

# Reading Families' Forum

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

**COFFEE AFTERNOON 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**At Southcote Community Hub**

Emma Duly, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Health Visitor spoke to 4 parents carers.

Health Visitor do developmental checks and can support a child up to the age of 5, if there is a health need. They might not have specific training about a particular need but are able to signpost families to services.

## **Sources of Advice and Support**

We discussed various supports available to families:

Reading University have a SCIPS programme for under 5s. [SCIPS Programme - Speech And Language Therapy \(reading.ac.uk\)](https://www.reading.ac.uk/scips) Their assessment has been endorsed by CAMHS for one child.

Dr Ruth Moyse has done research on autistic girls, but relevant to boys and girls. You can hear her talk at [PAST EVENTS | Reading Families Forum](#) 2h 14 minutes into recording.

Parenting Special Children and Autism Berkshire are really helpful.

A new team called RISE (Reading Inclusion and Support in Education) is due to start in Jan 24 and will include Educational Psychologists who can screen those waiting for an autism assessment then make recommendations to school.

The SEND Carers United Facebook page is excellent for parent to parent advice and support.

Portage Service can also support 0 – 4 year old children with additional needs. It is listed on the following page:

[Under 5s with SEND - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

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A parent also recommended “Forever Boy – A Mother’s Memoir of Autism” by Kate Swenson.

## **Feedback from parent carers:**

Agreed that 2 year developmental checks can be too early to pick up concerns of possible autism. Children are often moving up to a new stage at their nursery at this time so are being assessed there at the same time. Emma is trialling developmental checks for 3.5 year olds for some children.

Little information for families when children have been referred to the Autism Assessment team but are waiting, sometimes for months, for the team to do their screening before agreeing to put a child on the waiting list. This means families are without support.

Can be very difficult to get a nursery to agree a child needs additional support, despite distress before and after school.

Although requested speech and language assessment for one child, they were only offered one face to face appointment and a phone call follow up when an Education, Health and Care Plan was being considered.

The Reading Local Offer link from Brighter Futures for Children website goes to one page of information and it is not clear that you have to click on the first sentence to go through to the LO website. *Reading Local Offer later agreed to change this.*

Jenna Redmond, Autism Advisor at Brighter Futures for Children, is excellent. Available when a child is diagnosed as autistic.

RB 28/09/23