

Em.bold.en Newsletter – July 2019 – Number 6

Welcome to the 6th and final edition of the Em.bold.en newsletter. The Embolden project was started in 2017 to give a stronger voice to older families who have relatives with learning disabilities to influence decision makers, hold them to account and improve services. We are just about to complete the final year of the Comic Relief three-year funded project although OxFSN will continue to support and raise the profile of older family carers in everything they do.

Better Together Event

Our main event for the third year of the project was the first ever 'Better Together' Event held on the 8th November at the Kassam Stadium which saw the coming together of 120 individuals including family carers, key professionals from adult and children's health and social care, local charities and support providers. The event came about as a result of OxFSN been contacted by family carers about a number of key concerns they were dealing with.

The event gave family carers and professionals the opportunity to sit round the table to talk about 'What was and was not working' in these areas as well as provide suggestions on 'what could be done to make things better'. There was lots of lively discussion and at the end of the event we collated all the information which was fed back to all the professionals who attended. Seven months later we asked them to let us know what changes they had made as a result of hearing what family carers had to say. Their response can be read [here](#).

Life Long Caring



The Embolden project has enabled us to identify many older family carers – some who are also lifelong carers. We wanted to raise the profile of some of these individuals and worked with Sara Ryan to produce a photography project '[Life Long Caring](#)' which is now been shown around the county including County Hall, Cornerstone – Didcot, The Beacon - Wantage, The Churchill and several libraries.

The project was also featured in [The Guardian](#) during Carers Week.

Over the past three years we have also produced two films '[What Will happen](#)' and "[Peace of Mind](#)" both of which focus on two important issues that older family carers raised as concerns – what will happen to their family member when they are no longer around and Supported living. We are well aware that we often only hear through the media of the negative support that our family members get. However, at OxFSN we do see very good examples of great care and it is important that families are aware that with good planning and working with the right people it is possible to put in place good support.

Behind the scenes - What have we been doing?

We have been working hard to ensure that the voices and needs of older family carers are represented and heard across both health and adult social care. Gail Hanrahan is co-chair of The Transforming Care Partnership Board and attends the Oxford Health Learning Disability Board. She also met quarterly with Kate Terroni – something she hopes to continue with the new Head of Adult Social Care, Stephen Chandler who will join OCC in September. OxFSN also has representatives on the Co-Production Board, Carers Voice and is involved with many of the current OCC consultations.

This has enabled us to raise the profile of older family carers and the need for any future planning to include their family member. Information we have collected has been used by the County Council to help inform its housing strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which looks at population trends. We are also responding to consultations – in particular Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) which we know causes a lot of concerns for all family carers supporting an adult.

**If you have any burning issues you want us to raise at these meetings please
get in touch with Gail: Tel 07891 734987 or E-mail: Gail.Hanrahan@oxfsn.org.uk**

Save The Date

Despite the funding for Embolden coming to an end, we do have two events planned for the remaining year.

First is the **Embolden Legacy Event** where we will present our findings from the last three years and more importantly talk about how OxFSN are going to continue to move the project forward.

This will be held at the **Didcot Civic Centre** in the Lady Grove Room on **Wednesday 23rd October** from **10 am – 3.00 pm** and we hope to see as many of you as possible there.

The first **Better Together** Event received a lot of positive feedback (as well as some constructive criticism) and was overall a very successful event. So much so, we plan to do a second event later in the year.



Date:	Thursday 7 th November 2019
Location:	The Main Hall, Didcot Civic Centre
Time:	10.00 am – 3.00 pm

More detailed information on both events will be sent out later in the summer.

Social Media

If you are a social media user please visit the OxFSN website or our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/OxFSN) page as we are continually producing resources that you may find helpful including information on [The Care Act](#), Discretionary Trusts, [Disability Related Expenditure](#) and a [Planning For the Future](#) Check List. If you prefer a hardcopy please do get in contact with Kathy on 07786 731634 or Kathy.liddell@oxfsn.org.uk

Thank you

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you to all the older family carers who supported us and made the Embolden Project possible by coming to our events, answering all our questions and willingly posing for us (often more than once) when we asked. You have helped raise the profile of family carers probably more than you will ever know.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank those families who through the duration of the Embolden Project lost a family member but who still, even in their grief continued to support us.

Gail, Angeli and Kathy