

**Healthwatch Oxfordshire's
Voluntary Sector conference
8th July 2015**

Bringing together Oxfordshire's Voluntary Sector Voices



Healthwatch Oxfordshire organised its second Voluntary Sector conference for members of Oxfordshire's community and voluntary groups and charities on 8th July 2015. 61 people representing 40 different voluntary sector organisations were present as well as key representatives from Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and staff from Healthwatch Oxfordshire. In the breakout sessions on the Care Act and on children and young people, commissioners attending were encouraged to listen to comments and to think of solutions.

There was a wide ranging discussion on many topics. This report contains the key comments, points and actions resulting from those discussions.

Purpose of the conference:

1. To update members of the voluntary sector on Healthwatch Oxfordshire's role, priorities and work programme.
2. To provide information on Healthwatch Oxfordshire's Project Fund and get feedback from the voluntary sector on possible barriers to accessing the Fund.
3. To enable a discussion on children and young people's health and social care needs with relevant commissioners present.
4. To enable a discussion on the Care Act 2014 and its implication on carers in Oxfordshire with relevant commissioners.
5. To provide voluntary sector colleagues with the opportunity to hear about the health and social care commissioning priorities for Oxfordshire from the Director of Adult Social care at Oxfordshire County Council and the Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

The Project Fund:

- Attendees were positive about the idea of the Project Fund to enable organisations to conduct an evaluation of the health and social care needs of their members, or issues around access and quality of services on offer to their members.
- They requested clear criteria for applying to the Fund as well as a checklist detailing what organisations need to take into account when applying for the Fund and help to accurately cost the Project.
- Some pointed out that for smaller organisations the time and staffing limitations may be barriers that stop them from applying.
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire was encouraged to organise a buddy/mentor system to enable new organisations to learn from previously successful applicants.

Children and young people's health and social care needs:

This is a summary of the views and comments raised in the discussion by participants:

- **Children's Centres** were praised for the support they offer families and young people but cuts to their funding will make their work even more challenging.
- There are difficulties in **transition from children to adult services**:
 - 18 seems to be a cliff edge when young people move from children to adult services- could the voluntary sector play a bigger role in easing that transition?
 - There is not enough communication between children and adult services.
 - One major issue is neither children's nor adult services seem to be 'in charge'.
 - There are challenges in moving from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to Adult Mental Health Services.
 - The system is not set up to support transient student populations- those moving from home to university.
 - Transition care for people with diabetes from children to adult services needs improving as well as transition from paediatric to adult acute healthcare for those with chronic conditions.
 - Cared for children having particular transition needs at it includes housing, employment with no family support structure in some cases.
- **Femal Genital Mutilation (FGM)**- there are challenges in:
 - Access to schools with FGM risk communities.
 - Education for teachers and parents.
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services** are overstretched and struggling to offer support.
- Children where **English is not the spoken language at home** have additional barriers to overcome and often have to act as interpreters for parents or elders.

- Voluntary sector organisations were encouraged to:
 - Work with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action's Children and Young People's Forum.
 - Look at how they can offer more support to young people and their families making the transition from children to adult services.
 - Look at closer links with the Locality forum group to gather local intelligence.

The Care Act 2014 and its implications for Carers in Oxfordshire:

This is a summary of the views and comments raised in the discussion by participants:

- There is a strong need for a clear, local definition of the terms 'prevention' and 'carer'. This would enable Oxfordshire County Council and voluntary sector organisations to be clear about their responsibilities with regards to the Care Act.
- There is a big challenge in getting carers to identify themselves- particularly in black and minority ethnic groups. Carers are often hesitant to ask for support. The key is to get people to identify themselves as carers really early on so they can be offered support.
- **Comments about the online carers assessment tool:**
 - The tool is not fit for purpose.
 - There are high levels of frustration in using it- when filling in the online form you can't go back to previous pages and you can't save your information.
 - It is a national tool but locally commissioned so the Council can alter it- the Council will hold a workshop to gather feedback on the tool.
 - There is a paper version of the online tool that can be sent out.
- **Comments about support available for carers:**
 - Carers Oxfordshire has been set up as a single front door for carers- they are able to offer advice and support and should be the first port of call for carers.
 - Oxfordshire Support Finder is useful (but it is not mobile-friendly).
 - Carers' Voice is an independent organisation for carers to feedback through.
 - Employers for Carers is very active in Oxfordshire- they encourage employers to be carer friendly.
 - GPs have targets to identify carers. OCC has provided training for GPs on the Care Act but this is not mandatory. The County Council are currently trying to recruit GP champions in each practice to be able to cascade information through them about support for carers.
 - Pharmacists can deliver a Health and Wellbeing review for carers.
 - The Recovery College has courses for carers for people with mental health issues.

