

Oxfordshire

NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

27 November 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

Oxfordshire set to move to high COVID alert level from 2 December

The Government has confirmed that Oxfordshire will move into the high COVID-19 alert level (tier 2) from Wednesday 2 December. This means changes to the rules around working, socialising and running a business. Until that date, the national lockdown restrictions remain in place. From 2 December, the following will apply:

- 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, 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.

A list of FAQs about tier 2 can be found at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread.



COVID cases in Oxfordshire

The week up to 20 November saw a drop in infection rates across the county, with a total of 671 confirmed cases – an equivalent of 97 per 100,000 residents, and a decrease from 1,171 the previous week.

The fall in cases can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the impact of lockdown; an

increase in testing sites across the county; the success of the local contact tracing system, which in the past five weeks has contacted over 400 people who otherwise would not have been reached; and Oxfordshire's COVID-secure teams, who are helping ensure that local businesses are abiding by the regulations.

However, Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health Ansaf Azhar is keen to stress that we cannot afford to be complacent. "While the recent fall in cases is welcome news, this is just one week's data and the situation could easily reverse," he said. "National lockdown may be lifting next Wednesday, but we are still in the middle of a pandemic. It's critically important that we all stick to the restrictions."

COVID response structure

In light of the second wave of the pandemic and the introduction of the new national restrictions, we have stood up our Oxfordshire COVID response structure. The framework, which has been amended based on the lessons learnt during the first wave of the virus, is designed to help us coordinate a multi-agency response across the county.

Oxfordshire System Gold, chaired by Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council, Yvonne Rees, and Oxfordshire System Silver, chaired by Corporate Director of Adult and Housing Services Stephen Chandler, comprise senior representatives from across the Oxfordshire system, including local authorities, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH), Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG), Thames Valley Police and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP).

Oxfordshire System Silver is closely aligned with the Health Protection Board, which is responsible for strategic oversight of health protection regarding COVID in Oxfordshire and which is chaired by Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health Ansaf Azhar. The two groups share a similar membership to ensure that our countywide planning and response to the pandemic is coordinated.

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

There has been plenty in the news about the COVID-19 vaccine. While we don't expect a vaccine

to be widely available until 2021, the Government has asked the NHS to be ready to deliver a vaccination programme for England from December so that those who need it most will be able to access vaccinations as soon as they are available. Who receives the vaccine first will be decided by the national [Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations](#).



Detailed planning is underway nationally and locally, building on the expertise and strong track record we have across the NHS in delivering immunisations like the annual flu vaccination programme, to ensure that a COVID-19 vaccination programme does not impact on other vital services and to ensure as many people as possible get the vaccination in a timely way.

The NHS is working closely with partners across Oxfordshire and across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) to develop the implementation programme for our area; this will be supported by a communication campaign to encourage people to get the vaccine and to source volunteers to help deliver the programme..

Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

Call NHS 111 First

NHS 111 First launched to the public on 2 November, with the main objective of ensuring patients receive the care they need in the most appropriate setting. This will be achieved by contacting NHS 111 if the patient needs urgent health care advice. The patient will then be assessed and directed to the most appropriate clinical setting, which will include being given a timeslot to attend A&E if appropriate. By doing this, the risk of hospital acquired infection is minimised and the public can be assured that the NHS is open and it is safe to seek help when needed.

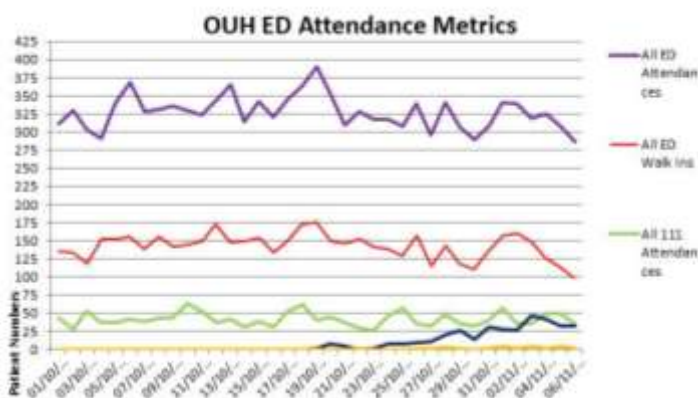
From 28 October the emergency departments at both the John Radcliffe and Horton General Hospital have been able to offer 'timeslots' for adults and children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and has been very successful. The following graph shows the attendance at an Oxfordshire A&E since NHS 111 First launched.

