



OXFORDSHIRE PARENT CARERS FORUM

The Voice of Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum Report

Summer 2021

Introduction

As we prepare to move from a prolonged period of restrictions and limitations, into a more familiar way of living, many of us will race towards embracing this freedom, whilst some may fear what the relaxation of these protective factors may bring.

For many SEND families, the last 18 months have been filled with challenges beyond their imagination and fears for their children's health, education and future plans.

Despite the challenges of this Covid period, Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum has continued to grow and develop its ways of working.

It has thought creatively and imaginatively in order to deliver opportunities for parent carers to feel empowered and informed.

It has been responsive to their requests for information sessions on particular topics and worked in partnership with professionals across all services in order to facilitate these.

Oxfordshire is currently in the midst of significant change and transformation, around how SEND services are commissioned, developed and delivered.

Substantial leadership changes have taken place across all teams, with new strategic leads, coming into post, during this period.

OxPCF are the preferred partners in Oxfordshire for the gathering of parent carer feedback and are named in the written statement of action and accelerated progress plan. We are committed to developing the same transparent way of working with this new team, as we had previously and hope to be seen as equal partners in co-production, providing a platform for the voices of SEND families in the county.

As a forum, we fully embrace the very valuable contribution SEND families can make in the journey to improve outcomes for all SEND children and young people in Oxfordshire. We look forward to strengthening these relationships and partnerships over the coming year.

Forum Details

We currently have 7 steering group members and one forum coordinator who works 10 hours a week during term time.



Engagement

Main Database: From 413 parent carers to 549 parent carers at the end of March 2021



From 622 to 745 followers



From 164 to 194 followers



From 148 to 208 followers

This report is formatted to reflect our organisational plan which in turn reflects our Contact Grant format. In addition we have included an infographic designed to share key facts and information about OxPCF in a bitesize format will also be shared.

Strengthening the Forum

During the last six months, we have reported on our 2020/21 Contact grant and have successfully applied for a grant for the 2021/22 year. This grant will continue to build on the work of the Forum.

During this financial year we have focused on further developing the way we record, monitor and report on information. We have improved our data recording processes and produced an organisational plan to track progress. This has ensured that our end of year and in year reporting has been more professional and simpler to do. It has also allowed us to work incredibly flexibly this year and adjust or amend plans, to be as responsive to the local authority as possible

We have improved our reporting processes to monitor, collate, use and report on data. We plan to implement the changes in the coming financial year.

During the last half of the year, we finalised our steering group terms of reference and agreed a simple committee structure: chairs and coordinators group for day to day decisions; sub groups as needed. This has speeded up decision making and allowed projects to progress between steering group meetings.

We have also agreed a code of conduct for all OxPCF volunteers to ensure clearer ways of working, set minimum standards and offer support and/or training to our volunteers. We are developing our recruitment materials to enhance our steering group membership further in 2021/22. The aim is to ensure that all new volunteers will join us with a specific role.

Due to the circumstances facing us this year we paused most of our training for volunteers. Despite this we did undertake Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for all staff and volunteers as it aligned with our objectives from 202/21. We also continue to work with and learn from other Forums and the National Network of Parent Carers Forums.

The Forum has continued to work in partnership with the Local Authority on key projects including:

- Children's integrated therapies service.
- Facilitating question and answer sessions for parent carers with professionals across health, education and social care.
- Implementing regular catch up meetings with CAMHS, to ensure a 2 way dialogue about the service.

We have worked hard to agree our local Memorandum of Understanding with our partners. We have also continued our regular meetings despite the challenges presented by the pandemic and new people in post within our partner organisations.

There has been an intense focus on digital this year which has led to us developing virtual/digital skills by sourcing and sharing resources and learning on the job. Our new website has launched and is being promoted widely.

Furthering Participation

Throughout this year we have had to be responsive and flexible making sure we are listening to parent carers and translating what we hear into actions that help the immediate situation. All of this against a changing landscape of professionals in health, social care and education..

We continue to focus on how we engage parent carers in SEND development conversations and particularly this year to issues arising from the impact of the pandemic and lockdown. To do this we have:

- Developed and implemented our online feedback form which we share widely across digital platforms.
- Run online digital events and activities: We have listened to parent carer concerns throughout the year and have responded rapidly to issues affected by the pandemic. Our communications have focused on being responsive to the rapidly changing situation and promotion of events planned at short notice to meet changing needs.

