

# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

9 June 2020

Oxfordshire health and local authority partners continue to work together to provide an effective and sustained response to COVID-19. This week's stakeholder briefing includes updates on the following:

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## COVID-19 Clinics

At the start of the pandemic, GPs and healthcare providers across Oxfordshire quickly mobilised and worked together to set up a number of COVID-19 Assessment Liaison and Monitoring (CALM) clinics, for the assessment of COVID-19 affected patients and meet the possible demand at the peak of disease prevalence. The clinics enabled confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients to be seen in a safe, infection free environment away from other patients, while normal general practice continued with routine patient care.

As we now move to the next phase of the pandemic with a better understanding of the disease and its prevalence, healthcare providers are still working together to develop long term sustainable clinic models, for medical care required by COVID-19 patients who are temporarily infectious to others. These clinics will help general practice to reassure patients that whatever their acute or chronic medical problem, it will be dealt with appropriately and risks of infection given thorough consideration when guiding them to the most appropriate service.

At the height of the pandemic there was capacity to provide a large number of appointments to COVID-19 patients but we did not see as many patients as expected. The next phase of work around the clinics will look at the ability to increase capacity at short notice as we don't know how the disease will develop.

## **Routine referrals to non-urgent care are re-opening**

During the pandemic OUH has continued to receive two week wait cancer referrals and all other urgent referrals; however routine referrals were paused in line with national guidance.

The Trust has been focusing on video consultations and remote monitoring of patients, and is planning with specialty leads to understand the impact of bringing patients on-site, including social distancing, and the impact of additional requirements around PPE, equipment, medicines and workforce.

The Trust is putting in place a series of measures to keep patients and staff safe including:

- Perspex screens in reception areas
- Social distancing floor markings and highly visible on-site communications
- Hand sanitiser stations

Over the past week, with staff and patient safety at the forefront of their plans, OUH has re-opened routine referrals into outpatient clinics in a number of specialties:

- Cardiac services
- Children's services (except ENT, ophthalmology and plastics)
- Haematology
- Neurology
- Dietetic service
- Oxford Centre for Enablement (*not all services*)

The Trust is looking at a phased opening to other routine referrals in the coming weeks. Work is underway to reschedule patients whose procedures were cancelled during the pause on routine referrals, and make sure that these are rearranged in a timely fashion.

## **Technology in General Practice**

Digital technology is playing a key role in the continuing efforts by GP practices to ensure patients get the care they need safely while protecting staff and the wider public. Across Oxfordshire 99 per cent of GP practices have implemented digital technology in the form of online and video consultations.

The use of video consultations has increased during COVID-19 which has helped reduce the number of face-to-face appointments required in GP practices. Remote diagnostics are also being piloted through one of the COVID-19 clinics in Oxford City. The system, developed by Oxehealth, has been installed in five clinical rooms at the clinic. An optical sensor enables GPs to safely obtain a patient's pulse and breathing rate measurements without being in the room.

Whilst patients can speak to their GP and face-to-face consultations are available as required, some practices are also offering online consultations. These consultations allow patients to remotely enter details of their illness online at any time of the day. This is reviewed by an appropriate clinician and actioned as necessary. This could be in the form of signposting to other services, a telephone conversation with their GP, or seeing their GP.

## **Re-introduction of non-COVID-19 services in primary care**

Oxfordshire CCG (OCCG) is working with GP practices to understand their experience of providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic and the re-introduction of non-COVID services in primary care following guidance from NHS England & NHS Improvement (NHSE&I). OCCG has developed a survey to seek feedback on their experiences so that we can learn from this, share helpful information with practices, and identify if and what support is needed going forward.

## **Supporting people with diabetes during COVID-19**

As we mark Diabetes Week 2020 (8-14 June), people living with diabetes in Oxfordshire are being reminded that a wide range of support is still available during the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to a collaborative effort by partners across the healthcare system.

Support includes [a dedicated hotline for people who need medical advice around their diabetes](#), virtual appointments via video consultations and phone calls, and the use of technology to remotely obtain essential data like glucose and insulin doses. People with diabetes are also being reminded that it is important to attend appointments at the hospital; measures are in place to keep patients safe and receiving timely care is one of the best ways of preventing existing conditions getting worse. Detailed guidance for people with diabetes is available in our new [patient information leaflet](#).

## **Project Wingman takes off at the JR**

Many airline pilots and cabin crew are currently grounded or on severely reduced flying rosters due to COVID-19. During this time they have come together to support the wellbeing of NHS staff by creating 'lounges' in dedicated areas in hospitals where staff can come before, during, or after shifts to unwind with refreshments and chat with flight and cabin crew volunteers.

[Project Wingman](#) was launched at the John Radcliffe Hospital on Tuesday 2 June and is already proving popular with staff. [It is open every day from 6pm to midnight](#). A second lounge is due to be launched at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury on Tuesday 9 June. It will be open from 4-10pm Monday to Friday.

## **New online Guide to Health and Wellness for OUH staff**

Many of us have been adapting to living and working in different ways as a result of COVID-19. To effectively care for others, our staff must first be able to care for themselves, and this has become ever more important since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A comprehensive online Guide to Health and Wellness has been created for OUH staff to access all the wellbeing support they need for themselves, their family, and their staff colleagues. It is available on [the Trust's website](#).

## **OUH leaders reaffirm commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion**

The Chief Executive Officer and Chief People Officer at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) have sent a personal message to all OUH staff to reflect on the Black Lives Matter movement and COVID-19's disproportionate impact on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities – including health and care staff. The full message is available [here](#).

## **Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Mental Health Helpline has launched new freephone numbers**

Calls will now be free to the [24/7 mental health helpline](#) which has received more than 1,000 calls from the public during the coronavirus pandemic. The round-the-clock helpline was set up during the outbreak to make it quicker and easier for people in Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire to get the right advice they need for their mental health and emotional wellbeing. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week for adults and children who need mental health care when their situation is not life threatening. The original local landline numbers will continue to operate alongside new 0800 freephone numbers.

- **Adults:** 0800 783 0119 or 01865 904 997
- **Children and young people:** 0800 783 0121 or 01865 904 998

## **Carers befriending line**

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) has launched a new [befriending phone line for carers](#); the service went live on Wednesday 3 June. Carers can call 01865 901012 at any time and leave their details. A befriender will call back between 11am and 12 noon, Monday to Friday.

## **Supporting the reopening of town centres**

Councils are playing a leading role in helping restart the local economy and supporting the ongoing stages of the easing of lockdown restrictions. The past week has seen us support schools in welcoming back more pupils and extend the hours of the household waste recycling centres, which are now open from 8am to 5pm seven days a week. We are now actively looking to the next phase of the easing of restrictions on 15 June, when non-essential shops will be allowed to open, and the district, city and county councils are working together and with partners to enable town centres across Oxfordshire to reopen safely.

## **£2.9m to be invested in fast-track plans to help safe travel across Oxfordshire**

Cyclists and pedestrians will soon start to notice the benefit of plans to spend £600,000 over the space of eight weeks – helping them to travel safely while social distancing as Oxfordshire gradually emerges from lockdown. These [fast-track plans](#) are the first part of a wider £2.9 million of Government funding to improve cycling infrastructure, parts of the roadwork network, and footpaths across Oxfordshire as the nation responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The county council will be working with the city and district councils to:

- Carry out enhanced maintenance for paths and cycle routes
- Install new cycle parking facilities across all districts and Oxford
- Change signal timings to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists
- Restrict hours of loading/servicing in key city centre streets
- Upgrade Park & Rides, with more room to park bikes
- Free up routes for pedestrians only
- Improve signage

## **Oxfordshire residents say ‘yes’ to being smoke free by 2025**

Local residents have given their feedback to say they support the [Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Strategy](#), which will encourage a smoke-free society. The strategy

was developed by the Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Alliance (OTCA) – a partnership that includes county, district and city councils; OCCG, OHFT and OUH. The strategy outlines a vision for Oxfordshire to be the first smoke-free county in five years' time. This is defined when adult smoking rates reach 5% by 2025 – five years sooner than aimed for in the Government's national Tobacco Control Plan for England.

### **COVID-19 funding pot for small businesses**

Small businesses affected by coronavirus restrictions are being encouraged to claim grants of up to £10,000 as the latest round of Government funding is rolled out. The city and district councils are administering the new discretionary scheme, which targets organisations that were not eligible for the previous grant schemes and which have ongoing property-related costs. Businesses operating in shared workspaces, market traders, small charities and bed and breakfasts, who can evidence a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis, could all benefit. Information about the application process for each district is available at:

- [Cherwell District Council](#)
- [Oxford City Council](#)
- [South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils](#)
- [West Oxfordshire District Council](#)

### **Celebrating the County Council's work during lockdown**

While the county has been sheltering and shielding, County Council staff have been hard at work supporting residents through this challenging time – from making over 10,000 phone calls to people who are shielding and providing virtual support to over 6,000 vulnerable people to improving 110 miles of road and creating a virtual library service that's loaned over 46,000 e-items. This [video](#) brings it to life.

### **Carers Week (8-14 June)**

To mark [Carers Week](#), we're celebrating the [contribution made by carers](#) to families and communities across Oxfordshire, we're celebrating the contribution made by carers across Oxfordshire, and who are part of 6.5 million people across the UK who are looking after older, seriously ill or disabled people. This year people across the country are continuing to face new challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people are taking on more caring responsibilities for their relatives and friends who need support, from helping with personal tasks such as dressing or practical tasks like shopping and cooking. Oxfordshire County Council is continuing to support carers during the pandemic by offering a Carers ID. The [Carer ID scheme](#) is for paid and independent carers, who are providing care and support to young people and adults known to OCC Social Care.

### **The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team seeks views with new online tool**

As part of the [Oxfordshire Plan 2050](#), the six local authorities in Oxfordshire, are together asking residents if the changes they've made during lockdown life – combined with new technology – could be the key in creating a more resilient, successful county in the future. They are looking for solutions to three big challenges facing the county as we plan for the future: i) how we will all live and work, ii) how we will move around, and iii) how we will tackle climate change. To get involved, visit [oxfordshireopenthought.org](http://oxfordshireopenthought.org)

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is one of the commitments made by the six Oxfordshire authorities as part of the £215m Housing and Growth Deal, which will help deliver new homes – including affordable and social housing, and infrastructure to the county while helping to tackle climate change.

**Frequency and further information:**

As the recovery phase of the COVID-19 response gets underway we will be reviewing the frequency of these briefings, as such there will be no briefing next week. However we do expect to continue to produce an NHS and local authority briefing for stakeholders on a regular basis going forward.

Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.

# Oxfordshire NHS & Care Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

8 April 2020

## National approach and working together locally

The position relating to COVID-19 is dynamic, in terms of national guidance for organisations and the general public. The Local Authorities and NHS organisations in Oxfordshire are working together to ensure our response is effective and coordinated. This briefing is to update you on how we are responding to the challenges and how this is changing the way we all work.

Our local approach is to keep the basic information updated on our websites for the public and to direct people to three national websites with more detailed information:

- [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) for general information including travel advice etc
- [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) for information and advice about the infection, symptoms and advice to reduce risk of infection
- [www.nhse.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhse.uk/coronavirus) for information for clinicians

Further information will be available as services develop and change to meet the rising demand as COVID 19 affects more people. In line with responses to emergencies our joint structure comprises:

- **The Oxfordshire GOLD group**, which includes the Chief Executives from Oxfordshire County Council, a District Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG), Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) is responsible for the strategic response objectives and overall management framework.
- **SILVER groups** (or cells) are mobilising the tactical response, determining priorities in obtaining and allocating resources. Planning and coordinating the response. Some examples of this include:
  - Ensuring coordination and services are in place to support vulnerable residents; including those identified through the national 'shielding' process
  - Primary and community services; Supporting discharge of patients from hospitals

## Service Changes during the response

The staff in all our organisations are on the front line in responding to this public health crisis and we are working to ensure services are organised to respond appropriately across the Oxfordshire health and care system. The work of our Oxfordshire carers, clinicians, care providers, Trusts and GP networks has been superb as they face an extensive period of acute challenge, many undertaking further training to extend their ability to respond to the known clinical pressures.

Some changes to current services have been necessary to allow staff to be deployed to support the care needed for COVID-19 patients and to help reduce the spread of infection, protecting patients, staff and the public. The service changes necessary, so far, include the temporary closure of the First Aid Units in Chipping Norton, Wallingford and Bicester and the midwife led unit at Wantage. They also include the cancellation of non-urgent operations and changes to the way appointments in primary community and outpatient services work, reducing the number of face-to-face appointments. Further changes may be necessary as the pandemic develops, with decisions taken as appropriate

and communicated to patients and the public.

### **Local Authorities**

All Oxfordshire Local Authorities are working hard to maintain frontline council services and their websites are updated regularly with information.

The most vulnerable residents across Oxfordshire will have recently received correspondence from the NHS identifying them as high risk and advising them to strictly self-isolate for 12 weeks.

This long term restriction may cause additional concerns for those people without any nearby support. Oxfordshire County Council and the District Councils have worked with volunteer and community organisations to ensure shielded residents without a support network have a simple point of contact for help.

A new, dedicated phone line provides access to a central team to who will be able to offer advice on a range of issues, and is operational from 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9pm – 5pm Saturday and Sunday on 01865 897820 or email [shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

For residents in Oxford City the contact line is 01865 249811 between 8am and 5pm or go to [www.oxford.gov.uk/CommunityAssistance](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/CommunityAssistance)

For those residents who are not in a high risk category but still need support, there are a number of initiatives taking place across the county, many of which, can be found on [Oxfordshire All In](#) or [Oxford Together](#). Alternatively residents can call the city and district councils directly for more information on community support.

