

Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

7 July 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 survivor says a 'huge thank you' to the staff who saved her life

A 77-year-old patient who spent 77 days in intensive care with COVID-19 at the John Radcliffe Hospital has praised the staff who cared for her as she continues her remarkable recovery. [Jenny Eadon](#) spent 11 weeks on the Intensive Care Unit at the JR as she battled severe complications as a result of COVID-19, including kidney failure, heart issues, pulmonary embolism, and a stroke.

Thankfully, Jenny's condition improved day-to-day and she has since been discharged to Abingdon Community Hospital, which is run by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, to continue her recovery. Jenny left the ICU to an emotional '[clap out](#)' by many of the staff who had cared for her.

Local outbreak control plan and #stopthespread campaign

As national lockdown is gradually eased, local plans have been developed by local authorities in partnership with the NHS and Public Health England to reduce the spread of infection and manage local outbreaks. This combined effort aims to minimise the risk of a second wave anywhere across England.

Oxfordshire's local outbreak control plan is designed to help people resume a way of life during COVID-19 that is safe, protects our health and care systems, and supports our local economy. It has been developed by Oxfordshire County Council's Public Health team, working with colleagues from the city and district councils, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (Oxford Health), Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH), Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG), Public Health England (PHE) and Thames Valley Police (TVP).

A summary of the plan is available at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread, together with guidance for residents and local businesses on how to help stop the spread. The site also

includes a [video message](#) from Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health Ansaf Azhar explaining why the easing of lockdown doesn't mean we can go easy on the virus. Published last Friday, the video has already had over 8.7k views on Facebook. Oxfordshire system partners are publishing #stopthespread messages across social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Please do share these messages with residents, businesses and community groups so that we can reach as many people as possible.

Supporting the safe easing of lockdown in town centres

In advance of the next major stage in the easing of national lockdown on 4 July, which saw the reopening of hospitality venues and visitor attractions, the city and district councils introduced a range of changes in town centres, including changes to road layouts, pavement stencils on narrow streets and alleyways, sanitiser stations, and social distancing signage. Hospitality venues are displaying posters in their entrances confirming that they have read and implemented Government's "Five Steps to Safer Working Together" guidance. And many venues are carrying VisitEngland's "We're Good To Go" signage for UK tourism, which means businesses can demonstrate they are adhering to Government and public health guidance.

Letter to businesses from Oxfordshire's Public Health Director

Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health, Ansaf Azhar, has written to local businesses across Oxfordshire thanking them for adhering to the Government guidance and to remind them of the important role they continue to play in keeping staff and customers safe and helping businesses to remain open. His letter, sent in advance of the wider easing of lockdown, outlines some of the most relevant Government guidance for business, including information on access to testing and advice.

Community Assessment, Liaison and Monitoring clinics (CALM) Phase 2: recovery and restoration

Health and care services in Oxfordshire, like those across the country, are now working carefully in the 'recovery' phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Infection rates are dropping steadily and the numbers of deaths from the virus are also, thankfully, much lower.

However, as we go on restoring routine services to ensure people get the treatment they need for all health conditions, we all have to be aware that the virus is still in our communities and we must continue to provide safe, expert care for COVID-19 patients.

In Oxfordshire, those patients with COVID-19 and any new cases will continue to have access to dedicated COVID clinics, where they will be referred by a GP or NHS 111 if their symptoms need face-to-face assessment. Patients will be able to go to a clinic which is convenient to them.

Each clinic site has a team of expert clinicians, working in infection-controlled conditions with personal protection equipment to ensure patient, staff and public safety. In addition, the COVID-19 home visiting service will continue to run for vulnerable people who are unable to travel to clinics. If the numbers of COVID-19 rise again, both services will be able to expand quickly to meet demand.

GP practices

Equally important is for everyone to know that GP practices and other primary care services are open for all other health care needs. Most practices are working differently now, offering telephone, online and video appointments in the first instance. For patients who need to be seen face to face, arrangements are made so they are seen safely. The message to all patients is that if they need health advice from a doctor or other clinician, they will get that advice and care in the safest way possible – but they must telephone their GP surgery first. Anyone turning up without calling will not be seen.

If patients receive an invitation for screening, immunisations or other tests, they are urged to make contact with their GP practice by phone or online as before to ensure they don't miss these important appointments.

Hospitals are now seeing more patients for routine appointments; they are also rebooking displaced outpatient appointments that were cancelled in order for the hospitals to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and are accepting new referrals. This may take a longer than normal however if a GP believes symptoms are worrying, patients can be referred urgently and will be seen quickly and safely in secondary care.

Happy Birthday NHS

To mark the NHS 72 anniversary celebrations, Oxford Health created a special video with music sung by some of its young patients in a Stevie Wonder style Happy Birthday rendition. Staff from all over the trust, from chief nurse Marie Crofts and chief executive Nick Broughton to those working in PPE on wards, took part spending their break times to capture snippets; watch it [here](#). OCCG wanted to use the NHS' birthday as an opportunity to say thank you to all NHS staff, especially those in Primary Care, for all their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic. OCCG Clinical Chair, Dr Kiren Collison can be seen in the short video [here](#). OUH marked the anniversary with a remote performance from the Radcliffe Orchestra, which comprises healthcare professionals many of whom work on our front line, of 'Nimrod' from the Enigma Variations by Edward Elgar. The orchestra would normally play a live concert in June, so they have created this online performance to raise funds for [Oxford Hospitals Charity](#) and other charities. You can [watch the video of 'Nimrod' on the OUH YouTube channel](#).

