



Department
for Education

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Cllr Stephen Conway, Leader of the Council, Wokingham Borough Council
Emma Cockerell, Director of Children's Services, Wokingham Borough Council
Nick Broughton, Interim Chief Executive, NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and
Berkshire West ICB

12 July 2024

Six Months Progress Review against Wokingham's Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)

Dear Cllr Conway, Emma and Nick,

I am writing following our meeting with colleagues across the Wokingham local area partnership on 14th March 2024, to review the progress against your APP over the last six months, and your one remaining area of weakness: *underdeveloped pathway to enable young people with SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood*. We thank you for your patience in awaiting this reply, which we were unable to send sooner due to the General Election pre-election period.

Thank you to your teams for both the paperwork that was submitted prior to the meeting and your contributions during the meeting. I would like to give particular thanks to Sara, Emer and Ginny as the school representatives, and Sarah and Terri for representing the parent carer forum (PCF). The local area's collective determination to making sustainable improvements to SEND services and to the lives of children and young people was clear in the meeting. The evidence provided in advance alongside the feedback from partners demonstrated a range of actions being undertaken to accelerate improvement.

Based on the evidence provided at the September 2023 APP review meeting, we agreed that you had demonstrated clear and sustained progress against action 3 and that we were content for minimal further reporting for this action. In respect of actions 1 and 4, we highlighted a number of outstanding areas for improvement and requested these be discussed at the next review.

When you met with the Department and NHS England in March 2024, you provided brief updates on actions 2, 3, 5 and 6, for which we are grateful. In terms of the substantive discussion on the evidence you provided for actions 1 and 4, our summary and feedback are below.

Action 1: *Strengthen governance and performance management of transitions for all children and young people with SEND in Wokingham.*

In your documentation, during the progress review and in subsequent information shared, you have now been able to demonstrate:

- Evidence of how information and data is used by all members in board meetings to strategically challenge and scrutinize progress being made.
- A breakdown of the timings of each of the board meetings that have governance and accountability responsibilities linked to SEND and inclusion, to demonstrate how decisions/information flows effectively between them.
- A data dashboard and a clear explanation of how this will be embedded into governance structures.
- Clarity about the links between the Borough Education Partnership (BEP) and the area's strategic governance and how information about the BEP will be made publicly available.

Action 4: *To improve transition arrangements through RBFT provision.*

In your documentation, during the progress review and in subsequent information shared, you have now been able to demonstrate:

- information that sets out what your long-term plan for improving transition arrangements through RBFT provision is alongside evidence of the impact of work already completed.
- How you are incorporating the results of the Annual Wokingham Borough SEND Survey 2023 (produced by SEND Voices Wokingham (PCF)) into your planned actions.

Based on the evidence provided, it is the view of the Department and NHS England that you have demonstrated clear and sustained progress against the one remaining area of weakness from your local area SEND revisit by Ofsted and CQC in June 2021. We are therefore content to step down formal monitoring of your Accelerated Progress Plan (APP).

I know that this positive result is due to a great deal of commitment and hard work across the partnership to address the issues highlighted in the SEND revisit. I would like to thank you for all that you are doing to support some of the most vulnerable children and young people in your local area, and to congratulate you on the progress you have made. Please do continue with these efforts and build on the successes you have already achieved to ensure that children and young people with SEND in Wokingham have the support they need to achieve the best possible outcomes.

To support sustained progress, you will continue to receive advice and challenge from your SEND Advisor Nick King, and NHSE Advisor Adeline Gibbs. The Department will also keep your situation under review and may request updates on strands of activity in the APP; we also may reinstate more regular and formal reviews should the need arise.

Please contact your DfE SEND Regional Lead Linda Slim or DfE SEND Case Lead Jasmine Hussain if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

I am copying this email to Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive of Wokingham Borough Council, Cllr Prue Bray Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Ming Zhang, Assistant Director of Children's Services, Rachael Corser SEND SRO Chief Nursing Officer, Sarah Clarke and Terri Walsh, Joint CEO's of the Parent Carer Forum, Nick King, SEND Advisor, Adeline Gibbs, NHSE Advisor, Linda Slim, SE Regional Lead DfE and Jasmine Hussain SEND Case Lead DfE.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine

Catherine Norrie

Head of Vulnerable Children's Unit,
South East Regions Group.