

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Report to Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee February 2023

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1 Healthwatch Oxfordshire reports to external bodies

During this period we published the following reports to:

- Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board in December 2022
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) System Quality Group – briefing note to the January 2023 meeting

All the above reports are available online at:

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

2 Healthwatch Oxfordshire Open Forum

We are holding an online Open Forum on **Tuesday 28th February** from 4.30pm – 5.30pm, and all are welcome to attend. Please do come along to:

- Have your say about local health and care services
- Hear about our work and tell us your views
- Meet our board of trustees and put your questions to them.

For details, including a Zoom joining link, see [here](#).

3 Influencing change

Men's health video Oxford 2018

<https://youtu.be/GcDG7wKMZ40>

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Mens-Health-Report-Final.pdf>

This video and report were produced working jointly with East Oxford United Football Club in 2018 to reach men from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and raise awareness of the importance of NHS Health Checks. Some 200 men from the diverse communities of East Oxford gave their views as part of this community led project. Nigel Carter, of East Oxford United Football Club, later spoke about the work we did together on men's health in this Diabetes UK [webinar](#) about working in partnerships with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

The Men's Health report (page 6) noted "Given Oxfordshire's take up of NHS Health Checks is just over 50%, our research suggests that men might value opportunity for more flexible options. This could include for instance, trial of Health Checks at in a

community setting where men regularly attend, working closely with community members to establish links and spread information”.

In October 2022 Public Health Oxfordshire commissioned a new and supplementary Men’s Health Checks service to be delivered in and co-produced by members of the community. They acknowledge **“that [the video] was part of the research that led us to change this contract to offer NHS checks in the community”**.

Read more about this here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news/new-oxfordshire-nhs-health-check-supplementary-service/> The service went live in January 2023 – to find out more information about this follow this link <https://www.healthchecksoxfordshire.org/>

4 Healthwatch Oxfordshire research

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

4.1 Leaving Hospital with Medicine January 2023

In early 2022 we were asked to help Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) gain insight into patient experience of its Patient Medicines Helpline. The Helpline provides support – via email and phone – from a pharmacist to patients leaving hospital with medicines.

A survey held between July and end of September gave people an opportunity to comment on their experience of being discharged from hospital with medicines, as well as of using the Helpline. In total we heard from 113 people – 105 people via the survey and 8 people face to face at the discharge lounge in the John Radcliffe Hospital. 9 people kindly came forward to share their stories in depth, illustrating the journeys people took. Some of these stories are included at the end of the main report and on our website [here](#).

A key finding was that few respondents had heard of the Helpline. We also identified other themes around clear and timely communication about medicines and discharge waiting times.

Based on what we heard, we made a series of recommendations to the Trust, to which they responded, including to:

- Review communication and promotion of the Helpline
- Seek patient input into the written communication and instructions for patients about medicines taken home

- Review and improve discharge process within hospital
- Review and ensure patients have clear communication about follow up prescriptions and where to turn once left hospital.

[Leaving Hospital With Medicine – main report](#)

[Leaving Hospital With Medicine – executive summary including OUH response](#)

[Leaving Hospital With Medicine – easy read summary](#)

See [here](#) for a text version of the report’s executive summary, which can be viewed in large print or other formats as well as translated into different languages using the Enable ReciteMe button at the top of the web page.

5 Enter and View 2022–2023

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

We make Enter and View visits to healthcare settings to collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people’s experiences better. Based on our observation and the feedback of patients and members of staff, we highlight areas of good practice and suggest improvements. To find out more about why and how we carry out these visits see here: [Healthwatch Oxfordshire Enter and View overview](#)

With the onset of COVID and restrictions to visiting health and care settings our Enter and View activity was curtailed but with the agreement and support of Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust we conducted a visit to the Kassam Stadium NHS COVID Vaccination Centre in February 2021.

In September 2021 we recommenced a programme of Enter and View visits and have since then conducted 15 visits, with two more planned for February 2023, and published 12 reports on visits. These include visits to GP practices, community pharmacies, dentist, care homes, an outpatient service, A&E and recently the new Oxford Community Diagnostic Centre and Children’s Hospital. All reports are published on our website once the service has had a chance to respond to the recommendations. They are also sent to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Enter and View visits together with the service response to recommendations made in the reports is one of the most rewarding parts of Healthwatch Oxfordshire activity. Visits are conducted by both Healthwatch Oxfordshire staff and lay volunteers and

most often recommendations are acted upon before the reports are published. Thus local residents are involved in assessing services and changes are made that will improve the experience of service users.

