

# Oxfordshire

## NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

19 March 2021

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-19 rates in the county

Over the past two weeks, the weekly COVID-19 rate in Oxfordshire has stood at just below 35 per 100,000 residents, which means we are at a comparable level with early October 2020.

However, while cases continue to decline, the rate at which cases are falling is now slowing and we are starting to see a plateau both locally and nationally. We are therefore continuing to urge people to follow lockdown rules and public health guidance to make a difference and stop the spread. The aim is to get cases as low as possible so that we can gradually emerge from lockdown with the confidence that COVID-19 will not restrict our lives in the same way.

The latest COVID-19 figures can be viewed on the county council's [interactive dashboard](#), which is updated on a daily basis.

## Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

### COVID-19 Response – a year on

Nearly a year ago England entered the first of its three national lockdowns. The past year has been unprecedented; nothing could have prepared the country for the scale of the pandemic or challenges faced by the NHS and other public services over the past 12 months.

However, NHS organisations and the Local Authorities in Oxfordshire have worked successfully together alongside other partners, the voluntary sector and local communities to ensure our response has been effective and coordinated.

To mark a year on, a minute's silence and a national [doorstep vigil](#) will form part of a day of reflection to mark the anniversary of the UK's first COVID-19 lockdown on 23 March.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Over 275,000 vaccines have been delivered to people in Oxfordshire since 7 December and second doses are now underway. This is well over one third of our local population. Uptake of the vaccine is 95% in over 80s, 75-79 and 70-74 year old population; 90% of our 65-69 year olds and



extremely clinically vulnerable population have been vaccinated and nearly 80% of our 60-64 year olds.

All older adult care home residents and staff have been offered the vaccine and work continues to vaccinate our frontline health and social care staff.

In line with the national roll-out, the vaccine is now being offered to [priority groups 1-9](#) which includes all those aged 50 and over, those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, carers of someone at high risk from coronavirus and adults with [underlying health condition](#).

People in these groups are being contacted by the NHS central booking system or by their GP practice to make an appointment at the Oxfordshire vaccination centre at the Kassam Stadium or at one of 21 GP-led local vaccination sites across the county.



## Changes to vaccine supply in April

Earlier this week, the Secretary of State announced that the supply of the COVID-19 vaccine will become constrained during April.

In Oxfordshire we have sufficient vaccine to continue to offer first doses to any eligible patient in priority groups 1-9 who have not yet been vaccinated. Second doses (Pfizer and Oxford-AstraZeneca) will continue throughout April as planned; the vaccine supply for these appointments is not affected and these appointments will continue to be arranged and take place for our patients.

The national booking service will continue to take first dose bookings from priority groups 1-9; appointments will be offered at the Kassam and other sites until the end of March. There are appointments available until then at which point these services will pause for first doses for four weeks. GPs will continue to invite eligible patients for first dose vaccinations during this time.

All patients in priority groups 1-9 will be able to access a vaccination, it is really important that as many of our patients who are eligible receive their vaccination - the benefits of the vaccine in preventing COVID-19, with its associated risk of hospitalisation and death, are clear and we want as many of our patients protected as possible.

All booked appointments at any vaccination service or centre will continue to take place unless you hear directly from the service team to rearrange. Please make sure you or your family member attend your appointment.

## Encouraging take up of the COVID-19 in Oxfordshire

The NHS and local authorities in Oxfordshire are keen to promote confidence in the vaccination programme and encourage people to come forward for their vaccination when it is their turn.

As Oxfordshire implemented the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine to the first four priority groups there was little evidence of people choosing not to take up the vaccine offer. However, as we progress through the priority groups, we are seeing growing anxiety within the community which is being fuelled by misinformation and inaccurate news stories.

A joint task group was set up across the NHS, local authorities, Healthwatch Oxfordshire and other partners:

- to track, trace and encourage people who have not taken up the invite of a vaccine to get it
- to promote the benefits and safety of the vaccine to all
- to identify different groups where there may be barriers to uptake and work with them to encourage uptake

Members of the group have set up the outreach scheme described in the next item. Members of the group have also developed many short films in different languages which are being shared via social media; made available written material in different languages; supported community groups for online events with the provision of GP speakers and publicity and are planning two pop-up vaccine clinics at two local mosques in Oxford with the aim of setting up another in the mosques in Banbury.

Following feedback from attendees at community group sessions, the NHS developed an animation to try to dispel the misinformation circulating about the vaccine. It is available [here](#).

## Reaching out to people in priority groups who have yet to have their COVID vaccine

A new outreach service set up by Oxfordshire councils, the NHS and GPs to support people who have yet to respond to their invitation for a COVID-19 vaccine has now been launched.