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- We have regularly communicated with parent carers through our social media channels sharing information, events, reports, updates and resources. We have circulated updates/information on at least a monthly basis – these have had an open rate of around 50%.
 - Created an EDI monitoring form to use with our membership to enable reporting on demographics. We will then use this data to plan how we can ensure that those we engage with are diverse and reflect the local context.

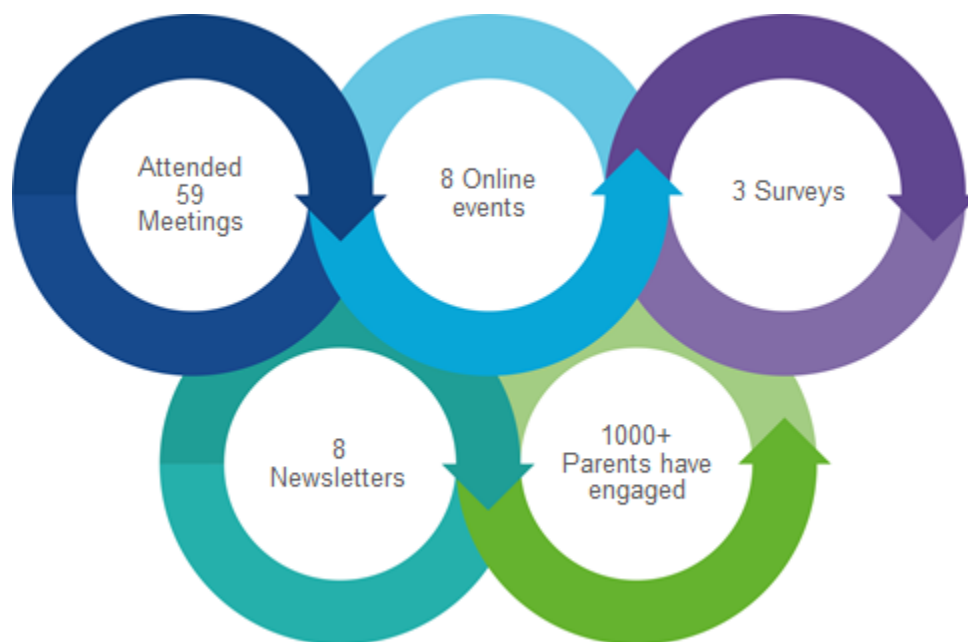
During this year we have undertaken and/or reported on 3 surveys:

- Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Exclusions Case Studies
- Children's Integrated Therapies

We have also undertaken 8 online events which 408 parent carers have attended. 7 of these were Q&A sessions with the subsequent publication of the content of the session that was shared with a wider audience.

Throughout this year we have taken an interactive approach to developing our events and activities procedures and processes. This has been a good decision as it has allowed us to take a research, plan, implement and review approach that has meant we are 'learning on the job'. So far this has been successful!

Working in Partnership



We have worked tirelessly with local partners to address COVID-19 SEND related issues. As a result we worked with a range of local partners to organise Q&A events in response to address issues that were being highlighted. These events covered the following topics:

- SEND Support
- EHCPs
- SEND Transport
- CAMHS/Anxiety

In addition to our Q&A events we have also hosted partnership sessions for parent carers to cover:

- Meet the Send Team
- Challenging Behaviours
- Handling difficult meetings

193 parent carers attended these sessions.

CAMHS

Having produced our CAMHS survey report, we have worked closely with key people to address some of the issues identified by parents and to ensure there is a two way dialogue. We are in the process of developing a follow up survey to understand more about people's current experiences over the last year.

Children's Integrated Therapies

We undertook Children's integrated therapies survey to bolster parent carer feedback into the review. This data has been analysed and a written report has been produced and circulated.

SEND Strategy

We continue to actively engage about the SEND Strategy and Written Statement Of Action and its Accelerated Progress Plan. We have been able to share our considerable experience of how the process has unfolded in Oxfordshire. We participated in the interim visit and raised challenges.

