

# July 2020

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



*We write this in very strange times and know for many of you how challenging things are.*

*We continue to have regular contact with the Local Authority Education, Social Care and Health teams during these difficult times and talk to them about the issues that families are raising.*

*We would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the highlights from last year and hope it will not be too long before we can organise events again; such as The Local Offer Live event (LOL) which is always a hugely popular event and a great way to find out about activities and support that is available in our area.*



**Last year we:**

- *Increased our membership by 62%. If you know anyone who has a child with a Special Educational Need or disability in the Borough, please encourage them to join. Full details are on our website.*
- *Offered Max Cards to all our members Free of Charge. This is a national discount card.*
- *Had contact with over 1000+ families through email, social media and contacts with other local voluntary groups.*
- *Ran more than 20 events for parent carers including 5 training sessions, coffee mornings, drop-ins, consultations and focus groups.*
- *Sent over 150 Information Packs to every school and local Councillor in the Borough.*
- *Ran surveys on Short Breaks, Private Assessments & Diagnosis, EHCP Process, Coproduction Charter and Short Breaks Gaps.*
- *Ran our Local Offer Live day which was a huge success with over 300 people attending.*
- *Represented the voice of families at the SEND Implementation Board (SIB) and the 6 work streams that resulted from the Local Area SEND Services Inspection in Wokingham and the resulting Written Statement of Action (WSOA)*

*Our committee has seen some changes too. Sarah Clarke and Terri Walsh have stepped down as Co-Chairs. We are so grateful for Sarah's hard work as Chair over the past 3 years, and the huge effort she has put in to the WSoA work streams. We also sadly said goodbye to Emma McKeever and we wish her well. We are however pleased to announce that Helen Corbett and Aleca Rzyzsko will be taking over the position of Co-Chairs, Debbie Jacobs has also joined as a committee member and Terri will continue as our Participation Coordinator.*

*Although we are a small group of volunteers, we all believe in our children and their potential and know with the right provision they can achieve so much. 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, we would like to thank the whole committee for all their efforts this year, you are an amazing team. Not forgetting Martin Jones who does a fantastic job to ensure our finances are balanced.*

**Helen Corbett & Aleca Rzyzsko**

Co-Chairs SEND Voices Wokingham

### CONTACT US



[www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk](http://www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk)



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**SEND Voices Wokingham**

## Events for Parent Carers



Last year we ran over 20 different events for parent carers including our annual Local Offer Live. This event brings together local charities and service providers to share information with families, gives parents an opportunity to feedback on services available locally and of course there are some fun activities for our young people to enjoy. We also ran several drop-ins and a membership day. We attended other local support groups coffee mornings too so that we could talk to parents about the issues that are affecting their family.



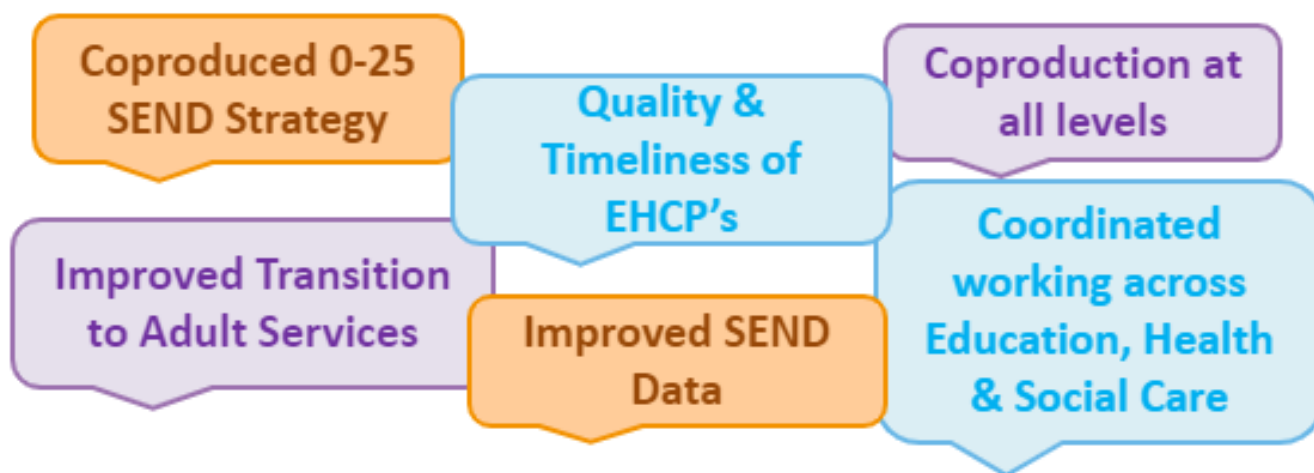
Members were able to collect their Max Cards from our events and we are pleased to announce that we are able to continue to offer members of SEND Voices Wokingham a FREE Max Card (a Max Card gives families various discounts to attractions across the UK). Full details of how to join SEND Voices Wokingham and the Max Card are available on our website or you can email: [info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk](mailto:info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk). Membership is FREE and the more members we have the stronger our voice when we talk to WBC Education, Health and Social care about the issues that are affecting you.

Max Cards will be available for members to collect from our events as soon as we can start running them again!

**\*\*STOP PRESS\*\*** We are currently looking at other ways we can distribute Max Cards, we will keep you updated as soon as we have more details.



## Local Area Inspection of SEND Services (Ofsted & CQC Inspection) - 1 Year On



Following the Local Area SEND Inspection which took place in March 2019, the Local Authority and Health were required to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address areas of concern identified in the inspection. The 6 areas identified are in the bubbles above.