Outreach workers from the community hub teams of the city and district councils across the county have already visited 200 people offering them support to get an appointment if they want one.

The team are finding that there are a range of reasons why people have not arranged a vaccination - from difficulties in booking an appointment, arranging transport, hesitancy and / or misunderstandings about the vaccine.

The outreach workers are from experienced teams which have been visiting residents who are shielding or self-isolating throughout the pandemic. They will be dressed in clearly identifiable clothing, carry an ID, and follow all social distancing guidelines. Residents will be visited by teams from their local council.

## Safety of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine

Several European countries have paused use of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine after reports that a small number of people who were recently given the jab also developed blood clots.

The UK's medicines watchdog, the independent [Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency](#) (MHRA), has said that evidence "does not suggest" the jab causes clots. Meanwhile European Union medicine regulator European Medicines Agency (EMA) has announced that the vaccine is 'safe and effective' and there is no indication of any link between the vaccine and reports of blood clots.

It's important to remember around 17 million people in the UK and the EU have received a dose of the AZ vaccine, with fewer than 40 cases of blood clots reported as of last week. Experts say the number of blood clots reported after the vaccine were no more than those typically reported within the general population.

Vaccination remains the best way to prevent serious illness and death from COVID-19 and offers the best hope for coming out of the pandemic. The message is that you should still get vaccinated when invited.



All the vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the MRHA. Any vaccine that is approved must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The MHRA follows international standards of safety.

Other vaccines are being developed. They will only be available on the NHS once they have been thoroughly tested to make sure they are safe and effective.

So far, millions of people have been given a COVID-19 vaccine and reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long-term complications have been reported.

### **'It's difficult to express my gratitude'**

A patient treated for COVID-19 at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury has thanked staff for

helping him recover after what he called "the worst time" of his life. Rob Hutt, 38, spent five days in hospital and is now recovering at home with his young family. Rob thanked staff for being kind, compassionate and supportive.



Professor Meghana Pandit, Chief Medical Officer at OUH, praised and thanked staff at the Horton General Hospital, as well as those based on other sites across OUH, for their response and hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more about Rob's story [here](#).

### **New child-friendly emergency care at the Horton General**

The Horton General Hospital in Banbury has a brand new area to look after children needing emergency care. The dedicated space has four cubicle spaces and a waiting room, created specifically for the needs of younger patients away from the main adult areas.



The new facilities, created with the support of Horton General Hospital Charity, [part of Oxford Hospitals Charity](#), will benefit around 11,000 young patients a year in North Oxfordshire and surrounding areas. The dedicated space will ensure children are able to be cared for in a secure and calm area. Read more [here](#).



## Day case hip replacement service shortlisted for COVID service transformation award

An innovative service for patients at OUH needing planned hip replacements has been nominated for a prestigious national award. Launched last year at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC) in Oxford, [the introduction of day case hip replacements means suitable patients can be operated on and return home the same day.](#)

Now the Orthopaedic team behind the service, which reduces the overall length of stay for these patients from around four days to a single day, is in contention to win the 'Post-COVID Sustainable Transformation Award' category at the *Health Service Journal (HSJ) Value Awards* later this year. Read more [here](#).

## Home monitoring for patients with lung diseases during COVID-19

A new home monitoring service provided by the OUH during the COVID-19 pandemic has benefited more than 160 extremely vulnerable patients with interstitial lung diseases.

Spirometers have been distributed to patients at high risk of COVID-19 so their lung conditions can be monitored without leaving their home, therefore reducing their risk of contracting the virus.

Spirometers can inform how well the lungs are working by accurately measuring the largest breath a person can take and how quickly they can force that breath out. Spirometers have been sent to homes across Oxfordshire and surrounding areas so that patients can carry out their test at home and email results in.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, OUH staff have been working hard to adapt services to ensure they are delivered as safely as possible; distributing spirometers is an example of this. The Interstitial Lung Disease Service has helped to remove the anxiety of a hospital visit at this time for many OUH patients. Read more [here](#).



## Visiting to be reintroduced at Oxford University Hospitals

Now that levels of COVID-19 in the community and in hospitals are dropping, from Monday 22 March 2021 OUH will be reintroducing the 'Rule of One' for inpatient visiting – one visitor, for one hour, per day, per patient. Ward staff will book slots in advance with visitors.

