

## Healthwatch Oxfordshire (HWO) report to Health Improvement Board (HIB) 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Presented by Healthwatch Oxfordshire Research and Projects Officer, Katharine Howell

### Purpose / Recommendation

- For questions and responses to be taken in relation to Healthwatch Oxfordshire insights.

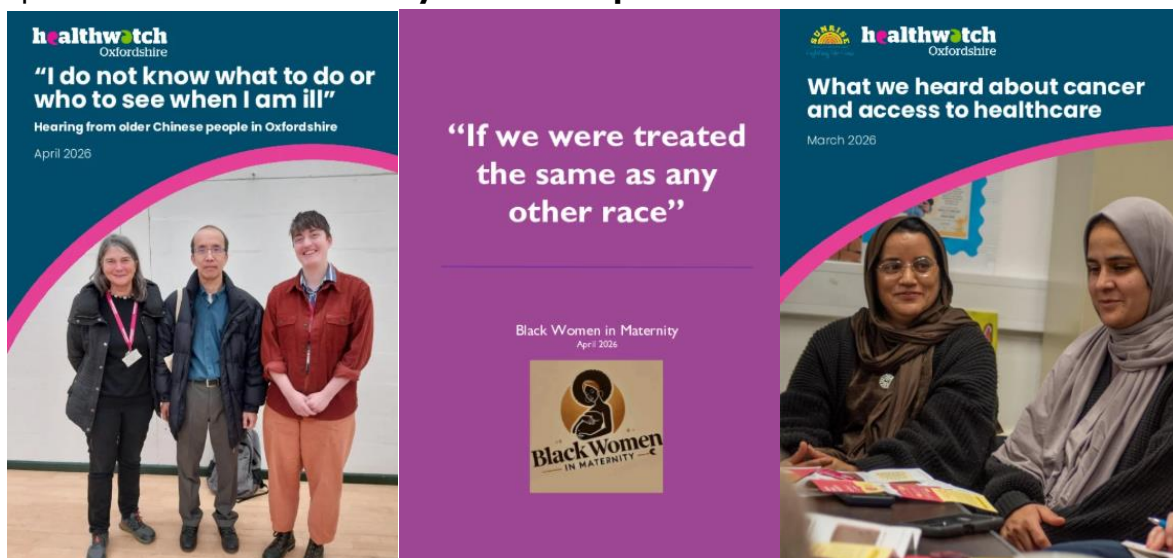
### Background

Healthwatch Oxfordshire continues to listen to the views and experiences of people in Oxfordshire about health and social care. We use a variety of methods to hear from people including surveys, outreach, community research, and work with groups including Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), voluntary and community groups and those who are seldom heard. We build on our social media presence and output to raise the awareness of Healthwatch Oxfordshire and to support signposting and encourage feedback. We ensure our communications, reports and website are accessible with provision of Easy Read and translated options.

### Key Issues

Since the last meeting in February 2026:

- We published three **community research reports**:



- **What we heard about cancer and access to healthcare**

We supported Sunrise Multicultural Project to hear from the communities they work with in Banbury Neithrop and Ruscote, particularly South Asian women, about cancer and access to healthcare. The report highlights how many women faced long waits for GP, dentist and hospital appointments, difficulties getting interpreting support, and mixed experiences of cancer information and diagnosis. It also includes recommendations to improve interpreting provision, GP access, cancer awareness and culturally appropriate care. We have shared the report and will continue dialogue with key local health decision-makers to bring about change as part of the community action research cycle, and will feed our findings into the local Cancer Alliance 10 Year Strategy, which is currently in development. Other outcomes include a translated leaflet about breast screening and a visit from breast care nurse Sam Evans to one of Sunrise's groups.

- **Hearing from older Chinese people in Oxfordshire**

We supported community researcher Derek Ng to interview 20 older Cantonese-speaking people from Oxfordshire about their experiences of health and care services. We heard about language barriers and a lack of interpreting and communication support, including when booking and attending GP appointments. People told us that health and care services could use text messages and outreach to community centres to share information and hear their voices. The report has been shared with providers and decision-makers and we are working with the Oxfordshire Older Chinese People's Centre to connect people with services and information.

*"Interpreter! I need help from an interpreter. It is quite troublesome if there was no help from interpreter. My daughter could not do the job right as both her Chinese and English languages were not fluent."*

*"I think I did manage to understand up to like 70% of the whole conversation. It was because he sometimes used medical terms which I did not understand. So I guess I covered about 70% only."*

*"It gets a bit more complicated as well in case you want a face-to-face appointment. They rather offer telephone appointment which is not ideal for me. I do have a problem in using phone as I find it difficult to express myself over the phone."*

- **"If we were treated the same as any other race" - Black Women in Maternity (BWIM)**

BWIM is a community project providing a maternity peer support and mentoring group for Black women in Oxford, funded by Well Together. Healthwatch

Oxfordshire supported BWIM to produce a community research report highlighting the maternity experiences of 52 Black women in Oxfordshire. The project heard that women valued being listened to, receiving clear and useful information, being offered pain relief when needed, and feeling supported by those providing their care. Women also shared their ideas for improving maternity care and support, including better education and postnatal support for new mothers.

BWIM shared its report with the Amos Review, a national independent investigation into maternity and neonatal Services in England. The findings have also been shared with local maternity services and decision-makers. BWIM is now working on next steps, including hosting an event and producing a leaflet to support dialogue with service providers and decision-makers, and to ensure women's experiences continue to inform improvements in care.

This report enhances and builds on past community research bringing the voice of lived experience into maternity (see for example film Black Women in Maternity by community researcher Omotunde Coker here [Women's views on maternity care | Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#) and subsequent development of Early Lives, Equal Start project and collaborative work with maternity services and grassroots communities [Equal Start – Flo's - The Place in the Park](#))

- **We launched a 'How to Guide – co-produced with community researchers in Oxfordshire'** - to enable communities to do their own community action research about what matters to them



**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).

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 are developing 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.

- We heard from **851 people** across 14 **rural areas** (Deddington, Cropredy, Heyford, Yarnton, Chipping Norton, Charlbury, Long Hanborough, Freeland, Chalgrove, Sonning Common, Faringdon, Stanford in the Vale, Shrivenham and Watchfield) for Oxfordshire County Council as part of the **Marmot focus on health inequalities**. We worked in partnership with Community First Oxfordshire and heard from people through surveys, outreach and focus groups. Emerging themes include gaps around transport, housing and provision for young people, the wealth of community groups supporting health and wellbeing in rural areas and the precarity of these groups and organisations due to challenges including funding. Publication due September 2026.
- We also published **four insight summary reports**:
  - **What we heard about GP services in Oxfordshire**, April 2025 – March 2026 – summarising feedback from 786 people about GP services. While most people were positive about the quality of care they received, we also heard about challenges accessing GP services – including contacting practices and booking appointments – as well as difficulties getting prescriptions and interpreting support.
  - **What you told us about using mental health services** – summarising the experiences of more than 100 people who told us about their experiences of seeking support for their mental health during 2025. We heard from some people about long waits and difficulties accessing appropriate services, while others shared positive experiences when support was timely and compassionate. This was shared with providers and presented to the Mental Health Prevention Concordat Partnership.

- **What you told us about Cora Health** – summarising what we have heard about Cora Health (formerly Connect Health), which provides musculoskeletal (MSK) services across Oxfordshire. This report brings together feedback we have received from 90 people between January 2025 and January 2026. While some patients experienced timely and effective care, most reported difficulties accessing support. Common concerns included poor communication, unclear information, long waits, cancelled appointments, challenges booking appointments and problems with referrals. We made recommendations to Cora Health and Thames Valley Integrated Care Board – their response is published on our website.
- **Hearing from men in Faringdon** – in November 2025, we spent a morning in Faringdon talking to men about their health in support of the Oxfordshire Men’s Health Partnership’s annual *30 Chats in 30 Days* initiative. The conversations we had with 30 men gave us valuable insight into what affects their health and wellbeing, and highlighted practical ways that support could be improved. We shared our findings with the Oxfordshire Men’s Health Partnership.

All reports are available to read via [our website](#), together with Easy Read, provider responses, and examples of [the impact of our research](#).

**Enter and View** reports and visits continue. Once complete, all reports and provider responses are available [on our website](#) including:

- St Leonard’s Ward at Wallingford Community Hospital
- Ashurst Ward at Littlemore Mental Health Centre
- Katharine House Hospice

Since the last meeting we also made an Enter and View visit to the Radiology OMRI unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

#### **Other activity:**

- We held two public webinars:
  - **Putting Marmot Principles into Practice**, March 2026 – with speakers including Olivia Clymer, Director of Strategy and Partnerships at Oxford University Hospitals, Community Health Development Officers Lydia Avann and Alexa Bailey, and Rachel Boland from Age UK Oxfordshire
  - **Help shape Oxford Health’s new strategy**, April 2026 – run jointly with Healthwatch Bucks, giving people the chance to share their feedback on Oxford Health’s new five-year strategy.

Recordings of these and previous webinars and joining details are available to watch [on our website](#).

- In **Quarter 4** we engaged directly with approximately 352 people across the county through being on the streets, attending events, hospital stands, community gatherings and Patient Participation Group meetings. Our focus during this time was around talking to people about living in rural communities, but we also attended several community events to hear from women about their experiences of using maternity services. We have had great days out talking to people at the Oxford Eid Extravaganza events in Blackbird Leys and the Sanctuary Fair in Florence Park.
- We have been participating in Neighbourhood Health workshops, to highlight the need for pathways for patients and residents to be part of the design of this shift towards care closer to home.
- Our most recent **Board Open Forum** was on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May** online.



➤ **Future of Healthwatch**

Healthwatch Oxfordshire continues an independent charity to be here to listen to people using health and care services and ensuring their voices are heard by decision makers – [sign up to our news bulletin](#) to hear about our work.

The recent publication of the Health Bill <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/4124> includes removal of statutory function of Healthwatch as an independent voice. We are working closely with health and social care system to explore future iterations for our charity.