

## Healthwatch Oxfordshire Report to Health Improvement Partnership Board February 2021

Since the last HIB meeting in November 2020 Healthwatch Oxfordshire continued to reach out and gather people's experiences of health and social care services in the county. We are pleased to welcome Amier Alagab as Healthwatch Ambassador to the Health Improvement Board, who brings both experience and expertise to the role.

The following gives an overview of our activity since the last meeting.

### 1. Outreach and communication

- We continue to engage using a range of methods including surveys (paper and online), and direct communications via local groups and media.
- We plan to carrying out focused work in Chipping Norton and surrounds from late March.
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire welcomed a new member of the team- community outreach worker - in early February. Their role will continue to support work in building relationships, links and reaching out to hear from seldom heard groups with a focus on Oxford City.

### 2. Recent reports

All reports available on: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/healthwatch-oxfordshire-reports/> We have recently published:

#### **Wellbeing- views of Oxford's new and emerging communities- Jan 2021.**

Joint action research during 2020 working with Oxford Community Action and community volunteers. 152 responses from East Oxford's diverse and multi-ethnic communities. People told us wellbeing is supported by family, friends, and faith- along with underlying factors including secure job, food, finances and sense of safety. Stress was caused by pressures in life, including cost of housing and food in Oxford, racism and discrimination, immigration worries and impact of Covid.

- 87% said they would turn to friends and family, 58% to faith leader or spiritual support and 30% to a GP for support when 'worries became too much'
- Only 4% said they would seek mental health support even though 60% said they would like help managing stress, 35% said they would like support with mental health and 18% would like help managing spiritual crises.
- People told us they faced challenges when seeking or using support for health and wellbeing including difficulty finding services that meet their cultural and spiritual needs, lack of accessible information in languages and formats, and concerns with confidentiality.
- There was a huge appetite to learn about prevention of ill health across a wide range of themes. People told us they favoured wellbeing support that was

practical, action based, and developed with input from communities themselves, and builds on and is delivered within trusted community settings.

- The report highlighted that to build responsive health and care services for diverse and multi-ethnic communities- with equity, trust, better access and cultural appropriateness-there needs to be a process of continuous and ongoing dialogue, involving better community engagement, more appropriate and responsive services, and improved information and access.
- Report available on Healthwatch Oxfordshire website including summaries in English, Swahili, Somali, Arabic and Tetum.
- Next steps include presentation of the report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March, led by community volunteers and initiation of conversations with health and social care services to find action oriented solutions.

**Adult unpaid carers-** looking after someone you know (170 responses). Themes highlighted: impact of caring on physical and mental wellbeing, unmet needs for support (45% said they had not received any type of support in the last 12 months). Impact of COVID-19 had exacerbated need. Report available on website highlights need for more coordinated and accessible approach to support to carers in the county. Healthwatch Oxfordshire will hold an open **round table event on March 3<sup>rd</sup>** to discuss the report with carers, health and care providers and others and identify ways forward.

**Employed Home Carers** views (39 responses) report available on website. Revealed huge pride in work as carer, but that they want to be valued both in monetary terms and by other professionals, and value more time to provide quality care. Again we heard about the impact of COVID-19 on both carers and their clients wellbeing.

### Current surveys and forthcoming reports:

We are currently running a number of surveys including:

- **Covid vaccines:** We have been focusing on this in a number of ways including an **Enter and View** visit to Kassam Stadium Covid Vaccine Centre. - Staff undertook an Enter and View visit to speak to staff and members of the public about how this is working.
- We have launched a county wide survey on vaccines <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CovidVaccine-yourviews/> to hear people's views on the vaccine programme.
- We have continued to link into local communities around vaccine information, concerns, local awareness and myth busting events.
- Listening to **family members and residents of care homes** during Covid-19 using survey, zoom focus groups and other methods. <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/carehomefamilies/> This has highlighted the impact on families and residents from visiting restrictions during COVID-19, despite best efforts by care homes to support ongoing communication. This has included views from care settings other than elderly residential care.

**Forthcoming reports:** will be available on Healthwatch Oxfordshire website once published.

- **Support to parents in Oxfordshire** (114 responses to date) Emerging themes: Loneliness and isolation of parents, mental wellbeing, especially for new mothers- accentuated during Covid where peer and face to face support has stopped. Again, raised concern about limited Health Visitor support through Covid. A report will be presented at the Children's Trust Board in March via the Healthwatch Oxfordshire parent ambassador.
- **Listening to Care Homes during Covid**-follow up (October- Nov 2020) from previous report in June, heard from 33 care homes. Dentistry services and support rated as 'worse' or 'much worse' in just less than half of respondents, while access to both spiritual/pastoral care, and hospital appointments were rated as worse or much worse by 41% and 44% of respondents, respectively. Pharmacy and GP appointments rated the most improved since lockdown

**Seeing a dentist during COVID-19 (Nov-Jan 228 responses).** Overall people who responded said they had had access to timely emergency and routine care from dentists during COVID-19. However, ongoing communication from the public has continued to highlight challenges in accessing emergency care and NHS dentists at this time.

- **Listening to Didcot**- forthcoming

### 3. Wider Healthwatch Oxfordshire Activity

- Healthwatch Oxfordshire hosted an event on 18<sup>th</sup> December for Patient Participation Groups to hear from Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group about the plans for Covid-19 vaccinations. 87 members attended from across the county. A questions and answers (Q&As) online document resulted from this and is constantly updated. The report and recording of the webinar can be found here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/what-we-do/ppgs/>