

Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

9 June 2020

Oxfordshire health and local authority partners continue to work together to provide an effective and sustained response to COVID-19. This week's stakeholder briefing includes updates on the following:

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COVID-19 Clinics

At the start of the pandemic, GPs and healthcare providers across Oxfordshire quickly mobilised and worked together to set up a number of COVID-19 Assessment Liaison and Monitoring (CALM) clinics, for the assessment of COVID-19 affected patients and meet the possible demand at the peak of disease prevalence. The clinics enabled confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients to be seen in a safe, infection free environment away from other patients, while normal general practice continued with routine patient care.

As we now move to the next phase of the pandemic with a better understanding of the disease and its prevalence, healthcare providers are still working together to develop long term sustainable clinic models, for medical care required by COVID-19 patients who are temporarily infectious to others. These clinics will help general practice to reassure patients that whatever their acute or chronic medical problem, it will be dealt with appropriately and risks of infection given thorough consideration when guiding them to the most appropriate service.

At the height of the pandemic there was capacity to provide a large number of appointments to COVID-19 patients but we did not see as many patients as expected. The next phase of work around the clinics will look at the ability to increase capacity at short notice as we don't know how the disease will develop.

Routine referrals to non-urgent care are re-opening

During the pandemic OUH has continued to receive two week wait cancer referrals and all other urgent referrals; however routine referrals were paused in line with national guidance.

The Trust has been focusing on video consultations and remote monitoring of patients, and is planning with specialty leads to understand the impact of bringing patients on-site, including social distancing, and the impact of additional requirements around PPE, equipment, medicines and workforce.

The Trust is putting in place a series of measures to keep patients and staff safe including:

- Perspex screens in reception areas
- Social distancing floor markings and highly visible on-site communications
- Hand sanitiser stations

Over the past week, with staff and patient safety at the forefront of their plans, OUH has re-opened routine referrals into outpatient clinics in a number of specialties:

- Cardiac services
- Children's services (except ENT, ophthalmology and plastics)
- Haematology
- Neurology
- Dietetic service
- Oxford Centre for Enablement (*not all services*)

The Trust is looking at a phased opening to other routine referrals in the coming weeks. Work is underway to reschedule patients whose procedures were cancelled during the pause on routine referrals, and make sure that these are rearranged in a timely fashion.

Technology in General Practice

Digital technology is playing a key role in the continuing efforts by GP practices to ensure patients get the care they need safely while protecting staff and the wider public. Across Oxfordshire 99 per cent of GP practices have implemented digital technology in the form of online and video consultations.

The use of video consultations has increased during COVID-19 which has helped reduce the number of face-to-face appointments required in GP practices. Remote diagnostics are also being piloted through one of the COVID-19 clinics in Oxford City. The system, developed by Oxehealth, has been installed in five clinical rooms at the clinic. An optical sensor enables GPs to safely obtain a patient's pulse and breathing rate measurements without being in the room.

Whilst patients can speak to their GP and face-to-face consultations are available as required, some practices are also offering online consultations. These consultations allow patients to remotely enter details of their illness online at any time of the day. This is reviewed by an appropriate clinician and actioned as necessary. This could be in the form of signposting to other services, a telephone conversation with their GP, or seeing their GP.

Re-introduction of non-COVID-19 services in primary care

Oxfordshire CCG (OCCG) is working with GP practices to understand their experience of providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic and the re-introduction of non-COVID services in primary care following guidance from NHS England & NHS Improvement (NHSE&I). OCCG has developed a survey to seek feedback on their experiences so that we can learn from this, share helpful information with practices, and identify if and what support is needed going forward.

Supporting people with diabetes during COVID-19

As we mark Diabetes Week 2020 (8-14 June), people living with diabetes in Oxfordshire are being reminded that a wide range of support is still available during the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to a collaborative effort by partners across the healthcare system.

Support includes [a dedicated hotline for people who need medical advice around their diabetes](#), virtual appointments via video consultations and phone calls, and the use of technology to remotely obtain essential data like glucose and insulin doses. People with diabetes are also being reminded that it is important to attend appointments at the hospital; measures are in place to keep patients safe and receiving timely care is one of the best ways of preventing existing conditions getting worse. Detailed guidance for people with diabetes is available in our new [patient information leaflet](#).

Project Wingman takes off at the JR

Many airline pilots and cabin crew are currently grounded or on severely reduced flying rosters due to COVID-19. During this time they have come together to support the wellbeing of NHS staff by creating 'lounges' in dedicated areas in hospitals where staff can come before, during, or after shifts to unwind with refreshments and chat with flight and cabin crew volunteers.

[Project Wingman](#) was launched at the John Radcliffe Hospital on Tuesday 2 June and is already proving popular with staff. [It is open every day from 6pm to midnight](#). A second lounge is due to be launched at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury on Tuesday 9 June. It will be open from 4-10pm Monday to Friday.

New online Guide to Health and Wellness for OUH staff

Many of us have been adapting to living and working in different ways as a result of COVID-19. To effectively care for others, our staff must first be able to care for themselves, and this has become ever more important since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A comprehensive online Guide to Health and Wellness has been created for OUH staff to access all the wellbeing support they need for themselves, their family, and their staff colleagues. It is available on [the Trust's website](#).

