

Report to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee

5 June 2025

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1. Healthwatch Oxfordshire reports to external bodies

For all external bodies we attend our reports can be found online at:

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/reports-to-other-bodies/>

We attended Health and Wellbeing Board, Health Improvement Board, Children's Trust. We attend **Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership** meetings under Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB). We work together with the five Healthwatch groups at place across BOB ICB to give insight into committees at BOB ICB wide level, including BOB ICB Quality Committee, Population and Patient Experience Committee, and Prevention and Health Inequalities Committee.

2. Update since the last Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) Meeting – 22 Jan 2025:

Healthwatch Oxfordshire reports published to date:

The following reports published since the last meeting can be seen here:

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports> All reports are available in **easy read**, and word format.

- **What we heard about GPs in Oxfordshire** (May 2025) Summarising insight from 345 people between April 2024 – March 2025. Healthwatch Oxfordshire hears more about GP services than any other health or care service – and whilst new access systems have benefited some and improved aspects of access, others tell us they face significant barriers to navigating and reaching the support they need. There is still a sense that some of the systems can be inflexible and do not meet the needs of some of the more vulnerable and that better communication would support public understanding of changes taking place in the way GP services work. In a survey we ran asking for people's views on our priorities for 2025–26 GP access was a key issue for many people – this report highlights what we have heard on this theme over the last year.
- **What we heard about pharmacy** (Mar 2025) April 2024– March 2025. This report fed into the Oxfordshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.
- **Your views on health and wellbeing in Wood Farm and Town Furze** (Feb 2025) as part of the community health profiles (part commissioned by Oxfordshire Public Health)

- **Hearing from Men in Oxfordshire** – (March 2025). Capturing voices of 167 men across Oxfordshire and their views on health and care. We heard about challenges including work pressure, lack of time, cost of living and stigma. Things supporting men to look after their health included being active, eating well, and support of friends, family and community. This was shared at Oxfordshire Men's Health Partnership.

To read more about the impact of all our reports see here:

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/impact/>

In addition:

- We launched a new **video highlighting the great work by PPGs patient champions and practice managers** in patient involvement in GP practices across the county. See here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/our-videos/> and here https://youtu.be/OWyt_R7mNlo
- We supported Oxford Community Champions in production of **two videos** on the **role of GP receptionists**, and on **accessing interpreting and language support** – useful for all community groups and others. See here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/our-videos/> and here <https://youtu.be/S2u6cSt7PHE>
- Produced a **new leaflet** on supporting SEND children to look after their teeth: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news/new-leaflet-on-supporting-send-children-to-look-after-their-teeth/> following on from our work with community connectors looking at this topic. Available in printed form on request.

Enter and View Visits

Since the last meeting we made Enter and View visits to the following services:

- To three Connect Health sites in Bicester, Henley and Oxford
- Phoenix Ward Littlemore (see below)

We published the following **Enter and View** reports:

(<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/enter-and-view/>) on visits to the following services:

- Phoenix Ward, Littlemore Mental Health Centre (May 2025)
- Hand and Plastic Injuries Clinic (April 2025)
- Freeland House Nursing Home, Freeland (March 2025).

- Ferendune Court Care Home, Faringdon (Feb 2025)
- Boots Pharmacy, Oxford City Centre (Feb 2025)

All published Enter and View reports are available here:

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/enter-and-view>
and information <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Enter-and-View-easy-read-information.pdf>

Webinars: Since the last meeting we have held four Public Webinars (Jan- March 146 people attended the webinars):

- January: GPs 'It's all about teamwork'
- February: 'Have your say on the future of the NHS'
- March: 'Mental wellbeing support for our children and young people'
- In March we held a closed webinar for PPGs linking with BOB ICB
- May 'Livewell in Oxfordshire' – with focus on prevention services and support.

To see our webinar programme, zoom links and recordings of all webinars:

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news-and-events/patient-webinars/> All welcome.

Our **next webinar** will be:

- Tuesday 10th June 1 p.m. '*Let's talk about menopause*'. All welcome.

Our ongoing work:

- We published our priorities for the year 2025-6 here:
<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/about-us/our-priorities/>
- We published a summary of our Quarter 4 (Jan-March) activity here:
<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/impact/activities-and-achievements/>
- Ongoing face to face **outreach** to groups and events across the county, including hospital stands (we have been speaking to patients at Horton, NOC, JR and Churchill since last meeting), community groups and events e.g. Eid Extravaganza at Blackbird Leys, Wantage PPG led Wellbeing Day, libraries, Adderbury Coffee Morning among others. We also attend PPG meetings and support PPGs e.g. an NHS Change consultation with Benson and Millstream Practices in March.
(Between Jan-March we spoke to 350 people during outreach.)

