

Better Together Event

You Said: We Did

The Better Together Event was held on the 8th November 2018 at the Kassam Stadium organised by OXFSN. It brought together family carers and professionals from health, education and social care as well as support providers and charities from the voluntary sector in Oxfordshire.

We ran a 'World Café' type event with 10 tables each discussing a key issue raised by families of people with learning disabilities of all ages, who have been supported by OXFSN. Each table had a facilitator who recorded key information which was then produced in a report and circulated to everyone who attended the event.

Lead professionals made pledges on the day about what actions they would take after hearing first-hand about what is and isn't working. We are now following up with feedback from them as to what actions they have taken as a result of attending the event.



Kate Terroni – Director for Adult Services, Oxfordshire County Council

As many of you will know Kate Terroni has now left OCC but Karen Fuller, the Deputy Director for Adult Services responded to the pledges that Kate made on the day saying,

“I’ve pulled together some areas where significant progress has been made, but as I’m sure you will appreciate some of the pledges were personal to Kate so it’s hard to comment on them all.”

Kate pledged to

- **Work with OxFSN**
- **Report back**
- **Promote employment**
- **Get input from people on the Supported Living Strategy**

Karen’s response on behalf of Kate:

- We currently have a number of ways in which we are promoting employment. One good example is the work done by the Oxfordshire Employment Service who help people whose health or disabilities are a barrier to them finding sustained work. They offer a range of employment support programs with local partners across the county for people aged 18 years and above. They’ve had some real successes recently both in terms of winning awards for their work but also with some real life examples of the difference they’ve made to people such as Chloe who features in this story - <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17449604.i-landed-my-dream-job-thanks-to-oxfordshire-employment-service/>
- In Adult Social Care we are moving towards a strength-based model which considers a person’s strengths rather than focusing on what they can’t do. A key part of this, particularly for younger people will be the promotion of employment.
- We are currently reviewing our Community Support services which will include employment support. In future we want there to be a strong emphasis on focusing on the person’s strengths whilst developing support solutions that maximise their independence and draw on the opportunities available in their local communities.
- In terms of a Supported Living Strategy, we are currently in the process of scoping a broader Adults of Working Age Strategy and co-production will be at the heart of this. The council has a dedicated Co-production Team who are responsible for promoting co-production as part of everything we do. As you are aware co-production is about working alongside people who use services/their families to design services from an early stage which helps ensure that these best fit what people actually need.
- We already have some excellent examples of recent strategies that have been co-produced in this way including our Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Older People’s Strategy. More importantly it’s not just us saying this; our work on Co-production has received positive feedback from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) during their recent review of health and social care, the Social Care
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- Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and from other authorities during a Peer Review of Oxfordshire County Council.
- Linking back to the above issue of employment, one of the key parts of this any future Adults of Working Age Strategy will be to include a pathway to employment opportunities which fits with the person’s capabilities and builds on their strengths
- We would be happy to update you on this work as it progresses so that we can ensure families remain engaged. I am looking at getting some regular dates to meet with OxFSN alongside my children colleagues moving forward.



Liz Williams – Service Director Learning Disability Services, Oxford Health NHS

Liz facilitated in place of Chris Walking (Senior Commissioning Manager at Oxfordshire) on the day who was unable to make the event.

Liz pledged to

“Publish Transforming Care information to show how far we have come as concerned that a lot of people have not heard of Transforming Care.”

Liz's response:

- This is where I sat in for Chris Walkling so I passed this to him – but we have not had meetings since and the Long-Term plan is now taking over. We need to agree how we continue to work together under the local term plan and make sure we publish it as well, learning from this event.
- But also, we are now working on our transition information on the Local Offer website as this was the action I took away operationally as a Service Director. Kirsten Prance (Associate Clinical Director of Learning Disability Services, Oxford Health NHS) led on this.

