

Your feedback about Cora Health (Formerly Connect Health)

January 2025–January 2026



Connect Health

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to everyone who shared their experiences with us.

Summary

Introduction

Cora Health (formerly Connect Health) provides a variety of services for the treatment of musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions and symptoms. These include clinics for physiotherapy, pelvic health and pelvic pain and podiatry. Cora Health is contracted by Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board to provide these services in Oxfordshire, which are delivered in 13 locations across the county. People can [refer themselves to Cora Health](#) or be referred by their GP.

This report summarises what we have heard about Cora Health from January 2025 to January 2026 via our [feedback centre](#), information and advice service, and through face to face outreach around the county including to community groups, patient participation groups and on the street. We have produced this in response to ongoing feedback from members of the public about Cora Health.

We also undertook Enter and View visits to three Connect Health services over summer 2025. Our [Enter and View report on these combined visits to Connect Health \(now Cora Health\) locations at Hanborough House, Bicester Community Hospital and Townlands Community Hospital, Henley-on-Thames](#). These include responses and actions agreed by the service provider following our recommendations based on what we observed. Enter and View provides insight into patient experience of these services 'on the day'. We were pleased to see positive improvements to Cora Health services made as a result of our visit, including better information for patients and clearer identification of staff.

Key themes

We heard about Cora Health from over 90 people from January 2025–January 2026.

We heard some positive feedback about timely and effective care. However, unfortunately most of those we heard from told us about challenges experienced in getting support from Cora Health, including:

- Challenges with communication – particularly experiences of contacting Cora Health on the phone, such as the phone not being answered
- Unclear information resulting in a lack of clarity about how to contact Cora Health or make an appointment
- Difficulty making appointments, particularly at a location that is easy to get to or local to the patient – with some people having to travel cross county
- Long waits for appointments and cancellations, often at the last minute, in turn adding to waiting times
- Problems with referrals and pathways to further care, with people feeling they have to ‘jump through hoops’ to get referred on for scans or to other services
- Complaints about the quality of care received, including a lack of accessibility for a visually impaired person.

We also heard about the negative impact these challenges have had on people’s mental and physical wellbeing due to delays in getting the care they need. Two people mentioned the lengthy survey they had to complete which was asking invasive and irrelevant questions.

“The physical examination was good. The physio himself was excellent. Exercises were sent by email. I cannot print them out. The exercises were not gone through with me or even shown or discussed with me. I have no further appointments as I have an MRI booked through [department]. If something is found, I am to ring them back and book a further appointment. I had a wait of 7 months for my appointment and only got that because my GP chased them. Also, from previous experience of physio, follow up appointments should be able to be booked at your appointment. You should not have to go home and wait 2 days, then ring up, get stuck in a queue to book an appointment.” Signposting, February 2026

Recommendations

We would like to make the following recommendations based on what we have heard and people's suggestions. Recommendations are for response and comment for Cora Health and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) – as to how they will address them.

COMMUNICATION

- Improve responsiveness by phone
- Ensure referral acknowledgements are sent and include clear information about how to make an appointment
- Ensure that communication is in a format that patients can use and respond to, in line with the accessible communication standard
- Clarify pathways and ensure this is clearly communicated with patients and colleagues in primary care

CARE CLOSER TO HOME

- Improve access to local appointments – the right care, at the right time, in the right place

CANCELLATIONS

- Address cancellations and improve communication around cancellations so that people hear well in advance of the appointment

GDPR

- Review the questionnaire people are asked to complete on referral to ensure compliance with Article 5 (1)(c) of the GDPR which says that personal data shall be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation'). **ICO 2026**

What we heard

We heard about Cora Health from a mix of sources through the year including via, online feedback centre, health service focused surveys, face to face outreach and use of paper feedback forms, and our Enter and View visits. We also picked up on collective feedback about Cora Health services via feedback from Patient Participation Groups and some health professionals – reflecting themes we were hearing from individual comments.

