



OXFORDSHIRE
PARENT CARERS FORUM

A Voice for Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

TOGETHER
EVERYONE
ACHIEVES
MORE

OxPCF Insights for OFSTED SEND Engagement Session October 25th, 2024



Our Journey of Progress: Updates since the Ofsted SEND Inspection, July 2023

Our Reach

**Over 2.5k
Forum
Members**

**12 working group
members, plus a
paid Forum
Manager,
Community Co-
ordinator and a
Communications
and Engagement
Lead**

**Over 3000
Social Media
Followers**

**2.2K members in
our peer support
group:
Oxfordshire
SEND Room**

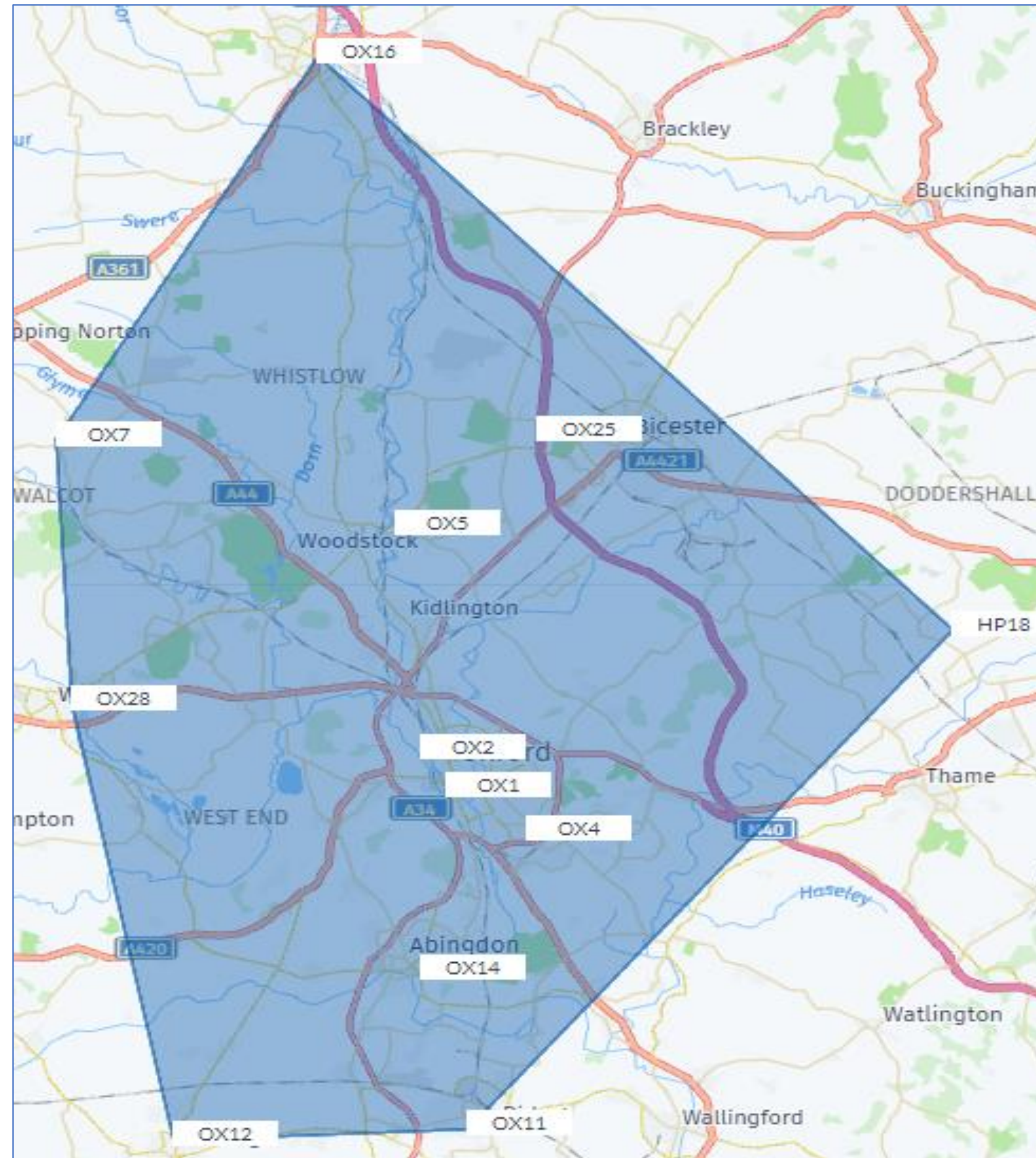
What have we achieved?

