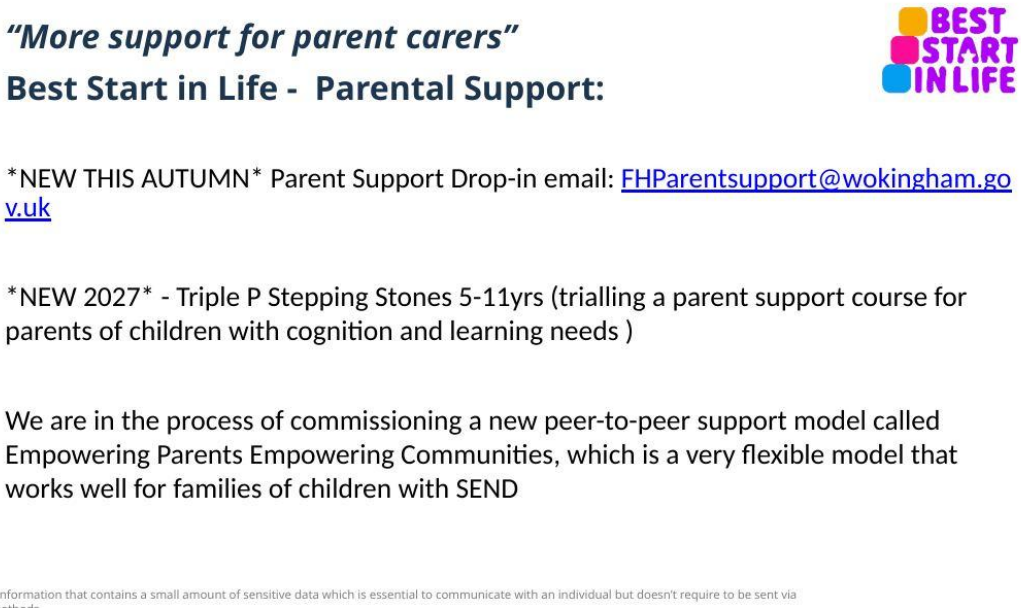
Wiggly Worms - Autism Group for under 5's held at Brambles Family Hub on Thursday's 9:30-11am - contact: bramblesfamilyhub@wokingham.gov.uk or call 0118 908 8050 and ask to speak to Kate Fudge

Bright Sparks – new summer club for neurodiverse children – many of whom are out of school. This was warmly received.

Explorers Extreme - Youth Club for Young People with additional needs aged 14 and over. Thursday's 7:30-9:15pm - contact: Kay.Nicker@wokingham.gov.uk

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods

Presentation slide 20



Presentation slide 21

Parent carer question: What about sports works cancelling all sessions halfway through the summer holiday?

Parent carer question: Should our Short breaks officer inform us about new clubs & activities? Sportsworks was fab so it is a huge shame as now no short break available for my child again . Happy to discuss privately as I had their short breaks review last Friday![

Response — Kelli Scott: Sportsworks was a provider who was affected by set-up difficulties. Kelli said that after school provision had recommenced the previous Friday, with another session due this coming Friday. Kelli noted that the Council recognised that this had been disruptive but that sometimes, things don't go according to plan. She said there had been learning from this experience that would help to shape future activity.

Parent carer question: no disrespect but these discussions (Short Breaks) started 5-10 years ago.

Response — Kelli Scott: Kelli acknowledged the long history and recognised that improvements had not reached some children when needed. She noted however that commissioning activity being taken forward and ongoing investment from the Council, demonstrated a change in approach and a commitment to respond to the short breaks challenge.

Response — Kelli Scott (chat response): If an existing short break is meeting a child's needs, coordinators would not routinely inform families about every new club. Where needs are not met, new options can be discussed at a review or during ongoing work with the family.

Parent (chat comment): HAF have been a lifesaver

Parent carer question: (HAF) what if you don't have a school?

Response — Jonathan Wilding: The question was clarified in chat as relating to EOTAS. HAF eligibility and how information reaches families outside school were to be considered; no definitive eligibility answer was provided.

