

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



Present for Wokingham Borough Council:

Helen Watson Director Children's Services (interim)
Ming Zhang, Assistant Director Education & SEND
Sally Furness SEND Quality and Practice Lead
Helen Jackson-Brench, WBC Area SENCO
Julia Bedsar SEND Local Offer Coordinator
Hayley Rees Category Manager Specialist Children's Strategy and Commissioning Service
Carey Tullock Senior Specialist Children's Strategy and Commissioning Service
Jonathan Wilding Safety Valve / SEND Consultant
Apologies: Jamie Conran Head of SEND

Cllr Andrew Mickleburgh Chair of the WBC Childrens Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Present for Health:

Miranda Walcott Designated Clinical Officer for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (0-25)
Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
Apologies: Lajla Johansson Lead for All Age Mental Health, LD, Autism and SEND Buckinghamshire,
Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board

37 parent carers attended.

Welcome and Introductions

Update from Sally Furness

SEN Team update:

Staffing Updates

We have a new SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Lead- Sally Furness. She will be working on the following-

- Designing a new Quality Assurance Framework to cover 4 key areas-
 - Quality of the EHCP's
 - EHCP Timeliness and family/young person's experience
 - Multi Agency Audits to include health, social care, education professionals and parent/carer forums
 - Staff training and development
- Developing a SEND Communication Strategy- Underway
- Creating new EHCP Process Guidance for the Local Offer- Underway
- Improving data quality and recording within the SEND Team- Underway
- Redesigning the SEND school consultation process- To start after this year's Key Stage Transfers are complete
- Supporting with creating Commissioning frameworks for Alternative Provision and Non-Maintained and Independent Schools to improve processes- Underway
- Writing the EOTAS Policy- Underway
- Ofsted Preparation, including development of the SEF- Underway

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Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



The key areas that Sally is working on:

- Data improvement and assessing the success of placements, and that they are meeting the outcomes for children.
- There will be a review of letters and documents for the EHCP Process after the key stage phase transfer process has finished
- A lot of work currently ongoing around EOTAS and Alternative Provision (AP). There is a working group meeting regular group meeting regularly to review documents, process and toolkits. SEND Voices Wokingham is part of the working group and hosting a focus group next week to help develop a new EOTAS policy.
- Ofsted prep ongoing

Staffing Updates

There is a new SEND Local Offer Coordinator- Julia Bedser

The SEND Local Offer gives information about the support available locally for children and young people with additional needs, and their families. We publish this information online via our [SEND Local Offer webpages](#) and our [SEND Local Offer Directory](#)

Julia's role is to:

- Improve our online Local Offer so that families can find information and support more easily
- Promote the Local Offer so that families are well-informed about what support is available
- Gather feedback from families and use this feedback to make further improvements to the Local Offer

Currently working on:

- Visiting schools and support clubs to understand what support is available and to listen to children and young people's voices
- Making improvements to the online webpages
- Developed a [Local Offer contact form](#)
- Developed a [SEND Local Offer newsletter](#), to bring news and updates about what's on offer locally directly to your inbox. This newsletter will also be a platform to celebrate children and young people's experiences.

Future developments:

- Further engagement with the community to ensure that our Local Offer is responsive to feedback from children, young people, parents and carers



Update from Julia Bedser

The key areas that Julia is working on:

- Reviewing the information on the Local Offer ensuring all relevant information is on there.
- NEW - Local Offer Contact form – on WBC SEND Local Offer pages for families to request support for things they can't find, what's useful and what's missing, what you'd like to know more about
- NEW – SEND Local Offer Newsletter – updates on what's on locally you can sign up for the email
- Developing Local Offer drop-ins

Staffing Updates

There is a new Area SENCO- Helen Jackson Brench

Helen's role is to provide advice and support to SENCOs and other school staff across Wokingham ensuring that children and young people with SEND have their needs met at the earliest opportunity.

Currently working on:

- Understanding and co-ordinating the support that is already available
- Visiting schools
- Recruitment of Deputy Area SENCOs

Coming soon:

- Network meetings for SENCOs
- SENCO newsletter
- Training for new SENCOs
- Review of Ordinarily Available Provision document
- Bespoke support for individual schools

Update from Helen Jackson-Brench

The key areas that Helen is working on:

- Helen Area SENCO started in Jan 24
- Supporting school staff and building a team of deputy SENCOs (seconded 1 day a week from schools) to add additional support direct to schools.
- Reviewing the Ordinarily Available documentation and how to improve it, to have a clear

Staffing Updates

- Two interim Case Officers, who support the Senior Case Officers with admin related tasks, have handed in their notice this week. The SEND management team have already started looking at CVs for replacements.
- There is an advert out for 2 new permanent Assistant Team Managers.
- The new SEND Team Manager has started and going through a robust handover with Charlotte. She has already identified improvements to be made to the SEND team and is looking to expand capacity.
- The new Post 16 Lead is starting on 5th February.

understanding of what the offer is from all schools.