NHS 111 First will launch nationally on 1 December and we will be supporting that national publicity campaign to continue to promote the service in Oxfordshire.

Meeting COVID-19 mental health need: talking therapy services to expand

TalkingSpace Plus in Oxfordshire and Healthy Minds in Buckinghamshire, both run by Oxford Health are to expand to help more people struggling with their mental health as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, offering more NHS support to overcome the trauma of illness, loss of loved ones, lockdown and unemployment.

Talking therapies already support people experiencing stress, anxiety and low mood. They also offer treatment to people managing their



mental health alongside a long-term physical health condition and those experiencing difficulties at work because of their mental health.

More than 16,000 people in Oxfordshire seek help from TalkingSpace Plus, and 12,000 people in Buckinghamshire seek help from Healthy Minds, each year. Both are [IAPT](#) services (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies). Appointments are available over the phone or by video conferencing meaning people can get support from the comfort of their own homes. Read more [here](#).

Oxford Health CEO speaks about mental health at annual lecture

This has been a tough year for everyone and for many people, including students, the pandemic is having an impact on their mental health. To help highlight the issue, and work being done to help tackle it, Oxford Health's CEO, Dr Nick Broughton, joined Prof. Roz Shafran to speak at the 2020 Monica Fooks Memorial Lecture, organised by Somerville College. A recording of the lecture is available [here](#).

Helping patients to keep in touch with friends and family

Visiting is suspended in community hospital wards where there are COVID-19 positive patients. Otherwise, Oxford Health is operating a visiting system which allows one visitor for one hour for each patient with all in-person sessions having to be pre-booked. Strict COVID-19 controls are in place.



However, knowing visits are crucial to our patients' and service users' recovery and wellbeing Oxford Health have developed other ways to keep people connected. The Trust now provide patients with an

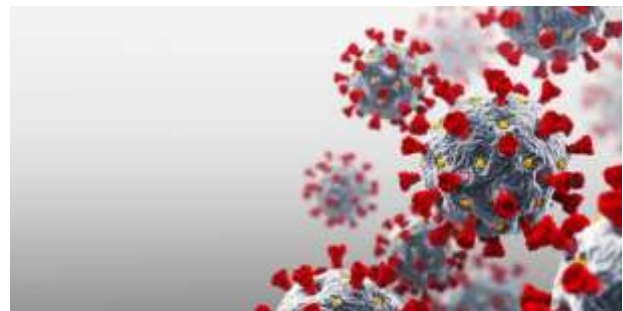
iPad so that they can make or receive video calls. Patients can also keep in contact with friends, family and carers via letters delivered to bedsides and read out to them. You can find out more [here](#).

All Oxford Health wards have a patient phone which friends and family can call.

More information on visiting, including booking arrangements, can be found [here](#).

Oxford leads the way in COVID-19 research

Dr Bruno Holthof, Chief Executive Officer of OUH, highlighted the unique partnership between OUH and the University of Oxford in COVID-19 research at this week's Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) meeting. His [COVID-19 research briefing](#) provides an overview of some of the key research projects.



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.

The **Oxford COVID-19 vaccine trial** took a major step forward on 19 November when the Phase II results were published in *The Lancet*, showing that the vaccine is well tolerated and provokes a strong immune response including among older trial participants.

And on 23 November interim analysis of the Phase III results was published, showing that the vaccine is 70.4% effective, with tests on two different dose regimes showing that the vaccine was 90% effective if administered at a half dose and then at a full

dose, or 62% effective if administered in two full doses.

