



Inspiring, informing and involving families of people with learning disabilities



ANNUAL REPORT and ACCOUNTS
1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Oxfordshire Family Support Network

The Directors present their annual report and financial statements for the year to 31st March 2024.

Report of the Directors

Introduction

This is the Thirteenth Annual Report of Oxfordshire Family Support Network. Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN) is a unique user-led organisation based in Oxfordshire, run by and for family carers of people with a learning disability. We provide independent information, advice and support by families for families of people with a learning disability. Set up by family carers who wanted to share their experience and knowledge to help others in the same situation, we strive to improve lives of people with learning disabilities and their families. We are currently managed by a board of six trustees, of whom four are family carers of people with a learning disability. All of the individuals who carry out work on behalf of OxFSN are family carers.

OxFSN is, to our knowledge, the only charity of its kind in the country. Everyone who works with us is a family carer of someone with a learning disability. Whilst we work directly with family carers, our support gives them the information and help they need to advocate for their loved one – with the aim of driving better services for people with learning disabilities. We also help to bring family carers together, enabling peer support and reducing isolation.

OxFSN brings a voice to family carers, representing them at the highest level locally and ensuring their reality is recognised by health and social care services.

As a user led organisation, we are able to build trust with families and act as a bridge to statutory services and professionals, helping to drive positive engagement. Our small team are all fully trained and we work to an 'expert by experience' model, with experienced family carers training to become members of our staff team.

Our support aims to support family carers, not only to ensure their knowledge of systems, processes and rights – but to improve confidence, reduce anxiety and help people feel more able to self-manage.

Highlights this year...

From April 2023 to March 2024

OxFSN have

227



connected with
227 family carers
of which 137 were
new to OxFSN

315



provided 315
hours of family
support

11



run 11 events
attended by 195
family carers

162



worked with 162
professionals

525



attended 525
hours of meetings

28



delivered 28
hours of training

Family Support

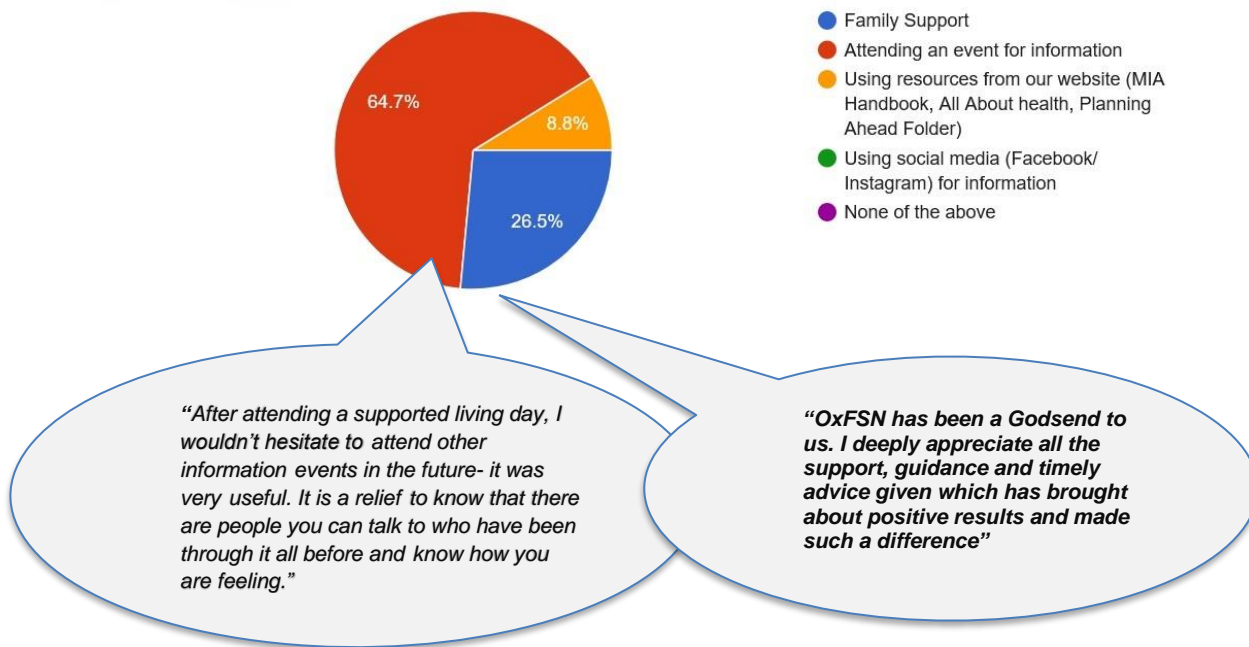
Our family support service covers a range of services, from telephone, email and face to face support to information events and workshops. We supported 227 family carers directly this year and provided 315 hours of support.

