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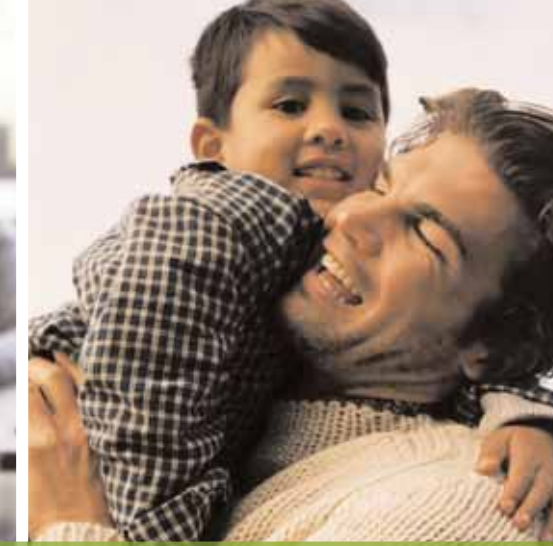
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# Wokingham Autism Partnership

## Report: 2008

» [www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)



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**The aim of the Wokingham Autism Partnership is to consider the needs of children and young people with Autism in Wokingham.**

**It brings together health, education professionals, social care professionals, parents and voluntary groups to ensure joint planning and best use of resources.**

**The Partnership will be an advisory body with the power to influence decision-making.**

### **Where we are now?**

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We know that there are nearly 300 children in the Wokingham Borough who have a diagnosis of autism across the Spectrum, and believe this is an underestimate. **This is 1.3% - significantly higher than the national average of 1 in 100.**

The Partnership has representatives from statutory agencies, voluntary organisations (including the National Autistic Society (NAS), Berkshire Autistic Society, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Family Help and Mencap) and parent groups. It meets six times a year and there are five sub-groups which are:

- Information
- Communication and consultation
- Diagnosis and assessment
- Services
- Training
- ASD Family Help (parent group)

There is a multi-agency team presenting the National Autistic Society EarlyBird and EarlyBird Plus programmes. The programme started in Wokingham in 2005, and to date, 23 families have attended EarlyBird while a total 50 families and 22 professionals have attended EarlyBird Plus.

NAS's Help2 programme has also been delivered in the local area.

There are a variety of sources of support for families in Wokingham ranging from information through to services from statutory and voluntary agencies.

- We have a range of Early Years services; from a specialist advisory teacher offering sessions in the home, to specialist provision.
- Information, advice and training are available to both primary and secondary mainstream schools.
- We have specialist resource bases at Wescott Infant and Westende Junior schools; and Addington, a special school for children aged up to 19 years.
- The Council also supports innovative and alternative packages of education.

### **We also know from various focus groups there is a need for:**

- A plan to strategically deliver a variety of training and workshops for parents and those who work with children on the spectrum
- More specialist provision for secondary age pupils
- A clearer pathway through diagnosis and assessment
- Access to appropriate therapies
- Inclusion, awareness and support from mainstream leisure providers
- Access to short-break provision for children with high functioning autism and Aspergers Syndrome
- Autism-specific leisure activities and social groups

### **Where do we want to be?**

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The Wokingham Autism Partnership wants the Borough to be one of the leading Councils for autism provision and an example of best practice which can be shared across the UK.

We want a Borough where autism is fully understood and children and their families are respected and supported.

#### **We believe:**

- That all staff supporting and working with children with autism should be provided with autism-specific training
- In early intervention and appropriate primary and secondary education to meet individual needs
- That all families of children with autism should have the opportunity for a short-break (respite care)
- That all children should have access to leisure activities and meaningful activity
- That all children with autism should be provided with appropriate information and support for their journey into adulthood.

### **How do we get there?**

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#### **Increase training**

- The Partnership will continue to work with ASD Family Help to develop a strategic plan of training and workshops, along with the creation of a multi-agency training team.

#### **Improve service provision**

- Work with the Council on the development of appropriate secondary school provision.
- Participate in the Council's Aiming High project to increase the range of short-break provision for children with autism.
- Assess need and develop more specialist autism activities.

#### **Improve the diagnostic and assessment pathway**

- Host a workshop with clinicians and budget providers to look at existing services and move towards multi-agency delivery.
- Review current therapy services; ensuring families and professionals have information on how to access them and when.

#### **Autism Awareness Week**

- May 19 to 23, 2009 across Wokingham Borough, including publicity and displays, workshops, a quiz night; film night; siblings group and talks in local schools.

**Chair of Partnership: Lynne Pitt**

**Co-ordinator: Pam Breslin**