

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Report to Health and Wellbeing Board – May 2026

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Since the last Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) meeting 12 March 2026

Healthwatch Oxfordshire reports to external bodies

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

- Health Improvement Board
- Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Board (April 2026)
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board
- Oxfordshire Military and Civilian Partnership.

Any reports to external bodies we attend can be found online at <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports-to-committees>

We attend Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership monthly, and attended the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) Quality Committee.

We attend Primary and Community Board, Neighbourhood Health working groups, and Oxfordshire Health Inequalities Forum and Oxfordshire Marmot Place meetings.

We published our priorities and focus for the coming year 2026-27 here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-priorities>

We have published Healthwatch Oxfordshire responses to Oxford Health draft strategic framework, and to government consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/correspondence>

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 recommendations of improvement or change. Hearing from people 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. Due to local pre-election restrictions we delayed publication of reports during this period. 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.

- We completed our engagement on End of Life Care, and will be publishing a report at the end of May
- We finished the outreach and engagement in early April across **14 rural settlements** along with Community First Oxfordshire as part of the **Marmot focus on health inequalities**. This work, was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) for the Marmot insight). We are currently analysing data and will have a final draft report for OCC at the end of May.



Since the last meeting in March we published the following reports based on what we've heard from the public. Insights give lived experience perspectives, and valuable indicators for health and social care services as they navigate the shift to Neighbourhood Health.

- **Your feedback about Cora Health** (provider of musculoskeletal services) (January 2025 - January 2026 feedback from 90 people). We heard some positive feedback about timely and effective care. However, unfortunately most people told us about challenges experienced in getting support from Cora Health, including poor communication, unclear information, trouble making convenient appointments, long waits, cancelled appointments and problems with referrals. Our recommendations, and provider and commissioner responses can be seen with the report.
- **What we heard about GP services in Oxfordshire** (April 2025 - March 2026 feedback from 786 people). We presented to Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) working group on GP services in April. (Published this week)



Snapshot reports:

- What you told us about mental health services

What you told us about using mental health services



In 2025 we heard from more than 100 people about their experiences of seeking support for their mental health. People contacted us by phone, email, our online Feedback Centre, and spoke to us when we were out and about.

We also visited the Keystone Hubs across the county, and carried out two Enter and View visits to Littlemore and Warneford Hospitals. People we spoke to had experience of a range of services, including Talking Therapies, CAMHS, Adult Mental Health Teams, Keystone Hubs and voluntary sector support like MIND, Restore and the Samaritans.

We will publish a longer report about what people told us, but here is a summary of some of the themes we heard, which include:

Helpful and compassionate help when people found the right support for them...

There should be more understanding about mental health services - to really understand what the patient is going through. I was passed around in adult mental services which made me very ill as they could not understand my mental health needs. Keystone Hub in Banbury were fantastic and offered the support and care I needed to make my mental health better.

Used a bereavement service in Talking Therapies, a six-week course which was online and was really helpful.

People who listened and validated my experiences... Making friends who understand mental health issues.

I really enjoy coming to the art class at the Keystone Hub. It gives me something to look forward to. It's just nice to know that I have someone with and to receive good advice.

Challenges and long waiting times in finding support...

Very difficult to get mental health support for one of my cared for family.

Mental health services are overwhelmed and unable to respond affectively to anything but the most severe cases.

Waiting lists for treatment after mental health diagnosis is far too long.

CAMHS support while waiting - it's hard to get the right provision at the right time.

Some told us about the things that support mental wellbeing, including exercise, being with friends and family, hobbies and connecting with nature...



We also heard about things that cause stress and affect people's mental wellbeing, including accessing a GP as first point, impact of poor health, loneliness and isolation, rural access challenges, money and work worries, and wider national and global uncertainty...

Some people told us about the need for more culturally appropriate, accessible and tailored support:

More Asian agencies to help people who struggle with mental health.

Better access to mental health services for teenagers and young people.

Nothing for men... especially around mental health, trying to find things for my generation, especially when retired, is difficult, especially mental health.

