The Leys Community Profile

Foreword

I've been a resident of the Leys for the best part of my working age and married life. The Leys is an area with a strong sense of community connection, people are always willing to help each and show support for one another. I'm still involved in the community through the running of the FriendLeys group, a social group for people to meet and connect, and my voluntary work with Oxford Hub. I'm also Vice Chair of the Blackbird Leys Parish Council which allows me to help residents find solutions to their questions and queries.

I'm really pleased to have been involved in the production of this community profile to highlight what it means to live in the Leys. The work that the Steering Group have done to complete the profile has demonstrated how positive it can be for different people to come together and work in partnership. From the beginning, I could see that the Leys would gain a lot from this community profile and it would go a long way to shining a light on the Leys and giving people a true view of what it's like to live here. I'm hopeful that this profile can be used to support residents and local groups as well as positively influence future developments in the Leys.

I'd like to thank Ros Jones and Kate Austin for their continued commitment to working together to produce this community profile of the Leys and for supporting my involvement every step of the way.

Cllr Peter Nowland, Chair of the Leys Community Profile Steering Group

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Introduction

Health and wellbeing are profoundly shaped by what happens in places and communities and by the wider social economic environment in which people live, learn, work and socialise[1].

Currently, in England, people living in the least deprived areas of the country live around 20 years longer in good health than people in the most deprived areas[2]. To tackle these inequalities, we must give more attention to those communities which are at greatest risk of poor health if we want to make a real impact on reducing inequalities.

Health inequalities are avoidable and unfair. Why should the place we live have an impact on how long we will live in good health? These health inequalities are systematic differences in health between different groups of people[3]. They are ultimately about differences in people's health status but also the different opportunities people have to lead healthy lives and the healthcare people receive – both contribute to overall health status.

Health is determined by:

- The social and economic environment
- The physical environment
- The person's individual characteristics and behaviours[4]

Oxfordshire is one of the most affluent areas of the country. This hides the astounding fact that there are 10 wards in Oxfordshire which feature areas which are in the 20% most deprived in England. The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019[5] highlighted these ten wards in Oxfordshire which have small areas ("Super Output Areas") that were listed in the 20% most deprived in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation update, published in November 2019. Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook and two of these wards and as they have a shared community infrastructure, a joint profile for 'The Leys' has been produced.

The identification of these wards led to the ambition to create community profiles of each of these 10 areas to ensure we understand, as fully as possible, the health outcomes and factors which influence these outcomes, for the wards in Oxfordshire where residents are most at risk of poor health, or experience health inequalities. The first area to be profiled was Banbury Ruscote and a proof of concept of the approach to creating community profiles was agreed by the Oxfordshire Health and

[1] Marmot, M., Allen, J., Goldblatt, P., Boyce, T., McNeish, D., Grady, M. and Geddes, I., 2010. The Marmot review: Fair society, healthy lives. *London: UCL*.
[2] Connolly, A., Baker, A. and Fellows, C., 2017. *Understanding health inequalities in England*. [online] Ukhsa.blog.gov.uk. Available at: https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/13/understanding-health-inequalities-in-england/.
[3] Williams, E., Buck, D., Babalola, G. and Maguire, D., 2022. *What are health inequalities?* [online] www.kingsfund.org.uk. Available at: https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities#life.
[4] World Health Organisation, 2017. *Determinants of health*. [online] Who.int. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/determinants-of-health.
[5] Oxfordshire County Council (2020). *Some are more equal than others.* [online] Available at: PublicHealthAnnualReportMay2020 (oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Wellbeing board in March 2020. The community profiles use data and community insight, for local organisations and stakeholders to work in collaboration with residents, encouraging an asset-based community development model (ABCD). An ABCD model is a localised and bottom-up way of strengthening communities through recognising, identifying and harnessing existing 'assets' (i.e. things like skills, knowledge, capacity, resources, experience or enthusiasm). Instead of looking at what a community needs or lacks, the approach focuses on utilising the 'assets' that are already there.

In Summer 2021, the Oxfordshire County Council Public Health team began work on a community profile for the Leys (Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards combined). Looking at the data for Leys, without including the community voice doesn't give us the full picture. It doesn't tell us the why, or what the community feel passionate about and think are the real assets of their own area. The aim of this profile is to combine what the data tells us about the Leys, with voices from residents and members of the community, to bring together a full picture of what it means to live in the Leys. The profile will be an opportunity to look beyond indicators and get behind the data through asking residents themselves: what are the strengths of their area, what are the challenges for their health and wellbeing and to uncover the impact of COVID-19 on the community. The profile will also link closely to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and explore alternative ways to present data.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank each member of the Leys Community Profile Steering Group for their oversight and guidance towards producing this profile and for their continued support during every stage of the process. A special mention to the Vice Chair of the Parish Council, Councillor Peter Nowland for his dedication and commitment to chairing the Steering Group.

Thank you to the team at Oxford Hub for their work in collecting the community insight and providing the report with the findings from the exercise, with a special thanks to Katharine Howell for her work and dedication to collect the insight and write up the findings.

Finally thank you to the residents of the Leys for giving up their time to be involved in the project. It couldn't have happened without the good-will of the community.

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Methodology

During the Summer of 2021, the Oxfordshire County Council Public Health team carried out a scoping exercise to explore where there may be any existing community insight for the Leys, to determine what engagement work had already taken place and to try to avoid any duplication. The scoping phase led to the identification of key stakeholders and partners with an interest in joining a Steering Group to shape and guide the production and delivery of a community profile for the Leys. The group agreed a Terms of Reference and a project planner to outline the milestones to create the profile over the subsequent 12 months. An independent chair was also nominated on behalf of the Steering Group. The overall purpose of the Steering Group was to provide collaborative and positive leadership for the coproduction of the Leys community profile.

Oxford Hub, on behalf of the Steering Group, was commissioned to carry out a community engagement exercise. Oxford Hub were selected to complete the work after a panel of Steering Group members reviewed applications to grant fund the project. The purpose of the community engagement was to better understand what members of the community felt were the:

- Strengths and assets in the area that support and enable their health and wellbeing - what matters to the local community
- Challenges to their health and wellbeing and what they think would help to address these
- Impacts of COVID-19

The approach Oxford Hub took to gather the community insight was flexible based on what they thought would work best in the community. Direct extracts from the community engagement report have been included within each section of the profile and this is indicated in the heading where this is the case. Other data and text have been compiled by Oxfordshire County Council Public Health.

Community Engagement Approach (extracted from the community engagement report)

Oxford Hub adopted a mixed methods approach in order to balance reach and depth. The insight gathering process was carried out with support from the Steering Group, particularly in terms of stakeholder mapping and developing survey questions. We recruited two community researchers, both people with extensive local connections in the Leys, to support the Oxford Hub team with insight gathering activities and contribute to stakeholder mapping and engagement. Data was collected using:

- Online survey, with a mixture of open and closed questions, circulated through existing networks, notably the Leys Health Centre patient text message communications.
    - 201 responses. All questions were optional.
- In-person survey with more open questions

    - Carried out by community researchers through a combination of drop-ins; ad hoc engagement in community spaces and events, e.g. community larder, the Blackbird pub, top shops; and using researchers' existing social networks.
    - 54 responses. All questions were optional.
- The demographic breakdown of survey respondents was as follows:

Table 1 Demographic breakdown of survey respondents

	Total participants	**Percentage of participants**	**Percentage of Leys residents in these categories**
Survey type			
Online In person	201 54	79 21	2020 ONS midyear population estimate 11,708
Where do you live?			
Blackbird Leys Greater Leys Other Prefer not to say	117 120 17 1	46 47 7 0.4	48 52 — —
Are you…?			According to ONS 2020 midyear population estimates
Female Male Prefer not to say/Other*	140 88 27	55 35 10	50.4 49.6 —
What is your ethnic group?			According to 2011 Census
Asian/Asian British Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British Mixed/multiple ethnic group White Other ethnic group/Prefer not to say*	9 26 10 178 32	4 10 4 70 13	6 12 6 75 —
How old are you?			According to ONS 2020 midyear population estimates
18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ Prefer not to say	6 37 52 43 54 44 19	2 15 20 17 21 17 7	9 12 13 14 12 12 —

* Groups combined to remove identifiability

This shows that this research was not representative of the population of the Leys and instead offers a limited, though still useful, insight into the perspectives of some residents.

- Additional in-person surveys – carried out by Leys CDI with eight young people aged 15-19, identifying as Black Caribbean, White British, White European, Black African and South Asian.
- Focus groups – 4, carried out with a range of groups (African-heritage elders, young parents, retirement home residents) with a total of about 30 participants
- Participatory asset mapping – carried out alongside in-person surveys and focus groups, asking participants to use stickers to point out the places, spaces and services that support them to be healthy and well. Along with places mentioned in surveys and focus groups, this was used to produce the map presented in section 4.1.
- Interviews with local residents and professionals working in health/wellbeing in the Leys – 8. Interviews with residents were audio recorded and transcribed.

Oxford Hub also drew, where possible, on existing and ongoing knowledge and research, including the recent Active Travel consultation, mapping being carried out by Thames Valley Police's Violence Reduction Unit, research into Healthy Habits being carried out by Press Red for Public Health, recent research into health in Oxfordshire's Sudanese communities, MakeSpace research on community ownership in Oxford, Systems Changers interviews with local residents, Clear Signal work with young families, and ACORN door-knocking.

Quantitative data was analysed by Press Red, including comparisons between age groups, gender and locality. Oxford Hub carried out a content analysis of qualitative data. Throughout this report, direct quotations from surveys, focus groups and interviews are presented in italics, and have been edited for spelling and punctuation to aid readability.

Reviewing the Findings
After completion of the community engagement exercise, the Steering Group worked together to decide on the recommendations for the profile. This involved including the suggestions/recommendations from the community engagement report alongside additional recommendations that the steering group had identified. Oxfordshire County Council Public Health combined the findings of the engagement work with the quantitative data available for the Leys into the profile.

Geographical boundary of the Leys

Data in this profile is reported on using several types of geographical boundaries – administrative and statistical.

Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) are used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to publish Census travel to work data and an increasing range of other social and demographic statistics.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are used as the geography for publishing the national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

There are 4 LSOAs which make up the Blackbird Leys ward and 4 LSOAs that make up the Northfield Brook ward.

Most of the data sources reported in this profile are using ward boundaries for Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook. Some data is reported at an MSOA level and some at an LSOA level.

Data included in this profile will be updated once available, particularly information from the Census, once the 2021 data has been released at a small area level. The most up to date data can be accessed through the online version of the report.

Limitations

The approach for developing the community profiles was not a rigorous piece of academic research and therefore caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from the findings.

The profile should be viewed as dynamic on-line documents that can be updated with any additional insight or research in the areas as it is produced, as well as national data updates such as from the 2021 Census.

Care has been taken to acknowledge sources of information and to ensure the accuracy of data as far as possible. Please contact jsna@oxfordshire.gov.uk if any inadvertent inaccuracies or omissions are identified.

The Microsoft Word accessibility checker has been used to ensure that the document is as accessible as possible.

(Extracted from the community engagement report)
Data collection was far from perfect and should not be considered representative of the Leys population. Rather, it offers an insight into the experiences and views of a range of residents. Limitations of the data include a limited reach in some demographics, particularly children and ethnic backgrounds other than White British, Mixed and Black/African/Caribbean; questions focused on certain areas of health and wellbeing leading to a focus on those areas in responses; potential bias from using Leys Health Centre patient text messaging to circulate survey; and a skew towards complaints and challenges due to the structure of questions. As the research was carried out over a short period of two months, it also offers a particular snapshot in time.

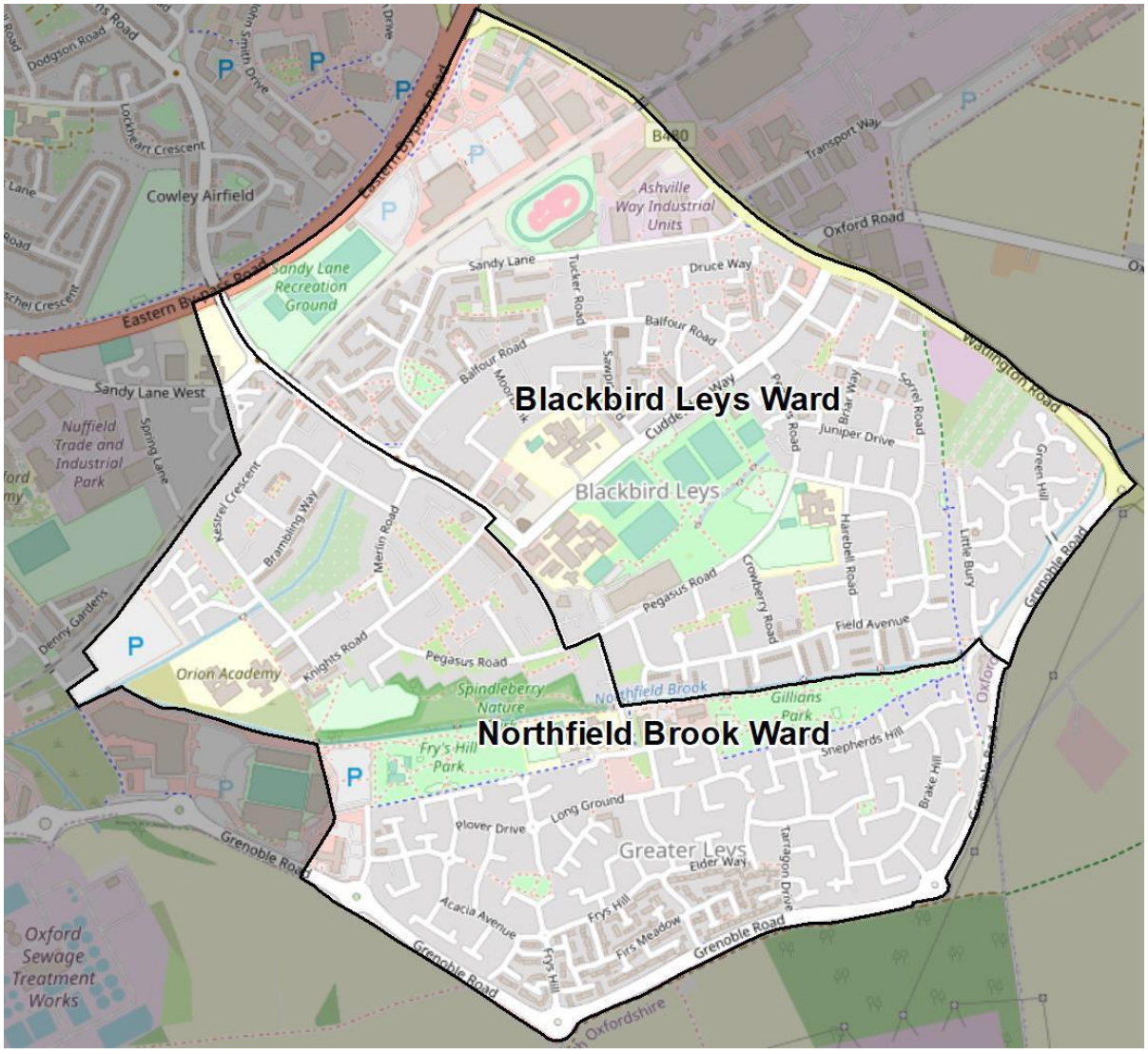
Location and History

(extracted from community engagement report)

Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards are located in south east Oxford. The area covered by Northfield Brook ward is generally known as Greater Leys, and the two estates are collectively known as ‘the Leys’.

The areas now known as Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys were farmland for hundreds of years. In 1957, Oxford City Council began development of the site of Sawpit Farm to create 2800 new homes for car factory workers and their families. This new estate, named Blackbird Leys after a neighbouring farm, included two high rise blocks of flats, Windrush and Evenlode, as well as a community centre, shops, a primary school and a secondary school. Some of the early residents of the estate, including some of our survey respondents, moved there from temporary post-war housing on the Slade.

Figure 1 Map showing Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook Ward Boundaries



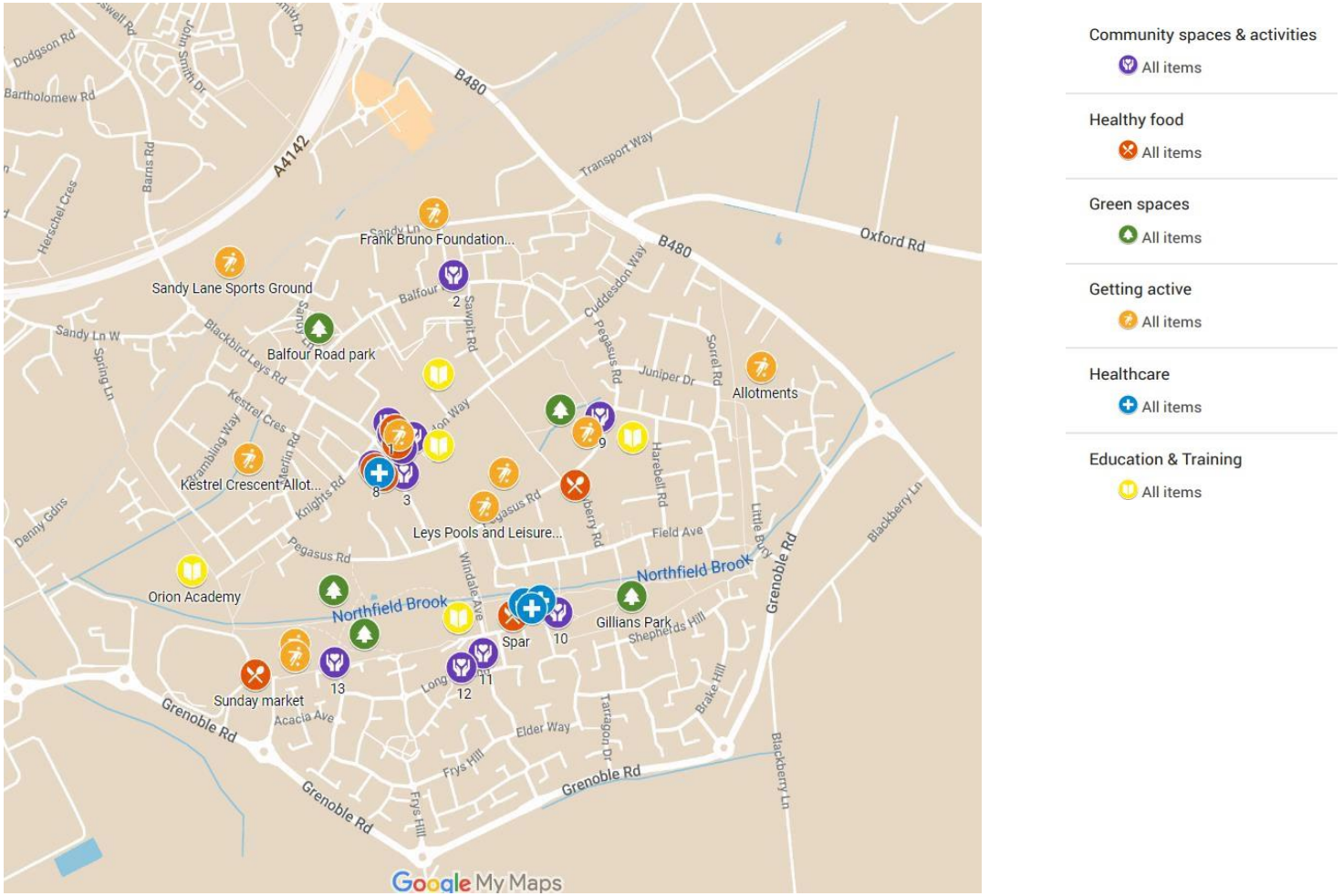
In the late 1980s, further development began building into the farmland south of Blackbird Leys to create Greater Leys, and in 1996 the Kassam football stadium was built to the west of Greater Leys. In the 1990s, the Leys gained a reputation for joyriding, crime and conflict between young people and the police – a reputation which was mentioned by many of our respondents as continuing today. In 2006, the Leys was featured in a television programme called ‘The Singing Estate’, contributing to the formation of the Blackbird Leys Community Choir. Despite the negative associations of the 90s, the Leys is also known for its diverse population, its active communities, and cultural events such as the Blackbird Leys Carnival and Family Fun Days.

The Leys makes up a large area, and its population includes a wide range of cultural and socio-economic groups. Participants in the research cited many different reasons for living in the Leys. Some had lived here all their lives, often belonging to families who have been in the Leys for generations. Others had been offered council housing there, some had moved to escape situations like domestic violence. Others had been attracted to the Leys by its affordable housing, sense of space, location and diversity.

In 2022, when this community insight gathering was carried out, the Leys has experienced more than two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant regeneration works are planned for the old centre of Blackbird Leys, including the community centre and the ‘top shops’.

Asset Map

Figure 2 The Leys Community Assets



The table below highlights some of the activities identified as happening in the Leys. This is a snapshot in time and is not an exhaustive list and so there may be more activities taking place which have not been included.

