

Dear Rachael Wardell,

Every Disabled Child Matters and The Children's Trust, Tadworth have created a Disabled Children's Charter for Health and Wellbeing Boards. We have written to invite the Chair of West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board to sign up to this Charter on behalf of the Board. We wanted to share the Charter with you and ask you to encourage your Health and Wellbeing Board to sign it.

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) and The Children's Trust, Tadworth have developed this Charter to support Health and Wellbeing Boards to meet their responsibilities towards disabled children, young people and their families, including children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and health conditions. As a previous signatory to EDCM's Local Authority Disabled Children's Charter, we know that West Berkshire Council is committed to disabled children, young people and their families, and we hope you take this opportunity to renew this commitment during a time of considerable change.

The importance of disabled children and young people

The Government recently responded to the report of the Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum by releasing Better Health Outcomes for Children and Young People: Our Pledge. This set out the shared ambitions for all actors in the new health system to improve the health outcomes of children and young people in England. This Charter provides a tool for Health and Wellbeing Boards to deliver on these ambitions for a key group of its local population.

Disabled children, young people and their families access services across multiple agencies, and therefore are disproportionately affected by poor integration between health, social care and education services and a lack of coordinated commissioning. This results in additional financial costs, poor outcomes, significant health inequalities and considerable distress for children and families. The transition to a new health system risks disrupting the support they receive still further, and we are concerned that this could mean that some children and families fall through gaps in provision. Health and Wellbeing Boards will play a crucial role in tackling these challenges by providing the strategic direction and leadership for local commissioners and services.

Disabled children and young people will provide a crucial test of the effectiveness of the new health system. If a Health and Wellbeing Board can improve integration for local disabled children and young people, who frequently test the interface between multiple services and agencies, it can deliver for all children and make a positive impact throughout their lives.

How the Charter can support Health and Wellbeing Boards

Signing the Charter will help your Health and Wellbeing Board to articulate a vision for improving the outcomes experienced by disabled children and young people to the public, commissioners, service providers and local partners including Parent Carer Forums. It will reassure parent carers that their Health and Wellbeing Board will use its influence to ensure the new health system delivers for disabled children, young people and their families in their area. Health and Wellbeing Boards can be confident they are taking the necessary steps to meet these aspirations.

- The Charter is accompanied by the following document: *Why sign the Charter?* This guidance demonstrates the value of the Charter commitments with reference to statutory duties and powers, and signposts Health and Wellbeing Boards to resources that will help them fulfil each commitment. Health and Wellbeing Boards will be asked to provide evidence of how they have met their commitments a year after signing the Charter. This guidance sets out evidence that Health and Wellbeing Boards may provide to demonstrate how they have met the Charter commitments.

If your Health and Wellbeing Board agrees to sign the Charter, EDCM will help you publicise this commitment by:

- Providing you with a template media release, including a statement from Christine Lenehan, EDCM board member. We will happily liaise with your media team to provide any further assistance required to promote to local press.
- Recording all of the Health and Wellbeing Boards who sign the Charter on the EDCM website so that parent carers can find out if their Health and Wellbeing Board is a signatory.
- Publishing information provided by Health and Wellbeing Boards on the EDCM website so that parent carers know the steps their Health and Wellbeing Board has taken to meet its Charter commitments.

About us

As you may know, EDCM is the campaign for rights and justice for disabled children and their families. EDCM is a consortium campaign run by four of the leading organisations working with disabled children and their families: Contact a Family, the Council for Disabled Children, Mencap and the Special Educational Consortium. The campaign partners represent over 770,000 disabled children and young people

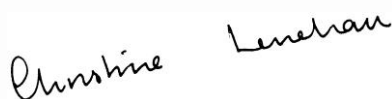
in the UK. The Children's Trust, Tadworth is the leading UK charity for children with acquired brain injury, multiple disabilities and complex health needs.

Please don't hesitate to contact peter@edcm.org.uk with any questions you have about the Disabled Children's Charter for Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Yours sincerely,



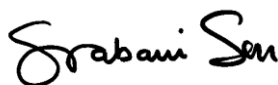
Dalton Leong
Chief Executive
The Children's Trust, Tadworth



Christine Lenehan
Director
Council for Disabled Children




Julie Jennings
Chair
Special Educational Consortium



Srabani Sen
Chief Executive
Contact a Family



Emma Harrison
Assistant Director for External
Relations
Mencap



Brian Lamb OBE
EDCM Special Advisor



EDCM was set up by four leading organisations working with disabled children and their families – Contact a Family, the Council for Disabled Children, Mencap and the Special Educational Consortium. EDCM is hosted by the National Children's Bureau, Charity registration number: 258825.