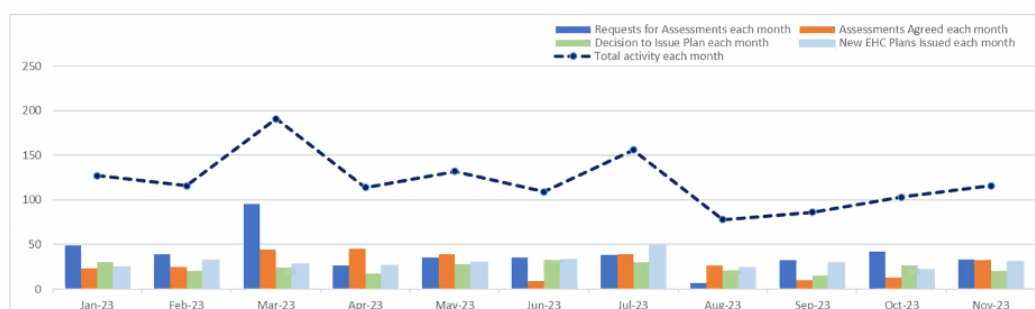
1st February 2024

Sally – Ongoing recruitment including 2 x Assistant Team Managers and 2 x case officers.

NEW - Sarah Post 16 Lead starts Monday 5th February

SEND Data Presented

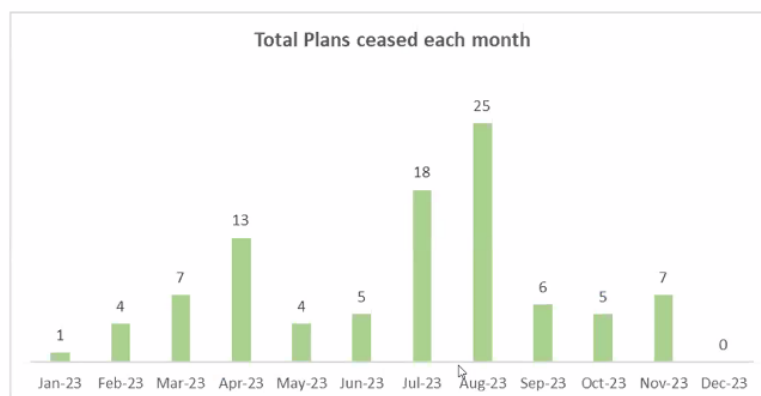
Current SEND Activity in 2023 (in numbers):



For the calendar year 2023,

- Number of Requests for assessments: 469
- Number of Assessments agreed: 336
- Number of Decisions to issue plan: 276
- Number of new plans issued: 343

Closing EHCP Involvements Information



- Total 95 plans are no longer needed after reviews this year, most being over 19 and NEET and a few moved out of LA.

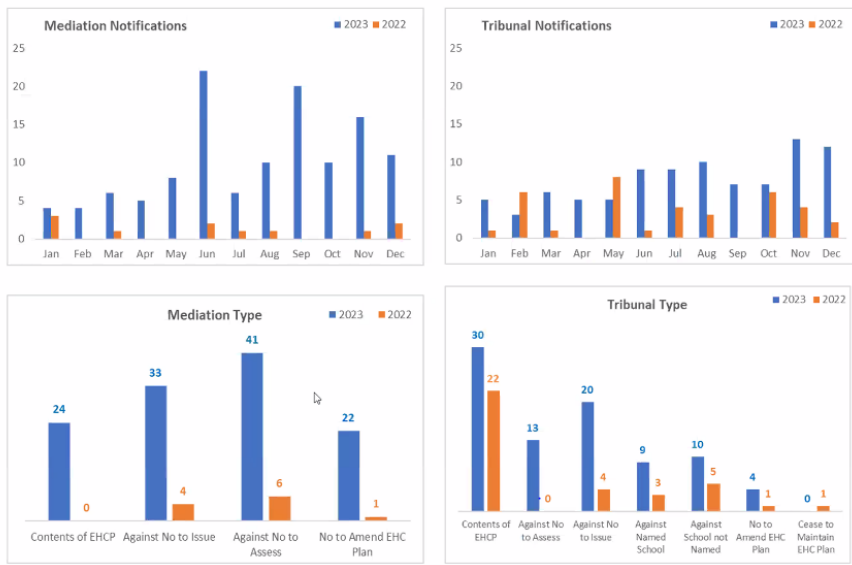
1st February 2024

Mediation & Tribunal Notifications:

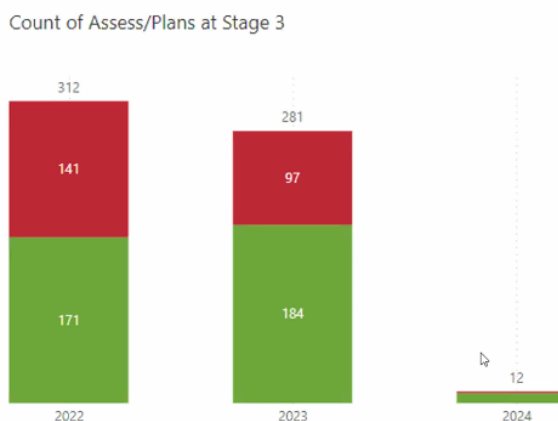
- 122 mediation notifications received in 2023, compared to 11 mediation notifications in 2022.

