

1. Introduction

The key areas of work for the Healthwatch Oxfordshire team since the last HWBB meeting include:

- i. Restructuring the staff team given funding cuts and moving premises.
- ii. Publishing seAp's report into the experiences of Oxfordshire's Gypsy and Traveller Populations' experiences of health services.
- iii. Fieldwork and reporting for our study into people's use and experiences of minor injuries units.
- iv. Fieldwork and reporting for our pilot 'young healthwatch' project at Icknield School, Watlington.
- v. Reporting for our work looking into themes across CQC inspection reports of care homes requiring improvement.
- vi. Publishing our 'this month we heard' feature on our website, which is a precis of all of the feedback we heard in the preceding month.
- vii. Contributing to the Transformation Board's work, particularly supporting communication and engagement.
- viii. Working with OCCG Locality forum chairs to initiate a project looking at administrative problems reported to us at the OUH eye hospital.
- ix. Publication of our own annual report, which can be found here:
<http://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/annual-report-2015-16>

1. Organisational Development

The HWO staff team has reduced by 1.4 FTE since December to refocus work after a loss of 1/3 of funding. Thus far the impact has mostly been felt in the ability to field staff to the various meetings to which the organisation is asked to contribute, rather than the Healthwatch initiated projects and outreach activities.

2. Grant aided projects

- a) Healthwatch is currently supporting the following groups to produce reports on their service user experience through the final tranche of its grant programme. The majority of these reports will be published between now and October:
 - a. **Oxford Parent and Infant Project (OXPIP)** is reviewing the experiences of parents in the period from conception to 2 years of age.
 - b. **Refugee Resource** is looking at access to primary care services of refugee and asylum seeker populations.
 - c. **Oxford Against Cutting** is looking to evaluate people's experiences of current support services for women who have experienced FGM and identifying any gaps in current services.

- d. **Cruse Oxfordshire** is working on a project assessing experiences of bereavement services in the north of Oxfordshire.

b) seAp's report into Gypsy and Traveller experiences:

seAp was awarded a grant from Healthwatch Oxfordshire to carry out a project looking into how members of the Gypsy and Traveller community in Oxfordshire access health services, and their experiences of the NHS. The project also looked at the experiences of the health professionals who treat and support the travellers to understand better the issues from their perspective.

The findings show that on the whole the Gypsy and Traveller population have a similar experience to the general population, with much of their comments focusing on access and waiting times. It also shows that local GP practices have been working hard to meet the needs of their patients from the Gypsy and Traveller Communities. However, it also shows the importance that the key worker and health advocate have in building relationships and explaining the health system and in facilitating their access to health services. The report made four key recommendations:

1. **Outreach keyworker** - the role was seen as critical in facilitating access and trust in the system and ultimately in reducing health inequalities; it was recommended that this role be strengthened.
2. **Access to GPs** - there are a few ways which access could be facilitated for the Gypsy and traveller community, such as phone back services and information sessions about services like health checks.
3. **Dental services** - further work could be done to encourage registration with dental practices.
4. **Further research into mental health** - further work could be done to better understand travellers' experiences and concerns about mental health.

The full report, and responses from local services can be found here:

<http://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reporting-back>

3. Supporting Voluntary Sector groups to report their work:

Following the loss of our project fund, we looked to find another way of hearing from members of seldom heard groups. We are providing support to voluntary sector organisations working with such groups in a number of ways, from advising on designing a project or methodology, to assisting with fieldwork, where possible / necessary, to simply helping with reporting and editing reports. At present we are supporting 2 groups with their reports:

- a) **Clean Slate** - they are looking into whether there is a gap in provision of mental health support to people who have been victims of sexual abuse, this seems particularly prevalent for male survivors.
- b) **Oxfordshire Advocacy's Cancer Advocates** - They have a number of concrete recommendations from their work supporting cancer patients in Oxfordshire. We are working with them to publish these as a report.

4. Outreach programme

a) The outreach programme scheduled or attended in the summer months includes:

Date	Event
Sat 2/7	Play and Activity Day - Bicester Garrison
Sat 9/7	RAF Benson
Sun 10/7	Cowley Road Carnival
Sat 16/7	Play and Activity Day – Abingdon
Fri 22/7	Play and Activity Day – Eynsham
Sat 23/7	Riverside Festival
Fri 29/7	Play and Activity Day - Dalton Barracks
Sat 30/7	Play and Activity Day - Grandpont, Oxford
Wed 3/8	Play and Activity Day – Bicester
Tues 16/8	Thame Community Day
Sat 20/8	Elder Stubbs Festival
Sun 4/9	Abingdon Dragon Boat Festival
Sat 17/9	Wantage PPG Event
Sun 2/10	Banbury Canal Festival

5. “This month we heard”

In order to feedback what we’re hearing more regularly with providers and commissioners we have created a new, ‘This month we’ve heard’ feature on our website. It is a thematic review of all of the information we’ve received through our outreach work, phone calls and email. We aim to publish feedback from each month no later than the 15th of the following month. Where we name individual services we write to our lead contact at those organisations to make them aware and offer them an opportunity to respond to the feedback. The first two months’ of work are found below, but the feature can be found at <http://www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/hot-topics>.

