

## Supporting parents of disabled children and young people

### Parent Carer Sounding Board Meeting March 2010 Oxford City

#### Background

Oxfordshire Family Voices (OFV) is a local forum of 84 parents from across Oxfordshire with disabled children and young people. In partnership with Oxfordshire County Council's Participation and Play Team, OFV undertook a detailed piece of work that looked at the needs of parents with disabled children and their families. The topics chosen by OFV for discussion at Sounding Board were: Extended Services and Integrated Transport.

#### Why did we meet?

To discuss the difficulties and possible solutions for families of disabled CYP is accessing Extended Services (ES) and using Integrated Transport (ITU).

#### Who was there?

In attendance were: 23 parents and 12 professionals: including Meera Spillet, Director of Children Young People and Families Services, Councillors Louise Chapman, and Ian Hudspeth the Councillor for Transport and senior leads from Integrated Transport, Extended Services, Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, Integrated Youth Support Services, Social Care and Parent Education Team.

#### First Stage

In depth interviews, focus groups, and open meetings were carried out with 67 parents and carers including local African, Afro-Caribbean and Asian parent support groups

to widen the representation of experiences and views.

#### Second Stage

A Parent Carer Sounding Board was held on the 4th March 2010. At the meeting there was discussion of all the issues raised through the first stage and actions were agreed.



#### Main questions for discussion

How can we build the partnership between schools, parents, transport and Extended Services to improve access for disabled children and young people to play, leisure, social and recreational activities out of school?

Where should we hold up to date information, and ensure it is given to everyone at the right time in the right format?

Could we have one point of information?

## Main issues for parents and carers, and actions agreed

- 1 The challenge for parents to get Extended Services where the services that are available are not accessible for their children.

### Actions

- Oxfordshire Family Information Service (OFIS) and Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) will continue to develop a database of support groups, Extended Services activities, funding opportunities and child care for parents with disabled children. OFV will support the development of this by keeping the OFIS up to date with any information gathered.
  - OFIS will develop a list of support forums for parents with the help of Out of School Liaison Officers, and Extended Services Coordinators.
  - OFV will feedback to OFIS or Extended Services on gaps in provision.
  - OFIS and AHDC will continue to develop strong communication channels with OFV and Out of School Liaison Officers. This will ensure they can work closely with special schools to help them develop out of school support and childcare.
- 2 The challenge to provide accessible childcare for parents who have disabled children.

### Actions

- Parents and services providers will contact



- OFIS if a child or young person (CYP) with disabilities cannot be offered an appropriate childcare place. OFIS will look at the gaps in childcare and share this information with Aiming High for Disabled Children, child care development teams and other relevant services.
- 3 The challenge of getting information on Extended Services (ES) into Mainstream and Special Schools for Parents and Carers.

### Actions

- The responsibility of Extended Services lies ultimately with the school partnership and host school. If the provision is signposted by the school but delivered by an external provider then the provider is responsible - but the school must be kept updated. The Partnership, the individual schools and all support services should have good working relationships and shared aims.
- There needs to be a mechanism for feedback about the quality and accountability of Extended Services provision. Area teams have responsibility alongside central services to ensure service delivery. Parent / Carer Involvement Officer (PCIO) will meet with ES and OFIS to agree next steps.

- OFIS and Out of School Liaison Officers will send information to schools and special schools about their services to ensure that information is given out at all opportunities, including parent's evenings, transition meetings and school meetings.

#### 4 Issues around transition for young people with autism / learning disability, going on to further education, and appropriate leisure activities.

### Actions

SEN services within Oxfordshire are working very hard to enable a choice of courses and activities for post 16s. They will

- work closely with OFIS and OFV to identify gaps and respond to needs and then feed this into the LDD 14-25 strategy group.

School Partnerships will share good practice between schools and parents, such as the 50 / 50 peer mentoring, short breaks

- schemes between mainstream and special needs schools and bases (in Berkshire). This will build understanding and help disabled CYP access more activities and develop independent living.

- The Parent Education Development Team will promote their transition support courses for parents through the OFV



website, and through OFIS and Extended Services.

- Integrated Youth Service are currently undertaking a Disability Badging Scheme for Activities that meet high quality standards for children with disabilities. OFV parents and Oxfordshire Young Enablers (OYE) will support this in agreeing the standards.

#### 5 Navigating the transport system

### Actions

- In partnership with ITU, the PCIO will write guidelines for parents on how to contact Integrated Transport about taxi contracts, to discuss issues such as flexibility and individual needs so that CYP can participate in after school activities.

- The PCIO will attend the integrated transport meeting quarterly to give feedback from parents from OFV.

- There should be a continuing dialogue of need for AHDC funding. This will accommodate changing transport needs as more Aiming High places arise. The AHDC team will follow this up.

- OFV will publicise the integrated transport quality monitoring email on their website for parents to feedback on their service: [gmcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:gmcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk), or phone through on their confidential phone line: 01865 323790.

- 6 How do we hear parent's voices regarding Special Educational Needs / Autistic bases on mainstream sites?

## Actions

- Governor Services with the support of OFV and Parent Partnership will draft guidance for mainstream schools with SEN bases to advise and urge schools to seek ways to hear the views of parents in a minority group such as this. Strategies might include:
  - Appointing associate members to governing bodies and inviting parents who have children in Bases within a mainstream school to become associate members.
  - Consulting parents in Bases regarding their children's needs with Extended Services. This provides a way for those parents to collectively link together to support one another and become a collective voice to express needs around activities / transport / Extended Services.
  - Arranging regular meeting between SEN Governor, SENCO, SEN Officer and the parents to feedback on issues and good practice.
- 7 Support for parents who are isolated and restricted due to their child's disability.

## Actions

- OFV will set up an e-support forum for parents.
- OFIS will continue to develop database of local support groups for parents of children who have disabilities.

- 8 What role could Oxfordshire Family Voices take to support all these challenges?

## Actions from OFV

- Become a route for parents to feedback and raise issues on Extended Services and transport.
- Feedback to the PCIO who will attend quarterly Integrated Transport Meetings to raise issues.
- Feedback to OFIS/PCIO at quarterly gaps in Extended Services provision, such as child care and activities. This will then be recorded and acted upon.
- Report back on good practise in areas and support other areas to develop local parent support groups.



This report will go to the Children and Young Peoples Trust.

For the full report and minutes please email [toni.bremble@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:toni.bremble@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

