

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO THE CALL FOR VIEWS TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL RESIDENTIAL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM IN OXFORDSHIRE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Oxfordshire County Council is at the first stage of exploring the development of an educational residential provision for children and young people with autism. An 'invest to save' project is proposed in the Council's Business Strategy 2011 with the aim of reducing the need to place children a long way from their families.

This is a significant, long term, project for Oxfordshire and to inform the development of this project, Oxfordshire County Council issued a call for views to:

- parents/carers of children with autism (or a similar profile of educational/functional needs) who are currently at, or have recently left, schools or colleges outside Oxfordshire
- children and young people with autism (or a similar profile of educational/functional needs) who are currently at, or have recently left, schools or colleges outside Oxfordshire
- professionals and providers from education, health, social care and other areas, representative bodies and those from the voluntary sector.

We asked questions on key areas such as the need for an educational residential provision in the county, experiences of a child or young person going to an out of county provision and possible target and age groups for the new provision.

The consultation ran from 7 to 28 February 2011, and the responses will help to shape the development of the educational residential provision and ensure that the proposals we put forward build on the experience and expertise of families and those supporting them.

In the meantime, we are pleased to have received 42 responses to the call for views consultation, and that:

- 38% of the responses came from parents/carers of children with autism
- 7% of the responses came from children/young people with autism
- 55% of the responses came from professionals and providers from education, health, social care and other areas, representative bodies and those from the voluntary sector

This document sets out who responded to the call for views and the points raised in response to the questions we asked among the three groups:

2. QUESTIONS ASKED TO PARENT/CARERS

1. To what extent they think an educational residential provision is needed for children with ASC in Oxfordshire?
2. How old was their child when he/she moved to a school/college outside of Oxfordshire?
3. How far away is/was their child? (journey time)
4. What led to the child being placed in an out of county residential provision?
5. What was the impact on the family and how did they keep in regular contact with the child?
6. What has not worked well for the child in the out of county residential placement?
7. What has worked well for the child in the out of county placement?
8. If they were able to design the perfect provision or services in Oxfordshire for their child, what would it be like?
9. Other comments

3. QUESTIONS ASKED TO CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

1. To what extent they think an educational residential provision is needed for children with ASC in Oxfordshire?
2. What has worked well in the school or college?
3. What has not worked so well in the school or college?
4. If they were able to design the perfect school or college in Oxfordshire, what would it be like?
5. Other comments

4. QUESTIONS ASKED TO PROFESSIONALS/PROVIDERS

1. To what extent they think an educational residential provision is needed for children with ASC in Oxfordshire?
2. Experiences or knowledge of a child or young person going to an out of county provision, if they think it could have been prevented, and if so, which services and at what age would these have made a difference?
3. If they were able to design the perfect provision or services to prevent the need for out of county placements, what would it be like?
4. What are the characteristics of the group or groups that the provision should target?
5. What age range would it cover?
6. Other comments

5. RESPONDENTS

The report shows a breakdown of the respondent groups and their responses collated in to themes for each of the questions above.

Total responses to call for views: 42

Respondent group	Number of responses	
Parents and carers	16	38%
Children and young people	3	7%
Professionals and providers	23	55%
Total:	42	100%

6. ANALYSIS FROM PARENT/CARERS ¹

Question 1: *To what extent do you think that an educational residential provision is needed for children with ASC in Oxfordshire?*

There were 16 responses to this question.

Response options	Number of responses	
Strongly Agree	14	88%
Agree	1	6%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	1	6%

Question 2: *How old was your child when he/she moved to a school/college outside of Oxfordshire?*

There were 12 responses to this question.

Response	Number of responses	
20 years	1	8%
16 years	5	42%
14 years	1	8 %
13 years	1	8 %
11 years	3	25%
5 years	1	8%

¹ Note that four of the 14 parents responded to a professional/provider survey as oppose to a parent/carer survey. The questions in the surveys were slightly different, hence why the number of responses to each question is different. The responses have been incorporated in the analysis where applicable.

Question 3: How far away is/was your child? (journey time)

There were 11 responses to this question.