Jayne Howarth – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Lead, Oxfordshire County Council**Jayne pledged to**

- **Improve communication**
- **Meet deadlines**
- **Transition & link in with adult social care, education and supported living**

Jayne's response:

- Firstly, the team is committed to even closer working relationships with Parents/Carers and services which link and provide support to young people, such as Adult Social Care and Transitions.
- There will be improved communications with families and professionals as additional staff come into post and caseloads are reduced. There has been a massive increase in requests for Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments, and this is inevitably having an impact on service delivery.
- Deadlines at present are being compromised because of high caseloads and an increase in assessment requests, but with additional staff it is hoped this will improve.

Sarah Ainsworth – Disabled Children's Manager, Oxfordshire County Council**Sarah pledged to**

- **Be part of a focus group to talk about Direct Payments and do focus work on how they can be used**
- **Get better at using data to commission the right services**

Sarah's response:

- We would be happy to host a meeting with families about direct payments but the feedback I had from them was that many families did not want the complications of a direct payment support package and would prefer other means of accessing support. We can of course provide families with different options where they exist but the difficulties in accessing PA's remains a challenge for all services because there is nearly full employment in Oxon.
- We have done a lot of work on improving our data and in the new social care database recording a child's disability is mandatory as is recording whether the child is on the Disability register. Danny Hearn who manages our Disability register is finalising the data for 18/19 and I would be happy to share this with parents/carers and to debate how we use it moving forward with OxFSN and the Parent Carer forum.



Robyn Noonan – Area Services Manager – North, Oxfordshire County Council

Robyn pledged to

- **Improve the pathway into adulthood – there is a new model coming**
- **Promote the local offer as not many people are aware of it**

Robyn's response:

- The County Council have heard the fact that we need to be having a different conversation with people who need support and their families to have better shared experiences and better shared decision making and listening to what is most important to people. This means valuing relationships and refocusing on being person centred. The journey is about how we change our practice from focusing on diagnosis and what people can't do to putting strengths-based approaches at the centre of our social care practice in Oxfordshire. This means building on what people are good at and the things that give them confidence rather than focusing on what people can't do.
- Social Work capacity has been increased on the Adult Social Care teams to improve the support available to young people moving from Children's Services to Adult Services whilst the coproduced model for supporting young people to move into adult services continues to progress.
- Adult Social Care have invested in more Social Work and Occupational Therapy staff to reduce the length of time that people are waiting to see someone. Waiting times have reduced significantly over the last 6 months.
- Staff from Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Special Educational Needs and other key partners meet monthly to identify and plan for young people approaching the age where they will transition into an adult service.
- Adult services have in reached into Abingdon and Witney College to begin to build the relationship with colleges and promote the 'Local Offer' more widely.
- The Local Offer has been promoted at as many internal and public meetings as possible.

In addition, there are a number of other professionals who have, as a result of either attending the Better Together event or because of have made significant changes in both designing services and in the way they work.

Will Gardner – Team Manager, Oxfordshire Employment, Oxfordshire County Council

- We have been working to expand Oxfordshire Employment's offer as we heard that there are many people who fall between the programmes that we have and since the event, we have launched two new initiatives, 'Careers in Care,' and 'Employment Support and Training.'
- In addition to this we're talking with commissioning colleagues about the replacement for Ox Forward, taking on board comments about more opportunities for 'meaningful occupation.'

Riham Abu Deep – Co-design Facilitator, Oxfordshire County Council

- What I have been able to do (which is fundamentally important) as a result of being (at the Better Together Event) is (to) connect people to one another and signpost people to the relevant support (e.g. being able to signpost a parent I met outside the event to the SEND Local Offer and give them a named person to contact purely because of working together in the same group...we're both OCC, but it took an external event for me to realise that offer was there...).
- It also reinforced my commitment to working together because it was such a powerful illustration of how bringing people together to listen and share and discuss, as equals, really breaks down barriers, raises awareness, deepens understanding, builds empathy and enables people to reach solutions together.
- I also hold the event very much in mind and the fact that people did make pledges, and I raise this where I can (in relevant arenas, obviously) to remind people of the importance of sticking to a commitment and following through with actions (to give value and meaning to people's time and efforts, build trust, etc and, crucially, actually bring about change).