Table 2 The Leys Community Activities

Activity	Info	Location
Monday Social (CDI)	Conversation, friendship, games & activities. (Refreshments included)	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
Zumba Gold - Over 50's (CDI)	Designed for older adults, the class focuses on all elements of fitness and balance	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
Singing for Fun (CDI)	No special skills or experience, led by a musician and dancer, this group is just for fun	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
Bring your own craft group (CDI)	A social crafting group - bring your own craft that you are working on from home and enjoy some conversation at the same time	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
Gardening Club (SLIGO - CDI)	Independent gardening group that meets once a month at the Clockhouse garden	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
Phoenix Rising (CDI)	Phoenix Rising is a local group that meets weekly for friendship and conversation	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
Online Zoom Social (CDI)	Meet online to join us in online crosswords, games and bingo	Via Zoom
Yoga	Mixed ability class with both standing and seated postures to help build strength and balance	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
FriendLeys	Over 50's local group to socialise (Refreshments included)	The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
Blackbird Leys Boxing Club (10yrs +)	Local boxing club	Oxford Stadium, Sandy Lane, Oxford, OX4 6LJ
Blackbird Leys Choir	Blackbird Leys Choir is a mixed-voice choir of about 15 enthusiastic amateur singers.	Blackbird Leys Community Centre (Jack Argent Room)
The Leys Neighbourhood Watch	Crime prevention scheme run by volunteers in the Leys with the goal of making the community and better and safer place to live.	Blackbird Leys Community Facebook Group (The Leys Neighbourhood Watch)

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Football and Basketball on the Leys (Oxford Hoops & Thrive Teams)		Leys Pool and Leisure Centre
Women and non-binary dodgeball	These sessions will be open to women and non-binary players aged 16 and over of all abilities. We will introduce attendees to the sport of dodgeball, increase confidence and levels of physical activity, as well as strengthen social and community ties in a fun filled environment.	Leys Pool and Leisure Centre
Women's boxing	Our ladies only class is led by one of our experienced female instructors Cynthia and designed as an all-round body workout - fitness exercises, cardio workouts, conditioning. Learning the basics of boxing.	Leys Pool and Leisure Centre
Pilates	Pilates is a mind & body centring technique that put emphasis on the importance of beginning movement from a central core of stability specifically the lumbar pelvic region. Pilates can be performed at different levels allowing those recovering from injury or illness to begin to exercise. This also is a challenging workout for those with an advanced level of fitness. www.oxfordciz.org/getting-active	The Barn, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7BU
Plus Fit	Exercise classes for those who identify as plus size. These classes are designed so people can exercise together without feeling uncomfortable around smaller framed people.	Leisure Centre
Music and Movement	Music & Movement classes, introduces music to children they can easily understand and enjoy through dancing movement and singing.	The Barn, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7BU
Online Pilates	Pilates can improve posture, muscle tone, balance and joint mobility, as well as relieve stress and tension.	Online via Zoom
Back to Netball (Active Reach)	Programme for women of all ages designed for people who have had a period away from playing netball.	The Oxford Academy, Sandy Lane West
Strawberry Fayre Majorettes (Tiny Tots 4 - 8yrs)	Baton twirling and pom pom dances	The Barn, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7BU

Ready Set Go (Oxford Hub)	Support children and families to learn how to ride a bike by providing them access to equipment and free cycling tuition where needed. We are also providing locks, lights and helmets for riders that don't have them	Blackbird Leys, Cowley, Cowley Marsh & Northfield Brook
Free Swimming Lessons (Aged 16 and under)	Free swimming sessions for all children and young people aged 16 and under, and who live in Oxford.	Leys Pool and Leisure Centre
YouMove	Free access to leisure facilities and other community activities for families with children aged between 5-17	Blackbird Leys and Rosehill
Active Reach (Oxford Hub)	A variety of exercise classes for individuals and families £6 per class	Blackbird Leys and Cowley
Leys Community Larder	Low-cost membership scheme to help reduce food waste and support people within the community	Wednesdays 14:00 - 17:00 @ Blackbird Leys Community Centre
SYRCOX	Free food parcels	Thursdays 12:00 - 15:00 @ Blackbird Leys Community Centre (Collection)
Leys Community Fridge	Free, fresh food anyone can access to help reduce food waste - no registration required	Thursdays 10:00 - 12:00 @ Blackbird Leys Community Centre
Access to Leisure Scheme	The Access to Leisure scheme provides up to 6 months of free leisure centre membership to anyone living in homeless pathway accommodation.	Leys Pool and Leisure Centre
Agnes Smith Advice Centre	We provide confidential, free, and non-judgmental advice. We specialise in helping people who have issues with money and debt, welfare benefits and housing	Agnes Smith Advice Centre, 96 Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6HS
Tea & Talk (English Conversation Group), AFiUK (African Families in the UK)	A relaxed group to practice speaking English with other parents; supported by an English language tutor. Topics of discussion will be about supporting our children's learning needs	Tuesdays 9:30 - 11:30am (Term Time Only) Blackbird Leys Community Centre

Findings

Population Profile

According to the 2020 ONS mid-year small area population estimates, the population of The Leys was **11,708** residents. Between 2011 and 2020, there was a 10% reduction in the total population of the Leys, down from 12,961 residents.

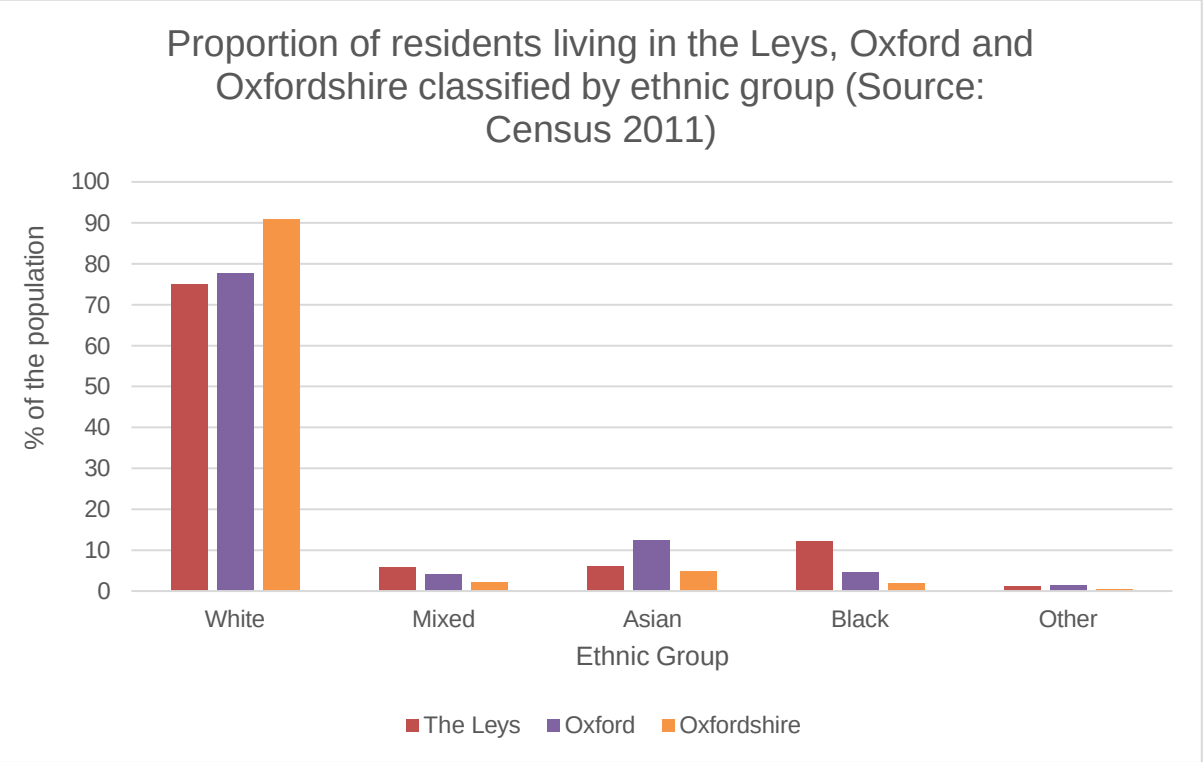
Figure 3 ONS ward level mid-year population estimates for 2020

ONS ward level mid-year population estimates for 2020, as a population pyramid, for the Leys (Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards combined)

Ethnicity

The most recent data on ethnicity is the 2011 Census. At the time of the Census, 25.1% of residents in the Leys belonged to an ethnic group that was not 'White'. This is similar to the proportion in Oxford City, where 22.3% belonged to a group that was not 'White', and higher than Oxfordshire County, where 9.1% of residents belonged to an ethnic group which was not 'White'.

Figure 4 Proportion of residents living in the Leys, Oxford and Oxfordshire by ethnic group



Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

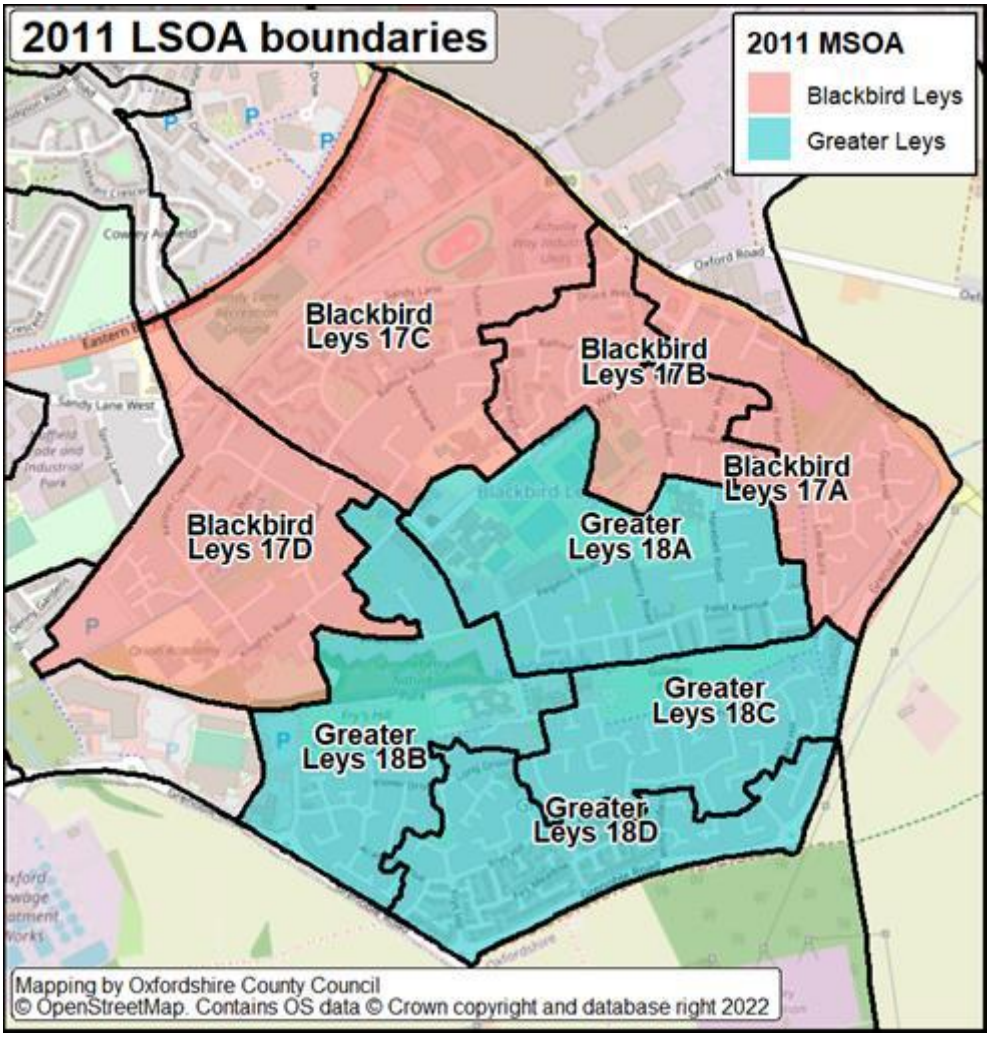
The indices of multiple deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is made up of 7 different domains which are combined and weighted to provide a small area with an Index of Multiple Deprivation. Small areas in England are ranked relative to the other areas based on their level of deprivation. The 7 domains which make up index of multiple deprivation are: income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education and skills training, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment.

According to this latest IMD, 6 out of the 8 LSOAs within the Leys rank amongst the 20% most deprived within England, and 5 LSOAs which are ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in terms of Education, Skills, and Training.

Table 3 MHCLG English Indices of Deprivation 2019 deciles for the LSOAs in Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook (1 is most deprived, 10 is least deprived)

LSOA Area Name	IMD	Income	Employment	Education, Skills and Training	Health Deprivation and Disability	Crime	Barriers to Housing and Services	Living Environment	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index	Income Deprivation Affecting Older People
Oxford 017A	2	3	3	1	3	3	1	7	3	6
Oxford 017B	2	2	2	1	2	4	4	7	2	3
Oxford 017C	3	3	4	2	3	3	6	3	4	3
Oxford 018A	2	2	3	1	3	2	4	7	1	3
Oxford 017D	2	3	3	2	3	1	3	4	3	2
Oxford 018B	1	2	2	1	2	2	4	8	2	2
Oxford 018C	2	2	2	1	2	5	2	9	2	2
Oxford 018D	7	6	7	5	7	7	5	9	5	4

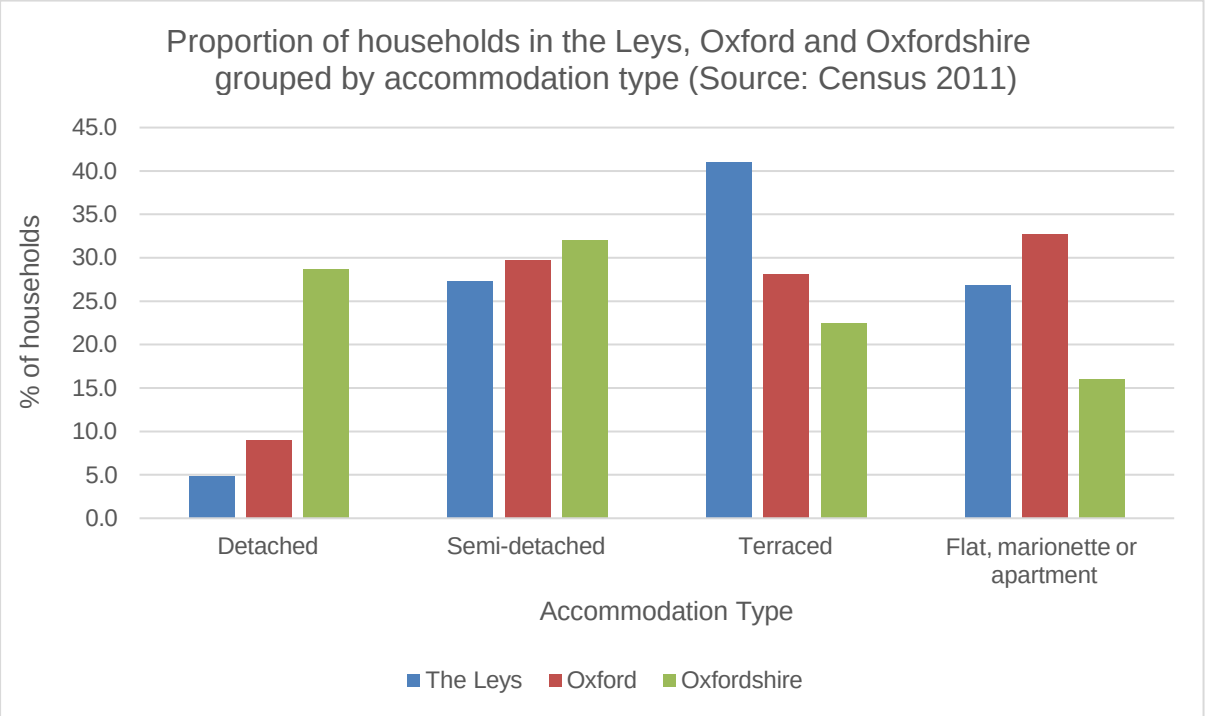
Figure 5 Map of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Blackbird and Greater Leys



Housing

Many aspects of housing can affect our health[6]. For example, a warm and dry house can improve general health outcomes and specifically reduce respiratory conditions. However, housing also has a huge influence on our mental health and wellbeing – children living in crowded homes are more likely be stressed, anxious and depressed, have poorer physical health, and attain less well at school[7].

Figure 6 Proportion of households in the Leys, Oxford and Oxfordshire grouped by accommodation type



Housing tenure

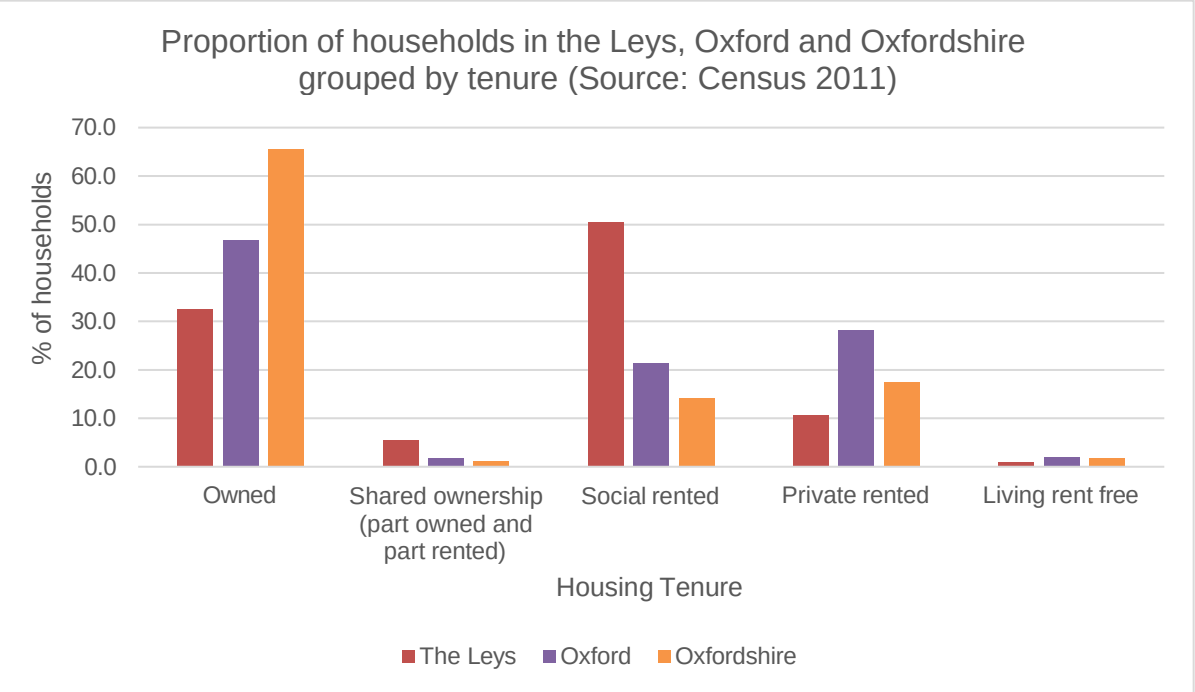
Housing tenure describes the legal status under which people have the right to occupy their accommodation. The most common forms of tenure are:

- Homeownership: this includes homes owned outright and mortgaged
- Renting: this includes social rented housing and private rented housing.

Data from the 2011 census showed that, compared to Oxford City and Oxfordshire County, the Leys had a lower proportion of households which were owned, either owned outright or through a mortgage. Just over 50% of households in the Leys were occupied by social renting, this was compared to 21.4% of households in Oxford and 14.2% of household in Oxfordshire.

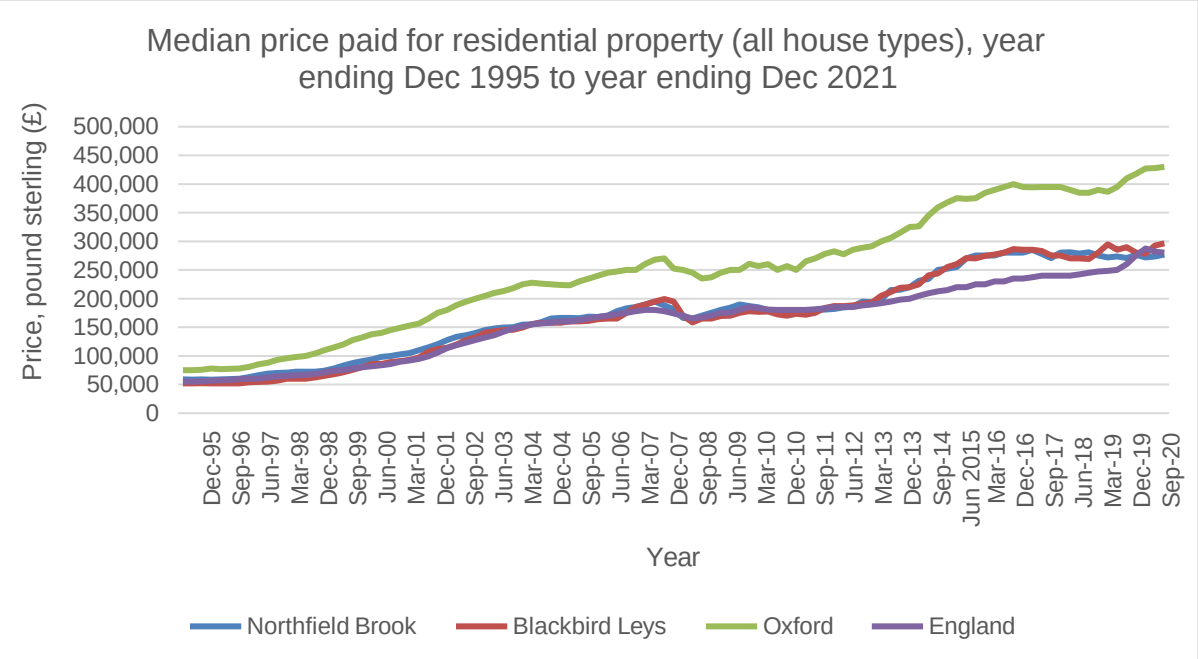
[6] Public Health England, 2018. *Chapter 6: wider determinants of health*. [online] GOV.UK. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-profile-for-england-2018/chapter-6-wider-determinants-of-health.
[7] Marmot M, Allen J, Boyce T, Goldblatt P, Morrison J. *Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On*. The Health Foundation; 2020. Available at: Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On - The Health Foundation

Figure 7 Proportion of households in the Leys, Oxford and Oxfordshire by tenure



One important aspect of both rented and owned housing is affordability. This influences where people live and work and affects the quality of housing, poverty, community cohesion, and time spent commuting[8].

Figure 8 Median price paid for residential property



ONS median house prices for all house types, Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards, Oxford and England

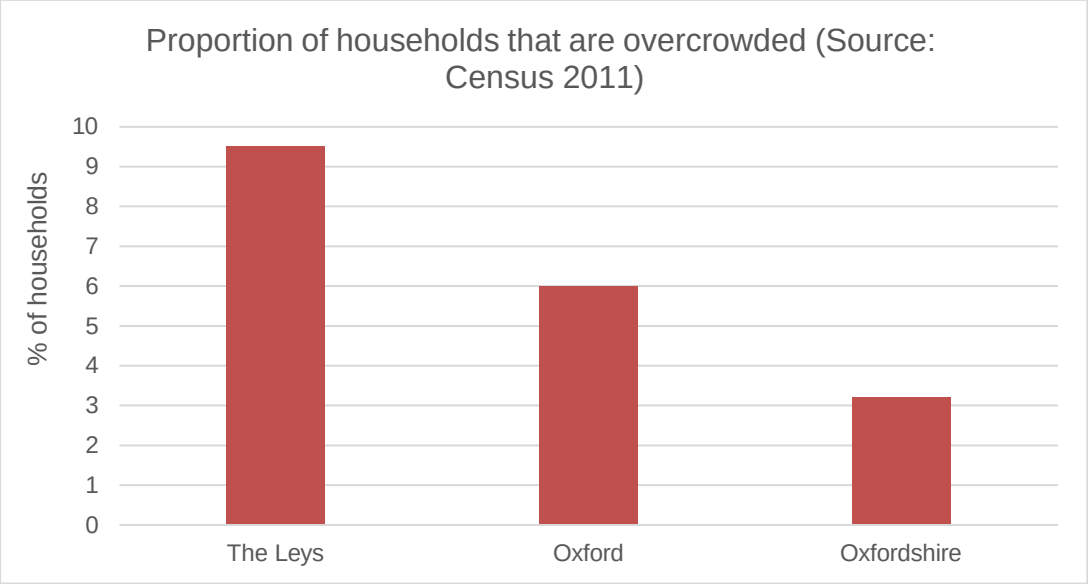
[8] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2017. *English Housing Survey*. [online] GOV.UK. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705821/2016-17_EHS_Headline_Report.pdf

Overcrowded houses

A household is overcrowded if it has fewer bedrooms than it needs to avoid undesirable sharing, based on the age, sex and relationship of household members.