Parent carer question: So you're widening the HAF criteria? We meet the criteria in Surrey where the school is but not in Wokingham where we live.

Response — Jonathan Wilding (meeting and chat): The council is exploring broader access criteria, but no change had yet been implemented.

Parent carer question: HAF SEND provision is a nightmare full almost immediately as vouchers aren't sent to all families at the same time. We've missed out every holiday for over 12 months!

Response — Jonathan Wilding (chat response): The council apologised for the barriers and said it was reviewing voucher allocation and considering options. No final solution was confirmed.

Parent carer question: We don't qualify for FSM but do qualify in Surrey where criteria include young carers and children with a social worker

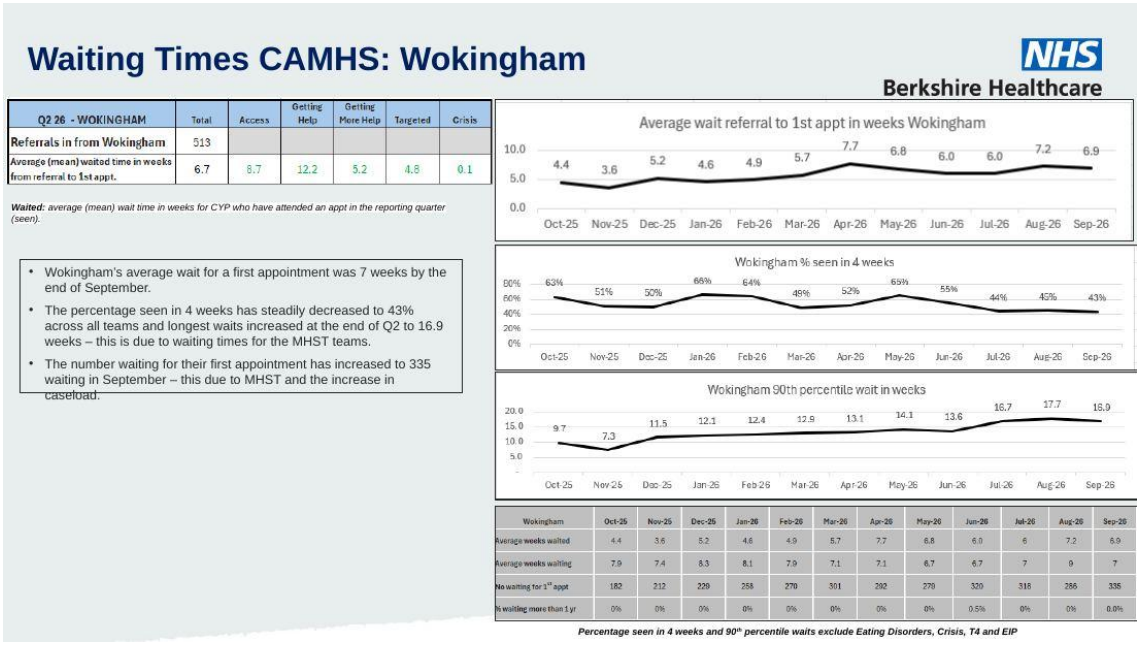
Response — Jonathan Wilding (chat response): These are among the criteria the council is considering adopting.

Parent carer question: I'd love to know about free school meals as gone years without due to this

Response — Follow-up required: The discussion identified difficulties for children outside school, including access to FSM recognition. A specific answer on FSM entitlement was not provided; SVW requested follow-up information.

6. Health waiting times and access

Louise Noble and Helen Alderman (Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Service Directors, Children, Families and All-Age Services) presented CAMHS, neurodevelopmental and therapy waiting-time data. CAMHS average first-appointment waits were seven weeks at the end of September; autism assessment lists reduced in size, although long waits remained for school-age children. ADHD assessment waits remained particularly long. Occupational therapy and speech and language therapy had reduced waits of over 52 weeks; physiotherapy remained within the 18-week target.