SEND Voices Wokingham has had representatives at all 6 of the work streams, Chaired the Co-Production group and also sits on the SEND Implementation Board (SIB) which oversees the work of the 6 groups. In 6 months, this accounted for an additional 250+ hours of work for us.

Work is progressing with all the groups. For example, at the time of writing this, there have been marked improvements in the time the EHCP process is taking with in the April and May, 95% and 78% respectively, were issued within the 20 week timeframe, a Co-production Charter is being consulted on, work is progressing on an updated 0-25 Wokingham wide SEND Strategy and an information booklet on Transition to Adulthood is being produced.

SEND Voices Wokingham will continue to represent families with these groups over the next year.

## Parent Reps needed!



As the work streams from the Ofsted/CQC Local Area Written Statement of Action (WSOA) progress we know that we will need your help.

We are looking for parents who would be able to review documents such as updated EHCP paperwork, a Transition to Adulthood booklet or be able to attend focus groups

(virtually) on areas such as Home to School Transport. If you think you would be able to help please email:

[info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk](mailto: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 2019/20. 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. The results of the surveys you completed last year have resulted in the following changes:

**Short Breaks Survey** – A Short Breaks steering group has been set up to look at the gaps in short breaks available in our area. We are hoping that work will start on this again very soon. As well as SEND Voices Wokingham and the Local Authority (LA) there are representatives from local voluntary groups, service providers and education establishments.

**EHCP Process Survey** – The results of this are shared termly with the group working on improving the timeliness and quality of EHCP's as well as the SEND Implementation Board (SIB), to ensure that the work they are doing is making EHCP's better for our children and young people. New paperwork is planned for the EHCP template, annual reviews and information gathering for the Request to Assess. This is an important ongoing survey to ensure that quality of EHCP's is continually monitored and reviewed.

**Private Assessments and Diagnosis** – The clear message from this survey was that long waiting lists are the main driver for families choosing to go for a private assessment. This has fed into the work on Multi Agency working ensuring that all professionals are involved early when a needs assessment is being requested which will also help improve the EHCP timeliness & quality.

Please keep completing the surveys and consultations. The information they provide is so important and makes a real difference to improving services in the borough.





## 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 here about the Local Offer website and the services listed, which will help to improve services in the future.

## What else has happened behind the scenes?

In addition to the work on the Written Statement of Action (WSOA), we continue to work with a number of other steering groups and boards in the area. These include the Berkshire West SEND Joint Implementation Group (JIG) which has representatives from those who commission health services for our children & young people, our Designated Clinical Officer for Children with SEND,



The Royal Berkshire Hospital, therapy services and CAMHS as well as local authority representatives.

We are members of the Short Breaks and SENDIASS Steering Groups, the SEND Providers Forum and regularly meet with the WBC Operational teams from SEND, Children with Disabilities and SENDIASS.

We have also been involved with the ongoing Local Offer review and updates, Healthwatch, EHCP Audits, Autism Strategy, Young People with Learning Disability Review, Transforming Mental Health Care to avoid hospital admissions, Autism/ADHD Early Support Service and National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) Regional Groups. We also met with local Councillors when we attended the NNPCF Annual Conference.

## Training Courses for Parent Carers.

This year we have run several training courses for parent carers including IPSEA Introduction to SEND Law, Confidence & Presentation Skills as well as hosting the 3 new SENDIASS training courses on EHCP's, Annual Reviews and SEN Support in School. All these courses help with participation during meetings, whether it is for an individual parent with their child's school or a member of the steering committee representing parents at a strategic board.



We are currently planning the training courses for this year. As soon as we have more details, we will let you know.

Well delivered...I left the course feeling a lot more confident in helping the school rewrite the EHCP  
(Annual Review Training)

This was one of the best training courses I have been on! I feel much more confident and it was also great to see the change in others too

It was incredibly helpful. The lady delivering it was very knowledgeable and I feel so much more confident about the whole EHCP process now.  
(IPSEA Training)

## Finance Report 2019/20

### Summary of INCOME

Department of Education Grant	£ 15,000
Additional Discretionary Grant (Infrastructure, IPSEA Training)	£ 18,000
<u>Total Funding 2019/2020</u>	<u>£ 33,000</u>

### Summary of EXPENDITURE

Parent Events	£4484.11
Meetings	£3529.16
Training	£3994.88
Infrastructure/Expenses	£2025.36
Information (newsletter etc.)	£2496.07
Admin Support	£6072.00
Expenses	£1872.67
Projects/Other	£1219.31
<u>Total Expenditure 2019/2020*</u>	<u>£25693.57</u>

### Our Plan for 2020/21

We will apply for a £15,000 grant from the Department of Education Grant for 2020/21 in May. If successful, the grant will be received in two separate payments across 2020/21.

\*Actuals April 2020

## Become a Member – Get your voice heard!

Membership is **FREE**.

Full details on our website:

[www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk](http://www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk) or you can email us on [info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk](mailto:info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk) or through Facebook.

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

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## Executive Committee

Co-Chair  
Co-Chair  
Treasurer  
Secretary

Helen Corbett  
Aleca Rzyzko  
Jacky Mackenzie  
Kathy Rzyzko

Committee Member  
Participation coordinator  
Accounts Manager

Sarah Clarke, Judith Newman,  
Debbie Jacobs  
Terri Walsh  
Martin Jones