For information and support

- See the **Live Well Oxfordshire** website <https://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk> for details of organisations and activities to help you stay healthy and well
- See the **Oxford Health** website <https://oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/support-advice/what-to-do-in-an-emergency> for details of mental health support in an emergency, including contacting **NHS 111** to access the 24/7 Mental Health Helpline
- The **Oxfordshire Mind** website www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk also gives details of local support and services, including the Oxfordshire Mind Guide



Please get in touch with us if you have a question about local health services or would like to tell us about your experience of using a service.

You can call us on **01865 520520** or email hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk



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Community research

Healthwatch Oxfordshire continues to bring our expertise in supporting **community and participatory research** and working with communities to explore issues and voice issues of importance to them. As noted above, we have been working with Sunrise Multicultural Project, 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, as well as the Black Women in Maternity Group.

- ✓ See our website for links to all community research supported by Healthwatch Oxfordshire, as well as resources, and local links to other community research <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/community-research>
- ✓ We attended a celebration event of Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) at Reading University on 23rd April, showcasing work by community researchers across the Thames Valley, including Oxfordshire, with keynote speaker Dr Priya Singh, Chair of Thames Valley Integrated Care Board.
- ✓ Healthwatch Oxfordshire shared insights on our journey, case studies and experience of community research with the Thames Valley Research Engagement Network (REN) in an interview piece here: <https://researchengagementnetwork.notion.site/Stories-and-updates-272f5d0ad77d8051a753da07454ce6a1>)
- ✓ We are an active member of **Oxfordshire Community Research Network** and continue to contribute to its development.

Participatory research is supported by Healthwatch Oxfordshire working alongside community members. Since the last meeting we have published the following reports:

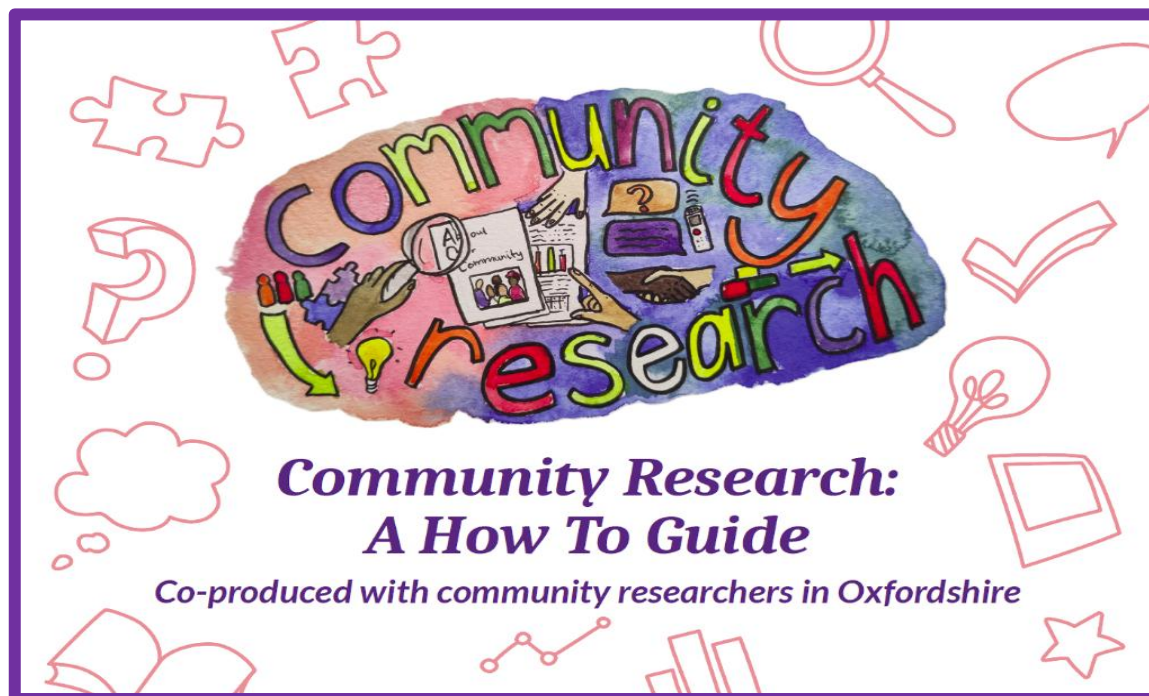
- **What we heard about cancer and access to healthcare** – community research with Sunrise Multicultural Project who wanted to understand the experiences of some of the communities they support in Banbury Neithrop and Ruscote, especially South Asian women – including what barriers people face to getting a timely diagnosis and what would support people to find and get help for cancer early on. As a result of this work, breast nurse, Sam Evans visited the women to listen and share information, and a translated leaflet has been made.

