

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Report to Health and Wellbeing Board – December 2025

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Since the last Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) meeting in September:

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Board

We held a **public open forum** meeting with Healthwatch Oxfordshire Board and team for members of the public to attend to hear about our activity and ask questions – online on 19 November.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire reports to external bodies

Since the last Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) September meeting we attended:

- Health Improvement Board (lay ambassador)
- HWBB workshop on Neighbourhood Health
- Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Board (Nov 2025)
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board.

Any reports to external bodies we attend can be found online at: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-reports/reports-to-other-bodies/>. We attend Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership monthly (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board – BOB ICB) among additional BOB ICB committees, including the Quality Committee.

We have been engaged in workshops by health and care system to scope and develop towards **Neighbourhood Health**, including at HWBB, BOB ICB level, and Oxfordshire, and Oxfordshire Marmot Place meetings.

Hearing from residents - Healthwatch Oxfordshire research and insight reports

Our research reports focus on making sure the voice of people who use services is directly linked to recommendation of improvement or change. Hearing from people on the topics is carried out using a variety of methods, including online, face to face, and targeted work, linking to community groups, and on the streets. All our reports and written responses to our

recommendations from commissioners and providers can be seen here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports> All reports are available in summary and Easy Read.

- Current survey to hear from the public about **End of life care** here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/have-your-say/complete-a-survey/> Planning in close liaison with Oxfordshire Palliative Care Network.
- We will be reaching out to the public and other stakeholders shortly to feed into our planning priorities and to help inform our areas of focus for the coming year 2026-7

Since September, we have published the following **reports**:

- **Trans and Non Binary people's experiences of GPs** (hearing from 45 people)
- **Digital care and the NHS App** (hearing from 823 people)

See report summaries below.

To see more about the **impact** of our reports and how we ensure people's voice makes a difference see here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/impact/impact-of-our-research/> We follow up on recommendations and action with providers or commissioners at six months.

Trans and non-binary people's experiences of GP services in Oxfordshire

Trans, non-binary and gender diverse (trans+) people are more likely to experience poor physical and mental health, and to face barriers in getting the health and care they need.

As part of a national study, Healthwatch England commissioned Healthwatch Oxfordshire to listen to local trans+ people in the county about their experiences of using GP services. We heard from 45 trans+ people via an online survey, in-person outreach and in-depth phone conversations.

What did we hear?

We heard that there are examples of good practice across Oxfordshire, where trans+ people are treated with respect and dignity, and able to access the care they need – but that this is inconsistent.

Some of the trans+ people we spoke to do not feel confident using their GP practice. People told us about barriers and challenges including:

- Long waits for NHS Gender Dysphoria Clinics (GDCs) and a lack of support while waiting
- A 'postcode lottery' of access to gender-affirming hormone therapy
- GPs not having the understanding of, or confidence in, trans healthcare to provide the support people need
- A lack of clarity and transparency in terms of what trans+ people can expect from GP practices and how to access care and support
- Not being respected, or being misgendered, by practice staff
- Problems with changing personal details (such as name, title and gender marker), including people losing their previous NHS records, being misgendered at the practice or in communications, and losing access to preventative screening.

"My GP seems okay with my identity but was not comfortable with continuing my testosterone prescription without specialist involvement even though I have been discharged by the NHS GDC back into the care of the GP."

"GP did not feel qualified to do anything and relied on me to get informed."

"My GP changed my gender marker without my consent or asking me if that was what I wanted at the time. I hadn't started transitioning medically and I would have preferred to wait as I was going through health issues and this just made things more difficult to explain to NHS specialists outside of transition related care."

We heard about the positive difference it makes when:

- GP practice staff are compassionate, respectful and willing to learn
- GPs support people to access and navigate gender-affirming care, for example through referrals, bridging prescriptions, shared care or blood tests
- Administrative changes are made quickly and effectively.

"My GP is empathetic and has been proactive in learning about things that are less familiar and chasing up possible avenues for me to receive some specific procedures."

"We appreciate all the hard work to be inclusive, accepting, patient and understanding. Every doctor has checked my name and pronouns."

What happens next?

We have sent our report to Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, which commissions GP services in Oxfordshire. They have committed to commissioning training for GP practice staff on understanding and competency in trans healthcare, providing guidance for GPs on prescribing gender-affirming hormone therapy, and setting up an LGBT+ page on their engagement platform, Your Voices.

Talk to us!