Outcomes for Parent Carers

It is important to the Forum that we see positive outcomes for parents in the work that we do. These outcomes focus on better access to knowledge and information, increased confidence to address issues, greater awareness and improved skills. This includes developing and increasing our use of a range of communication tools and methods to broaden and deepen our reach.

We have worked hard to make sure relevant and up to date information has been available, particularly in relation to COVID19 to ensure parent carers are confident about the situation. Our Q&A sessions have enabled parent carers to come together, share experiences and feel less alone. It has allowed parent carers to directly engage with service providers. We have used social media, reports, newsletters/updates and our website to communicate.

Plans for 2021-22

Our plans for 2021-22 include continuing to develop the way we work as a Forum to ensure we are transparent, efficient and effective. We want to ensure that the way we operate makes the best use of our limited resources, has a valuable impact on SEND services and strategy and ensures the issues concerning parent carers are on the agenda. We will also continue to strengthen the capacity of the Forum by recruiting new volunteers and increase volunteer confidence by offering parent participation training this year.

Diversity and Inclusivity

We continue our work to ensure we have a wide and diverse group of parent carers contributing to the conversation. We continue to focus on increasing diversity and developing inclusive ways for parent carers to share their concerns. This includes setting up a peer to peer support Facebook group that will also offer an engagement opportunity for parent carers and help identify emerging issues.

Future Engagement

We plan to continue offering virtual Q&A sessions and focus groups to review health and social resources - such as parent information leaflets.

Partnership working

Together with professionals we will develop a SEND views baseline survey to understand more about the SEND Landscape in Oxfordshire, and the experience of families and young people.

Emerging Issues

We plan to introduce a new project on Post 16 issues as this is an emerging topic of concern to parent carers.

Concerns, Observations and Comments

Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum is embarking on the development of a second report.

This document will contain a summary of feedback obtained from parent carers and professionals, through various channels.

In partnership with new strategic leads, the forum will be addressing the mechanisms needed, in order to effectively share this feedback with the Local Authority.

Currently any feedback or concerns that the parent carer forum may have, are shared verbally during KIT (Keep in Touch) meetings or when SG members are in attendance at the SEND Performance Board.

The forum wishes to move from a more anecdotal presentation of this feedback, to one where the lived experiences of children and young people in Oxfordshire with SEND, will be more widely heard and addressed.

Appendix

Appendix 1: OxPCF Infographic



APRIL 2020 - MARCH 2021 STATS

7 steering group members and 1 part-time (paid) coordinator



ENGAGEMENT



LINKS WITH 404 PARENT CARERS

CONNECTED TO 93 PROFESSIONALS AND ORGANISATIONS

59 MEETINGS ATTENDED WITH OUR PARTNERS



745 FOLLOWERS



194 FOLLOWERS



208 FOLLOWERS

ONLINE EVENTS HOSTED BY OXPCF
8 ONLINE EVENTS ATTENDED BY OVER 400 PARENT CARERS



**BACK TO SCHOOL
SEND SUPPORT
EHCPs
SEND TRANSPORT
CAMHS/ANXIETY**

**MEET THE SEND TEAM
CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS
HANDLING DIFFICULT MEETINGS**



SURVEYS AND REPORTS

606 FAMILIES SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCE OF OXFORDSHIRE CAMHS SURVEY

35 FAMILIES PARTICIPATED IN OUR CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED THERAPIES SURVEY

23 FAMILIES CONTRIBUTED TO OUR EXCLUSIONS CASE STUDIES REPORT

YOU SAID

WE DID

Covid-19 Issues



Hosted a Q&A and produced a resource sheet

Issues with CAMHS



Began a feedback process, created regular feedback opportunities with CAMHS and hosted a Q&A with CAMHS professionals

Concerns over Exclusions



Presented Case Studies to the Local Education Authority



KEY ISSUES for OxPCF in 2021 - 2022

**Post-16
Children's Integrated Therapies
School Refusal/Exclusions
CAMHS
PMLD**

Want to join us? Email info@oxpcf.org.uk for more info

Appendix 2: [OxPCF Organisational Plan for 2021 - 2022](#)

Appendix 2: Transcriptions of our Q&A Zoom Sessions between October 2020 - March 2021

- [Meet the SEND Team](#)
- [Challenging Behaviours](#)