



OXFORDSHIRE
PARENT CARERS FORUM

A Voice for Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council Local Area SEND Inspection July 2023

Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum Feedback Report

Our Reach

- Over 1.8K Forum Members
- 13 steering group members plus a paid Forum Manager
- Over 2500 Social Media Followers
- 1.7K members in our peer support group: Oxfordshire SEND Room

What's Working Well?

- Strong example of coproduction with children's social care, around the proposed closure of an overnight respite facility. As a direct result of a wider consultation process being carried out and parent carer engagement, this decision was overturned, and no Short break provision was lost. This example of co-production was driven by a committed individual, within the learning disabilities team.
- Good working partnership with Oxfordshire CAMHS, regular update meetings and opportunities for families to provide feedback via focus groups etc
- Strong partnership working with SENDIASS - includes training for forum members around confident participation in meetings and SEND Law myth busting and coproducing of leaflets around themes commonly identified by parent carers through feedback, ie send support, applying for an EHCNA.
- Better Together event, bringing together a large number of professionals across all services and parent carers. This was an opportunity for families to directly share their lived experiences with the professionals who developed the services and are directly responsible for ensuring improved outcomes.
- Recently, some partnership working in relation to the Children's Integrated Therapies Transformation Plan
- Reassurance, commitment and an awareness of the changes needed to take place, during a positive coproduction session with OCC, Oxford Health and ICB in July 2023.

What's been challenging?

- Coproduction is not consistently strong, valued or understood across the local area, even though there are pockets of excellent practice lead by individuals.
- Communication and a timely response to requests for information or guidance relating to Forum involvement is exceptionally challenging and leads to significant amounts of wasted time
- Parents not feeling listened to or their experiences being valued, led to the formation of a parent action group. This group organised a protest to coincide with a full council meeting and is very active within Oxfordshire.
- Challenges securing engagement from Education in projects/work streams that require multi agency involvement i.e Key Worker Pilot Project.
- A lack of local narrative, behind many of the projects which are being run, has led to an increase in silo working, alongside general confusion around the purpose and deliverables from particular pieces of work and how it fits together
- Damage to relationships across health, education and social care, due to a lack of inclusion and poor communication
- The Local Offer Project: Significant issues with co-production
- No input/connection with Adult Social Services or Adult Mental Health Teams

Top Issues for Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

1 OCC COMMUNICATION

Between the SEN Team and Families and Schools

2 CAMHS

- Waiting times causing significant concern and grow in length, particularly the NDC Pathway
- Difficult to access the right support
- Lack of knowledge and support for children presenting with PDA/Autism

3 INCLUSION IN MAINSTREAM

Inappropriate placements in a mainstream environment that cannot meet the needs of the CYP

4 EHCNA AND EHCPS

Timeliness, quality of EHCP's remains inconsistent and many do not reflect the CYP's needs or contain out of date information. Many EHCNA being refused when there is a clear need and evidence. Refusal of independent assessments