Having the Moving into Adulthood Handbook to refer families to has helped enormously as all the information families need in adulthood is usually there. This has reduced the time spent talking family carers through information. Much of our family support has been through our events and the resources we have developed....

Impact: Survey Results -2023-2024

Our information events proved to be really popular!

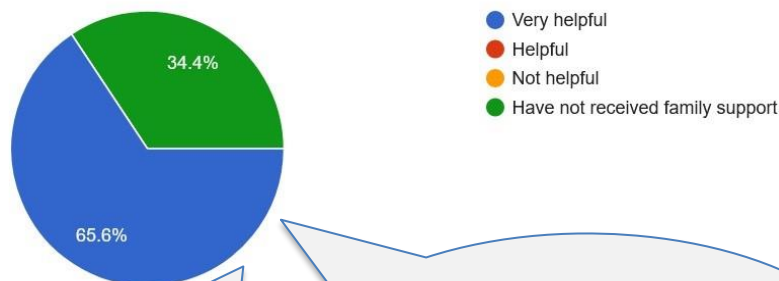
1. What was the reason for you connecting with OxFSN



"It makes such a difference knowing that there are people who understand our situation and can give us advice"

Those that received family support told us they found it 'very helpful'

2. If you received family support, was it

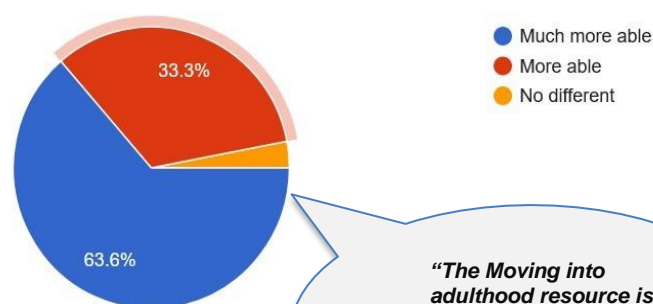


OxFSN is a total lifeline. There is nowhere to go to find joined up information on all the topics facing families with a young person with additional needs. OxFSN knows what families need, what the worries are and how best to help as they have all been there and done it themselves. I cannot praise the work of OxFSN highly enough.

"I literally have nowhere else to go as a parent for support and information about managing the social care and legal responsibilities I have as a carer and appointee for my adult child. No other Oxfordshire based organisation offers this specific and ongoing support for learning disability"

Almost 96% of families found they were more able to manage their situation with the support they received from us