Overcrowding can place strain on family relationships, reduce privacy and limit the space for children to study or play. It is likely that during the COVID-19 lockdown, the consequences of overcrowding have grown as large numbers of people were confined to their homes for longer periods of time. Those with the lowest incomes are also the most likely to both live in an overcrowded household and live with someone with a health condition or aged over 75[9].

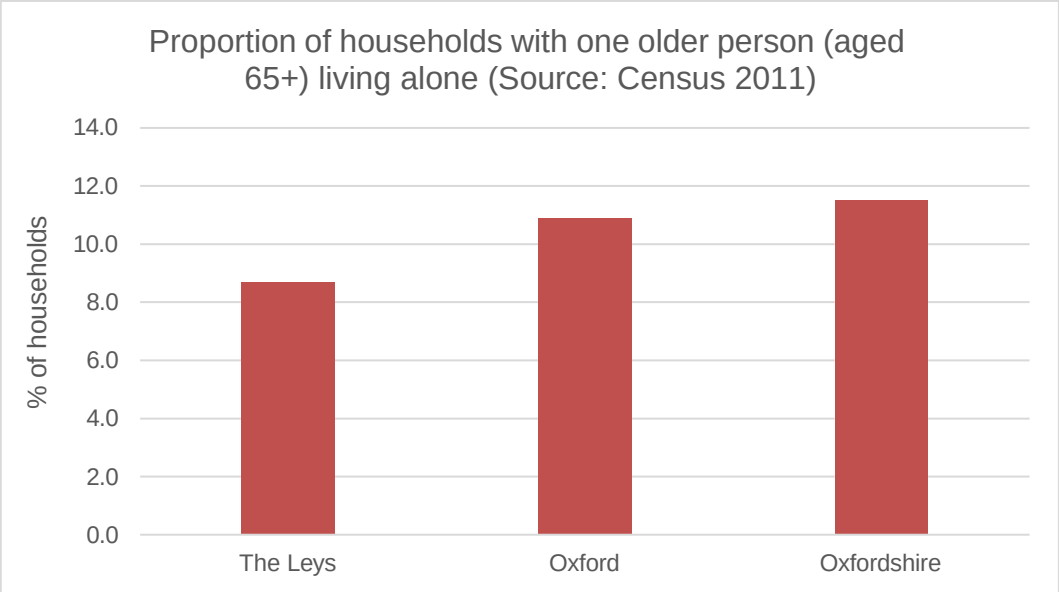
Figure 9 Proportion of households that are overcrowded



[9] Tinson, A., 2020. *Overcrowding is highest for those with low incomes*. [online] The Health Foundation. Available at: Overcrowding is highest for those with low incomes (health.org.uk)

Older people living alone

Figure 10 Proportion of households with one older person living alone



According to the 2011 census, the proportion of households with one older person (aged 65+) living alone was lower in the Leys compared to both the proportion in Oxford City and the Oxfordshire County.

Unemployment

There is strong evidence to suggest that work is generally good for physical and mental health and well-being, taking into account the nature and quality of work and its social context and that worklessness is associated with poorer physical and mental health.

There is a social gradient in unemployment, with those in more disadvantaged socio-economic positions are more likely to be unemployed. Unemployed people have a greater risk of poor health than those in employment, contributing to health inequalities [10] [11].

Unemployment count data between July 2019 and July 2022 shows that, as a result of the pandemic, unemployment counts in both wards (Blackbird Leys and Northfield brook), Oxford and Oxfordshire saw a sharp increase between 2019 and 2020. However, as of July 2022, the rate of unemployment remains to be higher than pre-pandemic levels for Blackbird Leys, Northfield Brook, Oxford and Oxfordshire.

[10] Marmot Review Team. Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic review of health inequalities in England post2010. London: Marmot Review Team, 2010
[11] McKee-Ryan F, Song Z, Wanberg CR, Kinicki AJ. Psychological and physical wellbeing during unemployment: a meta-analytic study. The Journal of Applied Psychology. 2005;90(1):53.

Figure 11 Claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16-64

	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022
Blackbird Leys	4.9	10.8	9.4	6.0
Northfield Brook	4.2	9.1	8.4	5.1
Oxford	1.8	4.4	3.9	2.6
Oxfordshire	1.3	4.0	3.2	2.1

Rate of unemployment claimants (as a percentage of the population aged 16-64), extracted from Nomis, for Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards, Oxford City and Oxfordshire County

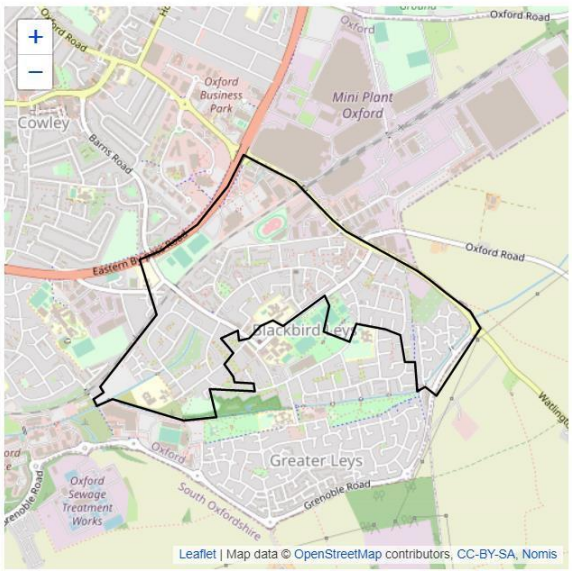
Health and Wellbeing

NCMP

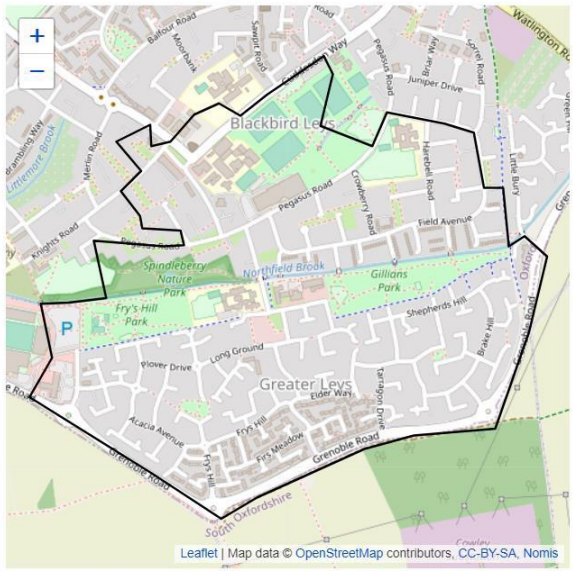
The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) is a nationally mandated public health programme. It provides the data for the child excess weight indicators in the Public Health Outcomes Framework and is part of the government's approach to tackling child obesity.[12]

The NCMP data in this profile is presented for the MSOA boundaries – Oxford 017 (Blackbird Leys) and Oxford 018 (Greater Leys).

Figure 12 Maps showing the Leys MSOA boundaries

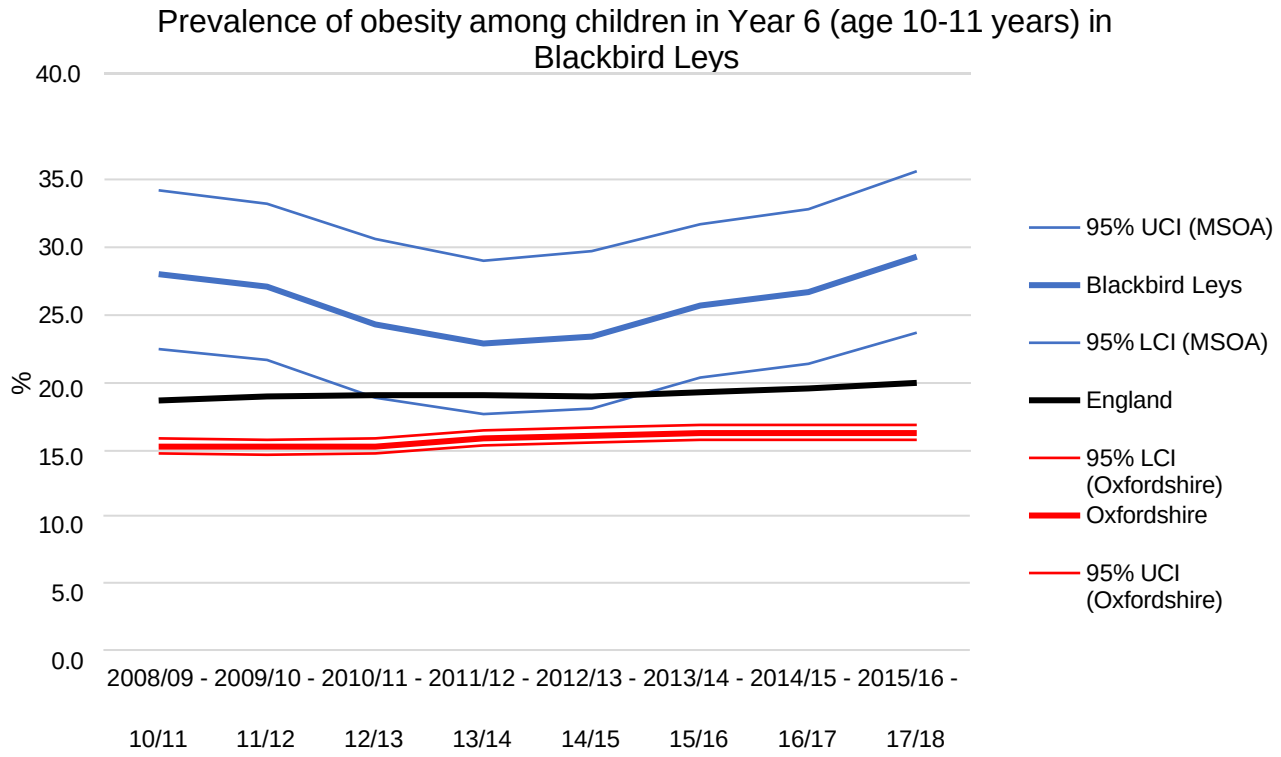


Map of 2011 MSOA boundary for Blackbird Leys (Oxford 017)

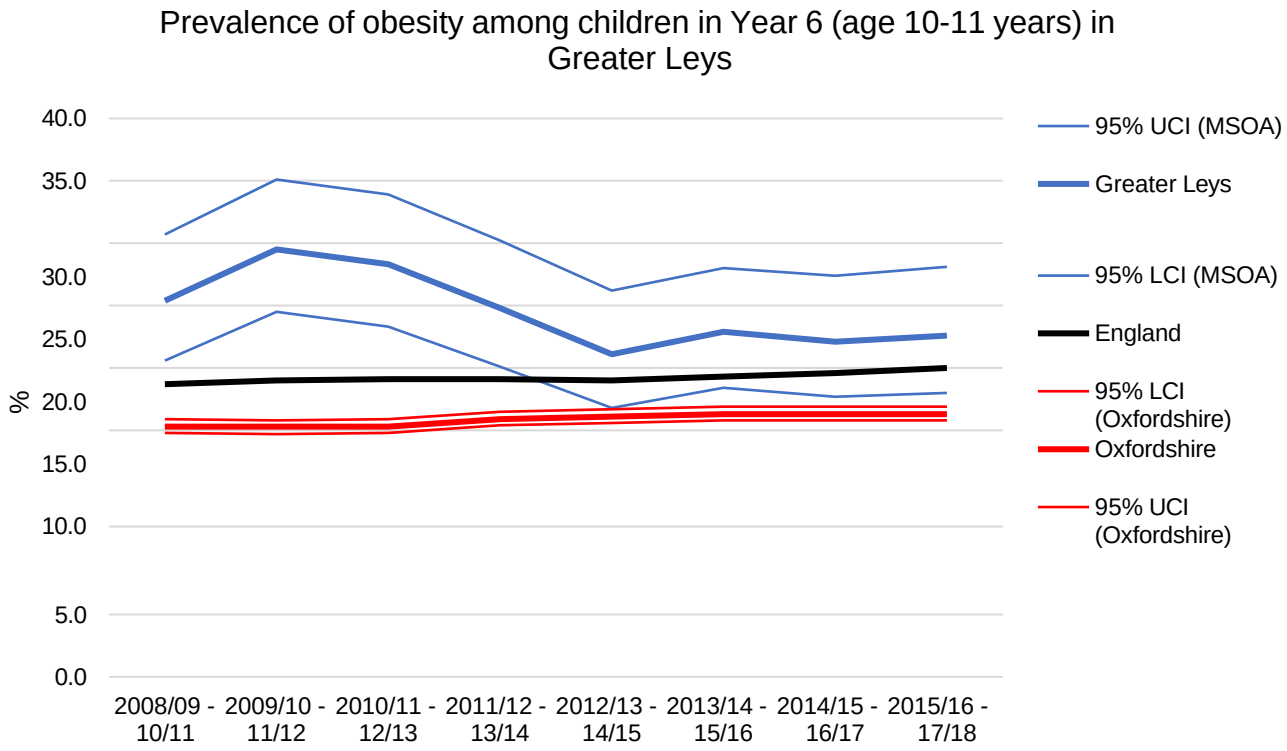


Map of 2011 MSOA boundary for Greater Leys (Oxford 018)

[12] GOV.UK. 2020. *National child measurement programme*. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-child-measurement-programme



NCMP data for the prevalence of obesity in Year 6 children in Blackbird Leys from 2008/09-10/11 to 2015/16-17/18. UCI = upper confidence interval. LCI = lower confidence interval.



NCMP data for the prevalence of obesity in Year 6 children in Greater Leys from 2008/09-10/11 to 2015/16-17/18. UCI = upper confidence interval. LCI = lower confidence interval.

The start of the 2020 to 2021 NCMP was delayed as schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2021 local authorities were asked to collect a representative 10% sample of data. Some local authorities were able to obtain height and weight measurements for over 75% of the population and therefore the excess weight and obesity prevalence has been published. Oxfordshire's coverage didn't reach 75% and therefore reporting at a local level for 2020/21 is not possible.

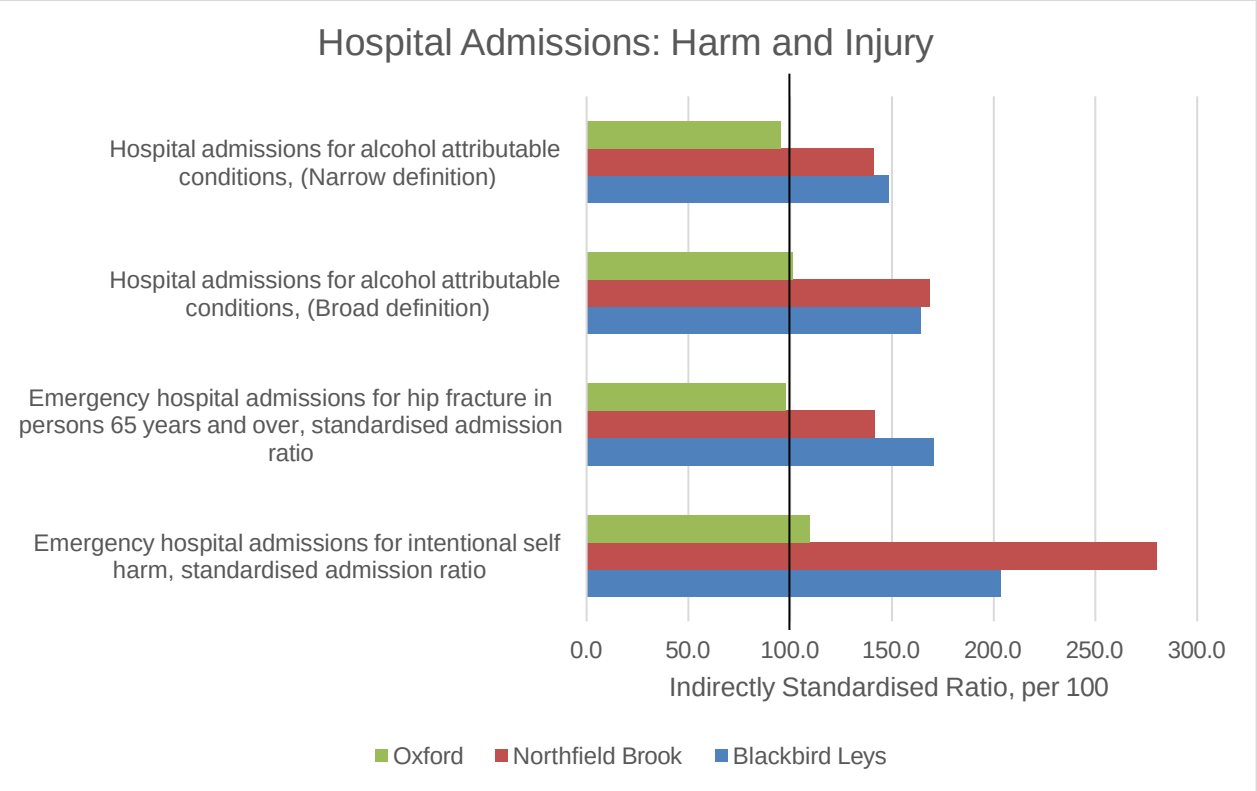
Analysis of national data shows that children in the most deprived areas in England are at the highest risk of living with overweight and obesity. These rates are concerning because they are correlated with higher incidence of other health conditions.

Local Health

Local health is a collection of quality assured health information presented for small geographical areas. A range of Local Health indicators available for these areas are detailed below.

Hospital Admissions, Harm and Injury

Figure 13 Hospital admissions, Harm and Injury



©Crown Copyright, source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities 2022. There are concerns about the quality of the data of this indicator[13]

[13] NHS Digital has identified a data quality issue affecting HES data for Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUH) in 2016/17. Over 30% of records from this trust did not have a valid geography of residence assigned. PHE have flagged the areas affected by this issue as the values should be treated with caution.

Alcohol consumption is a contributing factor to hospital admissions and deaths from a diverse range of conditions. The hospital admissions for alcohol attributable conditions (both the broad and narrow definition) were significantly worse in Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook compared to the England and Oxford value.

Hip fracture is a debilitating condition only one in three sufferers return to their former levels of independence and one in three ends up leaving their own home and moving to long-term care. Hip fractures are almost as common and costly as strokes and the incidence is rising. The average age of a person with a hip fracture is about 83 years and about 73% of fractures occur in women. The emergency hospital admissions for hip fractures in persons 65 and over in Blackbird Leys was significantly worse than the England value and the Oxford value. Northfield Brook was statistically similar to both England and Oxford.

Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm for Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook are both significantly worse than England and Oxford. The value for Oxford City was significantly worse than the England value.

Emergency Hospital Admissions

This indicator allows the level of such admissions at a local level to be compared to those expected given the age structure of local populations. High levels of emergency admissions may be due to a variety of causes such as high levels of injury within a population or poor management of chronic conditions within primary care. It should be viewed as an indication of the levels of unplanned secondary care use within a population and care should be taken when interpreting these results.

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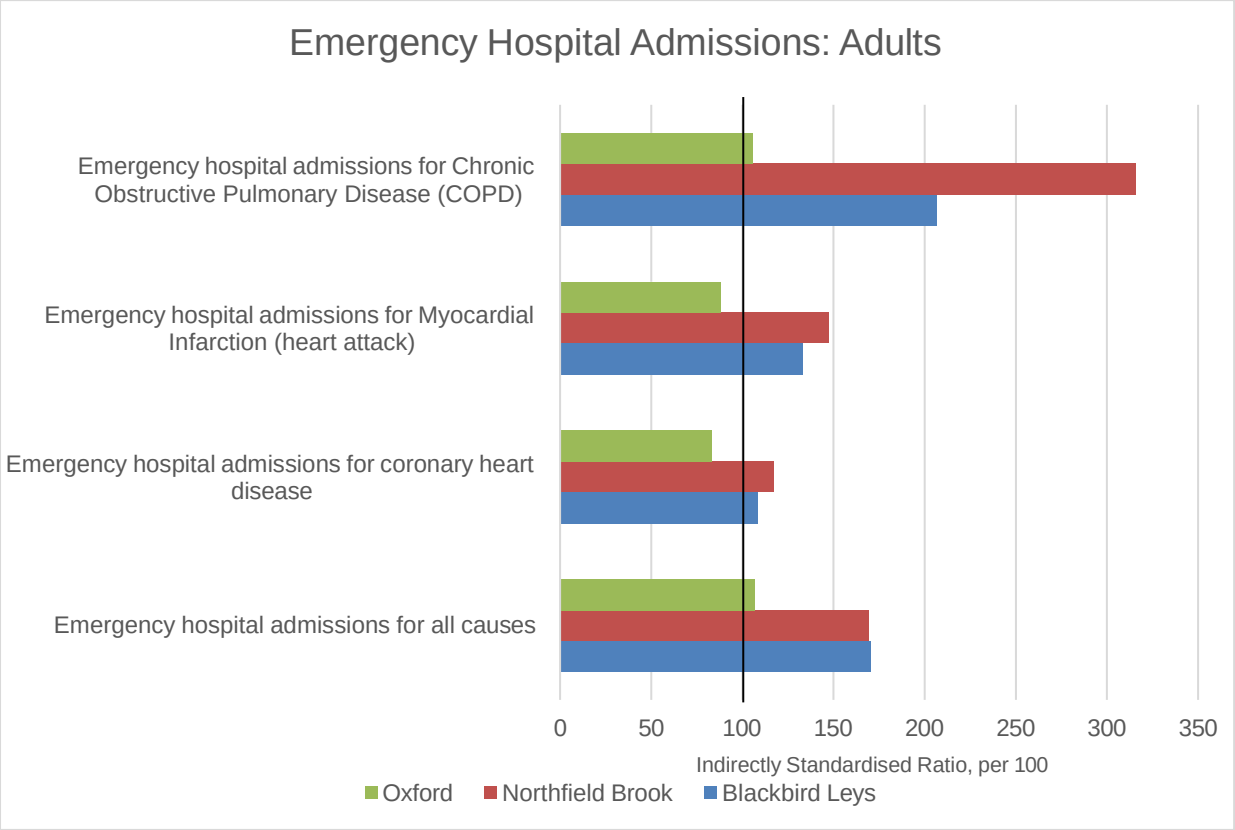
Figure 14 Adult Emergency Hospital Admissions



©Crown Copyright, source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities 2022. There are concerns about the quality of the data of this indicator[14]

[14] NHS Digital has identified a data quality issue affecting HES data for Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUH) in 2016/17. Over 30% of records from this trust did not have a valid geography of residence assigned. PHE have flagged the areas affected by this issue as the values should be treated with caution.

Lung cancer

Around one person in two in the UK will develop a cancer at some time in their life. The most common cancers are of the breast, lung, bowel, and prostate, together accounting for over half of all new cancers each year. This indicator measures the number of new cases of lung cancer and presents the data as a standardised incidence ratio (SIR) for lung cancers.

Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards are the two wards in Oxford City with a significantly worse than England average for the incidence of lung cancer (standardised incidence ratio) for the period 2015-2019.

Figure 15 Incidence of lung cancer

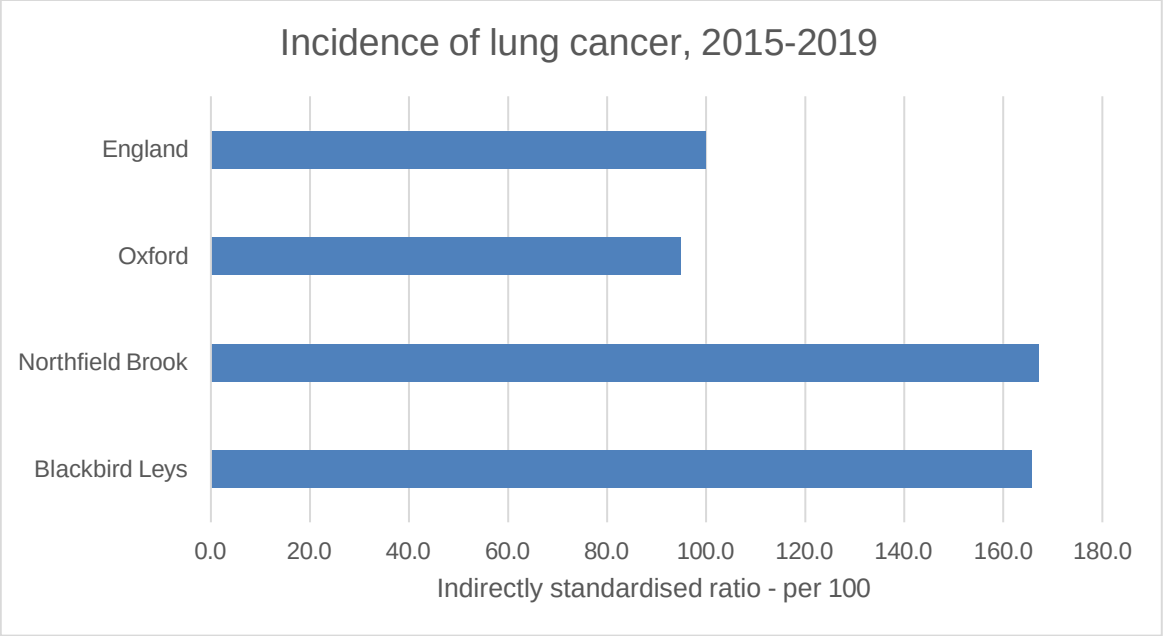


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Figure 16 Incidence of lung cancer for all wards in Oxford City

Area	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	197,043	100.0	99.6	100.4
Oxford	354	94.9	85.2	105.3
Northfield Brook	23	167.2	106.0	250.9
Blackbird Leys	27	165.8	109.2	241.2
Carfax & Jericho	10	145.8	69.8	268.1
Temple Cowley	17	140.3	81.7	224.6
Hinksey Park	20	125.4	76.6	193.7
Barton & Sandhills	19	124.8	75.1	194.8
Rose Hill & Iffley	26	115.9	75.7	169.9
Donnington	14	113.6	62.0	190.6
Headington Hill & Northway	16	113.2	64.7	183.9
Churchill	17	111.4	64.8	178.3
Osney & St Thomas	13	104.8	55.8	179.3
Cowley	19	102.1	61.4	159.5
St Mary's	10	96.6	46.2	177.6
Lye Valley	14	95.7	52.3	160.5
Walton Manor	11	85.8	42.7	153.4
Littlemore	12	83.1	42.9	145.2
Marston	16	68.4	39.1	111.1
Headington	14	64.4	35.2	108.1
Wolvercote	12	61.5	31.7	107.4
Summertown	11	55.8	27.8	99.8
Quarry & Risinghurst	12	55.2	28.5	96.5
Cutteslowe & Sunnymead	13	47.9	25.5	81.9
Holywell	-	*	-	-
St Clement's	-	*	-	-

Source: English cancer registration data from the NHS Digital Cancer Analysis System (AV2019 CASREF01), National Statistical Postcode Lookup (May 2021)

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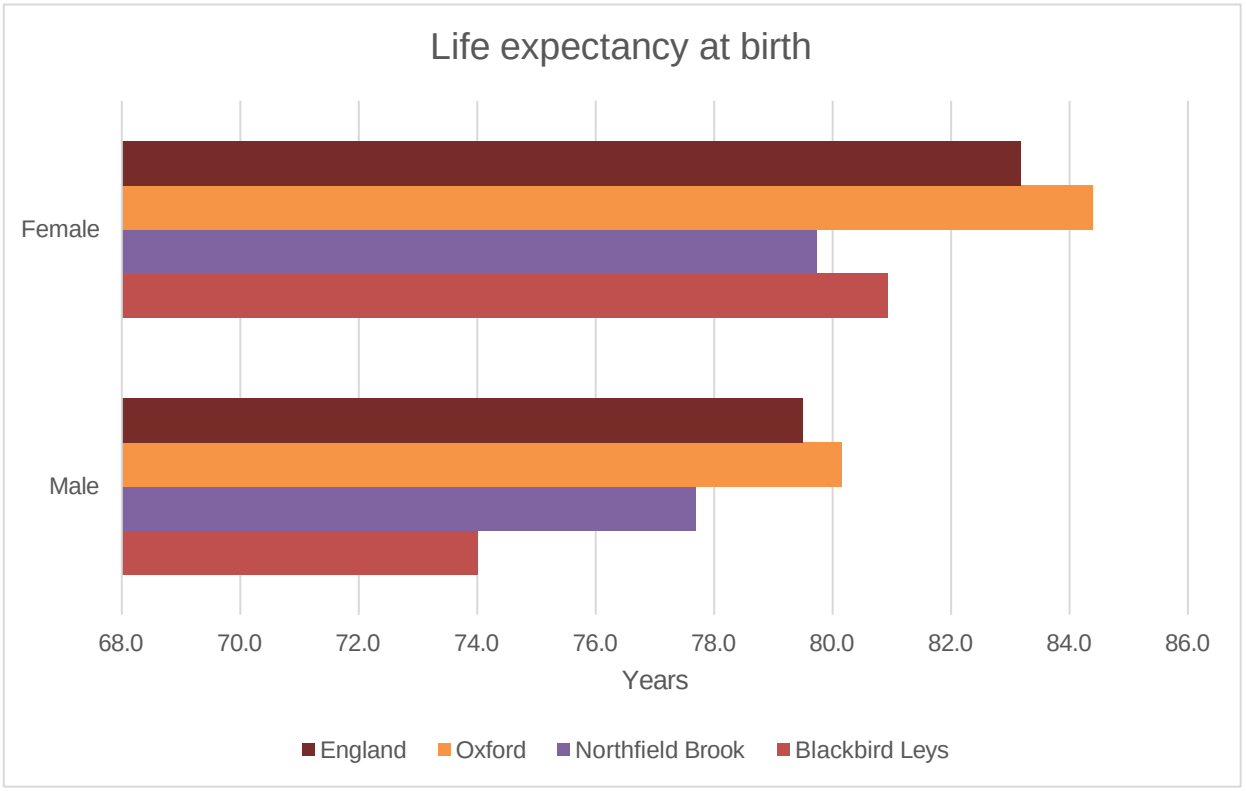
Life expectancy and mortality

Figure 17 Life Expectancy at Birth



©Crown Copyright, source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities 2022
Data for healthy life expectancy is unavailable at a small area level.

Figure 18 Causes of Death

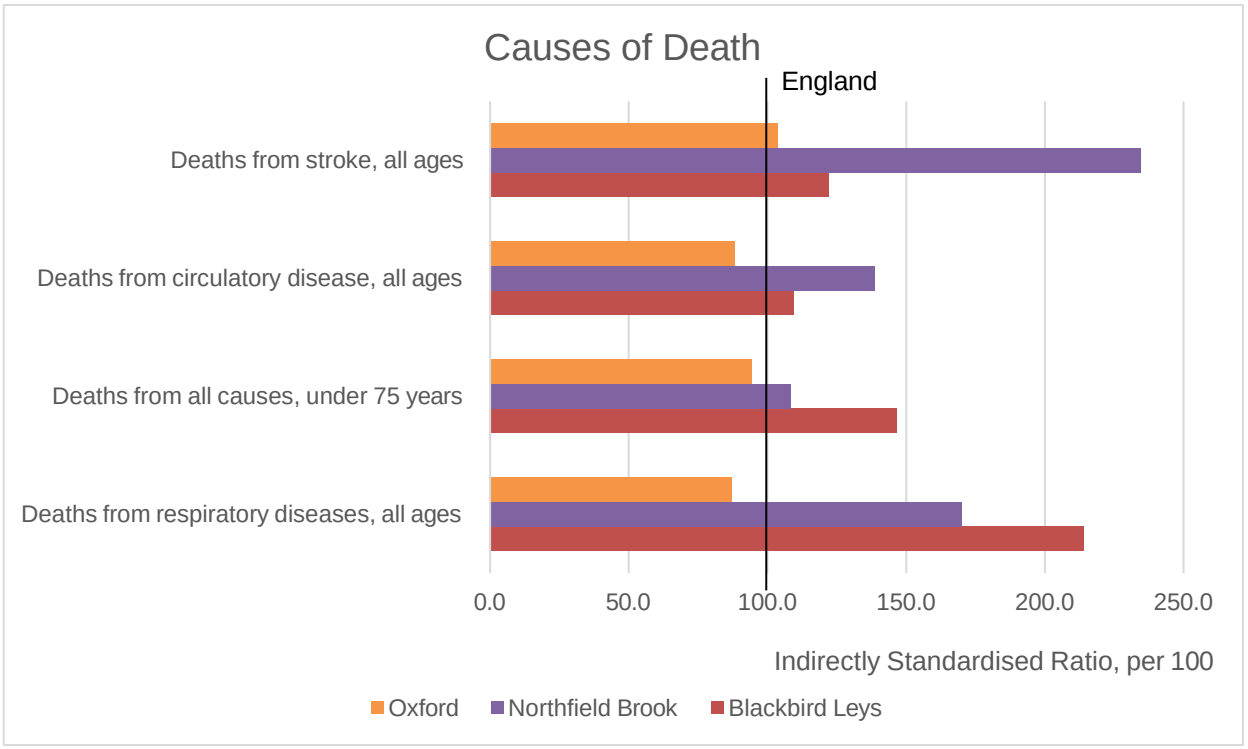


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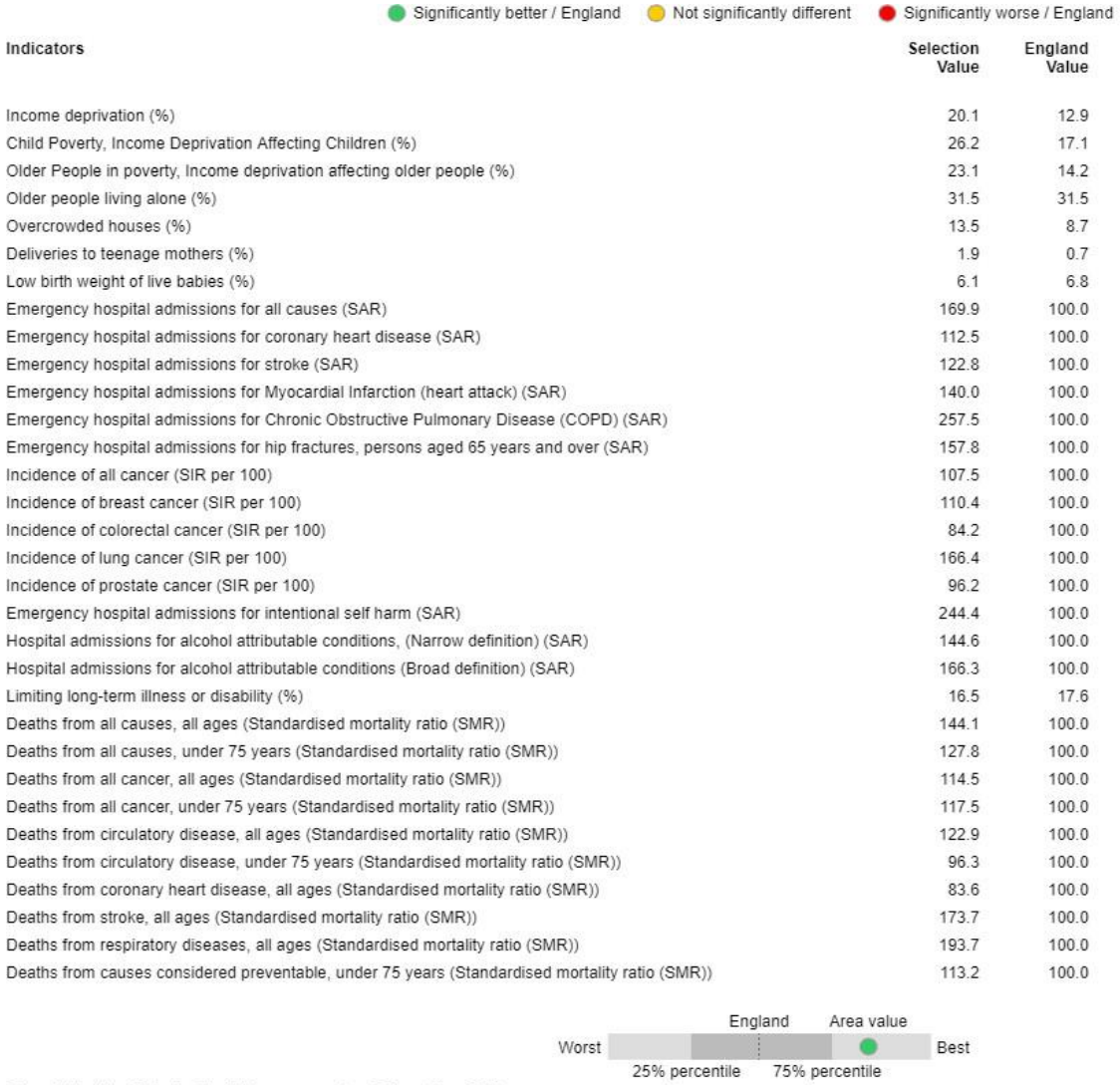
Figure 19 Local Health Spine Chart showing health indicators for 2 wards (Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook) combined data



Indicators	Selection Value	England Value	England Worst	Spine chart	England Best
Income deprivation (%)	20.1	12.9	50.7		0.7
Child Poverty, Income Deprivation Affecting Children (%)	26.2	17.1	63.4		0.6
Older People in poverty, Income deprivation affecting older people (%)	23.1	14.2	77.2		1.2
Older people living alone (%)	31.5	31.5	63.3		10.0
Overcrowded houses (%)	13.5	8.7	54.4		0.2
Deliveries to teenage mothers (%)	1.9	0.7	8.7		0.0
Low birth weight of live babies (%)	6.1	6.8	17.9		1.3
Emergency hospital admissions for all causes (SAR)	169.9	100.0	217.7		32.1
Emergency hospital admissions for coronary heart disease (SAR)	112.5	100.0	353.1		25.2
Emergency hospital admissions for stroke (SAR)	122.8	100.0	265.2		28.9
Emergency hospital admissions for Myocardial Infarction (heart attack) (SAR)	140.0	100.0	301.9		21.4
Emergency hospital admissions for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) (SAR)	257.5	100.0	589.2		0.0
Emergency hospital admissions for hip fractures, persons aged 65 years and over (SAR)	157.8	100.0	421.5		0.0
Incidence of all cancer (SIR per 100)	107.5	100.0	170.3		39.1
Incidence of breast cancer (SIR per 100)	110.4	100.0	225.9		32.6
Incidence of colorectal cancer (SIR per 100)	84.2	100.0	274.8		32.5
Incidence of lung cancer (SIR per 100)	166.4	100.0	384.2		20.7
Incidence of prostate cancer (SIR per 100)	96.2	100.0	232.9		22.7
Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self harm (SAR)	244.4	100.0	586.6		0.0
Hospital admissions for alcohol attributable conditions, (Narrow definition) (SAR)	144.6	100.0	470.8		26.1
Hospital admissions for alcohol attributable conditions (Broad definition) (SAR)	166.3	100.0	478.1		34.5
Limiting long-term illness or disability (%)	16.5	17.6	40.8		2.2
Deaths from all causes, all ages (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	144.1	100.0	258.2		38.3
Deaths from all causes, under 75 years (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	127.8	100.0	299.3		31.0
Deaths from all cancer, all ages (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	114.5	100.0	205.3		39.9
Deaths from all cancer, under 75 years (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	117.5	100.0	246.4		0.0
Deaths from circulatory disease, all ages (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	122.9	100.0	241.3		20.5
Deaths from circulatory disease, under 75 years (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	96.3	100.0	332.5		0.0
Deaths from coronary heart disease, all ages (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	83.6	100.0	293.8		0.0
Deaths from stroke, all ages (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	173.7	100.0	388.6		0.0
Deaths from respiratory diseases, all ages (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	193.7	100.0	331.1		14.1
Deaths from causes considered preventable, under 75 years (Standardised mortality ratio (SMR))	113.2	100.0	357.7		16.8

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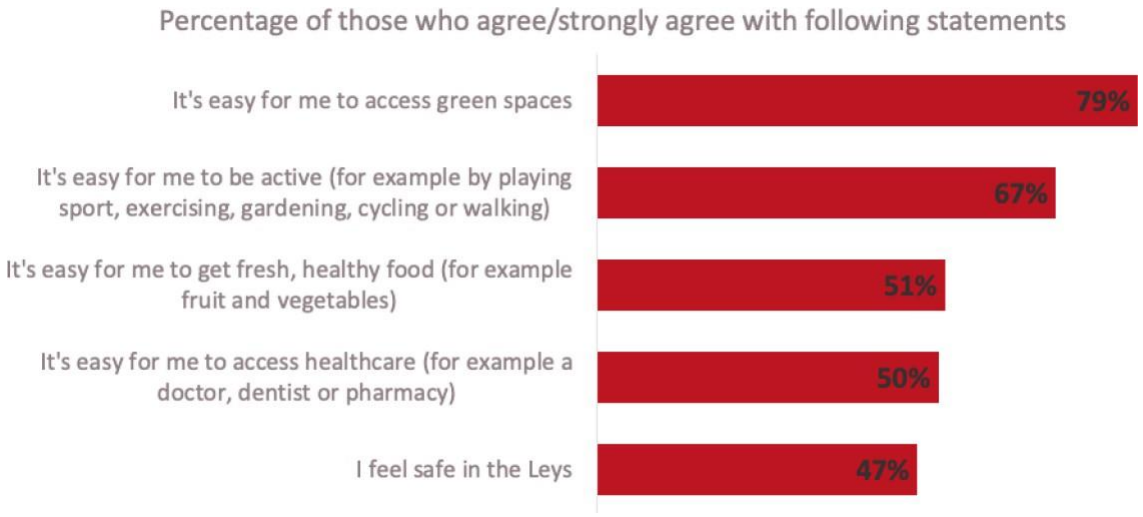
Community Insight

Community Insight (extracted from the community insight report with the addition of relevant health indicators)

To gain a sense of what the assets and challenges around health and wellbeing are in the Leys, Oxford Hub asked survey respondents what it's like to live in the Leys, in terms of various key factors that support health and wellbeing. Overall, people agreed that it was easy for them to access green spaces and to be active. They were more equivocal about how easy it was to get fresh, healthy food, access healthcare, or how safe they feel in the Leys.

Figure 20 Survey respondents agreement with the following statements

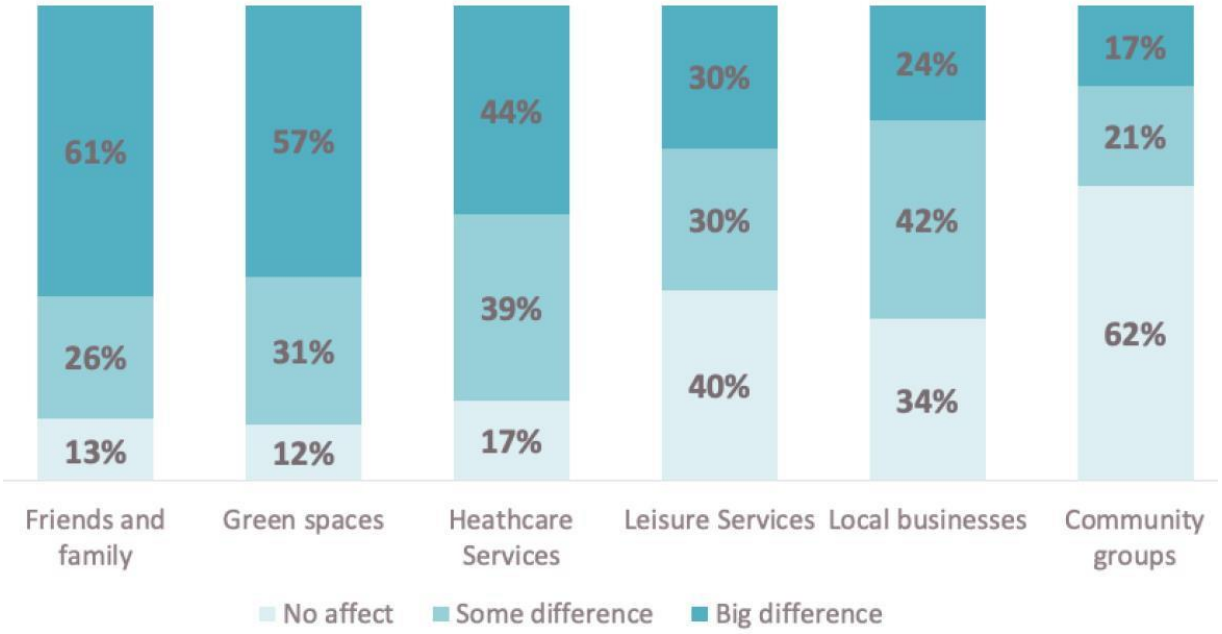


Compared to the overall average responses:

- Fewer of those aged 18-34 agreed that they could access fresh, healthy food (41%)
- More of those aged 18-34 agreed that it was easy to be active (78%) and easy to access healthcare (56%) than those in older age groups
- Much fewer residents in Greater Leys agreed that
    - they feel safe in the Leys (40%)
    - it's easy to get fresh, healthy food (47%)
- Conversely more residents in Greater Leys found it easy to
    - access healthcare (56%)
    - be active (73%)

When asked what the main factors were which supported residents' health and wellbeing:

Figure 21 Factors that support residents health and wellbeing



- Males (49%) and those aged 35-54 (49%) were more likely to feel that healthcare services make a big difference to health and wellbeing
- Those aged 35-54 (37%) also felt leisure services made a big difference
- Friends and family (67%) and community groups (27%) scored more highly than average for those aged 18-34
- A higher proportion of those aged 55+ (44%) did not feel that local businesses affected their health and wellbeing
- Green spaces were more valued by males (62%) and those aged 35-54 (63%)
- Those living in Greater Leys were more likely to feel that
    - leisure services (34%)
    - local businesses (29%)

  made a big difference to their health and wellbeing
- More of those living in Blackbird Leys reported that community groups (68%) did not affect health and wellbeing.

