

# Oxfordshire

## NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

11 December 2020

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

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# Outbreak Management

## COVID cases in Oxfordshire

The week up to 4 December saw a total of 568 confirmed cases in Oxfordshire, which is equivalent to a weekly rate of 82.1 per 100,000 residents. This represents a 3% rise compared with the previous week. While the weekly rate in Oxfordshire remains lower than the South East average, there has been a substantial increase in cases among the over 60s in the county and the public health team are monitoring this closely.



## Stopping the spread of the virus

In Oxfordshire we have put in place a range of local systems to help manage the virus. We have increased testing capacity, with a new local testing site opening at Woodford Green car park in Witney on 12 December. This will bring the number of local and regional testing sites in Oxfordshire to five: one drive-through site at Oxford Parkway, and four walk-through sites (two in Oxford, one in Banbury and one in Witney).

Our COVID-secure teams are working with businesses across the county to ensure they are following the guidance and enforce the rules where required. And our local COVID-19 contact tracing system is working alongside the national system to provide a valuable extra layer of protection in the fight against the virus.

Just six weeks old, the local contact tracing system has now achieved its first major milestone – successfully contacting over 500 residents, who may not otherwise have been reached. The scheme is a partnership between the six Oxfordshire councils, Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace and Oxford's two universities.

The NHS Test and Trace national system initially tries to contact all cases in the county, but where they are unable to reach someone within 24 hours, the case passes to Oxfordshire's local contact tracing team. County council call handlers first try to reach a case by phone. But where they are unable to get through, trained staff from the city and district councils visit people at home to explain why the

council is trying to get in touch and to ask them to contact the call centre.

## Tier 2 restrictions

Following the lifting of national lockdown on 2 December, Oxfordshire moved into the 'high' COVID-19 alert level (tier 2). This means changes to the rules around working, socialising and running a business:

- People must not meet socially with anybody outside their household or support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place.
- People must not meet in a group of more than six outside, including in a garden or other space.
- Non-essential shops can reopen, as can personal care businesses such as hairdressers, as well as gyms and the wider leisure sector. All businesses and venues must have COVID-secure measures in place.
- Hospitality venues will be allowed to stay open until 11pm – with last orders at 10pm. Only those that serve substantial meals can operate, and alcohol can only be served with substantial meals.
- Collective worship, weddings and outdoor sports can resume - with restrictions.

**OXFORDSHIRE IS IN**  
**TIER 2**

Find out more about tier 2/high alert restrictions at:  
[oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread)

**WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:**

- Meeting friends and family:**  
No mixing of households indoors, apart from support bubbles.  
Maximum of six outdoors.
- Travelling:**  
Reduce the number of journeys you make and walk or cycle if possible.
- Work and business:**  
Everyone who can work from home should do so.
- Education:**  
All education settings open.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

A comprehensive list of FAQs about tier 2 restrictions in Oxfordshire is available at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread).

## Reopening council services

The lifting of lockdown meant that council services which had closed temporarily were able to reopen on 2 December. This included leisure centres and leisure facilities, such as Oxford Ice Rink, and

libraries and heritage sites, such as the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock.

At the start of lockdown, a new [Click & Collect service](#) had been introduced in Oxfordshire libraries, across 14 participating branches. In its first fortnight of operation, 1,169 requests were received for 5,460 items. As a result of its popularity and excellent feedback from users, the service will now continue.

Further good news is that the 12 libraries that had not reopened since the initial lockdown in March will open again during January and February 2021.



## Community resilience

### Food donations scheme

A [donations scheme](#) has been set up by Oxford City Council so the public can easily donate food, essential items and Christmas treats to charities helping Oxford's most vulnerable communities. The scheme will support the entire food network across Oxford and remain ongoing until further notice as demand remains high and is likely to increase over the winter period.

Donations collected by the Council will be distributed to the following organisations: Oxford Mutual Aid, The Gatehouse, Rose Hill Community Larder, Rose Hill Community Cupboard, Botley Community Larder, Cutteslowe Community Larder, Iraqi Women Art & War, SYRCOX, and West Oxford Community Centre.

### Councils calling

During lockdown, Oxfordshire's councils have been checking in with thousands of vulnerable residents to see how they have coped and whether they need support. For example, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have made over 2,900 outbound calls and sent letters and emails to 9,310 vulnerable residents; while West Oxfordshire has been seeking to establish contact with more than 4,000 residents by phone to see if they need assistance.



