

Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2025

Local Research

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of local research carried out in the past year by organisations in Oxfordshire on topics relevant to those covered by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Such organisations include:

- Healthwatch Oxfordshire
- Community and voluntary sector groups
- Local Authorities
- Academic institutions

Whilst local research approaches, scope and methodologies vary, these reports can help bring the statistical data included in the JSNA to life, by adding 'qualitative' depth and highlighting the lived experiences and voices of local communities.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is an independent watchdog organisation, established in 2012 under the Health and Social Care Act. Healthwatch Oxfordshire captures the experiences of people in Oxfordshire using health and social care services through thematic and geographical research, outreach and engagement. Its aim is to ensure that the voices of health and social care users are heard by those that design and deliver services.

The following research reports from Healthwatch Oxfordshire are included in this JSNA Local Research report:

- Supporting children's oral health (July 2024)
- Food and the cost-of-living impact on communities in OX4 (July 2024)
- Using women's health services in Oxfordshire (July 2025)
- Hearing from men in Oxfordshire (March 2025)

Supporting children's oral health

Having healthy teeth and gums is an important part of being healthy and well. Children who live in the most deprived areas and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are more likely to have problems with their oral health or face challenges maintaining good oral health.

The aim of this community-based research project was to understand the challenges that parents and caregivers face when looking after the oral health of children under 10 years old. It was undertaken by Healthwatch organisations in Bucks, Oxfordshire, and Reading, and was funded by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB).

The three Healthwatch organisations interviewed 215 parents and caregivers of children with and without SEND to understand what helps them to support their children's oral health, what challenges they face, and suggestions for how support might be improved.

Main findings:

- Three broad areas of support helped them care for their children's oral health:
 - Behavioural support, such as teaching good oral health using educational resources.
 - Professional support, such as getting information and advice from dentists and health visitors.
 - Practical support, such as buying special toothbrushes and toothpaste, using timers for brushing, and brushing together as a family.
- The main challenges in supporting children's oral health included gaps in knowledge and understanding of oral health and dentistry services, children's resistance to brushing teeth, limited dexterity of children with additional needs, difficulty managing their children's diet and sugar intake, and difficulties accessing dental care.
- Suggestions for improvement included expanding oral health education and information to all children and adults, oral health promotion activities aimed at healthier food and better oral hygiene practices, increasing availability of NHS dentist appointments, promoting a SEND-friendly approach in all practices, and improving access to language and translation support.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire has published a separate report setting out the views from 96 people in Oxfordshire.

The main report, summary of the findings and a leaflet providing oral health guidance tailored to caregivers of children with SEND can be found here: [Supporting children's oral health – July 2024 - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)



Food and the cost-of-living impact on communities in OX4

Access to affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food is key in enabling people to live well. In Oxfordshire, community organisations play a key role in making sure that those most likely to experience health inequalities, have the access they need, especially during the cost-of-living crisis.

The aim of this research project was to understand the impact of the increased costs of living in communities, people's experiences of receiving community food support services, and ways to help improve support. It was led by Hassan Sabrie and Mujahid Hamidi, community researchers from Oxford Community Action (OCA), between May 2023 and June 2024.

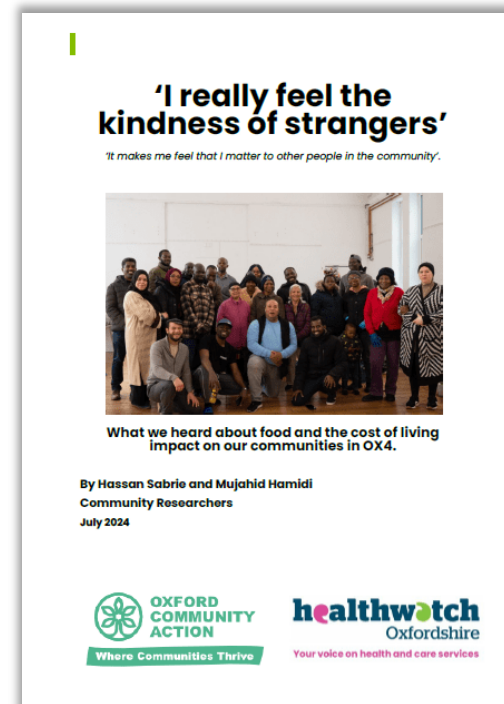
The report captured the views and experiences of 166 people living in the OX4 area of Oxford through a survey and in-person conversations.

Main findings:

- The cost-of-living crisis has increased people's bills and has had a negative impact on their mental and physical health, with many people finding it hard to make ends meet.
- Accessing community food support services has helped people save money and feed their families. It has made them feel part of a community and has supported their physical and mental health by relieving stress, reducing isolation, and encouraging healthier eating choices.
- Some commented that the food bags did not offer choice, consistent quality, enough food, and expressed preference for more basic ingredients, including fresh and healthy food. It was also noted that there is not enough cultural choice of food in Oxford.
- In terms of wider support to help them manage the cost of living, respondents suggested practical support to access healthy food, including a bigger or more healthy range of food in community food support bags, community meals and training in skills for shopping and cooking on a budget, as well as support and advice to manage finances, such as advice on housing and benefits.

The findings have been shared with stakeholders and action has already been taken to implement the respondent's suggestions.

The full report, summary of findings, and a short video about this work can be found here: [What our community researchers heard about food and the cost of living impact on communities in OX4 – July 2024 - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)



Hearing from men in Oxfordshire

Men's health and wellbeing is a key area of focus for health and care services. Men have a shorter life expectancy than women and are also less likely to seek help for physical or mental health problems. The aim of this report was to capture the views of men from across Oxfordshire on health and wellbeing.