- **Co-production:** Since early 2024, we've co-led the cross-cutting co-production workstream as part of the SEND transformation programme. So far, we've helped to define co-production, helped to facilitate co-production training and led focus groups. Our current focus is seeking to ensure parent carers have meaningful opportunities to engage in co-production with the LAP.
- **Feedback, Participation, Engagement & Consultation:** We continuously gather feedback from parent carers on the services their children and young people are accessing and share/report this at meetings and boards with the Local Area Partnership. Notably in the last 12 months, we successfully advised OCC on the overnight respite services consultation, facilitated the Better Together event attended by over 150 participants and produced a comprehensive report to guide improvements.

What have we achieved?

- **Active Participation:** We participate in over 50 meetings each month, contributing to key workstreams. Between July 2023 and October 2024, we have hosted 26 events, engaging with more than 1,300 attendees. These events included community information sessions and listening events on important topics such as SEND Transport, Social Care, CAMHS protocols, and EOTAS. Our ongoing collaboration with the LAP aims to ensure that parent carers' concerns are consistently raised and addressed, especially during service transitions.
- **Community Engagement:** We have established SEND Connect groups with community grants, onboarded parent representatives, and recruited a Communications and Engagement Lead and a Community Coordinator. Our team has expanded our social media presence with a strategic plan across Facebook, Instagram, and peer support groups. Direct engagement has also grown through our Community Coordinator, who has visited over 20 community groups, reaching more than 100 parent carers who were not previously connected with us.

Spread of Community Engagement October 2024



What have we achieved?

- **Surveys & Reports:** We supported the Baseline Survey via the LAP and produced a school's survey in January 2024, with key findings due soon. Additionally, we continuously update our website to keep parents informed about developments. We've continued to develop feedback channels, including online forms, peer group polls, and direct input from community visits, to ensure that carers' voices are consistently collected and feedback to the LAP.
- **Communication & Transparency:** We published the first LAP SEND Newsletter in July, with the next edition set for release for the October half-term. To promote clear communication and accountability, we are working with the LAP to start to produce regular "You Said, We Did" reports. With the aim to make sure that parent carers are informed about the actions being taken on their feedback.

What have we achieved?

- **Peer Support & Networks:** We've strengthened our peer support networks both online and in person, providing parent carers with spaces to connect, reduce isolation, and foster a sense of community. Our WhatsApp community and online peer support group (over 2,200 members) has enabled continuous engagement. The newly formed SEND Network, established through collaboration, brings together organisations, professionals, and businesses that support SEND families to network and receive information on the work of the LAP.
- **Providing Resources & Events:** We share vital information on respite care, local activities, and support services like SENDIASS, helping parent carers access essential resources. Our events, including webinars on key SEND topics, offer parent carers opportunities to engage, gain knowledge, and connect with others in similar situations.

Current Workstreams

OxPCF Workstreams with the Local Area Partnership 2024 - 2025

SEND Transformation Programme

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| SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board JFS + LK | Partnership Delivery Group JFS + LK |
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Programme Theme Groups

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| 1 Right Support, Right Time in Inclusive Settings JFS + TV | 2 Right Plan, Right First Time, Every Time JFS + JS |
| 3 Right Provision, Right Time, Looking to Independence CH + JFS | |

Cross Cutting Workstream

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| Communication, Engagement and Co-Production JFS, CELead, TV + JS |
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Priority Action Plan Sub Groups

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|---------------------------------|---|
| NDC Working Group JFS | SEND Baseline Survey JS + JFS |
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Oxfordshire County Council

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| Alternative Provision and EOTAS JFS + ? | SEND Employment Forum CH |
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| Strategic Attendance Board TBC | Improving Access to Mainstream Education for CYP with SEND TV |
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| FSP - Domestic Abuse Service TV | Children's Trust Board JFS ON HOLD |
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| Social Services Autism Pathway JFS ON HOLD | Team-Up Co-Production Board MS + CELead |
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| School Resilience Board TBC | Local Offer TBC |
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| Early Help and Prevention Board EC | Early Years Board TBC |
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BOB ICB/OH & OUH

