

OCRN NEWSLETTER

October 2026

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NEWS FROM THE OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY RESEARCH NETWORK

*** Save the date ***

On 14th December 2026, the Oxfordshire Community Research Network (OCRN) will be holding its community research showcase and end-of-year celebration in the Westgate Collaboration Space from 10am - 12pm. Although a formal invitation will follow, please don't forget to put the event in your diary. If you would like to help organise the programme for the showcase, please let us know at researchteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Skills training workshops for budding community researchers



Skills Training for Community Research

Build your skills as a community researcher!
Skills training workshops for budding community-based researchers

Tuesday 13th October 10am-3pm
Tuesday 20th October 10am-3pm
East Oxford Community Centre, OX4 1DD

Places limited to 15 – you must be able to attend both sessions.
To book or find out more:
email: hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk
or call: 01865 520520

OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY RESEARCH NETWORK
healthwatch Oxfordshire
Your voice on health and care services

On behalf of the OCRN, Healthwatch Oxfordshire is offering training to help community members develop the skills to do their own community research. Across two interactive workshops, based on our [How to guide for community research](#), we'll go step by step through the whole journey of community research, learning from practical examples and developing our own project ideas along the way.

The two-part workshop will be held on Tuesday 13th and Tuesday 20th October 2026 from 10am - 3pm, at the East Oxford Community Centre. Participants need to be able to attend both sessions. If you are from an unfunded group, you can claim reimbursement for your time and local travel. A light lunch and tea and coffee will be provided. Places are limited to 15, so book your place soon! [>>>](#)

OCRN quarterly meeting on 28th September 2026

At the OCRN quarterly meeting, held in the Westgate Collaboration Space, members heard updates on several exciting developments for the network. The new OCRN website, www.ocrn.net, is expected to launch shortly, providing a central hub for information, opportunities and resources for community researchers across Oxfordshire.



Members were introduced to the new OCRN Community Research Incubator Fund, a pilot programme offering grants of up to £2,500 to support community-led research projects that address local inequalities and wellbeing. The fund aims to make research more accessible to grassroots organisations and community groups, with a simple application process and support available for applicants.

The meeting also included updates on community research training, new opportunities for collaboration, and plans to strengthen OCRN's communications through social media, videos and future community research showcase events. The discussion reflected the growing momentum of OCRN and its commitment to supporting community-led and community-engaged research across Oxfordshire. Thank you to all participants and presenters for taking part.



Brand new OCRN leaflet

Designed by Sakinah Hamidi, the graphic designer of Oxford Community Action who also designed the [How to guide for community research](#), this new double-sided A5 leaflet highlights the activities of the network and opportunities to get involved. If you would like to disseminate the leaflet to your networks and participants, please get in touch with researchteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

OPPORTUNITIES

Vacancy: VCSE Neighbourhood Lead (3 roles)

Hosted by Oxford Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA), partner organisations across Oxfordshire have agreed to dedicate funding to support the creation of three part-time VCSE Neighbourhood Lead posts, initially for six months (with possible extension subject to agreement). Deadline: 12th October 2026. [>>>](#)

Event: Unsettling Familiarity in Community Health

Time: 9am – 3.30pm (day 1), 9am – 1.30pm (day 2)

Date: 8th - 9th October 2026

Location: Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, Oxford, OX2 6GG

This two-day interdisciplinary workshop brings together researchers, health professionals, and community practitioners to creatively and critically examine the concept of familiarity at the front line of community health. The workshop is organised around four panels: informal infrastructure, reproductive care, frontline voices, and beyond progress. >>>

Event: Exploring identity through storytelling: Kit de Waal

Time: 6pm – 7.30pm

Date: 14th October 2026

Location: Clerici Learning Studio (CLC 1.12), Oxford Brookes University

Through an honest exploration of identity, storytelling and representation, author Kit de Waal considers how writers can find their voices, build confidence and create space for their experiences within the literary landscape. The session also examines widening access to publishing, creating opportunities for underrepresented voices and the power of storytelling. >>>

Event: What makes a successful Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Time: 1pm - 2pm

Date: 27th October 2026

Location: online

Healthwatch Oxfordshire's next webinar will feature practical advice, real-life examples and learning from people who are helping PPGs make a positive impact across Oxfordshire. Interesting for those who are already involved in a PPG, thinking about joining one, or interested in how patients can help shape local healthcare services. >>>



Event: Pizza and Politics: Votes at 16 special

Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm

Date: 29th October 2026

Location: Central Oxford - venue details shared nearer the time.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government are bringing young people together with politicians, public policy experts, and democratic leaders. They will discuss school, transport, housing and jobs to the environment, health services, AI and young people's use of social media. Participants will receive pizza and refreshments as well as £15, travel expenses and a certificate for taking part. >>>

COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Health and wellbeing in rural towns and villages in Oxfordshire – 21st September 2026

Healthwatch Oxfordshire and Community First Oxfordshire were commissioned by OCC to hear from residents in 14 rural towns and villages with significant health inequalities: Chalgrove, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Cropredy, Deddington, Faringdon, Freeland, Long Hanborough, the Heyfords, Shrivenham, Sonning Common, Stanford in the Vale, Watchfield and Yarnton. This research forms part of the Oxfordshire Marmot Place work. >>>

IN THE NEWS

Putting children first in Oxfordshire's drive to reduce health inequalities – 14th July 2026

Children and young people are at the heart of ongoing efforts to create a fairer future for all in the county, as OCC commits to acting on the findings of a recent report by the Institute of Health Equity, as part of becoming a Marmot Place. The report, [Starting stronger, fairer futures in Oxfordshire](#), sets out clear evidence that while people in Oxfordshire generally live longer and healthier lives than the national average, outcomes are not experienced equally, with significant differences between communities. [>>>](#)

A new journal launches to bridge the gap between academic research and community voice – 22nd September 2026

The Young Foundation and partners have launched a new, diamond open access *Journal for Community Studies* that brings academic research into direct conversation with the knowledge, experience and expertise held within communities across the UK. The journal is designed to challenge traditional assumptions about who creates knowledge and what evidence matters. [>>>](#)

Community knowledge is essential knowledge – 22nd September 2026

Sue Griffiths shares the central principle of the new journal (see above) which brings academic expertise and community experience around the same table. She argues that community-led research should not be treated as supplementary or less rigorous. [>>>](#)

RESOURCES

Oxford Health Histories

A project of the University of Oxford, Oxford Health Histories is a resource dedicated to uncovering, documenting, and disseminating histories of health and medicine in Oxfordshire. It seeks to capture the diverse breadth of medical and health history in the city and county, highlighting the stories of individuals. [>>>](#)



OCRN Newsletter, 2026

October, No. 10 2026

Produced by the Research Team, Oxfordshire County Council for the Oxfordshire Community Research Network (OCRN).

To join the OCRN and subscribe to the newsletter, or to unsubscribe, please email: researchteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The OCRN brings together community organizations, residents, academics, local councils, health institutes and funders to strengthen community-led and community-engaged research across Oxfordshire.

Why join the OCRN? Because your experience and questions matter, and you don't have to do research alone. OCRN helps members connect, learn and influence how research is shaped, funded and used to support community health, wellbeing and reduce inequalities.