3. Do you/Did you feel more able to manage your situation with the support or information you received?



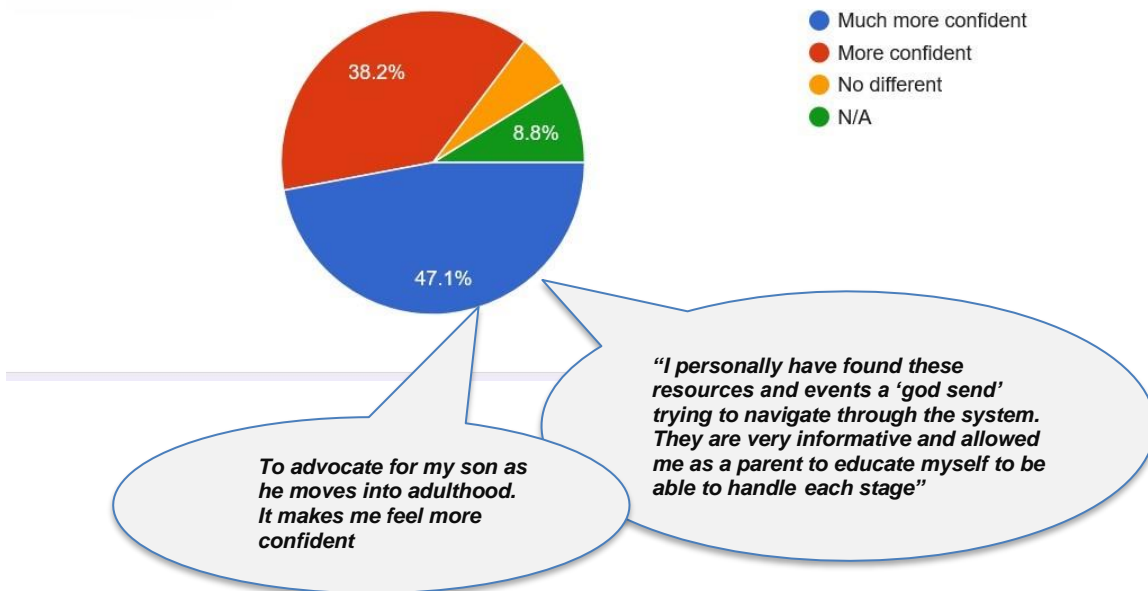
"There is a listening, understanding ear. The experienced staff are great. They gave us very practical advice. We talked over issues, attended, meetings, went to workshops and have used the excellent online advice and paperwork that they have put together. They are a hugely supportive and welcoming group of people with a mass of knowledge and experience. I thank them wholeheartedly"

"The Moving into adulthood resource is just like a bible - so much information structured in the most helpful way."

"A sure and steady hand guiding us through the complications of adult social care. In effect an essential service for people who otherwise feel abandoned."

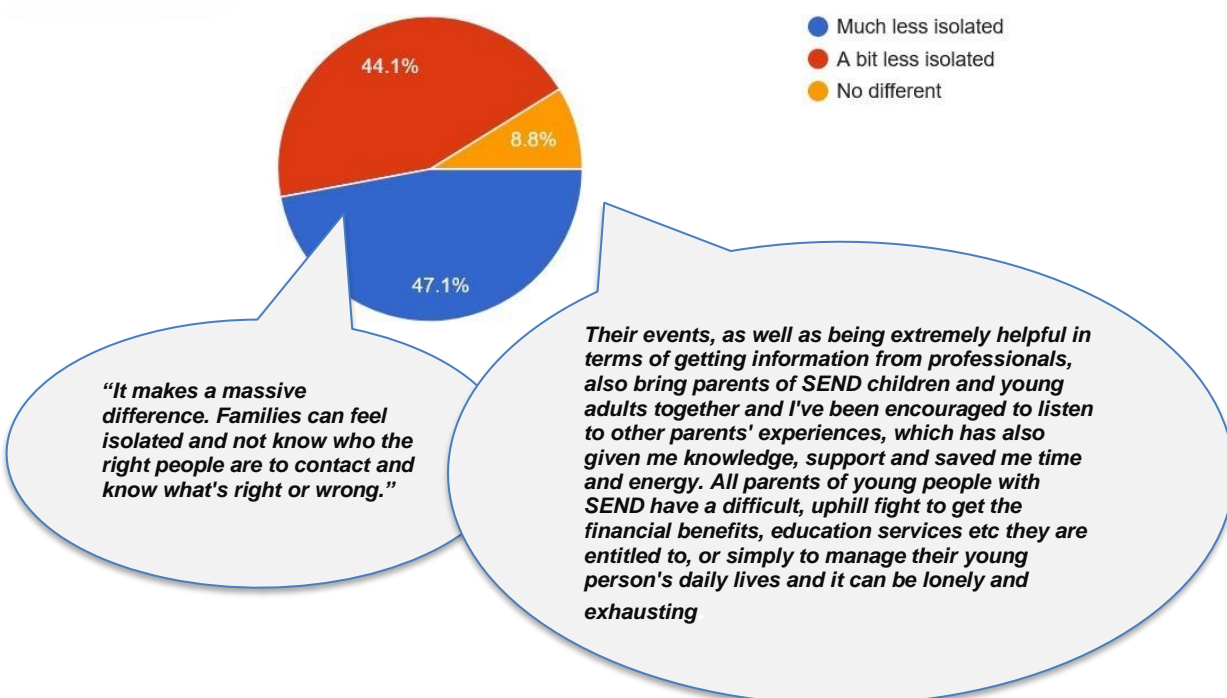
85% of family carers felt more confident with managing their situation and navigating the system with our help

