

# Oxfordshire

## NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

25 September 2020

Oxfordshire health and local authority partners are working together to help the county restart, recover and renew after COVID-19.

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## Introduction



*Restart, Recover, Renew* is an ambitious Oxfordshire system-wide approach to recovery, which places the health, social and economic wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents at its heart. It considers the interdependencies between

socio-economic factors, health outcomes, the economy, environmental matters and communities, and seeks to identify innovative joint solutions to shared challenges.

The devastating impact of COVID-19 has presented a challenge to our communities and across our services which we have never seen in our lifetime.

This Stakeholder Briefing provides a regular update on each of the six themes identified in our approach to recovery: i) Economy; ii) Place, Transport, Infrastructure; iii) Health, Wellbeing and Social Care; iv) Children, Education and Families; v) Community Resilience; vi) Organisational Recovery.

## Outbreak Management



In the 7 days up to 18 September, there has been a total of 91 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Oxfordshire, a decrease from 107 new cases in the previous week. This is equivalent to a weekly rate of 13.2 new cases per 100,000 residents.

Oxford currently stands at 21.6 cases per 100,000 population, which means the city's alert status is currently yellow. Cherwell is also at yellow status, with 15.3 cases per 100,000 population.

Oxfordshire system partners have been working together on a communications campaign – [#stopthespread](#) – to encourage Oxfordshire residents to take protective measures to stop the spread of the virus and protect themselves and others. The campaign comprises digital, social media and outdoor advertising, leaflets distributed to households, posters distributed across pubs, messages sent by GP practices to local residents, and media interviews with Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health Ansaf Azhar.

System partners are also working closely with Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University on a range of measures to keep students, staff and residents safe as teaching and studying resumes this month. Additional local contact tracing systems have been established to track attendance in key areas across campuses; local outbreak control plans are in place, which have been tested through joint exercises; and all students are being

provided with advice and guidance about how to protect themselves and others.

### Update on testing

Across Oxfordshire we are currently carrying out approximately 10,000 tests per week and have some of the highest testing rates in the south-east region. But as elsewhere in the country, demand is outstripping capacity, and so we are asking people to only book a test if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

To supplement regional resources, we have recently established a Local Testing Site in Oxford. Located at Oxford Brookes campus in Headington, it is open to the local community as well as to Brookes' students and staff. Advance booking is required – people showing coronavirus symptoms should call 119 or register online. We are actively looking to secure an additional testing facility in Oxford as well as further sites across the county.

A recent survey at testing sites found a quarter of people turning up did not have symptoms, and this is putting a huge strain on the system. We are therefore actively urging people not to order or book tests if they are not symptomatic.

Booking slots are made available the evening before for morning appointments, and on the morning for afternoon appointments. There are times during the day where booking slots may not be available. However, slots are released continuously and so anyone who has not been able to make a booking should call back or visit the website later.

Further information about coronavirus cases in Oxfordshire and the measures being put in place to control the virus can be found at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread).

### Launch of the NHS COVID-19 app

The new NHS COVID-19 app will launch in England and Wales on 24 September. This is part of the NHS Test and Trace service, which will be used alongside traditional contact tracing to help trace individuals who may have come into contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus.

The app allows people to check into venues by scanning a QR code. It also provides them with an alert if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, and helps them check if they have symptoms and book a test. You can find out more about the app [here](#).

You will start to see posters with QR codes being put up in public-facing businesses and venues across the county. From 24 September it will become **a legal requirement** for all designated venues to display an official NHS QR poster. Designated venues include:

- Hospitality services, including pubs, bars, restaurants and cafés
- Tourism and leisure services, including gyms, swimming pools, hotels, museums, cinemas and theme parks
- Close contact services, including hairdressers and barbers
- Facilities provided by Local Authorities for the public, including town halls and civic centres for events, community centres, libraries and children's centres

Resources for venues and businesses are available [here](#).

