

The Rt Hon James Murray
Secretary of State for Health and Social
Care

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Dear Mr Murray,

OPPOSITION TO THE ABOLITION OF HEALTHWATCH

As Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council I would like to inform you of a recently agreed Council Motion (14 May 2026) proposed by Cllr Georgina Heritage, Cabinet Member for Communities (and Chair of the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Partnership Board) concerning the abolition of Healthwatch.

Following the Government's proposal to abolish Healthwatch as part of its developing NHS 10-Year Health Plan, with functions being transferred to the ICB and local authorities, the Council believes this move risks undermining consistency and democratic accountability across the health and care system. It would reduce patient rights and weaken the ability of residents to influence decisions affecting their health and wellbeing.

The Council is therefore calling on the Government to retain Healthwatch as a fully independent, statutory patient voice at national and local levels.

The Council intends to support all appropriate national campaigns seeking to protect Healthwatch.

The Council will be seeking support from our local Members of Parliament expressing its concern regarding the proposed Healthwatch plans.

In addition, we are working closely with other Oxfordshire District Councils to highlight this matter and are supporting Oxfordshire County Council's decision to work with partners to create a local independent voice on health.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers
Leader of the Council**

cc
Olly Glover MP

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