



Enter and View report

Oxfordshire Mind - Witney Resource Centre

October 2019



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1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address	Mind Witney Resource Centre, 8 Moorlands Road, Witney, OX28 6LF
Service Provider	Oxfordshire Mind
Date and Time	Thursday 24 th October 6-8 p.m. 2019
Authorised Representatives	Veronica Barry, Carol Ball
Contact details	01865 520520

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to thank the service provider, service users, members of staff and volunteers for their contribution to the Enter and View Programme.

1.3 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



2 What is Enter and View?

Part of the Healthwatch Oxfordshire programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Oxfordshire representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch-authorized representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies.

2.1 Purpose of Visit

To engage with service users to understand their experience of attending Oxfordshire Mind's Witney Resource Centre, including activities and support, as well as to hear about experiences of wider mental health support.

To get a staff and volunteer perspective on working at Mind, and support.

To observe how the project operates and provides its services.

2.2 Strategic drivers

During 2019, Healthwatch Oxfordshire looked at people's experiences of mental health services across the county. We wanted to hear what is working well as well as where things could be improved. We visited a range of providers and mental health settings provided under Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership (OMHP), including inpatient acute care, community-based care and voluntary sector provision.



2.3 Methodology

This report stems from a visit to Oxfordshire Mind's Witney Resource Centre.

We undertook planning the visit by phone and emails, following an initial meeting with Oxfordshire Mind's Chief Executive.

We visited the Witney Resource Centre, during a Thursday night peer group session. We saw the project in action, as well as hearing from individual service users who were happy to speak with us and from staff.

We collected information by talking with service users and staff by using prompt sheets to act as an aide memoire to promote free-flowing conversation. We heard from **five service users** who were happy to speak with us on an individual basis on the day. We also spoke with **one staff member**. We left copies of our mental health questionnaire for other service users to fill in in their own time and staff were able to fill in an online questionnaire.

2.4 Background

Oxfordshire Mind was established in 1967, as an independent charity to support people living in Oxfordshire (<https://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk>). It is part of a network of local Minds, adhering to National Mind's standards.

Oxfordshire Mind is part of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, working to outcomes-based commissioning with people falling under Mental Health Clusters 4-17 and TalkingSpace Plus Partnership (Clusters 0-3). In addition, it receives funding from a range of other sources to enable it to provide wider wellbeing support, courses and information services for anyone experiencing mental health issues.

Oxfordshire Mind aims to raise awareness of mental health issues, making sure that support for mental health in Oxfordshire is easy to find. Mind runs a range of mental health support and wellbeing services, advice and information, including:

- Free courses and workshops held on weekdays, evenings and weekends. These aim to increase understanding of mental health- and focus on a wide range of themes such as Assertiveness and Communication, Managing Stress, Managing Strong Emotions
- Workplace training to support mental health at work
- Support with welfare benefits
- Peer support groups across the county
- Supported housing and accommodation
- Information and advice on mental health support and services and provision of Mind's information line support
- Primary Care Wellbeing Project
- Benefits for Better Mental Health
- Children's and Young People Team
- Safe Haven, Crisis support in Oxford



Oxfordshire Mind operates from sites across the county, including **Oxford city** (the Mill), **Cherwell and West**; Banbury, Bicester and Witney, **South and Vale**: Abingdon (Charter), as well as making use of local community and health facilities and meeting places. It runs a huge range of tailored courses and workshops, as well as activities like arts and crafts, music, mindfulness, board games, healthy cooking and opportunities for physical activity such as health walks and yoga.

People can contact Oxfordshire Mind directly themselves, via the information line, or with referral from GP or mental health professionals. On contact, they will be offered a 30 minute 'Options Session' by phone or face to face, with a Wellbeing Worker, who will take time together to identify and signpost to the type of support and interests relevant to them. The person will then be offered courses or activities within Mind or encouraged to access other support. Once an Option Session is complete, and Oxfordshire Mind can offer support, the person can then access any activities of relevance by using the activities information on the website. Once attending, service users are given support, can make use of the Recovery Star as a tool for setting goals, or more informal support, and can come and go as desired.

