

Reading Families' Forum

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

COFFEE MORNING 24th FEBRUARY 2021 VIA ZOOM

Nikki Stevens, SEN Team Manager joined eight parent carers, and Dingley's Promise, to discuss what is working and what families would like to improve regarding SEND in Reading.

Nikki is new to the Reading SEN team and is keen that the team listen to families and communicate clearly and in a timely way with families. Sometimes there will be difficult decisions to make but the team want to co-produce with families. Nikki also wants annual reviews to be timely and productive.

New coproduction meetings during EHCP needs assessments going well

Q – aggression to young siblings Son with autism at special school aggressive to young siblings. Some days are better than others, but one parent is struggling to cope. A Family Support Worker or Social Worker from a team in Brighter Futures is going to visit but family have little information about this.

Parenting Special Children have a Family Support Worker who can help families in these situations. (Tanya Spiers is the Family Support Worker for Dingley's Promise and can support families who have a child under 5 with additional needs.)

After Nikki left, the meeting also discussed the following:

There appears to be no clear process for dealing with aggression to siblings. This tends to be ignored until a professional such as school raise it. Even if siblings end up on the Child Protection/At Risk Register, nothing seems to happen.

Siblings don't always want to go to a young carers' club – they can feel like they are being excluded from the family or are able to go to their room or friends for a break. Horse riding or grooming has been offered but does not address the situation a sibling is in.

If a child is on the waiting list for an assessment for autism at CAMHS, the family should contact them and let them know if they are in crisis and they will triage and see if they can offer support earlier.

Chair will email parent with Nikki Steven's contact details and she will liaise with the FSW/SW to see how they can help family.

Parents are entitled to a parent carer needs assessment looking at their physical and emotional wellbeing and what is needed to help them care for their child with additional needs. Parents should contact TuVida to request an assessment. Forum have raised concerns that Brighter Futures are not always accepting the recommendations from these assessments.

www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1166585

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Q transitions Why can't transitions happen earlier than 17.5 to give time for support to be put in place and places sorted for college more quickly to give young people time to prepare. Nikki will be looking at how the Year 9 annual review can assist better with planning.

Q EHCP needs assessment information School have requested an EHC needs assessment but family have not been told how long this will take and next steps. Have not been given details of the process, IASS or the Local Offer. Would be helpful to have less documents and for the flow chart to be in a clearer place on the Local Offer.

EHC needs assessment takes 20 weeks. Various support can be put in at a child's local mainstream primary. There are social communication resources in Reading such as EP Collier and Christ the King.

Chair will email parent with information

Nikki left the meeting at this point

Q Timeliness of Reviews and updating EHCPs after the review

Sometimes changes agreed at reviews are not added to the EHCP, or only done so a month before the next review. This means that schools, including schools children have moved to during the year, do not have up to date information. One child's EHCP wasn't updated for 18 months following a review.

Often the person updating the EHCP doesn't know the child and the parents' views aren't taken into account unless a professional has said it in a report.

Generally families felt EHCPs were sometimes waffly and too long, had woolly, unSMART outcomes and confusion within the SEN team about which bits go in Sections F G and H

NB – meeting agreed need for agreed a physical disability resource in Reading to avoid children having to travel outside of Reading.

Next coffee morning: Tuesday, 16th February 10:30 – 11:45 on Zoom with Paul Gresty at Brighter Futures about what resource units are still needed in Reading

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

To book email fran.morgan.rff@gmail.com

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