Between December 2023 and November 2024, Healthwatch Oxfordshire held short, meaningful conversations with 167 men in Whitney, Didcot and across Oxfordshire to understand:

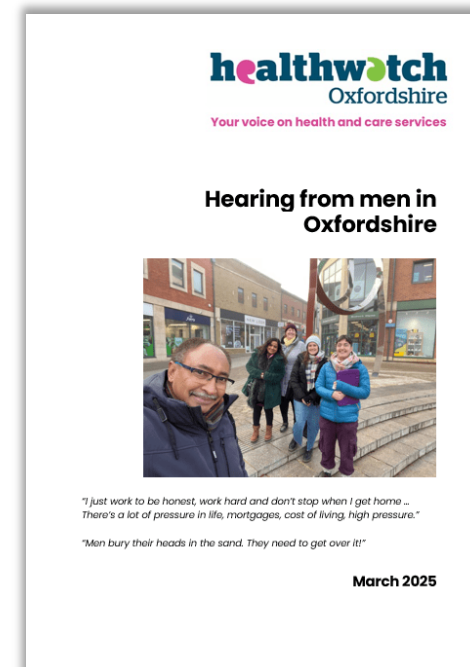
- Factors that help men to be healthy and well and factors that make this hard
- Their experiences of using health and care services
- Their ideas on how they would like to be better supported to be healthy and well

Main findings:

- Men looked after their health by eating well and being active, as well as relaxing and enjoying personal time. Spending time with family, friends or participating in men's support groups and social groups had a positive impact on their wellbeing, while seeking help from professionals for health concerns was also helpful. Faith and spirituality were also reported as supportive for their health and wellbeing.
- A lack of time to eat well, relax, be active or attend medical appointments were mentioned as factors making it difficult to stay healthy. Work pressures, worries about money and the cost of living, as well as barriers to accessing healthcare, hindered their efforts to adopt healthy habits. Stigma and stereotypes about seeking help had a similar negative effect.
- Men mentioned that they would like to receive more information promoting healthy lifestyles and have cheaper or easier access to gyms, leisure activities, exercise classes, and cooking classes. They also suggested getting easier access to healthcare and health checks. Finally, they felt that more men's support groups and activity groups would help them socialise, get active, and stay healthy and well.

This work follows on from previous research with [Men in Carterton in 2022-2023](#). It will help inform health and care services, commissioners and decision-makers about men's views and guide work to proactively support men.

The main report, summary of the findings and an information sheet with services and organisations working to support men's health can be found here: [Hearing from men in Oxfordshire – March 2025 - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)



Using women's health services in Oxfordshire

There is a growing awareness of the health inequalities faced by women and people who use women's health services, including, unconscious bias and barriers to healthcare. The aim of this research project was to capture people's experiences of using women's health services in Oxfordshire.

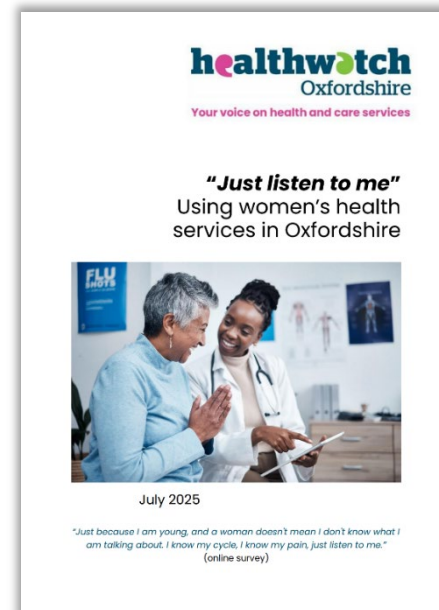
From August to October 2024, Healthwatch Oxfordshire heard from 684 women and people who use women's health services, through online surveys, face-to-face conversations, in-depth interviews and focus groups. People described their experience accessing and using women's health services, health services more generally, and getting breast or cervical screening.

Main findings:

- People had had both good and bad experiences of women's health services, with many examples of good care. However, many felt they were not listened or taken seriously, waited long for appointments or referrals, experienced a lack of person-centred care, and felt their healthcare professionals did not have enough understanding of women's health to support them.
- The most common barriers to receiving support related to accessing care, such as getting appointments with their GP or specialist clinics and not knowing what services are available.
- Challenges around menopause included lack of information and culturally appropriate support, and delays to diagnosis and treatment.
- Regarding their experiences of screening, people mentioned gaps around accessibility and inclusion, difficulty making screening appointments, and a need for trauma-informed care. Barriers to screening included misconceptions about eligibility and embarrassment.
- Improving information on women's health issues, tackling barriers to health and care services, involving patients in their care, and improving support for people living with women's health issues were suggested as ways to improve women's health services.

Based on these findings, Healthwatch made a series of recommendations, focusing on listening to and involving patients; sharing information and improving communication; and tackling barriers and improving quality of care, which were shared with stakeholders.

More information on this report can be found here: [Using women's health services in Oxfordshire - July 2025](#)



Other research and reports by Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Below is a list of other reports published by Healthwatch Oxfordshire between 2024 and 2025:

- [Patient Participation Groups in Oxfordshire - July 2024](#)
- [What you told us about hospitals August 2023-July 2024](#)
- [People's experiences of eye care services in Oxfordshire - September 2024](#)
- [People's experiences of leaving hospital in Oxfordshire - November 2024](#)
- [Your views on health and wellbeing in Wood Farm and Town Furze – February 2025](#)
- [What you told us about GPs April 2024-March 2025](#)
- [What we heard about pharmacy April 2024-March 2025](#)
- [Navigating urgent and emergency care services in Oxfordshire - June 2025](#)

A full list of Healthwatch Oxfordshire research reports can be found here: [Research reports - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)

A searchable list of reports is accessible here: [Reports - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)

Voluntary and Community Sector

Community First Oxfordshire The Small and Mighty – Infrastructure Research Report

There are thousands of small voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations and charities in Oxfordshire. They help local communities by running food banks, maintaining community spaces, organising activities and supporting residents. These groups have small budgets (less than £100,000 per year) and are often run by volunteers.

This research looked at what these small groups need to keep doing their important work and how they can be better supported. Nearly 300 organisations were surveyed and 18 in-depth interviews were conducted to understand their challenges and opportunities.

The research identified four key areas where these groups need infrastructure support:

- Voice: having a say in important decisions about issues in their communities
- Volunteering: recruiting and keeping volunteers
- Working Together: building stronger partnerships and collaborating with other voluntary organisations, the NHS, and local councils.
- Development: building stronger organisations, such as getting help with governance, planning, funding applications and financial management to address increasing financial pressures

The report made recommendations on ways to help small community groups continue their work.

1. Investing in support organisations that help small groups
2. Making sure help reaches rural areas, smaller organisations and low-income areas
3. Creating better ways for groups to influence decisions
4. Developing practical solutions for volunteer recruitment and management
5. Building stronger networks for groups to work together
6. Providing accessible training and development opportunities

The full report and easy read version can be accessed here: [The Small and Mighty Infrastructure Research Report - Community First Oxfordshire](#)



Active Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Scans

Active Oxfordshire is a local charity dedicated to promoting physical activity and reducing health inequalities, and an Active Partnership funded by Sport England. Their interventions focus on increasing physical activity opportunities for children and young people, older people, people living with health conditions or disabilities and people affected by mental health difficulties.

