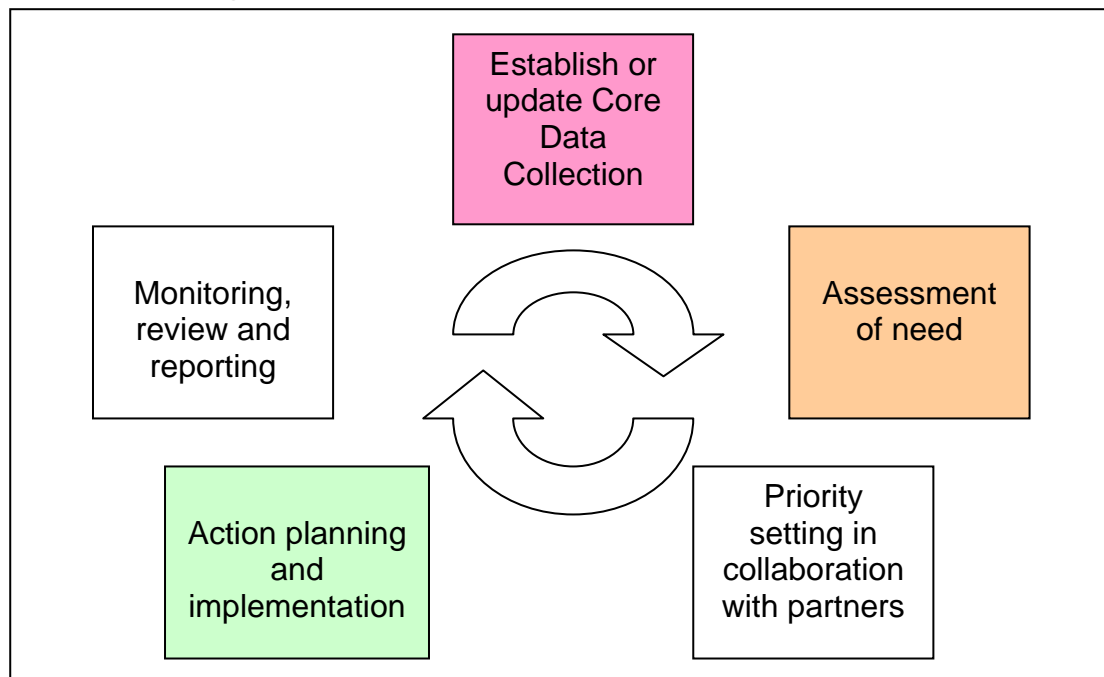
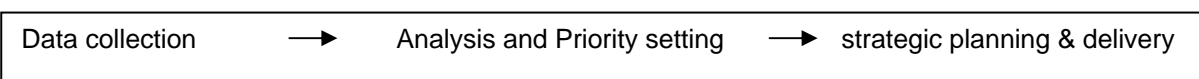
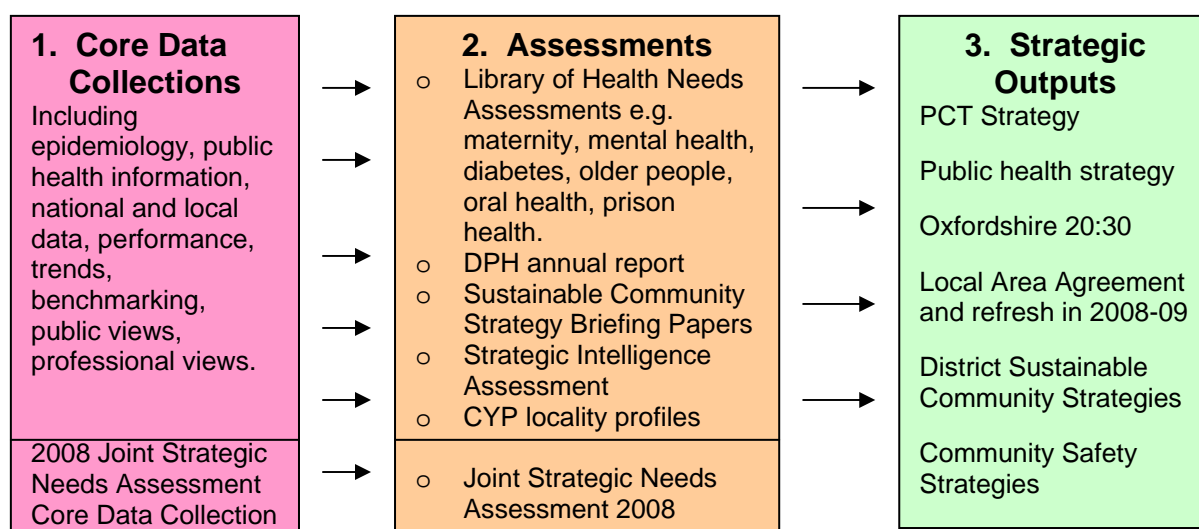