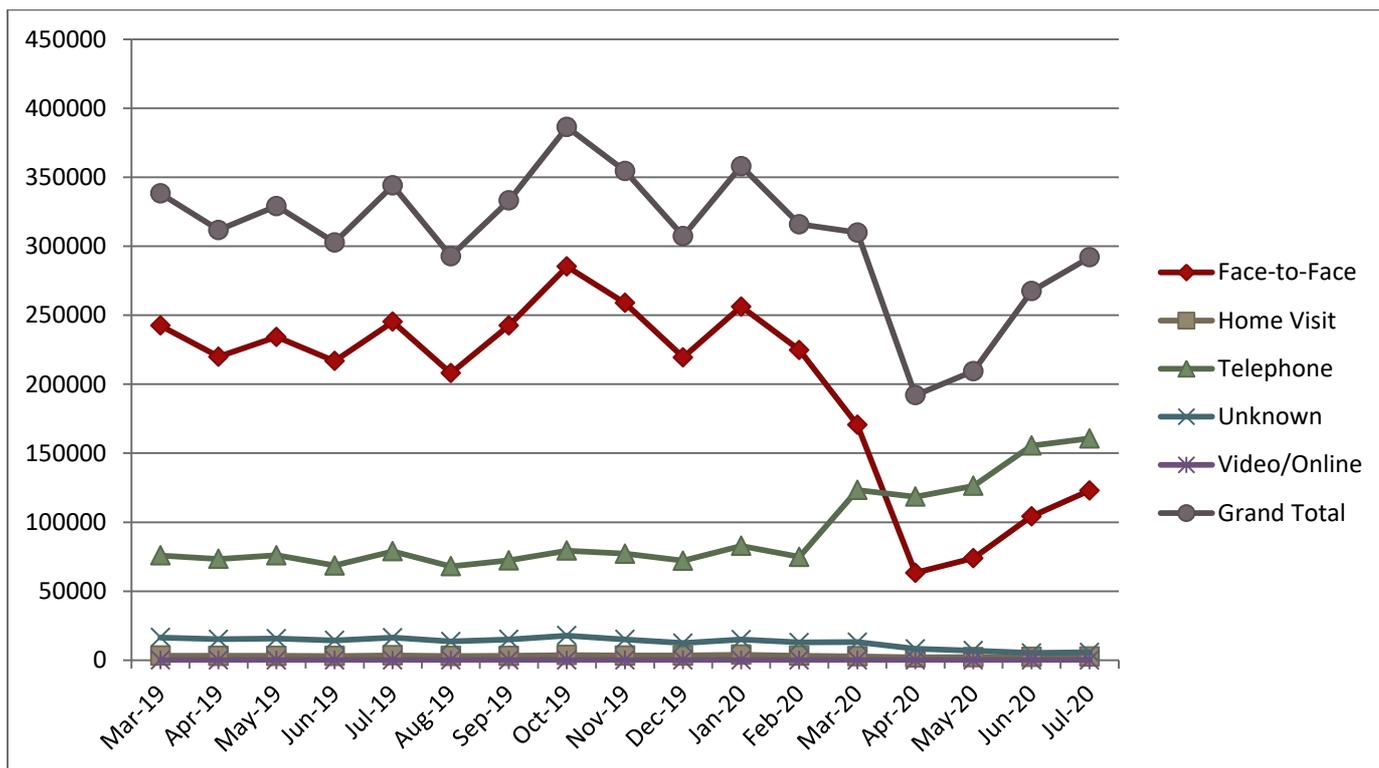
### Test and Trace Support Payment

From 28 September people will be required by law to self-isolate. New fines for those breaching self-isolation rules will start at £1,000, while those on lower incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result will be supported by a Test and Trace Support payment of £500.

These payments will be administered by district councils, who are working at pace in Oxfordshire to put in place this new service line by the deadline of 12 October (with back payments to 28 September).

In addition to this new grant, there are many ways in which Oxfordshire residents who need to stay at home are being supported. This includes support from our local community hubs, town and parish councils, community support groups and the voluntary and community sector.

## Health, Wellbeing and Social Care



In primary care, GP practices have been working differently to offer appointments to patients using telephone and online to reduce the number of people attending the practice in person.

During the height of the pandemic, the number of face-to-face appointments was significantly reduced. Support was provided to enable GPs to deliver more telephone appointments and to safely restore face-to-face services where telephone and online services cannot be used.

Since May, the number of appointments has steadily increased each month. The graph above shows the different types of appointment with the total number of appointments (Grand Total) for March being almost 310,000 and the number for July 2020 being almost 300,000.