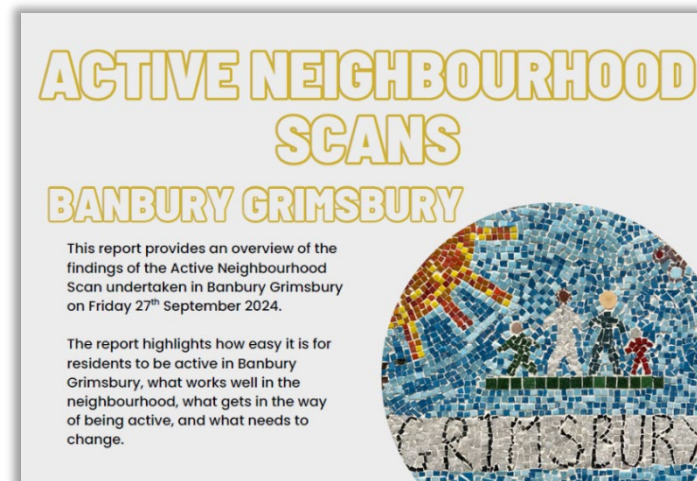
In September 2023, Active Oxfordshire conducted Active Neighbourhood Scans in both Blackbird Leys and Banbury Neithrop and Ruscote as part of Oxfordshire on the Move, which were included in the JSNA 2024. In September 2024, a further Active Neighbourhood Scan was conducted in Banbury Grimsbury. The aim of the report was to better understand what works well in the neighbourhood, what gets in the way of being active, and what needs to change.

Twenty eight residents and representatives from schools, local authorities, and community groups completed a questionnaire while walking, wheeling, cycling or playing in Banbury Grimsbury and Hightown. The questions related to how easy it was to conduct these activities.

Main findings:

- The strengths of the neighbourhood included good provision of parks, playgrounds, outdoor leisure facilities, and interactive walking routes.
- There was good bin provision and pavement markings, with some areas being well-maintained and tidy.
- Barriers identified to being active included limited cycling infrastructure with lack of dedicated lanes and unsafe road conditions, poorly maintained paths with potholes and uneven surfaces, and lack of lighting, especially in alleyways and parks.
- The overlapping use of spaces, such as cyclists riding on pavements due to lack of lanes or narrow paths being shared by pedestrians and bikes, was also highlighted as an area for improvement.
- Suggestions for improvement included the creation of more community-friendly and inclusive areas, such as picnic benches, seating, and shelters in parks, and the reviving of underutilised green spaces. There was also a desire for inclusivity in terms of accessible play equipment or walking guides in multiple languages.

More information and the full reports can be found here: [Active Neighbourhood Scans | Active Oxfordshire](#)



Active Oxfordshire Opening School Facilities

The Opening School Facilities (OSF) programme was a three-year national initiative launched in 2023 by the Department of Education. It aimed to increase physical activity by enabling schools to implement projects that made it easier for their students and the wider community to be more physically active. In Oxfordshire, the programme was led by the North Oxfordshire School Sport Partnership in collaboration with Active Oxfordshire and district councils, with 51 schools delivering 94 projects. The programme prioritised groups facing the greatest barriers to physical activity, such as children on Free School Meals, females, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Ethnically Diverse Communities, with 25% of participating schools located in priority neighbourhoods.

A total of 9,881 children and 1,555 community residents engaged with OSF-funded facilities. Supported projects ranged from bike libraries for borrowing bikes, top-up swimming lessons, girls football, and Young Leaders Training, to projects enabling school sporting facilities to be accessed outside of school hours by youth and community groups. A mixed-methods evaluation of the programme was conducted using school data capture forms, interviews with 10 schools, site visits, and feedback from young people.

Main findings:

- The programme resulted in increased physical activity among pupils and strengthened the relationships between the school and families.
- Targeted physical activity interventions significantly benefited pupils with SEND, helping with their emotional regulation, wellbeing, school readiness, and classroom focus.
- Outdoor play enhanced school culture and transformed school environments, improved student interactions across year groups, and reduced playground conflict. Schools reported better behaviour and more inclusive and enjoyable playtimes.
- Challenges to community projects included scheduling and creating awareness.
- Schools noted increased staff morale and capability through professional development tied to project implementation, while students developed leadership skills and a greater sense of belonging by running or engaging with the activities.

More information about the programme and the impact reports can be found here: [Active Oxfordshire – Opening School Facilities](#)



Oxfordshire Community Research Network

The Oxfordshire Community Research Network (OCRN) is a collaborative initiative led by Oxfordshire County Council and supported by community, grassroots, voluntary, statutory and academic partners. It was launched in March 2023, and its mission is to foster inclusive, community-led research that addresses health inequalities and amplifies lived experience.

OCRN brings together a diverse membership including community voluntary groups, larger charities, universities, health services, and local councils. The guiding principles that shape its ethos and operations are the following:

- Nothing about us without us
- Commit to action
- Value lived experience and time
- Be open, transparent and accountable

Key activities include steering group meetings, mentoring programmes, training workshops, information sharing through monthly newsletters and annual showcases to disseminate findings and promote engagement. It provides funding to support community-led research training, programmes and projects and serves as an online collaboration platform.

Successes include strengthened relationships across sectors, increased awareness of community research, and tangible outputs such as reports, films, and policy contributions. Notable projects include action-based research on food insecurity in Oxford's OX4 area and a workshop on health inequalities faced by refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers in Oxfordshire.

Challenges remain, including balancing power dynamics, ensuring inclusivity, and transitioning from planning to action. An independent evaluation by IPC underscored the importance of leadership, trust-building, and sustained funding.

OCRN continues to evolve, with strategic governance structures, realist reviews, and expanded partnerships aimed at embedding community research within broader public health strategies. It stands as a model for participatory research that empowers communities and informs policy through grounded, collaborative inquiry.