In all we heard from over 90 people:

- 25 people who left reviews of Cora Health via our online Feedback Centre
- 17 people who contacted us by phone or email for signposting information and advice
- 32 people who responded to other surveys, including Using the NHS App and Living in Rural Areas
- 14 patients and family members who we spoke to during our Enter and View visits to Cora Health clinics
- Those we have heard from through outreach and our work supporting Patient Participation Groups

Oxfordshire residents are able to leave reviews of health and care services in our online **Feedback Centre** and via paper 'Have your say' forms. As part of their review, we ask people to give a star rating for the service, where 1 star is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent'.

From 1st January 2025 to 31st January 2026, we received 25 reviews of Cora Health, across 5 of its 13 locations. Of these 25 reviews, 15 (60%) were 'terrible' and four (16%) were 'poor', two (8%) were 'neither good nor bad' and three (16%) were 'excellent'.



Figure 1: Bar graph showing overall star ratings of Cora Health locations, January 2025–January 2026, where 1='terrible' and 5='excellent' (25 responses)

Praise for timely and effective care

We heard from some who were positive about the care they had received from Cora Health. People valued helpful staff and being seen quickly, as well as treatment that made a difference to their pain and associated wellbeing.

“Excellent service – helped me out, went above and beyond.” (Hanborough House review, September 2025)

“Had no response from NHS in a year but was seen by Connect Health and diagnosed quickly.” (Hanborough House review, July 2025)

“I'd had shoulder pain for 6 or 7 months, but a [steroid] injection from Cora Health put me back on the straight, I'm glad it worked because they don't work for everyone.” (Outreach with men in Faringdon, November 2025)

“Very understanding and helpful” (Deer Park review, January 2026)

Challenges

Unfortunately, however, Healthwatch Oxfordshire has been picking up on less positive experiences from others. We heard common themes indicating challenges that people had experienced with the service, including issues with communication, cancellations, long waits for appointments, difficulty getting appointments in locations that were easy for them to get to and often involving long travel, concerns about the quality of care received, and challenges around referral pathways for scans and to see specialists. Some people had experienced a combination of these.



“I need a new knee and am in agony, awake all night in pain. I've had my third appointment with Connect Health and they are hopeless. You see someone, and then there is no check-up, no follow up, so you have to go back to your GP and get referred again. The GPs just hear MSK and hand you off, I can't get a referral to anywhere else, and PALS say they can't look into it as they can't investigate themselves. There is no communication, not even an acknowledgement of the referral. I live in Didcot and had to go all the way to Henley for my appointment.”

(Signposting, June 2025)

Challenges with communication

People told us about challenges communicating with Cora Health about their care. We have heard on multiple occasions about people not being able to get through to Cora Health on the phone – with long waits, being cut off or no response. Healthwatch Oxfordshire also receives multiple calls from people having difficulty finding Cora Health’s contact telephone number – indicating that communication and information for patients is unclear.

“I have been trying for the last 2 days to get through to Cora Health no one seems to answer my call.” (Signposting, October 2025)

“I have been trying to contact the MSK team, I’m put on hold for 15 minutes and then the call is terminated.” (Signposting call, September 2025)

“How hard they are to contact. Impossible to book an appointment. No acknowledgement of your referrals.” (Signposting email, July 2025)

“I keep calling and then it rings and I eventually get cut off as no one bothers answering”. (Signposting call, January 2026)

We heard that some people did not receive confirmation or acknowledgement of referrals or appointments, leaving them confused about whether the booking was going ahead or not.

“I was referred by my GP, I left multiple phone calls to be called back but never did, the only time I had a return call when I put in a complaint because the service was so bad. Lo and behold I got a phone call with a date booked and they advised they would confirm the appointment in writing and I’ve heard nothing.” (Connect Health at Marcham Road, September 2025)

“Communication isn't the best. I had a message to say my last appointment was a phone appointment but then my mum had a call to say it was at Chipping Norton so we went there, and then the physio rang me - it was a phone appointment and we'd driven all the way there (from Summertown) for no reason.” (Enter and View visit, Bicester Community Hospital, April 2025)

Some people said they were given confusing or contradictory information about how to make appointments, in some cases leading to them being discharged from the service without their knowledge.