The Oxfordshire Approach to Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Planning Cycle and the importance of Needs Assessments



The principle of using core data collections to inform priority setting is well established in Oxfordshire and recent joint work using this principle is illustrated in the diagrams on this page. The diagram above shows a simple representation of the planning cycle while the illustration below gives more detail of how this has been put into practice in Oxfordshire over recent years. The document entitled “Oxfordshire’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008” is the latest in a series of assessments produced in this way.



Partnership working is strong in Oxfordshire and joint strategic needs assessment is well-established. This work is based on the systematic use of core data, often compiled or commissioned jointly because of recognition of the need for agencies to work together. The outputs have often been published as topic specific Health Needs Assessments, some of which are detailed below. The core data collections used for these assessments have been at the heart of partnership working for some time.

The development of the Oxfordshire approach has gone through three distinct phases so far:

Phase 1: Data sharing and building joint data collections

The five year period from 2001 to 2006 saw increasing collaboration and joint work on data sharing and analysis of core data sets. The establishment of the Oxfordshire Data Observatory in 2004 was a major landmark. The Observatory runs on a partnership arrangement whereby the PCT, County Council, District Councils, Police, voluntary sector organisations and regional bodies share data, use common data sets, and align interpretation of data. This has resulted in a shared understanding of needs, particularly around small area statistics, including detailed analyses of deprivation data. Examples of this work are:

- Area profiles, by electoral ward or district, highlighting quality of life issues.
- Reports on particular themes including health, housing, economy and rural issues, with links to data sources.
- Improved access to a range of data on deprivation, social concerns and inequalities in Oxfordshire, including through the work of the jointly commissioned Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion.
- Updated local analysis of the Index of Multiple Deprivation to Super Output Area level, benchmarked against other areas and noting local trends.
- Local population projections for Oxfordshire agreed and used by all partners.

In addition the recent addition of locality health profiles and their source data sets through the work of the South East Public Health Observatory has added to the wealth of information available in core data collections.

Phase 2: Accelerating the development of joint approaches to needs assessment

2006 saw the establishment of Oxfordshire PCT, its practical co-terminosity with other statutory agencies and the appointment of a joint Director of Public Health with the local authority. This led to an acceleration of joint strategic needs assessment and strengthening of its use in partnership working. Examples of relevant publications from this phase include:

i) Director of Public Health Annual Reports

The first Director of Public Health Annual Report was issued in March 2007. This gave a comprehensive overview of the needs of the population of Oxfordshire and the resulting major threats to health and wellbeing. It drew on all needs assessments conducted to date, as well as the views of local and national opinion formers. This was followed by a second Annual Report in March 2008 which consolidated the first and added new topics, based on a deeper understanding of joint needs. The second report also analysed trends over time and provided an update against benchmarks.

ii) Library of Needs Assessments

As part of the drive towards World Class Commissioning led by Mark Britnell (first at South Central Health Authority and subsequently at the Department of Health), existing needs assessments in Oxfordshire were systematised and brought together into an electronic library of needs assessments to form a resource for the PCT and its partners across Oxfordshire. Links to these topic-specific reports have been included in the “Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008” (page 36) so they can be viewed as part of the whole JSNA.

iii) Systematic needs assessment in partnership: working towards LAA2 and Oxfordshire Community Strategy

Thirteen comprehensive needs assessments were commissioned under the auspices of the Oxfordshire Partnership to identify local needs so as to directly inform LAA2 and the Oxfordshire Community Strategy. These were published on www.oxfordshireobservatory.info as topic-specific briefing papers and used in multi-agency priority setting workshops. The priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA2 were based on this information.

iv) Use of joint strategic needs assessment to align organisational strategies across Oxfordshire

