

**Oxfordshire County Council
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**John Jackson, Director of
Adult Social Services**

31st May 2016

Carol Moore
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Dear Carol,

Oxfordshire County Council response to the seAP report on ‘Gypsy and Traveller Community experiences of healthcare in Oxfordshire’

Thank you for your letter on 3rd May 2016 with the above report attached. We were very pleased that our Gypsy and Traveller Service worked with seAp to help carry out the research for this report through facilitating their contact with travellers in the community.

Oxfordshire County Council provide services specifically for the gypsy and traveller community in Oxfordshire, in addition to services aimed at all children, adults and families.

The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Gypsy and Traveller Service manage six Oxfordshire County Council owned permanent sites and the five Buckinghamshire County owned permanent sites. There are a number of private sites in Oxfordshire, however this service has little involvement with private sites. The service also attends unauthorised encampments across both counties.

The service also conducts consultation and negotiations between the traveller community and the settled community.

Other services provided by Oxfordshire County Council include:

- A dedicated Education Inclusion Officer (3 days per week) at present supporting Gypsy and Traveller families and working in partnership with schools in Oxfordshire.
- Early Intervention Children’s Centres and hubs have identified specific staff to work with local sites on an outreach basis, but staff also work with other children and families in the community.
- Adult and Children’s Social Care Services.

- The local authority and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group have a section 75 agreement in place which allows the pooling of budgets to commission and provide mental health services across the county. Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy prioritises mental health services and County Council mental health social workers work jointly with the commissioned providers, Oxford Health, and voluntary partners to provide a comprehensive service. All mental health services are available to gypsy and traveller families via referral and self-referral.
- Oxfordshire Public Health is a team of professionals whose role is to improve and protect the health of local residents and promote a healthier Oxfordshire.

Our response to Key Findings and Recommendations in relation to services provided by Oxfordshire County Council are below.

Finding 4

There was a worry that the proposed closure of the Children’s Centre in Chipping Norton and the subsequent withdrawal of the outreach worker who regularly visits them would have a huge impact on the families living on the Beeches site, Chadlington.

Plans to remodel early intervention provision, which includes Children’s Centres, and develop an integrated service with Children’s Social Care are currently being progressed. A new integrated service which will be implemented from early 2017 will deliver a targeted service for vulnerable 0-19 year olds (up to 25 years if children have additional needs) and their families. This will involve the integration of services currently provided by Children’s Centres, Early Intervention Hubs and Children’s Social Care. The new service will also include a Locality and Community Support Service, which will support universal services, including health services, to identify children at risk and put support in place.

The new service will deliver support and evidence-based group programmes to children and families from 18 locations across Oxfordshire. These will include eight main children and family centres, two shared sites, one in East Oxford, which will act as an additional base for Blackbird Leys, and one in East Street Banbury, which will act as an additional site to Banbury Children and Family Centre. There will also be eight outreach centres which will provide Council run outreach activities to children and families. One of the outreach centres will be the ACE Children’s Centre in Chipping Norton.

In addition, the service will retain a mobile bus to deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community, as it is recognised these communities are less likely to attend the main centres. A proposal setting out how the mobile bus can be used to best effect is currently being developed, however a key element will be ensuring that support continues to be provided to the traveller community.

Finding 7

The travellers were concerned over the lack of visits from, and regular appointments with, health visitors.

From October 2015, the Public Health Team in Oxfordshire County Council took over responsibility for commissioning the Health Visiting Service from the NHS Area Team. The Health Visiting Service is a universal service that delivers the Healthy Child Programme for babies and children aged 0-5. There are five mandated health and development checks that are offered to all children aged 0-5, which include:

- Antenatal health promoting visit (28-32)weeks pregnant
- New baby review (within 10-14 days of birth)
- 6-8 week review
- 1 year assessment
- 2-2.5 year review.

Health visitors are notified of new births and families moving into Oxfordshire through the Midwifery service and/or GP Practice.

Any concerns from travellers that they are not being offered these checks, or other support, eg for children aged 0-5 with special needs, should be taken up with the GP practice where they are registered, who will ensure that the relevant health visiting team is made aware and can follow up with the individuals, or contact Oxford Health [Children and Young People Health visiting - Children and Young People](#)

In January 2016, Oxford Health Foundation Trust had a CQC inspection which rated the Children and Young Peoples Directorate, which includes the Health Visitor service, as Outstanding, one parent stated that “*she, the health visitor, understands my cultural differences*”.

We would like to make the following comments in response to the recommendations:-

1) Outreach Keyworker

We understand that there is a current Health Advocate employed by Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OHFT) with a role to work with Gypsy and Traveller communities across the county. Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Gypsy and Traveller Service agree that it can be difficult arranging welfare assessments to be completed when travellers arrive in the county and it can be difficult for travellers to access services when they first arrive. They suggest the Health Advocate could assist with this, but also state that the numbers of unauthorised encampments are low. Team members do signpost residents at the County Council site to contacts for both health services as well as county services, but do not provide this service on private sites. The team also facilitates a regular meeting of practitioners involved in supporting travellers in order to share information and identify issues and includes representatives of Adult Social Care, Children Education and Families and health services (including the Health Advocate).

2. Making GP Practices more accessible

We would support all measures that make GP practices more accessible and understand that the Health Advocate role employed by Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OHFT) provides support to the gypsy and traveller community around increasing access to primary care.

3. Dental services

The role of commissioning NHS dental services rests with NHS England, as such it is important that they ensure appropriate dental services are accessible to minority and vulnerable groups within our community. Oxfordshire County Council believes that every individual should have access to dental services, understand the causes of oral diseases and how to maintain good oral health. As commissioners of oral health promotion, Oxfordshire County Council works with all stakeholders to educate the population about oral health, sign post residents to local dental services and understand the importance of regular attendance with a dentist to maintain a healthy mouth.

4. Mental health issues

Oxfordshire social care mental health services work in partnership with Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OHFT) and commissioned voluntary providers in supporting service users from all communities in Oxfordshire, including the gypsy and travelling community. There is a comprehensive mental health service which will continue to work with all partners to increase access to mental health services.

OHFT and Oxfordshire County Council support working with the Health Advocate currently employed to work in the community to ensure that the needs (physical and mental health) of the travelling community are being recognised and that the community is supported to access appropriate services.

Yours sincerely,



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