This approach is also a feature across healthcare in Oxfordshire. The use of technology to continue to provide care without seeing patients face-to-face has helped keep people safe.

For example, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) – a Global Digital Exemplar trust – has now surpassed 60,000 online consultations; a milestone that is believed to put the Trust as the top performer for digital consultations in the country. In January, OHFT provided 86 per cent of patient contacts face-to-face. This has reduced to 47 per cent, meaning OHFT’s clinicians and therapists can still have one-to-one contact with patients and service users, providing help, reassurance and treatment.

In OHFT, more than 500 digital consultations take place each weekday, accounting for 13 per

cent of contacts, with a further 39 per cent of contacts by phone and the rest via email. Services which have embraced digital consultations include Children and Adolescent mental Health Services and IAPT (talking therapies) and dentistry, together with eating disorders, adult mental health, perinatal, early intervention in psychosis, and health visiting.

OHFT 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.

Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust – which is also a Global Digital Exemplar trust – carried out more than 17,000 video consultations from 16 March to 6 September using the Attend Anywhere platform.

OUH is a major regional and national centre for many specialties, so patients often come not only from Oxfordshire and the wider Thames Valley area but also from other parts of the country. During the COVID-19 pandemic, video consulting technology has allowed those patients, as well as those who live closer to our hospitals, to continue to access vital services.

Ahead of the widespread adoption of Attend Anywhere, the Oxford Sarcoma Service – one of only five National Specialist Bone and Soft Tissue Sarcoma Services in England – carried out a study into the technology. Patients often have to travel significant distances for on-going treatment – from as far away as Cornwall and the south coast. The study found that patients were "extremely happy with video consultation", in particular those who work or are house-bound.

Among the most frequent users of Attend Anywhere at OUH during COVID-19 have been children's services who have needed to engage

with children and teenagers. Using video is immediate, easier and more productive than engaging with them over the phone.

As part of its review into digital development OUH commissioned the [TheHill](#), Oxfordshire's health and care digital transformation catalyst, to explore what, how and why innovation and new technological solutions took place at OUH in the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic. [The report is now available on TheHill website.](#)

The NHS also continues to care for patients affected by COVID and this includes rehabilitation for those who were worst affected. As we plan for winter, there will be additional capacity to support primary care with a possible second surge. This will be in the form of three community-based clinics providing COVID care, supported by a visiting service for those unable to travel – one clinic will be located in the north (Banbury), one in the south (Wallingford) and one in Oxford. These are not walk-in clinics and patients needing to attend will be directed to their nearest clinic with an appointment either by their own GP or by NHS 111.

As the virus remains present across the country, arrangements are in place to protect patients and staff so other care can continue to be available. Urgent care and cancer services remained open throughout the pandemic and now most routine care is open for referrals.

Of course, there is still a backlog with longer waiting lists for most procedures and our hospitals are working hard to prioritise those patients in most need and to reduce the lists as quickly and as safely as possible. Additional capacity has been made available by using private providers across the county and by working collaboratively with other providers

across the borders into Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and elsewhere.

We know this is a difficult time for patients waiting to be treated for routine conditions. Every effort is being made to ensure patients and staff are safe, which means more space is needed to ensure social distancing and more time is needed to allow for deep cleaning and changing of PPE between each patient.

Plans for winter also well underway. Once again, we will be asking people to take action to stay as well as possible. Having a personal winter plan can make all the difference. Keeping a well-stocked first aid box including cold and flu remedies, keeping the home warm in cold weather, avoiding going out when it is icy and having the flu vaccination if you are in one of the at-risk groups.

We will also continue to remind the public of the on-going advice about COVID-19. This includes how to protect ourselves with simple hand-washing, using face coverings while out and about, making sure we socially distance when seeing people outside of our home and staying vigilant to changes to the advice if numbers of infections rise locally.

A system approach to communicating these messages has been taken and over the past weeks this has been particularly important as the number of cases was seen to be rising in Oxford. NHS and local authority communication teams joined forces to support the wide communication of messages for our Director of Public Health. These were particularly targeted at younger people, so in addition to using local media and traditional communications, we sent out messages via social media, texts from GP

practices, radio advertising and leafleting. Early indications are that this has had a positive effect on numbers of infections and we will continue to monitor these closely and take action as needed.