The strongly shared joint view of strategic needs in Oxfordshire has allowed us, as a family of organisations, to move more closely in a single direction, sharing a common vision based on needs. We have also benefited from comparisons with similar areas/counties and being able to analyse trends over time. This is evident in the alignment of a range of partnership strategies and single organisational strategies across Oxfordshire, including the strategic plans of the Oxfordshire Partnership, Oxfordshire PCT, Oxfordshire County Council, and the strategies of District Councils, Thames Valley Police and, in turn, other partners and formal partnership groups.

v) Systematic approaches to needs assessments

A programme of needs assessments was agreed and incorporated into the joint programme of work set up by the PCT Clinical Executive. Membership of this committee includes the Director of Social and Community Services and the Director of Children’s Services and much of this work has been undertaken in partnership. The forward programme is being implemented and needs assessments already produced during the last 18 months include:

- sexual health
- obesity
- joint older people needs assessment
- older people’s mental health
- diabetes
- Polish migrant community health needs

vi) Strategic needs assessment and Practice based commissioning (PbC)

Practice based commissioning offers a welcome locality and clinician-led view of local needs. This has been supported in Oxfordshire from the inception of PbC through the availability of data, information and analysis of local needs and making local comparisons, the inclusion of needs analysis in practice based commissioning plans, and the cross-fertilisation of ideas between PbC and other joint structures in the County. For example, membership of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership includes direct representation of practice based commissioners.

Phase 3: Department of Health initiative on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

This phase represents a further development of the existing work in Oxfordshire which is very welcome. The start of this phase was marked by the publication of Department of Health guidance in December 2007. The main outcome of this initiative is to formalise existing work through the creation of a nationally defined core data set which will allow comparisons, both within the county and with other areas. This enhances the benchmarking and trend analysis already carried out and makes sure our work is consistent with the national picture. The approach taken in Oxfordshire has been to embrace this initiative and commission additional data as soon as national guidance was clarified. This data has been used to influence updates of both the PCT and County Council strategies. It is also a key source of intelligence in refreshing the PCT Operational Plan. This data has now been “mainstreamed” and used routinely in the systematic forward plan for needs assessments in Oxfordshire. This includes:

i) Progress and tracking of improvement targets

Partnerships in Oxfordshire track progress against improvement targets using an integrated performance management framework based on the principles of the Balanced Scorecard. This enables targets to be monitored and performance gaps and trends identified. Joint methods of performance tracking for the National Indicators / LAA2 targets have been established, led by the County Council, that establish all National Indicators into a performance framework that will be reported to partnerships regularly, including the Health and Well-Being Partnership. The PCT provides information and analysis relating to all health targets in the National Indicator set to this system. Ongoing tracking of performance indicators informs the planning of ‘stretch targets’, for example around reducing health inequalities, and a continued reduction in emergency bed days.

ii) Benchmarking

In providing the health indicator data the PCT makes extensive use of benchmarking tools and analysis to provide insights to inform prioritisation, in particular the selection of strategic Outcome measures. Benchmarking analysis commonly being used as part of the strategic and annual planning cycle includes:

- Data-packs provided by the World Class Commissioning Programme.
- NHS Comparators, supporting identification of areas where there is room for improvement in key areas.
- Dr Foster ‘practice and provider monitor’ – supporting benchmarking of elective and non-elective care services.
- National Centre for Health Outcomes Development work, enabling in-depth review of comparative health-outcomes data by PCT and District Council areas. This tool is also used to assess expenditure on different aspects of health (Programme Budgeting categories) against health outcomes in the same area, and this work is informing strategic prioritisation (for example around orthopaedic service redesign).
- South East England Health Inequalities Measurement Tool which supports detailed comparisons of mortality by cause across the South East region, and is providing valuable analysis to support the PCT’s work in partnership to reduce health inequalities.

Looking forward to the next phase

The forward plan for joint strategic needs assessment includes:

- Annual updating and ongoing development of Core Data Collections and use of benchmarking tools
- Use of the JSNA to inform the updating of the LAA towards the end of 2008-09 ready for delivery in year 2.
- Setting key delivery targets for the Sustainable Community Strategy based on the priorities set out in the JSNA.
- Delivering the forward plan for systematic assessment of key health needs in the population.