### Support for rough sleepers

Since March, Oxfordshire's councils have offered safe accommodation to all those experiencing rough sleeping. In Cherwell, for example, this has helped 78 individuals into temporary accommodation who would otherwise have been at risk of rough sleeping; while South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have moved 72 clients onto longer-term accommodation out of a total of 123 households placed in temporary accommodation since 26 March.

Cherwell District Council is currently asking for views on its draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, which features a range of commitments and proposals, including a commitment to learn lessons from the response to the pandemic. The council is also looking to explore the possibility of creating a countywide early intervention hub in collaboration with partners. This would enable rapid access to a psychologically informed assessment of their needs for all those sleeping rough or at immediate risk of rough sleeping. The consultation, which runs until 17 January, can be [accessed here](#). In Oxford there will be [new arrangements](#) for offering emergency beds to people sleeping rough.

This winter Oxford City Council will be offering those sleeping rough their own room for the night rather than a shared sleeping space. Working with St Mungo's, Aspire and Homeless Oxfordshire, the council has secured 22 rooms across three venues and contingency plans are in place to provide more if the need arises. The use of communal spaces will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

## Oxfordshire Roads to Recovery treatment service

The countywide integrated alcohol and drug treatment service *Oxfordshire Roads to Recovery* has been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic to support homeless people to address their challenges with substance misuse.

Run by Turning Point and commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, the service has been working closely with partners to support those in

emergency and temporary accommodation. So far this year they have been able to successfully place 19 of these individuals in residential treatment to help them to address complex substance misuse issues, with more due to start placements in the coming weeks. Most of these people would not have achieved this without housing and significant input from Turning Point. This support and treatment has huge impacts on their long-term health and can be life changing.

## Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

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### COVID vaccinations get underway in Oxford on 'V Day'



NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) announced last weekend the location of the first 50 'hospital hubs' where COVID-19 vaccinations will be carried out – including one of Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust's sites, the Churchill Hospital in Oxford.

NHSE&I said that people aged 80 and over, as well as care home workers, will be first to receive the vaccination, along with NHS workers who are at higher risk. The prioritisation has been set nationally by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

OUH have been working closely with colleagues across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and West Berkshire to plan their local COVID vaccination programme. The 'hospital hub' at the Churchill Hospital will serve people living in those areas in the first instance.

Tuesday 8 December was a momentous day for Oxfordshire and an historic day for the NHS as they started the COVID-19 vaccination programme at the Churchill, part of the biggest and most highly anticipated immunisation campaign in history.

OUH Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bruno Holthof, said: "I would like to thank all of our staff who have done such a tremendous job to get our hospital hub set up at such pace. This has been a great achievement of team working by our estates, digital, pharmacy and clinical staff, with the support of many more.

"This is a hugely significant moment in our pandemic response, and offers hope at the end of what has been an incredibly difficult year for us all. The strict approval process it has gone through means that the approved vaccine, and any other vaccines approved in the future, will not only be safe, but will also be our best defence against the virus."

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



### Rolling out the programme

There will now be a process to rollout vaccinations first for those people who are either most at risk or need it because of the work they do. This includes those people over the age of 80 and people living and working in care homes. The prioritisation has been set nationally by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

From Tuesday 15 December, a number of GP-led primary care networks (PCN) across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire West will begin delivering vaccinations to these first priority groups.

Details are being finalised as part of the last stages of a national clinical assurance process and priority patients have been contacted to invite them to come for their vaccine once the green light is given.

More GP-led PCNs will be joining the vaccination programme on a phased basis and are set to go live on the 21 and 28 December 2020, extending the invitation to be other age categories and at-risk medical groups as vaccine stock becomes available.

Given the logistics of the current Pfizer vaccine, which needs to be kept at a temperature of  $-70^{\circ}\text{C}$  and cannot be moved too many times, further work continues to establish a roving model to reach into care home residents.

### How the public can help

The public have an important part to play in helping the NHS to deliver the biggest vaccination programme we have ever undertaken:

- please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, we will contact you;
- when we do contact you, please attend your booked appointments; and
- please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives by avoiding close contact with anyone you don't live with.

