

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Report to Health Overview Scrutiny Committee September 2019.

1 DENTISTRY

Healthwatch Oxfordshire carried out two pieces of research in 2018 focusing on NHS Dentistry. This focus was as a result of hearing concerns about access to NHS dentistry in Bicester in 2017. This led to Healthwatch Oxfordshire highlighting the problem to NHS England Commissioners, who have since commissioned more NHS dentists in the area.

Our subsequent reports 'Filling the Gaps; Access to NHS Dentistry in Oxfordshire' and 'Treatment only when needed- dental services for care home residents', included conversations with more than 400 people across the county, 172 questionnaire responses, and 26 care home responses.

Reports can be found here - <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/healthwatch-oxfordshire-reports/>

Overall, we found:

- Concerns expressed about access to NHS dentistry in some areas of the county experiencing population growth- with services not keeping up with demand in Thame, Faringdon, Bicester Wantage. This was also highlighted in Healthwatch Oxfordshire Wantage town study.
- Gap in awareness of importance of oral health among some adults and children.
- Room for improved information on what is available on the NHS including clear communication about pricing

Our main findings highlighted by the **care home** study were:

1. A significant number of residents in care homes did not use dental services at all.
2. Healthwatch Oxfordshire found that there were significant gaps in provision of dentistry services to residents of care homes.
3. Some care homes struggle to obtain NHS dental services for their residents.

Barriers faced meant that many residents at care homes received no dental treatment at all, or only in an emergency. Barriers included:

- Lack of NHS dentists to visit a home.
- Poor physical access at dentists' surgeries.
- Lack of transport and staff time to take residents for appointments
- Some homes felt that dentists were unwilling or unhappy to treat patients with dementia or learning disability.

We asked care homes what could be done to improve access to dental services for their residents and the following were suggested:

1. Better access to dentists at the care home for residents who cannot easily visit dental surgeries.
2. Dementia training for dentist treating residents with dementia. This would also improve the experience of people living with dementia in the community.
3. More information available to care homes about dental services that can be accessed by their residents.

1.1 Stakeholder meeting

Healthwatch Oxfordshire convened a stakeholder meeting to discuss the findings of the report in September 2018. This enabled discussion and support for a collaborative approach to tackling some of the issues.

Whilst NHS England South was unable to attend the meeting, it gave a written response to our reports saying that:

‘We recognise there are growing challenges around oral health for older patients, particularly as a much higher proportion of older people still retain their own teeth nowadays.

In terms of key issues raised in the report:

Access to High Street Dental practices

NHS Dental practices provide access to a full range of services for patients of all ages. Their contracts are site specific which means they can only provide services from sites identified in their contracts. Their services have to meet all the necessary requirements for Care Quality Commission registration and with regard a number of other legal requirements, such as Infection Control.

There are challenges for dentists in terms of going into care homes in terms of the limitations it places on treatment that can be provided if the necessary equipment and facilities are not available. Dentists also have to ensure compliance with Infection Control regulations and CQC registration for any site from which they provide services.

If patients are unable to attend High Street services on medical grounds, they can attend or be referred to Community Dental Service clinics with staff and facilities more adapted to their needs. In Oxfordshire, this service is provided by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and they have a number of clinics from which they provide services. The Trust has three domiciliary teams (North, Oxford City and South and West). The Trust has provided a domiciliary service for many years and is happy to see patients with a range of needs, both routine and urgent. The service has experienced staff willing to provide support to the care homes. Access to High Street Dentistry is under review at the moment with the aim of ensuring there are no gaps in provision. This is both in terms of High Street access and access to more specialist services.

The Oxfordshire Community Dental services has advised us that they have been unusually quiet recently in terms of contact with care homes and that they are looking to do work to ensure the care homes are aware of this service. We are aware that some care homes experience high turn-over of staff and this may impact on the local awareness of available services. We would also like to share that guidelines were recently published about maintaining good oral health in care home settings (i.e. helping residents brush their teeth twice a day). This is the responsibility of the home, but the Community Dental Services could advise and support staff if needed’.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire followed up the report recommendations with partners both on publication and again in August 2019. Full written responses to Healthwatch Oxfordshire recommendations were received from stakeholders (Local Dentistry Committee (LDC) and NHS England can be seen on Healthwatch Oxfordshire website here and show some positive progress and development, and increased joint working

1.2 Summary of feedback on progress August 2019

Feedback from partners show some positive progress has been made:

- Timely publication of the ‘Smiling Matters: Oral Health in Care Homes’ (Care Quality Commission. June 2019) supported Healthwatch Oxfordshire findings and recommended multidisciplinary approach and mandatory training and oral health checks for care home residents along with improved access. It has raised awareness of the issue both nationally and in Oxfordshire, with accompanying policy development taking place
- Community Dental Service (CDS) in Oxon currently developing and piloting online oral health training for care homes with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), and has experienced increased demand since the report, with commissioners aiming to develop more training to care home staff
- Health Education England (HEE) providing online training in dementia awareness for dentists.
- Positive moves to refocus commissioning for dental support to care homes, both nationally and locally, with local NHS exploring how to increase joint working and improve information and awareness of support, and use flexibility in contract reallocation and use to support improvements in access at dental practices and increased provision to keep up with population growth.
- Emerging Primary Care Networks provide a much-needed opportunity to highlight population oral health and improve joint working.

However:

- Healthwatch Oxfordshire has also received update from one care home identified as proactive but still struggling to access NHS dentistry for residents, with comments that although progress has been made, they “have constantly prompted to move forward. It appears problem after problem...very difficult in this area to manage without the service being

readily available” adding that concerns about payment and obtaining consent seemed to be also acting as barriers along with availability of support.

- Family members who cannot take a loved one to the dentist from the care home end up funding transport (taxi) and the cost of a carer. This is an issue of equity as this can be very costly.
- Dentistry support in care homes, via domiciliary support or Community Dental Service is still a limited resource.
- Dentist groups in Oxon state that adequate funding is needed to ensure support is available to more vulnerable patients with flexibility in commissioning packages and training.

1.3 Rose Hill Primary School - Healthy Eating Consultation.

This Healthwatch Oxfordshire Project Fund report carried out by researchers associated with Rose Hill Primary School focused on engaging parents, children and teachers in exploring development of healthy eating guidelines for the school. It highlighted some issues around oral health including:

- Many felt that information about dental care is scarcer, that knowledge about keeping teeth healthy is low and so many children have dental caries (tooth decay).
- Challenges of the wider food environment to healthy eating related to oral health, including access to foods high in sugar, higher cost of fresh fruit and vegetables, food poverty and confusing labelling systems on foods.
- Some parents spoke of their efforts to find a ‘child friendly dentist’.
- Schools can be a powerful vehicle in efforts to improve public health. They can create a healthy environment by encouraging and modelling healthy behaviour, educating children about healthy options, harnessing the power of positive peer influence, and reaching out to families, carers and the wider community.

As a result of the report, Rose Hill school has had ongoing conversations with the Community Dental Service (CDS) and is now working closely with the school to deliver oral health training, support future healthy food events and attend the youth club.

1.4 Wider ‘service review’ comments on dentist services from our Feedback Centre

78 reviews from April 2018-March 2019 about individual dentists on Informatics, part of the Healthwatch Oxfordshire Feedback Centre. Overall positive about treatment, but include comments on access to NHS dentists, waiting times, and communication/ information given by dentists about treatment, costs and care, pressure to go private, high staff turnover.

2 HEALTHWATCH OXFORDSHIRE ACTIVITY UPDATE

2.1 Healthwatch Oxfordshire Annual Report 2018-19

Healthwatch Oxfordshire's Annual Report for 2018/19 was launched at a public meeting on June 25 at The King's Centre. Report available at:

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

2.2 Mental health

Healthwatch Oxfordshire continues to focus on mental health services throughout 2019 (community and other).

To date we have undertaken five 'Enter and View' visits to acute mental health inpatient wards in Littlemore and Warneford, with support from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Future visits will include Enter and View voluntary sector services provided by Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership and Community Mental Health Teams.

Related Enter and View Reports will be on Healthwatch Oxfordshire's website on an ongoing basis and a final report pulling together mental health themes in March 2020.

2.3 Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board

Healthwatch Oxfordshire carried out a secret shopper exercise for the Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board (OSAB) to find out 'how easy is it for a member of the public to raise a concern?'. The resulting experience was reported back to the Board and it is not at all easy! 'We have a lot of work to do' was the comment from the new OSAB Chair after hearing our experience. We will repeat this exercise in six months' time to see if changes have been made to make the entire process for members of the public easier.

2.4 Healthwatch Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board Network

There is a planning group with representatives from all partners on the Board working together to deliver three Network events per year. We will be reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September and further updates will be available on the Healthwatch Oxfordshire web site.

2.5 Hospital visits

Healthwatch Oxfordshire continues its monthly 'pop up' visits to hospitals across the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's sites and has visited Churchill and Horton during this quarter. Patients continue to leave reviews on Healthwatch Oxfordshire 'Tell us' link. Generally, the reviews about care are very positive, however administration and parking continue to have a negative impact on the overall patient experience. We have sent a summary of the reviews to OUH for comment.

Comments from reviews:

“All staff are committed to delivering a good service. Reception staff are helpful/caring and professional. Nursing staff are excellent. The Oncology/Haematology staff are a real team. They are obviously experts in their field and are positive in their deliberations. Never rush you - so you feel you are listened to and have their total support.” (Churchill)

“Difficult to get to phone in time... automated hospital appointment reminder except it does not give you the actual reminder info. You get these calls at all times day and night and can be very anxiety provoking getting calls from the JR as you worry it is something urgent.” (John Radcliffe)

“Excellent service, we were treated with care and compassion” (JR-Maternity)

“I cannot speak more highly of all the staff I came into contact with” (JR-Cardiology)

“My sincere thanks to you all for the fantastic service and help I received” (Horton)

2.5.1 Other feedback received:

Between June and Sept 2019 Healthwatch Oxfordshire has received 96 reviews via its Feedback service.

- Reviews on a total of 11 service types
- Including Hospitals (29) GPs (27)
- Physiotherapy (13) (MSK) with continued concern about appointments system, communication.
- GP reviews focused on positives of care, and negatives of waiting times
- Pharmacy 5 reviews (Av star rating 3) comments include admin process, prescription mistakes and communication between pharmacy and GP

2.6 General updates

- **Healthshare MSK support:** Continued patient concern picked up by Healthwatch Oxfordshire about waiting times, communication and administrative process. Healthwatch Oxfordshire continues to monitor comments about this. We have sent an update report to HOSC Task & Finish Group, OCCG and Healthshare.
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire carried out a piece of work with BOB Healthwatch organisations, funded by NHS England through Healthwatch England to look at patient views on the **NHS Long Term Plan**, culminating in a report to BOB STP from the Healthwatch groups in the BOB footprint. A separate report with views of 155 Oxfordshire residents has also been produced. Two focus groups were also run as part of this: with an Asian Women’s group and mental health service users. All reports are available on HWO website <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/healthwatch-oxfordshire-reports/>
- In June 2019 Healthwatch Oxfordshire contributed to a report on, ‘**Delivering Better Births**’, on Personalised Care Plans featuring voices of women and families across BOB STP. This was carried out jointly with the five Healthwatch groups across BOB. Available on Healthwatch Oxfordshire’s

website: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Maternity-survey-Full-report.pdf>

- Healthwatch Oxfordshire continues to support the development of **Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)** across the county. June saw a networking event for PPGs with the theme of ‘Working Together’ attended by 34 PPG members. The next PPG Forum is in early October focusing on how the patient voice can be heard in the developing Primary Care Networks. Healthwatch Oxfordshire is supporting Oxford’s PPG forum event on Winter Planning in the Primary Care Network on 17 September. See website for details.

2.7 Healthwatch Oxfordshire Projects 2019-20

These are now under way with a focus on experiences of health and social care for families of military personnel, access to healthcare in the boating and bargee community, early year’s and family experiences of mental health support as well as outreach and response to upcoming issues. Healthwatch Oxfordshire is also undertaking a separate piece of work exploring the process of Financial Assessment Review undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council during changes that took place in 2018-19.

We continue to try actively to support seldom heard groups to voice their concerns and ideas, and carry out outreach through groups and market stalls, and specific projects.

We are currently recruiting to the Children’s Trust Board a Healthwatch parent representative.

2.7.1 Community outreach

Healthwatch Oxfordshire attended Mela, Eid Extravaganza and Cowley Road carnival in this period, and has linked with groups in areas of health inequality. We continue to develop our activity in the south of the County and have visited groups in Henley and Didcot. Work with East Oxford United on Men’s Health culminated in launch of a short social media clip encouraging men to take up NHS Checks that was Launched at Eid Extravaganza in Oxford.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44wYqRWknHM&feature=youtu.be>