

## **SEND Youth Forum visits Oxfordshire Museum and hears more young people's views across the county**

In June, members of the Oxfordshire SEND Youth Forum came together at the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock for an exciting session focused on learning, sharing views and influencing change.

Young people explored the museum's exhibits, including historical artefacts and dinosaur footprints. They also tested how easy it is to find information on the SEND Local Offer website, took part in a creative "Voice & Views" graffiti wall activity, and shared feedback on the developing Oxfordshire SEND Strategy and local partnership commitments.



The session showed how important it is to listen to young people and make sure their experiences help shape future services and support across Oxfordshire.

Through activities and discussions, young people told us what matters most to them, what helps them feel listened to, and how services can become more accessible and inclusive. Feedback on the SEND Local Offer was particularly positive, with members reporting that information was easy to find and navigate.

We were delighted to visit the Oxfordshire Museum and explore the exhibits and learning spaces available to young people. Forum members found the museum welcoming, engaging and accessible, and we were particularly impressed by the opportunities to learn about local history in an interactive way. As a result of our positive experience, the SEND Youth Forum intends to award the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock our "Seal of Approval", recognising organisations and venues that help children and young people with SEND feel included, welcomed and valued.



## **SEND Youth Forum Satellites Begin Their Journey**

We are also delighted to share that our eight new SEND Youth Forum Satellite groups are now beginning their work in schools and settings across Oxfordshire. We have asked all satellite groups to hold their first forum meeting before the end of the summer term, helping us hear from even more children and young people with SEND across the county.

Some of our satellite groups have already started gathering valuable feedback. At Meadowbrook College, students took part in a relaxed strawberry-picking trip designed to create a calm and comfortable environment where they could talk openly and share their views. Students told us that voice and participation look different for everyone and that they are more likely to speak up when they feel safe, respected and supported. The experience reinforced the importance of offering different ways

for young people to communicate, building trusted relationships and creating opportunities for feedback through meaningful, real-life experiences rather than formal meetings alone.

Feedback shared through Mabel Prichard School highlighted the importance of early support, clear information, accessible environments and inclusive opportunities. Families spoke about wanting more activities, community opportunities and support that helps children and young people participate fully in everyday life. They also emphasised the importance of strong communication, ensuring everyone understands what support is available and how to access it.

## What We Are Learning

Across both the SEND Youth Forum and our new satellite groups, a clear message is emerging: children and young people want choice in how they share their views, opportunities to participate in ways that work for them, and adults who listen, understand and take action. Young people tell us that feeling heard starts with trust, accessible environments and meaningful opportunities to get involved.

## What happens next?

The feedback gathered through the SEND Youth Forum and our new satellite groups will not stop here. Young people's views, experiences and ideas will be shared at the next SEND Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB), where senior leaders from education, health and social care come together to review progress and shape future improvements. This gives young people a direct route to influence decision-making across the local area partnership and helps ensure that services continue to develop based on what matters most to children and young people with SEND and their families. The themes emerging so far – including the importance of feeling listened to, accessible opportunities to participate, early support, clear communication and inclusive activities – will help inform these discussions and future actions.



## Thank You

A huge thank you to all the young people, families, schools and settings who continue to support the SEND Youth Forum. Every conversation, idea and piece of feedback helps us create a more inclusive Oxfordshire where children and young people with SEND feel valued, listened to and able to influence the decisions that affect their lives. We look forward to hearing from all eight satellite groups as they host their first meetings over the coming weeks.

To find out more about the SEND Youth Forum, explore our information page on the [Oxme SEND Youth Forum webpage](#). If you are a young person, parent/carer, school or setting and would like to get involved or find out more, please contact us at [SENDYoungPeople@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SENDYoungPeople@oxfordshire.gov.uk). We would love to hear from you.