### More good news as Oxford vaccine found to be safe and effective

On the same day that the COVID-19 vaccination programme got underway across the country, Tuesday 8 November, the peer reviewed results of the Oxford vaccine's phase III clinical trial were published in the *Lancet* medical journal.

Professor Andrew Pollard, Director of the Oxford Vaccine Group and Chief Investigator of the Oxford vaccine trial, said: "Today we have published the interim analysis of the phase III trial and show that this new vaccine has a good safety record and efficacy against the coronavirus.



"We are hugely grateful to our trial volunteers for working with us over the past eight months to bring us to this milestone."

Data for the Oxford vaccine, which has been developed with AstraZeneca, has been submitted to the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for approval.

[More information is available on the University of Oxford website.](#)

### New research study reveals hidden lung damage caused by COVID-19

Early findings from a research study into longer-term damage in patients recovering from COVID-19 suggest that cutting-edge scanning techniques may detect previously unseen lung damage.

In some people, the symptoms of COVID-19 can continue for many months after the infection, with many complaining of persistent breathlessness and fatigue. The virus may affect the function of the lung in ways that are not yet fully understood.

This new research study, which is being led by the University of Oxford with the University of Sheffield, is being supported by the [NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre](#).

It is investigating possible reasons for patients remaining short of breath following treatment for COVID-19 pneumonia, even after discharge from hospital, with an initial group of 40 patients, 20 of them from Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust, over the next six months.

Oxford researchers have been at the forefront of national and global efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, with many high-profile trials and studies being led from Oxford.

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

### Reflecting on a year like no other – One Team One OUH online photo exhibition

We can all agree that it's more important than ever this year to create moments that bring people together (even if that can only be virtually rather than in person) and provide opportunities for us all to reflect on a year like no other.

Oxford Hospitals Charity has put together the One Team One OUH exhibition featuring art and photography of staff from across Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) during the COVID pandemic.

Images from the exhibition will be available to view online soon because for obvious reasons we don't want to encourage people to come into our hospitals specially to see the exhibition.

Staff working on the four main OUH hospital sites in Oxford and Banbury, and patients coming to these hospitals for scheduled appointments, will be able to see the exhibition in locations on each hospital site.

### **OUH announces potential partnership with Katharine House Hospice**

Palliative care and end of life care services have never been more important than during the current COVID-19 pandemic and in Oxfordshire we are fortunate to have high quality and nationally renowned hospice care.

Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust has announced that it is exploring a potential partnership with the much-loved Katharine House Hospice, which is based in Adderbury in North Oxfordshire.

Under the potential partnership, the hospice's clinical service would transfer to be under the management of OUH, ensuring a sustainable future and allowing the hospice to protect existing services.

Jason Dorsett, OUH Chief Finance Officer and Executive Director lead at OUH for the potential partnership with Katharine House Hospice, said: "As an organisation, we are committed to working in partnership in order to provide the best possible care for patients in Oxfordshire and beyond.

"We look forward to the benefits which our new partnership with Katharine House Hospice will bring to patients and to the staff who care for them. Our culture of compassionate excellence is a perfect fit with Katharine House's reputation for high quality hospice care which is so valued by the community."

Angharad Orchard, Chief Executive of Katharine House Hospice, added: "Changing demographics mean that we need to deliver a broader range of services to more people in the coming years, and so we have needed to be open to exploring ways of ensuring that happens.

"Continuing our current model would eventually result in the loss of some of our clinical services due to the increasing demand for our services and a deficit in our funding, and we simply cannot allow that to happen. This proposal would protect the services that we provide."

[More information is available on the Katharine House Hospice website.](#)

### **Oxford Health surpasses 100,000 digital consultations**

Oxford Health has now conducted over 100,000 digital consultations – believed to be the highest number in the country.

Throughout the pandemic digital consultations have enabled important therapy to continue while safely distancing patients and staff, and there are benefits over and above infection control. Services which have embraced digital consultations include CAHMS, [IAPT](#) and dentistry, along with eating disorders, adult mental health, perinatal, early intervention in psychosis, health visiting and even physiotherapy.



As a Global Digital Exemplar, Oxford Health is keen to continue improving, especially in terms of patient experience.

