



## Say YES, Wokingham's SEND youth forum meeting 9 October 2024

Fourteen young people joined us to talk to:

- Sophie Kendall, Autism Lead, and Jonathan Wilding, SEND Consultant, at Wokingham Borough Council and
- Miranda Walcott, Designated Clinical Officer for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (0-25) at the Integrated Care Board (health).

Sophie and Jonathan have completed the Wokingham Autism Strategy and the Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Strategy.

They asked young people about out of school activities and how inclusive schools and colleges are.

### Young People's Views

- ✚ There weren't many activities over the last summer holidays.
- ✚ One young person said that they weren't allowed to do the after school activities because of their additional needs (secondary school)
- ✚ Another young person was enjoying football club after school, although clubs hadn't work for them before.
- ✚ There is a lot of stigma in school about being different. One young person said that they got rude comments at primary school and now at secondary school as well.
- ✚ It would be good if schools explained what autism is and all the strengths autistic people have. (Autistic young people are often good at making friends with other autistic young people and have lots of skills.)
- ✚ Young people wanted more help with understanding what is happening in lessons.
- ✚ Structured break times and/or buddies would also help.

- ✚ Several young people at mainstream secondary schools said that they did not have help to make friends. This help had worked well at primary school but stopped for Year 7.
- ✚ Young people who had attended a special school had friends at college that they already knew.
- ✚ It's hard to get up early for college.

Young people mentioned some groups which had really helped them:

- The A team at Parenting Special Children,
- ASSIST (Autism Spectrum Service for Information Support and Training) at Wokingham Borough Council. They have a good youth group in Woodley.
- Autism Berkshire drop in for adults. (Young person was nervous but they were helpful.)

Young people's feedback to Miranda about health services will be sent separately.

Next session

We will have a fish and chip takeaway.

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