Guiding principles

Nothing about us
without us

Commit to action

Value lived
experience and time

Be open, transparent
and accountable

Local Government

There are six Local Authority Councils in Oxfordshire:

- Oxfordshire County Council
- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council

This section of the JSNA Local Research report includes the following projects led or funded by the councils in Oxfordshire:

- Oxfordshire Community Insight Profiles
- Oxfordshire Housing and Health Needs Assessment
- Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showperson and Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessment
- LGBTQIA+ Oxfordshire report
- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse & the LGBTQIA+ Community review
- Everywhere we go, we are surrounded – Bite Back report
- Wayfinding for healthy lives report
- Brighter Futures in Banbury Annual Report 2023-24
- Projects of the Local Policy Lab programme

Oxfordshire Community Insight Profiles

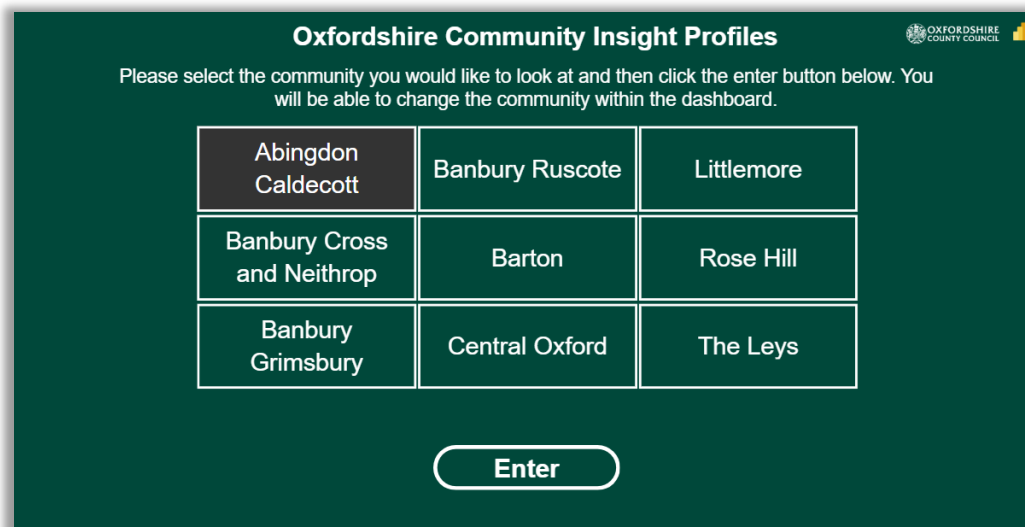
Since 2021, Oxfordshire County Council's Public Health team have been working with partners to carry out a programme of work to develop Community Insight Profiles (CIP). The work initiated after the publication of the [Oxfordshire Director of Public Health Annual Report for 2019/20](#), which highlighted ten wards in Oxfordshire which have small areas (Lower Super Output Areas) that were listed amongst the 20% most deprived in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) published November 2019. Profiles that covered these initial 10 areas were developed, with the last of those published in December 2023.

Following on from this, a further four Community Insight Profiles have been developed for areas across the county identified as falling within the 30-40% most deprived nationally according to the IMD (2019) and where local partners identified that there would be added benefit to developing a profile.

The Community Insight Profiles map assets in each area, capture community insight around enablers and challenges to health and wellbeing, detail a set of data indicators for each area and provide a series of locally led recommendations that outline objectives to enhance identified community assets and strengthen development opportunities.

What has been done:

- Collaborative work with partners in each local area has been carried out to create Community Insight Profiles in all 14 areas and has now been completed, with the last of the 14 areas – Bicester West – published in June 2025.
- To support the taking forward of actions arising from the Community Insight report recommendations, Community Health Development Officer posts have been funded for each of the areas where a profile has been developed. Along with a small grants scheme to support community projects that help deliver the recommendations from the community profiles.



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Oxfordshire Community Insight Profiles" with the Oxfordshire County Council logo in the top right. Below the title, a message reads: "Please select the community you would like to look at and then click the enter button below. You will be able to change the community within the dashboard." There is a 3x3 grid of buttons representing different communities. The first button in the top-left corner, "Abingdon Caldecott", is highlighted with a dark background. Below the grid is a large, rounded "Enter" button.

Abingdon Caldecott	Banbury Ruscote	Littlemore
Banbury Cross and Neithrop	Barton	Rose Hill
Banbury Grimsbury	Central Oxford	The Leys

Enter

What happens next:

- As the Public Health-led work to develop Community Insight Profiles has now concluded, the focus has shifted to ensuring the long-term impact of the CIP programme. This includes the introduction of a Community Insight Profile Development Framework, which brings together the learning gathered throughout the programme and an interactive [Community Insight Profile Dashboard](#) to make the data accessible and useful for ongoing and future projects.
- In collaboration with local partners, work is ongoing to take forward the recommendations from the Community Insight Profiles, including through the development of action plans in each of the areas, with actions ranging from quick-wins to longer-term initiatives.

Full reports, related summaries and resources can be accessed here: [Oxfordshire Data Hub – Health and Social Care – Community Insight Profiles](#)

Oxfordshire Housing and Health Needs Assessment

Housing is a key determinant of physical and mental health. The Housing and Health Needs Assessment (HNA) provides a comprehensive review of the relationship between housing and health in Oxfordshire from early childhood to older age, following a life-course approach. The purpose of this HNA was to inform the selection of appropriate metrics to monitor progress of the Healthy Housing ambition in the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030.

The assessment collected information from national datasets such as the 2021 Census and the English Housing Survey, local authority stock condition assessments, community insight profiles, strategic needs assessments, and interviews with housing, health and social care professionals.

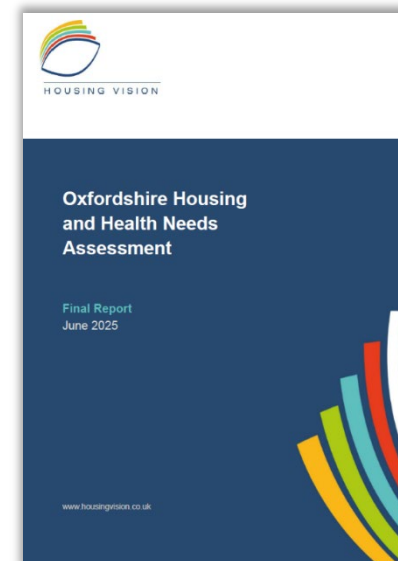
Main findings:

- **Housing Conditions:** 9.6% of homes in Oxfordshire are non-decent, which equates to just over 30,000 homes. Private rented homes have the worst conditions.
- **Priority Hazards:** Damp and mould, excess cold, fire risks, falls, and overcrowding are the most significant threats to health.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** Children aged under 5 years, older adults, disabled individuals, ethnic minorities, and low-income households are disproportionately affected.
- **Health Impacts:** Poor housing contributes to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, mental health issues, and injury risks.
- **Economic Costs:** Substandard housing costs the NHS an estimated £1.3 million annually in Oxfordshire.
- **Service Gaps:** There is variation in Home Improvement Agency support across the County and on the impacts of housing and health issues on both statutory services and VCSE sectors.