Visitors are **not** permitted in Emergency Departments, Emergency Assessment Units, and in outpatient departments – with limited exceptions including:

- **Maternity** – one birth partner only for labour and birth; 'Rule of One' visiting for other maternity inpatients; and one partner permitted for 12 week and 20 week scan appointments, fetal medicine appointments, and breech clinic appointments
- **Children** – one parent or guardian for as long as required, but no siblings
- **Patients in exceptional circumstances** – patients with mental health support needs, learning disabilities, communication support needs, patients who do not speak English as their first language, patients who require carers, and patients who are sadly at the end of their life.

Oxford Health has already reintroduced the 'Rule of One' for inpatient visiting at community hospitals and on mental health inpatients wards Monday to Friday.

## New Critical Care Building is good news for patients



OUH is delighted to announce that work on a new 48-bed Critical Care Building at the John Radcliffe Hospital is now underway. The £29 million development is supported by Department of Health and Social Care financing. The new Critical Care building is part of a regional plan to manage critical care as the NHS makes preparations for the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The new building will

improve the hospital's critical care environment and help the Trust plan for future demands on its services.

### Year on year improvement in NHS Staff Survey results

The results of the NHS Staff Survey 2020 were published on Thursday 11 March – they show a continued year on year improvement in OUH and Oxford Health results and the experience of staff working as part of each Trust.

Both Trusts saw a record level of employees taking part in the survey. More OUH and Oxford Health staff than ever would recommend working at their respective Trust or as a place to receive care despite the pressures of the pandemic.

To read more about the results at OUH go [here](#) and for Oxford Health go [here](#).

### Research suggests large numbers of COVID-19 survivors will experience mental health issues

A research review has found a large proportion of COVID-19 survivors will be affected by neuropsychiatric and cognitive complications. A psychiatrist from Oxford Health and psychologists from Oxford Brookes University evaluated published research papers in order to understand more about the possible effects of SARS-COV-2 and the extent people can expect to experience short and long-term mental health issues.

The Oxfordshire post-COVID clinic, which is run in partnership by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (Oxford Health) and the OUH, has a multi-disciplinary team which includes psychologists and psychiatrists to support patients with mental health issues.

The clinic is already seeing the impact of COVID - 19 on the people's mental health. Patients are presenting with Long COVID syndrome which includes fatigue, cognitive problems and a range of psychiatric problems. It is estimated that these problems are experienced by 1 in 5 people who have had COVID-19. Read more [here](#).

### Oxford Health vaccination centre welcomed Aled Jones and TV crew

Following on from recent MP and VIP visits, Oxford Health's vaccination centre at the Kassam Stadium welcomed TV presenter Aled Jones and the BBC Songs of Praise film crew on Thursday. The vaccination centre will form part of a programme representing the theme of hope to be broadcast on Palm Sunday on March 28.

The presenter met COVID Operations Director Tehmeena Ajmal, Oxford Health's head of spirituality and pastoral care, the Rev Dr Guy Harrison and Imam Monwar Hussain, who is the Muslim chaplain for OUH. He spoke on his work raising awareness of the vaccine among BAME



communities in the county.

### Social workers in the spotlight

Oxford Health has shown its appreciation for its 150 social workers as part of worldwide celebrations. Social workers support adults, children, families and communities to improve their lives and, at Oxford Health, many are involved in supporting mental health services. And to show appreciation for the massive contribution they make, World Social Worker Day is held each year to promote the scale and range of talent they employ to help people live healthier and happier lives.

Social workers work with some of the most vulnerable people in our society and manage some of the most challenging and complex risks from homelessness to substance misuse. Find out more [here](#).

### Oxford Health gives hope during National Eating Disorders Week

Oxford Health recently played its part in building understanding and spreading hope as part of National Eating Disorder Week.



Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses affecting people of all ages, genders, ethnicities and backgrounds. In Oxfordshire, Oxford Health runs the award-winning in-patient Cotswold House and has specialist teams working with and supporting service users in the community.

The Trust took to social media to help provide advice, access to support and also to tell the stories of some of the people who have suffered from eating disorders and their journeys to recovery. The stories, which you can [read here](#), hit home with a combined reach of almost 45,000 which was amplified with coverage on TV and radio.

## Oxford Health Council of Governors – will you stand?

Nominations for Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust's Council of Governors elections will open on Thursday, March 25. This is a chance to stand for election and help shape the future of the Trust. There are opportunities across the Oxford Health geographical area including Oxfordshire. Only members of the Trust can stand for election, so if you are not a member, or want to join and find out more see [here](#).

## Community resilience

### Putting Cherwell residents on the map

An online 'story map' has been created for Cherwell District Council to help the council provide a more tailored approach to service provision.