- 86 Tribunal notifications received in 2023, compared to 36 tribunal notifications in 2022.

- In 2023,
 - 36 hearings had taken place,
 - 6 settled before hearing



EHCP Timeliness



Success Percentage 2023- 65%

Success Percentage 2022- 55%

National Average 2023- 49%

Update from Jonathan Wilding – Safety Valve (SV)

- Awaiting formal response from the DfE from last SV report. WBC are meeting the DfE expectations and expect to receive the 3rd payment soon. On track for EHCP numbers by addressing needs at an earlier stage, and make school offer more consistent Ordinarily Available provision.
- Two primary schools, Loddon and Radstock planned to open Resource Base and SEND Unit respectively and will upfill from Sept 24.
- Hope to announce the secondary resource base soon.

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



- Improving the provision in WBC to be able to plan the journey of the SEN cohort as they progress through the system and are expecting the process to improve over this coming year.

Health Update from Miranda Walcott

Updates from Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT) and Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RBH)

- BHFT ADHD and ASD pathways are no longer part of CAMHS as they are not a mental health issues
- Next month AI being introduced to help with requests for help online to help triage the support and assessment that is required.
- Transition (from pediatric to adult services) videos have been released and are on BOB's website
- SVW Feedback from Families report – parents said GP's not understanding SEND, training sessions now booked to improve understanding. The 1st one on constipation and LD has happened
- Training for SEND Teams across Berkshire West (Wokingham Reading and West Berkshire LA's) on what's Ordinarily Available from Health
- 20th March parent carer engagement about their experiences on health services, focus groups, feedback and what's available and what services need to change – more information to follow from SVW
- Gap – It is recognized that there is a gap in ASD ADHD mental health support



Development in services since 2022

- Dynamic Support Register & Keyworker service
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Learning Disabilities service
- 24-hour service for Children and Young People in Mental Health Crisis via the 111 service
- Children and Young People Integrated Therapies contribution to Educational Health Care Needs Assessment Panel
- Weekly Designated Clinical Officer and Head of Children's Commissioning meetings
- Designated Clinical Officer generic inbox
- Pathways for Eating disorders in Autism developed from Clinical Experience model
- Introduction of Roald Dahl –Epilepsy Transitions Nurse
- Child in Care Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service team
- Speech and Language Therapy enquiry line for Early Years
- Remodelled front door for Speech and Language Therapy
- Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) (Pilot within Reading)
- Autism Assessment and ADHD service transformation programme
- THRIVE model in CAMHS and EWB has become embedded
- Children and Young People Integrated Therapies have completed training sessions for the SEND Teams on what is "Ordinarily Available" and how to respond to need
- Young People with a variety of Learning Difficulties across BOB have participated in transitions videos
- Service users have shaped the development of services by co-producing services through steering groups

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Questions raised both verbally and in the Zoom chat by those who attended the meeting. The questions have been grouped into topic areas.

- Q&A's from parent carers
- Answers from WBC in BLUE
- Answers from Health in GREEN
- Answers from SEND Voices Wokingham

Key Issues raised by parent carers during the evening:

- Post 16 - lack of provision, lack of clarity in Annual Review process
- SEND Team communications – continues to be an issue
- Data - mediation & tribunals increasing, is this just stalling tactics
- CAMHS Crisis Teams – parents still directed by professionals to A&E
- Short Breaks – no SEMH provision (8 years), no wrap around care, lack of holiday clubs. Parents forced to give up work
- Ordinarily Available – Not happening at the moment, how are you going to make sure all schools do this?
- Schools affecting children's mental health
- Complaints systems still too complicated

Welcome everyone, just a polite notice to remind you all that this is an open meeting and please bear this in mind if you mention personal details. Thank you SVW

Q - Requests from parents for future sessions to be recorded. It was recorded last time but consent to share not given to allow the discussion part to be shared unfortunately. Such a shame as so many people can't make it

SVW - SVW are taking notes to share afterwards, so hopefully that will help. Slide information will also be shared.

Q - No Jamie Conran?

SVW - No Jamie is on holiday, he sends apologies.

Post 16

Q - Can WBC advise when education provision for over 16 will be provided for those SEN kids that can't do mainstream?

Q - Post 16 - colleges tell you at open days that they can't take your SEN child without an EHCP, then they say they can't meet needs if a child with an EHCP when consulted with. Our local colleges make it very difficult for post 16 children to access education.

Q – post 16 provision is going to be too late for many young people, and they are missing out or parents being forced to tribunal to get the correct provision in place

WBC - Jonathan - I can't give an exact date but we have carried out a post-16 needs assessment, and we are in the process of prioritizing options before commissioning new post-16 provision. We will be making announcements in this in the next couple of months. We have earmarked over £2m capital to fund this.