Assets

(extracted from the community insight report)

In response to the question, what do you like about living in the Leys:

- Overall the most popular answers were 'Access to green spaces' (39% chose this option) and 'near to friends/family' (38% chose this option).
- There were differences for different groups of respondents
    - Access to green spaces was particularly important for those aged 35-54 (47%) and males (44%)
    - Being 'near to friends/family' was more popular for those aged 18-34 (59%), those from Blackbird Leys (51%) and females (42%)
- There were some interesting differences in the responses from each locality
    - 26% of those in Blackbird Leys chose 'sense of community' compared to only 16% of those from Greater Leys
    - 'Access to services' was chosen by 37% of those in Blackbird Leys compared to 21% in Greater Leys
    - 'Affordable housing' was chosen most often by those from Greater Leys (34%) compared to 19% from Blackbird Leys

There was a wide variety of comments about what participants like about living in the Leys. Some respondents were particularly passionate about the Leys as a good place to live.

I've lived in Blackbird Leys all my life. I love it here, all my family live here and it's great community spirit (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

Cheapest cost of housing, keeping [members of my community] *together, community spirit* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

Where I live is nice and quiet neighbors, no one hassles me (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Love it, passionate about estate, best estate, people, variety of people, unity (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

I love everything about the leys (online survey)

Everything so close (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

Several people commented on the great sense of belonging and community they feel in the Leys. For several respondents this was linked to the social and cultural diversity of the area. Others were more pragmatic about their reasons for living in the Leys, for example for the affordable housing.

Sense of belonging and community	• *You will not have a funeral from anybody in Summertown or Headington – a nan or grandad who's passed away – where there is at least two hundred to three hundred and fifty people. Here that's standard. So downstairs, the hall, the Glow hall, that's when there's a small funeral. Normally they go down to the big one opposite Knight's Court. You're looking at four, five hundred people. And that's – that's the difference. This area has – there's a community.* (interview) • *That its a community and everyone knows everyone* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys) • *The Leys/Greater Leys has potential to be a thriving community, loads of youth (future), diverse nationalities* (in person survey, Greater Leys)
Social and cultural diversity	• *Cultural diversity. It's comfortable for every culture compared to somewhere like Woodstock Rd very white middle class so you can feel very uncomfortable there as here you can be as visible or invisible as you want* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)
Pragmatic reasons	• *I like that everything is close by; there's transport. I like that it's a diverse area. But it's also like, realistically, for me, it's affordable housing. That's all it boiled down to.* (interview)

Access to Healthcare
(extracted from the community insight report)

Many respondents expressed their frustrations with the challenge of getting access to healthcare (see page 38), but several noted that when they did speak to their GP or another healthcare professional, they were very happy with the standard of care. Some people also commented that it was good to have a health centre within walking distance of much of the Leys. Several respondents also commented on the high quality of pharmacy services in the Leys.

I waited almost 2 months for a response but when my concerns were addressed by the GP the response was excellent. (online survey)

I have a fantastic Doctors surgery, who will see me instantly or help with any other problems. The pharmacist is a 2-minute walk and delivered all my meds when I was shielding or when I'm ill. (online survey)

The leys health centre is the only place I can praise living in blackbird leys. I receive the best healthcare for me and my family. (online survey)

Access to Healthy Food
(extracted from the community insight report)

Respondents have a mixed relationship with the local convenience shops like Deltey's and Spar, and takeaways (see page 41), but for some they were a key source of fresh food. Other popular sources of healthy food, especially fresh fruit and vegetables included Region to Season, the Sunday car boot sale at Kassam, and the community larder.

Delty's now sell Co-operative foods eg fruit, veg and salad so that is an amazing help to me. (online survey)

The Caribbean food shop at the Top Shops – with WI foods (in person survey, former Leys resident)

carboot sale at kassam green grocers stall - Sundays, well stocks and affordable. Community Larder On Wednesdays, needs better advertising, not enough people know its there (online survey)

However, most respondents cited the supermarkets and shops beyond the Leys, including Lidl, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Cowley Road.

Access to Green Spaces and Activities
(extracted from the community insight report)

The many green spaces in the Leys were mentioned by many participants as something that supported them to be active. These included parks and fields within the Leys, Spindleberry Nature Reserve, and fields and woods beyond the southern border of the Leys, such as Sandford Brake. Activities and opportunities for exercise include football, dance, the Frank Bruno Foundation (boxing and a gym), and Nemesis boxing club at Blackbird Leys Community Centre. Several respondents also said they enjoy spending time in their gardens or allotments. The outdoor exercise equipment in the parks were mentioned by several participants as supporting them to be active, especially as they are free to use.

Exercise machines in all the parks all free so very good (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

Opportunities and Community Assets
(extracted from the community insight report)

Participants mentioned community resources including the IT hub at Blackbird Leys Community Centre and the Agnes Smith Advice Centre. Some participants also raised the provision of youth activities in the Leys.

I mean they've always had… as far back as I can remember, a summer scheme. Which I think is really important because that's a long holiday. So both of the main providers have at least four weeks through the summer. Coz I just remember you know, as a kid feeling that, Oh my God seven weeks is such a long time. And you get bored don't you. [...] Some of the projects that they do through those summer schemes are amazing… (interview)

Safe upbringing, fantastic for me. OK fun times, good vibes, never bored. (focus group)

Challenges
(extracted from the community insight report)

Oxford Hub asked residents about what they dislike about living in the Leys.

- One third of respondents chose 'lack of services,' 'poor quality services' and 'cost of living' as things they disliked most about living in the Leys
- For those aged 18-34 'Cost of living' 50% and 'Lack of affordable housing' (44%) were chosen most often
- 'lack of services' and 'poor quality services' were highlighted most often by female respondents and those from Blackbird Leys
- Those from Greater Leys were more concerned by the 'cost of living' (37%) and 'lack of affordable housing' (26%) than those from Blackbird Leys

A quarter of respondents chose 'Other', most frequently mentioning:

Crime	• Mention of drug problems and anti social behaviour
Cleanliness	• Litter • General appearance of the area • Dog mess
Lack of activities/place to meet	• E.g. coffee shops or clubs for children

Comments about what people disliked about living in the Leys included its reputation:

Lack of funding for locals for things to do. Reputation that preceeds it is not how it is (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Trouble, violence, nothing for kids to do (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Gangs and idiots (in person survey, Greater Leys)

That it is a high deprived area and with that comes less opportunity arises. It has a bad reputation and when you tell people you live here, they turn up their nose. Current issues with youth/knife crime. (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

Some participants commented that they did not feel there was a community spirit where they live in the Leys, or that they are not a part of the community. For one interviewee, this had been highlighted by the pandemic:

> *I felt so incredibly alone and when they started clapping for the NHS the first time, I opened the curtain and still look and see nobody here really… And I just felt even more sad that I'm in an area where there is no community. You know it's… it's where the bus comes…It's too kind of disjointed, we're all… I don't know, it's very sad cause I'm such a community person but I don't live in a community.* (interview)

A theme that emerged was that although people had plenty to criticise about the Leys, many respondents are strongly connected to the area and would like to stay – they are deeply invested in it and would like to see things change for the better.

> *people are completely thrown that I live in Blackbird Leys. And of course the whole goal is to get out. And as soon as you're doing well you won't live in Blackbird Leys, get out. Well why should a community be about getting out. Why can't we live and thrive here.*(interview)

Crime and Safety
(extracted from the community insight report)

Some respondents criticised the negative reputation of the Leys in the media, and were keen to stress that the situation is generally better and more nuanced than this.

as soon as we moved in we had the Oxford mail knocking on our door saying how's the crime, because they'd already covered a story around the corner in [street], where they'd found some used needles in the play area for the children so it was immediately sensationalising that I'd moved into this horrendously crime filled area. [...] we kept being told, be careful that'll be taken, this'll be gone. And then one day, I went off to the shops with my son to get some stuff, and neither of us shut the front door. It was absolutely wide open for all the time we were out, and [...] as soon as I pulled up in my little [car], I thought Oh my god we've left the front door open, there'll be nothing in it. Everything was there, it was fine. (interview)

Oh, of course, everybody has a perception – it's a dump! That's what everybody thinks. Everybody still thinks there are joyriders. There are joyriders. There are just not – as many. But life and times have changed. Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys are no longer solely the deprived, difficult areas of Oxford. That actually has expanded itself to Rose Hill, to Barton but this Blackbird Leys carries just such a horrific reputation. It really does. (interview)

it's a bad picture painted of Blackbird Leys which actually, when you live here, you don't feel that way. [...] I think, if something happens on Blackbird Leys, it's splashed all over the media. And if it happens in other areas of Oxford it's kept a little bit hush hush. (interview)

However, crime and safety were real concerns for many participants. Some respondents expressed concerns about their own safety, and the impacts of this on their mental health and ability to get exercise. In some cases, these concerns were about the estate in general, whereas in others they were about specific areas, such as council housing that they had been allocated. Several respondents mentioned that they felt safe during the day but would be cautious at night.

I wouldn't go out alone at night or walk home from a bus stop, I'd drive or get a taxi (online survey)

I've never felt safe here I'm always on my guard. There's so much anti-social behaviour. (online survey)

I suffer from depression and anxiety, I can't go out for a walk as I'm worried something will happen to me. It's not safe here. (online survey)

Living here IS affecting my mental health as I don't feel safe going out of my front door! I'm now more of a prisoner than I was before covid 19 (online survey)

Similarly, some respondents highlighted the differences in feeling safe between different parts of the Leys

I never felt unsafe there [in Greater Leys], I feel more unsafe here. In Blackbird Leys.

I do not feel safe living in [tower block], however I have previously private rented in 2 different properties in greater leys and grew up in [street] in greater leys and felt safe. (online

The presence of gangs and drug dealing on the estate were raised by several respondents as a key concern. In some cases people had personally had negative experiences. People also mentioned serious crimes such as a murder in 2017 and a recent stabbing, and the impact of these on their sense of safety.

*It was a really hot night and the window had been open in the kitchen and I could hear as I went to the bathroom these young lads "where the **** is he", and as I went in the bathroom, there's someone outside my bathroom going *heavy breathing noises*, like he was the chap they were all looking for. And I was petrified because nobody will let us shut that secure door, it's always open. I used to ask people to shut it and I've given up now. I just accept you can come in and you don't need to press a buzzer. But all I thought was Oh my God are they coming in here. (interview)*

My first neighbour was a crack cocaine heroin dealer, and so quite often there would be huge rows and shouting and stabbings. My neighbour upstairs was stabbed, and quite often I'd be woken up in the night with the police outside my bedroom window, and I'd wake up to blue and white tape. And "She's got a knife, she's got a knife, she's got a knife so go around the front" and then there'd be banging on the doors, and one time when the police were called she thought I'd call them, so she threatened to break her knuckles on my face. (interview)

Drug dealers and addicts on every corner, in every park. I can't go out at night! People causing problems every day (online survey)

the use for illegal drugs is very widespread and impacts of spending patterns and lifestyles with vulnerable people I know narrowly avoiding death or life opportunities being ruined and others (including myself) being intimidated by those involved in the industry (online survey)

A significant number of people explained that although they felt safe thanks to their personal networks, they were concerned about their children's safety and potential to get involved in criminal activities, particularly as they become teenagers.

I feel safe but I worry about my children's safety as they get older. (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

No I don't want her going out on her own. I feel safe cos I've lived on the estate but not everyone knows my daughter like they know me. (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

Can be [hard] as they get older. Football team closed due to what they got involved in. My son got groomed into county lines. (in person survey, Greater Leys)

the disproportionate number of black children that have been excluded [and] expelled from school and whatever [...] They have no job, they see no hope, and they're there to be exploited by people from within our own community, and get involved with criminality and that's the end of… And this new law, that means that even if you are an innocent bystander to a crime that's been committed, you yourself are going to go down for that crime that you had nothing [to do with]… (focus group participant, identifies as African heritage)

Other concerns included speeding and unsafe driving and parking (including overflow traffic from the Kassam stadium), littering, noise disturbance from neighbours, unsafe dogs and dog poo, suspected sexual assault, and antisocial behaviour from young people. Several people commented on a general sense of dilapidation and neglect in the Leys, exacerbated by litter and rats. Young people surveyed by Leys CDI commented that…

The area is scruffy, the walls need cleaning it looking rough and it makes you feel that way about living here (online survey)

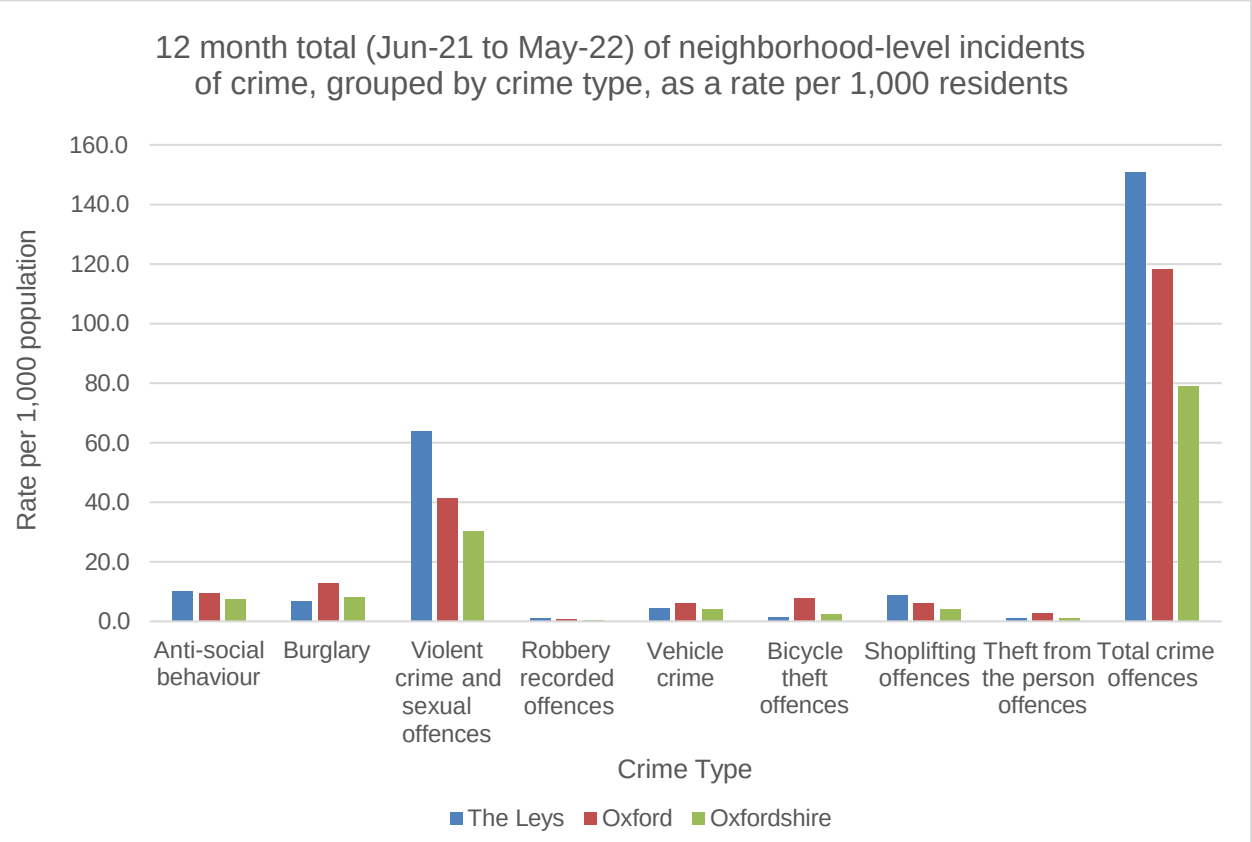
'it feels like nobody cares about the area and are willing to let it get destroyed over time' (in person survey).

An interviewee also expressed a concern for their children's safety because of fears about the users of local services.

But it's not quite the same in this environment. And a lot of that is nothing to do with the people who live in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys. It's the services that they choose to put here. Like temporarily housing people from Littlemore mental health unit, the fact that Norfield, what's now Orion School, is literally at the end of the road here (interviewee)

Several people commented that they would like to see more policing in the Leys, or a more satisfactory response from police or other authorities when complaints are raised. However, one respondent also highlighted the lack of trust between the police and local people. Local research carried out for the Clear Signal and Systems Changers projects found that some residents are afraid to report problems to the police, due to mistrust of the authorities, or in cases of family rifts, because of a fear of retribution.

Figure 22 12 month total of neighborhood level incidents of crime



Police UK data for 12-month total incidents of crime, grouped by crime type, aggregated from LSOA to ward level for the Leys (Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards combined), Oxford City and Oxfordshire County

Raising a Family
(extracted from the community insight report)

We asked in person survey respondents and focus group participants how they felt about raising a family in the Leys. Responses were mixed, highlighting the assets of community and family networks, but also the challenges of a lack of services or accessing those services.

So far so good as my kids has made lots of friends and they have joined the local football team (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

Peep has been amazing - it's made it a joy. But without peep there is very little other support. Had to travel out of the Leys for breastfeeding support. (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Family are grown, but I have grandchildren, whom I do worry about growing up today, but that would be anywhere nowadays (in person survey, Greater Leys)

There was a real sense of community – everyone knew each other, a good support network (focus group)

Too many negative influences, drugs especially e.g. weed, cocaine (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

It's ok but when they grow up I'm scared of the crime rate and them not having enough to do (in person survey, Greater Leys)

If you don't know people it can be hard! for the younger generation (focus group)

Problems getting children to the same school as siblings (focus group)

There were also concerns about a lack of adequate support for young people's education and a risk of young people losing interest in school and the opportunities it might open up. Focus group participants who identified as having African and Caribbean heritage highlighted how racism and racial disadvantage can increase the challenges facing young people and their families, particularly in terms of discrimination within the education system and vulnerability to getting involved in criminal activities:

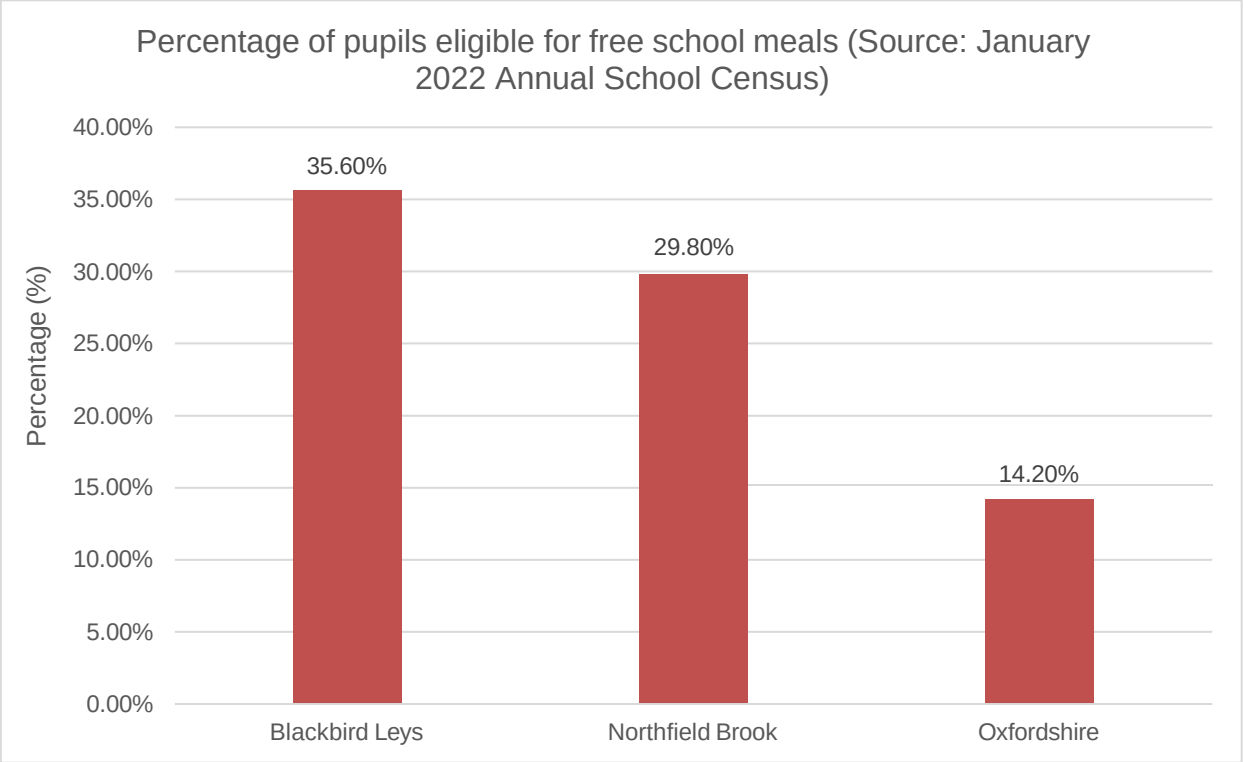
it's like watching your child walking on a plank. Everyday they walk on a plank and get to the end and go over into the water and drown. Who allows that? Who would want that to happen? Don't we say, 'let's put some safeguarding issues around that plank to reinforce and support that child from falling over?'. All our children coming up – three, four, five - go to school really bright, wanting to learn – by the time they get to eight, nine, ten, eleven, there's a complete drop-off, cut-off, disengagement. And yet still, we're still sending them to that system that is actually a kind of a plank that they are walking on and dropping off at the end of it every day. (focus group participant)

my son went to [school name redacted], and the teacher, head of English, said, 'the trouble with black children,' – to me and his mother – 'when you speak to them, they don't understand' (focus group participant)

Education/Qualifications

Figure 23 Qualifications among residents aged 16-64

Figure 24 Proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals



Access to Healthcare
(extracted from the community insight report)

The total practice population of the Leys Health Centre is 11,115 patients.

Table 4 The Leys Health Care Services Practice Populations

GP Practice	Number of patients from the Leys	% of residents
The Leys Health Centre	8494	72.68%
Cowley Road Medical Practice	1196	10.22%
Temple Cowley Health Centre	1188	10.15%
Hollow Way Medical Centre	1042	8.90%

Overwhelmingly, comments on access to healthcare centred on the difficulty of getting an appointment – particularly with a GP, but dentists and CAMHS were also mentioned by respondents. Frustrations about experiences of trying to access health care included waiting in a phone queue to speak to health centre staff; needing to phone the health centre during working hours to make an appointment; having to wait a long time for a GP appointment; not being able to see a GP face to face; not having a named, regular GP; and a dislike of explaining needs to non-medical staff. For some respondents these experiences had led to a feeling that the health centre did not care for or about them, and in two cases people had decided to pay for private healthcare instead.

