healthwatch Oxfordshire

Your voice on health and care services

Report to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

September 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 and the Children's Trust Board?. 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 - June 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.

- **Navigating urgent and emergency care in Oxfordshire – June 2025**
- **Using women's health and emergency care services in Oxfordshire – July 2025**

Report	Impact and outcomes
Using women's health services in Oxfordshire July 2025	Between August and October 2024 we heard from 684 women and people who use women's health services in Oxfordshire. This report captures what they told us about accessing and using women's health services, health services more generally, and getting breast or cervical screening. **Impact** – Our report is being used to inform the development of a women's health strategy for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. *"Healthwatch reports are a key part of our insights that inform strategy and planning. We are currently drafting our women's health strategy for this year and key aspects of this report are included in our priority setting."* Heidi Beddall, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer/Director of

	Quality at NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board – What we heard has also helped to bring about improvements in local services, including a commitment from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to reduce waiting times for specialist women's health clinics, improve patient information about screening and procedures, and training staff in cultural competency and trauma-informed care. For more details, see the responses from providers, on our report page.
Navigating urgent and emergency care services in Oxfordshire June 2025	This report captured the views and experiences of 322 people of navigating urgent and emergency care (UEC) services in Oxfordshire. **Impact** – We presented this report to the Urgent Care System Delivery Group to inform their planning for winter 2025/26. – Providers are developing a new overarching Oxfordshire Urgent and Emergency online service with clear information, and working to ensure consistency across all providers' websites.

To read more about the **impact** of all our reports, and commissioner and provider responses and actions, see here: https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/impact/

In July we hosted our **Annual Impact Report** for the year 2024-25 online. The full report and video of our staff presentations about our work can be seen here: https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/report/healthwatch-oxfordshire-annual-impact-report-2024-25/ Healthwatch Oxfordshire played a pivotal role to develop an event bringing communities from the ten urban priority areas, together to learn about what **Oxfordshire Marmot place** means. We worked with Oxford Community Action, Flo's, AFIUK, as well as Community First Oxfordshire and OCVA to enable this event to be community led and planned. Over 100 grassroots community representatives, and system decision-makers attended. Funding from Public Health supported the event. Notes and insight from the event can be seen here: https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news/oxfordshire-marmot-place-tackling-the-health-gap-at-its-roots/

Enter and View Visits

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

- Well Pharmacy, Marston
- Blue Outpatient at John Radcliffe

We published the following **Enter and View reports:** (https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/enter-and-view/) on our observations from visits to the following services:

- Visits to three sites (Botley, Bicester and Henley on Thames) into services provided by **Connect Health** (August 2025) (now known as Cora Health)

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 held two public webinars attended by 42 people - in May 'Livewell in Oxfordshire' and June 'Let's Talk about Menopause'.

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 16th September 1 pm** *On the* ***Ten Year Health Plan for England****,* with speakers from Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB). Zoom link via above.

Our ongoing work:

- **Community research** working with Sunrise Multicultural Centre, Chinese community and others focused on issues important to them.
- Ongoing face-to-face **outreach** to groups and events across the county, including hospital stands (at John Radcliffe), community groups and events e.g. Afrobeat Festival Blackbird Leys, Thame and Oxford Pride Festivals, Play Days across the county, among others. Between April and June we spoke to 579 people during outreach.
- We also attend Patient Participation Group (PPG) meetings across the county, and support PPGs e.g. advice on setting up, running meetings etc. In August we worked together with PPG members from **Charlbury PPG to do on the street**

engagement and insight gathering to support hearing from people about using the NHS App.

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 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, and relevant to this HOSC agenda.

The **top services** people contacted us about this quarter were **GP Services -** mainly around barriers access to services in a timely way.

