

# Reading Families' Forum

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

## **COFFEE AFTERNOON 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 via Zoom**

Miranda Walcott Designated Clinical Officer for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged up to 25 (DCO) joined 4 parent carers. One parent carer had to leave early.

Miranda is the DCO for Berkshire West (Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham). She works for the Integrated Care Board across Buckinghamshire, Berkshire West and Oxfordshire that replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups.

One parent advised that they had had a bad experience with CAMHS, as had some other parent carers. Her child was struggling emotionally and had severe problems – not sleeping or eating and was self-harming. She managed to get CAMHS to visit her child but they offered no help or support.

If CAMHS has said no and referred the family back to the support of the SENCo at school and the school feel that they can't meet all the child's needs, Miranda said that the school can contact CAMHS and discuss.

They are aware that CAMHS is under resourced and need is increasing – services are not sufficient. The pandemic has increased demand.

Access to adult mental health has been difficult and the adult social care team are working on this.

Miranda explained about the Transformation Plan and the priorities. This needs to be done collaboratively with parent carers and young people to develop a local plan for Berkshire West.

We need to move away from a medicalised model to a situation where all services are trauma informed and children are supported to develop resilience. Follow this link for further advice [Mental health and wellbeing | Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#)

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The crisis team is for those with existing or emerging mental health needs. They are aware that a crisis is defined by the person experiencing it.

Mental health support for children with a learning disability is a recognised gap and an LD CAMHS will be set up in Berkshire West. No date yet but likely to begin in about 6 months.

Eating disorder services for autistic children is being developed. A project "Peace" is being developed across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire based on a very effective model used at Great Ormond Street. Those with an eating difficulty rather than a disorder and those with ARFID (Avoidant, Restrictive Food Intake Disorder) aren't covered by Peace. Berkshire Health Foundation Trust have community dieticians and paediatric nurses and Autism Berkshire may be able to advise.

Also discussed wheelchair services – there are delays getting wheelchair assessments, additional supports for wheelchairs and repairs done to wheelchairs. Miranda is aware and is discussing with another parent carer soon. The wheelchair clinic don't take into account carers' needs which can mean that parent carers 'physical health is impacted by a chair that is too heavy etc.

RB 17/11/22