Recommendations to improve housing and health intelligence:

- Conduct a countywide stock condition and household survey.
- Develop a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- Define affordable housing using income-based thresholds.
- Improve service monitoring and strategic coordination across housing and health sectors.

The full report is available on [Oxfordshire Data Hub](#).



Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showperson and Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessment

The Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2024 aimed to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers across the local authorities of Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire, and summarise what is currently provided to guide policy development.

The assessment used a multi-phase approach including:

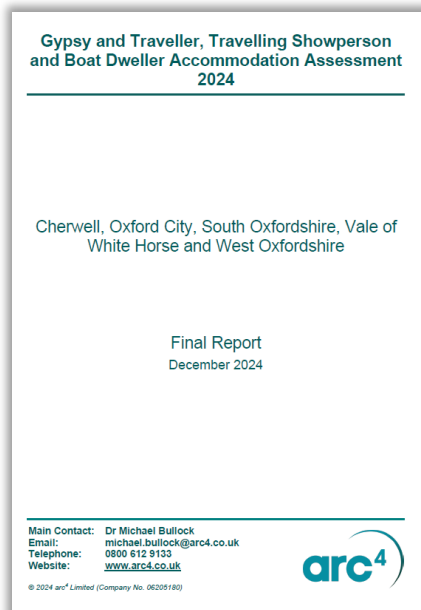
- a review of existing data,
- a stakeholder consultation,
- a survey of 153 Gypsy and Traveller households (68% response rate), 44 Travelling Showperson households (88% response rate), and 7 boat dweller households (18.9% response rate),
- a needs modelling using demographic data, migration trends, and survey and consultation data to project short- and long-term requirements over a period of 19 years (2023/24 to 2041/42).

Main findings:

- There were 42 Gypsy and Traveller sites (292 pitches) and 12 Travelling Showperson yards (61 plots) in Oxfordshire.
- There was a need for 161 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 16 Travelling Showperson plots by 2041/42, with 58 pitches and 10 plots needed in the first five years. This could be partially supplied from regularising unauthorised sites, expanding existing sites, and household dissolution.
- For boat dwellers, the main need was identified in Oxford City, with a recommended 20–50 additional residential moorings, which should be balanced with the need to provide mooring spaces for cruising boats and leisure boaters.
- Key barriers included land availability, planning constraints, and community opposition, while stakeholder engagement would be essential.

The GTAA provided a robust evidence base for local plans, ensuring Oxfordshire's councils can meet the accommodation needs of these communities in a fair, sustainable, and inclusive manner.

The full report can be accessed here: [Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showperson and Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessment 2024](#)



LGBTQIA+ Oxfordshire Report

Commissioned by Oxford City Council, this report aimed to better understand the demographics, experiences, and needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual + (LGBTQIA+) people in Oxfordshire. It sought to inform inclusive practice, improve accessibility, and guide future community engagement and event planning across the county.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected via an online survey, which was distributed to LGBTQIA+ individuals aged 18+ living in or regularly visiting Oxfordshire, as well as their parents, carers, and guardians. There were 218 responses. The survey findings were supplemented by national sources including the 2021 Census, the Government Equalities Office LGBT Survey (2019), and Stonewall's Homes & Communities Report (2018).

Main findings:

- 30% of respondents selected a gender other than male or female and 40% had a disability. Most lived in Oxford (60%) and were aged 25–34.
- While 78% felt comfortable in their LGBTQIA+ identity, many reported negative reactions in public (70%), at work (54%), and in education (55%). These rates were highest for Trans people.
- 46% felt there weren't enough LGBTQIA+ events. Barriers included clashes with work, lack of information, cost, and lack of accessibility. Advance notice, online marketing, and events with good public transport and gender-neutral toilets were suggested.
- People felt safest in museums, cafes, and LGBTQIA+ spaces, and least safe in spaces of worship, schools, and pubs. Visible support, inclusive policies, and community representation were key to fostering safety.

Recommendations to address the issues identified in this report included improving event accessibility, increasing event visibility, safety, and support, diversifying the programming, and creating inclusive spaces for underrepresented groups.

The full report can be accessed here: [LGBTQIA+ Report](#)



Domestic Abuse & the LGBTQIA+ Community – A local review of Oxfordshire

The 2021 census showed that Oxford city had the third highest ‘non-straight’ population in the country and is home to the UK’s largest population of Trans and Non-binary people outside of London.

The prevalence of Domestic Abuse (DA) in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual + (LGBTQIA+) community has been found to be equally high or higher than the prevalence of DA within heteronormative relationships. Galop’s report “An Isolated Place” found that roughly 6 in 10 (61%) LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors did not seek support from services after experiencing abuse and similarly in Oxfordshire, a very low numbers of LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors seek help by domestic abuse services.

This survey aimed to capture voices of LGBTQIA+ people in Oxfordshire around their knowledge of domestic abuse, its prevalence in the community, and the barriers that continue to prevent people from feeling safe reporting or accessing support.

Main findings:

- 9 out of 10 respondents have themselves experienced or known someone to have experienced domestic abuse
- Approximately half are themselves victim-survivors.
- 9 out of 10 report “Fear of Social Repercussions” and almost 9 out of 10 report “Fear of Police” as a main barrier to reporting DA.
- 4 out of 10 claim “good knowledge” of local DA services compared to around 7 of 10 of Cisgender Heterosexual (CisHet) respondents.

Recommendations:

The recommendations focus on improving inclusivity, awareness, and service accessibility for LGBTQIA+ individuals affected by domestic abuse. This includes better data practices, inclusive training, and stronger collaboration with local LGBTQIA+ organisations. The aim is to embed LGBTQIA+ considerations into domestic abuse services and ensure ongoing improvement.

The report (full and summary) can be found here: <https://iamlisaward.com/publications/>.



Everywhere we go, we are surrounded – Bite Back report

This report, produced by Bite Back, presents a youth-led evaluation of the food environment in Oxfordshire, focusing on junk food advertising and food offerings in Local Authority-controlled spaces like leisure centres. Bite Back is a youth-activist movement and registered charity, campaigning to redesign the food system to put child health first. The initiative aimed to empower young people aged 16-18 from across Oxfordshire to investigate and advocate for a healthier local food system.