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB), Integrated Care System, Oxford Health and Oxford University Hospitals

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|---------------------------------|--|
| BOB ICS CYP Board JFS | CAMHS Update/Feedback Sessions JFS |
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| Webinars with CAMHS NDC Pathway FM + JFS | Focus Groups for NDC Pathway Work FM + JFS |
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| Transitions from CAMHS to AMHT JFS | Reasonable Adjustments in Health for CYP TBC |
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HESC

(Health, Education and Social Care)

Joint commissioning across Oxfordshire County Council and BOB ICB

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| Children's Integrated Therapies JS + TBC | CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Board JES + JFS |
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| Learning Disability and Autism Board MS + ? | Neurodiversity Support Network JFS + ? |
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| Autism Strategy JFS + ? | Short Breaks JSW + GH |
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OxPCF Working Group (Steering Group & Parent Representatives)

JFS: Jules Francis-Sinclair **FM:** Forum Manager: Nikita Orme
UR: Una Rennard **LK:** Liz Knight **CH:** Charmian Hearne **SKK:** Sarah Karnik
JS: Julia Stackhouse **MS:** Marion Simon **JSW:** Jos Smith-Williams **CELead:** Communications and Engagement Lead: Ana Bonasera **CC:** Community Cordinator: Usma Farman
Parent Reps:
TV: Tressa Verrier **JES:** Juliet Semple **EC:** Evelyn Crosskey
GH: Georgina Hicks **SH:** Stephanie Harrison

Forum Work

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| Finances, Recruitment and Grant Management LK, JFS + FM | Feedback and Reporting Processes FM, JS + JFS |
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| EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity) TBC | Oxfordshire SEND Room JFS + CELead |
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| Connections with the SEND Community UF + CELead | Events for Parent Carers JFS, FM & CELead |
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| NNPCF and Regional Parent Carer Connections JFS | Oxfordshire SEND Partnerships Network JFS, CELead, FM + JSW |
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| Working with SENDIASS CH + JFS |
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| Marketing, PR, Website, Comms and Engagement JFS + CELead |
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Plans for the next 12 months

Co-production & Advocacy:

- Continue leading the co-production workstream to ensure that parent carers' concerns are heard and addressed, and strive for the LAP to provide meaningful opportunities for parent carers to be actively involved in co-production
- Continue to engage with the LAP's Priority Action Plan theme groups and sub-groups.
- Provide feedback to inspectors as requested and support ongoing inspection reviews.
- Influence national discussions through the national PCF and review SEND provision in other areas to bring in best practices.
- Undertake thematic reviews or reports on issues of importance to parent carers.

Plans for the next 12 months

Community Engagement:

- Expand the SEND Connect groups and peer support networks through both online and in-person outreach, led by our Community Coordinator and Comms and Engagement lead, to better support parent carers, including those in hard-to-reach communities. Continue to grow our pool of parent carer volunteers to represent a wider range of parent carers

Communication & Stakeholder Engagement:

- Develop and establish the LAP newsletter and ensure it reaches a wider audience.
- Strengthen engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including through the newly launched SEND Network.
- Expand our social media presence and increase engagement through platforms like Facebook and Instagram, while offering more opportunities for carers to provide feedback through surveys, polls, and events.
- Improve feedback mechanisms, such as introducing regular “You Said, We Did” reports, with the goal of transparent communication between LAP, stakeholders, and parent carers.
- Develop the SEND Network into a unified community and a strong voice for organisations and SEND services in Oxfordshire
- Host the *Better Together* event in April 2025 to foster community collaboration.

Plans for the next 12 months

Surveys & Research:

- Publish findings from the mainstream schools survey and conduct further research on the needs of SEND families. This data will guide advocacy efforts and help shape local services. Publish a You Said, We Did Report from the LAP following the Better Together report.

Events & Webinars:

- Continue to host a range of community information events, listening sessions, and webinars on key topics, including mental health, educational support, and service transitions, to ensure carers have access to important information and resources.