Presentation slide 23

Waiting Times for CAMHS MHST Wokingham

NHS Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

MHST Wokingham	QTR 3			QTR 4			QTR 1			QTR 2		
	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Number waiting for assessment							128	136	130	141	113	118
Average week waiting times	5.0	6.3	6.7	4.2	3.4	7.3	6.5	5.2	5.6	12.8	15.1	12.4

The graph shows the average waiting time in weeks from referral to 1st appointment for MHST Wokingham.

During the summer months, we experienced an increase in waiting times due to targeted groups not running and higher levels of cancellations and non-attendance (DNA), linked to the heatwave and summer holiday period. In addition, some families requested that assessments be scheduled for after they returned from holiday, which resulted in a temporary increase in our waiting times. Staffing issues (long-term vacancies that only recently recruited to), maternity leave, long-term sickness have also been impacting on our waiting times. Work has started to reduce waiting times and this should start to take effect within the next quarter.

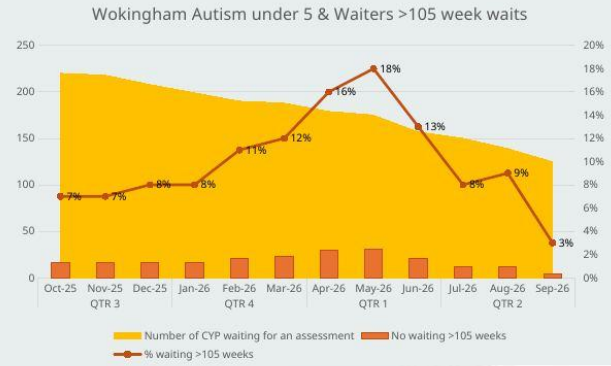


Presentation slide 24

Waiting Times Neurodiversity: CYP Autism Under 5 – Wokingham

NHS Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Wokingham Autism Under 5's	QTR 3			QTR 4			QTR 1			QTR 2		
	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Number of CYP waiting for an assessment	220	218	208	199	190	188	179	175	157	150	139	125
Average week waiting times	67	69	70	71	71	70	69	70	64	57	56	53
Average week waited times	109	92	101	115	111	108	87	93	104	114	106	82
Longest waiter in weeks	132	137	131	143	138	126	123	128	126	122	124	128
% waiting >105 weeks	7%	7%	8%	8%	11%	12%	16%	18%	13%	8%	9%	3%
No waiting >105 weeks	16	16	16	16	21	23	29	31	21	12	12	4



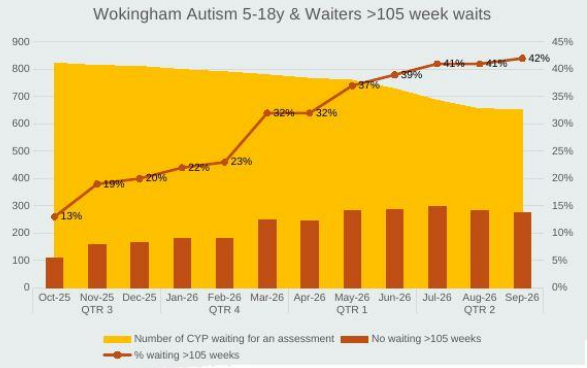
There has been a 43% decrease in the total number waiting over the past 12 months. The numbers waiting for assessment are declining. The % waiting more than 2 years has also reduced.

