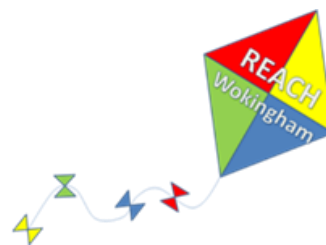


REACH Wokingham

Parents' Forum for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities



REACH Wokingham is an INDEPENDENT group of parent carers of children & young people with SEND. We act as a COLLECTIVE VOICE to represent all parents of children & young people up to the age of 25 with any special educational need or disability in the Wokingham Borough. REACH Wokingham act as a CRITICAL FRIEND to the Local Authority, Education and the NHS to help improve services today and in the future.

Chair's Message

Wow, what a year, my first year as Chair of REACH Wokingham Parent Carer Forum has been. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with such a dedicated team and our wonderful families. It has been a real privilege.

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who braved the snow and attended our AGM. It was fantastic to see so many new faces, as well as those we know. We have received some amazing feedback which we are in the process of feeding back to the relevant parties, thank you.

It was with great sadness that we bid farewell this year, to two amazing founders of REACH Wokingham; John Bowley and Lucy Walton who tireless chaired REACH Wokingham for many years. They are both going to be greatly missed and we wish them all the best in their new adventures.

We are delighted, however, to welcome Aleca Rzyso and Zsuzsanna Watson onto the committee and are really looking forward to working with them.

Also, a huge thank you to everyone who has contacted REACH Wokingham, in any way over the last year, we value every comment and without your views there would be no forum. Your views do make a difference, and the more views we receive the more we can advocate what is needed in Wokingham Borough for SEND children and families. One of our aims this year is to build our bank of parent/carers representatives to ensure our voices are present at as many meetings as possible. So even if you can only spare a couple of hours here and there but are still interested in representing our families, please do get in touch. We will be holding full training later in the year, so that you will know exactly what is required and you won't be attending meetings alone.

REACH Wokingham are constantly striving to work in a co-productive way with Wokingham Borough Council and are now working on a co-production agreement with them with the support of Contact (who support

Parent Carer Forums). We are really excited about this agreement, as this demonstrates that Wokingham Borough Council are really committed to working with REACH Wokingham and incorporating SEND children and their family's needs into all the decisions that are made. This agreement will ensure that your voices will be heard before changes are made and will influence the final decisions that are made before changes go out to consultation. All local authorities have struggled with budget cuts and interims and the situation has been no different in the Wokingham Borough, but with the new 21st Century plan and more permanent staff being recruited, we are hopeful of generating a positive new way of working.

We have lots of events planned for the upcoming year but if you have any recommendations of events you would like REACH Wokingham to run or ideas on how to improve what we currently do, please do let us know.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone on the committee for all their hard work and commitment this year, and to Martin Jones who keeps a tight grip of our finances. And by no means least, our thanks also go to Terri our amazing administrator, whose job title does not do her justice.

Sarah Clarke

Chair, REACH Wokingham

CONTACT US

: www.reachwokingham.com

: reachwokingham@hotmail.co.uk

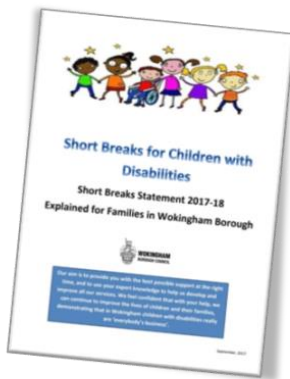
: REACH-Wokingham

Short Breaks

A big focus of our work this year has been on Short Breaks. Wokingham Borough Council has now published the Short Breaks Statement 2017-18 on their website.

This new statement along with the introduction of direct payments, pre-paid cards and the stopping of grants to a number of short breaks providers has raised many concerns with parents.

REACH Wokingham along with a representative from Contact have been meeting with the Council to discuss the 2018 changes to Short Breaks.



We still have a number of concerns about the lack of data, unclear eligibility criteria and lack of evidence of how parent carer views have been taken into consideration.