“Received notification we would be notified for a telephone appointment. I phoned [several months ago] to ask how long my husband would have to wait for appointment. I was told he is on the list but would not say how long it would be. [...] Now received letter saying as we have

not requested an appointment my husband has been discharged. Why were we told we would be contacted for an appointment?" (Connect Health at Hanborough House, November 2025)

"My husband received a text for him to contact MSK regarding the results of his recent MRI scan. He rang & spoke to the receptionist who said the first available appointment was not until [a month later]. The suggestion of a phone consultation was offered as a possible option. The receptionist said she would check with the clinician that this would be ok & would get back to us with an alternative date. As yet [nearly a month later] we have not received a phone call, however today my husband received a letter from MSK to say that 'we have attempted to contact him to book an appointment but have been unsuccessful'. This is incorrect. I have tried twice since today to contact you, held on for approximately 15 minutes & then have been cut off." (Signposting email, September 2025)

"Not clear communication on how to book an appointment , different staff gave different messages on how to book an appointment." (Enter and View visit, Hanborough House, April 2025)

A local GP pointed out a lack of clarity in initial correspondence for patients from Cora Health about how to make an appointment.

"In my experience patients are sent a long letter or email which states at the bottom that they have to ring up to book an appointment. Many patients fail to realise they have to ring up and continue to wait patiently for an appointment. Many months later they make a GP appointment as they have not heard and we then then tell them that the service have discharged them as they did not make that phone call. Those who do realise they need to ring up are often told there are no appointments available and that they will have to keep ringing back until one is available. I understand from Cora that they do not allow appointments to be booked more than 6 weeks ahead which contributes to this problem. Cora will not keep a waiting list of those who have rung in (which most other specialities would do) which is highly frustrating for patients. In my experience many patients just give up." (feedback from a local GP)

"I have seen a physio at Chipping Norton for a long and helpful discussion, who said I would be given an appointment to see another physio. I was offered one but was on holiday at the time and was promised another. Problem is that I don't know what telephone number to use, and would like to be able to get hold of it." (Using the NHS App survey, summer 2025)

People also told us that they had not received communication after appointments such as follow-up information or test results.

"Visited Cora Health this afternoon with daughter, they said they would sent through exercises by email but they hadn't come through, so was trying to contact them to find out how to get them." (signposting call, August 2025)

"I was seen at Deer Park and sent for an MRI scan at the Nuffield, but I haven't heard anything since (over a month)." (signposting call, September 2025)

Other concerns we heard about included confusion over the change of name from Connect Health to Cora Health, and the lack of communication about this, and feedback that people who were not digitally confident had been sent booking links that they were unable to access. We also heard about confusing text messaging indicating an appointment at weekends or late at night.

Difficulty making appointments

We heard that people had struggled to make appointments, being told there were no appointments and that they should try again in a few weeks' time. People also found it hard to book appointments to where they live and one person mentioned not being informed about the different locations available, despite it being the easiest for them to get to.

"Bureaucratic nightmare. If you can't drive, good luck getting an appointment – the fact that this particular venue wasn't even mentioned to me at first. I've been told I have a group therapy session only to find out no it's individual and over video. I had numerous telephone assessments all asking the same thing. The final nail in the coffin was being told to see how things go after my last treatment and if I still have problems after six weeks to call and make an appointment only to find out they are so busy the next appointment six weeks from now (i.e. 12 weeks) and I should have been told to make a follow-up the day of treatment. It is now October and if I get seen before January it will be a miracle. No waiting lists, no booking online, just keep calling in the morning and hoping for the best. How is this value for money for the NHS or good for patients?" (Hanborough House review, October 2025)

One person told us about inflexibility in appointment times meaning they could not get the scan they needed.