4. If you received family support, attended an information event or used the resources from the OxFSN website did you feel more confident in managing your situation and navigating the system?



91% told us they felt less isolated as a result of being in contact with us

5. We recognise that supporting someone with a learning disability and/or autism can sometimes feel isolating. Did you feel less isolated as a result of receiving support or attending an event with other family carers in a similar situation?



Embolden 2



Embolden is our older carers project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). Our funding for this project runs from September to the end of August so reporting times and collection of information is different from our financial year. However, at the end of this financial year we were halfway through the project and had already exceed the number of families we had aimed to support.

We have supported 294 family carers across the project so far. Our target was 125.

In 2023-24 we supported 23 families in the Teir 3 group, this is generally the older age range, parents in their late 70's, their 80's or their 90's and those most needing intensive support. (the original target was 12). These families have been supported to plan ahead for a time they are no longer able to support their relatives. It involves working face-face with families, getting to know them and their individual circumstances and supporting them to plan ahead in a Person-Centred way.

We held events both online and face to face.

- **Maintaining friendships and getting a social life**
- **Q&A with Adult Social Care**
- **Supported living (large face-face event)**
- **Planning for supported Living PCP course (2 sessions)**
- **Coffee & Chat sessions across the county**



We have developed a practical '**Planning Ahead – All About Me Folder**' to help family carers pull together all the key information about their relative. Depending on where they are at in their planning journey and the current living circumstances of their relative, the folder can be used in different ways.

"We really appreciate the special binder full of helpful forms and guidance. Really wonderful idea to put it all in a binder. All of Kathy's support has been gold dust."

- It can provide key information to someone who has to step in to provide support in an emergency if the person is still living at home.
- For families starting to plan ahead for where their relative may live in the future, it will provide the tools to help them think about where that may be and what level of support they may need.
- If their relative is already in supported living, it can include information that a relative or trusted other will need to know if they become the main contact.

Strategic Partnership with OCC Adult Social Care

Our close working relationship with Adult Social Care was again a major benefit this year and enabled us to involve families in coproduction and to quickly respond and feedback issues that affect families. *Here's what we've been doing...*

Overview of Activities in 2023/24

Attendance at Board meetings and strategy groups –

- The Learning and Autism Improvement Board
- The SEND Improvement Board
- Co Production Board
- VAM - Vulnerable Adults Mortality Subgroup (OASB)
- Carers Strategy Group (OCC)
- Building the Right Support Group – Complex Needs Sub- Group
Safe space
Supporting Living Sub Group
- Physical Health Strategy Group
- KIT (keeping in touch) meetings with SEND Team
- Integrated SEND Strategy Board

Commissioning:

Adult Respite services re-commissioning – involving families

- Engagement with families, carers and users of the service August 2023
- short survey sent out to families over a weekend. December 2023
- 1 face to face session and 1 online session held by OCC. January 2024
- 2 online sessions held in the first few days of January.

