

## Healthwatch Oxfordshire Report to Health Improvement Partnership Board May 2021 Presented by Amier AlAgab- Healthwatch Ambassador

Since the last HIB meeting in February 2021 Healthwatch Oxfordshire has continued to reach out and gather people's experiences of health and social care services in the county.

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), zoom events and direct communications via local groups and media. We are also increasing face to face engagement as the Covid restrictions lift.

### 2. Recent reports

Full and summary sheets of all reports, plus responses from commissioners and providers available on: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/healthwatch-oxfordshire-reports/>

We have recently published:

#### **Experience of using pharmacists in Oxfordshire in 2020.**

We heard from 370 people between February and September 2020 about their experiences of using pharmacies in the county. Respondents valued the role, service, and presence of community pharmacies, particularly important during COVID-19; although there was some anxiety about need to queue and social distance, and initial delays to medications.

Using pharmacies for advice varied- 52% respondents 'sometimes' asked the pharmacy for advice, and 30% 'never' used pharmacy for advice. People are not always clear who they are talking to in the pharmacy, and sense 'too busy' to talk. If aspirations for role of pharmacies in NHS Long Term Plan are to be fulfilled, more needs to be done to:

- Educate the public and communicate the pharmacist's role in support of minor conditions, advice, and prevention along with specialist commissioned roles.
- Provide clear information in the pharmacy about the role, qualification, and expertise of pharmacists to provide information and support.
  - Clearly signpost pharmacist personnel within staff team at pharmacies - including availability of confidential space
  - Actively encourage the public to 'ask your pharmacist'.
- Address issues highlighted with repeat prescriptions including delays, errors, and reliability.

#### **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, some face continued challenges in accessing emergency care and NHS dentists. Our report on *Access to Oxfordshire Dental Services during Covid 19 Restrictions* captured people's experiences of dental care from later in the pandemic:

- restricted access has meant that people who cannot see a dentist for urgent care have been left in pain or with worsening oral health. • While wealthier people were able to access treatment during this time by paying privately, this effectively excludes those on lower incomes. • People told us they wanted more and fairer access to dental care across public and private sectors, especially for urgent or emergency treatment.

Despite NHS England targets being imposed, many people are still finding it difficult to get a dentist appointment. **Full report and response** from NHS Dental Commissioner available on our website.

### **Voices of the loved ones of care home residents during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Between November 2020 and the end of February 2021 59 people told us about their personal experiences of having a family member living in a care home during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will bring together organisations involved in commissioning and regulating care homes, along with local care providers, to hear responses to this report and explore way forward.

**Other reports published at this time** (as noted in previous meeting) available on website.

- Living in and around Didcot (April 2021)
- Adult Unpaid Carers (March 2021)- and round table to discuss findings
- Employed Home Carers (2021)
- GP website accessibility- review supported by Patient Participation Groups

### **Ongoing surveys**

- **Covid Vaccine**- ongoing survey. 522 responses to date. Report forthcoming. Responses showed positive views towards the vaccine along with some concerns about mixed messaging from government around second dose timing etc. Additional survey heard from people using Kassam Stadium.
- Involved in wider group looking at **vaccine hesitancy** and ways forward (convened by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group) and have supported system linking up to Boater community and other seldom heard groups
- Views on **Ear Wax Treatment** - survey investigation in response to ongoing inquiries received

### **3. Wider Healthwatch Oxfordshire Activity**

- Continued events for Patient Participation Groups (PPG)  
<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/what-we-do/ppgs/>  
60 PPG members met on 26th March via Zoom to hear about social prescribing. Fortnightly newsletter for PPGs
- We are supporting three **Community Researchers**- to undertake training and small research projects (Community Participative Action Research), via funding from Health Education England and Public Health South East. They are at the stage of identifying area of focus and will develop skills in research in their communities over the coming year.
- Holding an **Oxfordshire Wellbeing Network (OWN)** event for community outreach workers to support information sharing and networking May 19th.