Many schools, early years and childcare settings are closed until further notice, but some are staying open for children of key workers and vulnerable children, including during the Easter holidays. If anyone in your area needs help to finding a school place please ask them to email [Schoolplaceavailability@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Schoolplaceavailability@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Details of open early year providers are [here](#). If anyone is having difficulty finding a suitable early years place the Family Information Service team on 01865 323332 or email [fis.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:fis.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Primary Care**

There has been a great response from primary care which has radically changed the way GP practices are working. Total triage is in place with all patients instructed to phone their practice first. Appointments are being conducted via video consultations, online consultations and over the phone wherever possible and only those patients who really need to attend a GP surgery in person are being asked to do so.

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) staff have supported primary care to ensure practices have access to the information and equipment they need. Daily bulletins are being issued to practices with key information to support them in caring for their patients. In addition, a primary care portal has been focussed on COVID-19 and is the central repository for all the information and guidance coming from across the Oxfordshire system and nationally.

### **Primary care and community services**

Oxfordshire is also making good progress in the set-up of COVID-19 Assessment, Liaison and Monitoring (CALM) clinics across the county. This programme is known publicly as *Patient Care during Coronavirus*. The CALM programme is bringing together the people and resources of the Oxfordshire GP practices, Primary Care Networks, GP federations, acute and community teams from OHFT and OUH, supported by OCCG, Oxfordshire County Council and other partners, into one co-ordinated team effort.

CALM consists of:

- **Clinics** across the county – sometimes referred to as 'hot hubs'. The aim is to



have dedicated sites for suspected COVID patients to minimise, as much as possible, the exposure of patients and staff at other sites

- **Home visiting service** for COVID patients
- **A central access point** to offer support and advice for all the clinics.

Information about how to access GP services appropriately during the pandemic is available [here](#)

### **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust: Mental Health Services**

The Trust's priority is to minimise disruption to patients and to communicate to them how to access services during this very challenging period.

Teams are prioritising emergency and urgent work over routine work. The majority of appointments are taking place digitally or over the phone. This includes new assessments as well as ongoing support and treatment for existing patients. At present, the service is only offering face to face appointments for urgent and emergency referrals (if these cannot be done over the phone or digitally), with appropriate use of PPE where indicated.

The urgent care pathway, which includes liaison services in acute hospitals, Street Triage and Crisis team is operational and Oxfordshire Safe Havens remains open.

The inpatient service is functioning with restrictions on visits and leave.

The Talking Space Plus service's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies groups/courses are being delivered digitally by Microsoft Teams (similar to FaceTime). Individual treatment delivery is using digital channels and/or telephone. No face to face appointments are being offered. Oxfordshire CAMHS pathways for children and young people are operational.

Oxford Health has developed written and video materials for the general public on social isolation, anxiety about COVID-19 and maintaining wellbeing, which are on its website. This website is also regularly updated with essential information.

### **Community Learning Disabilities (LD) Services**

These services are still open for referrals, which are being screened and assessments are being conducted remotely via phone or virtually (dependant on preference) wherever possible. Existing clients have been reviewed to identify those with underlying health conditions - at particular risk due to COVID-19 - and those with limited social supports. The LD team is in regular telephone contact with these people and sharing COVID-19 easy read information in relation to the pandemic.

Telephone support is open for families/carers/providers to advise how to manage behavioural difficulties and change in routine to support with social distancing.

### **Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH)**

OUH has been refocusing clinical capacity on the management of the COVID-19 priority patients, establishing separate wards and increasing critical care capacity. By 27 March 2020 all patients who were medically fit to go home were discharged as per national guidance. These patients will be supported in the community by primary and community care colleagues.

As part of OUH's COVID-19 Plan it has stopped all routine referrals into the Trust. Wherever possible, OUH will be moving to 'virtual clinics' for outpatients where clinically appropriate. All routine elective outpatient appointments and routine day case and inpatient elective surgery for adults and children have been postponed. Patients are being contacted to inform them how this affects any appointments they have.

[Updates to services are available on a COVID-19 page of the OUH website.](#)

To help reduce the risk of spreading the infection among patients, staff and the public, there is limited visiting allowed with more details explained on the [OUH website](#).

## **COVID-19 testing and NHS staff**

The testing priority remains critically unwell patients. This is now being expanded to NHS front line staff as testing capacity increases. There continue to be capacity issues nationally and a Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) consistent approach is being planned for how testing will work with key frontline staff so we gain the biggest benefit. More information about this will be shared as these plans develop.

Staffing is being seriously affected by COVID-19. With more capacity for staff testing, those who have symptoms but test negative will be able to continue working. In addition, accommodation is being made available to non-infected staff who have family members who are infected. A county-wide recruitment campaign has been launched to recruit across clinical and non-clinical roles to support services in the community.

## **COVID-19 Research**

Oxford is also leading the way into research for COVID-19. Please see links to the various research projects responding to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- [Vaccine trial](#)
- [RECOVERY treatment trial](#)
- [New wearable technology that monitors patients' vital signs being used with COVID-19 patients on the isolation ward at the JR](#)

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Access to the appropriate PPE for staff seeing patients in hospital and in the community has been raised as a concern both locally and nationally. There are regular updates from Public Health England about supplies and how to access them which are cascaded locally.

In addition, work has been done across the BOB ICS on mutual aid for PPE across health and social care providers to ensure priority services working directly with COVID-19 patients have stock when the normal supply route cannot deliver in time.

## **Social distancing**

We all have a crucial role to play in containing the spread of the virus through social distancing and self-isolation. The Oxfordshire health and care system are coordinating a local public health campaign to reinforce the need for social distancing, explaining what it means in practice and repeating the key messages about how to stay safe.

We appreciate that this briefing is long but felt it necessary to update you on the system wide approach to COVID-19. Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.

# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

14 April 2020

The Oxfordshire health and local authority partners continue to work closely together to ensure an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Adjustments are being made to the way services work as national guidance and information is updated and as plans for responding are put in place.

## People at increased risk

COVID-19 can make anyone seriously ill, but some [people are at a higher risk](#) and need to take extra steps to avoid becoming unwell; these people are most vulnerable if they contract COVID-19 and are sometimes called 'shielded' or 'extremely vulnerable'. This includes:

- Solid organ transplant recipients who remain on long-term immune suppression therapy
- People with specific cancers
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors.
  - People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- People who are pregnant with significant congenital heart disease

The Oxfordshire list of 'shielded' residents has been created centrally by NHS England & Improvement (NHSE&I). Residents on the list should have received correspondence from the NHS, identifying them as high risk and advising them to strictly self-isolate for 12 weeks. Local authorities along with the NHS across Oxfordshire have worked with the local Voluntary and Community Sector, to develop [a simple point of contact](#) for those who have been told by government that they have been identified as extremely vulnerable, and who have no support network and would otherwise be completely isolated.

## Community volunteering

There has been a fabulous response from the public across the country wanting to offer support the local authorities during this time. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), Oxford City Council and the District Councils have received unprecedented numbers of people contacting them offering to help. Along with Oxfordshire's district councils and city council, the county council fully endorses the initiatives led by the local voluntary and community sector. Two online points of contact have been set up for local community groups and volunteers:

- For those living in Oxford City: [Oxford Together](#)
- For the rest of Oxfordshire: [Oxfordshire All In](#)

The county, city and district councils are also directly connecting individuals in need of support, food and other items with local community groups and volunteers. This is undertaken primarily in response to telephone or email contact with an individual, relevant local contact details can be found on each council's website.

Information has also been shared with GP practices and other front line services to help them identify additional support for someone vulnerable and needing help.

### **New clinics to support patients with coronavirus**

New COVID-19 clinics to support patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are now open across Oxfordshire. A home visiting service will also become available soon for people suffering from coronavirus who are deemed suitable for this and need support in their own home. This service is supported by GPs and community staff from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT).

The clinics and home visiting service will bring together clinicians and resources to support patients with coronavirus in the community. Appointments for the clinics and support are arranged over the telephone either via the patient's GP practice or via NHS111. The clinics are only for patients with a pre-arranged appointment; they are not a walk in facility.

Precautions are being taken in each clinic to reduce the risk of spreading the infection. This is to protect patients, staff and the general public.

### **Reducing face-to-face contact with services**

Public Health England has released a useful set of campaign resources on how to access NHS services from home. It urges patients to access an NHS service online or by phone from home first (unless it is a serious or life-threatening emergency, they feel very unwell, or to attend on-going treatment and have been told to do so). The Health at Home campaign signposts the public to useful information about how to contact their GP, order repeat prescriptions, manage their well-being and existing conditions – without leaving their home.

### **Technology to support patients care goes live**

The Oxfordshire Health Information Exchange (HIE), launched last week, gives clinicians a view of their individual patient's latest record from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH), together with the GP patient record. This means the most up to date information is available to support direct patient care. For example, following discharge from hospital, GPs will have direct access to test results from hospital rather than waiting for them to be sent. The tool also provides access to the Digital Care Plan and is accessible to GPs working in the COVID-19 clinics.

### **New 24/7 mental health helpline launched**

A 24/7 mental health helpline has been launched by Oxford Health to take pressure off NHS111 for mental health advice in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

With support from Oxfordshire Mind, it will operate during the coronavirus pandemic to provide people with specialist mental health care as NHS111 receives an increasing number of COVID-19 related calls.

The round-the-clock helpline will make it quicker and easier for people in both counties to get the right advice they need for their mental health and wellbeing. It is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Like NHS111, people can call when they need to find out when and where to get help and to access support from mental health professionals.

- For adults the number is 01865 904997.
- For children and young people the number is 01865 904998

People who already use mental health services should contact services directly using the numbers in their care plan.

The Mental Health Helpline adds to the range of local mental health services people can access directly.

### **Cancer treatment continues during COVID-19**

Cancer treatment at OUH continues to be provided during the COVID-19 pandemic in line with [national advice issued to trusts by NHS England and NHS Improvement \(NHSE&I\) on 30 March](#).

NHSE&I's guidance states that:

- The NHS must ensure that essential and urgent cancer treatments must continue
- Cancer specialists should discuss with their patients whether it is riskier for them to undergo or to delay treatment at this time
- If referrals or treatment plans depart from normal practice, safety netting must be in place so that patients can be followed up
- Following the national securing of independent hospital capacity, consideration should be given to using this extra capacity for cancer diagnosis and treatment

Within OUH, multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) of clinicians for all cancer tumour groups have used this guidance in their work.

Cancer surgery within OUH continues to be carried out primarily within the Oncology & Haematology Centre at the Churchill Hospital, a regional centre of excellence, but also at the John Radcliffe Hospital and at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre for specific tumours.

Additional independent hospital capacity at the Manor Hospital is being utilised and OUH is working closely with other providers within the Thames Valley Cancer Alliance to ensure that cancer patients can have their surgery in as timely a way as possible where there is spare capacity to carry this out.

### **DIY warning from our eye experts**

During the lockdown for COVID-19, Oxford Eye Hospital, based on the John Radcliffe site, has seen an increase in the number of patients needing care for serious eye injuries.

Eye doctors at OUH are urging people to take extra care and use eye protection when carrying out DIY and household tasks.

People are being encouraged to take extra care, particularly when gardening or carrying out DIY, by wearing eye protection when necessary, and locking up household detergents and chemicals away from children as they can cause nasty chemical burns, particularly to the eyes.

[More details are available on the OUH website.](#)

### **Latest OUH service information**

OUH provide the latest information on changes to services as a result of COVID-19 [here](#).

### **Dedicated hotline to support diabetes care**

A dedicated hotline has been set up by healthcare partners to help people with diabetes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Designed for patients who need urgent clinical advice, it is hoped that the hotline will give reassurance to patients who are concerned about their diabetic health during COVID-19, and also ultimately help prevent admission to hospital.

The patient hotline number is 01865 857357, and is available seven days a week from 8am until 4pm. Patients can also email [dsnop.ocdem@nhs.net](mailto:dsnop.ocdem@nhs.net) If patients have a query out of hours, they can call 0300 3047777.

## **COVID-19 testing for staff**

All Oxfordshire partners are clear that health and care staff must self-isolate as per public health guidelines if they, or any household contact, develop a persistent cough or fever. However, there are certain circumstances in which prompt exclusion of COVID-19 in a symptomatic staff member or symptomatic household contact would not only provide peace of mind for that individual but also enable the staff member to return to work more promptly.

Staff testing for COVID-19 has commenced across Oxfordshire. As per national guidance, the priority is staff working in critical care, emergency departments and ambulance services, and any other high priority groups determined locally. However as extra capacity is introduced testing is being extended to staff in community services, mental health, GP practices, and the wider NHS family, along with social care.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Availability of PPE has been an issue in Oxfordshire for our frontline services as in the rest of the county. Hospitals, ambulance trusts, GP practices, pharmacists, care homes and hospices have been receiving supplies issued directly to them.

Across BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire) we have put in place mutual aid arrangements to support providers wherever possible. We are using these mutual aid arrangements to ensure providers have access to PPE. We continue to monitor the situation closely to identify and address any specific supply issues.

## **Domestic abuse support shared by Oxfordshire County Council and partners**

Domestic abuse advice is being shared by OCC and its partners in recognition that COVID-19 related movement restrictions will be having a direct impact on many individuals and families. Existing abuse can escalate because of stress, anxiety and other challenges, whilst widespread health concerns and job losses may mean some people experience or use domestic abuse for the first time.