Peer Support Growth:

- Strengthen and grow face to face peer support groups, our WhatsApp community and online peer support group to provide ongoing engagement, provide opportunities for feedback and reduce isolation among parent carers.

Plans for the next 12 months:

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Work:

- Strengthen our commitment to EDI by ensuring our activities and communications are accessible, including underrepresented groups and those with diverse needs.
- Address barriers for digitally poor families by providing alternative ways to access services and participate in events, such as printed materials, phone consultations, and in-person sessions.

Respite & Wellbeing Resources:

- Increase awareness of respite care and local resources that support carers in accessing necessary services, such as SENDIASS. Provide information and guidance to help carers navigate the support available.

Internal Development:

- Finalise the implementation of our new ways of working and complete the move fully to Teams for improved internal communication.

Self Assessment: How do we think we're doing as a Parent Carer Forum (PCF)? Strengths

Community Engagement:

- We've significantly expanded our reach, particularly through SEND Connect groups, peer support networks, and the efforts of our Community Coordinator, who has connected with over 100 new parent carers, including those from harder-to-reach communities. We now engage an estimated 4,000 families in Oxfordshire, representing 33% of families with children on SEND support or with an EHCP

Advocacy & Co-production:

- We are a key partner in co-production efforts with the Local Area Partnership (LAP). We strive to ensure that parent carers' voices are represented at critical decision-making tables, influencing key issues and driving improvements in the SEND Transformation programme. We continue to push for the LAP to expand opportunities for co-production, ensuring that parent carers can actively contribute to meaningful change.

Self Assessment: How do we think we're doing as a Parent Carer Forum (PCF)? Strengths

Communication:

- The launch of our LAP SEND Newsletter and the growth of our social media presence have improved how we share information and gather feedback from parent carers, creating a more transparent and inclusive dialogue.

Events & Feedback:

- The range of events we've hosted, including community information sessions and webinars, has been well received. We're committed to regularly gathering feedback from parent carers through surveys, polls, and listening events, ensuring that their concerns directly inform and shape our advocacy effort

Self Assessment: How do we think we're doing as a Parent Carer Forum (PCF)? Areas for Development

Diversity & Inclusion:

- While we have made strides in connecting with a range of communities, we recognise the need to enhance our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) efforts further. We are committed to ensuring all parent carers, especially those from underrepresented groups, feel listened to and included in our work.

Digital Inclusion:

- We've identified gaps in engaging digitally disadvantaged families. Addressing this will be a priority by providing non-digital alternatives and ensuring that those without consistent internet access can still participate in our activities.

Self Assessment: How do we think we're doing as a Parent Carer Forum (PCF)? Areas for Development

Volunteer Capacity:

- While we've expanded our pool of parent carer volunteers, there is still room for growth. We aim to onboard more representatives to cover a wider range of LAP priority groups and increase our influence.

Measuring Impact:

- Although we have been successful in many areas, we believe there is more we can do to better measure our impact. More structured feedback mechanisms, such as "You Said, We Did" reports and thematic reviews, will help us better track the outcomes of our efforts and adjust our approach as needed.

Self Assessment: How do we think we're doing as a Parent Carer Forum (PCF)? Areas for Development

Improving how we work:

- We are in the process of solidifying our internal operations, including moving to new ways of working. These changes will help us manage our growth and ensure long-term sustainability.

Strengthening Communication:

- We are focused on strengthening our communication and feedback loops, both within the forum and between parent carers and stakeholders, ensuring a continuous flow of information and accountability.

Self Assessment: How do we think we're doing as a Parent Carer Forum (PCF)? Areas for Development

Co-Production

- **Broader Involvement:** Seek to engage a wider range of parent carers in co-production efforts facilitated by the LAP, to ensure a more diverse range of perspectives and lived experiences is included in decision-making processes.
- **Deeper Integration:** Continue to strive for co-production to be a way of working for the Local Area Partnership.
- **Clearer Communication:** We continue to advocate for the LAP to provide transparency on how co-production feedback is utilised and to clarify expectations, ensuring that parent carers see how their input influences decision-making.
- **Sustained Collaboration:** Seek commitment from the LAP to move from one-off consultations to ongoing partnerships with parent carers. We are committed to continue to provide opportunities for the LAP to work co-productively with parent carers.
- **Building Capacity:** Continue to strive for training and resources to support both services and carers in effective co-production.