Q- why is there no educational support, post 16, ASD YP, no support from CAMHS, Foundry nothing, Bracknell refused, 2 million pounds for investment – what does that look like?

WBC - Jonthan – WBC short of post 16 provision, commissioning starting in the next 2 months. Please get in touch with me and let me know of your experience. This work may not be in time to address your daughter's needs but hope to have tenders out by the summer for a new provision for Sept 25. We recognize the gap and are working as fast as we can. There is a wide demand for post 16 and we are not sure we can meet all the needs in these provisions. We want to ensure we make the best use of what we have and benefit the widest number of cyp we can and have the greatest impact.

Q – By then my child will 18 and then you get cut off, Foundry cut you off at 16

WBC - Jonathan – we have imposed more flexibility in some cases with Foundry, get in touch, watch this space, family experience is important to understand the need. Please get in touch - jonathan.wilding@wokingham.gov.uk

Q - We have just had an email from our headteacher saying a decision has been made by the Governors Admission Panel that the school can't meet need for phase transfer to sixth form. We have not been involved or had any input in this. Our daughter has just sat her mock GCSEs, has 94% attendance and is very upset. They are meeting need, and her medical condition is improving, our daughter has an EHCP, and the school is currently named. We have been trying to get hold of our case officer for days about Phase Transfer, yet the school is saying they are advising the council they can't meet need we have medical reports to provide. What do we do?

WBC – Sally – please email me for further discussion. I have a Post 16 Background so can support with looking into the school's response. Sally.furness@wokingham.gov.uk

Q -There seems to be a lack of clarity over how Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) should be included in the EHCP and often this is being neglected and young people are missing key provision to support. How is this being addressed? At a recent AR we were told by the case officer they did not know what they should and should not include.

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



WBC -Jonathan – We have developed clearer guidance on PfA for our schools and accept that this has not been as clear in the past as is needed – it will improve as we have also appointed a new PfA Lead as part of the SEND Team next week – it has not had sufficient focus previously. Our new PfA lead will be working with case officers and training will be a key priority.

Q – Why can't someone do something about Activate learning in particular taking SEN children? They are awful and discriminatory.

WBC – Carey – Please email me carey.tulloch@wokingham.gov.uk as we will be continuing to work with Activate Learning and if there are specific examples or issues I meet with them regularly and am happy to raise

Q – Does Oak Tree have a 6th form? Answer please

Communication & SEND Team

Q - Our frustration is communication. (lack off) It is very very difficult to actually speak to someone. Numerous emails get sent, not responded to. It would be much more productive to have a two-way conversation with the case officer. Additionally, concern is that inaccurate information shared by 'professionals', especially information provided from schools to Wokingham BC . In our experience (and anecdotally from other parents) school SENDCO has been very very unhelpful and obstructive, school have every incentive to filter out to other school Pupils with SEN issues vs what is best for the pupil.

Q - No idea who my child's SEN caseworker is and he is meant to have his annual review within next 14days, at a key time - entering post 16 provision

Q - Perhaps will we get a new case officer soon and the already late re assessment of needs will be done

Q - I don't know who my daughter's case worker is either and we have her AR next month. not acceptable!

Q - typical radio silence all round!

Q - Comms has been a major issue, emails and calls unanswered here too

Q - It's never been so bad in my opinion

Q - I would just like to add that the communication is a HUGE issue for many MANY families right now, I have never seen so many desperate parents who've been left in the dark and totally ignored!

Q - for me its the lack of anyone giving any updates, responding to anything, or following through with any actions - repeatedly Child in Need call after Child in Need call, updating on the wrong child or just not showing up at all after pre-agreement

Q - We know the name of our Case Officer yet have no direct email address and no phone number for the Case Officer.

Q - Communication - I appreciate you saying this is a priority this year, what can you do now immediately to help parents contact you? It's ok working out a permanent long term plan but you

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



need to do something now. Can't you have an admin person who can send a holding email to let people know who their case officer is and when they will contact them?

Q - we've been told for the last year my child's case would be prioritised yet a year later nothing has changed and every email sent to Jamie has been ignored since June last year

WBC - Sally – we are working on a comms Strategy which will include a guidelines on expectation on the SEN team responses, which we are including following feedback from SVW. A promise being in place will enable individuals to be held to account and support training needs when required. Staffing capacity issues still impact response times.

Q can I ask are the new (SEND team) staff members are permanent or temps?

WBC - Jonathan - The new posts are initially 2-year contracts but with scope to extend

Q - Your team is impacted by staffing capacity, but this has been ongoing for over two years. The staff turnover seems unnecessarily large which indicates pressure within the team, surely WBC should balance the cost of re-training with these constant cost cuts.

Q - Why is there such a high turnover of staff in the SEND department

Q - SO SAVING MONEY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MEETING SEND CHILDRENS NEEDS! ARE YOU AWARE OF THE LAW?!

Q - We all hear about the lack of resources but why then do you keep employing agency staff at double the cost of permanent staff.

Q - new case officer attended annual review today, was not aware we had a new case worker, also glad they attended but they didn't say a word. surely, they should input something?

Q - many of the SEND team do not understand the duties under section 19

WBC - Jonathan - As you've heard there is a lot of recruitment underway within the team so we are aiming to be up to full capacity as soon as possible

Data

Q - Don't those stats (the data that was shared) tell you all something!

Q – tribunal and the cost to wbc, for me personally have had to appeal twice, one went and one consent, why does it seem wbc so quick to go to mediation and tribunal, rather than putting the support in place, why do we have to go through it when you are looking at the money. I knew more than my caseworker and then I get a consent order, surely this is costing wbc more.

Q - add another consent order to those stats as of today! Do SEN use appeals as a way of 'buying time', or hope that parents are unaware of the law and what their children's legal rights are so just accept what SEN say and don't appeal?!

Q - What is the cost for WBC legal services to contest all the tribunal cases? Is there a cost-benefit analysis where the council could settle these cases, especially as often found in families' favour, to

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



save money to be focused on other resources? We twice successfully obtained support for our son through tribunal, each time WBC settled just before the tribunal date having offered no information to counter our support request. Most recently, we were given an unlawful decision following the school panel decision, when we pointed out the decision was unlawful our complaint was resolved Q Q - within 24 hours, but again initially tribunal was suggested to us. Extraordinary that tribunal is so quickly suggested by WBC

Q - LA didn't attempt to work with us to resolve the issue and basically just delayed support for my child.

Q - we are waiting for our hearing

Q - Why do you think there has been a huge increase in numbers for mediation and tribunal? 98% of hearings are currently found in favour of the appeal which means unlawful decisions are being made.

Q - It's not just me and others, who are being refused to be assessed, but threshold is so low.

Q - OT reports required, when they are part of the request to assess

Q - No comms from SEN team, is so bad so can't contact, system flawed, which is why going to tribunal mediation, as no other option as no one to speak to

Q - mediation and tribunals, just to buy time?

Q - My case officer did not change a word of my son's draft EHCP without providing explanation why despite us making a number of representations and told us to call an early annual review if we would like to change anything in my son's EHCP. We went to the Tribunal.

Q - Same, majority of our comments ignored without explanation. I later found out that best practice is for the LA to offer a co-production mtg. We were not offered this and when I found out it was too late. I was pointed in the direction of tribunal again.

WBC - Ming – we assure you that it is not WBC intention to go to tribunal, we try every channel to get an agreement. We are putting additional measures in place and really want to reassure you we want to work with parent carers

Q – Pam (WBC officer), actually listens and gives genuine impartial advice, what's legal and what's in the best interest of the child.

WBC - Sally – training for staff for legal matters has been identified as a need and we are looking into this. I am not on panel or decision maker, but decisions have had to be more robust, they are not a delay tactic, work on mediation and tribunals have a negative impact on the SEN team too.

WBC - Jonathan- more work with schools needed to ensure they have done what needs to be done before we get to an EHCP request. This is a point of change and it is a difficult transition and tensions are showing in the system. It is about making the system work as it should but does mean that the data looks like resources rather a management issue and quality standards are in driving things.

Short Breaks (SB) / Holiday Clubs for SEN Children

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Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



Q – Local Offer website, sounds good, but what about the services that are still yet to exist, no suitable SEMH activities or respite, every year I have to ask the same questions and year and year on nothing is available, at what point do WBC start providing services that have been assessed as being required, 8+years waiting. We have SB, annual review says we need a service (SEMH) but it doesn't exist, can't provide anything, I never get a break from caring.

Q - I have never even been offered short breaks or respite from WBC.

Q - Saturday club often the child doesn't meet criteria and very difficult to obtain a place

WBC - Hayley – We have a senior commissioner reviewing SB at moment, as more options and availability is required, engaging with providers around gaps and accessibility, inc Me2, talking to cyp too. We are in the process of understanding what the needs are. What needs to be commissioned to meet the need. Review ends in March. SB Steering Group will be reviewing.

Q - so what's the timeline?

WBC - Hayley - March '24 to complete needs access, coproduce options. We know we need to increase pace and are also working with the Holiday and Food Club (HAF) for school holidays. We understand the pace, hoping some will be online this year.

Q - hard to believe that it's going to change. What is the parent carer involvement. Will parents be involved in collating feedback before march?

WBC - Hayley – SEND Voices Wokingham, cyp and parent carers will be involved. We need to balance pace with coproduction. We have used information provided by SVW surveys etc.

Q - I want to know now that Wokingham have built SEN schools if there is a plan to provide a SEN holiday club to allow parents respite and to WORK. As Thumbs Up club is fabulous but very limited and seriously oversubscribed.