Oxfordshire's domestic abuse services continue to offer support and can help people at risk by finding safe alternative accommodation or by increasing safety measures to enable them to remain at home. The County Council is working closely with partners to ensure those at risk of domestic abuse are able to access the help they need to be safe.

## **How and where to get help and support:**

- Anyone in immediate danger should phone **999**.
- Or if in danger and unable to talk on the phone, dial **999** and then press **55**. This will transfer the call to police, who will assist without the caller having to speak.
- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Services offers free advice:  
**0800 731 0055** (Mon-Fri 10am-7pm). Email [das@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:das@a2dominion.co.uk)
- Alternatively, call the 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline:  
**0808 2000 247**.
- Anybody worried about causing harm to the ones they love can get help by contacting [Respect Phoneline](https://respectphoneline.org.uk/) - **0808 802 4040**. <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/>

## **Appreciation of key workers**

Our health and care people are doing extraordinary things in the face of an extraordinary challenge, and so need an extraordinary level of support. This is why nationally and locally a range of wellbeing support has been developed to care for and protect all of our people, whether at the front line or in supporting services.

The appreciation for key workers shown by the public across Oxfordshire has been encouraging for all staff working in health and social care and the other areas of public service that continue to operate. Together we are doing all that we can to support and treat patients with COVID-19.

The public have a key role to play in helping to stop the spread of the virus and our communications with the public will continue to reinforce the government's messages:

- Stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives
- Only go out for exercise, food, health care or to work if you can't work at home
- If you go out, stay at least 2m (6 feet) away from other people
- If you or anyone you live with has symptoms of COVID-19 follow the advice for self-isolation.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently

Your help in supporting these messages is much appreciated.

Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.

# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

21 April 2020

As we embark on the fifth week of lock down, the Oxfordshire health and local authority partners continue to work tirelessly to provide an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However we are not doing this alone; our voluntary and third sector partners and local groups are very involved in the effort to support staff and the community during this challenging time. Whilst this briefing is longer than usual, we thought we would share some of this fantastic work with you.

## **Healthwatch Oxfordshire is working to support residents and help them access information on health and social care**

Healthwatch Oxfordshire, the health and social care advocacy organisation which supports local people to influence health and social care in the county, is working hard to support residents who are feeling cut off from their community. Healthwatch has turned its effort during the COVID-19 pandemic to supporting people who don't know where to turn for information or help, or those who don't have access to the internet. They are helping to give isolated people information they need and to put them in touch with support during this challenging time.

People are also being advised to contact Healthwatch to use their language translation facility, to help access information, if English is not their first language; they are also providing links to British Sign Language updates and other formats.

People who require support to access help and services can contact Healthwatch by:

- Calling on 01865 520520 Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm
- Emailing [hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](mailto:hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)
- Visiting [www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)

Healthwatch is also gathering information on how people in the county are managing with accessing health and care at this time, and how coronavirus support is for them. They are keen to hear people's experience either by phoning them directly or filling in a short questionnaire on the front page of the [website](#). Daily information updates from Healthwatch are also available via Twitter [@HealthwatchOxon](#) or the Healthwatch Oxfordshire Facebook page, as well as signing up to the weekly news bulletin [here](#).

## **Volunteering**

Many volunteers are coming forward across the country to support the efforts being taken to beat this pandemic. The term 'volunteers' is being used to describe very different groups of people and organisations:

1. General population/individuals wanting to volunteer. The main route for registering has been through the local authorities but some community initiatives have attracted volunteers to support local residents.
2. NHS volunteers are those individuals from the general population who have volunteered and registered through the NHS route (it is likely that many will have also registered above). This is a nationally run process and there is a referral route to access these individuals for specific tasks.
3. Voluntary/third sector organisations. These are already established and linking in through local authorities and/or the NHS (for example they may already provide services).
4. Businesses offering to help – typically unrelated to business as usual e.g. Harwell offering to manufacture PPE such as 3d printed face shields, Renault Formula 1 offering their PPE.



5. Former NHS health care professionals who have offered to return to practice. There is a national process to process these returners and match them with local NHS organisations.

### **Close collaboration with the voluntary and community sector**

The close collaboration between the County Council, Districts and the City, with the voluntary and community sector is continuing, with over 550 parish and town councils, community groups, organisations and local businesses registered on Oxfordshire All In and Oxford Together. Through these channels there is a collective of over 45,000 volunteers across the county.

There have been some amazing examples of existing voluntary groups adapting to address the current needs of communities. For example, the scout leaders in Witney are running a prescription home delivery service so that people do not have to queue outside pharmacies. In just over two weeks, they have delivered more than 1,700 prescriptions, helping more people stay safe at home.

The Oxfordshire County Council website provides a central hub of information and guidance for voluntary and community sector organisations, including the range of funding opportunities that can be accessed: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/volunteer-support](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/volunteer-support).

### **Working with residents**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have a dedicated support service for their residents to complement the wider Oxfordshire system's response work. The service:

- Provides support for the thousands of South and Vale residents on the NHS' shielded list, which includes weekly calls to check on their welfare and to address any concerns.
- Provides support for any South and Vale resident that needs help and has nowhere else to turn to.

The councils' support goes beyond simply providing essential supplies such as food and medicine – it includes help with daily activities, transport to medical appointments and a regular friendly chat.

To be able to offer this support to any resident in addition to those in the high risk and vulnerable categories, the councils have built up a huge network of community volunteers. The councils' role is to connect these residents with a local community group that can provide the support they desperately need and on an ongoing basis.

It's through this approach the councils hope to create a long-lasting legacy of active community groups that support vulnerable and isolated residents far beyond this pandemic to build more cohesive and connected communities in the future, which younger generations then model. Sometimes, however, the need for help cannot wait 24 hours or a community group isn't available, so the councils have also put in place a wraparound service to deliver urgent supplies and medicines, through a bank of staff volunteers.

To access help, residents simply need to call 01235 422600 or email [community.support@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:community.support@southandvale.gov.uk). The service mirrors Oxfordshire County Council's and is available Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 8pm and Saturdays and Sundays between 9am and 5pm.

To help promote the service the council has produced a series of promotional videos using real case studies to demonstrate that anyone can find themselves in a situation of needing help and should not to be afraid to ask. This is one of them <https://youtu.be/96ulEMXtu84>

### **Key relationship helps feed residents most at risk in West Oxfordshire**

Since COVID-19 first became a reality, a key priority for West Oxfordshire District Council has been ensuring those at risk are receiving sufficient food.

From the outset, the council team were able to build on their relationship with the Witney and West Oxfordshire Food Bank, an established organisation which deals with referrals from residents across the district who, for whatever reason, are struggling to buy food.

Since the crisis began, council staff have been helping ensure the food bank has enough stocks to meet with spiralling demand. They have also referred residents who have been getting in touch directly to the food bank.

The food bank received 109 referrals in February this year but in the Easter week alone they had 50 in four days. There have been problems with food supplies as the food bank normally receives donations made by people visiting supermarkets but this dried up as individuals have struggled to get food themselves.

Council officers worked with the trustees of the food bank to open an account with wholesaler Bidfood where food in sufficient quantities could be bought using cash donated to the food bank. They also worked closely with Didcot-based SOFEA which, in partnership with FareShare, re-distributes food surplus from supermarkets across the Thames Valley.

The food bank and the district council are working very closely to ensure food parcels are distributed to those in need. The council is also supporting the food bank to access sources of grant funding and helping them write bids which is vital to support the success of the project.

### **Single Point of Contact and Locality Hubs at Oxford City Council**

At the end of March, Oxford City Council launched a city-wide single point of contact (SPOC) for all residents and partners that require support due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SPOC takes referrals from organisations and residents that require support; these needs are recorded and then triaged to the five Locality Hubs for a response and action. Each Locality Hub covers a geographic area that focuses on meeting the needs of the people that require support. The Hubs have responded to 490 referrals up to 7 April. These have ranged from a friendly phone call, picking up urgent supplies to tackling issues related to isolation. A breakdown on referrals shows:

- 91% of referrals were classified as vulnerable
- 55% of referrals had mobility issues
- Seven referrals requested support and a reminder to take their medicines; emphasising the need and importance of prevention work during the COVID-19 crisis, particularly for the most vulnerable residents.

SPOC will also make referrals to the County Council if there are adult social care issues / and to the Locality Hubs if there is a dual need. Nine referrals were made to the County Council due to specific adult social care needs – emphasising that the referral process with the County Council is working well.

Referrals should be made via:

- Oxford City Council Contact Centre / SPOC Number 01865 249 811
- Online Access [www.oxford.gov.uk/CommunityAssistance](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/CommunityAssistance)
- SPOC is a 24/7 hour provision

Through Oxford City Council's work, they will continue to encourage vulnerable people to remain in their homes and have their needs met – thereby reducing pressure on the NHS. Like other organisations, the Oxford City Council response is reminding people to take medicines and helping to pick up urgent supplies and tackling other issues associated with isolation. For more information please visit the Oxford City Council [website](#).

## **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) continues to work with the county's business community, signposting them to both up-to-date Government resources and local authority support. In addition, they are also highlighting their own new and existing business support programmes.

More widely, OxLEP are also playing a 'convening' role during the pandemic, helping to mobilise the county's private sector to support the local and national response to the pandemic. For more information, go to: [www.oxfordshirelep.com/coronavirus](http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/coronavirus).

### **Supporting the most at risk residents – the shielded patients list and other vulnerable residents**

In the briefing last week, we talked about the Oxfordshire Shielded patients list. This is a list created centrally by NHS England of people who are most at risk from infection from COVID-19 owing to a specific group of underlying clinical conditions. These people have been instructed to self-isolate for 12 weeks.

There are approximately 13,000 people on the NHSE shielded list in Oxfordshire and of these around 7,200 people have responded to the letters sent by the NHS centrally and have registered for support to help them isolate for 12 weeks. Their details are passed to OCC which in turn checks whether they are already known to social care and pass the details onto the relevant district or city council.

About a third of these people who have registered have said they need help receiving essential supplies. Community pharmacies are responsible for access to prescriptions and local authorities are supporting in terms of food, social and community support. In addition, Government food supplies continue to be delivered to those who have stated they need them.

The 7,200 people who have registered are being called or emailed individually by local authorities to offer a welfare check to ensure they have the support they need. OCCG has also asked all GP practices to ensure that they have a plan for the shielded patients on their practice lists.

Central Government has supplied limited details of the 13,000 to supermarkets to ensure this group can get priority access to shopping delivery slots.

More and more Oxfordshire residents are responding to their GPs' and NHS letters and the list of 7,200 continues to grow daily. The NHS England list was expanded by 5,000 people in the week before Easter and so we can expect a surge of enquiries as this group registers for support. Local authorities and the voluntary sector will maintain their proactive contact with this group as it is added to, identifying those at risk and signposting options for community support. The longer list of 13,000 is known to GPs and health practitioners who are focused on making sure that there are plans in place to support each of them.

In addition to those who are formally shielded under this scheme, there is a much wider group of people who may be vulnerable in terms of their health and welfare at this time. Local authority and health partners are working to identify this wider group which includes anyone over the age of 70, pregnant women, and those at risk of domestic violence, deprivation, food poverty, housing, homelessness, severe mental illness, learning disability and/or autism and social isolation.

Partners across the wider public and voluntary sector system are working with their stakeholders and clients to ensure that all forms of vulnerability are addressed. Work includes signposting funding opportunities for the voluntary sector, joint approaches to communication around opportunities and services that are available, mapping the various activities that are underway to identify and address any gaps in provision.

It is presumed that this support offer will be needed until the formal lock down is stepped down and/or instructions in respect of the 12 week self-isolation programme are amended.

## Support for mental health services

Oxfordshire third sector partners continue to provide NHS services with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT), adapting provision to meet the current situation and support service-users and patients in our communities. Services include Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, TalkingSpace Plus, Oxfordshire Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) model and older adult mental health services.

Third sector partners are also supporting the newly launched Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Helpline launched at Easter to take pressure off NHS 111, specifically with staffing from Oxfordshire Mind and soon Response.

Third sector partners who are continuing to support business as usual include:

- Oxfordshire Mind and PML - TalkingSpace Plus
- Response, Restore, Oxfordshire Mind, Connection Support, Elmore Community Services, Root and Branch, Bridewell – Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership
- Response and partners (Ark-T Centre, Autism Family Support, Sofea, Trax, Oxfordshire Youth, RAW, Synolos, Banbury Young Homelessness Project) - CAMHS Oxfordshire
- Age UK – older adults Oxfordshire
- Young Dementia UK – older adults Oxfordshire

## How Oxford Hospitals Charity is supporting OUH staff during the COVID-19 pandemic

Oxford Hospitals Charity supports the four hospital sites within Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) – the John Radcliffe Hospital, Churchill Hospital and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC) in Oxford and the Horton General Hospital in Banbury.

The charity team is working a rota of 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, doing all they can to support as many staff and patients as possible. They are also working with the hundreds of local businesses, groups and individuals who want to offer to help – and ensuring they do not come into the hospitals unnecessarily.

The charity is particularly grateful to the volunteers who are helping to deliver support and to all those in the local community who have donated or fundraised for their appeal [www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/staffsupport](http://www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/staffsupport) (for Horton [www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/horton](http://www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/horton)) .