We expressed concern that the engagement sessions had been conducted with extremely limited (1-2 days) notice, the survey had only been open to families and carers for 3 days and

this severely impacted the feedback received from families and did not inform the decisions that were required to be made for this tender process. OCC revised the tender process in January 2024 and an Adult Respite Working Group was set up to work through this process.

- February 2024 – OxFSN Engagement Day held with families, carers, adults who use the service, representatives from Social Care, Brandon Trust, Shared Lives and Ruby Sweetman – OCC Commissioner.



A follow up report produced to inform specification for Tender.

Supported Living Tender

- Supporting families to be part of the tender process
- Meetings with families, meetings with procurement and OCC Team
- Supporting families at Evaluation sessions

Events, Workshops and Training:

- Better Together event March 2024 (with OXPCF)
- Working with Families Training

Financial Charging work, and engagement workshop



27 people attended the workshop, this included 18 family carers, professionals from OCC's Financial Assessment team, Victoria Baran - Deputy Director of Adult Social Care and Sam Harper - Interim Area Service Manager. The session was facilitated by Gail Hanrahan and Kathy Liddell from OxFSN. The aim of the workshop was to look at what was working and not working for family carers and to come up with some suggestions and solutions together to improve the process and their experience of it.



We followed this up with a detailed feedback report, which included feedback received from families via a survey and those who emailed us with their experiences. We sent to OCC with suggestions for future work needed.

Other Activities: Online Self-Assessment development – We worked with Marcia Bowden on the development of Oxfordshire's Self- Assessment Online information and system. Sense checking from a family perspective the language and the clarity of the wording and process for people using this system.

We responded to social workers who contacted us with issues related to families and were able to advise and provide signposting to resources, such as our Moving into Adulthood Handbook or our Embolden project for older carers. We raised issues with Adult Social Care and SEND teams impacting families.

All About Health – Easy Read website

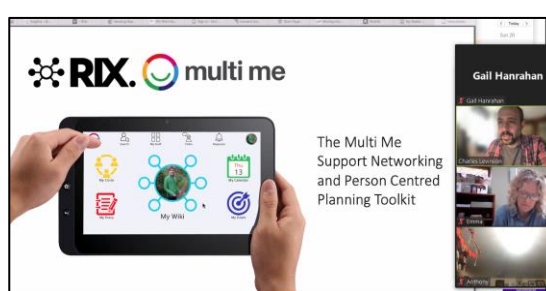
In November we were really pleased to launch our online health resource - All about Health.

We have worked hard to bring together locally and nationally available easy read healthcare information for people with a learning disability, their families, carers, professionals, and anyone who supports them. **Easy to find, easy to read and all in one place.** We would also like to encourage services to have an [All About Health | \(oxfsn.org.uk\)](https://allabouthealth.oxfsn.org.uk) link on their websites/resource libraries to signpost for support and easy access.

The regional information is local to the BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West) ICB area. However, disappointingly, funding from the ICB (Integrated Care Board) has not been forthcoming for ongoing maintenance and continuing to update the website. We are currently looking at other funding sources.



Multi-Me Training Course



We also held our 2nd Multi Me wiki training course with Charlie Levinson from Multi-Me. The final days completing in this financial year.

This time the course was held completely online with 12 participants. They were able to share and learn as they went through each session. Some of the participants had already

undertaken our Person Centred Planning Course the previous years and we had great support from two parents who are active users. Thanks to Frances Steep and Lisa Perry for sharing their experiences and their support to other family carers.

Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum (OXPCF)



OxFSN continue to host and support the parent carer forum in Oxfordshire. Funding for this work is available annually from the Department for Education (DfE) via Contact.

Our Joint Facebook group 'The Oxfordshire SEND Room' now has over 2.2K members and continues to be a source of information and advice, by parents for parents of SEND children and young people.

The Forum has gone from strength to strength this year and have received further funding from OCC to enable them to participate better in meetings and allow parent carers to be paid for their time and expenses. This has also allowed new members to join them in paid roles, while the work of the steering group remains a volunteer role. This will hopefully strengthen and help sustain the forum in future.

We'd like to take this opportunity once again to thank the forum steering group, who are all parent volunteers, for their hard work in ensuring that the voices of parent carers remains strong in Oxfordshire.

Looking Ahead - The Future

Funding & Future Work & Opportunities:

Funding for small charities like ours is always a challenge. There is a pressing need to secure longer term funding for our family support. Bids to potential funders are in progress. In the meantime, we are having to limit access to this service to those who strictly fit our criteria and who are in dire need of our help, unless they fit within our older carers age group (60+).

Whilst we have a funding agreement to work with Oxfordshire County Council, we currently receive nothing from Health Services or the ICB (Integrated Care Board) We will be unable to continue to undertake work if we don't receive payment for our time and expertise if we are asked to be involved.

Embolden is now in its final year. We have plans for an end of year conference next year, to share what we've learned and look at what needs to happen next. We are currently looking at future funding to ensure this vital work continues.

Funding is being sought to strengthen our support to younger families, using the same model of support we have used in Embolden and to develop more guides and resources online such as a handbook for families from birth to 16 in a similar format similar to the Moving into Adulthood Handbook.

And finally –

A huge thank you to everyone who has worked with us and supported us over the last year. In an increasingly challenging, ever-changing health, education and social care system there are always going to be new opportunities for our involvement. We need to make even more sure than ever before that the design and delivery of services is coproduced with family carers, alongside people with learning disabilities. We need to strive to try and uncomplicate an increasingly complex system and help families navigate it. We continue to work with all our partners to ensure this happens and as always take our lead from the families we support.

Thanks to our Funders for their support this year and to our amazing family carers for their generous donations and fundraising on our behalf



Finance report for the year ending 31 March 2024

Summary

OxFSN received total income for the year 23/24 of £138,213 (prior year £128,251) less expenditure of £132,026 (prior year £113,157) leading to a surplus of £6,186 (prior year had £15,095 surplus).

The bank balance at year-end was £120,380 (prior year £124,604).

Income and Expenditure Account

We are pleased that income was higher than the prior year, whilst expenditure stayed relatively stable; income up by 7.7% and expenditure up by 16.5%; generating a surplus of £6,186. Income and expenditure have remained stable in the last two years.

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2024				
	Unrestricted Funds	Current Year Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Year Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Ordinary activities	8,372	129,841	138,213	128,251
Other activities	-	-	-	-
Total income	8,372	129,841	138,213	128,251
Expenditure	2,185	129,841	132,026	113,157
Retained surplus	6,186	-	6,186	15,095

Balance Sheet

Cash at bank £120,380. Accruals and deferred income (income received in advance) £50,699. Total net assets were increased by £6,186 (the retained surplus for the year) to £58,865.

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024		
<u>Current assets</u>		
Cash at bank	120,380	124,604
Debtors, prepayments & accrued income	457	3,135
Total current assets	120,837	127,739
<u>Current liabilities</u>		
Accounts payable	11,274	13,716
Accruals & deferred income	50,699	61,344
Total current liabilities	61,973	75,060
Net current and total assets	58,865	52,679
<u>Represented by</u>		
Unrestricted funds	58,865	52,679
Restricted funds	-	-
Total funds	58,865	52,679

Reserves

Unrestricted funds: a general fund was built in prior years to cover 12 months employment costs. Steps were taken to rebuild the fund during the year. £6,186 was added in the year to the fund and the balance now stands at £58,865. This balance is now above the informal target of £42,000.

