



OXFORDSHIRE
PARENT CARERS FORUM

A Voice for Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

OxPCF Report for DfE Stocktake June 2024

Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum Feedback Report

Our Reach

**Overs 1.9
Forum
Members**

**11 steering group
members, plus a
paid Forum
Manager,
Community Co-
ordinator and a
Communication
and Engagement
Lead due to start
June 24**

**Over 3000
Social Media
Followers**

**2.1K members in
our peer support
group:
Oxfordshire
SEND Room**

What's Working Well?

Enhanced willingness to include OxPCF (Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum).

Establishment of clearer governance structures.

Advancement in comprehending data and addressing related issues.

Greater senior-level understanding of SEND issues and increased engagement in resolving these matters.

Improved clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

Continued progress in partnership working.

What's Working Well?

Commitment of funding for the first time since PCF started and heightened awareness of needed changes among several officers in the Local Area Partnership

Robust and supportive collaboration with SENDIASS, including the co-production of guidance for parent carers and webinars.

Strong partnership with Oxfordshire CAMHS and regular updates and family feedback opportunities via focus groups.

The recruitment of the Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services

Challenges/Concerns

- No increase in resources (funding and skills) with continued reliance on temporary staff.
- Lack of clarity on funding decisions, exemplified by recent cases like the sensory business case.
- Insufficient understanding of underlying issues requiring resolution.
- Projects lack coherence in addressing issues and fail to demonstrate how they will solve them.
- Inadequate inclusion of parent carers and OxPCF in decision-making processes.
- Absence of a cohesive workforce strategy covering recruitment, retention, and culture.

Challenges/Concerns

- Absence of a data dashboard for monitoring progress.
- Concerns regarding schools and SEND funding.
- Discrepancy between leadership perspective and family experiences.
- Continued use of ineffective approaches such as enhanced pathways and in-reach/out-reach schools.
- Inconsistency in staff and a shortage of Educational Psychologists (EPs).
- High rate of exclusions among children with identified needs.

Challenges/Concerns

- Co-production is not consistently strong, valued or understood yet across the local area, but there is some progress on developing this understanding. Movement towards clarity and consistency is not evident yet - the EOTAS workstream evidences this.
- Parents continue to not feel listened to or their experiences being valued. The campaign group continues to be very active within Oxfordshire.
- Continuing challenges securing engagement from Education in boards/meetings and work projects/work streams that require multi agency involvement
- CIT Funding Inconsistency/disparity across ICB BOB e.g. the sensory therapy programme. We now effectively have a postcode lottery within our own ICB
- Mainstream schools supporting children with complex SEND needs require easier access to essential resources to effectively cater to their students, thus alleviating strain on funding and enabling them to focus on education.

Top Issues for Parent Carers

**Listed in priority
order:**

- 1 ACCESS AND WAIT TIMES FOR OXFORDSHIRE CAMHS**
- 2 INCLUSION AND ADEQUATE RESOURCING OF MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS FOR SUPPORTING SEND**
- 3 COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING SEND**
- 4 AVAILABILITY OF SUFFICIENT SPECIAL SCHOOL PLACEMENTS**
- 5 QUALITY OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHCPS)**
- 6 COMMUNICATION WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OFFICERS (SENOS)**
- 7 GENERAL COMMUNICATION WITH ALL RELEVANT SERVICES**

Top Issues for Parent Carers Listed in priority order:

8 ACCESS TO AND EXPERTISE OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS COORDINATORS (SENCOS)

9 ACCESS TO AND WAIT TIMES FOR THERAPY SERVICES (E.G., SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, PHYSIOTHERAPY)

10 DEMAND FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES INFORMATION ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE (SENDIASS)

11 OPTIONS AND SUITABILITY OF POST-16 AND POST-19 PROVISION FOR SEND STUDENTS

12 TRANSITION FROM CAMHS TO AMHT

Top Issues for Parent Carers

Specific comments from parent carers:

**Failure in
statutory
duty to
provide
children with
an education**

**Naming
schools who
can't meet
need on
EHCP's**

**Lack of
specialist
autism
provision**

**Lack of Short
Breaks
provisions for
children with
learning
disabilities**

**Lack of
EOTAS policy
and process**

Top Issues for Parent Carers

Specific comments from parent carers:

Poor service delivery and communication, including avoidance of accountability and responsibility, excuse making, and scapegoating of families, particularly involving OCC SENOs and the SEN department at OCC.

Transition
from school to
post 16
options

Lack of accountability, with OCC maintaining distance and offering excuses rather than engaging in co-production, feedback, or accountability processes.

Top Issues for Parent Carers

Specific comments from parent carers:

The LA adopts an adversarial approach rather than collaborating with families and young people.

Views of parents, young people, and professionals are often ignored if they contradict the local authority's preference for mainstream settings. Decision-making panels and SENOs disregard opinions that don't align with the LA's stance.

Lack of consideration for best interests of young people in LA's processes.

Top Issues for Parent Carers

Specific comments from parent carers:

**EHCP's are often
vaguely worded
and therefore
unenforceable**

No specialist

**Lack of
consideration for
best interests of
young people in
LA's processes.**

Top Issues for Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

From Face to Face Groups

1 CAMHS WAITING TIMES > 3 YEARS

- Delay in URGENT CAHMS support
- CAHMS decline support as child presents different at school to home

2 SUPPORT FOR PARENTS /CARERS:

- Parents struggling financially as unable to work due to own health conditions and caring role for SEND child
- Lack of support for parents/carers who have disabilities themselves
- Isolation for parents
- Understanding diagnosis

3 OCC

- Transport issues when changing schools
- Lack of special schools
- No appropriate school placements
- OCC need to abide by SEN legislation e.g not assessing when they should
- Understanding jargon in forms
- Understanding tribunal process

4 MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

- Not enough SENCO'S within schools
- Schools not listening to parents until/unless a professional confirms parent's experiences to school
- Parents not involved in decisions about their child from school/county
- Lack of school trips and residential trips while in SEN base schools

5 SLT/OT

- long waiting time and not adequate online

Top Issues for Parent Carers in Oxfordshire

From Face to Face Groups

6 COMMUNITY

- Lack of public SEND swimming sessions

7 AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS /PROVISIONS

- Parents struggling financially as unable to work due to own health conditions and caring role for SEND child
- Lack of support for parents/carers who have disabilities themselves
- Isolation for parents
- Understanding diagnosis

8 OCC

- Waiting times for Lets Play etc...
- Lack of holiday clubs

9 TRANSITIONS

- Transition to secondary school for SEND children needs more planning
- What's available for YP Post school/education i.e work

10 SENDIASS

- long waiting times

11 GENERAL

- What happens if mainstream and specialist schools are not right?
- Lack of support for children not in school
- Support for children with selective mutism

End.