The charity is co-ordinating offers of support (except PPE and accommodation which go through the Trust) so, if you are asked, please direct people to:

- [charity@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:charity@ouh.nhs.uk)
- 01865 743444
- [www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/staffsupport](http://www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/staffsupport)
- On Twitter @oxhospcharity

A few examples of the support being provided are listed below:

- 350 meals, twice a day for frontline John Radcliffe staff, via [Salute the NHS](#) – increasing to 600 meals, twice a day
- Numerous other meals to wards and departments across the JR, Churchill and NOC
- 250 meals a day, twice a day, for frontline staff at the Horton General
- 150 meals a day for non-frontline staff at the Horton General
- Meals and support for staff staying in hotels and lodgings to be close to the hospitals
- 2,000+ care packs, plus thousands of Easter eggs donated and distributed across all hospitals

- Plans for additional psychological support for staff and creating a number of 'Respite Rooms' for staff to be able to rest and recharge in a comfortable and quiet area
- Practical items such as supplying hundreds of phone chargers to wards for patients' use, and kettles and microwaves, for staff use.

The OUH is incredibly grateful for the work of Oxford Hospitals Charity and to all those businesses, groups and individuals involved in supporting our staff and patients.

### **Tablets help patients in hospital stay in touch with friends and family**

Visiting restrictions are in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep patients and staff safe in the four OUH hospitals in Oxford and Banbury. These restrictions mean that patients are not allowed visitors – with a few exceptions including enabling one visitor for patients nearing the end of life.

However, the OUH Trust is helping patients to stay connected with friends and family and friends, with tablet devices provided to patients free of charge so that they can video call their loved ones. This 'virtual visiting' has been made possible thanks to a partnership between the Trust and their suppliers.

The Chief Digital and Partnerships Officer, at the OUH, set about securing a technological solution and within a week more than 200 Samsung tablets were delivered to the Trust.

The Trust is very grateful to staff at Wifi Spark as this project, from its inception to set up in the hospital, took six days. It is making a real difference to patients and helping them to keep in touch with family and friends. [More information is available on the OUH website.](#)

### **Key workers come together to Clap For Our Carers**

The weekly 'Clap For Our Carers' at 8pm every Thursday helps the public show their appreciation for key workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also an opportunity for us to show our support for key workers in different sectors.

OUH staff were joined by colleagues from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Thames Valley Police on Thursday 16 April when they joined us outside the West Wing at the John Radcliffe Hospital for the 'Clap For Our Carers' [event](#).

### **Patient praises OUH staff after recovering from COVID-19**

As of Thursday 16 April, 150 people had been successfully treated for COVID-19 in OUH hospitals and discharged home. Malcolm Airs, 79, from Dorchester-upon-Thames, took the time and trouble to thank the staff who treated him. Malcom's story and thank you is available on the Trust's [website](#).

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Availability of PPE has been an issue in Oxfordshire for our frontline services as in the rest of the county. Hospitals, ambulance trusts, GP practices, pharmacists, care homes and hospices have been receiving supplies issued directly to them. Across BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire) we have put in place mutual aid arrangements to support providers wherever possible. We are using these mutual aid arrangements to ensure providers have access to PPE. We continue to monitor the situation closely to identify and address any specific supply issues.

### **Staff Testing**

The priority for coronavirus testing has been patients in hospital, to inform their clinical diagnosis, followed by NHS and social care workers having to self-isolate because either they, or a member of their household, have symptoms.

As a next step, there is now the capacity to start to test other frontline workers who are having to self-isolate because either they, or a member of their household, have symptoms. Like with NHS and social care workers, we want to find out if these people have the virus – and, if they don't, they might be able to return to their work that is so

important. This programme will be rolled out over the coming week and an update will be included in next week's briefing.

### **Help tackle the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health**

University of Oxford researchers are asking the public's help to understand the best forms of support for children and young people's mental health during the pandemic. A survey for parents and carers of children aged 4-16 years seeks to gather insight into what protects children and young people's mental health over time and at particular stress points, and how this varies according to child and family characteristics. The aim is to identify what advice, support and help parents would find most useful, so that the most effective support can be given to the best effect. More information is available on OHFT's website [here](#) and the survey is available [here](#).

Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.

# Oxfordshire NHS and Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

28 April 2020

## Staff testing

Guidance from NHS/Local Resilience Forum was circulated on Thursday 23 April setting out the national arrangements for staff testing. This guidance included information for employers and staff about how to access the testing service. Two testing arrangements are now in place: one is for health and care staff, who will be tested at local NHS testing sites; the other is for staff identified as key workers and their household members who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, who will be tested at Government-run regional testing centres. For Oxfordshire, the regional testing centre, now open, is at Thornhill Park and Ride.

## Oxfordshire at the heart of COVID-19 research

There are a wide range of COVID-19 related research studies taking place in Oxfordshire:

Oxford patients with COVID-19 were among the first to be recruited to [the RECOVERY trial](#) which is testing the effects of potential drug treatments for those with the virus. This major national clinical trial is the largest of its kind in the world. It is being led by researchers from the University of Oxford. By 16 April, more than 5,000 patients had been recruited to the trial in 165 NHS hospitals. Data from the trial will be regularly reviewed so that any effective treatment can be identified quickly and made available to all patients.

Researchers at the University of Oxford's Jenner Institute and the Oxford Vaccine Group [began testing a COVID-19 vaccine](#) in human volunteers in Oxford on 23 April. Around 1,110 people will take part in the trial, half receiving the vaccine and the other half (the control group) receiving a widely available meningitis vaccine.

The researchers, who are supported by the NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), [started screening](#) healthy volunteers aged between 18 and 55 in March. The ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine has been produced in Oxford. The Oxford BRC provided essential funding to get the trial up and running. The team, including Prof Sarah Gilbert and Prof Adrian Hill of the University of Oxford's Jenner Institute and Prof Andrew Pollard of the University's Oxford Vaccine Group, told a press briefing on 17 April that they hoped to have 1 million doses of the vaccine ready by September to carry out large-scale clinical trials during the autumn.

The NIHR Oxford BRC's Co-theme Lead for Antimicrobial Resistance and Modernising Microbiology, Prof Sarah Walker, is the Chief Investigator for a [major new Government study](#) to track COVID-19 in the general population. Some 20,000 households across England are being contacted to take part in the first wave of the study, which aims to help improve understanding around the current rate of infection and how many people are likely to have developed antibodies to the virus. Participants in the study will form a representative sample of the entire UK population by age and geography. The results will help scientists and the Government in the ongoing response to the coronavirus outbreak, with initial findings expected to be available in early May.

Wearable technology developed by Oxford BRC-supported biomedical engineers and medical researchers is being used on the isolation ward at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford to monitor patients' vital signs. The BRC's Technology and Digital Health theme, led by Professor Peter Watkinson and Professor Lionel Tarassenko, has been developing and testing the concept of a [virtual High-Dependency Unit](#) (vHDU) for the past 18 months.

Oxford BRC has allocated funding to six new COVID-19 related research projects. You can read about them on the BRC website [here](#) and [here](#).

## **Clinical Lead urges people to use Emergency Departments**

Staff at OUH are encouraging people whose health may be at risk to come to the Emergency Departments at the John Radcliffe and Horton General hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendances have been significantly lower since the pandemic started and the Trust is concerned that people are putting their health at risk by not accessing life-saving services.

Staff will treat any serious conditions or ailments. There are systems in place to triage patients with suspected COVID-19, so everyone who comes to hospital will be treated in a safe way.

[More information is available on the OUH website.](#)

## **Pregnant women encouraged to attend important appointments**

Pregnant women in Oxfordshire are being reminded that medical help is still at hand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like many providers of maternity services, the OUH has made a number of changes to how maternity care is provided during pregnancy, to keep both women and staff safe. This has included carrying out some appointments by telephone or video. However, maternity services are still open 24/7 for births, urgent care, and clinical advice for women who have concerns about their health or their unborn baby.

Some face-to-face appointments with a midwife or doctor are essential, and it is important for women to attend.

It is understandable that many people have anxieties around their health during this very unusual time - especially pregnant women.

Women are reminded care is still available and it is important that they stay in contact with their maternity team and attend their scheduled appointments. Appropriate measures will be taken to keep them safe from infection and wherever possible appointments will be done remotely.

## **COVID-19 patient praises 'amazing' OUH staff**

A woman who is back home recovering from COVID-19 has described the "most amazing" Oxford University Hospitals staff who cared for her as her "extended family". Emma-Jayne Rose, 38, from Abingdon, took the time and trouble to thank the staff who treated her. [You can read Emma-Jayne's story in full on the OUH website.](#)

## **Mental Health Helpline 24/7 for all in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire**

People of all ages living in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire can get mental health support for themselves or a loved one round the clock by using the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Helpline, launched by Oxford Health with third sector partners earlier this month. This service is open to all and it's not just for those in crisis, but for anyone who is concerned about their emotional or mental wellbeing at the current time.

- **Adults:** 01865 904997.
- **Children and young people:** 01865 904998.

More information is available [here](#)

## **COVID-19 information for anyone with reading difficulties**

Oxford Health Learning Disability services' clinicians have been developing accessible information about COVID-19 for anyone who has difficulty with written information. This includes information on:

- Identifying symptoms



- How to access help and support
- Psychological impacts, managing emotional distress
- A wide range of resources and advice on staying healthy during isolation

This information, which gathers work by many Oxford Health teams, including psychological services and physical health, is available [here](#).

### **Digital hub offers Cherwell residents an action-packed guide to staying inside**

Cherwell residents can head online to find inspiring new ways to look after their health and wellbeing during the lockdown. A new digital [activity and wellbeing hub](#) has been launched to provide a one-stop-shop of resources and information about how to keep happy and healthy. The website includes links to Cherwell's new sport and leisure offerings as well as a digital version of the popular Families Active Sporting Together (FAST) initiative, with daily YouTube videos to help families stay fit. The site also includes details from partners across the region, such as Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, to encourage people to make the most of their daily dose of outdoor exercise.

### **Advice to help food banks and markets stay open**

After learning some food banks and food markets had closed over concerns about maintaining social distancing, staff from Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council have devised practical infection control guidance for people and organisations supporting more vulnerable groups. A shared resource is now in place which helps communities, third-sector organisations and small businesses understand how to keep themselves and others safe. The guidance, which has received positive feedback, has helped several food banks and food markets to remain open, providing essential items to less privileged individuals and families.

### **South and Vale's community support service**

South and Vale's community support service has connected over 500 residents with local community groups since the service was established less than a month ago. Consisting of more than 65 FTE staff volunteers and 200 community groups, the service is aimed at residents who need help because of their health or financial circumstances and who have nowhere else to turn. To date the councils have delivered more than 119 food parcels, feeding 238 residents including 55 children.

### **Oxford City Council supports food distribution for Ramadan**

Oxford City Council and the Central Oxford Mosque have teamed up to provide food for those most in need within the Muslim community in Oxford at the beginning of Ramadan. The food packages – which are Halal and contain a wide range of essential food supplies, including rice, flour, oil, dates, tinned tomatoes and chickpeas – are aimed at vulnerable or low-income Muslim families to enable them to close and open their fast during the month of Ramadan. Every food pack will also contain a leaflet from the City Council explaining the wide range of other support available in Oxford during the coronavirus pandemic.

### **OxLEP COVID-19 support**

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) has launched additional business support programmes, which complement its existing support for the county's business community:

- **Critical COVID-19 support programme** – this is designed to provide support and guidance in areas including business resilience, cash flow, cost reductions, and business diversification.
- **Regional redeployment service** - this service will match those recently made redundant with new work in sectors experiencing a surge in employment demand.

- **Digital Q&As:** a series of online Q&A events will be running over the coming months. The first, 'Supporting businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic' will be available via OxLEP's YouTube channel from midday on 30 April.

Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.

# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

05 May 2020

Oxfordshire health and local authority partners continue to work together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## How are we supporting care homes in the county?

Supporting care homes to provide high quality care to some of our most vulnerable residents during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential. Health and social care partners across Oxfordshire are working closely with care home providers to develop and deliver a support plan for homes, their staff and residents. This work is taking place across the system, with a Bronze Cell, including provider representatives, set up to provide oversight and co-ordination. The focus of the work includes preventative and proactive support for all care homes to ensure that education and understanding regarding care for residents, in line with national guidance, is in place; and focused support work with care homes that may be experiencing outbreaks or particular challenges. The themes addressed include:

- **Testing:** The importance of making testing available to care home staff and residents is recognised. Care home staff are key workers and have had access to testing at the static and mobile sites set up in Oxfordshire. OUH and OHFT have been working with Oxfordshire County Council to consider how to roll out a testing programme for care home residents in line with the national models.
- **PPE and Infection Control:** Information and guidance has been provided to services, including via a webinar for care home staff hosted by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's clinical lead for infection control. The Care Home Support Service will continue to offer support and advice and further webinars with care home staff will offer opportunities to share concerns, ask questions and keep them connected. This theme links closely with Oxfordshire County Council's work to ensure care homes, and other providers, have sufficient supplies of PPE to deliver safe care.
- **Staffing:** Oxfordshire County Council leads on issues relating to staffing in care homes to ensure safe staffing levels are maintained during COVID-19. This includes regular contact with homes to ensure that issues can be identified and support can be discussed at the earliest opportunity. A range of contingency plans have been developed across system partners which are reviewed weekly. Care home providers have welcomed these jointly developed contingency plans.
- **Safeguarding:** This remains a high priority as all care home residents are vulnerable adults. The aim is to ensure that normal safeguarding referrals and management activity are maintained through COVID-19 and to develop strategies with care homes enabling safe care to continue throughout the pandemic, alongside timely reporting procedures.
- **Clinical Support and Patient Management:** ensuring that clinical support for care homes and residents remains in place throughout this period, to meet medical needs associated with COVID-19 and general medical needs is essential. This has included guidance around symptom identification and management and targeted support via Primary Care and community health provision. This area remains under careful review given recently published national guidance which NHS partners are responding to.