- There are **online training courses** for carers through Carers Oxfordshire.
- Advocacy services- referrals as a result of the Care Act are starting to trickle through to **Oxfordshire Advocacy** but demand will outstrip what they are funded to deliver.
- Carers can link with other carers at their GP through their patient participation group.
- There is a wellbeing service run by Oxfordshire Mind- not just based in GPs surgeries, which carers can access.
- **Comments about support needed for carers:**
 - **Personalised support** for carers and **better information and advice** for them is needed including information that is easy to understand for people with learning disabilities.
 - Carers need a **risk assessment** to ascertain whether a carer is actually able to take on the role.
 - Adult carers for children and young people on the **autism spectrum** may often be undiagnosed themselves and need support.
 - **Assessment:**
 - **Better personalised care assessments** - it is the responsibility of the social worker involved to offer this but it is not consistently offered and this needs to get better.
 - **Training** for staff doing community assessments.
 - Assessment form **not fit** for those with autism/sensory disabilities/neurological problems.
 - Voluntary organisations should be aware of their **members' carers** and supporting them (not just their members).
 - Carers face many **different kinds of challenges** depending upon the people they care for and their specific needs should be taken into account:
 - People with disabilities such as Autism or neurological conditions- it is often very hard to understand the person cared for and therefore also the carers' needs.
 - People with physical disabilities- their carers often suffer physical disabilities of their own over time because of the care they've offered- Carers Oxfordshire can offer support- preventative work needs to be done to stop carers being injured.
 - Carers to people with mental health issues are under huge emotional stress themselves.
 - GPs should **proactively offer counselling and access to psychological therapies** when carers need this.
 - There should be **one case worker (a single point of contact)** for carers to get information from.
 - There is a need to offer **more respite care** to carers and to offer respite care appropriate to people with dementia to enable them to stay in their own surroundings.
 - Carers should be offered training to enable them in their role as carer.
 - Carers should be involved in the continued health care of the person they care for and their **expertise about the person taken into account.**

- Hospital discharge staff should be trained in the care act- discharge should meet carers' needs as well.
- Carers should be offered support even after caring stops and long distance carers also need support.

Health and social care commissioning priorities session in Oxfordshire

John Jackson , Director for Adult Social Services, Oxfordshire County Council, and David Smith, Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group , provided information about their joint vision, the financial challenges they face and their commissioning priorities.

They illustrated the difficult situation they face with some stark figures- Oxfordshire County Council need to make £88 million planned savings per annum by 2017/18 and will need an extra £60 million per annum by 2021/22. Efficiency savings of £22 billion in the NHS equates to an additional £272 million in Oxfordshire by 2020.

They explained that with pooled health and social care budgets, they are working to develop joined up services with an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and supporting people to live in their own homes.

For full details, please see the presentations that accompany this report. They then opened the session to questions, and responses.

Commissioning for smaller voluntary sector organisations:

- There was an acknowledgement from the commissioners that **commissioning for smaller organisations needs to be different** to enable them to bid for contracts. There were suggestions to specify in the contracting process that local organisations are encouraged to apply.
- Commissioners recognise that the **strengths of smaller voluntary sector organisations** in delivering contracts include their ability to be flexible and to build on their close contacts with service users - small organisations offer a range of services to people that reflect the services they want.
- Commissioners stated their preference for smaller organisations **working in partnership** with other voluntary and statutory sector partners to deliver contracts to avoid the need to monitor small, individual contracts.
- **Social value commissioning-** in the light of the Social Value Act commissioners were requested to take into account that smaller organisations' strengths lie in delivery but not necessarily in monitoring contracts.
- Organisations interested were advised to speak to the following commissioners:
 - **Shaun Bennett-** Commercial Services/Market Development Manager at Oxfordshire County Council.

- **Ian Bottomley**- Programme Manager for Mental Health and Jointly Commissioned Services, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
 - Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action and the Oxfordshire community foundation are undertaking a joint mapping project called 'State of the Sector' mapping the County by needs, groups that provide services and funding received and they hope this will be of interest to the commissioners.
- **Consultations:**
 - Questions were raised about the quality of consultations undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group- whether feedback gathered fed into the final outcome, whether the range of people consulted was broad enough, why Partnership boards were no longer support by the Council.
- **Strengths of voluntary sector organisations:**
 - It was noted that voluntary sector organisations are able to provide evidence of impact, which is of interest to commissioners. Healthwatch Oxfordshire can provide advice and support on this and can help small organisations frame messages in the language of the commissioners.

Closing session

- Attendees voted to have Healthwatch Oxfordshire's voluntary sector conference twice a year.
- It was noted that the voluntary sector can raise issues to the Children's Trust Board through Adrian Sell, Healthwatch Oxfordshire's Ambassador.
- Attendees suggested the following topics as half day sessions:
 - Eating disorders in young people.
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
 - Diabetes.
 - Preventative services for frail and elderly people.
 - South Asian communities/ geo-specific communities.
 - Personal budgets.
 - Cultural barriers to the delivery of health services- age-related for example- to the very young and the very old.
 - Health inequalities.

Actions

Healthwatch Oxfordshire:

- To hold a workshop for organisations on how to apply for the Project Fund.
- To promote the Project Fund more widely to increase awareness of the Fund.
- To make it clear on the Project Fund web page what skills and support are offer from Healthwatch Oxfordshire to organisations making an application to the Project Fund.
- To provide information for carers from Carers Oxfordshire as part of their outreach with the general public.
- To get information about Recovery College courses to circulate to conference participants.
- To ask Rosie Rowe if GPs could be offered training on the Care Act through the GP federations.
- To contact the voluntary sector about the Health Inequalities Commission to ensure their involvement in the Commission.
- To keep the pressure on to make public consultations on local changes meaningful and to push for better quality of consultations.
- To improve the website with the aim of getting better at signposting people to different services on offer.
- To circulate the contact details of the Locality Forum Chairs to conference participants.
- To ensure the online submission form is working.
- To invite Bede Gerrard, from the Oxford Council of Faiths, to attend a Healthwatch team meeting to give us more information about working with faith groups.

Action for Carers Oxfordshire:

- To further promote awareness of carers' rights to request flexible working.
- To promote their services further in waiting rooms and care settings.

Actions for Oxfordshire County Council:

- To hold a workshop with voluntary sector organisations and carers to arrive at a local definition of prevention and carer in the context of the Care Act.
- To hold a workshop to gather feedback on the online carers assessment tool.
- To send information on the Pharmacy Health and Wellbeing Review service for carers to Healthwatch Oxfordshire to promote.