'Virtual' public talks by Oxford's COVID-19 research pioneers

The scale and scope of COVID-19 related research activity taking place in Oxford demonstrates its status as a global centre for ground breaking research. The Oxford Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) is organising a series of 'virtual' public talks to shine a light on this remarkable work. 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, is the largest of its kind in the world.

Recently the researchers announced that dexamethasone (a steroid treatment which was among the drugs being tested) reduces death by up to one third in hospitalised patients with severe respiratory complications of COVID-19. Professor Martin Landray spoke about the RECOVERY trial during an online public talk on 30 June – [the video of the talk is available on the Oxford BRC website](#). The next online public talk will be at 3pm on Tuesday 14 July when Professor Andrew Pollard will be talking about the Oxford Vaccine Trial – [watch live on YouTube](#).

BMA Council Chair praises research into COVID-19 staff testing at OUH

A [study](#) at the OUH has revealed the different levels of risk faced by healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a major collaboration with the University of Oxford, almost 10,000 staff were tested both for presence of the virus responsible for COVID-19 and antibodies to the virus. This study, published last week, is the first to comprehensively investigate all staff groups across an institution. Based on the findings, an infection prevention and control plan has been implemented to limit transmission of the virus.

The BMA Council Chair, Dr Chaand Nagpaul, responded positively to the study, saying it provides important information on the risks to different categories of staff. His remarks were reported by the [Oxford Mail](#) among others.

Changes to hospital visiting arrangements

With effect from Monday 29 June OUH are allowing one visitor per patient, for one hour, once a day from Monday to Friday on their inpatient wards at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Churchill Hospital and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford and at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury. One-hour slots are booked in advance by staff on the wards.

Some patients have different arrangements, such as women in labour, children, patients at the end of their life, and patients with learning difficulties – these arrangements have been in place throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visiting is still not allowed on wards where patients with COVID-19 are being treated, and patients are expected to attend outpatient appointments unaccompanied unless there are exceptional circumstances. Patients attending Emergency Departments and Emergency Assessment Units are also expected to be unaccompanied unless there are exceptional circumstances. For more information including FAQs visit the OUH [website](#).

From July 1, Oxford Health has also started new visiting arrangements at six of its community hospitals. Family and carers of patients are being contacted directly by ward staff to book slots to make a visit. One visitor per day is allowed for one hour for each patient at Abingdon, Bicester, City, Didcot, Wallingford and Witney hospitals. Advice on infection control and masks for visitors has also been issued alongside some frequently asked questions (FAQs). More information is available [here](#).

Face masks and face coverings – a reminder

Face coverings on public transport and for hospital staff, outpatients and visitors became compulsory across the country from 15 June. A face covering mainly protects others from infection rather than the wearer from infection from others.

In line with new Government guidance for the NHS, all patients and visitors coming to OUH hospitals in Oxford and Banbury must now wear face coverings. Patients and visitors may wear a face mask if they choose, but a face covering is sufficient. All staff working in OUH hospitals – whether or not they work for OUH – must wear face masks. This is in line with the new Government guidance which came into effect on 15 June.

These are additional measures to help keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to staff, patients and visitors continuing to observe safe distancing and maintaining good hand hygiene. More information about the requirement for patients and visitors to wear face coverings is available on the OUH [website](#).

Face masks – making sure they are safe and legal

Traders in Oxfordshire are being warned by Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards not to sell low-tech face coverings as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or make claims they provide protection against COVID-19. Trading Standards legislation controls the sale of these products and requires producers and sellers to meet certain requirements.

Anyone involved in making or selling face coverings should refer to the [Trading Standards: face coverings guidance](#) to ensure they are compliant with the law. Follow-up advice can be requested by contacting Oxfordshire Trading Standards on **01865 895999** (Option 2) or email Trading.Standards@Oxfordshire.gov.uk. Oxfordshire Trading Standards is regularly monitoring online sites such as Facebook Marketplace and will be actively engaging with sellers to ensure any face coverings are safe and legal.

Letters to a Little One

Oxford Health's Chief Nurse Marie Crofts is writing to the children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces of members of staff to thank them for supporting the grown-ups coming to work or working from home during the pandemic. Personalised letters are being sent directly to around 600 children, accompanied by a small gift. The idea for the letter came from

Community Services Director, Emma Leaver, who is committed to supporting staff and their families.

Creating with Care programme

Oxford Health's 'Creating with Care' programme has been bringing entertainment and creative activities to the county's community hospitals with arts and music. Patients and staff at the Wallingford Community Hospital were treated to a socially distanced [summer concert](#) with strawberries and cream. Similar concerts are planned for Witney and Abingdon hospitals, too.

Frequency and further information:

For the time being we will be sharing an update fortnightly; this may change as we review communications for the COVID-19 response and recovery phase of the pandemic.

Please email occg.media-team@nhs.net with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.