The Oxford COVID-19 vaccine trial team was also announced on 23 November as the South East Regional Winner in the Excellence in Healthcare Award category of the NHS Parliamentary Awards.

The **OUH COVID-19 staff testing programme** is a great example of OUH and the University of Oxford working in partnership – based on the findings of the testing, the Trust implemented an infection prevention and control plan to limit transmission of the virus. It has also enabled a greater understanding of COVID-19. A [new research study](#) published on 20 November suggests that individuals who have previously had COVID-19 are highly unlikely to contract the illness again, for at least six months following their first infection.

The comprehensive staff testing programme is revealing a regular stream of valuable information to help better understand how to tackle the disease. More than 12,000 people who work at OUH hospitals have participated in the programme.

OUH open to care for those who need it during COVID-19

OUH is keen to encourage people to attend their booked outpatient appointments, planned operations, scans, and to seek help if they need medical assistance. The Trust is keen to remind people that healthcare is still very much available to them during COVID-19. Unlike during the first lockdown, planned surgery is still going ahead this time around.

It's incredibly important for patients to attend booked appointments. The Trust is assuring

patients that there are very robust measures in place to keep patients safe from COVID-19.

If people have been asked to attend an appointment, there will be a good reason for it; patient and staff safety, now more than ever, is the OUH's number one priority. Safety measures include safe social distancing, face masks for staff, face coverings for visitors, hand gel dispensers, and Perspex screens at our reception desks. [More information is available on the OUH website.](#)

Pregnant women reassured that safe maternity care is still available during COVID-19



A number of changes have been made to how the OUH provide care for pregnant women at their hospitals during the pandemic to keep everyone safe. This includes carrying out some appointments remotely, including over the phone or via video.

Its maternity service is still open 24/7 for births, urgent care, and clinical advice. Some face-to-face appointments with a midwife or doctor are essential, and the Trust are continuing to remind pregnant women that it is important to attend. [More information is available on the OUH website.](#)

Economy

Lockdown support grants

The city and district councils have begun the important work of processing 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 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.

Business support via OxLEP

The OxLEP Business team is continuing to offer support to the county's business community through a number of different programmes – the latest addition being its peer network programme, which (subject to eligibility) brings together diverse cohorts of business leaders to discuss business challenges with peers, delivered through a series of high-impact group sessions. Further information is available at <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk>.

UK transition business support

With the UK transition period set to end on 31 December, OxLEP has been encouraging Oxfordshire businesses to understand how this will affect several key areas including importing and exporting, hiring from the EU, and travelling to and from the EU. OxLEP's online resource directs

businesses to a variety of different support tools, advice and ongoing webinar series, helping them to be ready for the change. You can find out more at www.oxfordshirelep.com/uk-transition.

Oxford-Cambridge Arc event



The Leaders Group of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc hosted an online event on 17 November, which outlined the economic vision for the Arc, set out the big themes for innovation-led growth in the area and provided an opportunity for public conversation about the Arc's recently launched [economic prospectus](#). A recording of the event, which was attended by over 370 people, is now [available online](#).

Place, Transport, Infrastructure



Oxfordshire awarded £2.98 million to transform active travel

Cyclists, pedestrians and residents in Oxford, Witney and Bicester are set to benefit from a £2.98 million cash boost to improve active travel options and support local economic recovery over the coming months.

Oxfordshire's winning bid was announced on 13 November by the Department for Transport (DfT). The award is 25 percent more than the indicative allocation by the DfT and brings the total amount awarded under the DfT Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 schemes to £3,283,500.

The five active travel schemes put forward – three in Oxford, one in Bicester and one in Witney – are designed to have the greatest impact in terms of air quality, physical activity and environmental benefit. They are projects which go to the heart of supporting healthy and vibrant communities and will help enable a sustainable and safe recovery from the pandemic.

In addition to the DfT funding, OxLEP has provided £1.4m, which has been allocated to the schemes in Witney and Bicester. This funding combined with the award from the DfT will enable all five active travel schemes to be fully funded. Further information is [available online](#).

