

Your voice on health and care services

# What you told us about hospitals

August 2023 - July 2024



September 2024

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# Summary

This brief report gives a summary of feedback to Healthwatch Oxfordshire from members of the public about Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) services – John Radcliffe, Horton General, Churchill and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre– in Oxfordshire. Between August 2023 and July 2024, we heard from **114 people** by phone, email and via our online and paper 'Have your say' forms.

#### We heard that:

- People valued and appreciated the high quality of care they received from OUH services. They told us about professional, kind and caring staff, and experiences of being seen quickly or on time. We heard about the importance of good communication, including being kept up to date about care and staff explaining things in an accessible way.
- People's experiences varied between hospitals, departments and individuals. All eight people who reviewed the Churchill Hospital gave it five-stars, but experiences of the other hospitals were mixed.
- ➤ The most common problem mentioned was **waiting for care** including waiting for a referral, for care once at the hospital, for test or scan results, or for an appointment that had been cancelled. We also heard about problems with **quality of care** and **communication**.

This report and patient feedback will be shared with Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, commissioners - Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and published on Healthwatch Oxfordshire website: <a href="https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports">https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/reports</a>. Thanks to all who took time to share their views.

# Background

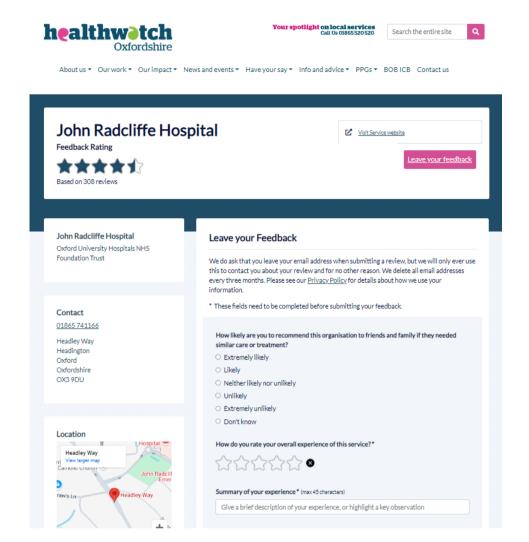
Many of the specialist and urgent medical care services for people living in Oxfordshire are provided by four hospitals – the John Radcliffe, Churchill and Nuffield Orthopaedic in Oxford, and the Horton General in Banbury. Together, these four hospitals are run by the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH). OUH also operates some smaller, specialist units, such as the Early

Pregnancy Assessment Unit at Rose Hill, and runs some outpatient services at clinics in the community, including at community hospitals across the county.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire regularly hears from members of the public about their experiences of using OUH services. People give feedback on specific health and care services through our 'Feedback Centre' on our website (Find & review a service Healthwatch Oxfordshire) and printed 'Have your say' paper forms. These give people the opportunity to answer simple questions about service quality and their experience of care. It also enables the service provider to give direct response to people's comments. With permission, all anonymised reviews are made visible to the public on our website. The health provider can also see reviews about their care and directly respond to the comments via our website.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire works with OUH to have regular outreach stands at the four hospitals, to make sure we hear from a wide range of people, including those who may not have heard of Healthwatch before.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire also hears about people's experiences of health and care services, including OUH, through our outreach at community events and groups across the county, and research projects focusing on specific services, themes or communities. As well as this, people contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire directly, by phone or email, to share feedback or seek advice.



This report briefly summarises everything people have told us about OUH in the past twelve months (1st August 2023 - 31st July 2024) through direct contact, outreach, online feedback and paper feedback forms.

This report *does not* include feedback about OUH gathered during this time in other ways – through our Enter and View visits or our more in-depth research. This insight can be found in additional reports, all of which can be seen on our website at Reports – Healthwatch Oxfordshire. These include:

- Enter and View visit reports: for example, visits to the Surgical Emergency Unit at the John Radcliffe, Day Case Unit at the Horton
- Research Reports: Maternal mental health in Oxfordshire (December 2023), How people experienced joined up care in Oxfordshire (October 2023), Supporting oral health in children (July 2024), People's experiences of Eye Care in Oxfordshire (September 2024).

## Who did we hear from?

Between August 2023 and July 2024, we heard from a total of **399 people** about OUH:

- 58 people who left a review of a service at OUH through our online feedback centre or via a paper feedback form
- > 56 people who contacted us directly by email or telephone
- > 285 people who we spoke to during outreach at hospital stands at different OUH sites.