Q – number of parent carers who have to give up work due to their SEN needs, as no holiday cover. Now WBC have SEN schools, will there be holiday clubs and respite for parent carers

Q - SB don't enable parent carers to work

Q - Thumbs up don't take any new for 4 years. 4 days over 6 weeks which doesn't enable you to work. 2 days over easter, doesn't enable you to work

WBC- Hayley – working with holiday and food club to expand the send offer.

WBC - Jonathan – we don't have the answer to SEN wrap around and we don't have resources to address this but can encourage the new schools to look at this.

Q - My son attends school after school, went once, but they requested extra £22 per hour for a one to one, when says is a SEN provision on the WBC Local Offer?

Q - I'm a parent who has had to stop work to care for my child. No provision for an undiagnosed ASD teenager to cover respite or summer holidays

Q - Agree - I had to give up work years ago. Child not had full time provision since 2019!

Q - I've had to give up my job as a SENCO to support my child

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



Q - my daughters after school said the same to us, we had to pay for 1:1 or she could no longer attend. ended up having to leave work!

Q - I can't work as my son is with me full time as the SEN team and school take months to sort a short-term alt provision

WBC - Jonathan – it's not realistic to ask parent carers to pay that extra. WBC's aspiration is to make services more inclusive but limited resources to do this and are aware of the impact of this, sadly WBC have no statutory requirement to do so and therefore the funding is not available. Aspirational, yes, wrong to say we can address but we see the challenge.

SVW - Terri – 15th May for next Zoom SEND Update – Hayley to update on Short Breaks

CAMHS/Crisis Team

Q – for Miranda, can you confirm the times the crisis team work? 11pm at night and went to hospital but was told only available in office hours at 9am.

Q - Is the CRISIS Team going to be available 24/7? When I took my son to A&E at 11pm, we had to wait until 12pm the next day as 'CRISIS team only was working office hours'!!

Q - This sounds terrible. There is no joined up support here, even within the dynamic support register framework.

Q - Unmet need in our experience causes mental health issues. We were put on various CAMHS pathways years ago and were told years waiting list for assesment. and we would stil be waiting. We were fortunate to be to go privately. Our experience is CAMHS is inefectual and the massive delay causes crises due to unmet needs. CAMHS waiting lists for assesments for ASD or Anxiety was years!

Q - CAMHS cause more damage than solve - well that's what my child says, and she's their customer.

Q -We were sent home after hours of waiting and then CAMHS called us the following morning to go back and someone from the crisis team would be ready for us. 6 hours of waiting in A&E crisis team didn't arrive we were admitted to the ward and my child sedated until crisis team arrived the following day!!

Q - we were sent to And E as well. Our daughter has PTSD with respect to Royal Berkshire Hospital

Q - Why are there no on call psychiatrists in hospitals?

Q - Every service says to go there (A&E)

Q - 2 years for ASD pathway and 3 years for Mental Health pathway. 6 months for crisis team help there are for adults only! they called prospect park for my 6-year-old!

Health - Miranda - The 24-hour CAMHS crisis support is accessed via 111 and will trigger a call from the local crisis support team. For out of hours call 111, during the day please contact the CAMHS crisis line.

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



Q - So for CAMHS crisis we don't call the hub? It's now 111 - maybe CAHMS need to send out a blanket email/correspondence on that - because when crisis hits you don't want to be calling around various depts.

Q- Miranda, is this clearly signposted on CAHMS WEBSITE?

Health - Miranda – wouldn't expect a cyp to wait all night, link in the chat out office and in office. Crisis line send to A&E, which shouldn't happen, let SVW know and Miranda will address directly with camhs as we don't want cyp going to A&E in crisis, apologize that this is happening and trying to change what CAMHS are advising.

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/about-our-mental-health-services-camhs/>

Q- Just read that link, no mention of calling 111. The web page is the same copy as a few months back, you call crisis adult team and wait for someone to call you

Health - <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/contact-us/i-need-urgent-help-now/>

Q - If they need sedating, you need a doctor, CAHMS crisis are not medical, what happens then?

Q - Surely in crisis they need medication, and adults would receive better care.

Q - Personal case was a year ago but have heard from others it is still true now.

Health - Miranda - I will continue to raise this with the CAMHS service manager that parent carers are being advised to take their Child or Young Person to A&E.

Local Offer

Q - Positive feedback on Local Offer. I'm really pleased to hear about the improvements in the Local Offer and website that are coming. To see someone dedicated to sort this and an overhaul of the website is much needed.

Q - does the local offer provide a list of local childminders who can support SEN?

WBC – Julia - Yes, on the Local Offer directory you can filter the search results to show childminders who have provided information about how they support children with SEN. [Wokingham Directory | Services in Childminders](#)

If a parent types their post code into the "filter by location" box, it orders the childminders from closest to furthest from their location.

Refine these results

Filter by location:

Place name or postcode



Childminders are asked to keep their information up-to-date and are sent six monthly reminders to update their directory listings.