Presentation slide 25

Waiting Times Neurodiversity: CYP Autism 5-18y – Wokingham

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Wokingham Autism Over 5's	QTR 3			QTR 4			QTR 1			QTR 2		
	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Number of CYP waiting for an assessment	823	814	811	799	791	780	767	760	729	687	655	653
Average week waiting times	72	74	75	76	77	80	78	80	79	82	85	86
Average week waited times	104	126	116	126	115	104	128	123	127	119	125	115
Longest waiter in weeks	150	155	134	146	142	147	147	135	139	134	138	141
% waiting >105 weeks	13%	19%	20%	22%	23%	32%	32%	37%	39%	41%	41%	42%
No waiting >105 weeks	108	157	164	179	181	249	243	282	287	297	281	276



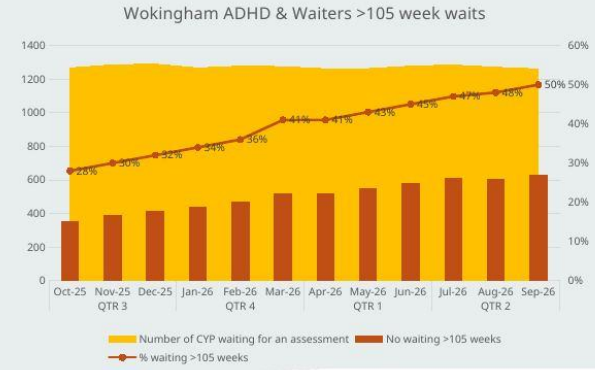
There has been a 21% decrease in the total number waiting over the past 12 months. The numbers waiting for assessment are declining although the % waiting more than 2 years is increasing..

Presentation slide 26

Waiting Times Neurodiversity: CYP ADHD – Wokingham

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Wokingham ADHD	QTR 3			QTR 4			QTR 1			QTR 2		
	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Number of CYP waiting for an assessment	1266	1285	1289	1266	1277	1274	1261	1262	1277	1284	1270	1260
Average week waiting times	79	81	83	84	86	87	88	90	91	93	96	97
Average week waited times	149	146	151	147	154	138	145	133	153	167	163	168
Longest waiter in weeks	171	169	147	177	181	185	187	192	193	178	183	187
% waiting >105 weeks	28%	30%	32%	34%	36%	41%	41%	43%	45%	47%	48%	50%
No waiting >105 weeks	350	391	410	435	465	519	518	547	578	609	605	625



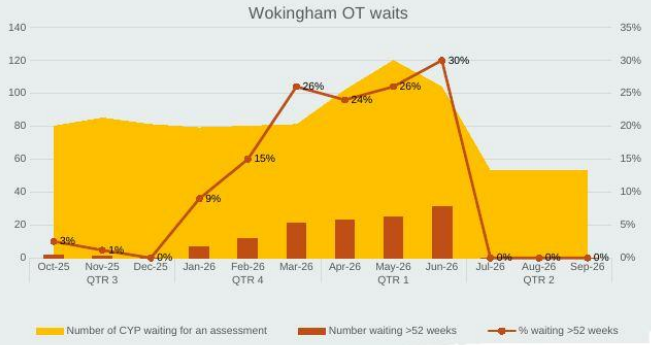
There has been a slight 0.47% decrease in the total number waiting over the past 12 months. The % waiting more than 2 years is increasing, with 12% of these waiting over 3 years.

Presentation slide 27

Local Authority Waiting Times CYPIT WOKINGHAM OT: For Children/Young People(CYP) with an EHCP who are referred with a new need requiring assessment. (*e.g. EHCP with SLT needs but new concerns relating to the need for OT identified and an assessment of need is required*)

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Wokingham OT	QTR 3			QTR 4			QTR 1			QTR 2		
	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sept-26
Number of CYP waiting for an assessment	80	85	81	79	80	81	102	120	104	53	53	53
Longest waits for an initial assessment in weeks	78	83	87	56	60	65	69	74	78	36	41	45
Average wait times in weeks	30	32	36	28	32	36	32	34	36	18	23	26
% waiting >52 weeks	3%	1%	0%	9%	15%	26%	24%	26%	30%	0%	0%	0%
Number waiting >52 weeks	2	1	0	7	12	21	23	25	31	0	0	0



Key insights

- There are currently no CYP in mainstream schools waiting over 52 weeks.
- Significant reduction in the number of CYP waiting.
- Average waiting time is improving.
- Competing priorities continue to impact on wait times.