Kirsten Prance – Associate Clinical Director, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

- Each Learning Disability Team now has a register of all young people with Learning Disabilities from age 14 up
- This register will be updated via information shared by special school nurses
- From this we will identify those who have the most complex needs and will need to be transferred for support
- For those with needs but who are accessing primary care well without additional specialist support identified as needed at this time we will be sharing information of the appropriate LDT team for their area so they know how to contact post 18 if needed.
- For those with active secondary care needs we will be attending EHCP meetings from age 16 to support with making sure we have appropriate information and to ensure that all know us so that we can be asked to supply EHCP reports once they turn 18
- All young people identified as needing to be transferred to our care will be offered an initial assessment in the 3 months pre their 18th Birthday with risk assessments and care plans completed with them and their families so that seamless care is delivered
- All families will receive a letter in September 2018 advising of our intention to offer this support so that families can opt out of our support should they feel it is not needed.
- The register will track young people until the age of 19 so that we can assure that they are picked up and report activity to CCG in line with our contract but post this age their names will come off the register as will all those identified not needing to

- transfer once letter and leaflet re adult Specialist Health Learning Disability services is shared.



Natalia Lachkou, Change and Programme Manager, Adults, Oxfordshire County Council

- I am pleased to be able to update you on progress the council has made with developing a new approach to supporting Oxfordshire young people and their families transitioning from children’s social care to adult social care.
- Over the last 6 months we have been working hard on understanding the needs of young people likely to transition and the numbers of young people we anticipate needing support. It has been a very busy time for both children and adults social care.

How we are taking your recommendations forward:

- Families told us at the ‘Better Together’ Event on 8 November 2018 that working together is improving but we are on a journey and more needs to be done to build on recent improvements.

<p>What is working well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions • That it is a recognised issue and being addressed (Oxfordshire are doing well) • Co-production of the new transition model – services, staff, etc.
<p>What could work better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation of experiences across the county in these transitional phases – OCC are trying to get a better transition • Transition came up as a major issue for many families – across the education, health and social care system

- We now have a shared understanding and visibility of the needs of young people likely to transition from children's to adult social care services. This group of young people includes over 1500 young people aged 14-25 who come into contact with the council through a variety of routes: children's and adult social care services, health and education. We have the data to anticipate who will need an adult service between 18 and 25 years. This data set is being monitored monthly and is fully refreshed annually.
- Children's and adult services continue to meet health colleagues monthly to identify and plan for transitions of individuals who are approaching this important stage in their lives.
- We are modelling and evaluating the benefits of two different all age pathway approaches:
 - a. Transitions team to support 15 - 25 year olds with special educational needs to work as part of a pathway: Children's services (0-14 year olds) and then Adult services (25+ year olds)
 - b. All age single disability team
- This work is grounded in the best practice recommendations you have made as a group. We have also kept an eye on examples of good practice from other local authority areas and recent developments in Oxfordshire children's and adult services.
- We have also kept Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards updated – they are following our journey with interest.
- Our main challenge has been collating, analysing and understanding all data about young people that we have. We have made progress in this area and are now looking in detail at how we might structure our teams differently and how much new arrangements would cost.
- This work has been informed by your best practice recommendations and research. The value of your contribution speaks for itself. I would like to thank you again for setting the course for this important work and I will continue to keep you updated on progress.

What is next?

- Detailed modelling of the transition team structures and costs will be completed in June.
- We will update council senior managers and support them to identify a preferred option in the middle of July.
- We will share the outcome of these discussions with you in early August.

Kathy Liddell
OXFSN
10 July 2019