Ordinarily Available/Early Intervention

Q – if needs met early in the first place, our experience school don't follow their own policy and we are here now due to that. School have every incentive to outsource cyp to special schools. No contact from school senco when cyp in hospital for year due to MH. PTSD due to treatments at hospital and no support there. Yet camhs and social care have said problem at home, on camhs waiting list for 3 years. Reports from camhs/social care not shared with parents. Hospital caused initial trauma. Due to safeguarding parents now unable to correct anything. Was told we deliberately filled form wrong, social care were told we refused to asses.

School refusing access to 6th form, no consult with parent carer.

Health - Miranda – please raise a complaint with BHFT with CAMHS via PALS.

<https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/about-us/contact-us/patient-advice-and-liaison-service-pals/>

WBC - Sally - Sorry to hear that - Helen's new role a Area SENCO is partly to address inconsistencies between schools and to build more consistency in the way schools work and the support they offer.

WBC - Jonathan – system wide issue isn't meeting needs properly. Your reasons are exactly why we talk early interventions. I'm really sorry to hear about your and your daughter's experience - if you can send me an email with your daughter's details and her school, I will pass it on to Jamie and ask him to prioritise this for attention; Jonathan.wilding@wokingham.gov.uk ... I will do my utmost to get this looked at closely

Q – how are you going to enforce schools to follow OA? Schools avoid trying to put things in place, especially when the child masks, when schools are academies?

Q - Can the LA hold schools to account if they are consistently letting children down? If they aren't actually doing the Ordinarily Available processes?

WBC - Jonathan – if we had a magic wand, we would all wave it, there are many schools where it works well, we need to share this and get schools to hold each other to account, establish an agreed offer, and they help WBC to hold each other to account. If we build partnerships with schools, create a belief on how we work, and the resources we are building and we have to get buy-in from schools. This will take time to negotiate and work towards. We can't direct schools.

Q - IF schools actually followed their own SEN policies, there would be less need for EHCPs in our experience.

Q - By the time most families are applying for EHCPs their children's needs have not been met for years!

Q - without the OA how are the EHCP going to reduce, including mental health camhs assessments? Things just haven't improved in reality.

Q - What action will you be taking where schools do not put support under 'ordinarily available' in place when most schools are academies, and you have no control over them? How are you going to make them follow it and put support in place early?

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



WBC - Jonathan – we are now putting in place, things that Wokingham haven't had before, such as the Area SENCO, these been successful in other areas. There will be some schools that don't follow suit, but there are schools that do support really well.

WBC - Ming – the new SENCO support to help hold schools and to hold them to account. We also note schools of concern (SEN Is an area that is included in this as well as poor academic performance etc) and the area SENCO will feed into that group. If it is an LA school causing concern we can intervene, with Academies we can escalate the Trusts Board and to Regional DfE Director if needed.

Q - do you track where there are peak plan requests from certain schools and send exclusions, is that part of this

WBC - Ming – yes, this forms part of a data, which is multi faceted, teaching learning standards, safeguarding and SEND.

Q - Early approach and support would avoid many issues. We are only a few here with one precious hour to give the Professionals the chance to make it right. It is too late for my child, but I am here to support future generations.

Q - I agree. The damage is done before any services are contacted or able to help, then they can't help as it is too late! parents are already broken before they apply for an EHCP, and that process is utterly dreadful because SEN care more about their purse strings than the child that desperately needs help.

Social Care

Q - where is social care where are they? As we are missing a part of working together is it being looked at as part of Safety Valve.

WBC – Helen W – DCS – social care is part of the work we are doing and part of the SEND Strategic Partnership, new SEND inspections include social care too now. If there are particular issues you would like to hear more about, we can provide an update and include a social care for the May 15th update meeting.

Q – Safety valve work and future improvements with educ settings is great but for many it is too late, but for those who are way past that social care is a big part now for them. The work planned sounds good but many won't benefit. What about those providers (EOTAS/AP) not being paid? The impact on social care finances is huge. Is this separate to Safety Valve?

WBC - Helen W – there is one Children's Services budget. There is lots going on including the Government SEND Reform programme which covers all child service, not new money.

Q - What is the Safety Valve money for?

WBC - Helen W - It is a specific agreement with the DfE for the High Needs Block deficit. There is ongoing work on Short Breaks and we are trying to look at all the needs of children and young people and the whole child and welcome suggestions of topics for the next meeting.

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



WBC - Ming – We are looking at whole the cyp, and all their needs, every aspect of the cyp and how everything impacts together. Our ambition is to cover a wider range of subjects in these updates with families.

New Resource Bases/SEND Units

Q - Both new resource bases located in Earley?

WBC – Carey – Yes, this is partly because of the space available at the schools and partly based on the fact that we invited applications from interested schools. They are both different provisions, so it is not duplication (Resource base roughly 50/50 model and unit 70/30) we will need to take location in to account for future development of resource bases to ensure a spread across the local area.

Q – Loddon & Radstock are both Resource Bases? Or one of them SEND unit

WBC- Carey - Loddon will be a resource base and Radstock a designated SEND unit. Both will have 21 pupils when full by 2026/27 academic year. We are mobilising the provision currently; it is likely they will have 6 places in the first year and phase up from there. More details will be available shortly as we move through mobilisation.