## GP opening hours - 8 May Bank Holiday

Arrangements are in place for GP practices across Oxfordshire to be open on the Bank Holiday on Friday 8 May 2020 for routine and urgent appointments between 8am and 2pm, with all access being by telephone in the first instance. COVID-19 clinics will also be open to

see suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients in Abingdon, Oxford and Banbury. Out of hours will provide cover for the afternoon of 8 May 2020 from 2pm. Patients are asked to phone first and not visit their GP practice or the COVID-19 clinics unless asked to do so.

### **'Hand it back campaign' delivers results**

In early April an Oxfordshire system-wide campaign asked people to help their local NHS by returning any equipment they had been loaned and no longer needed, as much of this equipment could be recycled and reused. Oxfordshire residents were asked to look around their homes for equipment with an NRS Healthcare sticker on it, from beds and mattresses to walking and toilet frames. The campaign, which was promoted online, on social media and in the media by all the system partners, has been a huge success, resulting in over 1,000 beds back.

### **International Workers Memorial Day**

Staff across the NHS and local authorities paused to hold a minute's silence at 11am on 28 April to pay their respects to all key workers who have lost their lives. Some gathered outside key sites, while keeping socially distant, including the hospitals and clinics. This year, the event was particularly poignant in paying tribute to the sacrifice made by so many workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also thanking all those who continue to do vital work at great risk. Sadly, by the day of the commemoration, more than 90 NHS workers had died since the nation went into lockdown, including staff from Oxfordshire.

### **Increased swab testing for critical key workers in the NHS, social care and other sectors**

As part of the Government's new testing programme, three new Government run mobile testing sites have opened this week in Oxfordshire. They offer testing for key workers and for the over-65s who believe they may be displaying COVID-19 symptoms. They are located in the car park of Cherwell District Council's offices at Bodicote House; in the car park of Bicester Village; and in New Street car park in Chipping Norton. The facility at Bodicote House came into operation on 1 May and council staff worked closely with Ministry of Defence staff to ensure the set-up of the site ran smoothly. We are working with the national team to try and ensure we have earlier notice of the timetables and location for mobile testing sites. These sites are in addition to the regional site at Thornhill park and ride and the NHS staff run testing sites at the Churchill and John Radcliffe Hospitals.

### **Digital developments across health and social care**

While we find ourselves in a challenging and difficult time we must also take the opportunity to recognise the positives in our collective response and the beneficial changes that we have brought about in recent weeks. This includes many things that we will continue, where appropriate, as the lock down is lifted.

One area where we have seen significant change is the use of technology, including digital consultations, remote monitoring and diagnostics. The sections below provide examples of how the Oxfordshire health and local authority partners are using technology in innovative ways to support patients and residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust**

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) has continued to expand new digital ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes providing iPads so families can safely visit patients virtually; offering consultations via secure video to patients; and clinical meetings with staff. The True Colours app, developed by the University of Oxford's Department of Psychiatry, helps people to monitor and manage their psychological wellbeing, and the effective use of virtual reality to treat a range of conditions including social phobia.

Like many others, the Trust now holds most meetings via MS Teams. The Chief Executive has been holding live video briefings and Q&A sessions on the pandemic response open to all staff using MS Live every two weeks. The first event reached 1,300 people - 800 joined live, 500 viewed on catch-up. Learning from this and early experiments pioneered by the OHFT communications director and the Trust's IT department was shared with colleagues at OUH, OCCG and OCC to inform and enable their live events.

### **Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

Digital technology has supported new and different ways of working at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust to improve the experience of patients and staff. The Trust held its first 'virtual' staff briefing on Microsoft Teams Live hosted by its Executive team on 30 April. Eight hundred and seventy staff joined live and a further 250 staff have watched a recording of the briefing on MS Stream; in total 1,120 staff have viewed the briefing. As the NHS moves into the recovery phase, the Trust's priority is to embed these digital developments.

#### **Video consultations transform patient care**

Attend Anywhere® is a web-based platform being piloted across 40 NHS trusts in England, including OUH, which enables clinicians to hold a video consultation with a patient rather than a traditional outpatient appointment in a hospital clinic. Patients and staff can access Attend Anywhere® on any internet-enabled device and there is no need to download and install any special software – the patient is simply sent a weblink. Using Attend Anywhere® reduces travel time and costs for patients, enables staff to work remotely, and reduces traffic congestion and car parking issues on hospital sites.

The use of Attend Anywhere® has increased markedly during the COVID-19 pandemic when many face-to-face appointments have not been possible, not least to keep patients safe by reducing the risks of a hospital visit. The Trust has run over 1,900 video consultations with patients, totalling 655 hours of video consultations since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic when visiting restrictions and the postponement of routine operations and outpatient appointments were put in place. The number of video consultations undertaken has put the OUH in the top 10 Trusts nationally for the use of video consultations. A key part of the Trust's recovery plan is how to maintain and build on this digital innovation.

#### **Tablets help patients in hospital stay in touch with friends and family**

Visiting restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic mean that patients in the four OUH hospitals in Oxford and Banbury are not allowed visitors – with a few exceptions including patients nearing the end of life, children in hospital, and women in labour.

However, similar to OHFT, OUH is helping patients to stay connected with friends and family by providing them with tablet devices free of charge so that they can video call their loved ones. This ['virtual visiting'](#) has been made possible thanks to a partnership between the Trust and its suppliers.

#### **New wearable technology monitors COVID-19 patients**

Wearable technology that monitors patients' vital signs is being used with COVID-19 patients on the isolation ward at the John Radcliffe Hospital. The system has been developed by biomedical engineers and medical researchers supported by the [NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre \(BRC\)](#) and went live on 23 March. The BRC's Technology and Digital Health theme, led by Professor Peter Watkinson and Professor Lionel Tarassenko, has been developing and testing the concept of a [virtual High-Dependency Unit \(vHDU\)](#) for the past 18 months. A vHDU is a general hospital ward in which high-risk patients are monitored using a new generation of wearable sensors that measure pulse rate, respiratory rate and blood oxygen saturation, combined with Bluetooth-linked tablet computers and smart alerting

algorithms. This [new wearable technology](#) not only reduces the burden on nursing staff, allowing them to perform vital-sign observations for high risk patients at the same rate as for lower risk patients, but also improves early detection when a patient's vital signs become abnormal.

### **Technology in GP practices**

Ninety seven per cent of GP practices in Oxfordshire are now using online and video technology to carry out consultations with patients who have access to computers or tablets. This is a safe way to provide care to patients, protecting them as well as staff. It helps reduce the number of face-to-face appointments although GPs continue to still see patients in their surgeries if they need to be seen. Online consultations are reviewed and actioned which could include signposting to other services, a telephone conversation with a GP or a request to see a GP.

The Digital Care Assistant is being trialled at a COVID-19 clinic in Oxford. This system, developed by Oxehealth, has been installed in five clinical rooms at the clinic, and relies on an optical sensor to enable GPs to obtain a patient's pulse and breathing rate measurements without being in the room. When patients arrive at the clinic they enter a clinic room for initial assessment without direct physical contact with clinicians. GPs triage patients via the system and then decide whether to undertake a physical examination. The installation is the first of its kind in primary care; its deployment was scoped, installed and went live within 4 working days.

### **Oxfordshire County Council, District and City Councils**

Oxfordshire County Council's Adult Social Care currently supports more than 6,000 people. Social distancing rules may have changed the way care is delivered, but social care workers are using technology in new ways to help support some of our most vulnerable residents. For example, Banbury Day Centre, which supports 52 adults with a learning disability, ageing health needs, physical disability, dementia or mental health needs, is offering a bespoke service through a range of technology platforms to support people's physical and emotional wellbeing. The day care visitors are invited to connect via daily emails or video calls, and a [YouTube channel](#) has been launched so people can log on each day to watch singing, get involved with quizzes and get companionship.

Online platforms are also playing a key role in supporting communities across the county. Two online community hubs in particular are being widely used to give and find support for those who are at high-risk or self-isolating: [Oxford Together](#) for those in Oxford City, and [Oxfordshire All In](#) for those in the rest of the county. The latter now includes a partial food access map and database, thanks to Good Food Oxford, which signposts a range of community food services across the county, such as the Witney and West Oxfordshire Food Bank, which deals with referrals from residents who are struggling to buy food. The City and Districts continue to work directly with the food banks and larders in their areas and are working collaboratively with the County Council and a range of food providers to develop, at pace, an evidence based food strategy and are working with a range of agencies, including Good Food Oxford, on this.

Online video and live-streamed events are also proving an effective way to keep residents and businesses informed and connected. The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) has recently launched a series of online Q&A events to help advise and support local businesses through the pandemic, with panels featuring council and business leaders. The first event is now available on [YouTube](#).

Daily fitness circuit videos are being published by the Families Active Sporting Together (FAST) initiative on Cherwell District Council's [activity and wellbeing hub](#) to help families to stay fit; while Oxford City Council provides access to a wide range of exercise and wellbeing videos via its online [activity hub](#). South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District

Councils are using video with [real case studies](#) to encourage people to ask for help if they need it. They have also launched online versions of their arts centres ([The Beacon](#) and [Cornerstone](#)) and [health and wellbeing programmes](#). Oxfordshire Libraries are hosting online storytelling and poetry readings on their [Facebook](#) page, and online library services have seen a 75% increase in the number of ebooks downloaded, with over 20,600 issued in April. Councillors across the county are using video as a powerful medium to thank volunteers, community organisations and staff for all their efforts during the pandemic.

Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.

# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

12 May 2020

As we enter week eight of lockdown, it is heartening to reflect on how much the NHS and local authority partners have achieved during this period, and the huge contribution that staff across these organisations have made in responding to the pandemic. It is essential during this challenging time that we support our staff to prioritise their health and wellbeing.

Oxfordshire local authorities are using online resources to support the wellbeing and mental health of staff, most of whom are now working from home. Across the county, city and district councils there are numerous initiatives underway to support staff during this challenging time. These include the development of intranets to focus on wellbeing, from fitness and self-help videos to e-learning modules on topics such as resilience and understanding mental health.

Weekly activities are being run to support staff and surveys are being undertaken to seek feedback and measure the effectiveness of the initiatives put in place. Online mindfulness sessions, video guides on relaxation techniques and resources to support mental health are also available. Virtual coffee mornings and virtual car sharing initiatives are also taking place in different areas of the NHS and local authorities to connect colleagues who miss the companionship of the office environment and want to buddy up for a chat at the start or end of the working day.

GP practice staff and staff at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) all have access to a wide range of health and wellbeing support including their Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) which are available 24/7 online and by phone.

All organisations provide additional online guidance on their staff intranets. OUH has a series of videos made by its Lead for Psychological Medicine, Professor Michael Sharpe, and OHFT's Psychosocial Response Group has developed support videos for staff and public. All staff have been made aware of support available both locally and nationally including the 24/7 mental health [helpline](#) run by OHFT, a wellbeing support helpline run by the NHS nationally, and free access to mindfulness apps including Headspace and Sleepio.

## Government announcement on easing COVID-19 restrictions

The Government has set out its [plans](#) to begin the safe easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions over the coming weeks and months. The steps being taken are designed to safeguard livelihoods, but in a way that continues to protect our most vulnerable residents and the NHS. Oxfordshire's health services and local authority partners will work together to follow the Government's 'roadmap' to resume more services, while ensuring the safety of staff, patients and the wider public. We will be conducting risk assessments and identifying what precautions we need to take to ensure we are operating safely and in line with new national guidance. As our plans develop we will be sharing these. At the same time we continue to respond as a system to the challenges of the pandemic.

## Thank you to all nurses on International Nurses Day

Today, 12 May is International Nurses Day – this year marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. In Oxfordshire we are marking this special day by thanking our nurses for the outstanding work they do every day, and now during the COVID-19 pandemic. A personal thank you card has been sent to every nurse at OUH with the OUH Chief Nursing Officer highlighting the contribution of nurses and midwives throughout the Oxfordshire health and care system. "[Take time to celebrate and shine a light](#)" is the message from



Oxford Health's Chief Nurse in her personal message to Oxford Health's 1,500 strong nursing workforce.

### **New Integrated Care System Executive Lead and Joint CCG Accountable Officer Appointed**

Dr James Kent has been appointed to the combined role of BOB ICS Executive Lead and Accountable Officer for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). James has over 25 years of healthcare experience as a doctor, management consultant and government adviser. Most recently he has been working with the NHS X leadership team on their priority areas for the recovery COVID-19 phase. He will start work formally on 18th May 2020.

### **'Help us help you'**

We have launched an awareness raising campaign, across Oxfordshire, to support the national 'Help us help you' messaging to ensure that the public continue to seek medical help when they need it during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the coming weeks, this communications campaign will be covering topics such as [cancer](#), [immunisations](#), [maternity](#), [stroke](#), mental health, heart attacks, learning disabilities, elective care, children and young people, changes in primary care and care for shielded groups.