Impact of SEND Improvement since the July 2023 Inspection

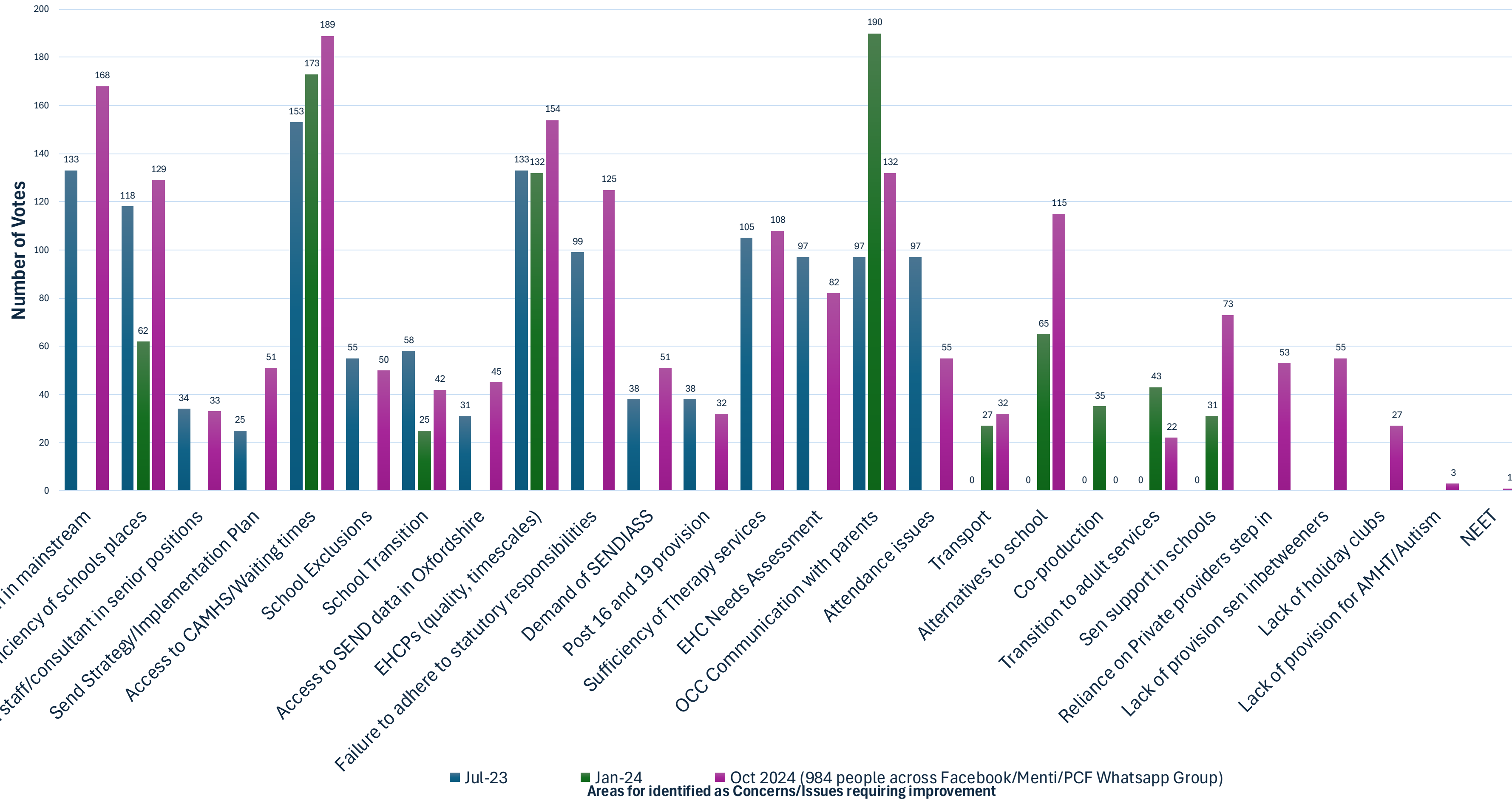
How Well Do We Think the Statutory Services from the Local Area Partnership (LAP) are Doing?