You can share feedback about your GP practice and other health and care services at:

- healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/services
- hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk
- 01865 520520

Local support

Here are details of some local support organisations:

- Local events and organisations for trans+ people in Oxford oxfordtransrights.org/trans-in-oxford
- Abingdon Queer Action [@abingdonqueeraction](https://www.instagram.com/abingdonqueeraction) on Instagram and [@abingdonqueer](https://www.facebook.com/abingdonqueer) on Facebook
- Topaz – social group for LGBT+ young people www.topazoxford.org.uk
- Silver Pride – Age UK events for older LGBTQ+ people in Didcot and Banbury. Contact community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or 01235 849434
- My Life My Choice LGBT self-advocacy group – for LGBT people with a learning disability mylifemychoice.org.uk/lgbt-group

Thanks to everyone who shared their views with us!

You can read our full report by scanning the QR or at healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/report/trans-experiences



Digital health care and the NHS App – voices from Oxfordshire

What did we do?

NHS England is undergoing major reform, including the expansion of digital health tools and services such as the NHS App. Although there is evidence of the benefits of using digital technology for health care, many people still face barriers using it.

We ran two surveys (one online and one face-to-face) to capture the views and experiences of people from a variety of backgrounds across Oxfordshire. In total we heard from 823 people.

What did we hear?

- Almost everyone said that they had heard of the NHS App, and most people had used it at least once.
- The commonest reasons for using the App were to:
 - Order repeat prescriptions (76%)
 - View personal health records and GP notes (70%)
 - Book and manage health appointments (43%)
- 58% of people agreed that the NHS App helps them manage their health and care.
- People value the ease of use, convenience, efficiency and access to information on the App.

"Seeing detailed test results gives me the full information that the GP is able to see."

"All the information and services that I need are at hand 24/7. Paperless prescriptions is great and I'm able to check when they are ready."

"I'm on lots of medication and ordering repeats is very easy for me."

Those who told us they had poor access to technology (signal, cost or equipment) or low confidence or skills in using digital methods, and those wanting to maintain choice around use of digital health care, found it difficult to use the NHS App or chose not to use it.

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- A quarter of the people we reached face-to-face across the county told us they had not used the NHS App.
- There is geographical variation – not all GP practices offer access to the full range of digital services on the App.
- Many people said they felt that digital technology is too impersonal and overlooks the essential 'human contact' aspect of health care.
- Some people feel 'forced' into using the App and are worried that digitalisation might affect their access and choice in health care.

"I would rather not have my health managed by an app. I would prefer to see a GP."

"I feel people who cannot use digital tools will be excluded from the health system in the future. I do not know how to use a computer and don't know how apps work."

What do we think should be improved?

Based on what you told us, we have made a series of recommendations for improvements, around:

- Increasing tailored support and accessibility for patients to use the NHS App
- Clarity about choice and data safety
- Involving patients in testing future NHS app development
- Addressing barriers in Oxfordshire, including rural digital access and cost



You can read our recommendations in full in our report – see the link below.

What happens next?

We have sent our report and recommendations to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and other health leaders in Oxfordshire.

We will continue to share what you told us about using the NHS App with health and care decision-makers in Oxfordshire.

Thanks to everyone who shared their views with us!

You can read our report in full by scanning the QR code or at www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/nhs-app



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Community research:

We continue to bring our expertise in supporting **community and participatory research**, and working with communities to explore issues and voice issues of importance to them. We have been working with Sunrise Multicultural Centre, looking at barriers to cancer care, working with a member of the Chinese Community to hear from this group, and with OX4 Food Crew to hear from families in temporary accommodation.

We are leading an additional funded piece of work (funded by and in support of next steps in Oxfordshire Community Research Network) to develop a practical **‘how to’ resource for community members to take part in community research**. The development of this resource is through a series of participatory workshops (Sept-Dec) with local grassroots groups, including with Oxford Community Action, AFIUK, Transition Lighthouse, Sudanese and Nepali community among others, building on the insights and learning from community members skills and knowledge. It has relevance and potential to wider community development, resident voice and asset based capacity building approaches, including Neighbourhood Health and Marmot Place, and wider health inequalities work in Oxfordshire and BOB ICB.

Enter and View visits and reports:

Staff and lay volunteer representatives 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 the feedback of patients and members of staff, we highlight areas of good practice and suggest improvements. <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/enter-and-view/>

Since the last meeting we have published the following Enter and View report:

- Well Pharmacy, Marston (Oct 2025).