May 2016

During May 2016, we heard from approximately 45 people, and three organisations. These are the main areas of concern that people or voluntary groups have been talking to Healthwatch Oxfordshire about:

- **GP surgeries** - praise for surgeries in Abingdon, Wallingford and Witney; some complaints about receptionists; issues surrounding poor communication between GP surgeries and other service providers such as community hospitals; concerns over waiting times.
- **Pharmacies:** Problems concerning repeat prescriptions and shortage of stock; delays caused by smaller pharmacies referring prescriptions to larger branches.
- **Social services:** Staff at the Citizens Advice Bureaux are seeing clients who have mental health problems but are unable to get the support they need and feel there is a real lack of support for people with mental health difficulties; two complaints concerning lack of compassion by social work teams.

- **Mental health services:** Concern over lack of services in the south east of Oxfordshire - problems include poor public transport and the need to travel further afield to places such as High Wycombe; praise for the complex needs service, concerns about the difficulty in car parking at the Wallingford GP surgery where the adult mental health team is also located adding to the anxiety of people using the services; concern over lack of services in Bicester following the closure of the Julian Centre.
- **John Radcliffe Hospital:** Difficulty in bringing forward appointment with neurology; numerous concerns around the Oxford Eye Hospital, including administration errors, lack of access, and lack of information for patients; praise for speech therapy service, complaints about condition of toilets on Levels 3 and 7, long waits in A&E department.
- **Churchill Hospital:** Several comments concerning parking and public transport, especially for those travelling from outside Oxford; praise for radiology staff.
- **Talking Space:** Concerns over access to the service and communication, which could be improved by improved information.
- **Hospital transport:** Praise for service but concerns over the length of time in advance appointments have to be booked.
- **General communication problems:** why services cannot communicate with each other to avoid people having to go through their details with every initial assessment; also why the hospital departments do not speak to each other to ensure a more fluid care pathway for the individual rather than being treated for each separate condition rather than in a holistic manner.

April 2016

During April 2016, we heard from approximately 50 people, and five organisations. These are the main areas of concern that people or voluntary groups have been talking to Healthwatch Oxfordshire about:

- **Poor communication** - letters arriving after appointment dates, unanswered telephones, miscommunication by and between hospital departments.
- **Delayed discharges** owing to waits for prescription drugs.
- **Too early discharge** - people discharged without adequate care package in place.
- **Parking** - Lack of provision and cost.
- **Lack of compassionate care** - accounts of nursing staff who have not demonstrated compassion or concern and stories of patients not being given adequate pain relief and “overlooked”. People have expressed to us their concern about people who do not have family or friends to “advocate” for them, and referred to “a constant battle to get basic care”.

- **Cleanliness** - unclean hospital ward and toilets at the John Radcliffe Hospital.
- **Mental health services** - Long waits for mental health support and lack of one-to-one support. Mental health services and GPs not understanding OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder).
- **GP surgeries** - long waiting times for GPs - also complicated telephone menus can make getting through difficult for people with memory problem, particularly in the north and west of the county, Also praise for a responsive Oxford GP for helping patient access hospital care quickly.
- **Health provision** - concern about health provision for new housing estates.
- **Support services** - concerns over funding for support services for people who have experienced sexual abuse, particularly men. For more information visit www.cleanslate.org.uk or email office@cleanslate.org.uk or telephone 01869 232461.
- **Advocacy** - An advocacy service exists for people aged over 50 who have been diagnosed with cancer, but not enough people are being referred to by their GP to this free service. The organisation asked how GPs can be made aware of the service. Greater awareness in general is needed.
- **Talking Space** - Frustration that Talking Space does not cater for people who are dealing with the physical and mental health consequences of historic sexual abuse like post-traumatic stress disorder. Also the limit of six sessions offered by Talking Space is not felt to be long enough for some people to be able to deal with some complex mental health issues.
- **Dementia** - concerns at possible loss of specialist day services for people with dementia because of budget cuts.
- **Children's Centres** - continued concern over proposed closures.

6. Healthwatch Oxfordshire projects

We are currently finalising three Healthwatch initiated projects, which are in final review before publication:

a) CQC Care Home inspection project:

We reviewed the CQC inspection reports of care homes in Oxfordshire to see if there were any themes in those rated as 'requiring improvement'. We followed up with conversations with 4 care home managers including some who had 'Good' inspection ratings to understand their perspective. This report will be published in July.

b) Use and experiences of MIU project:

We spoke to 62 people across 5 sessions in the county's minor injuries units about their pathway to attending the minor injuries unit, following up with a questionnaire on their experiences after they had been seen. Preliminary

results show overall people have good experiences, and use the service appropriately. The full report will be published in July.

c) Icknield school / Young Healthwatch pilot:

We conducted focus groups with students at Icknield School about their experiences of primary care. We believe working with schools will be a good model for future engagement with young people. This report will be published over the summer.