Challenges with the Leys Healthcentre

- *Getting through to the Doctors surgery is a joke when you do eventually get through your told a appointment can only be accessed if you ring back at 8.30am the next day. When you do this you have to wait for about a hour because everybody else is doing the same. I have been in a queue being number 27 so wait for 26 people before me.Then you can wait for 2 weeks to see your Doctor.* (online survey)
- *As a clinically vulnerable person i feel despondent with the local health center. Lack of face to face appts and having to speak to different GPS who diagnose over the phone i feel let down.* (online survey)
- *Doctors clinic is too small to cover the leys area resulting in prolonged waiting times for appointments* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)
- *The Leys Health center is oversubscribed, too busy, therefore not as kind sometimes and not as responsive as I hear from my friends and colleagues who are with GPs elsewhere* (online survey)
- *GP service deteriorated. Don't see same doctor. Can't book future appointments. Very stressful when you're already stressed because you're ill* (online survey)
- *can only get an appointment after speaking with a doctor and can only speak to a doctor if you call early enough which is really difficult when working all day. The service is not accessible to the average person let alone those who may have special requirements.* (online survey)

When interviewed, a healthcare worker in the Leys described the difficult management problem of getting patients to the most appropriate care for their situation, given the limited resources and staffing, especially when this goes against patients' expectations. One strategy the local Primary Care Network has introduced to help ease capacity is an urgent Hub, where people with acute healthcare concerns are seen by a clinician, freeing up GP time. However, for people who may have experienced (either in the past or elsewhere) seeing the same GP each time and face to face, and/or do not fully understand the process, this may feel like their needs are being minimised or neglected. The interviewee felt that these frustrations were being exacerbated by a government and media emphasis on 'a return to face-to-face treatment', without providing additional resourcing to support this.

Another interviewee with insight into the healthcare system argued that resourcing for healthcare in the Leys should be a question of equity, not equality. The Leys has higher levels of complex cases and health needs than other wards, so it needs the extra staff and resources to deal with them.

More funding for our local health centre. (online survey)

Some respondents had issues getting to the Leys Health Centre without a car or had specific needs that they felt weren't currently being met.

Lack of male doctors at the health centre makes discussing some health problems difficult at times (online survey)

The emphasis on the Leys Health Centre may partly reflect the fact that the survey was circulated through their patient text messaging list. However, similar concerns also came up in our in-person surveys.

Respondents pointed out the difficulty of accessing Oxford's hospitals or services like Specsavers by public transport, and one respondent said that they would like to be referred to local hospitals '*instead of being sent to Horton or Reading*' (online survey).

GP services are already totally inadequate; cannot possibly cope with expected influx in new housing. A small-scale health centre, mini-A&E is needed. More frequent direct public transport to JR would be helpful - for patients and health workers alike (online survey)

No direct bus routes from blackbird leys to JR or Churchill hospital (online survey)

And getting from [Greater Leys to] somewhere like the Cowley centre is so expensive on the bus. I mean, so expensive. It's cheaper for me to drive to the Westgate centre and park for the whole day, then it is for me to get the bus with my two [children]. (interview)

There were also challenges accessing other forms of healthcare. Several people mentioned the lack of access to mental health support, for adults and children. An interviewee working in a school setting had had to support a family to get a diagnosis to access CAMHS. On the day of the interview, the same school had also had to intervene in a family's interactions with the dental practice to help a child access emergency treatment.

> *Waited nearly 2 years for physio* (focus group)

Focus group participants also raised the issue of trust of healthcare and social care systems for some communities, for example people of African and Caribbean heritage, and suggested that better information and awareness could help:

> *I think people need to understand we need social care. We can easily get trapped within social care systems, and we need to understand what we need to do and what we don't need to do. They need to have clear boundaries of what can get you stuck in a system – so if a black person is trying to help you, it's not because, 'oh, you're with the Babylon System', and things like that, it's because you know what's trying to trip you up, and people need to listen.* (focus group participant, identifies as African Heritage)

> *A: As black people, we've got that kind of stigma. We've got so much pride, and you don't want this person knowing your business, you don't want that person knowing your business. But you need the help. It's like a Catch-22 kind of thing.*
> *B: But your whole business is known on the system somewhere. And the whole system is kicking against you.* (focus group discussion, participants identify as Black and Mixed ethnicity)

A note in addition to the community insight

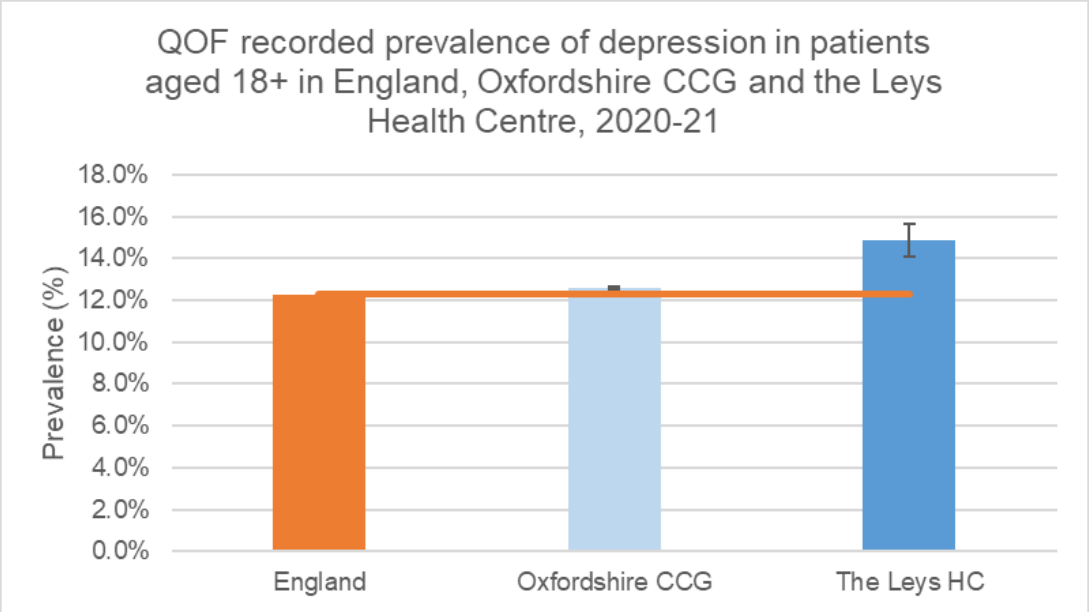
Between September and November of 2021, Healthwatch Oxfordshire conducted a survey to ask people about their experiences of contacting their GP practice. The report noted similar challenges and concerns to those of the residents of the Leys. Across Oxfordshire, patients struggled to get through to their practice because phone lines were busy, and that online apps and tools could be time consuming or difficult to complete. The report explains that one in three of the survey respondents called their GP practice to book a non-urgent appointment and many were unsuccessful.[15]

[15] Healthwatch Oxfordshire, 2022. *Patients' experiences of contacting GP surgeries in Oxfordshire*. [online] Healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk. Available at: https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/20220504_GP-report_final.pdf

Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF)
The QOF is an incentive payment scheme (not a performance management tool) which aims to improve patient care by rewarding practices for the quality of care they provide. This quality is assessed using achievement against a range of indicators across a number of key areas in clinical care and public health.

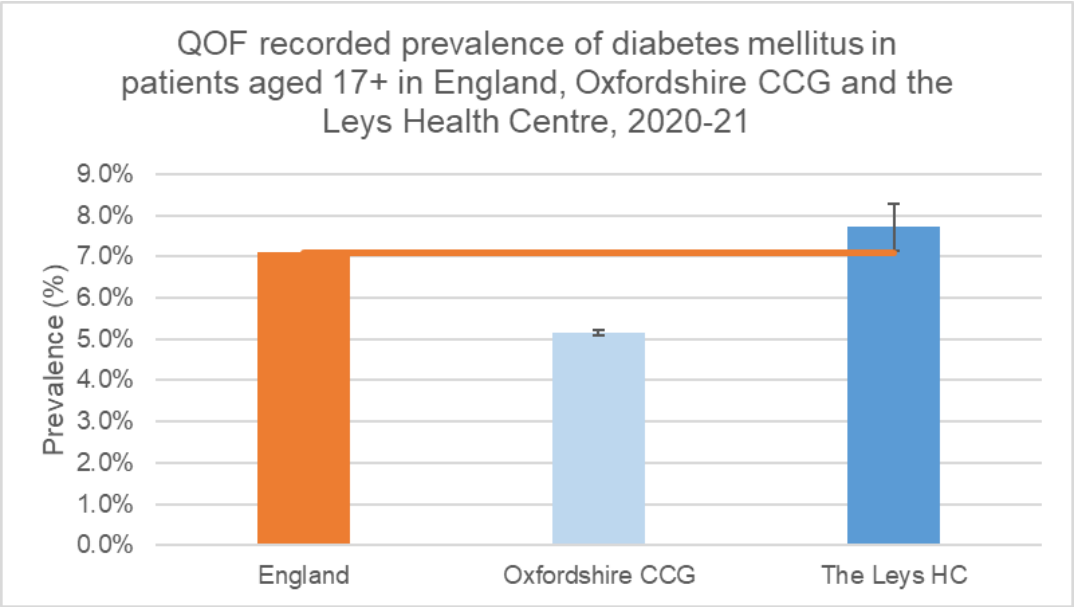
Depression
The prevalence of depression recorded by the Leys Health Centre in 2020-21 was significantly above the England rate. The QOF data shows that the prevalence of depression increased between 2020-21 and 2019-20 by 1.03%.

Figure 25 QOF Prevalence of Depression



Diabetes
The prevalence of diabetes mellitus recorded by the Leys Health Centre in 2020-21 was significantly above the England rate. The prevalence for Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group was significantly lower than the England prevalence. The Leys Health Centre recorded a slight increase in prevalence of diabetes by 0.38% from 2019-20.

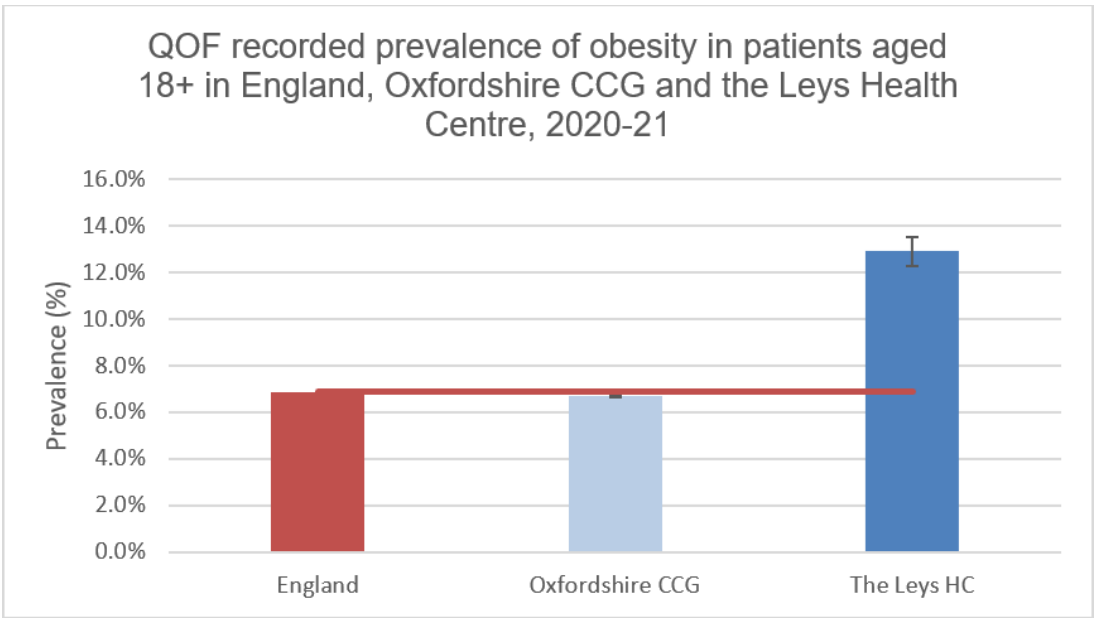
Figure 26 QOF Prevalence of diabetes mellitus



Obesity

The Leys Health Centre recorded prevalence for obesity 2020-21 was significantly above the England rate. The prevalence for Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group was significantly lower than the England prevalence. The Leys Health Centre recorded a decrease in prevalence of obesity by 4.12% from 2019-20. The decrease in QOF recorded prevalence of obesity is likely to be due to the reduction in face-to-face consultations during the pandemic; in order to be included on the obesity register, a patient must have a BMI of 30 or more recorded in the 12 months up to and including the reporting period end date.

Figure 27 QOF Prevalence of Obesity



Access to Affordable, Fresh, Healthy Food
(extracted from the community insight report)

Overwhelmingly, the barrier for respondents accessing fresh, healthy food was cost.

You can buy microwave meals and, you know these quick meals, very very cheaply. I don't particularly like them myself, but they're very cheap. I don't know you know the nutritional value in those is not great is it, but they're cheap. You know they talk about buying organic or buying, you know, buying fresh, but it can work out quite expensive for some people so…and obviously we've got two chippies, and a takeaway you know, in a very small space. (interview)

Oh well I can't afford to eat. Oh but there's two for one bag of chips for a quid. Here you are kids, have that. (interview)

What would help you to eat more fresh, healthy food? Cheaper prices. ... often have to choose between eating & heating (online survey)

I absolutely think that people choose the unhealthy take aways as they are cheaper than fresh fruit and veg in the Leys. (online survey)

National Data (a note in addition to the community insight)

- According to ONS[16], between 25 May and 5 June 2022, 88% of adults reported that their cost of living had increased over the last month, a considerable increase from the 62% of adults reporting the same between 3 and 14 November 2021.
- ONS experimental analysis of 30 food products in seven supermarkets[17] showed increases in (lowest) prices in the year to April 2022 for 24 out of 30 items.
- The greatest recorded increase in this selection of food products was for (lowest price) pasta which had gone up by 50% in the year.

This is in the context of a national crisis around the cost of living. However, the circumstances of the Leys, such as lower incomes and limited access to large supermarkets, mean that Leys residents may be experiencing this more acutely than elsewhere in Oxfordshire.

[16] ONS, 2022. *Inflation and the cost of living for UK households, overview - Office for National Statistics*. [online] Ons.gov.uk. Available at: Inflation and the cost of living for UK households, overview - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
[17] ONS, 2022. *Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis - Office for National Statistics*. [online] Ons.gov.uk. Available at: Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Respondents also highlighted the issue of access to sources of affordable, healthy food – particularly the distance to suitable shops and having transport to cover that distance. The big (cheaper) supermarkets are all outside or on the edge of the Leys, and are not on main bus routes. Some people said they have to get a taxi to do their shopping.

> *I drive, I have a well paid job so I can access to good value vegetables/healthy food at supermarkets a drive away but I strongly feel that the local shops in the Leys are too expensive for locals to access cheap healthy food and I think this is an issue that needs to be dealt with. Helping elderly/poor residents to access the larger supermarkets for cheaper healthy food should be a priority. They aren't far away with a car buy are pretty inaccessible without a car.* (online survey)

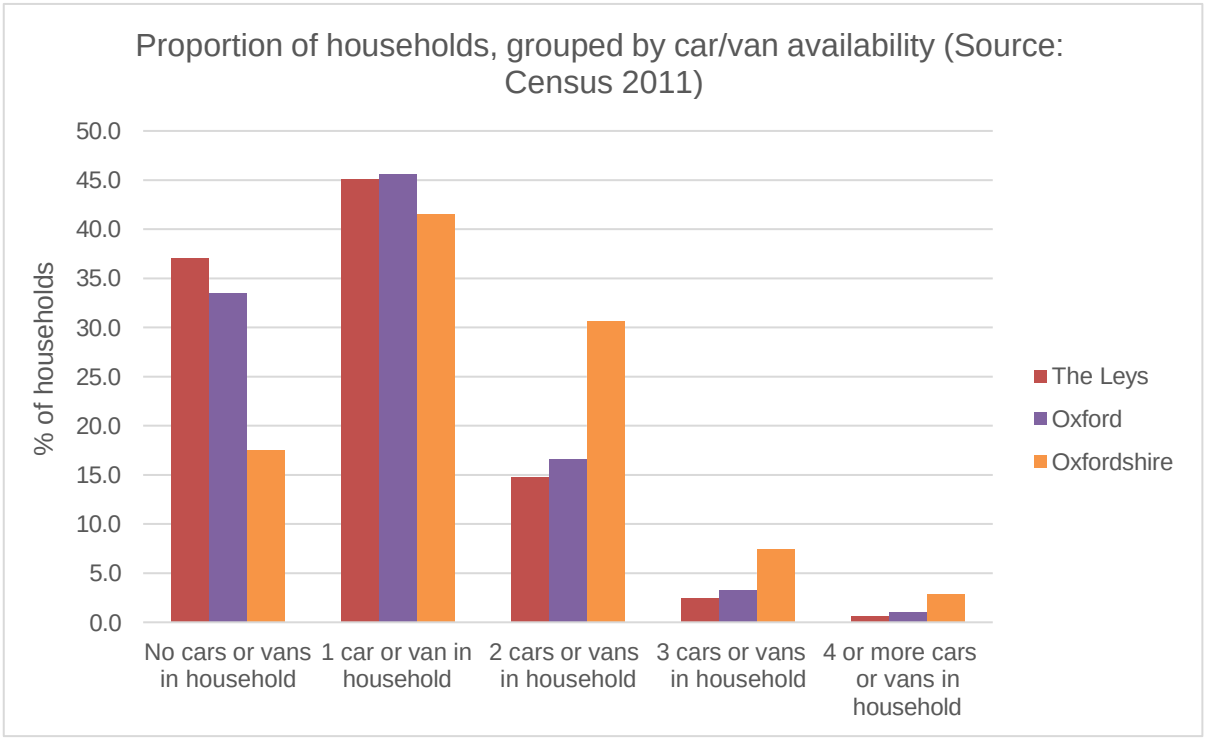
> *I struggle with this as I don't drive. Therefore for me the closest places would be Cowley center sainsbury's, tesco or Lidl but all are so far away from each other. We need more services in the Leys.* (online survey)

> *Fresh veg is over-priced in local shops (not their fault) but there is no direct public transport to Lidl, Tesco or more distant Sainsburys, only to Cowley Centre* (online survey)

> *Not having more accessible food supermarkets for older generation* (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Data from the 2011 census for car/van availability shows that 37% of households in the Leys do not have a car or van available to members of the household. This is more than double the proportion of households in Oxfordshire who do not have a car or van.

Figure 28 Proportion of households with car/van availability



These challenges around access may contribute to the situation, described by an interviewee involved in education, where children from the most economically disadvantaged families would be eating snacks from the top shops, meaning they were often branded, expensive and unhealthy. The interviewee said their school was planning to implement healthy snacks and support for healthy eating, but this had been on hold while more urgent priorities were dealt with.

Some participants also commented on the cultural appropriateness of the food locally available (for example, going to Cowley Road for South Asian ingredients) and its quality – several respondents commented that fresh food available in local/convenience shops has a short shelf life, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, and is not locally produced.

No where...what is available is too expensive,and poor quality..limited produce available (online survey)

Spar has a small selection but doesn't always look the best condition (online survey)

In this environment with limited food options, the scale of temptation was also key, with several participants mentioning the convenience and popularity of fast food.

I wish the ice cream van sound wasn't sooo frequent through the estate as it keeps making me think about & want unhealthy high fat/sugar ice cream (though people need to make a living which I understand) Imagine it sold frozen fruit and totally healthy treats! (online survey)

Lidl/Tesco. Spar and Nisa don't always have very fresh produce. It's more expensive than in supermarkets and it's around the corner (Nisa) completely overpowered by the sweets and snacks section. (online survey)

Access to Green Spaces
(extracted from the community insight report)

There were several challenges for people wanting to access green spaces, including for exercise. These included fears about safety (recent attacks on women, dogs running loose), the unpleasant environment of some green spaces (litter, broken glass, dog mess), and the potential impact of new developments.

I can easily go out for a run, I would say that in the light of high profile attacks on females while out alone, I feel nervous of running anywhere secluded. More security cameras around the Leys would help to ease the worries of females out exercising alone (online survey)

Being able to step outside and feel safe, have some nice green space that is not covered in litter, graffiti and overrun by groups of youths. (online survey)

Stop all the people with there dogs letting them poo all on the field and then leaving it there. Getting serious now and it stops us from playing on the field and there is too much dog poo everywhere (online survey)

I walk and run regularly in the green space nearby but I hear this will soon be gone due to new building projects. I am not sure where I will go then. (online survey)

Access to Activities
(extracted from the community insight report)

Participants named a range of challenges to them being active and getting exercise. These included personal factors such as a lack of motivation, being body conscious, being too busy or feeling overwhelmed.

However, many responses also mentioned cost and, in particular, the challenges around accessing opportunities for getting active at the Leys Leisure Centre.

Leisure centre is a nightmare to book and expensive, glass and dog poo in the parks, cycle routes not maintained, traffic, blatant drug deals at Spindleberry (in person survey, Greater Leys)

People felt that there were fewer options to get active since the pandemic (for example, the gym by the Kassam stadium closed), and several expressed a perception that there is not much to do beyond football or dance.

There could be more sports like netball and cricket, it is always the same old football (online survey)

One of the most significant barriers to using the Leys Leisure Centre is how expensive it is for those not receiving benefits.

Affordable gym prices for the working people. (online survey)

Interesting that swimming isn't even mentioned although we have oxfords biggest pool. It's like it was never meant for local residents to use as it is prohibitively expensive. (online survey)

The prices of the leisure centre are the same as a private gym so a membership is about £50 and a single class was £10 (in person survey, Greater Leys)

The issue of cost was made worse by the limited activities on offer. People who have been members since before the pandemic felt they are now getting fewer activities for the same cost.