Other activity summary:

- Our **Q2 Jul-Sep (2025-6)** activity summary is now available (**see below**).
- See here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/impact/> with examples of how our work has had an impact.
- Recordings and slides, and joining details for our **public webinars** can be seen here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news-and-events/patient-webinars/> Since the last meeting we held a webinar on **Cancer care in Oxfordshire** with speakers from Maggie's and Thames Valley Cancer Alliance.
- **Our next webinar will be Tuesday January 20th 2026 1-2 p.m. on the topic of Neighbourhood Health. All welcome.**
- **We publish bi-weekly news bulletins** to bring up to date health and care information to the public (to read previous issues and to sign up to receive a copy see <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news-and-events/newsbriefing/>), as well as active social media platforms, website and sharing communications via local news and community networks.
- We published our response to Parliament call for evidence on reproductive health conditions in girls and young women (Sept 2025). All correspondence can be seen here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/news-and-events/correspondence/>
- We carry out active listening, engagement and **ongoing outreach** to community groups, at events and on the street and other settings across the county, and gain insights into experiences and views on health and care along with via phone and our online feedback centre. We have a rolling programme of hospital visits to speak to the public. See below (Q2 summary) for some of the places we have been in July to September.
- We have been actively working with **Patient Participation Groups** (PPGs) across the county, attended PPG meetings and sending news updates, including meetings for example South Oxfordshire Patient's Association, White Horse Medical and Newbury Practice AGMs.

July to September 2025

Activity and achievements

Hearing from you

- **71** people contacted us for help or information about local health and social care services. The top three services we heard about were GP services, outpatient services and musculoskeletal (MSK) services.
- We received **134** reviews of **57** health and care services via our Feedback Centre. We received **19** responses to reviews from service providers.



Our Enter and View work

We made **3** Enter and View visits – to the Outpatients Blue Area at the John Radcliffe Hospital, the Children's Ward at the Horton General Hospital and the Breast Imaging Centre at the Churchill Hospital. We heard from **21** patients and **35** members of staff during these visits. All our Enter and View reports, which set out our recommendations, together with a response from the service provider about the changes they will make, can be read at www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports



Out and about

We continued our programme of general and targeted outreach visits to speak to people about their experiences of using health and social care services. We attended five Play Days across the county, the Leys Afrobeats Festival and Abingdon Health Fest, as well as visiting community centres, ladders and libraries. Between July and September we spoke to **506** people as a result of our visits. Over the summer, we focused our outreach on gathering insights into how people use the NHS App. Thank you to Charlbury Patient Participation Group (pictured top right) for joining us on a visit to the town to talk to people about this.

In September we attended the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre as part of our regular programme of hospital visits, hearing from **45** people. We reported back what we heard to Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust so they can use this feedback to make improvements.



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July to September 2025

Activity and achievements

NEW REPORT ON WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

We published our report setting out what we'd heard from **684** women and people who use local **women's health services**. The report captures views and experiences on accessing and using women's health services, health services generally, and getting breast or cervical screening.

Impact so far:

- The report is being used to inform the development of a women's health strategy for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.
- Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has committed to reduce waiting times for specialist women's health clinics, improve patient information about screening and procedures, and training staff in cultural competency and trauma-informed care.

Read this report at www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports

"Healthwatch reports are a key part of our insights that inform strategy and planning. We are currently drafting our women's health strategy for this year and key aspects of this report are included in our priority setting."

Heidi Beddall, Deputy
Chief Nursing Officer at
NHS BOB ICB



COMMUNITY RESEARCH IN ACTION

We started work on a new project working with members from grassroots community groups to collaboratively develop a toolkit for community researchers in Oxfordshire. Funded by Oxfordshire Community Research Network, the resource will set out the steps to support groups to be able to carry out research themselves.

We also supported:

- OX4 Food Crew to focus on experience of families living in temporary accommodation and access to healthy food.
- A Well Together group to explore more about black women's experiences of maternity services.
- A member of the Chinese Community to undertake interviews reaching voices of this community in Oxfordshire.

We also:

- ✓ Held a webinar about the new 10 Year Health Plan for England, attended by more than **60** people.
- ✓ Received more than **800** responses to our survey asking for people's views on using the NHS App.
- ✓ Attended six Patient Participation Group meetings to help support PPGs and share good practice.



Read more about the impact of our work at www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/impact