Oxfordshire Mind encourages involvement from people who use its services, and for them to bring their own expertise on mental health to the organisation. During 2019, it has taken a strategic review of processes and pathways for service users to be involved and feed into the wider organisation, as well as ensuring that appropriate support is offered to those that do become volunteers.

It's Involvement Strategy aims are that "Oxfordshire Mind will embed the involvement of service users and stakeholders at all levels within the organisation, aiming always for a co-productive approach. Oxfordshire Mind aims to ensure that all involvement is recovery and wellbeing focused, is inclusive, is meaningful, and has a positive impact." Opportunities for this are through opportunities for becoming a 'lived experience' volunteer or interviewer, Expert by Experience, Involvement Champion, Peer Supporter, as well as enabling input and feedback at Mind's different venues.

2.4 Summary of findings

Oxfordshire Mind's Witney Resource Centre is based on Moorlands Road, a modern building adjacent to Witney Community Support Centre. Entrance is through a door with a buzzer. Local buses serve the centre, so it is accessible from around the town, and there is free parking outside and in nearby car parks.

The centre is on one level, fully accessible, opening out to a large hallway, accessible toilets, large activity/dining area, kitchen and hatch, and additional rooms for private and quiet space.



The Witney Centre offers wellbeing activities and peer group sessions weekdays on Mondays, Tuesday and Thursdays with additional opening on Wednesday evening for Oxfordshire Mind courses.

There is a clear information board in the main area, with up to date information on events and local support services, and a display of activities and courses for the day and weeks ahead.

The large, modern kitchen is well equipped, and freshly cooked meal is prepared together at the evening peer group session. Service users share these mealtimes together, with a chance to socialise. Service users can help themselves to hot drinks at any time.

Service users can take part in six weekly planning sessions, aimed at bringing ideas to activity and session development. There is also a suggestions box.

The centre has nine members of staff and an active volunteer team. The manager oversees development and running of services across Cherwell and West Area- capacity for which is stretched with limited resources. Staff can offer one to one sessions to service users, and this is protected time, but impacted when staff capacity is limited.

Staff have fortnightly team meetings, and a working group has been established for the recruitment and training of locums. Staff feel supported, and able to voice suggestions and concerns within the organisation.

Results of visit

Available Information

The project has well displayed and up to date information available for service users to make use of including;

- Large notice board in the dining area, with up to date information on mental health support, social support and voluntary sector initiatives
- Information on local support and activities
- Information on Mind, how to get involved in the organisation and ways to give feedback
- Health and safety information as appropriate, in kitchen and on board
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire poster



Service user Feedback

We were available to speak to service users at the evening peer support and evening meal session. In total we heard from five people who were happy to speak with us.

All service users were positive about coming to the Witney Resource Centre- commenting that it really contributed to recovery. We heard comments on how they valued the centre, describing it as a ‘lifeline’ and providing a real sense of ‘community’ and ‘family’. They valued the informal atmosphere.

We heard comments on the value of the centre for reducing isolation and loneliness, giving people a sense of friendship and shared experiences. Meeting people at the centre had enabled friendship groups to develop, and service users met independently to do other activities in Witney such as join local coffee mornings or go to cafes.

Service users valued the sociable aspects of cooking and mealtimes, commenting that ‘sitting down with others’ was really important, and for some offered the only chance in the week to share mealtimes.

People valued the activities they took part in, in particular, the music ‘jam’ session and the book group, both of which showed real innovation and creativity, and had ‘rekindled’ interests.

People valued the staff and volunteers, and felt listened to, especially 1:1. They felt they had an opportunity to be heard, making use of a suggestions box, or speaking individually to staff members. One comment suggested that service users do not always see what happens to or have feedback on their suggestions.