Reports are found here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/enter-and-view/>

6 What we are hearing about

We continue to listen people in their communities, through our signposting service, utilising social media and via our online feedback centre. A review of activity and outcomes will be presented to the Healthwatch Oxfordshire Board of Trustees and at our Open Forum online meeting on 28th February 2023. More details can be found at the end of this report.

Outcomes from our work – To read about other outcomes see our Board papers for the 28th February 2023 Healthwatch Oxfordshire Trustees meeting which will be available on this web page <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/about-us/board-papers-and-minutes/>

6.1 GP patient registrations

In December 2022 we received 10 calls in a short period of time from patients unable to register with a GP surgery in the Didcot area. We were able to signpost them to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) team who assisted them to register with a GP, sometimes with one that had previously turned them away.

Of concern to Healthwatch Oxfordshire was that all three practices based in Didcot were at the time operating a temporary list closure to new patients. Whilst some patients were able to secure registration with a GP by making contact to the PALS service this could represent a small sector of people, and that there will be other patients seeking registration who may give up, or not have confidence, access or awareness of routes to help via Healthwatch Oxfordshire or BOB ICB PALS.

A review by Healthwatch Oxfordshire of the three GP practice websites on 27th January 2023 shows that all three practices – Woodlands Medical Centre, Oak Tree Health Centre and Didcot Health Centre are now operating a temporary suspension of new patient registrations. A review of the NHS Find a GP website – <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp/results/OX11%207GD> shows that Didcot Health Centre and Oak Tree Health Centre as accepting new patients. This is

very confusing for patients with inconsistent information being given by the NHS and individual practices.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire understand the pressures on general practices throughout the county and agree that GPs have a duty to provide a safe service. They also have a responsibility to provide primary care to people living in their area and respond to the needs of vulnerable people. Didcot is not the only area of population growth associated with housing developments. Our work with Patient Participation Groups is raising this as an emerging issue in other parts of the county.

The NHS Constitution states, amongst other promises, under the section of **'Patients and the public: your rights and the NHS pledges to you'**¹ that:

'You have the right to access NHS services. You will not be refused access on unreasonable grounds.'

Healthwatch Oxfordshire ask the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to assure itself that Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board as the responsible NHS body is keeping this pledge with regard to access to primary care to all residents of Oxfordshire.

6.2 Patient feedback on the Connect Health Service

Since October 2022 we have only received three reviews about the Connect Health Physiotherapy service via Healthwatch Oxfordshire Feedback Centre. This low number should not be interpreted as a representative sample of patient experiences, however the individual's experience and time given to write feedback is valuable for the service provider. The Feedback Centre is an online service that enables people to let us know of their experiences services they have used, these reviews are moderated and sent to the service concerned for a response. Appendix A to this report reproduces the feedback and response from Connect Health.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire has met representatives of Connect Health prior to the contract commencing to share patient experience of the previous service provider. A Connect Health representative presented to a Healthwatch Oxfordshire Patient information webinar in July 2022 attended by 23 PPG representatives. You can view the webinar here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/ppgs/patient-webinars/>

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-nhs-constitution-for-england#patients-and-the-public-your-rights-and-the-nhs-pledges-to-you>

We would welcome supporting Connect Health to establish a user group to inform the continuing service development and improvement.

Appendix A Healthwatch Oxfordshire Feedback Centre

Physiotherapy – Connect Health services

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/services/?filter=physiotherapy>

Since October 2022 we have received three reviews about the Connect Health Physiotherapy service via Healthwatch Oxfordshire Feedback Centre. These reviews relate to three different sites East Oxford Health Centre, Bicester Community Hospital and Marcham Road.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Feedback Centre – enables people to post feedback on services anonymously. Where we have the person's email address and have serious concerns about the feedback – for example, safety of service – we will contact the person via email and ask permission to send their feedback directly to the service provider together with their email address. This means they can have a direct relationship with the service provider and gain a personal response.

All anonymous feedback posted is also sent to the provider so that they hear this and are encouraged to post a response below the initial feedback on the website, for all to see.

All feedback and provider responses are moderated prior to being posted.

The reviews of Connect Health Physiotherapy Service and associated responses from the provider are found below.