### **District councils help keep families active**

The Active Communities Team at South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils has published a range of [activity sheets](#) for families to download and take with them on a walk. They include an animal finder sheet and urban and nature treasure hunts. Cherwell District Council's sport and leisure team is celebrating after Sport England's recent Active Lives Study found that Cherwell had seen more adults become physically active than any other region in Oxfordshire. Around 12,200 more adults are now doing at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week, compared to the year before. These results reflect a huge amount of hard work by the council's sport and leisure team in attracting residents to take part in physical activity through a range of wellbeing initiatives.

### **Coronavirus Carer ID scheme**

Oxfordshire County Council is continuing to support carers during the pandemic by offering a Carers ID. The [Carer ID scheme](#) is for paid and independent carers who are providing care and support to young people and adults known to OCC Social Care. The carer ID is a simple letter of authority which can be presented while out and about, should the carer be challenged.

### **Staying safe advice for volunteers**

The ongoing COVID-19 situation will mean that community support and volunteering will remain critical for many months to come. To help volunteers stay safe and keep others safe while helping out, Oxfordshire County Council has provided a range of information and guidance on its [website](#). The guidance has recently been updated to include the latest Government advice on how volunteers can help safely.

### **OxLEP**

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) continues to work with the county's business community, signposting them to Government resources and local authority support. They also continue to play a 'convening' role, mobilising the county's private sector to support the local and national response to the pandemic. A series of online Q&A events are being staged as part of this support. The first two, covering business support and the visitor economy, are available to watch on the OxLEP [YouTube channel](#); further Q&As scheduled for this month include events on skills and the rural economy.

## **COVID-19 research update**

The scale and scope of COVID-19 related research activity taking place in Oxford demonstrates not only the Oxford's status as a global centre for research but also the benefits to patients and staff of the strategic partnerships between the NHS and universities.

## **COVID-19 vaccine development**

Researchers at the University of Oxford's Jenner Institute and the Oxford Vaccine Group [began testing a COVID-19 vaccine](#) in human volunteers in Oxford on 23 April.

Around 1,110 people will take part in the trial, half receiving the vaccine and the other half, the control group, receiving a widely available meningitis vaccine. The researchers, who are supported by the Oxford Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), [started screening](#) healthy volunteers aged between 18 and 55 in March.

At the end of May, the COVID-19 vaccine team will start large-scale Phase III trials which will include trial sites across the UK. If the vaccine prevents the disease, the team hope that millions of doses could be produced by the autumn.

## **COVID-19 treatment trial**

Oxfordshire patients with COVID-19 were among the first to be recruited to a major [new clinical trial](#) to test potential drug treatments.

The [Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy \(RECOVERY\) trial](#), led by researchers from the University of Oxford with support from the Oxford BRC, is the largest of its kind in the world. Data will be regularly reviewed so that any effective treatment can be identified quickly and made available to all patients.

## **COVID-19 research in primary care**

The Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, which is headed by the Oxford BRC's Theme Lead for Multi-morbidity, Professor Richard Hobbs, has joined forces with the Royal College of GPs and the clinical system supplier EMIS Health to urgently recruit as many GP practices as possible to track the spread of COVID-19, develop understanding of the pandemic, and inform government strategy around measures such as social distancing and lockdown. The PRINCIPLE trial is the [first national COVID-19 trial outside hospital](#).

## **Oxford Centre for Anxiety Disorders and Trauma (OxCADAT)**

Oxford Health BRC researchers have been developing guidance for remote working with patients who need talking therapies care delivered by IAPT services (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) including Talking Space Plus in Oxfordshire, as well as supporting other clinicians and services further afield.

They have created a range of online resources on COVID-19 related topics including remote delivery of treatment. All resources are free and clinicians can register on the site to access [training materials](#).

Looking at treating post-traumatic experiences following intensive care unit admissions for COVID-19, there's a newly published paper on Cognitive Therapy for PTSD, a first-line treatment for PTSD developed by Prof. Anke Ehlers and Prof. David Clark of the OxCADAT, for patients who develop PTSD after ICU. It explains how to address some of the distinctive [features](#) of post-ICU PTSD. BRC staff are also being redeployed to support the remote treatment delivery of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire IAPT services.

## **Oxford Precision Psychiatry Lab**

The Oxford Precision Psychiatry Lab (part of the Oxford Health BRC Digital and Informatics, led by Prof. Andrea Cipriani) has summarised the best available [evidence-based guidance](#) about COVID-19 for frontline mental health clinicians. The team is also carrying out a

systematic review to focus specifically on the relationship between COVID-19 (including SARS and MERS) and mental health patients and staff. It will collect available information and data on how to manage and support psychiatric/mental health patients and staff during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Adult Mental Health projects in development– two online studies**

Oxford Health BRC Adult Mental Health Theme is looking at a plan to use Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to look at COVID-genomics and spread patterns. The work led by Prof. Paul Harrison is one of a range of applications to the University of Oxford's urgent COVID-19 research fund. The Experimental Medicine subtheme is running a randomised study looking at the effects of remotely administered behavioral activation on depression, anxiety and the psychological effects of COVID-19 and a study exploring the relationship between depression, anxiety and emotional bias in a large sample (1,000+) in work led by Prof. Cath Harmer.

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# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

19 May 2020

Week nine of lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic sees some easing of restrictions but the majority of people remain at home. The pandemic has transformed the way we live and work and the crucial social interactions and routines that keep everyone – from children to older people - mentally resilient have been displaced by lockdown and social distancing. The pandemic is affecting mental health in general - causing disruption, uncertainty and anxiety and creating rising levels of worry and stress.

Mental Health Awareness Week 2020 (May 18-24) got underway yesterday with this year's theme being about kindness and looking out for each other. As part of this week Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) is urging people to reach out and get [help](#). Early on in the pandemic the Trust launched a 24/7 mental health helpline to provide people with mental health advice during the coronavirus pandemic.

- The number for adults is 01865 904997
- For children and young people, the number is 01865 904998

The helpline makes it quicker and easier for people of all ages in Oxfordshire to get the right advice they need for their mental health and emotional wellbeing. OHFT's mental health advisers can help people get the right help for a range of conditions and symptoms including anxiety, low mood, stress, worry, difficulty with relationships, crying often, feeling helpless, confusion, hallucinations or hearing voices.

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, Oxford City Council has launched an intranet-based campaign focused on boosting staff mental health and wellbeing, from fitness and self-help videos to e-learning modules on topics such as understanding mental health. South and Vale District Councils are running an internal campaign based on this year's theme of kindness, which includes a daily email comprising a positive quote or affirmation along with a task to help improve people's mental health resilience. While Oxfordshire County Council, together with Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Councils, are encouraging members of the public and staff to #Shareyourkindness for Mental Health Awareness Week by sharing acts of kindness that have been taking place across our community. You can read some examples [here](#).

## Learning Disability and COVID-19

In the county, the [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#) partnership is committed to ensuring that people with learning disabilities have the same opportunities during their lives as anyone else.

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board established a subgroup three years ago to review the deaths of all people with learning disabilities, encompassing the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) Programme. This panel meets regularly and includes service providers, commissioners and representatives of those that use services and family carers; currently this is Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN). Notifications of all deaths come from any agency, or the public through this link: [LeDeR notification Link](#).

Individual reviews are undertaken including contributions from family and carers with summaries and themes being used to develop learning that can inform how services are developed.

During the COVID-19 pandemic this review process has been enhanced with a rapid (within 2 weeks) review of all cases. Locally this has been completed for every notified individual.

The following points have been identified:

- In the first four months of 2020 there has been no increase in notifications of deaths of people with learning disabilities.
- All those reviewed who have presented with symptoms of COVID-19 have had care and treatment plans with full access to specialist support when this has been needed.
- There have been examples of clear planning between services to ensure that the individual can go home, with any additional support they may need.

### **Helping patients stay in touch with their loved ones**

Visiting restrictions have been put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep patients and staff safe on the four hospital sites run by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – the John Radcliffe Hospital (JR), Churchill Hospital and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford and the Horton General Hospital in Banbury.

Given this, it is important for the Trust to help its patients keep in touch with their loved ones who, with limited exceptions, cannot visit them at this time. The Trust is doing this in a range of ways:

- Keep in Touch, a new letter delivery service, is being piloted initially at the JR. Family members and friends can email [keepintouch@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:keepintouch@ouh.nhs.uk) with messages for inpatients at the JR, including pictures if they choose, and these will be printed and delivered to the appropriate ward. A similar scheme has already been implemented by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.
- Patients can stay connected with family and friends through ‘virtual visiting’ by using tablet devices provided to patients free of charge so that they can video call their loved ones.
- Thanks to OUH partners at Hospedia, who provide the bedside entertainment system on the Trust’s inpatient wards, patients can make free outbound phone calls (including calls to mobiles) from their bedside unit for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Patient takes part in research after recovering from COVID-19**

An [Oxford man](#) who spent his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday being treated for COVID-19 at the John Radcliffe Hospital is taking part in research into treating and understanding the virus.

During his treatment, Tim Clayden was put on the antibiotic azithromycin as part of the University of Oxford’s Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy (RECOVERY) trial, which is comparing potential treatments for COVID-19. He also joined another research study to inform future treatments, the Clinical Characterisation Protocol for Severe Emerging Infection (CCP-UK) study, which is led by the University of Liverpool Research. Nurses collected daily samples from him in hospital and visited him when he was back home recovering for a final sample.

### **Thank You - now more than ever: acknowledging staff ‘behind the front line’**

Last week the OUH launched a new website and social media campaign to publicly thank some of the people who have been working tirelessly to support frontline staff at the Trust during the #OneTeamOneOUH response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teams featured so far on the Trust [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) include:

- The [M&S Foodhall and Café](#) at the John Radcliffe Hospital.
- The Trust’s [Chaplaincy team](#) who support patients, their loved ones and staff.
- [Carpenter Catering \(Belota\)](#) whose cafes and food delivery services for staff at the John Radcliffe and Horton General hospitals have provided a valuable service.
- The [Linen team](#) who are responsible for not only the freshly-laundered bed sheets, blankets and pyjamas essential for the daily bed and linen changes that keep inpatients safe and clean but also a staff uniform service for doctors and nurses,

which has been extended to include co-ordinating the provision of clean scrubs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Caring in a crisis: supporting people with sight and hearing loss**

The Sensory Impairment Team at Oxfordshire County Council is a small countywide team of specialists working with adults and children who are deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired or with a dual sensory loss. Supporting around 1,000 people every year, the team provides advice, assessment, social work, equipment, information and rehabilitation support. Since the initial stages of the lockdown, the team has been adapting the way they work in order to best support people with a sensory impairment. For example, during the early stages of the lockdown, it was noted the British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters were not used for the daily Downing Street briefings, so the team used social media, email and BSL-relay interpreters to ensure that information was available and accessible. The team has also been making use of Skype, WhatsApp and phone calls to stay in regular contact with people who have a sensory impairment. And if someone cannot hear by phone, they have been contacting them by email or have spoken with relatives or a BSL interpreter. More information is available [here](#).

### **Oxford City Council supports Grand Iftar event for Ramadan**

Oxford City Council has provided financial support, carers and drivers to help with food deliveries for Oxford Homeless Project's Grand Iftar event on 15 May. The Grand Iftar celebrates and connects Oxford's diverse communities, people of faith and no faith during Ramadan over an Iftar (breaking of the fast) meal. This year, because of the COVID-19 lockdown, a city-wide meeting was not possible and so instead 1,500 meals were delivered to people across the city. More information is available [here](#).

### **OCVA support for the voluntary sector**

Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action ([OCVA](#)) is a charitable organisation, supported by Oxfordshire County and Cherwell District Councils, which provides infrastructure support to community and voluntary organisations across the county. During the coronavirus crisis, OCVA has been supporting groups in the voluntary sector across Oxfordshire by providing information on funding, governance and volunteering, and guidance on many issues currently facing charities. They are also working with local and national agencies to provide information to assist groups and volunteers. Groups, charities, trustees or volunteers who need advice and support both in the current crisis and also looking to the future to help groups recover and build resilience, can contact OCVA for help and advice at [admin@ocva.org.uk](mailto:admin@ocva.org.uk) or on 01865 251946.

### **Boost to Bicester's blue lines**

The 5km blue line health routes, which were painted onto pavements back in 2017 to offer Cherwell residents free and easy ways to exercise, recorded their highest daily usage in April. In Langford, pedestrian counters indicate almost 500 people walked the line each day over the Easter period, up 104 percent on the previous year. Meanwhile, the data collected from Bure Park, part of the Bicester West route, showed almost 900 daily users over Easter, up from around 670 people during the same holiday period in 2019.

### **Delivering digital democracy**

Alongside the councils' focus on delivering key frontline services during the COVID-19 pandemic, extensive work has been going on behind the scenes to make sure that councillors are able to meet using online means. In April, the Government temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person, meaning online meetings could take place. Oxfordshire County Council staged its first meeting of all county councillors on 4 May using Microsoft Teams. West Oxfordshire District Council followed on 13 May, with members of full council 'attending' via Webex and the public following the proceedings via Facebook Live, which attracted more than 1200 clicks

and 20 likes. 20 May will see both Oxford City Council and Cherwell District Council hold their first virtual meetings: Oxford City's Annual Meeting of Council will take place via Zoom, while Cherwell will hold an extraordinary Council Meeting via MS Teams, with the Planning Committee meeting in the same way the next day. Planning Committee meetings will be held online for the Vale of White Horse District Council on 26 May and South Oxfordshire District Council on 28 May. Also the multi-agency Growth Board meeting will be held virtually on the 2nd June; the advisory groups supporting the Growth Deal commitments have continued to meet virtually throughout the crisis. The first virtual meeting of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) will take place on 25 June.