5 ADEQUATE PROVISION

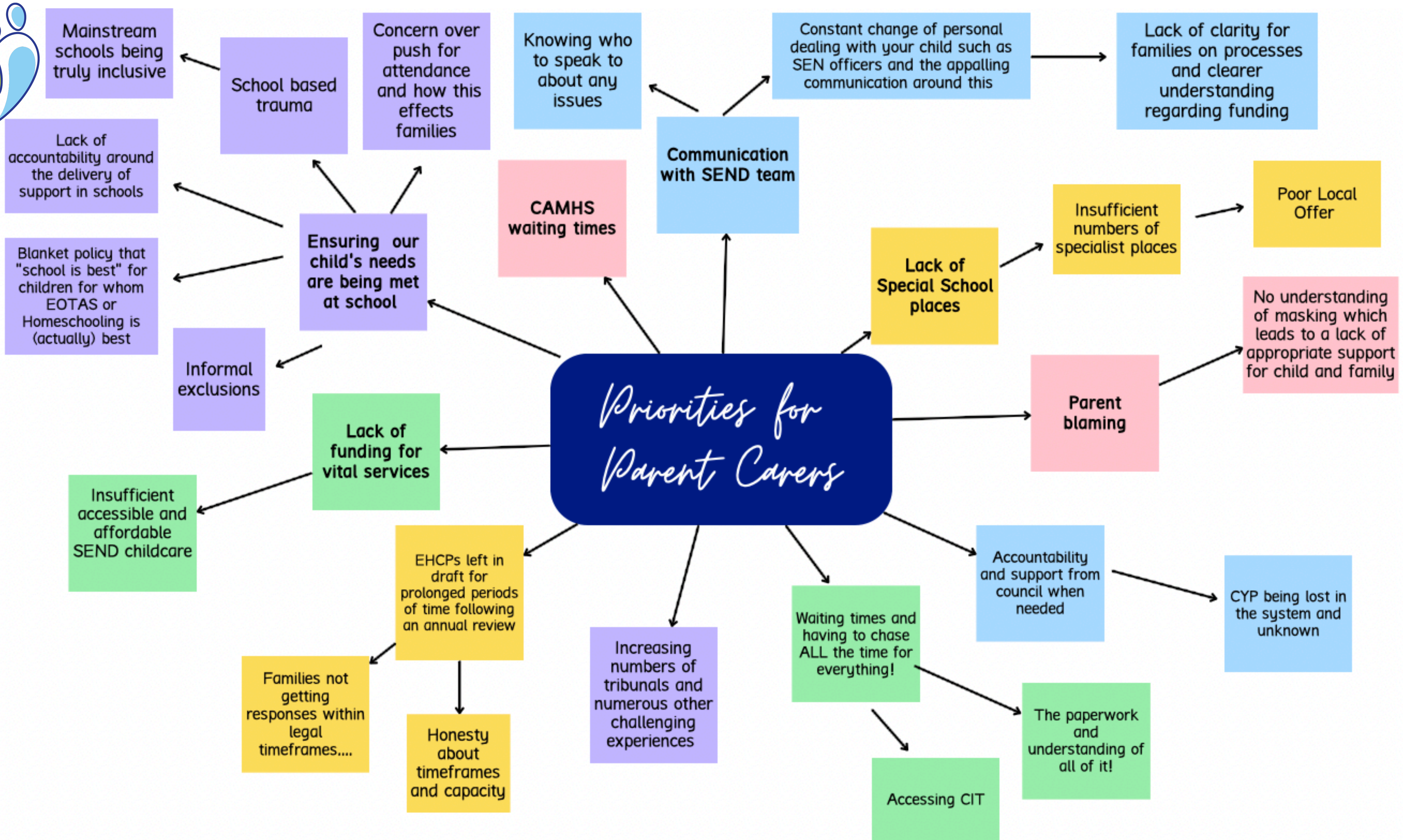
Sufficiency of appropriate provision to meet our children's needs including special schools and alternative provision options

6 THERAPY PROVISION

Sufficiency of therapy services eg SaLT, Sensory, Behavioral and OT

Top Issues for Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

7	STAFF RETENTION	SEN Case Officer retention and significant number of interim staff/consultants in positions of authority
8	FAILURE TO ADHERE TO STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES	Parents often experience a disregard of statutory duties and time scales, where local policy appears to be adopted rather than the following of law.
9	SCHOOL TRAINING	Teaching staff need to have the appropriate and adequate training in SEND and SEMH - one inset day session / single day course is not sufficient or appropriate
10	ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS	EBSA is a particular challenge in Oxfordshire, there are a significant number of CYP who are missing education. Exclusion numbers are rising both for fixed term, PEX and reduced timetables.
11	TRIBUNALS	Tribunals used to delay the provision of education and support
12	POST 16 AND 19 PROVISION	Provision/ceasing of plans at 19 due to a lack of suitable pathways for progression. Only real option for families is to look at out of county provision





OxPCF Workstreams and Events

2022 - 2023

Workstreams with OCC

CCG/Oxford Health/OUH

OxPCF Workstreams

Forum Work

Events

LOCAL OFFER	SEND strategy and Implementation	CAMHS Survey and Report	CAMHS Feedback Sessions	EOTAS	Foster Carers	Recruitment	Feedback	Better Together	Awards Ceremony
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SEF (Self Evaluation Framework)	Access to Learning Board	CAMHS Focus Groups	ADLT (Autism Learning Disability Liason Team)	EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity)	SEND Working Group and SEND Baseline Survey	Grant Management	MOU	Meet and Greet with MP's	Positive Coffee and Chats
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Ordanarily Available	School Accessibility Strategy	CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Project	Children's Integrated Therapy Systems	Reasonable adjustments in hospitals for CYP with SEND and disparity in services	SEND Transport Issues	Reporting	Coproduction training with PCF and services	Q&A's for Parent Carers on key issues	Online feedback sessions
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SEND Strategic Outcomes Framework	Short Breaks	Resources for ASD	Preparing for Adulthood	PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities)	Post 16 Network	Connections with Schools, Support groups/ Organisations and MP's	Communication Plan	Family event for parent carers	
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Workstreams with Social Services

ASD CSC Offer/Pathway

Mental Health for 18+	Oxfordshire SEND Room
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Working with SENDIASS