ASD/ADHD diagnosis pathways and Support

Q - What about the comorbidity between ASD and ADHD with MH? so many of our children have multiple diagnoses and difficulties?

Q - Unmet needs in school for ADHD and Autistic kids leads to mental health issues

Q – Please could you explain how AI will be used to decide whether to accept autism/ ADHD assessment referrals? Thanks

Q – But why are so many children getting to crisis? Why is support early in still not in place. I did mental health training through work 17pprox.. 6 years ago and the horrendous figures of children’s mental health was known then, but it hasn’t got better, it’s got worse. Why? My daughter just sits on waiting lists, moved from one team to another.

Q – my child was bullied at primary school as his ASD needs were totally missed. He has actually been diagnosed with PTSD from it and affecting his Secondary school years.

Health – Miranda – The AI system will analyse the free text it does not make the decision as to whether a referral will be accepted or not this will be completed by a Practitioner. The AI will decide what type of assessment is needed.

Support from Autism Berkshire will remain as well as ShaRoN which is an online support service <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/sharon-online-advice-platform/>

Zoom SEND Update for families with WBC & Health

1st February 2024



Q – for @Miranda Walcott – does the adhd pathway still only take referrals from the 6th birthday? It doesn't affect me now, I was asking as it's crazy that they have to wait and THEN wait on the waiting list for years.

Health – Miranda – Yes, they for children under the age of 5. I advise that you contact your GP for a referral to the community pediatrician.

Q – we were told only after 6th birthday last year?

Health - Miranda - Nationally children under 6 are not diagnosed with ADHD which is why I advised to seek support from the GP for a referral. Unfortunately, this is too late for you

Q - @Miranda Walcott that is incorrect! NICE guidelines specifically state about diagnosis and medication in under 5s!

Q - and also there are case where children get medication before 5, my point is just that they won't get seen until at least EIGHT if can't be referred until they are 6

Health - Miranda -The NICE Guidelines I am fully aware of, but children should be able to be on a waiting to TO BE SEEN after their 6th birthday. I will take this further and get back to Terri and Sarah as to why this is not the case within Berkshire West

Q - You don't need to go to the GP for an ADHD referral - you can self-refer via an online form. My GP told me I'd made a wasted visit.

EOTAS/AP

Q - How are the LA separating AP and EOTAS ? They are very different as well as provision under medical needs and those where a school placement is deemed inappropriate. There seems to be no clear line within the SEND team and a lack of understanding of medical needs, AP and EOTAS. How will this be addressed?

WBC - Carey - the difference between AP and EOTAS are very clear, but I agree in the past this has become confused and some children are classified as EOTAS when actually they do not meet the legal test for this and should be AP. We are working on developing a new EOTAS policy Sally Furness is coordinating with SEND Voices Wokingham on this. There is more to do in this, including communication and training for SEND case officers, Schools and more information for parents.

Q - How long from EOTAS being agreed by SEND team should a plan be put in place? Answer please

Q - But it seems it's okay to not give a child EOTAS but say they are reassessing needs but then not do it properly or on time?

Q - With the severe lack of places in Specialist setting in the borough, when will WBC start to use online schools to plug the gap? My child is not able to access mainstream anymore and the process to find a space in a SEN school is long and arduous. Access to an online school like Minerva would help keep my child in education. Answer please

School Affecting Childrens Mental Health

Q - My child has been out of school since Dec 2022 due to school trauma. She was bullied and had no support for her ASD since starting mainstream secondary. I have now had to give up work to care for her and we are having to pay for PTSD therapy for her.

Q - trauma for children and then trauma of the parents too! the damage the System has caused my family will never be repaired

Complaints System

Q - It takes time & there are so many questions and have to repeat yourself. its exhausting. my current (WBC) complaint I put in August, and I am still waiting for an outcome!

Q - Parents DO NOT have energy or capacity to add yet another form, leaflet, contact, phone call or email

Q - PALS and CAMHS never respond to complaints

Q - the issue is complaining is so difficult

Answer please

Compass Team

Q - Ofsted believes Compass team has a Clinical Psychologist. Are you aware that they do not? And the Compass Team Psychologist is unregulated by the Health and Care Professional Council and not registered with the British Psychological Society. (as the Educational Psychologists all are) We have complained about the conduct of this "psychologist" and have been advised that they have 'Clinical Supervision' from a Clinical Psychologist. And we were refused contact with the Clinical Supervisor (who we do not believe exists). This potentially affects all parents and children that the Compass Team have been involved with and is a safeguarding risk, in our opinion. As they have given very bad advice to our school about our child's needs and as we have just discovered does not believe our child's diagnosis (by a Consultant Psychiatrist and a Clinical Psychologist)

Q - I've used Compass team - are you talking about X'? I thought they were a psychologist?!

Answer please

Thank you everyone for giving up your time this evening.