I've been a member of Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre for [over 5] years now and have always attended [several] times a week doing exercise classes. Since covid hit with lockdown, the variety of classes have disappeared and specialized instructors were made redundant and have not been replaced. I am still paying my membership but i'm not getting my money's worth. Lots of customers have left, finding other places to go or are just not bothered about exercising anymore. It's a disgrace that Fusion are allowed to do this and are not been held to account. Constantly, they send me emails promising new classes with more instructors. It would be so nice if someone investigated this and it would encourage new and old customers to get fit and healthy. (online

Participants reported that costs aside, the leisure centre was difficult to access, including for those receiving benefits. Activities like swimming have exceptionally long waiting lists; respondents said the phone is often not answered; and it can be complex and embarrassing to disclose that they are on benefits and go through the process of registering. Problems with booking and unfriendly customer service put participants off using the leisure centre.

after [a bereavement] that was one of the things [...] and every part of me didn't fancy it, but because you booked a [space] I went and it did me the world of good, that physical exercise when you're feeling low. So I recognized the value of it, but it's expensive, it's an unfriendly staff [...] I just think the service, customer service was absolutely appalling and also the fact that the food was not at all healthy snacks. No, go get your chips and your chocolates and things, well, you know, it all feels very much not thought through and it's not owned by the community, it's kind of another one of those done to "here we go look at this wonderful swimming pool you've got". But I did enjoy the couple times, but then they'd messed up the booking, and then I… you know, got fed up (interview)

services are always fully booked (online survey)

Ensuring facilities are open and available e.g fusion leisure don't answer the phone (online survey)

Respondents raised several issues around swimming at the Leys Leisure Centre, including cost, difficulties booking, and wanting the water to be warmer. Several commented that they dislike the public visibility of the Leys Pool. Along with a lack of female lifeguards and women-only or women and children-only swim sessions, this is particularly excluding Muslim women. These comments reinforce research already carried out with local families through Ready Set Go and with the local Sudanese community[18]

[18] Ahmed, N., 2022. *Food & Healthy Lifestyles: What we heard from the Sudanese Community in Oxfordshire*. [online] Healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk. Available at: https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Food-and-Healthy-Lifestyles-What-We-Heard-From-The-Sudanese-Community-in-Oxfordshire.pdf

I hate that swimming pool being so on public display. I mean I used to love swimming and I used to pay to go to the gym behind the kassam stadium. But when it came to lockdown, they're not opening it up again so, I was gutted about that cause that was my perfect place to go for a swim. [...] all I want to do is swim up and down, do a bit of exercise, I don't want to be on public display. (interview)

The temperature of the water in the swimming pool to be warmer (as in the old County pool at rear of the Community Centre) rather than designed for those attending a gala or swimming competition (online survey)

The muslim women do not have opportunity to go to the swimming pool in leys because it is mixed. If it is possible to have one day just for women with coach too. (online survey)

Other comments around barriers to getting active included the need to accommodate people with childcare responsibilities:

More family inclusive activities hard to go to some as having childcare issues (online survey)

Getting active, no free time without children, no creche (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Participants mentioned that they would like to see more options for different age groups, particularly older people and the very young.

No over 50's football(as before when OUFC used to conduct one (2012) (online survey)

They also mentioned barriers to cycling, such as poorly maintained cycle paths, a lack of cycle routes or a local repair shop, and the cost of bikes. One participant had had challenges accessing allotments.

Opportunities
(extracted from the community insight report)

Two major themes that came out of the insight gathering was a sense that many people feel there aren't many activities or opportunities that suit them, and a lack of spaces where these could happen.

There is a lack of community activities if you don't have kids. There are parks, but no cafes or other places where groups and individuals could meet for casual socialising. The Community Centre is trying, as I'm sure is the leisure centre, but neither really offer any attractive social spaces. There's no place for community groups eg Book Club to coalesce to build community. (online survey)

this is the community centre, and there are two nights that run a youth group a week. That's it. There is nothing. There's been an absolute death of community services that children and families engage in, if they are not part of a religious organisation. (interview)

[Comparing the Leys to Barton Community Association] they have so much things going for them, and it is a place that you know you can go there and get something, but with us it's like you've got some seeds and you've just thrown them, and everything's scattered around (interview)

Need more activities in the area because there's nothing (focus group)

There was a widespread perception that the only activities were for young children or older people, but people expressed a need for more opportunities covering a wide range of demographics, including toddlers, children, families with young children, teenagers, adults without children, over 30s, single people, men, older people who are active, elders of African heritage, or someone aged 84. Key considerations for any activities were that they need to be affordable and at times that make sense for people's lives, including childcare responsibilities and working hours.

The lack of opportunities, especially for teenagers, was in turn linked to fears about children getting involved in criminal activities as they get older. In conversation with community researchers, staff at Thames Valley Police also identified this relationship between the lack of accessible activities for young people and young people getting involved in criminal activities.

What do you dislike about living in the Leys? There's nothing free for the kids to do. that I see kids doing bad stuff out of boredom (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Something for 13-23 year olds to do The boys and girls need something to avoid them getting involved in county lines and teen pregnancy etc (in person survey, Greater Leys)

For other demographics, the lack of opportunities also had consequences for health and wellbeing. One interviewee described an older neighbour who had nowhere to go while her husband was in daycare, and spent all day in the pub.

Several respondents talked about the need for a community centre in the Leys. One of the community researchers began asking respondents about their perception of the Blackbird Leys Community Centre and discovered that many people did not know what it was, what happened there, or thought it was just for boxing and/or youth activities. For those familiar with the community centre, there was a perception amongst some that its provision is limited, especially compared to the past.

> *Nothing for youth to do despite a lot of spaces in community centre. Not enough community events ie fundays for adults and kids, life skill sessions for all ages* (in person survey, Greater Leys)

An interviewee suggested that although there currently is a community centre, because it is operated by the city council and groups have to pay to use the spaces, it doesn't feel like a true community space. They suggested that the planned redevelopment could provide the chance to try something different – a community centre run by a community association made up of local residents. Survey respondents mentioned being inspired by spaces like Flo's in the Park and Sandford's Talking Shop, and had ideas for spaces not just for regular activities but also for socialising and bringing together people from different cultural groups.

> *Save our community centre the plans to replace it with a small building next to residential accommodation will be the end of all our community gatherings and is a tragedy* (online survey)

> *A: is there something specific about Florence Park that makes it, like, attractive?*
> *B: Everything. It's just the building, the fact that there's – I mean, it's highly overpriced – but, there's toilet facilities, it's clean, it's ethical, it's – there's a small park area, that's contained. [...] if there are kids playing in the park, nine times out of ten there are […] parent or parents supervising their children.* (interview)

People also wanted to see more spaces for community interaction, suggesting coffee shops, family pubs or a community garden.

There were also issues about how people access the activities that are currently available, in terms of physically getting there, affording any costs, feeling welcome, digital access, or the surrounding support (e.g. childcare) to attend classes or sessions.

What are the changes that you'd like to see in the Leys to support your health and wellbeing?
Being able to access more, most things now you have to book online, pay by card, or everything is full (in person survey, Greater Leys)

There are people that are really hard to reach. And I don't really know what the answer is, I mean I'm not talking about just in terms of health and that. I mean you know, even with the IT courses you know and… Or people not knowing exactly what is going on and what might benefit them. (interview)

Other Concerns
(extracted from the community insight report)

Other concerns raised included frustrations with the introduction of Oxford's Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), and the issues this has created for travelling around the city. One respondent was critical of the city's City of Sanctuary policy, which they perceived to be creating a tax burden on residents and adding pressure to services. Many respondents expressed concerns around planned development in the Leys, and how this might affect services and green spaces.

We need better access to health services, trying to get to see a doctor or dentist is a joke. If the regeneration project goes ahead, god help us, seeing any health professional will go from difficult to impossible. (online survey)

There was also perception for some respondents of impact of 'certain demographics' on services, often emphasising a distinction between people who work and people who receive benefits.

Not convinced anything positive will be done in the future to support the employed. All support is mainly for the unemployed which is unfair to those trying to improve their lives. (online survey)	*There are too many different cultures living here, having someone representing each culture - then having monthly meetings with those representatives would give you a better view of what is needed for better well being in the leys* (online survey)

This perception may also be linked to an interviewee's comment about a lack of social integration between different groups in the Leys, and their sense that the feeling of community and activities happening in the community were mostly limited to intergenerational residents.

there are two tiers when it comes to people who live in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys. There's people who have always been here, who are like generationally integrated – into the elders and everybody. And then you have the likes of me who have come along – none of that – it doesn't matter what happened, because you don't know about it. And we're like a totally different breed who just – it's kind of like, we live side by side, but our communities don't always mix.

COVID-19
(extracted from the community insight report)

Nearly half of those responding to the online survey (44%) reported that their healthand wellbeing has worsened as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic

- This was even higher amongst
  - those aged 18-34 (63%)
  - females (48%)
  - those living in Greater Leys (49%)

For some participants, the negative impacts of the pandemic were primarily on their physical and mental health, their relationships and sense of community.

Given that we were basically locked in a 1st floor masionette with [number of kids]. I'd say it drove us nuts. And the kids. No sleep. No exercise (one walk and no playgrounds didn't cut it) children need gardens and green space. We don't have a garden. It was hell for all of us. Being in unsuitable housing hasn't helped our [SEN] child especially. (online survey)
Made me realise that I lived in an area with no sense of community, neighbourliness or belonging (online survey)
obviously not everybody was able to go to the funeral and I think that was really tough. As you could… You didn't have closure. Yeah, so that… I think numbers were limited and obviously there were more vulnerable people, particularly older people, who were advised to stay at home. So that was really hard, because lots of people didn't get to say a proper goodbye, so, yeah that was quite tough (interview)
Living in a high rise I felt trapped out of fear of contracting covid. I was scared to use the lift due to the amount of people who used it let alone the stairs. Also without having a garden or a accessible balcony I felt like a prisoner (online survey)
It has kind of cut me off or deterred me from going out and socialising (online survey)
Isolation, poor fitness, poor mental health, lost purpose and connection with the outside world, migraines, mobility issues (online survey)

For others, the challenges had come with the pandemic's impact on services that support their health and wellbeing:

Even more isolated than before and less likely to go anywhere and do anything. I miss the easy face to face appointments with doctors and physiotherapists and counselling, and having to access services by phone. (online survey)

Things are still not back to normal yet we as people are expected to go back to normal but services aren't (online survey)

Lost my dental appointments and all treatment t stopped also lost health appointments (online survey)

Closure of gyms and park club has closed down. Fusion haven't been the same after covid (online survey)

It has been stressful as schools was affected and everything for the kids (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)

For some participants, both their health and the services they need to support them were affected.

Lock down affected my child's mental health, we are waiting far too long for our first CAMHS appointment (online survey)

The pandemic also affected people's income and highlighted inequalities within the local population.

- *Just cost we lost a lot of money over the past few years* (online survey)
- *Son losing his job due to covid* (focus group)
- *It demonstrated the inequality of access of certain demographics, especially long standing, working local populations. It also highlighted, as has this new build scheme, and LTNs, that both Oxford City and County Councils are unrealistic and out of touch.* (online survey)

However, for some, the pandemic also led to positive changes for their health and wellbeing, or to a greater sense of community.

The government minister, Gove, made a public statement very early on, that allotments could be used. This provided an annex to our garden and place to be involved with the challenges of growing food and engaging with friends and others in a wonderfully new way of being community (online survey)

It was great. I could get right out into the country because it was so easy to cross the roads. The reduction in traffic improved the air quality. (online survey)

it was amazing, it was truly amazing the number of food parcels that went out you know. The number of people that…Who had been furloughed and offered their time to help people was just phenomenal. (interview)

It got me running :) (online survey)

The pandemic provided an opportunity for me to get off the treadmill, reassess and take charge of my own potential (online survey)

Interweaving Themes
(extracted from the community insight report)

'A double-edged sword': assets and barriers to using them
A recurring theme in the findings is that the Leys has lots of infrastructural assets that in practice aren't accessible for local people for various reasons including cost and accessibility. This includes the assets already discussed (health centre, leisure centre, green spaces) and others, such as training and apprenticeship opportunities at RAW and Activate Learning that were seen by respondents to be for outsiders rather than for local people.

> *everything up here is like a double-edged sword. There's an amazing swim centre that they've clearly spent an astronomical amount of money on. But, they cannot retain lifeguards. So, the kids can't use it.* (interview)

This was also reflected in respondents saying 'we need a community centre', because of the twin barriers of the costs of using the community centre and misconceptions about who and what it is used for. For some assets, the perception was that they were most used by people from outside the Leys.

> *We have a gym and swimming pool but I think it's not good for people living in the community (in person survey, Greater Leys)*

> *BBL is a big community but there isn't enough for the kids to do everything has to be paid for and a lot is used from people who don't even live in the community* (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Very different experiences
(extracted from the community insight report)

Many responses seemed to contradict each other: for some, it's easy to access healthcare, whereas for others it's very difficult; some people feel very safe, while others don't. This seemed to depend on various factors, including where in the Leys people live, relative to services and transport routes; their socio-economic status, gender, age, ethnicity and position in community (e.g. feeling safe when 'people know me'), and their mobility (e.g. access to a car or buses and/or disability).

> *we have no services at [eastern Greater Leys] everything is down the other end or on Blackbird Leys.. calling it a community takes the mickey* (online survey)

> *I feel safe because I grew up there but other people don't feel safe.* (in person survey)

I don't want to think that Blackbird Leys is a negative place to live and I believe there are parts of it where they were really nice little communities getting on with each other. I think probably if you walked across there just behind the flats you know the little houses there was still playing outside but we are such a mismatch of… there's no thoughts gone into anybody living here. (interview)

Access
(extracted from the community insight report)

As noted above, access to community assets is partly determined by people's mobility (through car ownership, (dis)ability, proximity to bus routes, time, caring responsibilities), and this also dictates the extent to whether they can use services beyond the Leys, e.g. Cowley gym, supermarkets, or hospitals. Some respondents specifically called for improvements to infrastructure:

As disabled person that can't walk far and a wheelchair user it's difficult to get about the leys without a car. (online survey)

Not enough dropped kerbs for disabled people in wheelchairs and some of the pavements are not wheelchair friendly specially self-propelled chair's. (online survey)

Several participants commented that the cuts to the No.12 bus in Greater Leys had negatively affected them. One interviewee pointed out the mismatch between creating housing for older people in Greater Leys but then cutting the buses that serve that area.

Responses to questions about healthy eating in particular were indicative of the disparity around transport and access:

Where can you get fresh, healthy food in the leys?

- *'Why are you asking this question? Spar, Aldi, Londis, Tescos, M&Sp, Sainsbury's and the Coop are all examples of places you can get fresh food locally. Others available too.'* (online survey)
- '*Nowhere*' (11 different online survey respondents)

Sense of being ignored and neglected
(extracted from the community insight report)

A theme that regularly came up was that people feel that the Leys is being let down and neglected by the authorities. Several participants talked about how their complaints to the city council or the police about issues such as housing, difficult

neighbours, safety and crime, had gone unheard. There was also a sense of resentment against professionals from outside and projects being imposed on the local area.

Sense of being ignored and neglected

- *What changes would you like to see in the Leys, to support your health and wellbeing? A sense that local government care.* (online survey)
- *Humanity…? We are Oxford's own refugees* (online survey)
- *Programmes run by "so called experts". Blackbird Leys is a classic and long history of vast amounts of money being thrown at poorly managed projects* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)
- *The council how they treat the area. MP was meant to help me and he didn't do anything* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)
- *Professional parasites coming here for the work/money then when that ends they leave.* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)
- *Police target BBL, racism, perception, no respect for parents* (in person survey, Blackbird Leys)
- *every time I've been asked to fill in a survey for the City Council, I have always made it clear that I don't like living here and I wanted to move and I've never ever got anywhere with it* (interview)
- *Everything's bodged up, you know, the window is all bodge bodge bodge, no quality. And I think that impacts on your mental health and I can understand how people end up… there's not a lot of money in the pot so, well let's have betting shops around this area. Loads of betting shops, cause you never know, you might be lucky today.* (interview)

For some participants, this was about much more than resources: it was also about perceptions, attitudes, and respect.

> *There's no care, and I think I know there's been cuts and cuts and cuts but actually, what a false investment it is. You know, if you actually invested in saying, "you matter"* (interview)

The topic of local governance (e.g. the parish council) rarely came up. When it did there was a sense that people felt these bodies didn't necessarily represent their interests, or of '*too many people with hands in the same pies'* (interview), and a lack of space for new, fresh voices.

Listening to local voices
(extracted from the community insight report)

Linked to this was another recurring theme: that many Leys residents are frustrated by participating in research and engagement work and seeing no impact as a result. This had contributed to a feeling of being ignored by authorities, and a sense that the

Community Profile would be no different. Some participants challenged us on the methods and the overall concept of the insight gathering, and some expressed an urgent need for things to really change as a result of this work.

This is my problem, because growing up, we always had to do surveys, interviews, and all this stuff – and then now I'm on the other side of it, asking people to do it – but I still see no change. I need to see evidence [...] I want to see people change, I want to see people progressing, I want to see difference. (community researcher)

So what's the outcome gonna be this time, when they've done the ward profiles. Are we gonna start listening, really listening? I hope so, you know, I think what your intentions are, you know, are good. But I think, you know, it needs the power balance needs to shift back. (interview)

our own provisions have got to be crucially part of it – we've got to take control. We've had too many reports (focus group participant, talking about racial discrimination)

There's very little here. We are all barely living. Living hand to mouth regardless of employment status. But none of you actually care about us. This is just a tick box exercise. (online survey)

please can you take the time to find better ways to engage with members of our community (online survey)

Wider Determinants of Health and Wellbeing
(extracted from the community insight report)

Some participants expressed a perception that some of the aspects of health and wellbeing we asked about, such as being active or eating healthily, were down to individual choices and motivation. In a focus group discussion focusing on racial disadvantage, participants disagreed over the relative role of parents vs schools in supporting children.

I think it is all done by the individual. There is little community impetus to get fit. I have time to get fit but it's up to me to do it (online survey)

What would help you to eat more fresh, healthy food? We already do. It's our responsibility to stay healthy, no-one else's. (online survey)

However, many responses also indirectly or directly referred to the wider determinants of health inequalities and the impact these have on people's health and wellbeing.

But just resources – it's not just medical, it's education, it's everything – it's supporting that gap of – the wealth division. You know, putting jobs in place… (interview)

Built and natural environment
In particular, challenges around affordable housing, including a lack of adequate social housing leaving people negotiating the expensive private rental market.

More social homes. (it is increasingly demoralising to see homes being built but will never afford to buy one 10%-20% isn't enough for the demand). Better quality large family houses not flats!!! (online survey)

who doesn't want to live in East Oxford? It's just like – my heart is absolutely there. But my bank account keeps me here. (interview)

More council houses for families stuck in private ones (online survey)

People are getting shipped out of Oxford cos they can't afford to live here (in person survey, former Leys resident)

To have the opportunity to move out of these flats (online survey)

One respondent, whose family members have special educational needs and long-term health conditions, described how their family had been split across the country between private renting in the Leys and social housing elsewhere. For those who do receive social housing, there were still often major challenges for their health and wellbeing, such as limited size, a lack of choice, challenging neighbours and neglect of communal spaces.

> *there's no care, no care with anything. And I think that just makes you feel even more, kind of, worthless. You know, these windows, where I had to open it a few times [to get shopping in during the lockdown] the seals broken and everything. I mean the classic… they were probably fitted in the 60s, and they've never been touched since. [..] I would like the council to pay attention to their residents. I would love it if they would… is it retrofit? Where they… yes, let's retrofit and make these attractive flats.* (interview)

> *stop telling us that this is what you're having and if you don't like it tough luck, go and be homeless. I mean what an attitude. And then we're supposed to be grateful that they're going to convert garages, in Blackbird leys, to create more homes. Excuse me? Would you like to go and live in a garage? Let's start having accommodation anybody would say, do you know what, I'd like to live there. I mean and then we're supposed to be grateful, this is what I mean, it's like it's all gone so topsy turvy. When we go to what humans need to just survive, you need warmth and shelter, and then you build from there. Love, self esteem, you know and you move on up. So we've got communities where people don't have successful lives. They're so depressed and ashamed of where they live.* (interview)

> *What would help you to be more active? A bigger house with a decent sized garden, away from a main road, as I have severe health issues and I have a disabled son.* (online survey)

This was echoed by an interviewee who commented on the lack of space in some parts of the Leys, and the impact of this on their wellbeing.

> *It's too squashed if you like, there's not enough space in that particular part [of Greater Leys] [...] It's almost like the area we were in, the middle development was almost like, how many more houses can we squeeze in. So everywhere you look, left right up down, where its red brick red brick red brick. And I had a month when my auntie died [...] we went to live in country] for a month, and I remember when I drove back from the airport after a month in this beautiful paradise, I cried. Because everywhere I looked it was just red brick road, red brick house cross the road. And we had no access to our back gardens after going through the front, because that was the safety measure for crime. So all the houses kind of had their gardens so it became narrow at the end like a little rabbit Warren. It's not very good for your mental health really.* (interview)

In the quotation above, the participant alludes to something that several respondents commented on – a sense that many of the decisions around development in the Leys were being made with profit in mind rather than residents' wellbeing.

At present, green spaces act as an asset to many respondents, enabling them to walk, run or cycle, walk their dogs, their children to play, and be out in nature. However, there were challenges around the maintenance and care of these spaces, and fears that planned developments in the Leys would encroach on these spaces, as well as putting additional pressure on local services and infrastructure.

> *Greater infrastructure to support the size of the population.* (online survey)

Vulnerability
(extracted from the community insight report)

Some participants (though notably not many) talked explicitly about the challenges of racism, ableism and other forms of discrimination.

> *There's not a day goes past that I don't hear of another stabbing, whether it's locally, whether it's nationally, whatever, and given our past experience of George Floyd and everything else that's happened, it's really, really hard to try to stay well emotionally, mentally – it's like we're constantly hitting one trauma, to the next, to the next, to the next. And I feel like my voice is kind of buried at the moment, but I feel like, if I was more free and able to, I would really want to ask the government – the national government, the local government, the police, the schools, everybody – what is going on when you totally exclude a group within society, in terms of their education, their schooling, job prospects, everything else financially, from life – what do you expect will happen to those people?* (focus group participant, identifying as African heritage)

Work, the labour market and income
(extracted from the community insight report)

Some participants spoke about the challenges of insufficient wages and benefits, especially relative to the rising cost of living. There were also comments about the challenges of transitioning between work and benefits and qualifying for social housing.