Presentation slide 28

Local Authority and ICB Waiting Times CYPIT WOKINGHAM Physio: For Children/Young People(CYP) with or without an EHCP who are referred with a new need requiring assessment. (*e.g. EHCP with SLT needs but new concerns relating to the need for Physio identified and an assessment of need is required*)

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Wokingham PHYSIO	QTR 3			QTR 4			QTR 1			QTR 2		
	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sept-26
Number of CYP waiting for an assessment	10	11	16	8	8	6	3	4	3	4	4	9
Longest waits for an initial assessment in weeks	27	32	35	34	38	17	11	16	14	24	14	16
Average wait times in weeks	18	19	18	33	30	8	8	11	8	15	0	0
% waiting >18 weeks	60%	73%	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Number waiting >18 weeks	6	8	8	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0



Insights

- The team continue to deliver to the 18-week access target.

Presentation slide 29

ICB Waiting Times CYPIT WOKINGHAM SLT:

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

ICB Wokingham SLT	QTR 3			QTR 4			QTR 1			QTR 2		
	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sept-26
Number of CYP waiting for an assessment	46	49	55	51	44	43	44	46	43	41	31	34
Longest waits for an initial assessment in weeks	135	140	144	59	63	68	48	46	39	43	42	46
Average wait times in weeks	26	26	22	16	19	23	19	20	21	21	24	24
% waiting >52 weeks	10%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Number waiting >52 weeks	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Key insights
- There are no children waiting over 52 weeks.
- Average wait times of 24 weeks.

Presentation slide 30

Waiting Times for intervention - CYPIT SLT Early Years

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

There is no wait for an initial conversation with a speech and language therapist. Following the initial conversation to understand the child's needs and the impact of those needs, a decision is made about how best to help. When specialist SALT input is recommended following an enquiries call, waiting times for the next steps are closely monitored. Some children receive one intervention before it becomes clear that additional support is needed, while others complete an intervention and are then supported to step down to self-management. These decisions are made on an individual basis. The current waits for interventions and percentage of calls that are returned to self-care are shown below:

WOKINGHAM	TOTAL numbers waiting	Longest waiter in weeks	Avg wait in weeks
1:1	0	0	0
Clinic assessment	35	17	13
Clinic demo	0	0	0
Clinic sessions needed	0	0	0
Home visit	1	8	8
Joint assessment SLT/stammering	0	0	0
Nursery assessment	7	14	11
Nursery visit	0	0	0

Percentage of enquiries calls that are returned to self-care (RTSC) ordinarily available support across the Wokingham

Date	Number of calls per month	Percentage returned to self-care
Jul 26	29	48%
Aug 26	14	50%
Sept 26	32	38%

All children waiting for Speech and Language Therapy specialist interventions have already been provided with advice and strategies to promote early intervention and self-management as part of the enquiries call and have co-produced therapy goals included in their Enquiries Plan. Although the service operates to an 18-week target, waiting times are determined by each child's unique situation, specific needs, and associated risks.

It is expected that children will require different types and levels of support throughout their early years journey with the fundamental aim to promote development, empower and facilitate transition to school and self-management.

Presentation slide 31

Parent carer question: MEDICATION PATHWAY question - if you've been on wait list for over 2 years and now had a letter but child cannot leave the house, do you get discharged like have in the past or with there be flexibility?

Response — Follow-up required — Berkshire Healthcare: No specific answer about the medication pathway discharge policy was recorded. Health representatives invited details to be passed through SVW for individual follow-up.

Parent carer question: MENTAL HEALTH - if a child cannot leave the house and been in crisis, do you still discharge them or is there other help now?

Response — Louise Noble: Louise explained that some mental health support can be delivered at home, including an intensive support team for significant mental illness and enhanced risk support involving the team around the child. Individual eligibility and arrangements require case-specific follow-up.

Parent carer question: Do you know what the wait time is for CAMHS trichotillomania support. 18 months wait so far and no update, no interim support either! Leaflets of advice haven't helped at all so far.