Boards/Meetings we have attended 2022-2023

Oxfordshire County Council

- Integrated SEND Strategic Board
- Learning Disability and Neurodiversity Improvement Board (+ Task and Finish Group for the Pre and Post Diagnosis Workstream and Media Campaign group)
- Access to Learning Board
- Attendance Strategic Group
- SEND Employment Forum
- DBV/Early Intervention Strategy Group
- Unpaid Carers Strategy
- Short Breaks Board
- CYP Strategic Outcomes
- Local Offer Project
- SEF Review
- SEND Strategy and Implementation
- Keep in Touch Meetings (OCC/OH/ICB)
- SENDIASS Steering Group
- Team Up Project Board

Oxford Health/ICB

- Children's Therapy Systems Board
- Oxfordshire CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Project Board
- MHST
- Eric Project Pilot
- Walking with You Parent Peer Support Group
- Sensory Pilot
- CAMHS Catch Ups

Misc

- NNPCF Meetings
- Meetings with Councillors
- Meeting with Children's Trust Board Rep

Please note: Attendance at these meetings does not necessarily represent coproduction/involvement in work

Where our involvement could have been improved :

- The development of the attendance strategy
- Development of the ordinarily available toolkit
- Development of the transition handbook and transition information leaflet
- Development of a new early identification of need handbook which supersedes the co-produced handbook developed with families in 2016, revised in 2019 and then abandoned. This was cited in a previous inspection as a forward thinking shared document, as well as being an excellent example of co-production
- Early involvement in the DBV bid and understanding how direction of travel was identified, alongside ongoing inclusion and understanding of this piece of work
- Development of the Key Worker Pilot Project, funded by NHSE was a massively missed opportunity as a direct result of struggles with multi agency by end.
- No involvement in the strategies mentioned in the prep meeting such as the AP strategy and the Early Intervention strategy
- The commitment that they are working with us to remodel the SEND Strategic partnership board has not been shared with us prior to this meeting

Risks

- SEND Strategy: Whilst aspirational and containing hopes which can not be argued with, it wasn't coproduced. Our advice was not taken and consequently we are now feeling the affects in the implementation work.
- Development of the implementation plan which sits beneath the SEND strategy, is hugely challenging due to the vague and non-specific nature of the SEND strategy. This work is very late starting.
- Data from power BIA has not been forthcoming, despite numerous requests over a long period for more detailed information around performance, leading to significant concerns around accountability.
- The use of a significant number of interim service leads/consultants and the associated costs. Major staff changes at strategic level, places Oxfordshire back where it was following the 2019 revisit inspection.

Risks Continued

- The use of a significant number of interim service leads/consultants and the associated costs. Major staff changes at strategic level, places, Oxfordshire back where it was following the 2019 revisit inspection.
- The significant demand on SENDIASS, with soaring caseloads, and increased waiting times for families to receive support.
- The SEF, needs to reflect far more strongly, the feedback and lived experiences of families, children and young people, accessing and using services in county, rather than relying on and identifying areas, which have always been historically strong in Oxfordshire.
- Failure to adhere to statutory responsibilities, and duties has become normalised in Oxfordshire.
- The use of foster carers as a key provider of respite within the children's social care proposal for short breaks

OxPCF Wish List

- Commit to improving communication with families to ensure that they receive transparent and accurate information
- Commit to actively listening to and engaging with families, taking into account their views and wishes and using them to construct positive outcomes wherever possible
- Increased accountability from strategic leads and a commitment to have a real understanding of coproduction
- Commit to adherence to statutory timeframes for EHC needs applications, assessments, plans and subsequent annual reviews and plans amendments. The acceptance that policy does not trump law, and that policies must be lawful
- The attendance of decision makers from the SEN Team at mediation sessions, in order to reduce the number of cases which head to tribunal.
- For Oxford Health to continue to look into the improvement of access to CAMHS

OxPCF Wish List Continued

- Review currently local policy and procedure to ensure compliance with SEND law, followed by an annual audit and other measures such as regular quality-monitoring spot checks to ensure continued compliance by all staff
- Review SEND training provided to schools to ensure its adequacy. All teaching staff should receive comprehensive SEND training with additional more specialised sessions which are targeted, based on the needs of the child/children in the classroom and commit to providing comprehensive training to Senior Leadership teams and SENCO's in schools to ensure their full understanding of the statutory obligations placed on them and the local authority to children with SEND.
- Review the support and provision offered to children and families where they are in the position that the child is not receiving or participating in education for whatever reason. Improve access to specialist provision.
- Accept that some children, alternative provision or EOTAS is the best outcome for them and where this is the case, act swiftly to ensure they are being educated in the way that works for them, as soon as they can be.
- The carrying out of children's social care assessments, under section 17 and not through the MASH.