As a result of this REACH Wokingham, working with Contact, have conveyed your concerns to the Council via their formal complaints process.

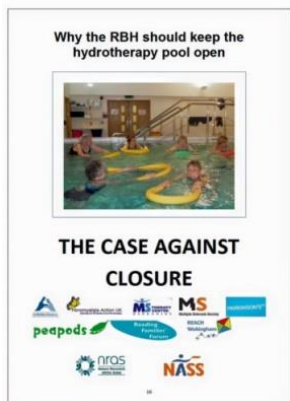
We would encourage parent carers and support groups to continue to bring their concerns to REACH Wokingham, particularly around the impact the changes will make to you, so we can represent these to the Council in our role as strategic partner.

Please email REACH Wokingham with any concerns: reachwokingham@hotmail.co.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 2017/18. We know there have been a lot, but without your feedback on these REACH Wokingham do 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 hope to be able to share a formal response from the council to the SEND Self Evaluation and Local Offer surveys very soon.

Health – The Hydrotherapy Pool



In April 2017 it was announced by the Royal Berkshire hospital Chief Executive Steve McManus that plans to close the hydrotherapy pool had been abandoned and that the hospital trust is "committed to the continuation of hydrotherapy provision, whether this is on the Royal Berkshire Hospital site or through alternative facilities off the site". This is a remarkable turnaround from the situation at the end of 2016 when Royal Berkshire Hospital managers announced, without any consultation with doctors, nurses, or patients groups that the pool was to close at the end of March 2017 with no replacement.

REACH Wokingham was a part of the RBH Hydrotherapy Pool Campaign team along with Arthritis Matters, MS Society, Berks DPAC, Berkshire MS Therapy Centre, Peapods, Reading Fibromyalgia Support Group, Parkinson's Society and Reading Families Forum.

Thank you to all the parents who provided information to us about the hydrotherapy service in our area. These views were invaluable in helping save this facility.

REACH Wokingham would like to hear from parent carers if there are any ongoing issues with the hydrotherapy pool. Please let us know, as without the information from you we cannot raise the problems you have with health.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair	Sarah Clarke	Committee	Julie Monahan, Rebecca Kirby,
Vice Chair	Helen Corbett		Aleca Rzyzsko, Zsuzanna Watson
Treasurer	Judith Newman	Administrator	Terri Walsh
Secretary	Sandra Stubbs		

IPSEA SEND Law Training.



In February 2018 REACH Wokingham hosted an IPSEA Foundation SEND law training session for Wokingham Borough parent carers. 27 parents attended the training session run by Jo Salisbury from IPSEA and it provided parent carers with an introduction to the law relating to the education & training of children & young people with SEND. Here are some of the comments we received from parents who attended.

Really grateful to have the opportunity to attend this, it will be invaluable!

This was an excellent course – just the right level in terms of complexity and quantity of information

Our trainer Jo was extremely good, really helped me put a plan in place.

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

REACH Wokingham are making plans for next year, and are considering running a 'Disabled Children & Young People: The Law in a Day' training. Important issues that could be covered include topics such as school transport, housing, short breaks and many more. Email reachwokingham@hotmail.co.uk if you would be interested in attending this course.

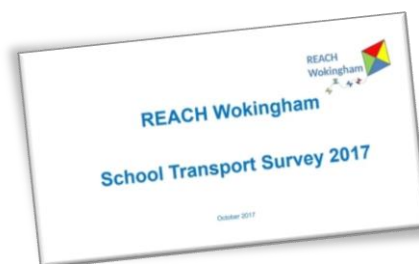
Transport Survey 2017

Thank you to all parent carers who completed our Transport Survey 2017. The full report is available on our website www.reachwokingham.com.