It's a distraction, all the time worrying. How do you pay the bills? How do you do this? And even if I've not got that worry now, which is the first time in my whole adult life. I'm worried because I can't sustain working and I can only top up my pension so far and then I've got… all they'll do with me, because I'm [60+] is say, well you can go into sheltered accommodation. We could get you somewhere in sheltered accommodation. Well, I don't want to go and play bingo thank you very much. And you know, just be "alright dear?" I'm still wanting to party and have a life. (interview)

I phoned up the council and said, well obviously I'm gonna be coming off benefits but I won't have any income until I get to the end of my first months pay, so is it OK if we add on what I owe this month while I'm starting work and pay extra [...] "No, you'll be kicked out. You're on a year temporary tenancy and actually if you don't pay your rent on time, you will lose your flat." So my sister paid my rent for me, cause that was the only… I haven't been on benefits long… if I've been long term unemployed, for years and years, I would have been eligible for a scheme where they would have given me that. The way to pay my rent back…but I had no… So again it was scary. Ohmygod I'm going to lose the roof over my head, and my sister rescued me again. And then, so I was very grateful grateful grateful, oh gosh, I you know, could have been on the streets. (interview)

Gas and electric and food prices go down because they are too expensive (online survey)

There's very little here. We are all barely living. Living hand to mouth regardless of employment status. (online survey)

This is situated in the context of the Leys, which has big differences in wealth and income, and within Oxford, where the inequalities are even bigger.

there's a huge community of people that live up here who are doing absolutely fine financially, and I don't know where they are. [...] the people on the corner, like, one of them's got some Tesla car. These people have money – so not everybody that lives in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys queues up for the food larder. [...] [on my close] most people will own houses. Yeah. So, like, in my close there is two that are on private rented, so a lot of people own their houses and do Airbnb up on the Leys as well. (interview)

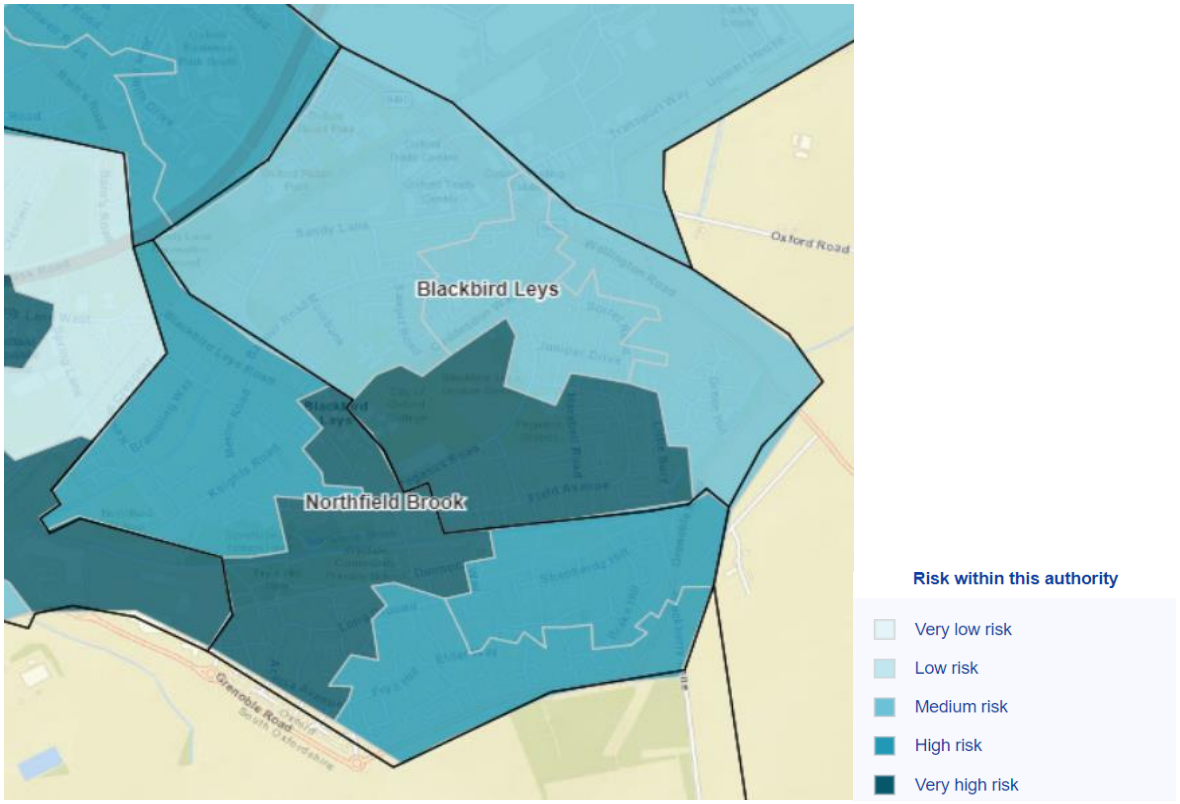
Nothing has changed. We haven't got a centre, an African-Caribbean centre within this community, within this Oxford University, where you've got the town and gowns down there. You've got the poor people on the estates all around who just work in the college, on the underground, and come up, feeding all the students, clearing all the tables, washing up, cleaning up and whatever – nothing has changed. (focus group participant)

Loneliness

Social isolation and loneliness have a significant impact on physical and mental health and its effect on mortality is comparable to other well-established risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity[19].

The heat map below shows the relative risk of loneliness across 32,844 neighbourhoods in England. The relative risk of loneliness is based on the Census 2011 figures for the factors: marital status, self-reported health status, age, household size.

Figure 29 Relative risk of loneliness across the Leys



Crime

(extracted from the community insight report)

Challenges around crime have already largely been discussed in the Challenges section. In this quotation from a focus group, the participant links this directly to vulnerability due to racial discrimination.

[19] Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T.B. and Layton, J.B., 2010. Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review. *PLoS medicine*, *7*(7), p.e1000316.

why aren't we as a black community outraged by what is happening to our children that are beautiful, gorgeous, have ambition, want to work, want to study, want to whatever – that the whole of them have been criminalised and ended up in the criminal justice system or been excluded from school more than others (focus group participant, identifying as African heritage)

Education

(extracted from the community insight report)

Although education was not the focus of the insight gathering, several participants raised the importance of education in supporting people to develop habits and skills for health and wellbeing throughout their life. Education was also a keen consideration in terms of equipping children to access opportunities for work, a better income, and avoid getting involved in crime.

Residents' Suggestions

Participants shared a host of ideas about what could support their health and wellbeing and make the Leys a better place to live. They range from small, practical changes to big ideas about community building and local leadership.

Healthcare

Many respondents asked for more, and more face-to-face GP appointments, to be provided. Some also wanted ways of making appointments that did not rely on calling the Health Centre at particular hours. Other suggestions included:	*The health authorities look at the specific health issue of Black people i.e. sickle cell, blood pressure, diabetes* (in person survey, former Leys resident, identifying as African heritage)
	Spreading awareness for mental health and encouraging people to have more full body check ups (in person survey, Greater Leys)
	Drop-ins or clinics for oral health in schools (interview)

Healthy Food

Ideas included: options for people to grow their own food; education in schools about healthy eating and habits; cookery classes for all ages; more independent shops e.g. grocer's, butchers; an open air market; a mobile shop (or even a healthy snacks van); a local farm shop. However, most suggestions revolved around improving economic access to food, either via vouchers for fruit & veg, reducing food costs, or providing a living wage or an increase in benefits to account for the rising cost of living.	*Not having to work full time to be able to afford to live. Low cost green grocer near by. we don't have any nice cafes that provide healthy affordable meals* (online survey)
	Increase in welfare benefits as all the prices keep rising. Or vouchers to cover the cost of the fruit and vegetables. (online survey)
	A community larder that is needs-first, food-first, not based on waste reduction (interview)

Green spaces

The biggest concern was about ensuring that green spaces are not all removed due to new developments. Other suggestions included:	*Nicer surrounding areas - Grass and road sides being cut. (online survey)*
	police patrols for safety when out walking (online survey)

Getting active

Ideas focused on making significant improvements to the Leys Leisure Centre, including offering more affordable classes/gym membership; and providing a wider range of activities, including for different ages and needs (e.g. low impact, in evenings, women-only).

Other ideas included: incentives for getting active or reaching targets; bike repair drop-ins; community garden and/or community garden shop; walk meet-ups; volleyball pitch; more basketball hoops; bike ramps; nature trails in green spaces; a cycling track in the park; updates and improvements to play parks; more easily available, up to date information about what activities are on offer; support groups or gym buddies to help people get active; community games to coincide with the Commonwealth Games.

Everyone on benefits should have vouchers to spend on either swimming or active group. There is not enough facilities around for the number of children in this area. Meaning kids hang out by the shops buying sweets or by the chippies. Some bike ramps would be great. More mature playgrounds, incentives for kids to get active - education through school. The reason kids don't go to physical activities is because they are expensive and their parents can't afford it or don't see it as priority. If schools had funding to run a lot of after school activities kids would be sent to that. Parents have childcare sorted and kids are active. (online survey)

Opportunities and community spaces

Participants had lots of ideas for activities and opportunities, including: life skills training; coach trips for the community; and a mentoring scheme for young black and mixed race men, with support and training for local black men to become mentors. They also talked about the kinds of spaces that would support community building, such as a family-friendly pub, a multicultural centre or centre for people of Caribbean heritage, and a community centre co-produced and run by a community association, accessible to all.

Having somewhere like the West Indian Day Care Centre (in person survey, Greater Leys)

Day trips, sports day, community BBQs, carnivals (in person survey, Greater Leys)

I hope that when the new community centre is built, that we are able to have some sort of learning hub, whether it be… Whether it be IT courses or learn to knit, whatever it is I think you know for people to… to explore what they have interests in, whatever that might be, and to meet with like minded people, and also on the digital side of it obviously you know to… to up their skills, to improve their chances of finding an employment. (interview)

Communication

Participants thought there could be better communication and publicity around existing assets like the community larder and car boot sale, to ensure that people make the most of them. One interviewee suggested reviving Leys News, which was a free, accessible platform for people to find out what was going on, but could also be used to support young people to learn how to write and develop journalism skills. Participants also commented that there could be better communication between different stakeholders, to enable strategic and collaborative working:	*Newsletter or digital community page to see what events/classes etc are on would be useful* (online survey) *I think the youth provision is very important, and it would be nice to think that… I mean we've got some youth providers on the estate, and I think, for me I think it would be really nice if they came together a bit more, and looked at, you know… What they're providing, what maybe they duplicating.* (interview) *I think that it will take everybody. It's going to take the schools, it's going to take the parents, it's going to take the grandparents, the community, it's going to take the police, the local authorities. It has to be the whole package of everybody* (focus group participant)

Residents' vision for the Leys

Participants shared their visions for what the Leys could be, some abstract and some very specific. There was a sense for many participants that despite the challenges, the Leys is a place that people feel passionate about, that is worth fighting for, and where people's health and wellbeing can be improved – as long as we all take action.	*Quality cafes, independent shops, youth hubs or fun areas so kids can be involved in mindful activities - make a wall for painting murals, climbing frames or mature kids playground, I would like to see more architectural fun stuff, more benches, more bins - litter is a massive issue, healthy food providers* (online survey) *Horses, rickshaws, many more flowers & trees, a tiny museum of interest to both local leys dwellers and of international renown (bit like the old Livesy Museum in London)* (online survey) *When I have shared with one of my friends that lives in Blackbird Leys my plans for housing, she says well what's the point, nothing will ever change. And that's the attitude you've got to overcome and the only reason this research is being done is cause the NHS work out, we've got a high number of obese people in this area, got high number of people diagnosed with depression in this area, we've got a high number of people with diabetes in this area, and if we add in how children are doing in school, a lot of them are obese and underachieving. They're not up to the average in Oxford. Well let's do something about it.* (interview) *To change area for the good way to be safe ,beautiful, active and clean lot. it makes a lot affect in our life and children in the future*. (online survey) *More facilities and more local leadership*. (online survey)

Community Insight Author (Oxford Hub) Concluding Remarks

Leys Community Profile: companion piece and proposal

We were shocked by the depth of disadvantage and inequality revealed in the Leys Community Profile, from life expectancy several years below the county average to hospital admissions for self-harm that are triple the average for Oxfordshire. But although we were shocked, we weren't surprised, which in itself is deeply frustrating: the issues raised by local people are things we have been hearing variations of for years. We want to see real, meaningful change for people in the Leys – and we believe that the Community Profile work could provide the data, community energy, and political momentum, to make that happen.

This document builds on the recommendations made by Leys residents for changes in the local area that would support their health and wellbeing. The framing of the questions asked in the community insight gathering process means that these mostly focus on new activities, events and spaces, or small changes to existing infrastructure and services.

However, residents' responses and insights also referred, both explicitly and implicitly, to deeper and wider issues that perpetuate health inequalities and challenges for people's health and wellbeing in the Leys and beyond.

We would like to highlight these and propose recommendations that seek to tackle the factors contributing to the health inequalities revealed in the community profile. We have two key questions:

- What needs to happen so that another Community Profile in ten years' time wouldn't just find all the same things?
- How do we collectively use the available funding, and the momentum from this work, to open up conversations about what needs to change – and start making change?

We draw on Oxfordshire County Council's work on Healthy Place Shaping, which identifies the need for work on health inequalities to take into account underlying factors such as the built environment and models of care, as well as engaging the community in making change.

Community activation: an end to consultation

A key theme from the community insight was that many Leys residents feel ignored and neglected by agencies and institutions. Although listening to communities through consultations and insight gathering is important to inform policy and practice, it is still part of a top-down approach to community development that can contribute to this sense of disempowerment. This dynamic centres the power with the consulting body, to listen or ignore local people. There is often a mismatch between the expectations of local people and agencies, and what is actually feasible for the consulting body to change in practice, meaning that this dynamic tends to lead to disappointment and greater disillusionment.

The wider determinants that drive health inequalities in the Leys are complex, deeply entrenched, and often systemic. Similar consultations have been commissioned by Public Health before, and shown that the issues raised are beyond the power of Public Health to fix. Successive public health and other interventions over the last 50 years have not managed to make lasting progress to tackle inequality in the Leys.

However, that doesn't mean that change can't happen – just that a different approach is needed. Meaningful change should involve agencies and institutions (and see below) – but crucially also needs to be led by local people themselves. To move beyond the current cycle of consultations, top-down responses and disillusionment, any response to the community insight needs to be centred around local ownership, supporting Leys residents to make their own changes. Agencies should collaborate with local people and groups to collectively come up with and test hypotheses and solutions, starting with change on the ground. This would foster a system where:

- Responses are shaped around and directly informed by people's lived experience of the challenges they are addressing
- Responses have greater accountability to the community than external interventions, and can adapt according to need and demand
- Power and resources – which themselves underpin health inequalities – shift towards local people and communities
- Agencies can (re)build trust with communities by actively supporting local groups to meet their goals.

Approaches that could support Leys residents to do this include:

- participatory grant-making and action research (e.g. supporting local people to test, develop and deliver solutions to inequalities, such as the events, activities, businesses and spaces they see the need for)
- community organising (e.g. to tackle unfair labour and housing practices)
- training and consciousness raising (e.g. Systems Changers, which brings together local parents and early help professionals to discuss changes).

Bringing in the wider determinants

It is clear from the community profile that factors like employment, education, discrimination, housing, transport and crime have huge bearing on people's health and wellbeing. It is also clear that the Leys is a diverse area, with a wide range of experiences and its own internal health inequalities, along axes including wealth, age, race, gender and disability.

An overarching theme across these determinants is the need for equity in access to resources and services for the Leys, and especially for some areas and groups within the Leys. There are higher needs in the Leys compared to other parts of the city and county – for example, a higher proportion of residents with complex health needs and more children with SEN diagnoses – which are not being adequately met. Not meeting these needs increases pressure on services and perpetuates negative outcomes for people's health and wellbeing – so why are we not prioritising access to provision and support to meet these needs for the Leys?

Any meaningful response to the community profile needs to take account of these wider determinants, the ways in which they interact, and engage with people and agencies with influence over them, such as Oxford City Council (housing), the River Learning Trust (education), Thames Valley Police (crime), Oxfordshire County Council (transport). Some of these conversations are already underway through the Community Impact Zone partnership and developing plans by the Oxford Inclusive Economy Partnership to explore local views around employment in the Leys. Public Health can also play a role in making and nurturing the connections between these agencies, particularly the spaces and networks for them to work together to make real change.

Changing the narrative about the Leys

The community profile has provided a first step in building a narrative about the Leys that recognises its strengths and assets as well as the challenges. However, the profile itself shows that for many residents, the reputation of the Leys is negative, and many residents also have aspirations, for themselves or their children, to eventually move away from the Leys. Local ownership of positive change could play a key role in shifting this narrative, and could be supported by agencies and local media organisations like the Oxford Mail.

Next steps: a participatory response

The publication of the Leys Community Profile offers a unique opportunity to reset the narrative around health inequalities in the Leys, how they can be addressed and by whom. This is a chance for Public Health to empower and support the local community to make its own change, rather than continue the cycle of consultations and disillusionment.

We propose that the funding allocated to implementing recommendations from the community profile is disbursed through a participatory grant-making process. This would offer a way for local people to take ownership of making change in response to the community profile, and for the Steering Group to demonstrate its commitment to taking action in response to local concerns and its trust in local people, while supporting a range of projects and activities.

Recommendations and Next Steps

After receiving the findings from the community insight project, workshops were held with members of the Steering Group to discuss these findings, as well as considering the quantitative data indicators. The Steering Group offered possible solutions to take forward the resident suggestions and connected different agencies which might be able to collaborate to address some of the challenges. These discussions led to the identification of high-level recommendations to address some of the challenges identified by residents and were based on the resident's suggestions of what they would like to happen in the Leys. **Following the publication of this profile, the Steering Group plan to collaborate with wider partners, organisations, and stakeholders to write a detailed and specific action plan with objectives. This action plan will capture what should be achieved, how this will happen and by whom. An accessible summary of the report will also be produced.**

Some of the recommendations outlined below will be achieved in the shorter term and categorised as quick wins. Whereas others are longer term recommendations which require more time and structural change to deliver.

No.	Theme	Recommendation
1.	Community Spaces	Utilise the findings of the community engagement to inform the regeneration of the community centre in the Leys and incorporate local voices into the model.
2.	Access to Healthcare	Work with relevant health partners to raise awareness and provide accessible information to members of diverse communities with distrust in the healthcare system. Build on existing work of social prescribers to empower residents to find solutions to challenges related to healthcare and utilise the knowledge and skills of social prescribers. Explore opportunities for improved access to medical services beyond the Leys, with transport providers including volunteer travel schemes. Engage with local health providers to identify solutions to the challenges faced by residents regarding access to health centre services. Work with health care commissioners to explore new and innovative approaches for offering GP appointments, e.g. the Health on the Move Van or

		other mobile approaches. Healthcare providers encouraged to involve the community when reviewing their services.
3.	Getting active	Activity providers and local partners to consider approaches and means of increasing activity in females. Partners involved in physical activity provision to collaborate on projects/programmes to avoid duplication by collaborating with existing partnership groups, such as the Leys Health and Wellbeing Partnership.
4.	Leisure facilities	Share the findings from the community engagement with Oxford City Council to help support their review of leisure facilities, and to explore possible solutions to some of the challenges identified by residents regarding access, cost and cultural sensitives of the facility.
5.	Green space	Use the findings from the Green Space & Us community engagement to improve the local environment and existing assets, and to reduce barriers experienced by residents in using green spaces.
6.	Healthy food	Expand and strengthen existing community food networks in the Leys, including exploration of the reopening of the community fridge and opening a food bank. Improve awareness of Healthy Start vouchers, including eligibility criteria and retailers accepting vouchers. Connect with relevant partners, such as Active Oxfordshire, to explore programmes with the provision of healthy food included with activities and consider implementing programmes for households not eligible for benefits and financial support.
7.	Opportunities and community spaces	Local partners to adopt an asset-based community development model by working with existing partnership groups, such as the Leys Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to develop and expand

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		activities happening in the Leys to other population groups and demographics. Local agencies to explore how they can empower and support local groups and residents to establish opportunities in the community themselves. Local partners to explore what would support residents to feel safe in the Leys, e.g. connecting with Blackbird Leys Neighbourhood Policing Team and the Leys Neighbourhood Watch to understand the differences in opinion of crime and safety in the Leys.
8.	Communication	Identify new and creative ways to communicate what's happening in the Leys to residents, with a consideration for digital exclusion. Share the findings of the community profile with the Leys community.
9.	Accountability	Develop an action plan to take forward the recommendations of the community profile and engage with organisations to enable the actions to be delivered.
10.	Next steps	Engage with residents and diverse communities who were not able to be engaged in this report to gain an even deeper understanding of health and wellbeing in the Leys. Evaluate the approach adopted for community engagement and producing the final community profile. Embed local people and groups in decisions and next steps to ensure trust is gained within the community and activities are based on a bottom-up approach. Need to demonstrate the changes as a result of the profile to show the impact to residents. The longer-term recommendation of this profile is to address the systemic issues identified in the community engagement, which will in turn, have the biggest impact and change for the community. No one organisation or agency has the ability to make these changes alone, instead it requires a multi-system approach to tackling the identified in the identified challenges in the report,

		including but not limited to: housing, crime and safety, access to services, racism. This could include the production of a systems map and ensuring wide circulation of the profile to key decision makers.

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Conclusion

The Leys Community Profile demonstrates the objective and subjective assets which exist and are deeply valued by members of the Leys community as support for their health and wellbeing. However, the data shows us that many health outcomes faced by those in the Leys are significantly worse compared to the rest of the City, Oxfordshire county and nationally. This profile brings to the forefront some of the challenges faced by residents of the Leys for their health and wellbeing. As a Steering Group we have outlined our recommendations and next steps to address this need within the Leys community to build on existing assets and alleviate some of the challenges experienced by residents. It will be essential that these recommendations and future action is shared across wider stakeholders to truly address the health inequalities experienced by the Leys community.

More Information

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides information about Oxfordshire's population and the factors affecting health, wellbeing, and social care needs. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | Oxfordshire Insight

Blackbird Leys Settlement Profile
Profile which focuses on Oxfordshire's larger communities and provide information on population, health and wellbeing, health inequalities, deprivation, and house prices. Places | Oxfordshire Insight

Local Health is a collection of quality assured health information presented for small geographical areas. Local Health contains indicators related to:

- Population and demographic factors
- Wider determinants of health
- Health outcomes

It presents data for middle super output areas (MSOA), electoral wards, clinical commissioning groups (CCG), local authorities, and England as a whole. Local Health - OHID (phe.org.uk)

Quality Outcomes Framework
The Quality Outcomes Framework contains indicators calculated for GP practices in key areas of clinical care and public health. Includes recorded disease prevalence, achievement rates and personalised care adjustment data. Quality and Outcomes Framework - NHS Digital

Appendix

Appendix 1 – In person survey and focus group questions

Consent checklist:

- Explained what the research is for
- Explained who will have access to the data (Oxford Hub & Oxfordshire County Council Public Health) and how it will be stored (secure Google drive)
- Explained what taking part involves (answering some questions) and that it's optional
- Explained that we will ask about age, gender and ethnicity, which is information that could identify them, but these questions are optional
- Checked that aged 16+
- Asked for and received consent

1. Where do you live? (Circle the answer)

Blackbird Leys / Greater Leys / Other _____

2. What do you like about living in the Leys?

3. What do you dislike about living in the Leys?

4a. How far do you agree with the following statements? (circle the answer)

- **I feel safe in the Leys**

strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **It's easy for me to access green spaces**

strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **It's easy for me to get fresh, healthy food (for example fruit and vegetables)**

strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **It's easy for me to be active (for example by playing sport, exercising, gardening, cycling or walking)**

strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **It's easy for me to access healthcare (for example a doctor, dentist or pharmacy)**

strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

4b. Would you like to say anything else about your answers to this question?

5. What's it like raising a family in the Leys?

6. What are the things in the Leys that support you to be healthy and well?
E.g. getting active, healthy food, green spaces, access to healthcare, housing, cost of living

7. What are the barriers to you being healthy and well?
E.g. getting active, healthy food, green spaces, access to healthcare, housing, cost of living

8. How has COVID-19 affected your health and wellbeing?

9. What are the changes that you'd like to see in the Leys to support your health and wellbeing?

10. Is there anything else you'd like to say about health and wellbeing in the Leys?

Age: **Gender:** **Ethnicity:**

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