

Report to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee

June 2024

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1. Healthwatch Oxfordshire reports to external bodies

Since the last HOSC meeting in April, Healthwatch Oxfordshire attended BOB ICB Quality Committee and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

For all external bodies we attend our reports can be found online at:

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

We attend **Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership** meetings under Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB). We work together with the five Healthwatch groups at place across BOB ICB to give insight into committees at BOB ICB wide level, including BOB ICB Quality Committee, BOB Health Overview Scrutiny Committee and BOB Integrated Care Partnership.

2. Update since the last Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) Meeting April 2024:

Healthwatch Oxfordshire reports published to date:

Summary of our **Quarter 4** (Jan-Mar 2024) activities and outcomes can be seen here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/about-us/board-papers-and-minutes/>

All the following reports published since the last meeting can be seen here:

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports> All reports are available in **easy read**, and word format. Since the last meeting we published the following reports based on focused insight gathering:

- **Health and wellbeing in Ambrosden, Arncott, Blackthorn and Piddington** (May 2024). Focused on these communities in the North of the county, insight gathered by Community First Oxfordshire on behalf of Healthwatch Oxfordshire, built on our previous report on rural isolation (March 2022). They reached 162 members of the communities from November 2023 to January 2024. Based on what they heard the report identified pressures on access to services, public transport, and limits to community capacity and volunteering. The report and summaries can be seen here:

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

Together we will present what we have heard to Health and Planning Group in July, and further discuss insights it offers into **issues faced by rural communities here and more widely**.

- **Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR2)** we continued to support and mentor two community researchers from Oxford Community Action to focus on **cost of living and food insecurity** in OX4. (This programme took place between May 2023 and June 2024 enabled two community researchers time to be supported through by NHS S.E. CPAR 2 Programme. This involved training and mentoring from University of Reading and Scottish Community Development Centre, along with Healthwatch Oxfordshire acting as host and giving on the ground support). The final report and accompanying film (<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/our-videos/>) is being presented to key stakeholders and system leaders at the CPAR 2 South-East showcase event on 6th June in London (same date as the HOSC meeting). The community researchers reached 170 people using community food services in OX4 area (using food support from Oxford Community Action, Oxford Mutual Aid and Waste2 Taste- each part of OX4 Food Crew). The report highlighted the significant impact of cost of living on people's ability to meet basic household expenses and the difficult choices made to make ends meet. The report also indicated the underlying drivers - including challenges faced by people with longer term health conditions. It also highlighted the positive contributions made by community food provision in giving support, reducing isolation, and building sense of community and suggested actions for community and system partners to better support. We continue to contribute learning from our work to support development of Oxfordshire Community Research Network.
- **Patient Participation Groups in Oxfordshire** – Between January and February we carried out a survey to hear from all those involved in Patient Participation Groups in the county. We heard from **78 people representing 35 Patient Participation Groups** and GP practices across Oxfordshire – amounting to 53% of the 66 GP practices in the county. We heard that some of the things that help PPGs to work well are:
 - active, positive and enthusiastic members
 - good, trusting relationships with GP practices
 - engagement (and capacity to engage) from practice staff, especially GPs
 - support from GP practices to communicate with patients and recruit new members
 - clarity around the remit and role of the PPG

- opportunities to support the practice, for example with hands-on activities like vaccine clinics
- opportunities for collaboration and learning between PPGs in the PCN area and more widely.

There was a clear voice that patients and PPGs would like more opportunities and pathways to hear from and feed into local health policy, communicate and engage directly with decision-makers from Primary Care Networks (PCN), Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership and the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB). They would also like more clarity and structure around the role of a PPG, support to engage with a wider range of patients, and to be kept up to date with news and information about health and care in their local area.

- We completed the focused work on **oral health in under 10's** and with emphasis on hearing from parents and carers with children with special educational needs and disabilities. We will publish the report in July, along with a joint overview report on learning across the BOB ICB Core 20 Plus areas, in conjunction with Healthwatch Bucks and Healthwatch Reading.

Enter and View Visits

Since the last meeting we made visits to the following services- Health Visiting Service, Didcot (April), Oxford Eye Hospital (April), and Ambulatory Unit – Oncology at the Churchill (May). Reports forthcoming.

We published the following report on Enter and View visits to the following services:

- Alma Barn Lodge Care Home, Didcot (May 2024)

All published Enter and View reports are available here:

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

and <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Enter-and-View-easy-read-information.pdf>

Our current work:

- We currently have a survey to hear from the public on **experience of leaving Hospital (discharge)** in the last twelve months

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news/leaving-hospital/>

The survey will be open until the end of August, and we are also following up people in their journey with more in depth stories.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/leavinghospital/> We have been working closely with system partners to develop this work, with aim of understanding more from people about their experience of hospital discharge routes, and emphasis on supporting people to return to their usual place of home.

- We hosted a **webinar on 21 May** for members of the public hear about Pharmacy First with presentations by David Dean CEO Pharmacy Thames Valley, Dan Leveson, BOB ICB Place Director for Oxfordshire, and Julie Dandridge Head of Pharmacy, Optometry and Dentistry BOB ICB. Slides and video of the webinar can be found here:
<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news-and-events/patient-webinars/>
- We presented on the importance of Patient Engagement to an audience of over 150 at the Primary Care Network event (along with Healthwatch Bucks). Our next webinar will be on Tuesday 18th June from 12-1p.m. and focus on involving patients at the heart of healthcare design with Dan Leveson and Sarah Adair from BOB ICB
<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news/webinar-join-us-on-tuesday-18th-june-to-hear-about-oxfordshire-patient-engagement/>
- We continue ongoing outreach to groups and events across the county, including hospital stands, community groups and events e.g. Witney Pride, Hanwell Fields Event, libraries, Family Day – Sunshine Centre, and visits to hotel accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Board

Our open forum event for the public to attend was held online on Tuesday 28th May
<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/about-us/board-papers-and-minutes/>

Join us on **Tuesday 2nd July from 1pm – 2pm** for an online event showcasing our work during 2023–24. Members of the team will talk about some of our achievements over the past 12 months, and there will be a chance to ask questions. Find out more and how to join here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news/join-us-on-tuesday-2nd-july-for-a-showcase-of-our-work-2023-24/>.

3. Key issues we are hearing from the public:

We hear from members of the public via phone, email, online feedback on services (<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/services>), and when out and about. This enables us to pick up and inform health and care providers and commissioners on emerging and current themes.

Since the last HOSC meeting (1st April – 20th May 2024) some of the themes we have been hearing include:

- Cancelled appointments (GP, hospital, community services)
- Challenges booking and accessing covid boosters – and limited access and coverage especially in Didcot area

“There was no service, I had to drive to Goring. Didcot is an expanding town with garden town status so should offer a service for local people and surrounding villages”.

“Both my wife and I are 80 so I decided to book our spring Covid jabs today. The NHS web site directs one to walk-in sessions. These are extremely thin on the ground (15 miles away or more and, in any case, we wanted to book an appointment. I tried to find how to book an appointment on line but ended up going round in circles so ended up dialling 119. This tried to send me back to the web site and even said that the person taking the call would just be doing the booking in the same way that I could”.

- Problems accessing pharmacy services – for example long queues or pharmacies being closed during opening times

“Massive queues, script takes a week to be processed and the pharmacy closes for lunch. It’s unbelievably frustrating to have to go there for anything.”

- Concern about access to ADHD medications.

“ I called my GP as I was worried about a notice on their website which said they will not be prescribing ADHD medication to new patients. I asked how would it impact on me as I already have a regular prescription. I was told it wouldn’t but that could change at any time. I worry every month now as I need my medicine to help me function”.

Of those people who contacted us **about hospital services**, the main issue commented upon were delays (13). Delays fell into three different categories:

- Delays receiving follow-up appointments with some appointments being cancelled meaning long waits between appointments.

"I raised issues pertaining to issues with follow on appointments - lengthy waiting times".

"I was referred to [service name] and waited 2 years due to their repeatedly cancelling my appointments.

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- *Delays waiting for surgery:*

"I want to complaint to OUH on the gynecology appointment and surgery wait times."

"My surgery has been cancelled numerous times and I have now been waiting [number] years."

- *Delays in receiving diagnostic test results:*

"MRI scan in December 2023. Despite emailing them 6 weeks ago I've still not heard anything".

"I was referred for an MRI scan which took place on [date] September, and I still have not had result."

Five people complimented the Oxford University Hospitals on the quality of their service:

"Attended A&E at John Radcliffe Hospital and directed to Ambulatory Assessment Unit. Other than the wait (6hrs - doctors strike) the care could not be better. Saw Physicians Associate, had blood tests, ECG, X-ray and observations done and following interpretation of results by doctor, a CT scan. Medicines also supplied by pharmacy on site. Throughout the wait there was a supply of food and hot and cold drinks. I was kept informed about what was happening throughout."

"Always received excellent treatment. How the NHS manage all they do is a combination of dedication and miracle!"

Of those people who contacted us **about GP services**, the top issues were getting an appointment and communication. Of those who raised getting an appointment as a

problem some people indicated they were being directed to 111/999 by their GP practice.

"My surgery uses e-consult and it works very well if you send your request in early. I have always had a face-to-face appointment, a phone call or email reply within an hour or so. Downside is if you send in the e-consult after about 9.30 - 10am you often get a message to say appointment capacity has been reached and to contact 111."

"Blood pressure readings requested and sent months ago. Haven't heard a thing since. I know the readings were high but no idea if I should be doing anything different."

"Unable to obtain an appointment for my xx-year-old son until 6 weeks' time, as his need is not urgent".

"Long wait for appointment (one month)".

"I have been with this GP practice for [20 plus] years. Sadly it has got worse and worse. It has expanded and this has made things worse. Impossible to get any continuity of GP. And communications between patients and GPs and between GPs made harder and harder".

We hear praise for the **good care** most people receive from health professionals once they receive treatment:

"Had a telephone call back and a very thorough consultation. The doctor and reception staff were all friendly".

"This surgery is simply superb, nothing is too much trouble for anyone you speak to from the reception staff, nurses and GPs. Never before have I had a GP call me back without asking a few days after my consultation just to check I was ok. This surgery has all of the feel of a good old fashioned family doctors that really care and go above and beyond".

"Kind staff - so understanding and helpful".

People are still finding it difficult to **access NHS Dentistry** trying numerous practices across the county.

"Caller in Banbury has been trying to find an NHS dentist for her and her child, she has not seen a dentist for over 4.5 years".

"My parents live in Banbury and still have not been able to register anywhere local for NHS treatment. They have worked all their life and have their pension, but this does not stretch to private healthcare. They just paid £45 for a checkup for my Mum, she needs dentures at a cost of £3000 do you know anywhere taking on new NHS patients".

"After Covid my dentist wrote to me saying they were going private, and I was no longer on their books. I am a diabetic, on medication, I have no teeth in half my mouth as I have had to take them out due to pain, and emergency dentist telling me to take Paracetamol. This has now left me not leaving my house, due to being unable to eat properly, and when I do it causes me pain, and I have collapsed a couple of times due to not eating. I feel so low as my smile was the whole of me and it's gone and taken the best of me with it."