We also heard feedback about OUH through our outreach and engagement at events across Oxfordshire, and with groups representing diverse communities and those more likely to experience health inequalities, including Action for Deafness, African Families in the UK, Early Lives Equal Start and My Life My Choice.

We ask people giving feedback or contacting us directly to tell us about their gender, age, ethnicity and where they live to understand who we are hearing from. Of those who told us this information:

- > 77% (79) were women and 23% (23) were men
- > 34% (33) were aged 65-79 and 32% (31) were aged 50-64
- > 78% (73) were White British; we also heard from people of other White backgrounds and several people with Asian British ethnicities including Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.
- > People were fairly evenly spread across the five districts, and we heard from four people who live out of county.

Over half of reviews or comments (54%, 62) were about the John Radcliffe Hospital. We heard about a wide range of departments and services, particularly experiences of the emergency department (including Accident and Emergency A&E and the Ambulatory Assessment Unit ACU), orthopaedics and cancer care.

Hospital	Number of reviews or comments
John Radcliffe	62
Nuffield Orthopaedic	17
Churchill	13
Horton	3
Outpatient clinic in community	2
OUH - site not specified	17

	Number of reviews
Hospital department	or comments
Emergency department (including A&E)	10
Orthopaedics and fracture clinic	9
General outpatients and hospital-based consultants	8
Oncology and cancer care	8
Gastrointestinal services	6
Gynaecology	6
Maternity	6
Eye hospital	5
Trauma	5
Ear, nose and throat, audiology and maxillofacial services	4
Neurology, neurosurgery and stroke care	4
Other (departments with 2 or fewer reviews each)	22
Unknown / not stated	10

#### Feedback - note on data

Not all the reviews we receive are published for public view, as they may contain information which is difficult to anonymise. Where someone has had a particularly poor experience, we will make every effort to enable the provider to give direct feedback to that person with their permission, and to help respond and resolve the issue together.

The nature of feedback can mean that people will give feedback when they want to comment on a particular poor experience, or a very positive experience, so overall this may present a less representative view. However, analysis of patient comments brings out common themes, giving insight into experiences of OUH services, and highlighting areas for potential improvement and change.

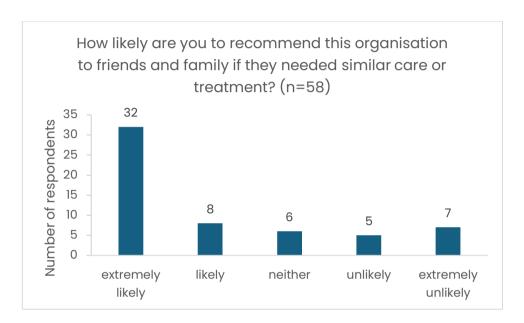
## What did we hear?

## Ratings

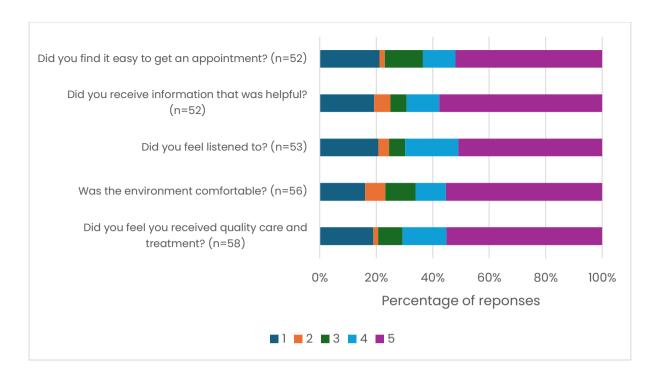
People providing feedback on a hospital via our online Feedback Centre or paper feedback forms rate their experience out of 5 stars, where 1 star is 'terrible' and 5 stars is 'excellent'. For all 58 reviews across OUH services, the average rating was 3.8 stars. For the hospital sites that received multiple reviews, average ratings were:

- Churchill 5 stars (8 reviews)
- John Radcliffe 3.9 stars (37 reviews)
- Nuffield Orthopaedic 1.8 stars (9 reviews)

When asked how likely they were to recommend the hospital to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment, 32 people (55%) said 'extremely likely'. All 8 people who reviewed the Churchill Hospital said they were 'extremely likely' to recommend the hospital; responses for the other hospitals were mixed.