"I went to Connect Health in Wallingford and they said they couldn't give me an ultrasound because that takes 20 minutes and appointments are only 15 minutes long, so they just gave me exercises. For one of the referrals they forgot to send a piece of paper so by the time I had the appointment it was out of date and I had to go back to the doctor. Then numerous appointments were cancelled. It's been confusing – I was given a phone appointment in August but then was given another one and told 'you can't have more than one appointment on the system'. I had an appointment yesterday which I'd been led to believe would involve an injection but in fact it was just an assessment and the next appointment isn't until after Christmas. The sciatica gives me a burning sensation but I'm lucky I'm not in pain!" (Outreach, September 2025)

People also gave negative feedback about the assessment questionnaire they had to complete as part of the appointment booking process.

The website is good – was easy to book this way. But you then get sent this survey you have to fill in and there are pages and pages of it, asking quite personal details like do I have a mortgage? It was quite invasive. But you have to fill it in to progress to an appointment. (Enter and View visit, Bicester Community Hospital, April 2025)

Long waits and cancellations

We heard that most people had to wait weeks or months for an appointment – particularly for an appointment at a location that was easy for them to get to.

“3 months waiting for physio on an ankle, that place was miles away, or wait 4 months for a more local appointment.” (Living in rural areas survey, January 2026)

“I have been on a waiting list for physiotherapy for months – don't even have a projected date.” (Living in rural areas survey, January 2026)

People told us that, after making and waiting for an appointment, it was cancelled – often at the last minute. Some people had experienced multiple cancellations. These cancellations meant people were waiting longer for treatment, and in some cases meant they had to rebook appointments in locations that were more difficult for them to get to. Rebooking was also made difficult by the communication problems already noted above.

“Booked by phone for an injection. Drove from Oxford on the day to be told that procedure was not performed there. Had to rebook in Henley for a month's time.” (Connect Health at Deer Park Medical Practice, feedback centre, August 2025)

“I have been waiting for an appointment for my [joint] since March of this year, every time it gets close to my appointment I get a message to say that appointment has been cancelled. It's extremely hard to get through via the phone system.” (Marcham Road, September 2025)

“I called them to book an appointment, this appointment was cancelled within a few hours by text and I was unable to get through to the call centre. I then received contact re a questionnaire which I promptly completed to define my issue. I've received no contact from them. When I finally get through to them the next phone appointment is some 8 weeks after first contacting them.” (Connect Health at Hanborough House, feedback centre, August 2025)

“I live in Witney. My appointment was at Banbury Connect Health. My phone rang whilst I was in the car all ready for my journey to Banbury. I'd checked out car parking, spent the morning doing that [...] and I got a message literally JUST before my departure telling me my appointment was cancelled! No reason given. I had waited 6 weeks for this appointment. [...] Eventually, I managed to contact Connect Health (very difficult indeed). Was told there are no foreseeable appointments in the future at present except in Henley! I am [an older person]

and wouldn't drive from Witney to there." (Connect Health at Banbury Cross Health Centre, feedback centre, February 2025)

People told us about the impact of multiple cancellations on their trust in the service and on their wellbeing. In some cases, people gave up or felt forced to seek private treatment.

"I have been waiting for an appointment re arthritis in my [joint name]. At the start of the year the pain ramped up significantly, and I am now unable to do most of the things that I should be able to do due to this issue. When it gets close to my appointment time I receive a message from Cora Health to say that my appointment has been cancelled, this has happened 3 times now, when I phone up it takes ages to get through to someone and then all they offer me is another appointment 2 months down the line, then that gets cancelled as well. It is as if they know that I am likely to need a [joint] replacement so keep fobbing me off with the hope that I will get so frustrated that I will end up going private (if I could afford it I would)." (Signposting email, September 2025)

"Self-referred then received welcome statement! Then nothing for a month then phoned them and they said I should have received a text the day before (which I didn't). Offered me a telephone consultation for a month later. This was cancelled by text on the morning of [the appointment] and I phoned to rearrange another telephone consultation for [a week later] and guess what? Just received a text cancelling the telephone appointment today. I'm not going to bother contacting them again as I have no faith in their service." (Connect Health at East Oxford Health Centre, July 2025)