We heard how service users felt that they could contribute to the centre and wider organisation, taking on fundraising roles, awareness raising and peer support. Some felt it was important to be able to ‘give back’ having experienced help and support themselves.



Service users find support with wider aspects of their lives, including signposting to other support, information and financial management and form filling support from Mind's financial team.

What suggestions did people make?

- Service users commented on the limited opening times at Mind in Witney, and would like to see the centre open more often during the week and for longer hours
- Clearer feedback on suggestions made by service users, some were uncertain of what happened to suggestions
- Service users were aware of tight resources, and this was a concern- but would welcome a wider range of activities
- Changes to daytime opening hours had impacted on some service users using public transport, meaning sessions were difficult to get to on time

Service users' comments on mental health support in Oxfordshire

- Transport was seen as limited especially for those from outlying villages, making it difficult and costly to access services and support
- More recovery courses and clinical support in Witney area
- Long waiting times for support in wider mental health services in the area

Activities

Witney resource centre is open for wellbeing sessions, during key hours during the week.

Mondays: 1.45-3.30 p.m.	Yoga sessions
Tuesdays 10-3.30 p.m.	Open peer support, crafts and 'Get into reading' book group
Wednesday 6-8 p.m.	Exploring Self Esteem (course)
Thursdays 10-4 p.m. and 5-8 p.m.	Practical ways to wellbeing (course) Open peer support with meal

The book group is run by a volunteer, and is a great example of a creative, and innovative approach- enabling service users to explore a wide range of topics and themes with support. One member of staff also supports a music 'jam' session, which is popular.



Staff Feedback

We were able to speak with one member of staff. However, comments given showed a huge passion and commitment to the work and to supporting service users' recovery.

Working within a limited budget and capacity involved using creativity to put on sessions and activities but was seen as challenging and sometimes stressful. Lack of staff and time capacity impacted on ability to coordinate activities and courses.

Line management and wider management at Mind Oxfordshire was seen as supportive and flexible, and staff felt that suggestions they made within the organisation were heard. We heard for example, how staff suggestions had led to the organisation adopting 'Disability Confident' status.

Staff comments on wider mental health system

- Limited resources, capacity high staff turnover in local mental health team impacts on communication across the system
- Long waiting lists for Complex Needs services impacts on the capacity of the voluntary sector to offer appropriate support
- Witney Mind is establishing placement links with students from the local mental health team, to be able to build knowledge of the voluntary sector.

2.5 Recommendations

Oxfordshire Mind

- Clearer feedback to service users from suggestions made in suggestions box
- Consider reviewing opening times and sessions to ensure that needs of people living in the area are met and tie in with public transport

Wider observations for the attention of Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership

- Using public transport in the area can mean accessing limited support services in the area is a challenge
- Long waiting times for Complex Needs has an impact on voluntary sector provision

2.6 Service provider response

- We are due to launch a Service User Forum in Witney as of the beginning of March 2020 to give our service users another vehicle of communication and opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions. As of November 2019 we have established feedback boards in our 3 hubs as well as the suggestion boxes and as of December 2019 we have included a bi-monthly "You said, we responded" section which provides an update on what has happened as a result of feedback



received. Both implementations have been as a result of feedback received from our service users at Service User Involvement workshops.

- Although Oxfordshire Mind don't facilitate sessions directly on a Friday in Witney we support the Recovery College to offer mental health education courses by offering a free venue and in December we also supported the provision by Abingdon and Witney College of their Building Resilience programme especially for our service users. We have recently linked in with Sport in Mind who are looking to offer physical activity sessions in Witney and have requested feedback from our service users to feed into their development plan. We are also looking at where/how we can develop our offer within budget constraints and will consider transport within this. Our course timetable varies term by term, with the current one available on our website or via the information line (01865 247788).
- Oxfordshire Mind is part of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership working group for complex presentations and we will share this feedback within the partnership.
- Thank you for your report and taking the time to visit us.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire. www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

Tel: 01865 520 520 Email: hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk