

SUPPORTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

How Community First Oxfordshire's work feeds into health and wellbeing across the county

Health is more than just 'not being ill'. As the WHO explains: "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being" and staying well in daily life can help prevent illness.

There are lots of things which impact health, much more than just medical care (though this is crucial). Whether it's a community dance class or a footpath to a nature reserve, our social and physical surroundings influence our wellbeing. If we are connected to people, encouraged to exercise, comfortable in our homes, and able to access healthcare, we are generally happier and healthier.

Here's how our work links to health:

Housing

Community-led, affordable

Good quality, affordable housing is vital to health. Led by communities, we explore local housing needs and develop citizen-led projects to meet them. With local networks and suitable infrastructure, good housing protects against cold, damp, and isolation.



Community plans

Neighbourhood & community-led planning, stewardship

Through design, local plans can enable active travel, reduced pollution, access to green spaces, and accessible transport to healthcare services.

Community hubs

Halls and shops

Community halls and shops are an important hub for local people. They offer a space for groups to use, often hosting social hubs, exercise classes, and warm spaces.



Community action

Volunteering, activities

Community action supports wellbeing in many different ways. From community kitchens sharing healthy eating, to social groups reducing isolation and supporting mental health, to sports clubs and gardening groups encouraging an active lifestyle

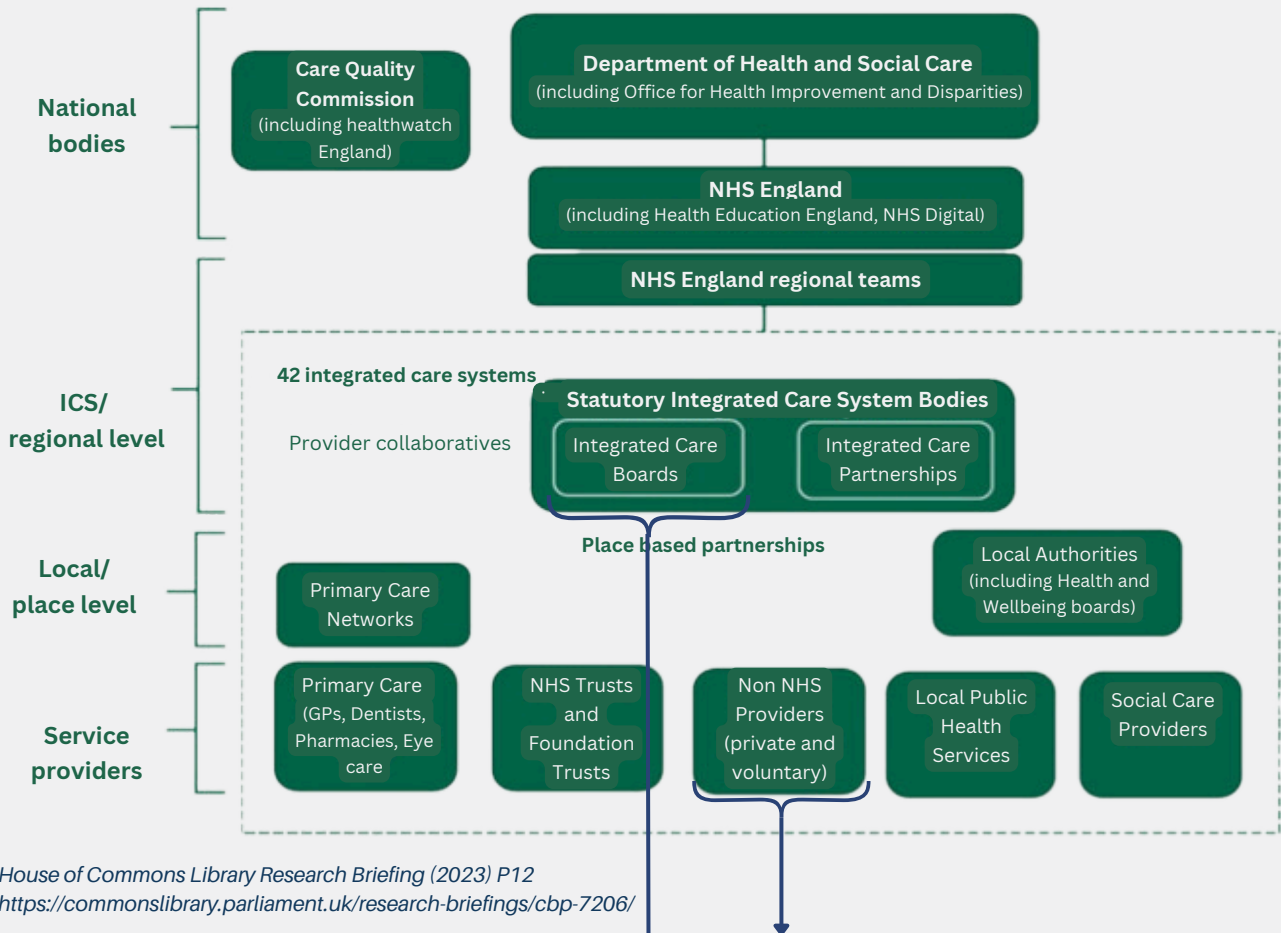
Community Transport

Volunteer drivers, good neighbour schemes

People can struggle to attend healthcare appointments or social activities due to isolation and lack of mobility. We advocate for community led-transport and good public transport services to help people live healthy, independent lives.



The structure of the NHS in England



We work with these groups