People reviewing services also answered questions about how easy it was to get an appointment, whether they received information that was helpful, whether they felt listened to, whether the environment was comfortable and if they felt they received quality care and treatment. The majority of responses were positive – 4 or 5 stars. The highest-scoring area was helpful information, whilst getting an appointment and feeling listened to, had the lowest scores. Again, there were differences between hospitals – the Churchill Hospital was awarded all 5's and one 4, whereas both the John Radcliffe and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre were given scores ranging from 1 to 5.



## Themes: What was positive?

Over twenty people mentioned the high quality of care they had received.

"The care my husband received was incredible - he was having chemotherapy within five weeks. Every aspect of his care was fantastic." (Feedback collected at Churchill Hospital, September 2023)

"What great care - examined, blood tests, ECG, X ray and then CT scan of chest following blood results. All interpreted, diagnosed and treated (on ward pharmacy) within about 5 hours. Unbelievably thorough care, I was very impressed and grateful." (John Radcliffe, Emergency Department, signposting, February 2024)

We heard from 15 people who valued their interactions with **professional, caring** and friendly staff.

"I felt like I had entered a well oiled machine - but a kind one." (John Radcliffe, Gastrointestinal services, feedback review, January 2024)

"Staff were lovely, food was very nice." (John Radcliffe, Neurology, signposting, February 2024)

People told us they appreciated **being seen on time** (if they had an existing appointment) or **being seen quickly** (if, for example, they were referred or came via the Emergency Department).

"Seen promptly and treated with great courtesy." (Churchill, Urology, feedback review, October 2023)

We heard that people valued good communication - particularly being kept informed about what was happening with their care, and having things explained to them in an accessible way.

"I was kept informed about what was happening throughout." (John Radcliffe Ambulatory Assessment Unit, signposting, January 2024)

"The hospital appointments are very fast and the CT scan staff are very pleasant and caring but I would like you to pay special attention to [doctors] for their continuous care and for keeping me constantly informed on various results and future treatment." (Churchill, Pleural Unit, signposting, April 2024)

"The consultant gave a consultation in layman's terms. He was friendly and professional throughout." (John Radcliffe, Neurology, feedback review, October 2023)

"I found on my visit that I was put at ease, my illness and treatment was explained and the staff put me at ease and made sure that I understood all the information I was given." (Churchill, Oncology, feedback review, November 2023)

In one example shared with us, good care and communication included making reasonable adjustments to support someone with a learning disability.

"My son broke his leg and this required an operation and several nights in hospital. As my son has a learning disability, they allocated us a side room so I could stay with him and help him understand all that was being said to him. Everyone was very kind and his care on the Trauma ward was excellent." (John Radcliffe, Trauma, feedback review, March 2024)

We heard that when care and communication worked well, this helped to build trust and a sense of safety for patients.

"Made me feel very safe and confident." (Churchill, feedback review, May 2024)

"I was really worried and exhausted by the time I got to the unit. I'd spoken to midwife [name] before I got there and she saw me when I arrived. Both her and Dr [name] comforted me and helped me to feel safe. I'd had a terrible experience in A&E the day before and they made sure I got the right treatment and put me (and my partner) at ease." (Community Early Pregnancy Unit, feedback review, February 2024)

## Themes: What could be improved?

The most common theme in areas for improvement was around **waiting for care**. Experiences of waiting included:

Waiting for appointments or communication after being referred

"Wife has advanced vascular dementia and is immobile. She has two broken teeth which need extracting. Our dentist has referred us to the hospital however they have said the waiting list is 6-8months. It is unacceptable that a dementia sufferer who cannot communicate their discomfort and pain is being made to wait like this." (John Radcliffe, Oral, Maxillofacial and Dentist, signposting, January 2024)

"My GP referred me for an urgent appointment and it took them 6 weeks to acknowledge the request." (OUH, Oncology and cancer care, signposting, August 2023)

Waiting to be seen on the day, particularly in the Emergency Department.
 Several people said that waiting was a problem, but that when they got care they were very happy with the quality of care. As well as the time taken to get care, people also mentioned a lack of adequate space to wait comfortably

"My husband had his gallbladder out [...] but surgery did not happen that day, this then led to 8 hours sat in SEU triage makeshift waiting room (which smelt like sweat and urine) in an uncomfortable chair before eventually he and several other patients were put on trolleys with no pillows in the waiting room - this was where the doctors' round then had to happen the following morning. On the second day he was still waiting on a trolley and did not have a bed on the ward which means that despite being ready to operate, the surgeons had to move onto other patients." (John Radcliffe, Surgical Emergency Unit, feedback review, February 2024)

"Such a long wait and standing room only." (John Radcliffe, Eye Hospital, feedback review, February 2024)