### **Getting people more active, more often**



Cherwell District Council has partnered with Street Tag to launch an app that encourages people to walk and cycle more around the district. An interactive map guides people to specific digital markers, with participants picking up points for each one they discover.

The virtual tags are placed in popular walking routes and areas with green space to encourage people to get around on foot or bike. The app uses the latest GPS technology and logs when a player is in the correct area, rewarding them with points.

Since the app launched on 10 August, residents and participants have clocked up almost 5,000 miles – that's a combination of cycling, walking and running to Rome and back, twice!



### **Ambitious investment plan launched for Oxfordshire**

A £4.3bn investment plan for Oxfordshire, which aims to generate significant national and international financial backing, has been published by the county's Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). The [Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy Investment Plan](#) calls on the UK Government and international investors to back a portfolio of programmes and projects to support the economic recovery from the pandemic and to trigger significant job openings and commercial activity.

By 2030, the investment plan's portfolio of projects will aim to deliver 24,500 jobs, 2,700 qualifications, create support for more than 41,000 adult and young learners, as well as adding 350,000m<sup>2</sup> of new commercial and innovation floor space countywide. Some of the headline projects include:

- **A £172m Energy Systems Accelerator** – a global hub for knowledge sharing and collaboration in net zero-carbon energy systems.
- **A £18.3m Oxfordshire Social Contract, Careers Innovation Gateway** – a transformative programme focused on driving social mobility and long-term career opportunities for young people across Oxfordshire.
- **The Harwell International Space Cluster** – a package of three projects that

will expand the Harwell Space Cluster into one of the world's leading locations for space technologies and downstream services.

**A Global Health and Life Sciences Cluster programme** – a package of two projects involving Oxford University and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which will deliver a world-leading Clinical Bio-manufacturing Facility and the expansion of a new Bio-Escalator incubator for spin-outs and research.

### **Rediscover Oxford**

Oxford City Council has joined forces with the *Oxford Mail* on a marketing campaign to help boost city centre businesses and cultural attractions. The campaign aims to encourage Oxford and Oxfordshire residents to visit their home city for day trips and to re-engage with their city through cultural activities. It also encourages those from further afield in the UK to visit for staycations.

Oxford's brilliant businesses, beautiful green spaces and must-see attractions are being promoted through coverage in the *Oxford Mail* and *Oxford Times* and digital and non-digital advertising. A website has been created to provide suggestions for activities, daytrips and staycations: [www.rediscoveroxford.co.uk](http://www.rediscoveroxford.co.uk).

Although many people are now returning to the city centre to shop or visit restaurants and pubs, the coronavirus pandemic has meant significantly fewer tourists are visiting Oxford than normal. Footfall is down by 62 per cent compared with last year, which is affecting the retail and hospitality sectors, especially those which rely on the summer tourist trade.

## Place, Transport, Infrastructure

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### Funding deal to update A40 west of Oxford

Oxfordshire residents will benefit from a funding deal with Homes England for £102m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund, dedicated to providing a significant upgrade to the A40 west of Oxford. The key route carries up to 32,000 vehicles a day on the section between Witney and Oxford and is single carriageway in some sections.

The deal will enable the County Council to improve sustainable travel for residents,

communities and business while supporting thousands of new homes and jobs. The sum of £102m will deliver the Housing Infrastructure Fund 2 A40 Smart Corridor, comprising:

- An extension of the dual carriageway from Witney to the proposed Eynsham park and ride, including improving cycling facilities along the route
- An extension of the A40 westbound bus lane from west of Duke's Cut canal and railway bridges close Oxford near to the proposed Eynsham park and ride
- A40 capacity and connectivity improvements to widen access at Duke's Cut canal and railway bridges, extending the eastbound and westbound bus priority lane, prioritising bus rapid transit at this pinch point.

## Children, Education, Families

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### Welcoming children back to school safely

Oxfordshire County Council worked closely with schools and colleges on preparations for the safe return of children at the start of the academic year. Risk assessments were carried out and hygiene measures put in place across all education settings, and all education providers are following Department for Education, Public Health England and County Council guidance.