While there are **pockets of good work** happening within the LAP, it is difficult to see a clear, consistent pattern of improvement across all services. Despite some positive relationships with OxPCF, the **change is not yet being felt on the ground** by families.

There remains **resistance from certain parts of the services**, and there is still **limited effort to co-produce** solutions with families. Fifteen months since the inspection, many parents have yet to see any tangible improvements in their day-to-day experiences.

The broader **culture shift has not fully taken place**, and children and families are still not consistently at the heart of decision-making processes. While we acknowledge that change takes time, it is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that families feel the impact of these efforts.

Parent Feedback July 2023 - October 2024



What parents have told us

Insufficient Support and Resources: There is a pervasive sense of inadequate support for children with SEND, with calls for increased funding, trained staff, and resources. Parents express frustration over the lack of qualified teachers and appropriate facilities for children with specific needs.

Long Waiting Times and Delays: Many parents report significant waiting times for assessments and services, particularly for ADHD and Autism diagnoses. This delay exacerbates the challenges faced by children and their families.

Ineffective Implementation of EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans): Parents highlight issues with EHCPs not being properly followed or implemented in schools, with claims that the content often does not meet their children's actual needs.

Communication Breakdown: There is a recurring theme of poor communication between schools, local authorities, and parents. Many parents feel unheard and unsupported, emphasising the need for better collaboration and transparency.

Impact of Mental Health on Education: The text underscores the mental health crises faced by many CYP, particularly in relation to school attendance and anxiety. There is a strong call for prioritising wellbeing over attendance metrics.

Issues with Co-production: Parents face limited involvement in decision-making, with some services resisting or needing training in co-production, leading to a lack of meaningful collaboration and overlooked feedback.

Need for Alternative Provision: Many parents advocate for more alternative educational options, such as therapeutic settings and smaller classes, to accommodate children who struggle in traditional school environments.

Positive Acknowledgements: Despite the challenges, there are acknowledgments of positive experiences with certain staff members or specific schools that provide effective support, indicating that change is possible.

What parents have told us

Recognition of Neurodivergence: There is a clear demand for better training and understanding of neurodivergence among school staff, particularly regarding how autism and ADHD manifest, especially in girls.

Parent Advocacy and Tenacity: The comments reflect the challenges parents face in navigating the system, often requiring significant effort and persistence to secure the necessary support for their children.

Calls for Systemic Change: Many comments suggest a need for broader changes within the educational and healthcare systems, including accountability for local authorities and a shift in focus towards child centred practices.

Lack of Social Care for Autistic CYP: Concerns over insufficient social care support for autistic CYP, leaving families without needed services. Gaps in provision are impacting the wellbeing and development of these children.

Lack of Training and Resources in Schools: There is a strong sentiment that mainstream schools are not adequately equipped to support children with SEND, due to insufficient training for staff and inadequate funding.

Poor Transition to Adult Services: Parents express worry about the transition from children's to adult services, particularly the limited options available for young adults with SEND post-19.

Financial Burden on Families: Parents feel compelled to spend substantial amounts on private assessments and legal advice to secure meaningful Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This highlights the inequity in the system, where those who can afford to pay for additional support have better outcomes.

Inadequate Educational Provision: Many parents express frustration over the lack of suitable placements for academically able children whose needs are not met in mainstream schools. There's a call for more specialized schools and alternative educational settings that cater to a broader range of needs.

Parent Carer Feedback: Qualitative Insights, October 2024

CAHMS mental health practitioner who did assessment was lovely and thorough

The teachers in my child's mainstream school care about him and do their best to support him

Great sixth form pastoral care and counselling but waitlist too long

Online therapy from CAMHS has been good

Communication between parents and SENOs has gotten slightly better

There are some amazing individuals in OCC who can share their ways of supporting families

Our resource base provides fantastic support, enabling access to mainstream learning, thank you!

The EP was very good, but the parents and school had to fight for it to be in-person assessment

After 6 years of poor communication from SENOs, it's changed

Communication has been better with our case officer

The assessment was excellent. Calm, punctual - important for autism

Larkmead SENCO and staff amazing, even on shoestring budget

Parent Carer Feedback: Qualitative Insights, October 2024



Parent Carer Feedback: Qualitative Insights, October 2024

