

Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Report to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny
Committee

February 2021

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1 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 keeping relationships with communities.

On the 18th December 2020 we hosted a webinar for Patient Participation Groups to hear from the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group about the plans and status of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. This was attended by 87 members of PPGs 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/>

We have continued to recruit to our new Community Outreach Worker post and hope to have someone in post early February. The role will continue to support our work to reach out to seldom heard groups in Oxford city. This is an exciting role if challenging in lock-down, but we are determined to make it work!

2 Reports

Since November 2020 we have published the following:

1. **Listening to Care Homes during COVID-19 follow up report** (see Section 3 below)
2. **Oxford's new and emerging communities' views on wellbeing** - January 2021.

This was circulated earlier to HOSC members and can be found here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/healthwatch-oxfordshire-reports/>

Working collaboratively with Oxford Community Action and community volunteers from Oxford's East Timorese, Pakistani, Sudanese, Syrian, Nigerian, Palestinian, East African communities and Word Fountain we ran focus groups and a questionnaire (Jan-Aug 2020) to find out about community views on wellbeing. Despite challenges of Covid, 152 people responded to the questionnaire from Oxford's diverse and multi-ethnic communities.

The report highlights there is huge interest in learning more in practical ways about health and wellbeing, with preference for this to be delivered through community settings, working with communities to develop.

However, it also highlights that communities face significant barriers to accessing some support, and there is more to be done to ensure services build trust, reflect cultural and spiritual needs, and reflect diversity in their organisations and

approach. It highlights 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 ongoing dialogue involving better community engagement, more appropriate and responsive services, and improved information and access.

3. Oxfordshire Children’s Trust Board - Healthwatch Oxfordshire Parent Survey Interim Report December 2020

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

4. Report to Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board December 2020

5. Healthwatch and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS)

Working with our fellow Healthwatch across the BOB ICS area we have also published:

Different Outcomes, Different Access to Care December 2020

The five local Healthwatch for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire carried out a review of 21 reports published by the five local Healthwatch since 2018 that are relevant to the topic ‘addressing inequalities in health and care access and outcomes’. We compared the main findings and the recommendations and showed two consistent themes. The reports we reviewed represent the experiences and views of more than 1,200 people.

The report has been sent to BOB ICS for consideration and can be found here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/reports-to-other-bodies/>

Joint Healthwatch response to NHS England’s integrating care plans consultation.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire has joined with the four local Healthwatch in the area that includes Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire to respond to an important public consultation by NHS England.

Summary of our response:

The five Healthwatch in the BOB ICS (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System) have welcomed NHS England’s continuing intention to move towards more ‘integrated’ health and social care services that are more personalised, more ‘joined up’ and equally available to all local people, with reduced inequalities in access to care and in people’s health outcomes.

However, we have some concerns about these proposals.

- The NHS England proposals do not say enough about how patients and social care users, families and unpaid carers will be heard and make a difference,

nor about the statutory role of local Healthwatch and how that will be included into new regional and more local arrangements.

- We have told NHS England that their proposals feel very ‘top down’ to us, rather than starting by thinking about a local resident who uses a local GP surgery, and thinking from there about the issues.
- We are also disappointed that the timing of the consultation meant that we did not have a chance to ask local people to contribute their views through local Healthwatch. We know from listening to people about the NHS Long Term Plan in the past that they do want to share views and experiences and make a difference to strategic planning in health and care.

The response document can be found here

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/what-we-do/campaigns-and-correspondence/>

3 Care Homes Reports

3.1 Listening to Care Homes during Covid- follow up report (October-Nov 2020)

In October we carried out a follow up of the survey of Care Homes - to build on what we had heard from 38 care homes earlier on in the pandemic¹. (This time we heard from 33 care homes.

Note: results were from the period before this recent lockdown, so aspects, for example morale, may have changed.

We heard how care homes had been working hard and creatively to develop new ways to support residents, and enable them to exercise, socialise and keep in touch with loved ones, via digital technology and Covid safety improvements such as screens. We also heard about positive improvements to PPE provision and supply, praise for Care Home Support Service and the support and training given. Overall, to the date of the research, morale among residents had largely stayed the same or improved- although mental health impacts were acknowledged. A similar trend was seen in staff morale.

However, 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.

Three recommendations were made for the system to:

1. Rapidly assess and address gaps in dentistry provision and access in care homes.

¹ See report of June 2020 <https://cdn-hwoxfordshire.pressidium.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Listening-to-care-homes-during-Covid-19.pdf>

2. Review communication channels to care homes to avoid confusion and overburdening of information.
3. To support care homes to facilitate visiting to care home and residents as soon as practicable under the circumstances.

The report has been presented to the system wide Care Homes group and will be published in early February after we have received formal responses from health and care partners.

3.2 Listening to care home residents and family members

This listening activity is ongoing. Together with local media - particularly newspaper and social media - we are working with care home providers to distribute a paper version of the online survey to hear from as many people - residents and family member - about their experience of living in a care home and the impact that COVID-19 has had.

A quick scan of the completed responses reveals support for the staff at care homes but is hard reading when people tell us about the impact on residents and family due to visiting restrictions / no visiting allowed.

We will circulate the report and a summary of findings and recommendations for HOSC when available.

4 Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West HOSC

At the November HOSC meeting the terms of reference for the proposed BOB HOSC was discussed.

Membership included two lay members and Healthwatch was asked to consider whether they wanted to take one of these places or have a standing agenda item on the agenda. Due to time constraints the five Healthwatch across the BOB ICS area have not yet agreed a collective response.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire's preferred option is to have a standing agenda item. This will:

- Enable the five Healthwatch to report on what we have heard relating to agenda items to be discussed and give the opportunity for attendance at the meetings by representatives of the five Healthwatch.
- Avoid any potential conflict of interest that might arise during the meeting - thus negating our ability to fully partake in the scrutiny of the system partners.
- Release both lay seats to the wider BOB community. We are also happy to support the BOB HOSC in recruiting to these places.

The five Healthwatch are now in contact with the relevant officers and will present our collective response to membership to them soon.