Enter and View report
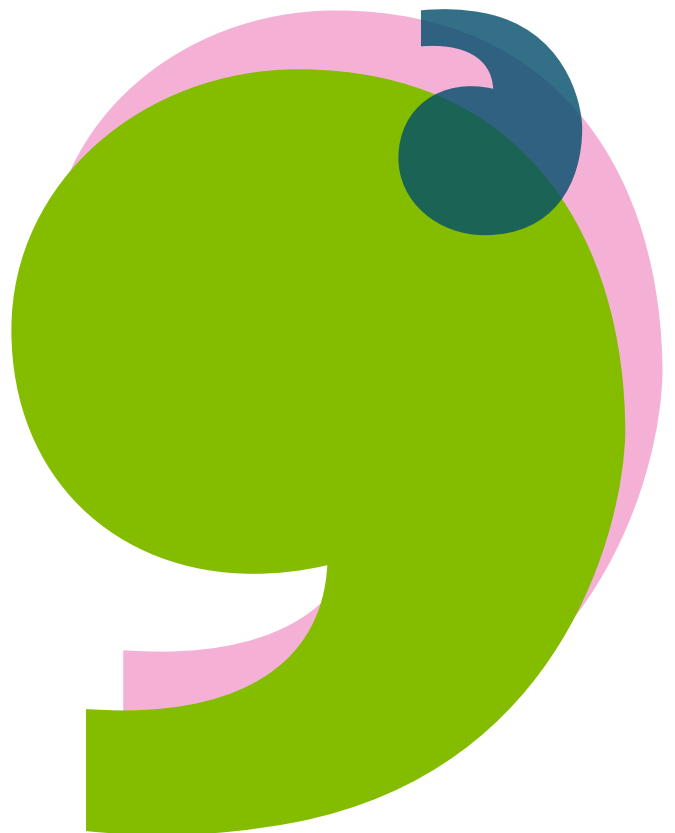
Oxfordshire Mind - Bicester- OYAP

November 2019

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1   Introduction

1.1   Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address	Mind Bicester
Service Provider	Oxfordshire Mind
Date and Time	15th November 2019
Authorised Representatives	Brian Allan, Jeanne Humber
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 authorised 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 Mind's Bicester based service 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 service in Bicester.

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

We visited the Charter Centre twice, during a daytime and an evening session, in order to get a broader view of the work. We saw the project in action, as well as hearing from individual service users who were happy to speak with us and from staff and volunteers.

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 **four service users** who were happy to speak with us on an individual basis on the day. We also spoke with one staff member, and one volunteer. 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 work 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.

Its 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

One thing was very noticeable. The people attending were happy to be there in a warm and caring environment. They were able to share issues with each other and understand other people were experiencing some of the same problems, hence feeling they were not alone.

Everyone we heard from told us they would like the service to offer more days and have its own Hub. Whilst people appreciated being able to meet at Sainsbury's Café, we did hear how it impacted service users negatively due to being in a public space.

2.5   Results of visit

Available Information and observations

Oxfordshire Mind no longer has a 'Hub' in Bicester so meets at two different locations twice a week. It now operates on a 'drop in' system. On Mondays, there is an informal get together in the Sainsburys café in Bicester and on Fridays, the group meets for two hours in a room at the OYAP Trust building at the old St Edburg's School. OYAP offers all young people the chance to learn new skills and develop confidence through creative projects. Mind rents a small room from OYAP on a weekly basis.

We found the location really difficult to find, despite being given directions and only got there due to someone showing us in person. As this is not a Mind centre there was no telephone number to call to either ask for directions or to say we were lost! We did wonder how this might feel for a new person visiting for the first time if they were not familiar with location who is maybe already feeling anxious about coming to the group.

Once we arrived in the building it was not clear which room we should go to, but luckily staff spotted us through the glass wall looking somewhat lost.

As this is not a Mind centre, available information and work displayed was aimed at the children and young people using the centre.

The room used by Mind had a limited amount of space so we wondered whether a maximum limit had to be imposed upon the group. A couple of group members had additional accessibility or mobility needs and we thought the space did not support this very well.

With having access to only one room, there was nowhere for service users to go and have a private 1:1 conversation with staff.

Mind staff supplied drinks and snacks and the kettle was placed on a trestle table within the room.

Activities

Due to the set up and size of the room available to Mind, activities had to be appropriate for the space. We heard that bingo, music and scrabble were popular activities.

It was very clear to us however how important it was for people to have a safe, non-judgemental space to go as it was a way of combatting loneliness and isolation giving people some social contact and something to do

Service user Feedback

- Service users told us how much they valued the chance to meet up and chat with people who had similar issues
- We heard how important the group was in order to make new friends and not feel alone
- We heard how helpful and supportive the staff and volunteers were playing a key role in supporting service users with some really difficult issues
- We were told that staff were great at pointing out other places service users could go if they needed help with other issues such as benefits, or getting to see a doctor more quickly
- We heard how people much preferred it when there was a hub at the Causeway

What suggestions did people make?

- When asked what they would like to change we heard the following suggestions:
    - They would like the service to offer more than four hours a week
    - An additional room at the school (OYAP building) to enable a relaxation session to take place
    - The reintroduction of aromatherapy
    - The introduction of a gentle exercise group
    - For Mind to start a walking group in Bicester as the 'Walking for Health' group walked at too fast a pace

Service users' comments on mental health support in Oxfordshire

- People had varied experiences of mental health support, often accessing a number of services over time
- Some people told us that communication with their Adult Mental Health Team wasn't great with phones not being answered or calls not being returned plus confusion about how many sessions they were meant to have with their psychiatrist
- We heard positive feedback about the City Day Hospital, the downside being that you are not offered long enough there
- We heard how helpful Elmore Community Services were, but also that they had long waiting lists

Staff and volunteer feedback

- Staff told us how much they enjoyed working with service users and being able to offer support and structure in their lives
- We heard how frustrating it was for them to not have their own building anymore and the problems associated with room set up and tidy in a shared space plus how crowded the conditions were
- We heard how the group has moved locations a number of times over the years and as a result some people have stopped attending the session and how it took some service users up to one year to adjust to such changes
- Volunteers have more time and flexibility so can introduce new ideas such as cooking groups

2.6　　Recommendations

- Service provision in Bicester appears to be shrinking over time. Oxfordshire Mind to confirm it is taking steps to ensure the service doesn't stop completely and ideally increase its offer.
- Staff be provided with a 'pay as you go' mobile phone so there is a contact number for service users or other visitors.
- The inclusion of a map in the email or letter which new service users are sent.

2.7　　Service provider response

- We do have the use of another space in the Headmaster's house during the peer support group at OYAP premises on a Friday afternoon if a private space is needed but this is still not ideal as it is a short walk from our room for the group.
- We have never had to turn service users away in Bicester due to the space and we do not have any plans to reduce provision. We would love to expand our offer in Bicester and have a more suitable and more permanent venue in the future, funding permitting.
- A specific mobile phone for Bicester is a good suggestion and a map included within the initial Options letter as both would help people to find us. We will take these suggestions forward and liaise with OYAP about signs etc. to make finding the room easier.
- Thank you for your report and taking the time to visit us.