

Make sure your voice is heard

By Eddie Duller OBE
Chairman



The conversations about how the arrangements for your health and social care are likely to change are hotting up.

Those responsible for the services are making the assumption that people will welcome their approach to bring the services closer to your doorstep, and that may well turn out to be true.

But, as usual, the devil will be in the detail and we have yet to reach that stage.

Formal consultation is not due to start until October, but there is no reason why you cannot pose your questions and opinions now.

So far the authorities are talking in their own language, their ideas peppered with phrases and acronyms which can be fairly meaningless to the general public.

In an effort to make matters clearer we have launched a jargon-buster guide on our website, where we are also spelling out their latest ideas in plain English.

There are opportunities for you to ask questions through our website and we will raise them with those responsible for making the proposals for change.

You can also raise them directly at a series of meetings being arranged throughout the county.

Either way, I urge you to speak up now.

Speak up on health and care changes

Health and care services in Oxfordshire are going to be changing over the next few years. There will be a major transformation in where and how some services are delivered - with the aim of making them 'closer to home'.

Changes in people's health, the fact that people are living longer and very little growth in health spending means more has to be done with the resources available to ensure people can live healthy lives and still receive quality services.

Did you know?

- 61% of people in Oxfordshire are overweight or obese;
- 32% more people will have diabetes by 2030;
- 30% more people will be over the age of 85 by 2025;
- More than 50% of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14;
- 12 days is the average time between receiving long-term home care after they're ready;
- 29% of patients have told us that the wait to see their GP was unacceptable;
- 30% of GPs plan to retire in the next five years;
- 50-60% of stroke patients have been unable to access the Early

Supported Discharge service;

- £200m of NHS money needs to be spent differently to make sure services are best able to meet future health needs.

At the moment, people from the health service, including GPs, other clinicians, managers and representatives of the county council are looking at the needs of Oxfordshire's population as well as the concerns the system is facing to come up with options for how services might look in the near future.

What's not changing?

- The NHS will continue to provide a comprehensive service, available to all;
- Access to NHS services will continue to be based on clinical need, not an individual's ability to pay;
- The NHS will continue to provide high quality care that is safe and effective;
- The NHS will continue to work in partnership with other organisations in the interest of patients, local communities and the wider population.
- You will be able to access care provided by your local GP;
- When you need hospital treatment, you will get it;
- When you need emergency treatment, you will get it.

How you can take part in the talks

These leaders would like the views of the public to help them shape the options for services. Over the summer they will be conducting a number of events across the county so that people can read about the early ideas for services and have their voices heard to shape these options.

Once the options are finalised, there will be a formal public consultation, which will be sometime in the autumn 2016.

You can find out more about the public events on our website www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk or at Talking Health, which is run by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group by going to: www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/talking-health/

We're also producing fact sheets about the changes, which you can find at www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/fact-sheets or you can give us a call on 01865 520 520.

Giving a voice to football fans



Healthwatch Oxfordshire met fans of Oxford United FC in April, when the club held a Men's Health event before their home match against Luton Town FC.

The club held the event because 65% of fans are white males who, anecdotally, do not go to the doctor and are difficult to engage.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire had a stand outside the Kassam Stadium and chatted to fans about their experiences of using health and social care services.

Other organisations taking part in the event, which was organised by the Oxford United Community Trust, included Prostate Cancer UK, which is the Football League's official charity partner.

Jen Marks, Community Involvement Officer at Healthwatch Oxfordshire, said: "Events like this provide a great opportunity to speak to people who we may not always reach, and find out their experiences of local services."

Luton Town may have won the game 3-2 but Oxford United went on to achieve promotion to League 1 next season.



Latest annual report puts the year in focus

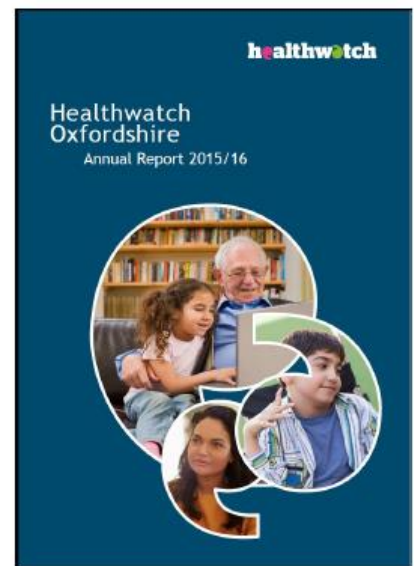
The Chairman of Healthwatch Oxfordshire, Eddie Duller, has called for a more 'joined-up' approach to the way care is delivered across the county.

The comments come in the introduction of Healthwatch Oxfordshire's Annual Report, which is published today.

In his introduction, Eddie Duller says that work needs to be done by service providers to overcome many of the problems caused by poor communications between hospitals, the county council, GPs and the rest of the system.

The report provides key statistics on Healthwatch Oxfordshire's work during the financial year 2015-16, which include:

- Spending 533 on our Dignity in Care project



The front cover of the annual report



This has been a year of growth and change for Healthwatch Oxfordshire – Carol Moore

- Working with 50 voluntary groups, and funding six of them to produce reports
- Reaching more than a million people globally on social media.

Carol Moore, Executive Director of Healthwatch Oxfordshire, said: "This has been a year of growth and change for Healthwatch Oxfordshire. The beginning of the year saw the recruitment of four new staff members to strengthen our research, community involvement and communication activities.

"Our two major projects this year were about people's experiences of discharge from hospital and dignity in care. Working with our dedicated team of volunteers we visited 23 different locations from hospitals to a hospice and spoke to over 300 people.

"Our recommendations and working with the system to put them into action has set us up as a partner in quality improvement in Oxfordshire."

The annual report is available to read and download free of charge at: <http://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/annual-report-2015-16>

Wantage Community Hospital closure – but for how long?

A campaign group has been formed in Wantage, after Oxford Health announced the closure of the town's community hospital for engineering works.

Oxford Health made the decision following the discovery of Legionella, the bacteria which causes Legionnaire's Disease, in the site's water system.

However, while the hospital will close, work to replace the pipes has been postponed until after a county-wide consultation into all aspects of health provision.

The results of that consultation are not expected until early 2017.

Worried Wantage residents have formed a campaign group, and expressed concerns that the closure of the hospital

may be permanent. At a meeting at the town's Beacon leisure centre on May 19, local county councillor and Chair of hospital League of Friends Jenny Hannaby said: "This is the third time I have had to try and save the hospital in the last 20 years."

At the same meeting, Wantage MP Ed Vaizey said: "Everyone wants to know that the consultation is a genuine consultation, and will consider keeping the hospital open. My concern is that the consultation is so vast but gives little opportunity to put our views across about what facilities we want in Wantage, such as an MIU (Minor Injuries Unit)."

Representatives of Oxford Health told the meeting that the decision to close

the hospital had been made solely on safety grounds, and that closing it in a 'proactive' way in the summer was less disruptive for patients and would avoid winter pressures.

Oxford Health said that it would maintain the same number of beds across its other community hospitals in Wallingford, Didcot and Abingdon.

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust which runs the midwifery-led maternity unit at the site, will keep that facility open. Outpatient physiotherapy services will also remain open.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is keeping in close contact with Oxford Health, and will publish responses to queries it has raised with the Trust concerning the consultation and closure.

Report highlights gypsy and traveller concerns

More needs to be done to make GP services accessible to Oxfordshire's gypsy and traveller community, a new report recommends.

The recommendation is one of several made following research by seAp, a local provider of advocacy services, which was funded by Healthwatch Oxfordshire.

seAp spoke to 16 gypsy and traveller families at four sites, along with about 35 primary healthcare staff, about the issues they faced in accessing GP services and other healthcare.

The report found that while in general, members of the gypsy and traveller community were satisfied with GP and maternity services, there were concerns about appointment systems. These included the time waiting for the phone to be answered, waiting times to see a GP, waiting times at the surgery, difficulties with speaking to a GP on the phone and not being able to get appointments for both parents and children at the same time.

Concerned

Some travellers were concerned about the appointment booking system, particularly the touch screen to sign in, which could be confusing for older patients and difficult to access for those with reading difficulties.

The report makes a number of recommendations, including:

- Appointing a keyworker assigned to work between the primary care services and traveller sites.
- Making GP services more accessible by, for example, recorded messages on the phone for travellers, and other patients with reading difficulties, as this would help with

some of the difficulties around literacy levels. The information in these messages could include how to use GP practice appointment systems, the out of hours and A&E services.

- Further work should be done to encourage travellers to register with a dentist, such as information sharing sessions held on the traveller sites to promote the local dental services that are taking patients, the dental plans available and their appointment systems.

Recommendation

A recommendation that further work is carried out with the Gypsy and Traveller community in Oxfordshire to gain a more detailed understanding of their concerns in accessing healthcare, in particular more information on travellers' experiences and concerns with mental health services would be very beneficial.

Carol Moore, Executive Director, Healthwatch Oxfordshire, said: "We hope that they will consider the recommendations made in the report, particularly with regard to the appointments system."

Kate Hill, Team Manager at seAp, said: "We learnt a lot about the people who live on the different sites that we visited. We were welcomed and those we spoke to shared a lot of information with us."

"We hope that the NHS services and others read the report and learn more about the needs of this community so that services can be more accessible to them in future."

The full report is available at <http://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reporting-back> along with the responses of the key service providers.



Meet us at a community event near you soon

Going out into the community and meeting people who use health and social care services is an important part of our work. This is where we hear people's experiences, both good and bad, so that we can feed them back to the service providers.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be attending a range of events across the county in the forthcoming months.

These opportunities allow people to talk to our staff and tell them their experiences, and their concerns, surrounding health and social care services in Oxfordshire.

During July, you can see us at various



Look out for our gazebo

events including:

- July 9, RAF Benson
- July 10, Cowley Road Carnival
- July 16, Play & Activity Day, Abingdon
- July 22, Play & Activity Day, Eynsham

We've moved to a new office

June 1 saw Healthwatch Oxfordshire move to new offices at High Cogges, near Witney.

The move comes as a result of the cut in our funding from Oxfordshire County Council and the need to find cheaper premises.

The new rural location, which is close to the A40, is fully accessible both by private and public transport.

Our other contact details, such as email and telephone number, remain un-



changed. For more details of how to find us, visit our website at <http://www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/contact-us>



Contact Us

01865 520520

hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk
www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

Healthwatch Oxfordshire
The Old Dairy, High Cogges
Farm, High Cogges, Witney
OX29 6UN

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is to hold its Board meetings in public. Members of the public will have an opportunity to submit written questions five working days in advance, and ask questions at the meeting itself. The dates and venues for its forthcoming meetings are:

*July 26 2016 4-6pm
Council Chambers
Bicester Town Council
The Garth
Launton Road
Bicester
OX26 6PS*

*September 27, 2016. Details TBC.
November 22, 2016. Details TBC.*

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