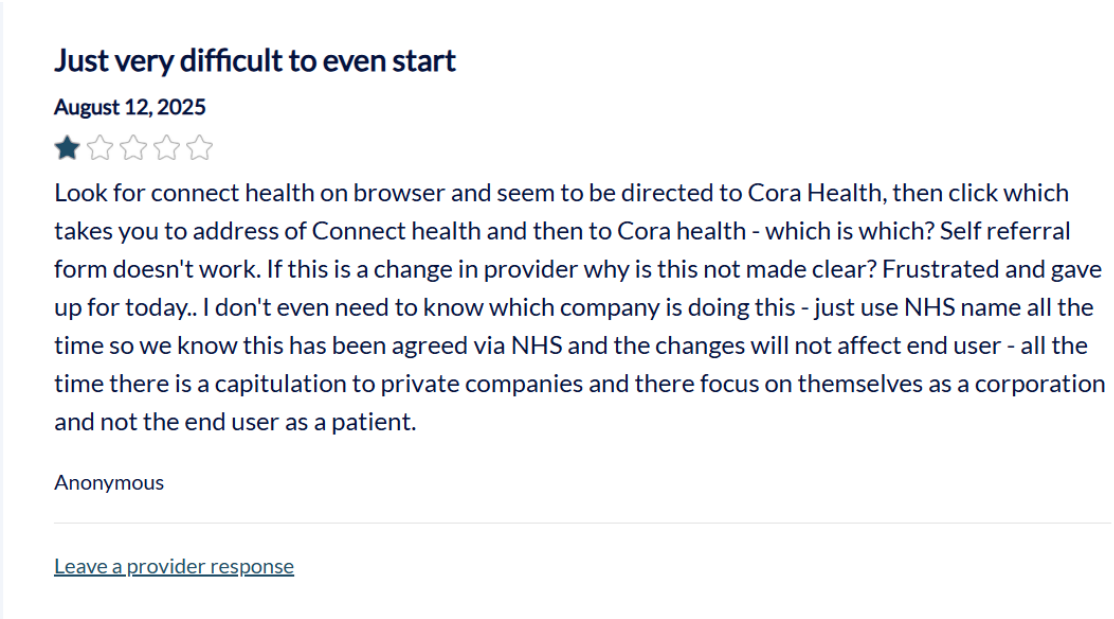
> *"Excellent triage service when needing to speak or see the GP. Medicine treatment excellent."*
>
> "*You just can't get an appointment. If you can't phone up at eight, when I am always at work, you have to use e-consult, but again I'm usually at work when you have to do that. If you do ring first thing you can be on the phone waiting to get through for an hour. It just puts you off making an appointment. If I was poorly now, I'd probably just call 111".*
>
> *"I knew I had an issue with [medical condition] again, so 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".*
>
> *"Went to GP surgery at 8am to book an appointment as didn't want to wait on the phone, and was told by the receptionist to call 111 to get a doctor's appointment*".
>
> *"There are never appointments available online anymore, the only way to get one is to phone the surgery. For people that aren't well enough to call (you're often waiting over 30 minutes) it means no healthcare. A new call back system was brought in but this doesn't seem to trigger until you're first in the queue anyway. If you can't wait a month and need to see someone more urgently, you have to be able to call at*

8am and stay on the phone for ages. This means anyone with sleep issues, chronic fatigue, anxiety, memory problems, autism etc is precluded. God help anyone that needs the loo frequently as well, unless you fancy bringing the phone with you!"

"The surgery itself is brilliant with good doctors and all the other staff are very nice and helpful. It's just a shame that you can't get the medical help you need from them."
"Unfortunately their system for online appointments don't let you add extra information they will need so would be great if they phoned patients so they could help them properly. It's no good ringing the practice as it can take ages for them to answer the phone if they even do."

"I find it very difficult to book appointments. I struggle to book appointments online as my computer skill are not good."

Connect Health (muscular skeletal services) has now been absorbed into Cora Health, causing some confusion for patients. We have asked for clear communication for patients about the changes:



Just very difficult to even start

August 12, 2025

★☆☆☆☆

Look for connect health on browser and seem to be directed to Cora Health, then click which takes you to address of Connect health and then to Cora health - which is which? Self referral form doesn't work. If this is a change in provider why is this not made clear? Frustrated and gave up for today.. I don't even need to know which company is doing this - just use NHS name all the time so we know this has been agreed via NHS and the changes will not affect end user - all the time there is a capitulation to private companies and there focus on themselves as a corporation and not the end user as a patient.

Anonymous

Leave a provider response

Using the NHS App

We have just closed our survey focused on the NHS App. We heard from 823 people via face-to-face outreach and an online survey. The report will be published in November. Initial insights show the main reasons for not using the app were preferring to manage their health care in-person, not knowing about the app and lacking digital confidence. Most people said they used the app to order repeat prescriptions and view their GP health records, with less than half managing their appointments via the app. Many people said their health records on the app were incomplete. People from seldom-heard groups have more difficulty using technology and found the app complicated. While acceptance and use of the NHS App appears to be generally high, inequalities are preventing some people from fully accessing the service. Most users perform specific tasks and focused effort is needed if the app is to support transformation of the way people manage their own health and health care.

Illustrative quotes:

"Repeat prescription ordering works well. It is easy and useful to be able to look at your test results."

"Very useful for accessing my health records and finding trustworthy information about health conditions and medication."

"I do try and use the app but I struggle with apps because I have an old phone. I have a lot of health problems so when I do use the app I can order repeat prescriptions."

"I like to see the doctor and I really struggle with IT and would feel very uncomfortable using the app on my phone and would be very scared if I lost my phone knowing people could access my medical records."

Learning disability – feedback we have heard from our work supporting My Life My Choice's Health Voices group includes:

- Issues with getting transport to health appointments, including patient transport for hospital appointments
- Challenges with phone triage, such as difficulty understanding all the options Mixed experiences of using the NHS App – including finding it difficult to navigate
- Difficulties getting prescriptions, including medication shortages, being told to use the NHS app or fill out long forms

- We also heard from a parent carer of an autistic adult about concerns about their hospital treatment, including use of antipsychotic medications despite these being discouraged due to severe side effects, and feeling dismissed by clinical staff
- We also heard from SENDIASS volunteers about long waits for speech and language therapy and occupational therapy for children with SEND.

Winter pressures – see our reports on Navigating Urgent and Emergency Care and Leaving Hospital in Oxfordshire https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/research-reports/

- We continue to hear some challenges with the discharge process, including incorrect communication from Royal Berkshire Hospital about post discharge support, delays and gaps in social care provision, and primary capacity to pick up tests for someone leaving hospital. We feed what we hear back to the multi-disciplinary team.