

Reading Families' Forum

A voice for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

COFFEE MORNING 16th MARCH 2021 VIA ZOOM

Paul Gresty joined four parent carers. Paul works in Brighter Futures for Children looking at building capacity in special schools and mainstream schools. This involves looking at capital funding for building work, where needed. It can take some time to set up.

Brighter Futures are currently looking at building resource units in mainstream nurseries and a social and communication difficulty resource in Southcote to open in Sept 21. Resource units are places within mainstream school that a child/young person can go to if they need extra support, or spend all their time in, depending on their need.

There is also a possibility of setting up satellite classes in mainstream schools that are run by special schools.

The Avenue are looking at vocational profiling to look at young people's employment aspirations and their skills alongside Education, Health and Care Plans. This works well to enable those who may be able to work.

After college, the offer for Reading young people with an Educational, Health and Care Plans has improved with various supported internships such as at the Royal Berks, Johnson & Johnson, and the Grid. Contact Ways into Work for more information.

Brighter Futures are also looking at what else is needed in primary, secondary and post 16 education settings and Paul would like parents' views to help inform future plans.

Parents' Views:

1. Some parents felt that their children would have managed in a mainstream primary, if there had been resource unit, but that their children might not have coped with this in secondary school and needed special school.
2. One parent had a young person who had benefitted from a resource unit in a secondary school and needed it less as the young person got older.
3. Post 16 and 19 - Reading College has a unit for autism and another for those with other special educational needs. More of this is needed.
4. Post 19, after special school, is a particular gap for young people with profound or multiple disabilities and/or complex needs as there is no provision in Reading. One parent was told that there would be nothing for their young person after they left special school. Data is needed but there may be 8/9 in just one special school.
5. Planning for post 25 young people with severe/profound disabilities is also needed. One young person known to a parent at the coffee evening was offered respite in an old people's home. Apart from respite at Strathy Close, there is little else. The Forum are working with the Reading Services Guide to improve information about day activities and have liaised with a new company with experience of doing drama with severe and profoundly disabled young people who may be able to

www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1166585

Reading Families' Forum

A voice for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

offer day activities post 25. *Since this meeting Make Sense Theatre has opened and is offering short breaks over the Easter Holidays for 12 – 25 year olds.*

6. Online activities for those with more complex needs is also needed while they are shielding. Some are likely to need to shield at least into the summer term.
7. The transition to adult social care document for Wokingham is detailed. Can Reading have something similar? *Since the meeting, Ramona has contacted Reading Borough Council who are updating the transition document and she has asked if parents can co-produce it. The Forum have also advised the assessment by adult social care needs to start before 17.5 for those with complex needs.*

Other information:

The new special school shared between Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils is due to open in Sept 22 for those with autism and/or social, emotional and mental health difficulties at the Winnersh farm site. The detailed plans for the school building are not available yet but the site map is available. Feedback can be submitted to commercialproperty@wokingham.gov.uk by Friday 9 April 2021.

<https://news.wokingham.gov.uk/news/winnersh-farm-send-school-and-housing-engagement/>

1st July 2021 9:30 – 2:30 Transition Conference for Preparing for Adulthood, jointly hosted by Reading Families' Forum and Parenting Special Children. Join the conference to hear a disabled adult's personal experience, hear about the law from Professor Luke Clements and more. To book email fran.morgan.rff@gmail.com

Coffee morning in April – Fran will invite Daryl and Mary Jane Stroud from CAMHS

RB 31/03/21

www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1166585