

Healthwatch Oxfordshire

**Report to the Oxfordshire Joint Overview Scrutiny
Committee**

April 2021

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Update on Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Healthwatch Oxfordshire staff continue to work from home or in our COVID-19 secure office environment when needed. This is continuing to prove a challenge to our traditional approach to listening to people about their experiences of health and care services - that is actively out in the community. We are adapting and making progress with new ways of reaching out - exploiting social media channels, webinars, newspaper articles, and maintaining relationships with communities.

Between April and end December 2020:

- We heard from 4,542 people.
- We reached 345 people through our work with local groups, including Oxford Community Action, Black Asian and Ethnically Diverse Women in Oxfordshire Recovering from Lockdown and Domestic Abuse, African Families in the UK and the Early Years Network.
- During October and December, we were active in Didcot and surrounding villages listening to residents about what it is like living in the Didcot and surround areas, their experiences of accessing health and care services. The Report can be found on our website <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/research-reports/>.
- At the end of December 2020, we welcomed 87 members of Patient Participation Groups to a webinar who were able to ask questions of the Clinical Commissioning Group about the COVID-19 vaccination programme. 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/ppgs/news/> . This was followed up in March 2021 with a webinar of Social Prescribing attended by 60 people.

Making a difference, being heard, influencing changes.

- A presentation of our Care Home COVID-19 report to Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group Primary Care Commissioning Committee in October led to a briefing webinar for care homes including a focus on legal framework and safeguarding. This was in response to concerns raised in our report about restrictive visiting arrangements at some care homes.
- At our recommendation, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust updated its website so that content about maternity services, including partners being able to visit and be present at birth, was more accessible.
- Homestart Oxfordshire made use of our report on the emotional wellbeing of under-fives in developing its support for families during the pandemic.
- The Healthwatch Ambassadors report 'Help and support for parents in Oxfordshire' was presented to the Board in March 2021. There are three recommendations in the report as follows that the Children's Trust:
 1. Take note of the findings of this research.

2. Make a commitment to review and monitor the reinstatement of all services that were operational prior to April 2020 and how they are 'catching' up on supporting families across Oxfordshire.
3. Support voluntary and community organisations to re-engage with families - including running group sessions and face-to-face meetings.

The report was welcomed, the recommendations agreed, the executive summary and full report praised. An action for the Trust Board agreed for health visiting and midwifery to be placed on future agendas. Kevin Gordon Director Children and Families, Oxfordshire County Council expressed his keenness to engage with the 3rd sector on COVID-19 recovery plans.

Our Community Outreach Worker joined us in early February. The role will continue to support our work to reach out to seldom heard groups in Oxford city.

Reports

During March 2021 we published the following reports:

Adult unpaid carers in Oxfordshire are they getting the right support when needed? - February 2021

The key messages from the research were:

- Many people do not identify as a carer.
- Many carers do not access support - including financial support, caring support, personal support.
- The challenges to getting support included not know what is available, too much information, having to repeat their story over and over, can be a confusing and complicated process, there is no one to help on a personal basis just leaflets and signposting.

What is needed to support unpaid carers?

- Coordination of advice and support.
- Active promotion of what is available to unpaid carers.
- Personal practical support.
- One place or one person to help.

We held a round table meeting on 3rd March 2021 to discuss the findings of this report. This meeting was attended by representatives from Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, AgeUK Oxon, Carers Oxfordshire, Rethink, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and six carers who took part in the research.

The carers who attended welcomed the opportunity to be part of the discussion, hear what is happening and hoped that similar meeting could be arranged in the future.

Healthwatch Report was welcomed by all those who attended as it confirmed what the commissioners and service providers had been hearing from carers.

We heard that the newly commissioned carers support service (went live on 1st April 2021) creates a carers pathway that appeared to address many of the findings from the research. This pathway has been developed by commissioners, carers organisations and carers responding to similar issues.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will monitor the impact of this new service over the next 12 months.

Listening to the voices of employed home carers March 2021

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/research-reports/>

Enter & View at Kassam Stadium - NHS mass vaccination centre.

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/enter-and-view-reports/>

Report to the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board March 2021.

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

On-going work

Reports to be published during April 2021:

- Listening to residents in care home and their loved ones.
- Using your pharmacy during 2020
- Dentistry - access during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Didcot - living in Didcot

Planning for the next year and beyond with our focus being on listening to seldom heard communities across Oxfordshire, digital exclusion to accessing health and care services. Our goals and strategy for 2021-22 can be found here

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/about-us/our-priorities/>

To support our strategy of working alongside seldom heard communities to have their voice heard Healthwatch Oxfordshire are now beginning to work alongside and support five **community researchers** in the County. These are part of two projects supported by funds from Care Quality Commission, and Health Education England / Public Health England.

We continue to support the development of Patient Participation Groups, Primary Care Networks, and the Oxfordshire Wellbeing Network.