



Rural Isolation in Oxfordshire Survey Report

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Supported by:

healthwatch
Oxfordshire

About Community First Oxfordshire

Our mission:

‘Supporting communities to find solutions to their planning, housing, social action, and service needs. Promoting positive change for all’

We aim to:

- Help communities to identify issues that affect them and to find their own solutions
- Increase participation in community activities and local democratic processes
- Achieve improved provision of local services and facilities
- Promote means of accessing services which cannot be provided locally
- Empower everyone in communities on an equal and inclusive basis
- Influence policies and programmes at national, regional and local level to take account of the specific needs and views of people in rural and urban communities

Methods and Reach of Engagement

- Timeline – November 2021 to March 2022
- Define/distinguish rural isolation
- Design survey
- Promote online survey (4 weeks to respond)
- Focus groups and interviews (Jan to Feb 2022)
- Complete first draft report (early March)

- Known limitations – time, reach and complexity of subject

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What we found, what people said....



528 people took part - 488 people replied to the online survey and a further 40 individuals took part in the focus groups and interviews.

The key points made were:

- Most people knew their neighbours well and most people had face to face contact daily or several times a week.
- Most people had access to the internet and used the internet to access friends/family, online banking and shopping.
- Most people had access to their own vehicles.
- 176 people said they felt lonely sometimes or often.
- Despite high car ownership, 63 people said the lack of bus services/transport affected their sense of isolation – this view was also felt in all the focus groups and interviews.
- Community activities and spaces (formal and informal) were important to people of all ages.

Isolation is complex – there is no one solution that would fit all



Rural Isolation in Oxfordshire: Learnings

What did we learn from the engagement project?

The nature of rural isolation is a broad and complex, however based on what we heard we offered four learnings:

1. Always take a **multifaceted approach** when strategizing and/or working in rural areas.
2. **Public transport and transport planning** should involve the communities that use them.
3. **Support community solutions** – the breadth of activities in the community is important to most people.
4. **Information and services** – make sure we offer information on services in multiple ways.



Questions

Thank you for your time.
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