

Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

27 May 2020

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

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

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

Test and Trace

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

Bereavement leaflet

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

Thank you from NHS staff to teachers

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

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

Army of staff return to the NHS frontline

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

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

Reassuring patients of safe cancer care

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

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

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

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – Board meeting videos

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

Extension of the NHS Bereavement Scheme

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

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

Mental Health Awareness Week (May 18-24)

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

Helplines:

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

Self-help videos:

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

The gift of kindness:

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

Get active to boost your mental wellbeing:

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

Digital breakthrough

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

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

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

Tales from the Front Line

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

NHS Charities Together grants awarded

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

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

Oxford Pharmacy Store

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

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

Helping families to keep in touch with patients

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

Planning for life after lockdown

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

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

Community First Oxfordshire - business (almost) as usual

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

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

Eid celebrations

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

The art of engaging and educating

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

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

The Olympics comes to South and Vale

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

Supporting Oxfordshire's business community

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

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

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