#### [Cherwell District Council's Story Map](#)

has been created by digital specialists Press Red, using technology developed in partnership with organisations including Active Oxfordshire, Sport England and Public Health England. The story map uses data in the public domain, as well as specialist information from in-house studies, to create a more rounded picture of life for Cherwell residents living in specific locations.



The software enables the user to zoom into a specific area, showing a range of relevant data. This can be used by the council and its partners to understand more about different neighbourhoods and enable the delivery of more targeted help for those who need it most.

## Economy

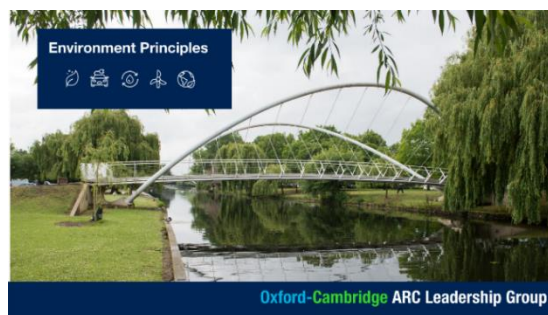
### Oxford-Cambridge Arc sets out environment principles

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc Leadership Group has endorsed new environment principles, which seek to secure practical ways to increase nature and find innovative solutions to managing natural resources.

The principles set out the ambition to protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets across the region. They will embrace green spaces, housing standards, sustainable transport, energy generation and transmission and water management and conservation.

The UK Government has already set out its [intention](#) for the Arc to be the UK's fastest growing economic region and a world-leader in sustainability. These principles provide a clear statement of regional intent that embodies local

commitment to adopting an approach that results in environmentally sustainable economic growth.



### Culture Fund to help boost Oxford city's cultural projects

Oxford City Council has opened a grant funding pot to help boost the city's cultural projects. The [Culture Fund](#), which awards grants from £500 to £1,000 to cultural organisations and artists in Oxford, opened for its first round for applications this week.



The fund was created to provide cultural groups with the ability to leverage income from other funding sources. Over the past year, the fund has awarded £29,247 to successful applicants, who have used this to secure £319,446 in cash and £113,196 in in-kind contributions.

### Final call for Business Investment Fund expressions of interest

Expressions of interest for Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Business Investment Fund

## Place, Transport, Infrastructure

### Preparing Oxfordshire for the electric vehicle revolution

Oxfordshire will be one of the first places in the UK to put in place a comprehensive strategy to make it easier for motorists to join the electric vehicle (EV) revolution. On 16 March, the county council's Cabinet adopted the Oxfordshire EV infrastructure strategy, which sets out key actions to allow more drivers to go electric by 2025.

The government has proposed an end to the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, and so comprehensive, accessible and efficient infrastructure is essential if we want people to ditch fossil fuels and move towards EVs. EV sales in Oxfordshire are expected to rise faster than the national average, with Oxford University researchers predicting that by 2025 there could be more than 25,000 EVs on the county's roads.

The strategy has been a collaboration involving the county, city and district councils, and is among the first of its kind in the country. It will put Oxfordshire in a strong position to ensure that anyone wishing to buy an EV will have access to convenient charging facilities – a vital factor for anyone considering switching from petrol or diesel.

One of the aims is to convert at least 7.5 per cent of council-managed car park spaces for EV charging by 2025. Other objectives for this period include:

- Enabling and delivering public EV charging strategically across Oxfordshire.
- Adopting a common approach to managing EV charging in council car parks.
- Enabling residents without access to private off-road parking to access a range of options for EV charging.
- Encouraging new developments to install high-quality EV charging infrastructure.
- Setting standards for the quality of public EV charging in Oxfordshire to make sure it is high quality, open, accessible and future-proofed.

must be received by 19 March. The £2.1million capital fund – created to support Oxfordshire's business community to move into an effective

renewal phase following the COVID-19 pandemic – aims to support scalable businesses from across the county through matched grants, ranging from £25,000 through to £100,000 per business. Details are available [here](#).

- Working with partners to encourage other landowners to install EV charging infrastructure for businesses, residents and other users.

Meanwhile, West Oxfordshire District Council has taken delivery of its first battery electric vehicle – a Renault Zoe R135 Iconic. The council's waste and recycling delivery partner **Ubico** will use the council-owned vehicle day-to-day. The Zoe's 52kWh battery has enough capacity for staff to undertake their work without the need to recharge during the day.

### Oxford's Zero Emission Zone pilot approved



Oxford's Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) pilot is due to launch in August after having been formally approved by the city council's Cabinet last week and the county council's Cabinet this week. Oxford will be one of the first places in Britain to introduce a ZEZ. The scheme aims to reduce toxic air pollution levels, help tackle the climate emergency and improve the health of residents, workers and visitors in Oxford and beyond.

