

## **Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum: *Who we are, What we do and How we are funded***

Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum (OxPCF) is an independent organisation led by a dedicated team of volunteers who are all parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who believe that all disabled children and young people in the county should have access to the same opportunities, experiences and information as any other child.

Our aim is to be a well-informed, connected and empowered community of families of children and young people with SEND in Oxfordshire. To do this we gather the views and lived experiences of local families and provide opportunities for their voices to be heard. We work in partnership with the Local Area Partnership (LAP) which includes Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), Oxford Health, Oxford University Hospitals Trust and Integrated Care Board Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (ICB BOB) and others to highlight where local services are working well, or challenge when changes or improvements need to be made.

We want to ensure parent carers in Oxfordshire play an integral and equal part in the local authority's decision-making process and help shape, develop, implement and evaluate SEND services and systems.

### **WHAT WE DO:**

Local authorities in England are legally required to work with their local Parent Carer Forum (PCF). This is set out in the SEND Code of Practice. PCFs are also referenced in the Children and Families Act (2014) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

- **We work in partnership** and build links with health, education, social care and other voluntary and third sector organisations supporting families with disabled children in Oxfordshire to make sure local services meet their needs.
- **We listen to parent carers** in Oxfordshire and gather their lived experience through our online peer support group, [Oxfordshire SEND Room](#), surveys, feedback forms, polls and events. We then make sure this information is fed back into the [Local Area Partnership \(LAP\)](#) decision making process and ensure the planning of SEND services are co-produced with the voice and views of the families that use them.

- **Our aim is to give an equal voice to all**, no matter how small or large the community, and to make parent carer participation an integral part of service and information development and provision in Oxfordshire, creating better outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

### HOW WE ARE FUNDED:

We are awarded an [annual grant](#) - currently £17,500 - from the Department of Education. The grant, administered by the charity [Contact](#), helps strengthen parent carer forums nationally and pays for basic PCF administrative and event-related costs.

We have also secured just under £36,000 from OCC to deliver a number of small projects this year which aim to amplify the voice of parents across the county.

#### *With the funding we will:*

- Build a SEND Network and provide a space for parent support groups, providers and third sector organisations to meet, network, receive training and provide feedback on SEND services in Oxfordshire. This includes recruiting parent carers to attend focus groups and consultation meetings with the LAP as well as participating in co-production opportunities with them.
- Fund a part time communications lead to support communications to SEND families across the county by producing a termly SEND wide Oxfordshire newsletter and to increase parent carer engagement in hard to reach communities.
- Fund a part-time community coordinator in the forum to connect with parent carers, including hard to reach, inequality and digital poverty groups, with existing parent carers groups and to provide information sharing and feedback opportunities for parent carers.
- Help us identify, analyse and report on the different communities of parents engaging with the PCF and the LAP within Oxfordshire.
- To fund the Better Together Event which will be held on 28th March, 2024

For further information on how you can support our work, please visit [www.oxpcf.org.uk](http://www.oxpcf.org.uk) or email [info@oxpcf.org.uk](mailto:info@oxpcf.org.uk)