The study was conducted during the October 2024 half-term, involving workshops where young people shared lived experiences and stories. They then conducted fieldwork across Oxfordshire, documenting food advertisements in Oxford, Didcot, Banbury, and Bicester, and auditing food options in leisure centres. The team used the government's Nutrient Profiling Model to classify products as high in fat, sugar, or salt (HFSS).

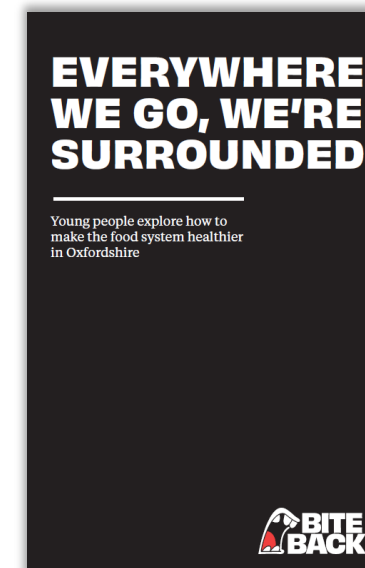


Main findings:

- There was a strong presence of junk food advertising, particularly in Oxford, where 70% of HFSS adverts were concentrated.
- 12 schools had at least one junk food ad within 400 metres of their gates.
- Bus stops were the most common advertising sites, accounting for 82% of HFSS ads.
- In leisure centres, 53% of vending machine products were HFSS, with food items being significantly more unhealthy than drinks. Cafés and self-service areas also prioritised unhealthy options, often placing them prominently and pricing healthier alternatives higher.

The report calls on Oxfordshire's local authorities to adopt healthier advertising policies, following successful models in London. It urges collaboration with public health teams to improve food environments in council-run spaces, making healthy options more visible, accessible, and affordable. The young participants' voices underscore the urgency of reform, highlighting the negative impact of the current food system on their generation's wellbeing.

A video is available to watch [here](#) and the full report is available [here](#).



Community Outreach Active Travel report

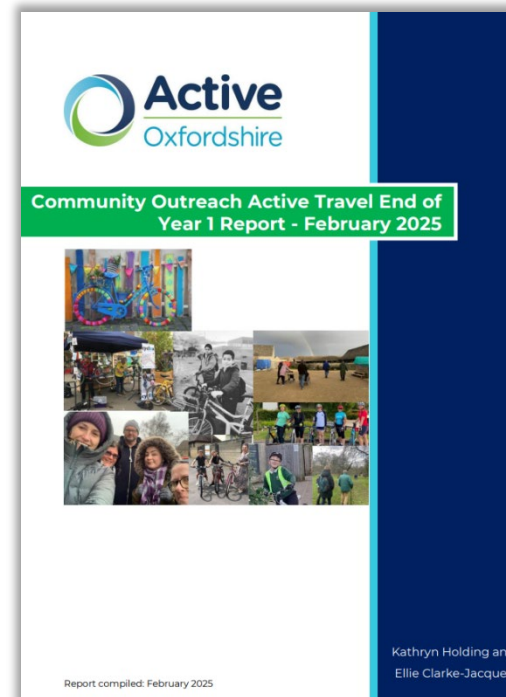
Active travel, such as walking or cycling, has a positive impact on physical and mental health and promotes healthier, more connected communities. The Community Outreach Active Travel (COAT) programme aimed to support residents in 10 priority neighbourhoods across Oxford, Banbury, Abingdon, and specified market towns to travel actively to work, school and in their daily lives. It was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council and delivered by Active Oxfordshire. The 28 projects supported via the programme reached 1,183 individuals. They focused on removing barriers to active travel, making it more accessible to disadvantaged groups, and reducing health inequalities.

The evaluation of the programme combined project data and participant surveys. The registration survey was completed by 92 participants and the follow-up survey by 38 participants (3% response rate).

Main findings:

- 56% of participants reported increased use of active travel (74% walking, 37% cycling), with 67% using it daily. Participants walked on average 5 days/week and cycled 2 days/week.
- Participants reported improved physical and mental wellbeing, increased confidence, and stronger community connections
- Barriers to cycling included road safety concerns (35%), lack of cycle paths (19%), and weather concerns (19%). Improvements suggested included more and better cycle lanes, separate from traffic, secure places to lock bikes, and subsidised or cheaper access to bikes.
- Barriers to walking included long distances, needing to use the car afterwards, time constraints, personal safety concerns, and the weather. Suggestions to encourage walking included improvement of the condition of footpaths and pavements.

The full report with details about each supported project can be accessed here: [Community Outreach Active Travel report](#)



Move Together report

The Oxfordshire Move Together programme provides support for people with long term health conditions, mental health issues, those who are at risk of falls or who are struggling with pain to become more active. Programmes include home activity support, digital options, community activities, and specialist exercise interventions. It is jointly funded by Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, Oxfordshire County Council, and City and District councils and coordinated by Active Oxfordshire in partnership with local authorities.

The aim of this report was to evaluate the change in wellbeing between initial assessment and 3-month reviews for Move Together participants. The reviews were undertaken between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 and collected qualitative and quantitative feedback from 889 participants.



Main findings:

- 64% of participants increased their activity levels, with an average increase of 3900 steps per day.
- 91% have made positive lifestyle changes. These include healthier eating choices, building physical activity into their daily routine, losing weight, better management of their long-term health conditions, making friends or enjoying nature.
- 75% of participants reported the perception of their health had stayed the same or improved. This related to physical health, in terms of strength, stamina and balance, as well as mental health.
- 36% of participants reported improvements in their ability to undertake usual activities, 32% improved pain levels.
- 60% of participants with symptoms of anxiety and 55% with symptoms of depression demonstrated improvement by the 3-month review.
- There were 43% fewer GP appointments recorded in the 4 weeks prior to the 3-month review compared to the initial assessment. This translates to 4.3 fewer GP appointments per participant per annum.
- There was a 22% reduction in 111 or out-of-hours demand in the 4 weeks prior to the 3-month review compared to initial assessment
- Move Together creates a social value gain of £1,446,600. This is a return on investment of £3.70 for every pound invested in the Move Together programme.