### **Mohinder Sawhney appointed non-executive director at Oxford Health**

A senior adviser to international companies and non-profit organisations is joining the Board of Oxford Health as a non-executive director in the New Year. Mohinder Sawhney is an economist who has extensive experience as an adviser to organisations large and small, including the World Bank, the Department for International Development, Diabetes UK, Hampshire County Council, and the Bank of England.

Earlier this year she completed her final third term as Chair of Revitalise, a charity providing respite breaks for disabled people and carers. Oxford Health's Council of Governors, made up of representatives of the public, service user and staff, approved the appointment. Read more [here](#).

### **National survey launched to guide future of community nursing**

Community nurses from Oxford Health are taking part in a new national project to give patients, carers and healthcare professionals the opportunity to have their say about the future of community nursing research. Dr Cathy Henshall, Head of Research Delivery at Oxford Health. "Generating this list of priorities will give funders, trusts, nurses and academic centres the steering they need to really get to grips with research and the future of community nursing." Find out more [here](#).

## **Oxford Health volunteers take their place on the Wall of Fame**

People who have given their time and skills to support and enhance the work of Oxford Health have been featured on the Helpforce Wall of Fame.

Helpforce is a national body that partners with health and care organisations to increase volunteering opportunities and accelerate their impact. The talent and dedication of Oxford Health volunteers has impressed them so much that a number have made it onto the online wall. Julie Pink from Oxford Health joined Megan Rendall this week on BBC Radio Oxford to talk about volunteering and what it means to Oxford Health and the people it cares for.

Read more about the Wall of Fame [here](#).

## **Help needed for COVID-19 mental health research**

Researchers at the National Centre for Mental Health (NCMH) want to know how the lives of people with lived experience of a mental illness have been affected by the COVID-19 virus. Oxford Health has backed an online survey that asks basic information about mental health, wellbeing and experiences related to COVID-19.

Taking part is voluntary and takes around 20-25 minutes. So far, over 3,000 people have taken part in the survey. More are needed. Find out more [here](#).

## **Innovative sleep project in the national spotlight**

Oxford Health has been shortlisted for the HSJ Awards 2020 for the Mental Health Innovation of the Year. The trust's entry, 'A good night's sleep in hospital – A new standard in mental health' shines a light on the Oxevision platform. Previously known as Digital Care Assistant, Oxevision enables staff to gather observations from mental health inpatients without waking them at night.

## **Greener healthcare research wins national award**

An Oxford Health consultant has received a prestigious honour for his work on policy development in the area of sustainable healthcare.

## **Economy**

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### **Business support grants**

The city and district councils are continuing to process applications for the new government funding available to businesses that have been forced to close during the current lockdown. Known as '[Local Restrictions Grant Support Grant \(Closed Addendum\)](#)', the grants will provide businesses that have had to close or have been severely impacted

Dr Daniel Maughan is the medical lead for Oxford Healthcare Improvement and a consultant psychiatrist for the early intervention service for Oxfordshire. His work in designing policy to think sustainably, environmentally and ethically has been recognised with a President's Medal from the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Find out more about Daniel's work [here](#).

### **Royal College Award for Oxford Health doctor**

Dr Maxime Taquet has been awarded the Royal College of Psychiatrists Foundation Doctor of the Year award. He is an Academic Clinical Fellow within the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford and currently working four days a week in the Sandford ward at the Fulbrook Centre. Max has done all his medical placements at Oxford Health. Talking about his award he wanted to highlight "what an excellent training environment Oxford Health is." More [here](#).

### **Oxford Health student wins major prize for research**

Research by an Oxford Health Foundation Year 1 student on schizophrenia and COVID-19 has received national praise.

Dr Kah Long Aw has been named the overall winner of the South Eastern Division Poster Prize at the Royal College of Psychiatrists South Eastern Division & London Division Autumn Conference 2020 for his submission entitled '*Schizophrenia and Covid-19: Are standards being met during the Covid-19 Pandemic?*' More [here](#).

### **Opt-out approach to research benefits patients and staff**

A new study undertaken by an interdisciplinary team at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and the Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre, has shown that an 'opt-out' approach to research recruitment could benefit both clinical research and patient care. More [here](#).

by the latest lockdown with grants of up to £3,000 per month. This will benefit businesses in the retail, hospitality, leisure, accommodation, and night-time economy sectors in particular.