## **Campaigns**

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have continued to support the national campaigns and promote advice including the importance of [handwashing](#) and how to socially distance. This is ongoing, and continues to be important as the lockdown begins to get lifted. This has been promoted both online and offline through the media, social media, key community contacts and information has been made available in different languages.

There have been additional campaigns encouraging the public to help the NHS which include the recruitment of staff and volunteers as well as a plea to ask the public to return any NHS equipment they might have at home. Both campaigns had a positive response from the public.

We have been promoting the change of services at GP practices and offering reassurance to the public that their local GP is still there for them should they have any healthcare concerns and that if they do need to have a face-to-face appointment there are precautions in place to make this as safe as possible. This has also included promoting clinics within the community to care for patients with coronavirus symptoms who might need to seek medical advice for another matter.

As part of a wider national campaign we have been promoting that NHS services are still available to those who need them and that if anyone has any symptoms that they are concerned about they should seek advice. The '[help us, help you](#)' campaign has included a focus on [A&E](#), [cancer](#), [immunisations](#), [maternity](#) and [stroke](#) to date. This week the focus will be on [mental health](#) and cardiovascular symptoms. All of these have been communicated on our websites, through social media and in the local media and received positive coverage across all channels.

We are currently looking at how we can further reach groups of people who might be vulnerable or 'seldom heard' and if there is anything more we can do to offer advice and reassurance.

Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.

# **Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19**

**27 May 2020**

Oxfordshire NHS and local authority partners continue to work together in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This regular briefing has highlighted some of the initiatives that have been put in place to ensure local people can be cared for safely, some of the campaigns that have been run with the media and through our collective social media channels to help people understand how they can play their part in keeping safe and how to use services during the lockdown.

Many of the changes put in place have used technology to help provide safe distance during consultations using video conferencing and telephones as much as possible to reduce the risks of spreading the infection.

As we begin to see the lockdown ease, we are now working together to plan for recovery. More information will follow over the coming weeks as we develop these plans working together in Oxfordshire and with our partners across Buckinghamshire and Berkshire West.

## **Test and Trace**

Following the recent announcements Oxfordshire system partners are working together on what needs to be prepared locally. This is a fast evolving situation and we will update on a regular basis.

## **Bereavement leaflet**

Attached with this briefing is a guide to local and national bereavement services. Some of these services are working in different ways but are still there to listen and support people who have lost someone close during the COVID-19 pandemic. This information was brought together by Oxfordshire's health partners, local authorities and voluntary organisations.

## **Thank you from NHS staff to teachers**

To mark National Thank a Teacher Day on Wednesday 20 May, Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) Chair, Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bruno Holthof wrote to all head teachers of schools in Oxfordshire to thank them and their staff for everything they are doing for the children of NHS staff and other keyworkers. Head teachers were asked to share the message with all teachers and support staff so that they know how grateful the NHS is for all their hard work.

Personal Thank You cards were also sent to the staff teams working in the nurseries on OUH hospital sites.



### **Army of staff return to the NHS frontline**

The NHS is grateful to everyone who has answered the call and returned to the NHS frontline to support patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 339 people – nurses, doctors, midwives, and others – have been recruited to Oxford University Hospitals through NHS Professionals' Rapid Response scheme.

One of these is Su Chantry, who was working as an Occupational Health Manager at Williams Grand Prix Engineering in Grove before the pandemic, and has been working on the general medicine, orthopaedics, and acute respiratory wards at the John Radcliffe Hospital since March. [You can read Su's story in full on the OUH website.](#)

### **Reassuring patients of safe cancer care**

Patients receiving cancer care in Oxfordshire have been reminded that safe cancer care is still available to them during the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent national survey suggested that getting COVID-19, or giving it to their family, were among the top reasons that people would not come forward with cancer symptoms, along with fears they could be a burden to the health service.

It is important that people do not miss out on cancer care because of fears around COVID-19. Finding and treating cancer early gives the best chance to cure it, and ignoring potential problems can have serious consequences now or in the future. Ongoing care and treatment is just as important, as many of these are also curative and can control disease long term.

Robust procedures are in place to ensure safe care and patients should feel confident in the fact that they are in a safe environment and that their treatment can continue as it always did. [More information is available on the OUH website.](#)

### **Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – Board meeting videos**

The Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust [Board meeting on 13 May](#) was held virtually due to social distancing restrictions. Following the Board meeting, Trust Chair, [Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery recorded a video message](#) exploring some of the areas discussed. A video recording of Trust Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bruno Holthof, presenting his [Chief Executive's Report](#) during the Board meeting is also available.

### **Extension of the NHS Bereavement Scheme**

The Home Office announced on the 20 May that it has extended the NHS Bereavement Scheme to the families of NHS support staff and social care workers. The bereavement scheme was initially launched in April for health workers in the NHS and independent health and care sector. The Home Office is now extending the offer of indefinite leave to remain, free of charge, to the families and dependents of

NHS support staff and social care workers who die as result of contracting coronavirus. The Home Office's press release can be seen [here](#).

### **Mental Health Awareness Week (May 18-24)**

This event was widely promoted at Oxford Health Foundation Trust (OHFT) and supported by partner organisations. Below are a selection of stories that were widely publicised using social media and shared with local media.

#### ***Helplines:***

The awareness week provided another opportunity to share the dedicated 24/7 mental health helplines for adults (01865 904997) and children/young people (01865 904997) in Oxfordshire.

#### ***Self-help videos:***

A suite of specially created self-help videos is available on OHFT [CAMHS website here](#) for parents, children and young people to explore and understand emotions created by lockdown, social distancing and Coronavirus. The animations, created by Prof. Paul Stallard, the Oxford Health CAMHS psychologist behind the award-winning Blue ICE app, provides information on a range of feelings, explores what is normal and provides practical solutions and work sheets that can involve all the family. OHFT have also promoted the special [Coping with Coronavirus leaflets](#) produced by the Trust psycho-social response group on Worry and uncertainty; Recovering from trauma; Bereavement; Depression; Obsessional problems and OCD. [Full story here](#)

#### ***The gift of kindness:***

Kindness and our mental health are deeply connected. Lives can be transformed by a simple act of kindness; a smile or a phone call to break through the loneliness of social distancing to remind people of community support, and hope. The NHS talking therapy service TalkingSpace Plus has been reaching out during Mental Health Awareness Week. [Full story here](#)

#### ***Get active to boost your mental wellbeing:***

Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, Active Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire All In encouraged people to get moving this Mental Health Awareness Week. [Story here](#)

### **Digital breakthrough**

Oxford Health has just completed its 10,000<sup>th</sup> online consultation with 300 online consultations taking place every day – meaning that while the 'new normal' with social distancing and a no visitor policy has halted many physical face-to-face contacts, clinicians and therapists can still have vital one-to-ones with the people they care for, proving help, reassurance and treatment.

The benefits for patients include saving time and cost of travelling to a clinical appointment, avoiding the stress of traffic jams and car parking, and instead can choose appointments from the comfort of their own homes.

It also means OHFT is reducing its carbon footprint with fewer business miles and meeting their ambition of being a more green and sustainable trust. Oxford Health is now working with Oxford University to develop a study into the effectiveness of digital consultations to inform how services are delivered in the future.

### **Tales from the Front Line**

Oxford Health is producing a range of stories celebrating individual staff making a direct impact on their collective work during Coronavirus. The first was on [Jonathan Nolan](#) who in his first week of secondment as ward manager at City Community Hospital, fell ill with coronavirus. His story tells of his recovery and challenges back on the ward. The second story is that of [Leanne Cain-James](#), a former RAF Corporal, whose mission was to help co-ordinate the trust response to the evolving COVID-19 situation and the personal sacrifices she has made. More stories are in the pipeline.

### **NHS Charities Together grants awarded**

All inpatient wards across OHFT in all localities are being granted £300 to buy patient activity and sensory items - like arts and crafts, puzzles, games, gardening items and much requested LEGO. A wide range of other ideas have been approved including:

- A project to give community and inpatient staff who wear PPE special 'Hello My Name is' badges with smiley photos was supported to help patients disturbed by PPE obscuring staff faces. Hundreds have been created so far going to Witney Community Hospital, Sandford ward team and the young people's Highfield Unit.
- Fitness items have been approved to support staying fit and well for Cotswold House, Oxford, Wenric Ward at Littlemore and Evenlode Ward at the Oxford Clinic is getting a specialist activity table.
- Musicians and singers from Oxford Contemporary Music will be staging a series of uplifting 'socially distanced' performances outside wards to boost patients' spirits at Littlemore, Fulbrook and the Warneford in May and June
- Speech and Language Therapy app to provide remote therapy which both the team and the people they support can access.
- The Artscape programme has been supported to develop new projects around music and arts.
- Heart failure fridge magnets for patients to help keep them safe and remind them of key points relating to their condition.
- Fusion Arts to provide online art demonstrations for patient in mental and community health settings.

## **Oxford Pharmacy Store**

One specialist Oxford Health team is playing a crucial role during the UK's fight against Coronavirus - keeping the NHS well stocked and functioning, including the nation's new Nightingale hospitals. Oxford Pharmacy Store (OPS) is a 33-strong team which distributes medicines to more than 3,000 UK healthcare providers and works in partnership with 100+ commercial and NHS manufacturers.

OPS is working directly with NHS England and the Commercial Medicines Unit Covid-19 supply teams, sourcing and supplying medicines on ICU Covid-19 priority medicines List. This includes arranging same day deliveries of in demand medicines to the Nightingale units.

## **Helping families to keep in touch with patients**

Relatives and friends of patients in Oxfordshire hospitals are being offered help keeping in touch while visiting is restricted. Both Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have set up dedicated email addresses where relatives can send letters and pictures that will be printed out and delivered to patients. The Trust has created a dedicated email address – [keepintouch@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:keepintouch@ouh.nhs.uk) – for close family and friends to use to pass on their messages. This service is being trialled at the John Radcliffe Hospital, with a view to rolling it out to other locations within the Trust. To find out more about this see [here](#). Oxford Health's similar scheme, which helps families and friends keep in touch with patients and service users at community hospitals and inpatient units, uses the email address [keepintouch@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:keepintouch@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk) For full details of this see [here](#).

## **Planning for life after lockdown**

Bold transport plans are under discussion for Oxfordshire as the county begins to emerge from lockdown. Ideas were invited from all 63 county councillors on potential changes to roads and transport networks in response to the Government's national £250 million cash fund. Enthusiastic suggestions were received from across the county as the council seeks to make sure that every town and village will benefit from how the funds are invested. The [plans](#), which are being developed in partnership with the city and district councils, will have a strong focus on encouraging residents to walk and cycle, and will enable Oxfordshire to make strides towards sustainable and zero emission transport as well as support public health and safety as public spaces begin to reopen.

To help tackle the issues surrounding climate change, West Oxfordshire District Council is inviting residents' views on what actions should be taken, with local opinion helping shape the Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire. The [consultation](#) runs until 16 June.

## **Community First Oxfordshire - business (almost) as usual**

Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) is a community development charity working in

partnership with the county, city and district councils to strengthen community infrastructure. They support and advise volunteer-led actions in Oxfordshire, helping hundreds of volunteers fulfil many roles in their communities and supporting good neighbour schemes. During the pandemic, CFO has continued to provide their main advice services, including advice and support to almost 300 community halls and centres across Oxfordshire. They have also increased their online support: the CFO [website](#) provides information and guidance, from national and local sources of advice to specific advice for communities, charities and businesses.

### **Eid celebrations**

Last weekend saw Muslims across the county celebrate Eid. Oxford City Council's partnership with the Central Mosque for Ramadan has enabled them to send out food supplies to vulnerable members of the community throughout Ramadan; and to mark Eid they provided celebratory Eid presents and sweets to 200 Muslim and non-Muslim vulnerable households. A multi-language leaflet to promote emergency support was included in the parcels, together with a greetings card from the mosque and the council.

### **The art of engaging and educating**

Cherwell District Council's Community Services team has been using art as a way to engage and educate during lockdown. They have organised a virtual training session for staff from local schools on 'Emotional Literacy through Art', a course run by the British Association of Art Therapists, to equip teachers with skills to support children who are returning to school. The team has also linked up with PlanetArt to launch a competition in association with local schools and The Sunshine Centre inviting children and young people to submit designs for a piece of sculpture to display on the new Bretch Hill development in Banbury Rise.

Oxfordshire County Council's Youth Justice Service has also been using the creative arts in innovative ways to help children. A project involving a recording artist, who has been working with children who had been groomed for drugs exploitation, has helped the children talk openly about their experiences.

### **The Olympics comes to South and Vale**

Like many sporting events this year's Olympics in Tokyo has been cancelled - and so the Active Communities Team at South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have created their own. Families are being invited to download the [Olympics pack](#) and then complete a set of challenges to win a Bronze, Silver or Gold medal.

### **Supporting Oxfordshire's business community**

To help support local businesses during the pandemic, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) has created a range of online resources, including a series of

digital Q&As. The most recent Q&A, on the impact of COVID-19 on the rural economy, is available [here](#).

Last week, OxLEP also launched its COVID-19 Business Resilience Fund, with the organisation repurposing funding aimed at supporting Oxfordshire businesses to survive and thrive. Through a competitive process, this programme provides eligible businesses with unmatched grants ranging from £1,000 to £10,000. [Find out more](#).