The Move Together full and summary reports as well as the outcome report can be accessed here: [Active Oxfordshire – Move Together](#)

YouMove report

YouMove provides free and low-cost physical activity opportunities for children and families facing disadvantage, including those on Free School Meals, Universal Credit, refugee families, and those supported by Early Help services. Its aim is to reduce inactivity and improve wellbeing through accessible activities. It is funded by Oxfordshire County Council in collaboration with Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), and coordinated by Active Oxfordshire, in partnership with district councils. The programme launched in May 2022 and by 31st March 2025 was supporting 13,900 individuals from 3,911 families.



Evaluation of the programme was conducted via a six-month feedback questionnaire sent to 1337 families, with a 15% response rate (201 families, covering 721 individuals). The survey assessed activity levels, mental wellbeing, barriers to participation, and overall experience. Responses were compared to baseline data collected at registration.

Main findings:

- 50% of participants increased the amount of physical activity they were doing since joining YouMove. The average increase in physical activity duration was 70 minutes a week for adults and 153 minutes a week for children.
- There was a 50% increase in the number of adults achieving recommended activity levels and a 9% increase in the number of children. There was, for adults, a 30% decrease in the numbers classed as 'inactive' and a 53% decrease for children.
- 57% of adults reported higher life satisfaction, while 50% of children reported feeling happier after six months.
- 92% of families thought that being part of YouMove was making some difference to their family's health and wellbeing.
- Families reported improved mental health, increased family bonding, and greater access to activities they otherwise couldn't afford.
- Barriers to participation in YouMove activities were experienced by 69% of families. These included location, lack of awareness, and transport. Leisure centre staff awareness and booking systems were also noted as areas requiring improvement.

The YouMove summary and outcomes reports can be found here: [Active Oxfordshire – YouMove](#)

Wayfinding for healthy lives

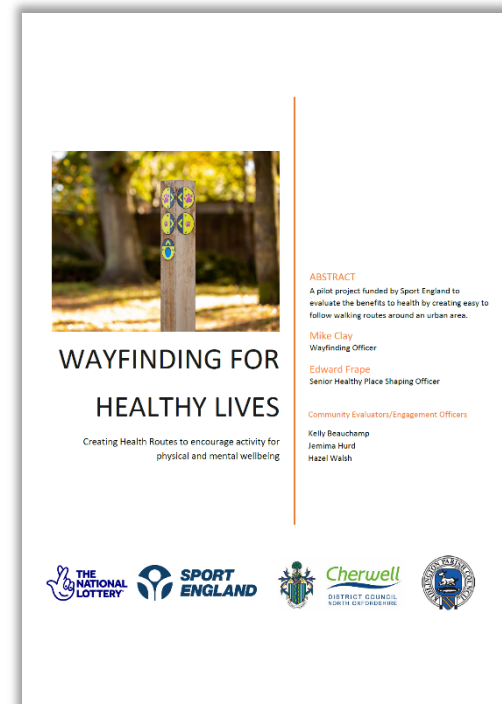
The “Wayfinding for Healthy Lives” project aimed to increase the physical activity levels of primary school-aged children and families in Kidlington by promoting walking through the creation of easy-to-follow themed walking routes around the area. It was funded by Sport England and Cherwell District Council and led by Cherwell District Council’s Healthy Place Shaping Team in collaboration with residents, Parish Councils, local businesses, voluntary organisations, schools and health care providers.

The initiative targeted families with children aged under 12 years, addressing concerns around childhood obesity and inactivity. Drawing on Healthy Place Shaping principles and taking a whole-family approach, the project sought to connect community assets, such as schools, parks, shops, and green spaces, via accessible walking trails. A multi-phase approach was followed, including asset mapping, extensive community engagement, co-design of routes, and installation of zoo-themed infrastructure. Five circular trails (1.5km to 5km in length) were developed and launched in October 2021, each marked with animal paw prints and signage inspired by Kidlington’s historical zoo.

The social impact of the Kidlington Zoo Trails was evaluated using pre- and post-intervention surveys of 377 people over 1.5 years, to measure wellbeing in economic terms, and usage was monitored using infrared pedestrian counters. Community Evaluators were also appointed to facilitate the engagement of the local population and to ensure their input throughout the project.

Main findings:

- There were an estimated 579 distinct monthly trail users, with a significant increase in life satisfaction among monthly trail users.
- This translated to an estimated annual social value of £3,575 per user and a total of £2.07 million for the community.
- The cost-benefit analysis showed a return of £18.23 for every £1 invested.
- The trails were well received, becoming integrated into school curricula and community events, with positive feedback across social media.
- The project demonstrated that low-cost, co-designed wayfinding interventions can yield substantial wellbeing benefits and serve as a model for future developments.



Brighter Futures in Banbury Annual Report 2023-24

The Brighter Futures area covers Grimsbury, Neithrop, and Ruscote, the three wards in Banbury, North Oxfordshire, with the highest level of deprivation in the Cherwell District and in the 20% most deprived wards nationally.

The Cherwell Brighter Futures Partnership aims to address deprivation and health inequalities in the area by supporting the community through collaborative, community-led interventions that span crisis support, long-term wellbeing strategies, and systemic change. It operates through themed working groups, covering housing, education, health, community safety, and volunteering.

This report describes how partners from statutory bodies, grassroots organisations, and community groups have worked together through an asset-based approach, empowering residents to co-create solutions and shape services to address their needs.



Main findings:

- There is persistent impact from the cost-of-living crisis, with low-income households disproportionately affected by inflation and housing costs.
- No rental properties in the area were fully covered by Local Housing Allowance, exacerbating financial strain.
- A range of impactful initiatives have been adopted: food larders, soup lunches, and grants for community food projects; mental health support through singing groups and mindfulness programmes; and targeted help for vulnerable groups, including domestic abuse survivors and rough sleepers.
- Innovative schemes like the Community Connections Fund and Well Together grants promote arts engagement and community-led health projects.
- The Buddy Scheme supports leaders of small organisations, while the Community Pop-Up Space provides accessible information and services.
- Sustained collaboration, responsive action, and community empowerment are crucial in tackling inequality and fostering resilience.

The full report and more information about Brighter Futures can be accessed here: [Brighter Futures in Banbury | Cherwell District Council](#)

Local Policy Lab programme

The Local Policy Lab is an initiative set up in 2024 to enable collaboration between the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, Oxfordshire County Council, and our partner authorities and organisations.

It aims to deliver applied policy research that is both timely and impactful for local residents. In addition, it provides graduate students with the opportunity to work on locally relevant issues and supports building of partnerships between councils and university researchers.