### **Oxfordshire Kickstart Grant Scheme**

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) ran an application process for its

[Oxfordshire Kickstart Grant Scheme](#) on 8 December.

The scheme is designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) businesses in Oxfordshire, who have been affected by COVID-19, to deal with the impacts of the pandemic and access specialist professional advice, equipment or technology to rebuild and support a quick recovery.

Most grants awarded will be in the range of £1,000 to £3,000, although grants of up to £5,000 may be considered in exceptional circumstances. This is a 100% grant scheme funded by the Government (through the European Regional Development Fund) and there is no requirement for businesses to contribute financially.



### UK transition support

In the lead-up to the end of the UK transition, it's key for Oxfordshire businesses to check the new rules that will come into operation from 1 January 2021 and to take action now. OxLEP and the local authorities are working together to support the local business community and signpost them to a range of advice and resources. A communications campaign is running on social media during December to support this, with targeted activity on LinkedIn, Facebook and Google. Further information is available at [www.oxfordshirelep.com/uk-transition](http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/uk-transition).

### OxLEP Business – Peer Networks

OxLEP's [peer networks programme](#) brings together cohorts of business leaders so they can discuss business challenges with their peers. Delivered through a series of group sessions, businesses gain and reflect valuable feedback from peers and identify practical solutions to overcome business challenges. Businesses will then choose which coach, mentor or business advisor to work with to further explore solutions to your challenge.

## Place, Transport, Infrastructure

### Improvements to Oxford city centre completed

A series of construction projects to cut traffic delays and congestion in Oxford has been completed. The Oxford City Public Transport Improvements Scheme comprises 14 construction projects to increase capacity and reduce delays for buses, increase services to the Westgate Centre, improve air quality, and reduce congestion in the city centre by creating additional bus layover space.



The programme of works completed by Oxfordshire County Council was made possible through £1.3m of funding secured by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) through the government's Local Growth Fund. The 14 projects also included additional bus stops and improvements to existing

bus stops, creating a new stop for tourist coaches, improvements to real time bus passenger information, and the digitisation of bus gate enforcement.

### Draft strategic vision for Oxfordshire

A strategic vision for Oxfordshire is being prepared by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, with the aim of improving the lives of all in the county. It will be used to help create an agreed set of long-term, strategic economic, infrastructure and environmental priorities designed to deliver the outcomes that local people want.

The Oxfordshire Growth Board is currently seeking views on the vision through an online consultation, which runs until 3 January 2021. Everyone is invited to have their say – you can find out more at [www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/strategic-vision](http://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/strategic-vision)

### Free parking in run-up to Christmas

To support local traders and ease traffic congestion in the run-up to Christmas, free parking is being offered across many of Oxfordshire's towns in December.

In Oxford, the five park and ride sites are free every day until 27 December, in a joint initiative between



Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council. Oxford Bus Company, which operates services from the park and ride sites, is supporting the promotion by running a '£4.80 per car maximum charge' promotion. This will mean that any more than two adults in the same car will get their bus journey for free. Children will go for free too.

In the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire, people can park for free in district council car park on specific days this month and are being urged to use this opportunity to support their local shops and cafes in the run-up to Christmas. Abingdon, Faringdon, Goring, Thame and Wantage are offering free parking on Saturdays; Didcot on Mondays; Henley on Tuesdays; and Wallingford on Thursdays.



## Children, Education, Families

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### Supporting children and families in need

The COVID Winter Grant Scheme is a new £170m government scheme to tackle hardship during the winter for those families and individuals most impacted by the pandemic. The grant is principally aimed at families with children, for support with the cost of food and basic utilities, and there is some additional flexibility to support other needs and for individuals without families.

Oxfordshire councils have received £1.37 million to run local support schemes for those in greatest need, and they have been working together to identify those most in need of support within the rules of the scheme and the most effective ways of getting that support in place as soon as possible.

The county council will be administering a holiday-hunger scheme to support families around school holidays for those in receipt of, or who are entitled to, benefits-related free school meals. Over the

Christmas, February and Easter holidays, £15 per week per child in food vouchers or equivalent support will be provided through schools for each holiday week.



All councils are also looking at schemes to support families and households who are most at risk of economic hardship and who need support with the cost of food and utilities.

## And finally...

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We hope this update is useful. 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 as soon as we can.