October 2022

After injuring my knee, I was referred to physiotherapy via the JR Trauma Centre. I was given an initial appointment which unfortunately after contracting COVID, I was unable to attend in person. I had a telephone call with the physio who did give me some basic exercises and said she would need to see me in person. It's now been six weeks and I've still not received any such follow up appointment. I am lucky that I can afford to see a physio privately but I'm sure many people would not be able to. It's basic prevention that if physio is done correctly in the early stages of an injury such as this, there are less likely to be complications/ongoing issues. I wonder how much money it costs the NHS to provide physio compared to surgery – I should think substantially less!

October 2022

I referred myself to physio after being advised by A&E and my GP. I had a gentleman phone me up asking what I was expecting from the service?? I wanted to be able to walk with more support for my ankle which I had damaged, I also needed ultrasound to bring down inflammation. I am caring for two family members who have aggressive cancer, and I have to be able to walk to care for them. I was told they no longer offer any care!! So why was I asked what kind of help was I looking for, why couldn't they automatically say, "sorry we don't treat any acute injuries no matter if you are a carer!" I was told that if I wanted any help then I had to go private!! I'm a carer on income support, how am I supposed to pay for private treatment? I was informed that they could send me a range of exercises. Because I have had no one physically assess me, how do they know what type of exercises I needed to do? How am I supposed to know if I am doing them right and safely? I am so upset and so angry by the way I was treated, what was said and how I was completely ignored. The gentleman said if I wasn't happy with their service to make a complaint to my local CCG who will do absolutely nothing! I am absolutely furious that we have lost our physio department in the community to have urgent treatment. I was told after 8 weeks I could phone up again and reapply for treatment, but I may only get exercise emailed to me again. I messaged my GP in desperation and he has referred me to the fracture clinic for additional help. I can't emphasise what a dreadful conversation I had, being refused all treatment and told if I need the care that I am requesting was to pay to go private!! This is not a service. This is shambolic!!

Reply from Connect Health:

Dear Service User,

Thank you for taking the time to leave this feedback. I am sorry that you have had a negative experience with the service and I would love to be able to look into your concerns in more depth. If you would be happy to discuss this matter further with me, then please can you email us at generalenquiries@connecthealth.co.uk with your name, DOB and contact number, asking to be contacted by the Oxfordshire Operations Manager and I will be sure to get in touch.

Best wishes

Avril

Oxfordshire Operations Manager

December 2022

I was referred to Connect Health by the Community Physio Service. The first contact was the triage phone call. I was given exercises without being seen, including the hard bridge exercise. I complained as I had not been seen and was told by the community physio that this was a hard exercise. I decided not to do the exercises given by Connect Health until I was seen and continue with the community physio exercises that was described by the Connect Health physio as good.

I was seen by the Connect Health Physio on Friday 16th December 2022. I was given exercises that are not as hard at the initial appointment. The room was basic. A height adjustable couch that was narrow. There was no other equipment e.g. stair to practice get advice walking up and down them with advice from a physio. I live in a bungalow. I later found out that no clinic has equipment. My foot drops so I wanted some advice as I feel terrified coping with kerbs, thresholds, steps and stairs. I have falls. This service is not like the NHS. As Connect Health contract is for a period, there is no incentive to provide equipment.

The physio was unable to book another appointment as there were none available. It does not look like you see the same person each time. I rang the appointment booking line after the weekend and no appointments were available. I will try again in the new year but it is Connect Health to contact me and not me trying again and again to get an appointment to be told nothing is available. I need to be seen in South Oxfordshire.

I am concerned about the quality of care provided by Connect Health as a partner of the NHS. The standard of care is well below previous experiences of physiotherapy.

Anonymous

Reply from Connect Health:

Thank you for taking the time to provide this feedback. We take all feedback seriously and value the opportunity to use it to improve the quality of our services.

It is difficult to comment on specific exercise prescriptions without knowing the details of your condition. If you would like me to take a more in depth look into this please do contact us on complaints@connecthealth.co.uk and I would be happy to examine it further.

This is one of our smaller clinics and is a new location that was not offered by the previous provider. Due to its size we unfortunately do not have the space for gym equipment on site but we do have this equipment at many of our other sites based across the county and would be happy to see you in some of our larger south based clinics (Witney/Wallingford/Henley) where we have this type of equipment and space. If you would like to discuss your complaint more extensively with me please do contact us on complaints@connecthealth.co.uk. Thanks again for taking the time to feedback.