## For people bereaved due to life limiting illness

**Marie Curie Telephone Bereavement Support:** Regular bereavement support sessions with a trained volunteer for up to six 45 minute telephone sessions. Call 0800 090 2309 (8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 11am – 5pm Saturday to Sunday).

**Sobell Bereavement Service:** Support for relatives and friends of Sobell patients and anyone who has received hospice care. Call 01865 225 878 or visit [www.sobellhouse.org/bereavement-support](http://www.sobellhouse.org/bereavement-support)

**Katharine House Bereavement Service:** Support for relatives and friends of Katharine House patients. Call 01295 811 866 or visit [www.khh.org.uk/bereavement-services](http://www.khh.org.uk/bereavement-services)

**Sue Ryder Bereavement Service:** Support for relatives and friends of Sue Ryder patients. Call 01491 641 384 or email [enquiries.southoxfordshire@sueryder.org](mailto:enquiries.southoxfordshire@sueryder.org)

## For people affected by the death of a baby

**SANDS:** Helpline available on 0808 164 3332 (9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 9.30am to 9.30pm Tuesday and Thursday) or [helpline@sands.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sands.org.uk)

## For parents affected by the death of a child

**The Compassionate Friends:** Helpline 0345 123 2304 (10am – 4pm & 7pm – 10pm every day) or visit [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

## For people bereaved by suicide

**Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide:** Gives callers a chance to talk confidentially with someone who has experienced bereavement by suicide. Helpline: 0300 111 5065 or [www.uksobs.org](http://www.uksobs.org) (9am – 9pm Monday to Friday).

**Support after Suicide Partnership:** Help is at hand guide online [supportaftersuicide.org.uk](http://supportaftersuicide.org.uk)

# Oxfordshire Bereavement Support during the COVID-19 pandemic

The death of someone close is painful at any time, but during the COVID-19 pandemic it may be more difficult to find help and support.

This guide offers information about local and national bereavement services. Some of these are working in different ways but there are still people available to listen and to support you. These services might be useful to you now or later.

## Key local support

**CRUSE Bereavement Care, Oxfordshire:** Bereavement support for all adults from trained volunteers via telephone and video calls. Call 01865 245398 (10am -1pm weekdays) or email [oxfordshire@cruse.org.uk](mailto:oxfordshire@cruse.org.uk)

**SeeSaw, Grief Support for Children and Young People in Oxfordshire:** Support for children and young people (aged 18 and under) by telephone and email. Families can email [info@seesaw.org.uk](mailto:info@seesaw.org.uk) for a call back.

**TalkingSpace Plus:** Talking therapies for adults experiencing depression or anxiety. 1:1 support by phone or access to online resources following telephone assessment. Self-referral via 01865 901 222 or <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/> \*

**Coping with the Coronavirus: Bereavement:** Oxford Health leaflet available online at <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/news/coronavirus-and-your-mental-wellbeing/> \*

**How to Help... A Bereavement Support Guide:** Age UK Oxfordshire [www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/late-spring/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/late-spring/)

**The Oxfordshire Bereavement Guide:** Oxfordshire County Council guide and practical advice [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/births-deaths-and-ceremonies/deaths](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/births-deaths-and-ceremonies/deaths) \*

## Practical advice on what happens after someone dies

**UK government guidance:** information about what to do when someone has died [www.gov.uk/after-a-death](http://www.gov.uk/after-a-death)

**National Association of Funeral Directors:** information about funerals during the pandemic [nafdcovid19.org.uk/advice-for-the-public/](http://nafdcovid19.org.uk/advice-for-the-public/)

**Faith Groups:** All denominations offer support to all those who have been bereaved through their pastoral care systems. To access your local faith group contact the vicar, priest, Imam, Rabbi or other faith leader.

## Online resources

**NHS:** advice on bereavement [www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/)

**CRUSE** - Coronavirus bereavement information and resources. [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

**SeeSaw** - resources for children and families who have been bereaved. [www.seesaw.org.uk](http://www.seesaw.org.uk)

**At a loss** - Coronavirus bereavement resources. [www.ataloss.org](http://www.ataloss.org)

**Mind** - information on bereavement [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/about-bereavement/](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/about-bereavement/)

**Sue Ryder** – information and online counselling service for adults. [www.sueryder.org](http://www.sueryder.org)

## Helplines

**National Bereavement Partnership COVID-19 Hub:** 0800 448 0800 (7am – 10pm, every day) or [helpline@nationalbereavementpartnership.org](mailto:helpline@nationalbereavementpartnership.org)

**Cruse Bereavement National Helpline:** 0808 808 1677 (9.30am – 5pm Monday - Friday, and until 8pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) or [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)

**Winston's Wish Helpline:** 08088 020 021 (9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday) for children, young people and anyone caring for a child or young person who has been bereaved.

**Oxfordshire Mental Health Helpline:** 01865 904997 for adults, or 01865 904998 for children and young people (both open 24 hours every day).

**Samaritans:** 116 123 - confidential listening service (open 24 hours every day) or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) for a response within 24 hours.



# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

2 June 2020

This week's COVID-19 briefing includes updates on the following:

- [Recognising volunteers](#)
- [Learning Disability Services](#)
- [50 years of service](#)
- [Mental Health Helpline](#)
- [Test and Trace](#)
- [Re-introduction of non-COVID-19 services in primary care](#)
- [Helping children return to school](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Training in Care Homes](#)
- [Clinical Support to Care Homes](#)
- [Rehousing those in need](#)
- [Supporting Oxfordshire's business community](#)
- ['Thank you for saving my life'](#)
- [Public recognition for staff working 'behind the front line'](#)

## Recognising Volunteers

Volunteers' Week is an annual celebration of the contribution made by millions of people across the UK through volunteering – it is a chance to recognise the incredible efforts of volunteers and to thank all those who volunteer their time. Throughout this week, local authorities and their partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector are shining a spotlight on the contributions of individual volunteers across the county and highlighting the range of opportunities that are available and the benefits that come with volunteering. Individual stories are being published on social media using the hashtag #oxfordshirevolunteers.

In the NHS, volunteers are also being recognised for their efforts to support during the pandemic. At Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT), volunteers have been at the heart of responding to the pandemic by providing vital help in distributing PPE to the nursing teams. The team has been sorting PPE from big deliveries into individual packs of ten of everything. Nurses can pick up their packs at a time that is convenient for them. Working in socially distanced groups, the team has been producing over 600 packs a day, freeing staff to focus on their duties.

Other volunteers have got creative in their own homes, making 1500 laundry bags, 300 headbands and 500 star-shaped cards that are used to write positive messages for palliative care patients. While not every volunteer has been able to do what they normally do as volunteers, the support and desire to help has been heart-warming.

All OHFT volunteers are asked to take part in the trust COVID-19 risk assessment. Volunteers and members of their household are also offered testing through the trust occupational health, should they experience symptoms.

Volunteers have also been the backbone of efforts to support staff at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) while they care for patients in

their hospitals with COVID-19. The Trust are hugely thankful to all of their volunteers, whether they are helping through the Voluntary Services Department, the League of Friends on all their hospital sites, or working with Oxford Hospitals Charity to support patients and staff.

Volunteers are also vital to the charity Supporting the Sick Newborn and their Parents (SSNAP), Sobell House Hospice and Maggie's Centre Oxford (both on the Churchill Hospital site), and the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy.

The Trust are also very grateful for the public and staff governors on their Council of Governors, all of whom have taken on their roles on a voluntary basis.

And last but definitely not least, the hospital radio stations (Radio Cherwell and Radio Horton) are run by dedicated and passionate enthusiasts, on an entirely voluntary basis.

### **Learning Disability Services**

From the beginning of the pandemic, OHFT's Learning Disability Service has been creating accessible easy read guidance on COVID-19 and collating material from other reliable sources. Everything is published online in one place on [the Oxford Health website](#) and is free to use.

The service has compiled over 400 COVID-19 Hospital Passports for people with LD, which include brief summaries of medical conditions, medicines, dietary requirements, eating/ drinking difficulties, and communication preferences and sent them to OUH to be appended to patient records. The service has also identified very high risk patients and checked with them and their GP what arrangements are in place should they contract COVID-19 and what their wishes would be. The service continues to make weekly, or more frequent, welfare checks.

### **50 years of service**

The Estates Team at OHFT celebrated gardener Chris Willis 50 years of working at the Trust on May 26 by creating a dedicated garden for him at the Littlemore Mental Health Centre. Chris started with the Trust in May 1970 as a 17-year-old straight from school. He works in all weathers: clearing leaves and snow, cutting grass, trimming hedges and tending flowers. Chris has always been passionate about creating an environment where staff on breaks or patients on ground leave can take a walk and enjoy the grounds and gardens at Littlemore. In 2019 his hard work was recognised in the annual Staff Recognition Awards when he won the category 'Living the Values.'

### **Test and Trace**

Test and Trace was launched across England last Thursday (28 May). The service is designed to help identify, contain and control coronavirus, reduce the spread of the virus and save lives. It forms a central part of the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy, which seeks to return life to as close to normal as possible, for as many people as possible, in a way that is safe and protects the NHS and social care.

There are responsibilities placed upon public health authorities to work with Public Health England and with local district, city and health system partners to investigate and control outbreaks and to support the community to ensure safe and effective self-isolation. Discussions are currently taking place across the Oxfordshire system

about the development of a local outbreak control plan, and further details will follow shortly.

### **Helping children return to school**

In preparation for the return of more children to the classroom on 1 June, hundreds of thousands of personal protective equipment (PPE) items have been delivered to Oxfordshire schools by Oxfordshire County Council. They include masks, aprons, gloves, visors and hand sanitiser. This PPE equipment will help local schools manage an immediate response in the unlikely event of a pupil becoming unwell. The council has also carried out risk assessments and has made changes to school bus pick-up points to ensure there is enough space for children to maintain social distancing.

In Cherwell, primary schools have been provided with a bespoke guide to help children gradually transition back to school after lockdown. The council has worked with outdoor learning specialist Muddy Feet to produce a resource pack detailing ways parents and teachers can help pupils adjust to the 'new normal'. The pack includes a range of nature-based activities and guidance on how the outdoor environment can be used to manage anxiety and enhance mental wellbeing, creating a safe and fun environment for youngsters to learn.

### **Infection Prevention and Control Training in Care Homes**

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic the importance of providing infection prevention and control (IP&C) training to all Care Homes was recognised. In many ways Oxfordshire was ahead of other areas having commissioned a Care Home Support Service (CHSS) with OHFT for many years. The CHSS already had a linked named Nurse to all Care Homes.

Although a series of National webinars were offered, it was felt that a locally run version, would be more meaningful to our care homes. On 16 April Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) hosted a training webinar, which included a panel of Public Health England, Oxfordshire County Council, IP&C leads and Care Home Association leads. Over 100 participants joined the webinar and topics including the correct use of PPE, isolation, managing waste safely and testing were included.

Over the past month OCCG and OHFT have supported the NHS England / Improvement (NHSE/I) initiative to train all Care Homes in the correct use of PPE. The "Super" training was based on a train the trainer model which required a number of key staff to attend training and then these staff would train other care home staff. This model allowed for every Care Home in Oxfordshire to receive either a Face to Face training or be trained using virtual training. By Friday 29 May all Care Homes had either received training (83%) or had training booked very soon.

### **Clinical Support to Care Homes**

Clinical Support to Care Homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been supported through the already established scheme providing enhanced care to Care Homes. This includes a named clinical lead, responsible for overall clinical oversight of residents including, but not limited to advanced care planning, access to secondary care and overall treatment plans. Guidance regarding care for residents during this time has been written specifically for care homes with input from Care

Home representatives. This has been circulated to all Care Homes along with other guidance as it has emerged.

### **Rehousing those in need**

As the country went into lockdown at the end of March, the housing teams in the district and city councils worked with local hotels, hostels and Oxford University to make sure homeless people and rough sleepers could access safe self-contained accommodation during the pandemic. The focus then immediately turned to finding long-term solutions. Now that moving home is permitted in some circumstances, the councils are calling on landlords to help those in need find settled accommodation. In West Oxfordshire, where there are currently 39 households living in temporary accommodation, the council is calling for anyone with a property available for private letting to get in touch.

In Cherwell, landlords who can help will receive a package of support under the Cherwell Bond Scheme and up to £15,000, if needed, to improve the property condition or convert the property to a shared house. In South and Vale there are currently 44 people living in temporary accommodation and the councils are working with local registered providers and private landlords to provide long-term accommodation. The councils are also due to adopt a new Housing Assistance Grants and Loans Policy in July, which sets out how the councils will meet their statutory duties and exercise their powers when awarding housing assistance grants and loans.

### **Supporting Oxfordshire's business community**

In response to the unprecedented challenges that Oxfordshire's small businesses are facing as a result of COVID-19, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) are repurposing funding to create a business resilience fund. The fund complements the range of support available from the Government and – through a competitive process – provides eligible businesses with unmatched grants ranging from £1,000 to £10,000. The deadline for submissions is 5pm on Friday 5 June. Find out more [here](#).

### **'Thank you for saving my life'**

A patient treated for COVID-19 at the John Radcliffe Hospital has thanked staff for saving his life. Ken Wood spent nearly three weeks in intensive care and on a recovery ward before being able to leave hospital and continue his recovery at home. You can read Ken's story in full on the OUH [website](#).

### **Public recognition for staff working 'behind the front line'**

A new website and social media campaign to publicly thank some of the people who have been working to support frontline staff at Oxford University Hospitals during the response to COVID-19 is being featured on [OUH website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **Further information:**

Please email [occg.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occg.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.