We are connected with many different and diverse community groups and we sit on the regional VCSE Health Alliance which feeds into our regional Integrated Care Board (ICB). It is here that we bring the voice of community members to influence higher level decision making.

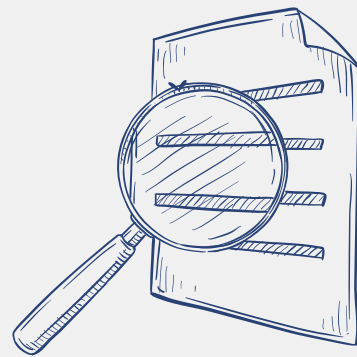
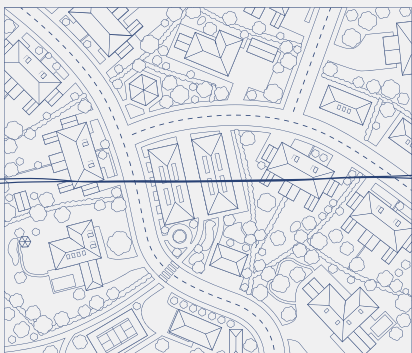
We support these groups

We are connected to community groups through specific programmes like Well Together and Connected Communities Fund (see below). We also provide support to groups through trainings and tailored advice, like our volunteering workshops.

Health Research

Community insight profiles

Community insight profile are deep dives into an area to better understand people's health and connectedness to local services. They try to reach those who are unable to access suitable healthcare and highlight health inequalities. These profiles are then used to shape the health strategy in an area.



Health inequalities

Well Together, Marmot Place, Connected Communities Fund

Well Together is a collaboration to support grassroots community groups supporting healthy living. Through the programme, we support groups in a Grants plus approach - with funding, advice and support - and link groups together to maximise local connectedness. We are also funding groups through the Connected Communities Fund, and are part of the Marmot Place Project working with many partners across Oxfordshire to identify and tackle health inequalities.

Advocacy

Strategic Boards, Partnerships

Our advocacy work promotes many aspects of healthy communities; including planning, housing, transport, community hubs, and access to services. We sit on strategic boards such as Cherwell and Oxford Strategic Partnerships to advocate for the voice of communities that we work with.



The role of our community and physical environment can be under-appreciated in conversations around healthcare. The examples above show how our work supports both prevention of illness and promotion of ongoing wellbeing, as well as supporting the social fabric and practical infrastructures that enable people to access healthcare. We look forward to continuing to work alongside communities to embed wellbeing into our places and social networks.