

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum (OxPCF), Oxfordshire County Council (OCC<sup>1</sup>), Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OH), Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust (OUH) and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and West Berkshire (BOB) Integrated Care Board (ICB), collectively known as the Local Area Partnership (LAP<sup>2</sup>)**

**Date:** June 2024

**Review Date:** June 2025

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Oxfordshire Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) LAP is a group of organisations committed to co-production whose commitment is to use an agreed set of co-production principles and methods as codified in the series of three **Working Together** documents which can be found [here](#). Co-production will be how the LAP improves outcomes for the families in Oxfordshire and builds trust and confidence in SEND services. The Working Together series of documents will be published and accessible to all through the Local Offer
- 1.2. A co-productive approach recognises that citizens who access services, and their families and carers, have the expertise and skills, gained through their own experience, to help innovate and improve services for children and young people with SEND. Our agreed definition of co-production is:

‘Co-production is the process where providers and/or professionals and stakeholder citizens equally share a whole-life responsibility for the creation and delivery of products, services, or knowledge. Co-production is underpinned by the principles of **equality, diversity, access, and reciprocity.**’
- 1.3. We welcome and care for each other, value and include each other, communicate effectively with each other and work in partnership when developing new services for the future or making improvements to existing services.
- 1.4. When embarking on any pieces of work, all participants (including OxPCF, the LAP and any parent or adult carer participants) will be expected to agree, and then adhere to, the co-production Code of Conduct prior to work commencing. This document will be made available to all and distributed directly wherever appropriate.
- 1.5. Our working relationships are focused on embedding genuine and meaningful parent carer participation. This is where parent carers are seen as equals and valued as independent members of our teams, bringing knowledge and expertise to the shaping and delivery of services for children and young people with SEND and their families.
- 1.6. This MoU aims to ensure that we are clear about our roles and responsibilities in developing services with parent and adult carers. It sets out how we will work together to create a culture where the voices of parent and adult carers of children and young people

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<sup>1</sup> When the term OCC is used it represents any service provided by the Local Authority including but not limited to; Education, Public Health, Childrens and Adult Social Care

with SEND are included in the shaping of services and provision of information and support.

- 1.7. As part of the Children and Families Act 2014, the LAP must provide information about services for children and young adults with disabilities and measure how well services meet local needs. It also states that views and comments on these should be used to inform future commissioning decisions.
- 1.8. OxPCF is an independent body that represents and comprises parent and adult carers across Oxfordshire who want to create better outcomes for the children and young people with SEND for whom they are responsible. OxPCF wishes to do this by bringing the voices and views of parent and adult carers across the county together to participate in co-production.
- 1.9. OxPCF are recognised as the formal and primary conduit for parent and adult carer views of SEND families within Oxfordshire and will seek representative views of local residents through appropriate channels.
- 1.10. The LAP wishes to co-produce and support delivery of plans and improvements to services to support children and young people with SEND, aged 0-25.
- 1.11. This MoU ensures that all parties are clear on their roles and responsibilities in effectively co-producing improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND and that our shared aims and objectives can be met by creating an open dialogue, underpinned by a shared vision between OxPCF and other members of the LAP.
- 1.12. Involvement of OxPCF may take place with both steering group and/or wider forum members. The level of involvement is determined by the specific requirements of any given work stream. All involvement needs to be discussed and agreed with a Forum Chair and/or Forum Manager in advance.

## **2. Facilitating co-production in Oxfordshire**

- We commit to Keep in Touch (KIT) LAP meetings on a half-termly basis (6 times a year) to facilitate regular dialogue about current and relevant issues, including an upward cascade of the voice and views of parent carers so that senior leaders hear firsthand, unfiltered feedback.
- The KIT meetings will be jointly attended with the Oxfordshire SEND information advice and support service (SENDIASS) and Oxfordshire Family Services Network (OxFSN), to reflect OxPCF's close working partnership and shared commitment with these organisations.
- The agreed route for correspondence relating to the KIT meetings is via the Executive Assistant for the senior leadership team.
- We inform each other when planning the consultation or development of relevant services that will impact families and young people in Oxfordshire.
- OxPCF and the LAP will share our respective Forward Plans of relevant work with each other.
- We will try to avoid one-off consultations through effective co-production arrangements. When parent or adult carer participation (e.g., focus groups, surveys etc.) is undertaken we work together to provide as much advanced planning and

notice as possible, ensuring a variety of ways for parent carer views to be received and acted upon, to enable a meaningful process.

### **3. Expectations of OCC, Oxford Health, Oxford University Hospitals Trust, and BOB ICB:**

- To recognise the value and importance of the Forum's independence from the LAP.
- To recognise the importance of the Forum's role in decision-making processes to ensure the interests of children and young people with SEND and their families are kept at the centre of decisions. The LAP will consider OxPCF as a critical friend, contributing evidence and information, constructive challenge, and innovative solutions
- To actively encourage and promote positive a culture change around SEND across Education, Health, and Social Care services with a 'top to bottom 'approach, encompassing all, in every environment, challenging and improving embedded views and practice as required
- To seek the opinion and views of OxPCF as the primary conduit of parent and adult carer involvement on all relevant workstreams, with OxPCF connecting with wider SEND community in the form of formal and informal groups, organisations and families of children and young people with SEND, as appropriate.
- To work primarily with OxPCF to ensure that parent and adult carers of children and young people with SEND views are included and visible in the development of strategic plans, the commissioning and delivery of services and the production of documents.
- To actively invite OxPCF to be members of any groups involved in the design of services for children and young people with SEND from the inception of the workstream. Consideration will always be taken with regards to Forum capacity and prior commitments in our work plan.
- To recognise the administration costs that occur because of requests for involvement by parent carers in the work of the LAP and to ensure that the OxPCF is supported (financially and administratively) to deliver this involvement within an agreed work plan.
- Within the constraints of the general data protection regulation (GDPR) and any other legal constraints, to ensure that members of OxPCF's Steering Group have full access to any LAP data, documentation, guidance, policy, discussion, or other information that relates to children and young people with SEND across all areas of Education, Health and Social Care that is required for us to participate in, review, contribute to or complete our specified and agreed work (requests for additional information from OxPCF to be considered for proportionality in line with freedom of information regulations).
- To ensure that feedback raised by OxPCF is acknowledged, acted upon, and responded to in a timely manner, leading to an agreed action to resolve or address the issue. The outcome of the action is to be updated by the following KIT meeting. This will be the case whether the feedback is submitted during a meeting, or via an email.

- To keep OxPCF informed promptly of any relevant information, issues, and staff changes, at strategic level, which take place within the LAP. This ensures that the steering group members are aware of any changes and only contact members of staff who are still in post.
- To ensure that OxPCF Steering Group members are, where this is appropriate to their area of known expertise or specific workstream, and practicable, invited and welcomed to attend any training, seminars, consultations or other event that the LAP hosts where it may be of benefit to our working together at the current time or in the future.

#### **4. Meetings attended by Forum Representatives:**

- Occur at times that are suitable for parent and adult carers of children and young people with SEND to attend, ordinarily, during term time, this would be at times that are suitable for the specific parent and adult carers involved. However, there should be recognition that, under exceptional circumstance or emergencies, appropriate times may be different, and this should be accommodated, where possible.
- Occur during term time where possible and only during school holidays with mutual advance agreement.
- Hybrid meetings should always be offered as an option for virtual attendance unless it is not possible.
- Meetings should have a Terms of Reference, which includes details of attendees and their role in the meeting.
- Meeting dates are agreed in advance, with agenda items requested and distributed in good time (at least five working days beforehand) that sets out the date, time, venue, and meeting content, and if applicable any OxPCF contribution, together with relevant reading e.g., minutes/decision papers/presentations etc.
- Documents should be written in plain English and are clear, comprehensive, and jargon free to enable Forum members to make informed decisions and choices.
- Meetings that have minutes and actions produced should be circulated to OxPCF as soon as possible after the meeting, and always before the following meeting.
- To ensure that papers and documentation (including agenda and minutes) are sent to OxPCF's administrative email address ([info@oxpcf.org.uk](mailto:info@oxpcf.org.uk)) and the individual representatives of OxPCF, regardless of actual attendance at the meeting. A list of meetings that OxPCF routinely attends is contained in Appendix 2
- For two representatives from OxPCF to be invited to all meetings/boards to aid parent and adult carers of children and young people with SEND's capacity, and continuity of contributions (financial contributions to be agreed separately)
- To act on advice and guidance given, where appropriate and feasible.
- To take positive action to promote and attend OxPCF membership, events, information gathering and other activities.
- Parent carers attending meetings or events as a representative of OxPCF will represent the views and concerns of parent carers across Oxfordshire, drawing on their individual experiences, but without making individual representation. Where parent carers also have a professional role within Oxfordshire SEND services, they

will clarify the capacity in which they are attending at the start of any meeting or event.

## **5. Expectations of OxPCF:**

- To be actively involved in the planning, development, implementation and reviewing of the local authority, Education, Health, and Social Care services in Oxfordshire.
- To seek annual funding from the DfE (parent participation grant), Local Area Partnership and other relevant sources as is necessary and/or feasible.
- To agree to hold all and any LAP data, documentation, policy, or other information obtained via the course of our work in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and confidentially, unless agreed otherwise in advance in writing with the appropriate area member of the LAP Senior Leadership Team
- To be part of networks on a regional and national basis to discuss common issues and share good practice.
- To ensure that all representatives will be provided with information about how they should conduct themselves when representing the Forum.
- To reach out to parent and adult carers of children and young people with SEND across Oxfordshire aiming for an involved group that reflects the diversity of the Oxfordshire SEND community.
- That when working with other groups, organisations or individuals we will only support and/or encourage surveying, polling or other information gathering from parent and adult carers of children and young people with SEND where the data collected may fall under the remit of the GDPR, by other formal organisations and/or groups whose compliance responsibilities and/or policies in this respect align with our own. Informal organisations and/or groups or individuals whose compliance responsibilities and/or policies do not align with our own will not be supported or encouraged to gather, hold, or process data which falls under the remit of the GDPR, by OxPCF.
- To ensure that all Steering Group members receive induction and relevant training as appropriate and feasible.
- To ensure, where appropriate, Steering Group members are DBS checked.
- To share information in a variety of ways and through a range of appropriate and secure mediums.
- To provide feedback to the SEND Team for ongoing service development and improvements, including the Oxfordshire Local Offer.
- To accept opportunities to participate in training delivered by SENDIASS.
- Confidentiality and Data Protection: We fully respect that the nature of information shared, especially about individuals or families, must be kept confidential and only used in the right settings as per Safeguarding and GDPR Regulations 2018. OxPCF is a GDPR compliant organisation, with all Steering Group members undertaking GDPR training.

Period covered by MoU and Review/Termination Agreements. We undertake that this MoU remains in place for as long as OxPCF is the recognised parent carer forum for Oxfordshire. We will review this MoU annually to ensure all sections remain accurate and appropriate.

Amendments and Dispute Resolution. Any amendments made to this MoU must be agreed by all parties with proposals put into writing for discussion. In the event of a dispute requiring resolution an independent mediator will be used.

**Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum**

SIGNED:



Name: Jules Francis Sinclair

Position: Co-Chair

Date: 27.06.24

**Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council**

SIGNED: 

Name: Lisa Lyons

Position: Director of Children Education & Families

Date: 27.06.24

**Signed on behalf BOB ICB**

SIGNED:



Name: Rachael Corser

Position: Chief Nursing Officer

Date: 27.06.24

## Appendix 1 – Relevant legislation and guidance

### Children and Families Act 2014

Oxfordshire County Council must provide information about services for children and young adults with disabilities and measure how well services are meeting local needs. It also states that ‘views and comments on these should be used to inform future commissioning decisions’.

#### The SEND Code of Practice states:

**1.13:**“ Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families.” It goes on to state that:

**3.18:** At a strategic level, partners must engage children and young people with SEN and disabilities and children’s parents in commissioning decisions, to give useful insights into how to improve services and outcomes. Local authorities, CCGs and NHS England must develop effective ways of harnessing the views of their local communities so that commissioning decisions on services for those with SEN and disabilities are shaped by users’ experiences, ambitions, and expectations. To do this, local authorities and CCGs should engage with local Healthwatch organisations, patient representative groups, Parent Carer Forums, groups representing young people with SEN and disabilities and other local voluntary organisations and community groups.

**1.12:** Effective participation should lead to a better fit between families’ needs and the services provided, higher satisfaction with services, reduced costs (as long-term benefits emerge) and better value for money. Local authorities should work with children, young people, and parents to establish the aims of their participation, mark progress and build trust. They should make use of existing organisations and forums which represent the views of parents – and those which represent the views of children and young people directly – and where these do not exist, local authorities should consider establishing them.

### Representation and Health

The NHS Constitution establishes the principles and values of the NHS in England. It sets out the rights to which patients, public and NHS staff are entitled. The NHS is committed to achieve these, together with responsibilities which the public, patients and staff owe to one another to ensure that the NHS operates fairly and effectively. This includes how patients access health services, the quality of care patients receive the treatment available to patients, confidentiality of personal information and the right to complain if things go wrong.

All NHS bodies and private and third sector providers supplying NHS services will be required by law to take account of this Constitution in their decisions and actions. The pledges the NHS makes to patients can be viewed by downloading the NHS Constitution [1]

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires CCGs and Commissioners in NHS England to enable:

- Patients and Carers to participate in planning, managing, and making decisions about their care and treatment through services it commissions.



- The effective participation of the public in the commission process itself so that services provided reflect the needs of local people.

## **Appendix 2 – OxPCF attendance at meetings**

As of January 2024, OxPCF members have been involved in the following boards, groups, and strategic meetings:

- Local Offer
- Unpaid Carers Strategy
- Short Breaks Board and Working Groups
- Sensory Processing Project Group
- SEND Employment Forum
- Alternative Provision Strategy and Recommissioning
- Team-Up Co-Production Board
- Delivering Better Value - Early Intervention and Prevention Strategic Group
- Learning Disability and Neurodiversity Improvement Board
- Oxfordshire Strategic Attendance Board
- SENDIASS Steering Group
- Update sessions with CAMHS
- CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Board
- Neurodiversity Support Network Oxfordshire
- Autism Strategy Working Group
- Update sessions with BOB colleagues
- Children's Therapy Systems Board
- School Resilience Board
- EOTAS Policy and Process Working Group
- SEND Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB)
- Partnership Delivery Group (PDG)
- Programme Theme Groups
- Comms Engagement and Co-Production Workstream
- NNPCF Regional Meetings

Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum to be invited to be an active member on other boards and in meetings as appropriate.

This list will be reviewed at least annually (in line with OxPCF's grant review and application process with DfE) and more often as required.

## **Appendix 3 - Behaviours that contribute to effective co-production.**

Good effective co-production participation in Oxfordshire happens when we:

### **Welcome and Care**

- All voices are heard and valued.
- Expectations are communicated early and with clarity.
- Supportive communities are built in partnership.
- Environments feel happy and secure for everyone.
- Confidence, well-being, and self-esteem are nurtured.
- Strengths and achievements are emphasised.
- Responses are honest and considerate.

### **Value and Include**

- Decision making processes involve the people they are about or affect.
- Needs are identified early, and involvement of all partners is welcomed at every stage.
- Everyone tries to have the right knowledge, understanding and skills to respond constructively to different strengths and needs.
- Responses to individual needs and changing circumstances are creative and flexible.
- Everyone is involved in the development of policies, systems and values.

### **Communicate**

- Views and involvement are always sought.
- Listening is calm and respectful.
- Follow up responses are timely and constructive.
- Time and space are made available to ensure everyone's voice is heard in a way that suits them.
- Information is given in good time and in an accessible format taking into account individual needs.
- Language is constructive and respectful.
- Questions are answered as fully and transparently as is possible, and not asked repeatedly if the answer provided is not what was expected
- Agreed actions are regularly reviewed and evaluated with all partners.

### **Work in Partnership**

- There are opportunities for all partners to feedback to improve everyone's experience.
- Everyone is an equal partner, and their contribution is valued.
- Co-production and participation in individual and strategic decision making is actively encouraged.
- Partners work well together to develop plans, set targets, and create and deliver specific programmes.