Plans for electric vehicle charging points in county's car parks move up a gear

The £5.2 million Park and Charge Oxfordshire programme is amongst the first of its kind in the UK and is set to deliver up to 280 fast charging points across the county in 2021. It has been awarded funding from Innovate UK and is being delivered by a consortium of partners, including the four district

councils (Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and West Oxfordshire), Oxfordshire County Council, SSE Enterprise, Urban Integrated UK and the University of Oxford.

With interest in electric vehicle ownership on the rise in the county, one key factor holding people back is the inability to easily charge them outside their home, with an estimated 35 percent of residents having no access to off-street parking. The new Park and Charge Oxfordshire project offers an alternative solution by providing residents with the opportunity to park for free overnight in council-owned car parks, whilst giving access to top-of-the-range electric charging points.

In Cherwell, preparation work has begun to convert 12 bays at Bicester's Cattle Market car park into an electric vehicle charging hub. These will be made available early next year. And in West Oxfordshire, six car parks have been selected as part of the first phase of the programme, which will provide a total of 35 charging points capable of charging 70 vehicles. Installation work is expected to start in the spring, with the project set for completion by the summer.

Zero emission zone consultation

Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council have launched a final consultation on proposals for the pilot stage of the [Zero Emission Zone for Oxford](#). This first stage covers an area of central Oxford and

is due to be launched in August 2021. It aims to help cut vehicle emissions in the city and improve local air quality. The consultation runs online until 17 January 2021 and can be found [here](#).



Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Cowley – feedback survey

Residents are being invited to give their views on a series of proposed steps to introduce three Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in the Cowley area of Oxford to make residential roads safer for cycling and walking.

Three experimental LTNs are being proposed within the Cowley area, with the introduction of traffic filters in Church Cowley, Temple Cowley and Florence Park. The LTNs will be implemented using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, which will be in place for six months.

The consultation webpage will be open for the whole six months after implementation. The survey is open until 18 December, and implementation is expected in late February-March 2021.

Children, Education, Families

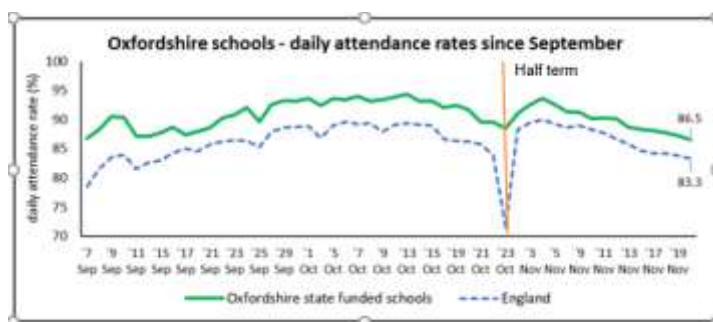
Schools update

School leaders have been working extremely hard to ensure that schools have remained fully open since the Autumn Term started on 1 September.

In total only 8 primaries schools, 1 secondary school and 2 special schools have needed to close and, in all cases, this was due to lack of staff and not for public health reasons. To date, 3 secondary schools, 3 special schools and 150 primaries schools have not had any COVID cases.

The overall daily attendance rate in Oxfordshire maintained schools (including academies) remains consistently above the national average, as shown by the following graph. Daily attendance in primary schools is high at 93%, while the attendance rate in

secondary schools has been between 80% and 85% over the last week.



Where pupils need to remain at home, education is 'remote' and consists of a blend of text book, work book and online teaching, plus some face-to-face teaching.

Two members of Oxfordshire County Council's Education Team have been deployed to work full time on coordinating support and advice to schools when they have a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak; they are supported by two members of the Public Health team.

New Independent Chair for the Oxfordshire Children's Safeguarding Board

Derek Benson has been appointed as the new Independent Chair for the [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#) (OSCB), taking up the role at the start of November.