Response	Number of responses	
1 hour +	5	46%
2 hours +	3	27%
3 hours +	3	27%

Question 4: What led to your child being placed in an out of county residential provision?

There were 12 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 4	Number of responses	
No suitable provision available in the area to fit child's requirements	10	83%
Challenging violent behaviour, including threat to others and him/herself	5	41%
Exclusion from previous school/provision	3	25%
Family not being able to meet child's requirements	1	8%

Question 5: What was the impact on your family and how did you keep in regular contact with your child?Impact

There were 11 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 5	Number of responses	
Negative impact	9	81%
<u>Where specified:</u>		
1. Lack/loss of contact with the child due to placement being too far away and/or difficulties in visiting (3)		
2. Guilt (2)		
3. Cost implications for travel arrangements (2)		
4. Marriage break-up (1)		
5. The placement was not successful/did not continue (1)		

Positive impact	5	45%
<u>Where specified:</u>		
1. <i>Stress relief/ respite for family (3)</i>		
2. <i>Child has developed social skills/ improved behaviour (2)</i>		

Contact

There were 11 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 5	Number of responses	
Telephone	7	64%
<u>Where specified:</u>		
1. <i>'Weekly' (3)</i>		
2. <i>'Regularly' (2)</i>		
3. <i>'Every night' (1)</i>		
Parent/carer/family visit the provision	5	14%
<u>Where specified:</u>		
1. <i>Every fortnight (1)</i>		
2. <i>'Regularly' (3)</i>		
Child visit the family	5	45%
<u>Where specified:</u>		
1. <i>Once a fortnight (2)</i>		
2. <i>Once a month (1)</i>		
3. <i>Every 3 weeks (1)</i>		
4. <i>'Regularly (1)'</i>		
Feedback from the residential provision	2	18%
<u>Where specified:</u>		
1. <i>'Weekly' (2)</i>		

Question 6: *What things have worked well for your child in the out of county residential placement?*

There were 12 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 6	Number of responses	
Structured 24 hour curriculum that meets the child's requirements	9	75%
Structured support in day-to-day living /development of social skills, peer bonding, acceptance	7	58%
Safe, spacious environment	2	17%
Nothing worked well (placement ended)	1	8%

Question 7: *What things have not gone so well for you child in the out of county placement?*

There were 11 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 7	Number of responses	
Lack of contact; separation from family, friends and local community	5	45%
Long distance	4	36%
<i>Travel expenses (2)</i>		
The care/ unit	2	18%
Everything has worked well	2	18%
No transition period between placement and service for autism	1	9%

Question 8: *If you were able to design the perfect provision or services in Oxfordshire for your child what would it be like?*

There were 13 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 8	Number of responses	
A specialist autism educational unit <i>with</i> residential	11	85%
Support with social activities and sport hobbies	7	54%
Support with life learning skills	6	46%
Small units rather than large	4	31%

complex		
Spacious, safe and quiet location	4	31%
Therapy services	3	23%
Ad-hoc respite provision	3	23%
A specialist autism educational unit <i>with no</i> residential	1	8%
Link with mainstream and specialists schools /colleges	1	8%

7. ANALYSIS FROM CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

Question 1: Do you think that a residential school or college is needed in Oxfordshire for children with autism or similar needs?

There were two responses to this question.

Response options	Number of responses	
Strongly Agree	2	100%
Agree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Question 2: What things have gone well for you in your school or college?

There was 1 response to this question:

“Work, people”

Question 3: What things have not gone so well?

There were no responses to this question.

Question 4: If you were able to design the perfect school or college to help you do as well as possible what would it be like?

There was 1 response to this question:

“Closer to Oxford”

8. ANALYSIS FROM PROFESSIONALS/PROVIDERS

Question 1: *To what extent do you think that an educational residential provision is needed for children with ASC in Oxfordshire?*

There were 23 responses to this question.

Response options	Number of responses	
Strongly Agree	19	83%
Agree	4	17%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Question 2: *If you have had experience or knowledge of a child or young person going to an out of county provision (including specialist colleges) do you think this could have been prevented, and if so, which services and at what age would these have made a difference?*

There were 21 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes. The responses have been broken down in to two sections.