Restricted funds: restricted grants are managed so as to match expenditure with income in the financial year.

Reserves for the Year Ended 31 March 2024				
	B/fwd 1 Apr 2023	In year	Transfers	C/fwd 31 Mar 2024
	£	£	£	£
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>				
Total	52,679	6,186	-	58,865
<u>Restricted funds</u>				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-
Total Funds	52,679	6,186	-	58,865

Accounting Policies

OxFSN follows UK generally accepted accounting practice (UKGAAP). The particular policies adopted are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts.

1. Accounting convention
These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.
2. Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty. In the application of the Company's accounting policies, management is required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates and the estimates and underlying assumptions are continually reviewed. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised, in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.
3. Critical judgements in applying accounting policies The following are the critical judgements, apart from those involving estimations (see below) that management has made in the process of applying the Company's accounting policies and that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements
 - 3.1 Accounting for Accruals. Various methods are used for calculating different types of accrual. They include:-
 - i. Trend analysis
 - ii. Judgement of directors
 - iii. Supplier statements
 - iv. Formulaic approach based on historical cost information
4. Accounting for Doubtful Debts - Impairment of receivables
OxFSN is required to judge when there is sufficient evidence to impair individual receivables. It does this based on the age and status of the receivables.
5. Revenue
Revenue in respect of services provided is recognised when, and to the extent that, performance occurs, and is measured at the fair value of the consideration receivable. Where income is received for a specific activity that is to be delivered in the following year, that income is deferred.

6. Other expenses
Other operating expenses are recognised when, and to the extent that, the goods or services have been received. They are measured at the fair value of the consideration payable.
7. Property, plant and equipment
Recognition property, plant and equipment is capitalised if:
- it is held for use in delivering services or for administrative purposes;
 - it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to, or service potential will be supplied to OxFSN;
 - it is expected to be used for more than one financial year;
 - the cost of the item can be measured reliably; and
 - the item has cost of at least £5,000.
- Where a large asset, for example a building, includes a number of components with significantly different asset lives, the components are treated as separate assets and depreciated over their own useful economic lives.
8. Grants
Revenue grants are treated as deferred income initially and credited to income to match the expenditure to which they relate.
9. Cash and cash equivalents. Cash is cash in hand and deposits with any financial institution repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in 3 months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. In the Balance Sheet, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and that form an integral part of OxFSN's cash management.
10. Provisions are recognised when the Company has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable that the Company will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period, taking into account the risks and uncertainties.
11. Contingencies
A contingent liability is a possible obligation that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the trust, or a present obligation that is not recognised because it is not probable that a payment will be required to settle the obligation or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured sufficiently reliably. A contingent liability is disclosed unless the possibility of a payment is remote.

A contingent asset is a possible asset that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the trust. A contingent asset is disclosed where an inflow of economic benefits is probable.

12. Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the goods or services have been received. Financial liabilities are de-recognised when the liability has been discharged, that is, the liability has been paid or has expired.

Independent examiner's report

Report to the trustees of Oxfordshire Family Support Network Limited on Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. The charity's gross income does not exceed £250,000.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section ,145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Crabb'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Peter' and the last name 'Crabb' clearly distinguishable.

Peter Crabb. Independent Examiner

22nd September 2024

Charity name	Oxfordshire Family Support Network
Charity registration number	1143367
Company registration number	7583197
Registered Office	30 Tamar Way, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7QH Oxon
Directors and Trustees	Yvonne Cox - Chairman Jan Roast Charmian Hearne Jessica Patton Ms Kathleen Rist
Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc, Banbury,
Independent examiner	Peter Crabb, 22 Murcot Road, Upper Arcott, Oxon. OX25 1QH
Solicitor	Cooperatives UK, Hanover Street, Manchester. M60 0AS