"Took ages to get the care I needed but once I did it was all fantastic care." (John Radcliffe, Trauma, feedback review, May 2024)

"Our experience of A & E although the staff were helpful they were obviously overstretched and we were there for 10 hours before a doctor could give us results from a blood test and almost 24 hours waiting in A&E before a bed was available on the children's ward. Once on the children's ward, we were dealt with very well and saw a number of different health professionals." (John Radcliffe, Emergency Department / Children's Hospital, signposting, February 2024)

• Waiting for care as an inpatient, for example waiting for pain relief

"On the night of the [date] I was moved [wards] at 10.30pm approximately. I was asked if I wanted painkillers which I said yes, and after pressing the buzzer three more times, and never seeing the nurse that came to me again, I finally got two tablets around 2am." (John Radcliffe, Neurology, feedback review, October 2023)

• Waiting for the results of tests or scans, particularly MRI scan results

"I have been having issues with my back and arm and hand for a year now, after getting referred to musculoskeletal and then after several appointments I was referred for an MRI scan which took place on [date in] September and I still have not had results. I have made several calls to the musculoskeletal people who say I can't have an appointment until the results are through – my GP says they referred me to musculoskeletal so there is nothing they can do and my symptoms have got worse. This is a bad experience as nobody wants to see me and after waiting five months for my scan there is still no sign of it." (Nuffield Orthopaedic, Orthopaedics and fracture clinic, signposting, February 2024)

"Waiting 5-7 months for [MRI scan] results knowing they are busy it doesn't stop me worrying" (John Radcliffe, Neurology, signposting, March 2024)

We also heard from eight people who had experienced long waits for care due to **appointments being cancelled**, sometimes multiple times.

"Appointment due March 2023. GP contacted Sept to request urgent appointment. Three more appointments promised then cancelled since

then despite severe acute symptoms" (John Radcliffe, Gastrointestinal services, feedback review, December 2023)

"I had an appointment for my brother for ENT on a Monday. Had a letter to say his appointment on the Friday had been cancelled. Had to phone up and the Monday one was cancelled and moved to the Friday. He went to the same place during Covid and they said they had sent a letter as his appointment was cancelled we never received. Such a waste of time and money especially as he has learning and walking difficulties. Always have a problem with his appointments there." (John Radcliffe, Ear, Nose and Throat, signposting, February 2024)

"My surgery has been cancelled numerous times and I have now been waiting 4 years." (OUH, signposting, February 2024)

We heard from seven people about **problems with the quality of their care**, including errors and misdiagnoses.

"I went several times to A&E with a dislocated shoulder. They decided I was lying but didn't bother to X-ray it. They sent me home with no treatment."

(John Radcliffe, Emergency Department, signposting, January 2024)

"The actual surgery went well, but there was zero aftercare." (Churchill, Oncology and cancer care, signposting, April 2024)

"My son broke his finger, but they lost his notes and by the time they found them it was too late to do anything about it, so he now has a wonky finger." (John Radcliffe, feedback collected at Eynsham Play Day, July 2024)

People told us about **issues around communication**, including:

• A lack of interpreters, including for those for whom English is not their first language or users of British Sign Language. We heard about a particular lack of face-to-face interpreters and interpreters for certain languages such as Tetum. People also told us there was a reliance on friends or family members to interpret rather than trained professionals.

"I went to A&E and they were unable to book an interpreter for me and they had to ask my family and friends to interpret. I was in hospital for seven days I ask daily for an interpreter but there was no interpreter available. On the daily ward round every day, I asked could I have an interpreter, but I wasn't responded to." (Story shared at Action for Deafness event, May 2024)

"I visited my friend in hospital who was having treatment on the oncology ward. I asked them what cancer you have - they didn't know. I asked what their treatment was, what was the prognosis - they didn't know. They were really confused about what was happening just knew they needed to be there but didn't really understand why. They didn't have access to an interpreter, the doctors had tried to explain but they still didn't know. I asked the nurse what cancer my friend had and then I told them, they were shocked as they hadn't known." (Story shared at Action for Deafness event, May 2024)

During outreach with local community groups, we also heard comments on preference for face-to-face interpreting, the need for more translated information, the importance of cultural competence among staff. We also heard a desire from community groups that there was an interest in training for language interpreting among members. Clear explanation of procedures, follow up and after care communication was also seen as important among those for whom English is not a first language.