Response — Louise Noble: Louise did not have a specific wait figure and offered to investigate through SVW. She said staffing had increased in the relevant team and waits were reducing.

Parent carer question: But then the access to support after the inital appointment can then be months beore any other support/ treatment can be accessed. For example the outcome of an assessment places the child on the waiting list for the SCT but they will not commit to any wait times and you are left in limbo without knowing when a CYP will be seen.

Response — Louise Noble: Louise acknowledged that families should not be left without communication. Exact dates cannot always be guaranteed because clinical risk and need affect prioritisation, but services should keep in contact and are working to give approximate timescales. She offered to investigate missing updates.

Parent carer question: What happens when a child is not in school or Home educated as we have been faced with being told they need school based evidence

Response — Follow-up required — Berkshire Healthcare: No clear specific answer on evidence requirements for children not attending school or who are home educated was recorded.

7. Local SEND provision and post-16 plans

Carey Tulloch and **Oliver Gill** (WBC Head of Children's Strategic Commissioning & Transformation and Head of Education Access and Sufficiency) described the local SEND sufficiency programme and planned specialist places. Families particularly raised the need for small, therapeutic post-16 environments offering academic as well as vocational qualifications. Oliver explained that the proposed Woodley hub was being designed with a greater academic element than the existing Wokingham provision. The precise offer is still being developed.



Presentation slide 33

Parent carer question: 2028 Post 16 Hub 2- Woodley, can I discuss at my annual review this Summer as in Y10?

Response — WBC response in chat: The team may not yet have all the details for the annual review; information will be shared when available.

Parent carer question: Is there any further info on the specialist school satellite setting planned for 2027?

Response — Carey Tulloch / follow-up required: Carey explained that some settings cannot be named until consultation or DfE application processes are complete. Further details will be shared when possible; a specific satellite-setting update was not confirmed.

Parent carer question: What about those post-16 students who are academically able but want vocational subjects like hair, beauty etc but can't access mainstream?

Response — Oliver Gill: Oliver said the Woodley design was considering an academic and vocational mix, potentially with different elements delivered across more than one hub, subject to needs analysis and practical arrangements.

Parent carer question: Would like to see post-16 that can offer range of GCSEs and A Levels within in a small therapeutic setting

Response — Oliver Gill / Carey Tulloch: This need was acknowledged as part of the work to design Woodley and future provision; the qualifications and therapeutic offer were not yet confirmed.

Parent carer question: could there be a consultation with families about these gaps?

Response — Oliver Gill and Terri Walsh: Oliver supported a dedicated engagement session on post-16 hubs. Terri said SVW would work to arrange dates and invite families to contribute to the design of Woodley and future hubs.

8. Funding and delivery of improvements

Parent carer question: Do you think you're going to have enough funding in order to really address the problem?

Response — Jamie Conran: Jamie said funding remained under significant pressure, there were no guarantees about how additional deficits would be addressed, and Wokingham was investing capital in local places and staff. He offered a more considered written response.

Follow-up points identified

- Clarify HAF eligibility and access for EOTAS, home-educated and out-of-school children, and review voucher allocation and wider criteria.
- Clarify FSM recognition and access for children not attending school.
- Confirm the medication-pathway approach where a child cannot attend in person and the evidence requirements for home-educated or out-of-school children.
- Provide individual follow-up on trichotillomania waits, communication while waiting for treatment and relevant home-based mental health support.
- Share further details of the planned satellite provision and Woodley post-16 hub as they become available.
- Arrange family engagement on the design of future post-16 provision, including academic, vocational and therapeutic needs.
- Provide the fuller response promised on SEND funding pressures.
- Circulate the slides, Q&As and link to the council's latest SEND developments and Priority Action Plan updates.

Source note: Slides are reproduced from the presentation used at the meeting. Questions are drawn from the meeting chat and transcript. Written chat questions retain their original spelling and wording, except for removal of identifying names. Responses are edited for clarity and brevity. Where the recording did not establish an answer, no answer has been inferred.