Derek has over 30 years' experience in public service, working first at an operational and then strategic level within the Metropolitan Police Service and Essex Police. He currently chairs a number of safeguarding partnerships and therefore brings a thorough understanding of the role and a wealth of safeguarding knowledge.



Safeguarding is everyone's business. The key findings and recommendations of the historic Child

K's case review, published last week, highlight the increased vulnerability and risks for children who are less visible in communities. More information can be [found online](#).

Care leavers' House Project opens door to education and employment



Care leavers in Oxfordshire have successfully supported each other into college and employment through an innovative shared housing scheme – the House Project – which has been overseen by Oxfordshire County Council since July 2018.

The House Project has involved 25 young people living in shared accommodation in Oxford, where they have been able to learn and develop as a group – an important step in their transition from being cared for to living independently. The majority of current housemates are studying at college, with a third in employment. This is considered a major success by the project organisers in the current economic climate.

Other News

Happy tenth birthday for our EMU team

Another Oxford Health service is celebrating ten years of helping thousands of patients.

Abingdon Emergency Multidisciplinary Unit (EMU) first opened its doors in 2010 to offer an alternative to acute hospital admissions for sub-acute needs. The service provides an urgent assessment and treatment service aimed to reduce admissions to the acute hospitals.

EMU offers a comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment supported by rapid 'point of care' diagnostics and treatment plans. It provides a

seven-day service to the local community supporting care closer to home and can treat people with multiple, often complex problems, many of whom are frail and elderly. Find out more about EMU and its birthday celebration [here](#).

Wantage maternity unit reopens

Women in Wantage and the surrounding areas can now choose to give birth at Wantage maternity unit, which reopened on 9 November. The unit had been closed for births since March while refurbishment works were being carried out.



The team at the unit care for women from across the Vale of White Horse, including Wantage, Abingdon, Faringdon, Southmoor, and all the surrounding villages, working closely with the Abingdon midwifery team.

Oxford Health Care needs you

The Oxford Health Charity is appealing for donations to help fill boxes of morale-boosting treats for our staff working in our hospitals, in our mental health settings and out in our communities. It wants every pack that's sent out to nurses, doctors, therapists, mental health professionals and support teams – to be brimming with goodies that show just how much they are appreciated. More information on how you can get involved can be [found here](#).

Encouraging people to give a virtual gift to hospital patients this Christmas

OUH and Oxford Hospitals Charity have joined forces so that the local community can 'give a virtual gift' to people spending this Christmas in hospital.

In previous years, groups and individuals across Oxfordshire have donated toys and gifts at Christmas for patients of all ages across our hospitals but this year the festive toy and gift drops cannot take place due to COVID-19 restrictions and so the Charity, working alongside the Trust, has brought in a new virtual gift giving scheme to ensure Christmas cheer on the wards can continue.

Physiotherapy Service goes digital to help keep people active

There's special online help for people with Parkinson's disease thanks to a community-based Oxford Health specialist team. The Trust's Physical Disability Physiotherapy Service (PDPS) team, made up of nine part time physiotherapists, have started delivering physical activity lessons for people with Parkinson's disease online. Find out [more here](#).

Wednesday at One – focus on learning disability

A series of lunchtime meetings – Wednesday at One – is exploring factors that impact on the health and life expectancy of people with learning disability.

The meetings are open to all and are of particular interest to family members, paid carers or clinicians looking after someone with a learning disability? You can find out more about the meetings and the topics covered [here](#). The meetings can be accessed via this link: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#).

The series is organised in collaboration by Oxford Health, OCCG, Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers, Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Care Association, Berkshire Care Association and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

And finally...

We hope this update is useful. Please email occg.media-team@nhs.net with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as we can.



By going to www.hospitalcharity.co.uk/giveagift, you can donate a toy for a child, a gift for an older patient, or support one of the many projects to make our hospitals more comfortable and welcoming for patients. For more information and to see how your virtual gift can make a difference across our hospitals, please visit the [Oxford Hospitals Charity website](#).