A letter was sent to parents and carers across Oxfordshire to reassure them about the preparations that have taken place for the safe return of children. 94 per cent of schools in Oxfordshire have remained open since the start of lockdown and no significant outbreaks were seen during this time. Moreover, research by Public Health England shows that coronavirus outbreaks and infections in schools and early years settings are very rare.

Out of more than 1 million children attending pre-school and primary school in June, just 70 children were affected.

Through the **#backtoschoolsafely** campaign, parents and children are being encouraged to adopt active travel where possible, including walking, cycling or scooting to school. An email address has also been set up for parents to report any congestion issues close to their

child's school:

[schoolsactivetravel@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsactivetravel@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Barton Park Primary School opens its doors to its first pupils**



Children living at Barton Park, Oxford, are benefiting from a new primary school, which opened its doors on 3 September. The school

is initially welcoming a reception and combined year 1 and year 2 classes, with COVID-19 safety measures throughout the building and grounds. Longer term, the school expects to cater for 315 children aged between four and 11, alongside 45 nursery places.

The new school has been designed to promote active and healthy lifestyles in line with Barton Park's ethos as a 'healthy new town'. The school has been built by Oxfordshire County Council and its completion is the latest milestone in the development of Barton Park by Barton Oxford LLP, a joint venture between Oxford City Council and Grosvenor Britain and Ireland.

## **Community Resilience**

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### **Community Hub Emergency Relief Grants**



Oxfordshire's six councils are establishing a Community Hub Emergency Relief Grants

scheme to help tackle the effects of coronavirus on the most vulnerable.

Supported by an allocation of national funding from DEFRA and administered by the county's four district councils and city council, the scheme will be open to local voluntary and community organisations tackling the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available to support the work of voluntary not-for-profit organisations, working to relieve hardship in their community and prevent food insecurity. Projects that can be funded include, but are not limited to, community food banks and food projects such as larders and fridges.

Applications will be invited and assessed on a rolling basis. The intention is that the majority of this fund is spent by the end of October in line with government guidance.

For further information, please visit the city and district councils' websites.

# Organisational Recovery

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## COVID-compliant workspaces

Since the start of lockdown, many staff across local authorities in Oxfordshire have been working from home, while committee meetings have been held virtually. In light of recent Government guidance, this arrangement will remain in place for the foreseeable future, with staff who can work from home being asked to continue to do so. The Facilities Management teams have been working hard to make buildings COVID-compliant in order to support

public-facing services and to provide desk space to those members of staff who cannot work from home. Surveys have been conducted across county, city and district councils to monitor staff sentiment and assess requirements and support for remote working in the longer term, as well as levels of digital confidence.

## Other news

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**Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust's Digital Care Assistant was shortlisted for Nursing Times Awards 2020.** Oxford Health has been shortlisted for Nursing Times Awards 2020 in two categories: Nursing in Mental Health and Technology and Data in Nursing.

The trust's entry, A better night's sleep: a novel approach to nursing observations at night shines a light on the Digital Care Assistant (DCA), which enables staff to gather observations from mental health inpatients without waking them at night. Developed in collaboration with Oxehealth, an Oxford University spin-off IT company, the DCA observation technology was launched last summer on the acute male inpatient Vaughan Thomas Ward at Warneford Hospital, Oxford.

Virtual HealthFest 2020: Oxford Health's annual celebration of Trust, partner and community involvement which usually attracts 500+ visitors at Warneford Hospital went online this year due to COVID-19. It was broadcast on [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/healthfest/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/healthfest/) on 12 September, the Trust's Chief Executive Nick Broughton welcomed festival-goers to a virtual site featuring a main stage debuting a film about Abingdon Community Hospital – including the Oxfordshire Stroke Rehabilitation Unit – alongside videos from a host of trust services and partners including SCAS, Smoke Free Life and Age UK Oxfordshire.

Six other 'activity tents' shared information on Research & Development, Keeping Active, OHFT's Green Alert campaign; Thriving with Nature, Arts & Wellbeing and the Trust's Charity, Membership & Involvement activities.

## And finally...

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We plan to share an update at least once a month. Please email [occq.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occq.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as we can.