The ZEZ pilot will restrict polluting vehicles from key city centre streets during the day. Those who drive polluting vehicles into the zone will be charged a fee, with the level of the charge dependent on how polluting the vehicle is.

The pilot is the first phase of the ZEZ. It will allow both councils to gain useful experience and information before introducing a larger ZEZ covering most of Oxford city centre in 2022, subject to further



public consultation. It is intended that the restrictions and exemptions applied within the pilot will be the same in the expanded ZEZ.

### Developing innovative and sustainable community-led housing

Oxford City Council has been awarded funding to work with Transition by Design and Oxfordshire Community Land Trust to develop a blueprint for reclaiming disused land for innovative council housing.

An award of £19,994 from the Housing Advisers Programme (HAP) will help the council expand on a community-led [pilot project](#) to demolish a row of derelict garages and build four new zero carbon council homes in Champion Way.

Around 600 of the council's 2,000 garages are vacant. The HAP funding will be used to unlock the potential for building new homes on these sites and other unused pockets of land owned by the council. This will provide a pipeline of five sites, which could yield around 30 homes.

HAP funding will also enable the council to develop a range of approaches for working with communities to build sustainable homes on difficult brownfield sites. These could include using modular construction to build meanwhile homes as move-on accommodation before developing a site for permanent council housing.

## Children, Education, Families

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### Symptom-free testing to support the return to school

The Government is encouraging all households with nursery, primary and secondary school and college-aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles, to undertake twice-weekly rapid lateral flow testing.

Adults in these households who are workers or volunteers in a public-facing role can get tested at one of Oxfordshire's three symptom-free testing sites: Spiceball Leisure Centre in Banbury, The King's Centre in Oxford and The Beacon in Wantage. A fourth site in West Oxfordshire is due to open shortly.

**CORONAVIRUS**  
If you have a public-facing job, protect your colleagues, customers and family and book your free test now.

**1 in 3** people who have COVID-19 don't have any symptoms

Find out more at [oxfordshire.gov.uk/covidtest](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/covidtest)

**Cherwell** DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE **OXFORDSHIRE** COUNTY COUNCIL

Parents and those in childcare and support bubbles can also order tests online for home delivery or collect up to two packs of home test kits (each contains seven tests) from one of Oxfordshire's COVID symptomatic sites between 1pm and 7pm. Testing will not be taking place at these sites during these times to avoid contact with anyone with COVID-19 symptoms. The sites are open seven days a week and residents do not need to book an appointment to collect home test kits.

Further information is available on [Oxfordshire County Council's website](#).

## And finally...

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### New High Sheriff of Oxfordshire appointed

Theologian, Imam and former businessman, Monawar Hussain has been appointed as

Oxfordshire's new High Sheriff at a ceremony held at Buckingham Palace on 10 March. He will succeed the current High Sheriff, Mrs Amanda Ponsonby MBE, on 8 April.

The office of High Sheriff is an independent non-political royal appointment made by the Queen. While the role dates back to Saxon times, it has evolved to include a mix of ceremonial, charitable and community functions and is voluntary and unfunded. Supporting the crown (for example, attendance at royal visits) and judiciary remain central elements.



Monawar is a Muslim chaplain at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, a tutor at Eton College and founded The Oxford Foundation – a charity that promotes religious and racial harmony through educational and arts-based activities. He has also devised, pioneered and successfully steered a unique programme that confronts violent extremist ideology, which has been used to train religious education teachers in the UK.

Monawar said: “During this very difficult year, I have witnessed first hand the acts of altruistic kindness, compassion and love that have been truly inspirational. Fellow citizens from all walks of life – faiths, cultures, professions and communities –

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.

have come together looking out for the vulnerable and needy. I therefore will dedicate my year as High Sheriff to thanking and ‘celebrating Oxfordshire’s heroes’, individuals and voluntary groups, from all walks of life who have made exceptional contributions to their communities all across the county.”

## 21 March is Census Day

Households across Oxfordshire are being asked to take part in Census 2021, a national survey that takes place once every 10 years.

The census provides the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, apart from 1941.

One of the many things census data is used for is to help local councils underpin funding bids for community programmes. Examples include the Families Active, Sporting Together (FAST) programme in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington, a four-year programme funded by a Sport England grant and partnership funding, which makes it easier for families to enjoy physical activity and sport together.

In advance of Census Day on 21 March, households have been receiving letters with online codes explaining how they can complete their forms. If you haven’t received a letter, or need some more help or information, please visit [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk) or call the census contact centre on 0800 141 2021.