

We are the independent voice of families, representing their experiences to improve lives

Welcome to the first SEND Voices Wokingham newsletter. 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

CONTACT US

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 info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk

 [SEND Voices Wokingham](#)

SEND VOICES Wokingham the new name for REACH Wokingham



You may have noticed we have changed our name!

Following feedback from parents, our new name explains who we are, what the forum does in the Borough and better reflects that we are the

“independent voice of families, representing their experiences to improve lives”.

We also have a great new website, www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk, which is regularly updated with news and information on events training and consultations for any parents and carers of children and young people with SEND in the Borough.

We are also really pleased to announce that all members of SEND Voices Wokingham will be eligible for a FREE Max Card. Full details of how to join SEND Voices Wokingham and the Max Card are available on our website.

Local Area Inspection of SEND Services (Ofsted & CQC Inspection) - UPDATE



The Local Area SEND Inspection took place in March 2019 and the findings resulted in Local Authority and Health being required to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address areas of concern identified in the inspection. The full inspection report can be found here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80582>.

This week SEND Voices Wokingham were included in the WSOA process meeting with the DfE and NHS England, along with the senior leaders from WBC and CQC. The WSOA will be co-produced by the WBC and CQC, along with SEND Voices Wokingham. Throughout the discussions it was wonderful to hear how the main focus will be resolving the main issues raised by the Ofsted inspection and ensuring that the actions result in improvements for our young people. At these early stages of planning it was also encouraging to hear the start of a culture change of listening to our families and how important that is.

The frustrating and difficult part for us as a forum and our families, particularly those who are struggling currently, is the timescale of change. The WSOA submission deadline is August 2019. Ofsted will then review the document and either accept or request changes to the plan. The plan of course will be staggered, and the changes will be implemented over the next 18 months, when the Ofsted/CQC revisit is due. The good news is the senior leaders of the WBC and CQC also understand this frustration and are keen to implement changes quickly.

The WSOA will be a document that is shared with everyone once it has been approved by Ofsted. As more information becomes available, we will keep you regularly updated. Please be assured that we will continue to advocate for our family's voices to be heard.

Parent Reps needed!



Following the Ofsted/CQC Inspection, SEND Voices Wokingham have been asked to join a number of strategic and operational groups as well as working parties and we know there are more in the pipeline! We are looking for parents who as well as their own views, would be able to represent the views of all parents across the borough. SEND Voices Wokingham would provide information to take to the meetings. If you are interested in being a parent rep or would like more information please email: info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk

Surveys, surveys, surveys.....thank you for your feedback

A big thank you to all the parent carers who have completed surveys or consultations for us during 2018/19. We know there have been a lot but without your feedback on these, SEND Voices Wokingham does not know what is working and what needs improving. Please keep completing the surveys and consultations so we can represent your views to the council and health. We will be updating our website with survey results.



Short Breaks

Short Breaks continued to be a big focus of our work the past year. Following your feedback, we worked with the Disabled Children's Team at the council to update and improve the Short Breaks Statement 2018-19 and to signpost parents to the right person to resolve individual issues following the introduction of the new Short Breaks payments and cards. We will be reviewing the Short Breaks Statement again at the end of the summer so if you have any comments or feedback please let us know.

Do you need a break from your caring responsibilities?

You can apply for Short Breaks **yourself**. All the information you need about the types of Short Breaks available, eligibility and how to apply are available on the Wokingham Local Offer:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/local-offer-for-0-25-year-olds-with-additional-needs/disabilities-and-conditions-support/short-breaks-and-respite-care/>

Need more help? Please contact the Short Break Co-ordinator by phone: 0118 974 6881 or 6890 or by email:

shortbreakselfassessment@wokingham.gov.uk



You can scan this QR code and go straight to the Short Breaks website.

Steve Broach - The Law in Day Training.

In March 2019 SEND Voices Wokingham were very pleased to host leading SEND Barrister, Steve Broach, to run a Law in a Day training session for parents. This really popular course was attended by 36 parents and discussed many issues relevant to families in the Borough. Steve covered topics including Judicial Reviews, discrimination, support from schools, children out of education, short breaks, school transport and many more. A full copy of the slides is available on our website... Here are some of the comments we received from parents who attended.

Good course, covered the necessary subjects, was well delivered without too much legal jargon

Thank you so much for such an informative session.

A huge whistle stop tour of some complex laws. It was very useful especially as my young person is approaching transition age and I had no idea of the implications of that

Are you interested in learning more about the law around SEND provision?

SEND Voices Wokingham are hoping to run another course SEND and the Law in 2019/20 and would also like to invite professionals to ensure that everyone has the same information. If you would be interested in attending please email us at info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk

Finance Report 2018/19

Summary of INCOME

Department of Education Grant	£ 15,000
Additional Discretionary Grant (training courses & name change)	£ 8,000
<u>Total Funding 2018/2019</u>	<u>£23,000</u>

Summary of EXPENDITURE

Parent Events	£8690.68
Meetings	£260.05
Training	£2720.95
Infrastructure/Expenses	£2375.54
Information (newsletter etc.)	£1694.58
Admin Support/resources	£6347.88
Expenses/Other	£990.86
<u>Total Expenditure 2018/2019*</u>	<u>£23080.54</u>

Our Plan for 2019/20

We will apply for a £15,000 grant from the Department of Education Grant for 2018/2019 in April. If successful, the grant will be received in two separate payments across 2019/20. We also plan to apply for another discretionary grant to allow us to run further training courses and participation events.

*Actuals April 2019

Become a Member – Get your voice heard!

Membership is **FREE**.

To become a member of SEND Voices Wokingham email us at: info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk. You can also find details of how to join on our website: www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk or you can contact us through Facebook. The more members we have the stronger our voice when we talk to Education, Health and Social Care about the issues that are affecting your family. By becoming a member, you will also receive information about our work and related events, including training courses and special events to share information and help you get your voice heard.

Any data we hold about you will be stored carefully and never given to any third parties.



www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk



info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk



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The Local Offer

Want to find out more about the services available for children & young people with SEND locally? The Local Offer is an online guide to the range of services, support and information that are available locally and how to access them. It can be found on the WBC website <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/our-local-offer/>. You can also give feedback on here about the Local Offer website and the services listed. This will help to improve the Local Offer web information and the services the Council provide.



You can see the comments that have been received by the council and what they are doing to improve the service.

Executive Committee

Chair	Sarah Clarke	Committee Member	Judith Newman,
Vice Chair	Helen Corbett		Emma McKeever, Kathy Rzyso
Treasurer	Jacky Mackenzie	Participation coordinator	Terri Walsh
Secretary	Aleca Rzyso	Accounts Manager	Martin Jones