OUH leaders reaffirm commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

The Chief Executive Officer and Chief People Officer at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) have sent a personal message to all OUH staff to reflect on the Black Lives Matter movement and COVID-19's disproportionate impact on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities – including health and care staff. The full message is available [here](#).

Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Mental Health Helpline has launched new freephone numbers

Calls will now be free to the [24/7 mental health helpline](#) which has received more than 1,000 calls from the public during the coronavirus pandemic. The round-the-clock helpline was set up during the outbreak to make it quicker and easier for people in Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire to get the right advice they need for their mental health and emotional wellbeing. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week for adults and children who need mental health care when their situation is not life threatening. The original local landline numbers will continue to operate alongside new 0800 freephone numbers.

- **Adults:** 0800 783 0119 or 01865 904 997
- **Children and young people:** 0800 783 0121 or 01865 904 998

Carers befriending line

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) has launched a new [befriending phone line for carers](#); the service went live on Wednesday 3 June. Carers can call 01865 901012 at any time and leave their details. A befriender will call back between 11am and 12 noon, Monday to Friday.

Supporting the reopening of town centres

Councils are playing a leading role in helping restart the local economy and supporting the ongoing stages of the easing of lockdown restrictions. The past week has seen us support schools in welcoming back more pupils and extend the hours of the household waste recycling centres, which are now open from 8am to 5pm seven days a week. We are now actively looking to the next phase of the easing of restrictions on 15 June, when non-essential shops will be allowed to open, and the district, city and county councils are working together and with partners to enable town centres across Oxfordshire to reopen safely.

£2.9m to be invested in fast-track plans to help safe travel across Oxfordshire

Cyclists and pedestrians will soon start to notice the benefit of plans to spend £600,000 over the space of eight weeks – helping them to travel safely while social distancing as Oxfordshire gradually emerges from lockdown. These [fast-track plans](#) are the first part of a wider £2.9 million of Government funding to improve cycling infrastructure, parts of the roadwork network, and footpaths across Oxfordshire as the nation responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The county council will be working with the city and district councils to:

- Carry out enhanced maintenance for paths and cycle routes
- Install new cycle parking facilities across all districts and Oxford
- Change signal timings to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists
- Restrict hours of loading/servicing in key city centre streets
- Upgrade Park & Rides, with more room to park bikes
- Free up routes for pedestrians only
- Improve signage

Oxfordshire residents say ‘yes’ to being smoke free by 2025

Local residents have given their feedback to say they support the [Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Strategy](#), which will encourage a smoke-free society. The strategy

was developed by the Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Alliance (OTCA) – a partnership that includes county, district and city councils; OCCG, OHFT and OUH. The strategy outlines a vision for Oxfordshire to be the first smoke-free county in five years' time. This is defined when adult smoking rates reach 5% by 2025 – five years sooner than aimed for in the Government's national Tobacco Control Plan for England.

COVID-19 funding pot for small businesses

Small businesses affected by coronavirus restrictions are being encouraged to claim grants of up to £10,000 as the latest round of Government funding is rolled out. The city and district councils are administering the new discretionary scheme, which targets organisations that were not eligible for the previous grant schemes and which have ongoing property-related costs. Businesses operating in shared workspaces, market traders, small charities and bed and breakfasts, who can evidence a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis, could all benefit. Information about the application process for each district is available at:

- [Cherwell District Council](#)
- [Oxford City Council](#)
- [South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils](#)
- [West Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Celebrating the County Council's work during lockdown

While the county has been sheltering and shielding, County Council staff have been hard at work supporting residents through this challenging time – from making over 10,000 phone calls to people who are shielding and providing virtual support to over 6,000 vulnerable people to improving 110 miles of road and creating a virtual library service that's loaned over 46,000 e-items. This [video](#) brings it to life.

Carers Week (8-14 June)

To mark [Carers Week](#), we're celebrating the [contribution made by carers](#) to families and communities across Oxfordshire, we're celebrating the contribution made by carers across Oxfordshire, and who are part of 6.5 million people across the UK who are looking after older, seriously ill or disabled people. This year people across the country are continuing to face new challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people are taking on more caring responsibilities for their relatives and friends who need support, from helping with personal tasks such as dressing or practical tasks like shopping and cooking. Oxfordshire County Council is continuing to support carers during the pandemic by offering a Carers ID. The [Carer ID scheme](#) is for paid and independent carers, who are providing care and support to young people and adults known to OCC Social Care.

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team seeks views with new online tool

As part of the [Oxfordshire Plan 2050](#), the six local authorities in Oxfordshire, are together asking residents if the changes they've made during lockdown life – combined with new technology – could be the key in creating a more resilient, successful county in the future. They are looking for solutions to three big challenges facing the county as we plan for the future: i) how we will all live and work, ii) how we will move around, and iii) how we will tackle climate change. To get involved, visit oxfordshireopenthought.org

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is one of the commitments made by the six Oxfordshire authorities as part of the £215m Housing and Growth Deal, which will help deliver new homes – including affordable and social housing, and infrastructure to the county while helping to tackle climate change.

Frequency and further information:

As the recovery phase of the COVID-19 response gets underway we will be reviewing the frequency of these briefings, as such there will be no briefing next week. However we do expect to continue to produce an NHS and local authority briefing for stakeholders on a regular basis going forward.

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