Could the placement have been prevented?

There were 11 responses explicitly to this question.

Responses identified in response to question 2	Number of responses	
Yes <i>Only if specialist services had been available in the county (6)</i>	6	54%
No	5	45%

Which services and at what age would these have made a difference?

There were 15 responses explicitly to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 2	Number of responses	
By providing local specialist provision <i>In earlier years (5)</i>	10	67%
By having a local college/residential provision post	5	33%

16		
By working with young people coming through transition	4	27%
By providing more respite for families	4	27%

Question 3: If you were able to design the perfect provision or services to prevent the need for out of county placements what would it be like?

There were 24 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 3	Number of responses	
A specialist autism educational unit <i>with</i> residential <i>Accommodation separate from education part (2)</i>	11	46%
Offer ad-hoc respite provision	10	42%
Support with life learning skills	7	29%
Offer therapy services	6	25%
Offer apprenticeships/ qualifications/ work opportunities	5	21%
Link with local community	5	21%
Spacious, safe and quiet location	5	21%
Offer parents support groups	3	12%
Support with social activities and sport hobbies	2	8%
Small units rather than large complex	2	8%
Offer outreach	2	8%
Link with mainstream and specialists schools /college	2	8%

Question 4: What are the characteristics of the group or groups that the provision should target?

There were 23 responses to this question, some covering multiple themes.

Response themes identified in response to question 4	Number of responses	
Children/yp with challenging behaviour	9	39%
Children/yp with high functioning Autism	5	22%
Children/yp with Asperger's Syndrome (4)	4	17%

<i>High functioning (3)</i>		
Children/yp unable to access education in mainstream schools	4	17%
Children/yp who are severely disabled / have complex needs	3	13%
Children/yp with severe learning difficulties (SLD)	3	13%
Children/ yp with sensory difficulties	2	9%
Children/ yp with moderate learning difficulties (MLD)	2	9%

Question 5: *What age range would it cover?*

There were 21 responses to this question. Where there has been more than one consistent response this has been coded in to age groups and the rest is reported individually.

Response themes identified in response to question 5	Number of responses	
Age 11-19	3	N/A
Age 16-25	2	N/A
Other	16	N/A
<i>Age 2-19</i>		
<i>Age 3-24</i>		
<i>Age range 8+</i>		
<i>Primary</i>		
<i>Age 11-20, with respite provision for those between 7 and 11 years</i>		
<i>Upper juniors and seniors</i>		
<i>Age 14-18</i>		
<i>Age 14-25</i>		
<i>Age 14-19</i>		
<i>Foundation to 16+</i>		
<i>Age 16-23</i>		
<i>Post 16</i>		
<i>Up to 18</i>		
<i>18+</i>		
<i>Age 19-25</i>		
<i>All ages</i>		

9. SUMMARY

15 out of 16 parents/carers agreed or strongly agreed to the proposal, 2 (out of 2) young people and 23 (out of 23) professionals or providers also agreed or strongly agreed.

In terms of the aspiration for the provision, parents/carers, professionals and providers identified the following features:

- Structured 24 hour curriculum that meets the child's requirements
- Structured support in day-to-day living /development of social skills, peer bonding, acceptance
- Support with social activities, sport and hobbies
- Support with life learning skills
- Small units rather than large complex
- Spacious, safe and quiet location
- Offer therapy services
- Ad-hoc respite provision
- Offer apprenticeships/ qualifications/ work opportunities
- Link with mainstream and specialists schools /colleges
- Links with the local community
- Offer parents support groups
- Offer outreach

Groups that the provision should support:

- Children and young people with challenging behaviour
- Children and young people with high functioning Autism and asperger's syndrome
- Children and young people with severe learning difficulties (SLD)
- Children and young people who are severely disabled / have complex needs
- Ability to accommodate those with sensory difficulties and moderate learning difficulties (MLD)

The age range that the provision should cater for varied, commencing from primary, secondary or post 16 and ending at 18/19/20 or 25.