"The first injection gave a little relief for six weeks. The other two none at all. Spoke to [X] after the third one and he said I needed an injection with an ultrasound. Made me an appointment for three months later. Day before the appointment I received a text saying the appointment was cancelled and phone to rebook. I did and after being offered the appointment I had just had cancelled was told there was nothing available and to ring in 2/3 weeks to see if any were available and to contact my GP in the meantime to get some painkillers. I am not able to wait any longer and risk being in pain so reluctantly I have had to go private." (Hanborough House review, November 2025)

Problems with referrals and pathways

We heard from several people who had seen Cora Health for an initial assessment in order to be referred on for scans and specialist treatment but had struggled to get the right referral. In some cases, people felt like they were having to 'jump through hoops' of multiple assessments to get the care they needed, while some had to go back to their GP. Others were confused by the lack of clarity about the process of attending different appointments. This may also reflect a lack of clarity and effective communication – with patients and with colleagues in primary and secondary care – about pathways and what patients can expect in terms of assessment and treatment.

"Initially told if [joint] worse would look at possible surgery. Now no X-rays for 18 months, scans refused as Cora told GP [condition]. This has never been mentioned to me or discussed. I do not have this [condition], I have a deteriorating [joint]. I need scan to get a referral with specialist for possible surgery. GP cannot refer without Cora go-ahead for scans."
(Hanborough House review, December 2025)

"Was referred to Cora Health for physio for my painful hip. Saw a different physio nearly every time. A lot were students. Exercises did not help. Had to beg for an X-ray which was finally granted after a year and a half. The student said I had to buy resistant bands off the internet before an X-ray would be authorised. GP would not authorise one as student physio did not think it necessary. Finally got X-ray [and] imaging clearly indicated I needed a hip replacement." (Marcham Road review, September 2025)

"I need a new knee and am in agony, awake all night in pain. I've had my third appointment with Connect Health and they are hopeless. You see someone, and then there is no check-up, no follow up, so you have to go back to your GP and get referred again. The GPs just hear MSK and hand you off, I can't get a referral to anywhere else, and PALS say they can't look into it as they can't investigate themselves. There is no communication, not even an acknowledgement of the referral." (Signposting call, June 2025)

"I saw a physio who said she would refer me to the NOC. However when I called for confirmation, I am now being triaged seeing an advance practitioner in a month's time. Who will say I need another X-ray. Contacted my GP who has arranged an X-ray for tomorrow."
(Hanborough House review, feedback centre, June 2025)

"Being referred to Connect Health feels like a delaying tactic. When you know you need a hip replacement or a lump removed, to have to wait for the referral, jump the hoops of exercise/steroids before being told that you need an operation just causes more pain and distress than is necessary." (Signposting, June 2025)

"The appointment could have included the injection. To wait another month and ANOTHER 'assessment' is ridiculous with the amount of pain I'm in." (Marcham Road review, September 2025)

"Physiotherapy is probably my most difficult thing. I have a knee problem which is causing me a lot of pain and discomfort. I have been seen by the physiotherapist but am finding it almost impossible to get a referral to a Consultant." (Living in rural areas survey, January 2026)

"We're not really sure what our appointment is for today, we thought the next stage was to speak to a surgeon or a consultant about whether [family member] should have a knee replacement or not, but the man I spoke to on the phone was not very helpful and the process isn't clear - he basically said we would have to jump through hoops and this was the next

hoop. It would certainly have been easier to keep seeing [staff member] in Banbury. The whole thing is quite tricky to navigate.” (Enter and View visit, Bicester Community Hospital, April 2025)

One person told us that inflexible referral pathways meant they were sent back to Cora Health even where treatment had not relieved their symptoms and they felt they needed a referral to a different service.