- We jointly presented with **community researchers** we supported from OX4 Food Crew and Oxford Community Action to share the research at Oxford's Marmalade Festival (Part of Skol world forum) on 'Feeding Oxford in a cost of living crisis'
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire **Board Open Forum** (see here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/about-us/board-papers-and-minutes/>) – took place on 22 May in Didcot Civic Centre, and combined with our team being 'out and about' on the streets in Didcot during the day to hear from members of the public. We heard about challenges to GP access, and concerns about rapid expansion of development with pressure on services.

3. Key issues we are hearing from the public:

Along with our themed research above, we hear from members of the public via phone, email, online feedback on services (see here for reviews and to leave a review <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/services>), and when out and about. This enables us to pick up and raise with health and care providers and commissioners on emerging themes. Below is a brief insight into some of the themes we are hearing public on different issues.

- Challenges people experience in **making GP appointments (See details in GP report -link above)**

"I rang my GP at 8am and by the time I got through at 8.18am there were no appointments left for the day so they told me to ring 111. I rang them and had to go through my history with them, and they said they would get me an appointment with my GP as they had some emergency slots they could allocate me to. Within five minutes I got a text message from my GP to say there were no appointments for me, so I rang 111 back and had to go through my story again and they said they would ring the GP back and check. They then came back on the call to say they had my surgery on the phone but they wouldn't confirm if I had an appointment or not, so we then ended up having a three-way call with my GP and 111. [...] I then had to answer all the same questions for a third time and then they said someone would call me back in six hours."

"My experience of the GP's, nurses and administrative staff at this practice has been universally excellent. But they are increasingly hidden behind an impenetrable piece of software called Engage-consult. I have just spent over an hour trying to make a routine, non-urgent appointment to have a nurse

check a mole, which has recently started to itch. Eventually I got through to a reception on the telephone, who explained that I can only keep trying Engage-consult. When I do that, I get a message saying there are no more appointments available for today. BUT I DON'T WANT AN APPOINTMENT FOR TODAY! It can be next month as far as I'm concerned."

"I struggle with my hearing and I cannot hear anyone on the phone. I have to go and visit the practice to book an appointment."

➤ **Social care**

"Carers just don't have the time to care, they are stressed and under pressure. I never get the same carers as they are always leaving because of the stress of doing the job being under pressure for time, having to leave people".

- Difficulty **getting to appointments**, including people who are eligible for non-emergency patient transport but could not arrange the service to align with their appointment, and people who are not eligible but have been given appointments at some distance from where they live

➤ **Audiology** – people having challenges since drop-in clinic stopped running

"My hearing aid stopped working and I followed the instructions to either mail my hearing aid with a wait of up to 2 weeks for repair or to email Adult Audiology. I emailed to ask if an appointment could be made as I did not want to be without them, as this would be very isolating and difficult for me – working full-time. After no response received [several days later] I phoned them. Phoning is not my preferred method of communication, as a hard of hearing person, but I can use the phone okay. [...] I was advised the soonest appointment at the local Hospital to where I live would be end of May!! And so could I come to the JR on Saturday instead. Reluctantly I have agreed to this, but I cannot believe this can be the situation for our local area. It's just not good enough. I believe if you have age related hearing loss, you may be able to use a local provider (like Specsavers) but for any other hearing loss it's under the NHS."

- **ADHD:** Healthwatch England has recently published a report on ADHD, with some respondents giving feedback on support in Oxfordshire:

"I would like the NHS to look at more feedback from the ADHD community so that the way in which diagnoses are done reflect more adult experiences of this type of brain. We share more symptoms which should be recognised. The referral process should take into account and make reasonable adjustments for those with ADHD. For example filling in long boring forms and returning them expeditely is REALLY hard. And to do that more than once, as I have had to, is even worse. Trying to get information about waiting times or appointments is also really hard for someone with ADHD. Listening to people who say "oh, everyone seems to think they have ADHD these days" is really frustrating. Many of us have lived with this our whole lives without knowing about it – of course there is going to be a back log of people now coming forward"

"Support and empathy has been non-existent. Medication is constantly out of stock which exasperates the symptoms and creates more anxiety and stress"

- **Quality of care:** generally, once people are able to access the support they need, we hear that the care they receive from health professionals is good.

"Having fallen at home and called 111, they phoned back and they called an ambulance as I was still on the floor in pain. Paramedics carried out their tests and took me to A&E. The miracles were: no queue at A&E; straight to a cubicle, quick to Xray, diagnosis; empty bed in Trauma ward; slot available in theatre following day [weekend day]. So broken [bone] screwed together within 24 hours of falling. Can't fault anything. Thanks a million."

"I recently had nasty viral bug that led to an ongoing complication. I saw a very kind pharmacist the same day I first called, then a physician's associate who called in the GP. If I had had to wait for a GP appointment, I would have had to wait for longer. I was really impressed with the physician's associate system – the person I saw was knowledgeable, very professional and kind and was great on checking things with the GP. I would be really happy to use this system again."