Appointment letters not arriving on time or containing incorrect information

"The appointment letter and all patient information arrived two days after my appointment so utterly irrelevant by that time." (John Radcliffe, Gynaecology, feedback review, November 2023)

"Admin issues raised, on behalf of partially sighted person, 'She received an appointment letter for [date], to see a consultant at an outpatient clinic at Abington Community Hospital. I have seen the appointment letter, so can verify the details. Upon arrival, she was told that the consultant was on holiday and "Tuesdays are for hearts, not eyes". She has subsequently received a letter from the consultant, which I have also seen, listing her as having not attended her appointment – at a different time – on [same date] AT THE JR and therefore having to wait for a new appointment in March 2024." (John Radcliffe, signposting, September 2023)

#### Difficulty contacting the department

"Nobody answers the phones, replies to emails or answers letters. Left in pain for months as they have not followed up as they agreed to." (Nuffield Orthopaedic, Orthopaedics and fracture clinic, feedback review, November 2023)

#### • Not updating people about waiting for care

"Sadly lacking in keeping you informed about the wait times for operations. Need to have a better communication process - keeping the patient updated!" (Nuffield Orthopaedic, feedback collected at Bicester Library, May 2024)

 Not updating family members and unpaid carers or involving them in decisions about someone's care

"Mum diagnosed with cancer, led to believe it was treatable and she underwent treatment which made her so ill. She had a fall and needed surgery even though stage 4 cancer. Put a DNR on her file without talking to her, myself or her husband." (OUH, signposting, March 2024)

We heard from three people about **problems with pain relief during hysteroscopies** at the John Radcliffe Hospital – that pain relief or sedation were not offered, and that information about this was not provided before the appointment.

"Unfortunately because of the short time scale I wasn't sent any information about the procedure but I remember someone mentioning previously about taking paracetamol before the procedure, which I did. I'd recently had to have an endoscopy and colonoscopy and was routinely offered sedation and pain relief for those procedures so I naively assumed that as it wasn't routinely offered for this procedure then it wouldn't be necessary. I was thinking it would be similar to a routine smear test. I was wrong. It's like a form of torture. [...] This procedure is extremely painful and sedation/pain relief should be offered as standard." (John Radcliffe, Gynaecology, feedback centre, February 2024)

Other areas for improvement we heard about were:

 Parking at the John Radcliffe and Churchill Hospitals – this is an ongoing source of stress for patients and carers, especially those with physical

- impairments, along with problems with traffic travelling in and out of Oxford.
- Making reasonable adjustments for patients when scheduling appointments – e.g. avoiding early morning appointments for a "severely disabled" patient who lives some distance from the hospital.
- A lack of **food and drink options** in some parts of the John Radcliffe
  Hospital, a need for more food options that appeal to people from different
  cultural backgrounds, and a negative experience of the Mitie food service
  at the John Radcliffe.
- Dissatisfaction with the **OUH Patient Advice and Liaison Service** about its response to feedback or complaints.
- Problems with hospital discharge, such as differences between what was
  offered by the pre-op team and what the post-op team were able to
  provide. (Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be reporting on hospital discharge
  in more detail in November 2024).
- Continuity in care, for example midwives caring for people from diverse communities, where continuity can help with .

## **Useful links**

Have your say – leave your feedback with Healthwatch Oxfordshire on a local health or care service here:

https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/services

OUH Patient Advice and Liaison Service – for feedback, comments and complaints <a href="https://www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/feedback/pals.aspx">https://www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/feedback/pals.aspx</a>

**Healthwatch Oxfordshire** our friendly staff are here for you to help answer questions or give you information on health and care services in Oxfordshire. If you need more information or advice call us on **01865 520520** from 9am-4 pm Monday to Friday

Visit our website <u>www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk</u> (with translation facility) or email us on hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

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Vizita ami-nia sítiu <u>www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk</u> (ho fasilidade tradusaun) haruka email mai ami iha hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

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hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk.

منظمة هيلث ووتش لديها موظفين ودودين يعملون لمساعدتك والاجابة على الأسئلة أو إعطاء المعلومات حول الصحة و خدمات الرعاية في أكسفورد و ضواحيها. إذا احتجت معلومات اضافية أو نصح يمكنك الاتصال على الرقم و خدمات الرعاية في أكسفورد و ضواحيها. إذا احتجت معلومات اضافية أو نصح يمكنك الاتنين وحتى الجمعة.

يمكنكم زيارة موقعنا على الويب (و المتاح مع خدمة الترجمة) www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk كما يمكنكم مراسلتنا على الايميل hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

To find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire please see **www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk** 

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