Six projects were selected for this year's programme based on their contribution to OCC's work on the three [Marmot](#) priorities for the County (supporting the early years, creating fair employment, and ensuring a healthy standard of living for all) and strategic priorities put forwards by Oxford City Council, the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and Community Action Group Oxfordshire. Fourteen students and six academic advisors contributed to projects spanning across children and adult social care services, workforce diversity and evaluating grant funding allocations to community-based projects.

Two projects relevant to the content of the JSNA and their findings are described below.

1. Mapping Community Nature Funding in Oxfordshire

Less affluent communities are known to receive greater benefits from accessing greenspace, at the same time these communities tend to also have the least access to greenspace. In Oxfordshire, the least affluent neighbourhoods are situated in urban areas where greenspace availability is already more constrained.

To understand whether funding is being distributed in a way that reduces inequalities in access to greenspace and in health, an analysis of 100 funding applications received by five organisations that fund community nature-based projects was conducted. This identified specific areas where the information needed to assess impacts on inequalities is not yet being collected in a systematic



way (for example most organisations collect limited information about the resident groups expected to benefit the most from the project).

Interviews with funders and grant recipients were used to identify recommendations for how to make the application process more accessible, supportive and less burdensome for community organisations, which will be fed back to key funding organisations in Oxfordshire, to influence future funding cycles. These included the following actions for funders:

- be clearer about the funding criteria and application requirements,
- communicate these earlier,
- adjust the complexity of application processes to organisation size and provide pre-application support.

Community organisations also highlighted the need to address not only physical but also social barriers to accessing greenspace for population groups for whom greenspace use is, or has been, associated with experiences of harassment and discrimination.

2. Family Hubs in Oxfordshire

Family Hubs are community-based centres that provide a 'one stop shop' for families of children aged 0-19 years, or up to 25 years for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They offer virtual and face-to-face support and provide access to a range of services including midwifery, infant feeding and breastfeeding advice, health visiting, mental health support, safeguarding, and SEND-related services.

This project supports a wider programme of work that seeks to understand current successes, challenges, and gaps in meeting local families' needs to inform how the Family Hub model is developed going forwards. Interviews with community organisations, schools, OCC and NHS staff who support families in Witney (town and district) yielded the following recommendations:

- create a universal access, physical Family Hub space in Witney, supported by a digital offer and mobile outreach,
- allow time and space for relationship-building, rather than focusing solely on short-term, or clinical outcomes,
- ensure that there is investment in staff,
- ground Family Hubs in principles of non-judgemental, needs-based care that are already being used in Witney.

Academic institutions

Community Gynaecology Service Oxfordshire: How a local women's health hub improved access to menopause care

This study was published in the Post Reproductive Health Journal in September 2024.

The Women's Health Strategy 2022 aims to improve access to Women's Healthcare needs, with menopause care being a key component to optimise. This strategy encourages the 'expansion of women's health hubs around the country and other models of "one-stop clinics," bringing essential women's services together to support women'.

A service evaluation was completed at a local women's health hub in Oxfordshire to review referrals for specialist menopause care.

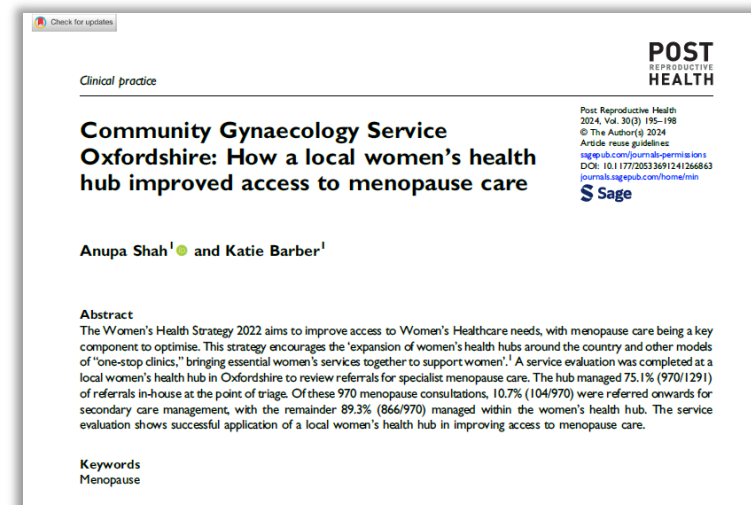
Main findings:

- The women's health hub managed 75.1% (970/1291) of referrals in-house at the point of triage.
- Of these 970 menopause consultations, 10.7% (104/970) were referred onwards for secondary care management, with the remainder 89.3% (866/970) managed within the women's health hub.

Key message: The local women's health hub was successful in improving access to menopause care.

The full study can be found here: [Full text link](#)

Citation: Shah A, Barber K. Community Gynaecology Service Oxfordshire: How a local women's health hub improved access to menopause care. Post Reprod Health. 2024 Sep;30(3):195-198. doi: 10.1177/20533691241266863.



The experience of seeking and accessing help from mental health services among young people of Eastern European backgrounds: A qualitative interview study

This study was led by the Department of Experimental Psychology of the University of Oxford and published in the Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice Journal in 2024.

The study aimed to understand how young people from Eastern European background sought help for mental health problems.

The study team conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with young people (18-25 years old) of Eastern European background living in Oxfordshire that had experienced severe mental health problems.

Main findings:

- The study participants felt being caught between different cultures and needing to navigate the potentially contrasting expectations of both cultures.
- The participants' families were perceived to influence this process, so families with more open views about mental health problems made it easier to navigate the process of seeking help.
- Young people's cultural and familial beliefs about mental health problems affected their decisions when experiencing difficulties, their trust in services, and their perceived sense of resourcefulness and ability to cope.

Key message: It is important to recognise the cultural tension experienced by young people of Eastern European backgrounds, as this can help the development of more accessible and inclusive mental health services.

The full study can be accessed here: [Full text link](#)

Citation: Radez J, Causier C, Maughan D, Waite F, Johns L. The experience of seeking and accessing help from mental health services among young people of Eastern European backgrounds: A qualitative interview study. Psychol Psychother. 2024 Sep;97(3):425-438. doi: 10.1111/papt.12524.



Finding out more

Reports included in previous JSNA Local Research publications can be accessed via the following links:

[Oxfordshire Data Hub – JSNA – Bitesizes and Health Needs Assessments](#)

[Oxfordshire Data Hub – JSNA – Local Research](#)