- **I do not know what to do or who to see when I am ill – hearing from older Chinese people** – We supported a community researcher who carried out interviews with 20 older Cantonese-speaking people from Oxfordshire. We heard that older Chinese people had both positive and negative experiences of using health and care services. We heard about barriers to care, particularly:
 - Language barriers and patchy access to interpreting support
 - Difficulty making GP appointments
 - Long waits for care.

We also heard how these challenges, particularly a lack of tailored communication or proper interpreting support, can compound each other, meaning that some people were waiting for an initial appointment over months rather than weeks. We heard that in several instances people chose not to contact health services when they were unwell, or had to go without care despite having tried to seek help.

- **Black women in Maternity** – research led by this group hearing from women from African Caribbean heritage and their experiences of maternity care. This fed into Amos Review of Maternity care, and will continue to build a dialogue with maternity services in the county. Healthwatch Oxfordshire supported the group with the research process.
- **Publication of a ‘How to guide’ for community researchers** – co-produced with community researchers in Oxfordshire (see below).

We are pleased to launch this week a 'Community Research a How to Guide', co-produced with community researchers in Oxfordshire



See here for online version <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/community-research-how-to-guide> which can be used by anyone in Oxfordshire and is free for others to promote and use.

This is the culmination of work in Sept-Dec 2025 when we held a series of participatory workshops with local grassroots groups, including Oxford Community Action, AFIUK, Transition Lighthouse, Sudanese and Nepali community among others, building on the insights and learning from community members skills and knowledge. (Funding for us to convene and run workshops by

Oxford University, via Oxfordshire County Council) to develop the Oxford Community Research Network. Healthwatch Oxfordshire then resourced it to fruition, editing and designing the guide with local designer, getting it printed, and developing it in an online format. We shared this printed report with the community members on 13th May at Rose Hill, and together looked at next steps for supporting groups to use the guide, continue skills development and working with members of Oxfordshire Community Research Network.

The development of this resource took 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 Thames Valley ICB.

Enter and View visits and reports:

Staff and lay 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. See <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/enter-and-view-reports>

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

- St Leonard's Ward, Wallingford Community Hospital
- Ashurst Ward at Littlemore Mental Health Centre

The impact of our Enter and View visits



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Other activity summary

- See here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-impact/> with examples of how our work has had an impact, including our **Q4 Jan-Mar (2025-26)** activity summary
- Recordings to watch and slides, and joining details for our **public webinars** can be seen here <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-webinars>

Since the last meeting we held a webinars for the public on:

- ✓ **Putting Marmot Principles into Practice in Oxfordshire.**
- ✓ **Oxford Health Strategy** which we convened with Healthwatch Bucks.



- **We publish bi-monthly 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/our-newsletter>), as well as active social media platforms, website and sharing communications via local news and community networks.
- 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. Outreach in the last quarter (Jan-Mar 2026) included:
 - Focus groups and talking to people on the street to hear from rural towns and villages as part of Marmot engagement work – in Watchfield, Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon, Deddington, Shrivenham, Chalgrove and Sonning Common
 - Outreach to parent groups to hear about maternity services, including in Rose Hill, Banbury, Witney
 - Eid Extravaganza in Blackbird Leys

- In Jan-Mar 2026 Healthwatch Oxfordshire was contacted by **97 people** looking for information and advice about a wide range of services. The **top three services** people contacted us about this quarter were GP services (26), hospital outpatients services (16) and maternity care (12)
- We received **94 reviews from the public** of **51** health and care services via our Feedback centre. We received **29 responses** to reviews from service providers. To leave a review here: <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/feedback-on-a-local-service>
- We continue actively working with **Patient Participation Groups** (PPGs) across the county, attended PPG meetings and sending news updates, and supporting involvement in development of Neighbourhood Health.