The recommendations from the survey were:

- Get parents more involved in the planning of transport
- Improve communications between transport, SEN and parents
- Develop a mechanism for reporting concerns/complaints and an agreed resolution timescale, with special attention paid to incidents where safety is an issue
- Compulsory training for drivers/escorts in SEND
- Minimum standards of English for drivers/escorts
- Service level agreement with transport companies needs to be accessible and adhered to
- Transport team to come to events such as Local Offer Live day to talk to parents
- Make parents more aware of options such as paying private mileage for transporting child to school

REACH Wokingham sent a copy of this report to Wokingham Borough Council and have since been involved in a Home to School Transport working group. In addition school transport is now being discussed at a pan Berkshire SEND meeting which includes representatives from Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham local authorities.



REACH Wokingham would always like to hear your experiences with school transport, good or bad, so that we can continue to work with the council to improve this service.

CAMHS



CAMHS is still an area of concern. Many parents have told us that waiting times are unacceptable, referrals difficult to obtain and families are being left at crisis point. These concerns were reiterated at our SEND consultation event in February.

REACH Wokingham have collated parents' concerns over CAMHS and have forwarded these to Healthwatch Wokingham along with concerns over the information available on the CAMHS website and timings of the participation feedback sessions. The feedback from parents will also be shared with the council and health and of course Ofsted when the local area inspection of SEND services in the borough happens.

A reminder - Reading CAMHS has now **moved** to the Reading University Campus, their address is:
Reading CAMHS, Science & Technology Building 54, Earley Gate, Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 6BZ

The Local Offer

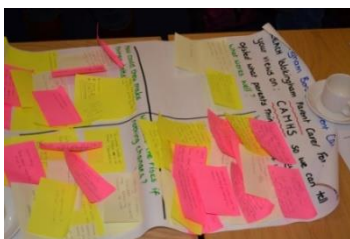
The Local Offer is a guide to the services in Wokingham that are available for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged from birth to 25. It can be found on the Wokingham Borough Council website
<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/our-local-offer/>

It helps parents, carers and young people to see clearly the range of services, support and information that are available in their local area and understand how to access them.

You can also give feedback on the Local Offer, both the website and the services listed, via the updates and feedback link. This will help to improve the Local Offer web information and the services Wokingham Borough Council provide. You can see the comments that have been received by the council and what they are doing to improve the service.



Ofsted – Parent Reps needed!



REACH Wokingham believe that the Ofsted inspection of the local area SEND services could happen very soon. We have been doing a lot of work to gather parents views, comments and concerns on a number of areas that we know Ofsted will want to hear about. These areas include:

SEN support in schools, CAMHS, school transport, EHCP's, therapies, the Local Offer, post 16 SEN support & preparing for adulthood, SENDIASS/IS and early years (0-5).

Could you be a Parent Rep ?

REACH Wokingham are compiling a list of parents who would be able to act as parent reps at the Ofsted meetings when they happen. As well as their own views they would be asked to represent the views of all parents across the borough. REACH Wokingham will provide information to take to the meetings. If you are interested in being a parent rep or would like more information please email: reachwokingham@hotmail.co.uk

Finance Report 2017/18

Summary of INCOME

Department of Education Grant	£15,000
Additional Grant	£ 5,190
Total Funding 2017/2018	£20,190

Summary of EXPENDITURE*

Parent Events	£ 4,685
Meetings	£ 844
Training	£ 440
Infrastructure/Expenses	£ 4,986
Information (newsletter etc.)	£ 1,038
Admin Support/resources	£ 6,202
Total Expenditure 2017/2018*	£18,195

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 2018/19.

*Estimated at March 2018

Make your voice heard!

REACH Wokingham hold a database of parent carers in the Wokingham Borough interested in what we do.

Please email:

info@reachwokingham.co.uk

with your name, address, disability & year of birth of your child and we will add you to our list. You will then be amongst the first to hear about events, training, information and consultations we are running.

The more members REACH Wokingham have the more influence we have when we talk to the Local Authority or Health about services that affect you! Any data we hold about you will be stored carefully and never given to any third parties.

: www.reachwokingham.com

: reachwokingham@hotmail.co.uk

 : REACH-Wokingham