“I had a long wait for a physio appointment for a [joint] injury. No scan was offered. I followed the exercise plan but never recovered. Asked GP for referral to a surgeon; was bounced back to these people who said I had an exercise plan to pick up again.” (Marcham Road review, April 2025)

We also heard from someone who had been referred to Cora Health following discharge from hospital, for whom long waits had affected their recovery. Again, this indicates a need for clearer communication and more joined-up working between Cora Health and primary and secondary care providers.

“Months after leaving hospital, still waiting for a telephone assessment let alone treatment. Effectively no NHS physio after discharge.” (Connect Health at Marcham Road, feedback centre, September 2025)

Negative feedback about the quality of care

Although most comments related to accessing the right care at the right time and in the right place, we also heard some negative feedback about the quality of care people had received, for example treatment that was not tailored to their needs or a lack of empathy and professional curiosity from staff.

“Referred for post operative care following surgery. I was told by the consultant no movement of my [joint] and this was very important to follow. Was sent a questionnaire asking me to do multiple range of movement exercises which could have resulted in dislocation of my [joint] if completed. Referral clearly wasn’t even looked at before the questionnaire was sent.” (Marcham Road review, December 2025)

“Very rude staff member, said that she asked the questions, not me, and told me to be quiet.” (Hanborough House review, December 2025)

“No ‘hands on’ work done at all now. All ‘assessments’ then downloaded online exercises.” (Living in rural areas survey, January 2026)

“Having a telephone call in not adequate physiotherapy.” (Living in rural areas survey, January 2026)

“Tried physio told to follow exercises on app knee is no better.” (Living in rural areas survey, January 2026)

We also heard that someone with additional communication needs had been provided the information they needed in a format that they could not access.

“I had one appointment and then told to do the rest of the exercises via a screen online, but as I am visually impaired this is very hard to do, or to make sure I'm doing them right.” (Feedback obtained during a Healthwatch Oxfordshire outreach visit to the NOC, March 2025)

Impact on patients

People told us the impact that waiting for and struggling to access effective musculoskeletal care was having on them. Challenges included pain, difficulty sleeping and problems managing diabetes due to not being able to exercise. A GP we heard from spoke about the impact on people's employment, cardiovascular health and mental health, and on health inequalities. They also highlighted the impact of these challenges on other parts of the health and care system such as primary care.

“As a result of these issues many patients have unmet MSK needs. This may keep them from employment and impact on for example their cardiovascular or mental health if they are unable to exercise because of their MSK problem. This also contributes to pressure on local GP practices as patients will make multiple appointments to see GPs to for example discuss pain relief and what has happened to their referral. In my experience many patients need to be referred multiple times before they actually get seen. This puts pressure on the GP practice by increasing paperwork as well as making it more difficult for patients to get GP appointments.

It is worth highlighting that the problems created by the difficulties in making an appointment will fall disproportionately on those from deprived communities and those patients who are most vulnerable. Wealthier patients are often able to opt out and pay for private physiotherapy but this option is not open to many people. Vulnerable patients who are digitally excluded or perhaps have speech difficulties and are isolated from friends and family also have particular difficulty in making appointments.” (Feedback from local GP)

Useful information

Cora Health Oxfordshire

- Telephone number: **01865 634336**
- Website: www.corahealth.co.uk/locations/south-east/oxfordshire/referrals
- Feedback and complaints:
www.corahealth.co.uk/contact/feedback-complaints

Support with physical activity in Oxfordshire

- **Move Together** – support for adults who face barriers to getting active, such as long-term physical or mental health conditions, disabilities, or those who are pregnant or post-natal
www.getoxfordshireactive.org/move-together
- **YouMove** – support for families to access low cost and free activities
www.getoxfordshireactive.org/you-move
- **Age UK Oxfordshire exercise classes** – including strength and balance, seated exercise and stay strong and steady classes.
www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services
Email: active@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
Telephone: [01235 849 403](tel:01235849403)
- See also **LiveWell Oxfordshire** for more local activities and exercise classes
livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk



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