

Oxfordshire

NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

8 January 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.

Table of contents

Outbreak Management	2
Health, Wellbeing and Social Care	3
Community resilience	7
Economy	8
Place, Transport, Infrastructure.....	8
Children, Education, Families	9
And finally.....	9

Outbreak Management

Third National Lockdown

A steep rise in coronavirus cases across England has prompted the government to place the nation into a third lockdown.

Nationally, the number of new daily cases of coronavirus has topped 60,000 for the first time since the pandemic started, while the number of COVID patients in hospital has risen by 30 per cent in the space of a week.

Locally, cases in Oxfordshire have more than doubled in the past fortnight, with the number of cases increasing by 64 per cent in the 7 days up to 1 January. The weekly rate in Oxfordshire currently stands at 519 cases per 100,000 residents. The rise is particularly concerning among the over 60s, where cases have doubled in the past week alone. Hospital admissions have increased significantly as a result. The latest figures can be viewed on the county council's [interactive dashboard](#), which is updated on a daily basis.

The rapid spread is being attributed to a new variant of COVID-19, which is passed on far more easily. Although there is currently no evidence that this variant causes a more severe illness nor that the vaccine will be any less effective, it is 70 per cent more transmissible. This new variant has now become the dominant strain across the south east.



What are the new lockdown measures?

- You must stay at home, except for a legally permitted reason. This includes activities such as essential shopping, education and childcare, work which cannot be done from home, medical needs, exercise, and communal worship.
- If you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should stay local in the village, town or part of the city where you live.
- You must not meet socially with family or friends, unless they are part of your household or support bubble.

- You can leave your home to exercise once a day. You can exercise in a public outdoor place with members of your household or support bubble or, when you are on your own, with one person from another household.
- Primary, secondary and special schools will remain open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Remote working will take place for all other children until February half term. End-of-year exams will not take place this summer. Early years settings such as childminders and nurseries can remain open.
- Higher Education provision will remain online until mid-February for all courses, except those for future critical workers such as medicine and dentistry.
- Pubs, restaurants, and non-essential shops and businesses must close, although hospitality venues can provide delivery and takeaway services - but not takeaway alcohol.
- People who are clinically extremely vulnerable should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. They should not attend work.

Further information about the national lockdown restrictions can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home. A set of Q&As about lockdown in Oxfordshire can be found at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stopthespread.

COVID Secure teams

Oxfordshire's COVID Secure teams are helping enforce the new lockdown restrictions - checking that non-essential businesses and licensed premises are closed as required and that food retailers such as supermarkets and other essential shops and businesses are keeping to the rules and operating safely. They are also continuing to work with the police on checking public spaces and parks to deter group gatherings.



Impact on public services

Since 26 December, Oxfordshire has been subject to tier 4 restrictions and many of the tier 4 measures for public services also apply under lockdown. For example, household waste recycling centres remain open; parks and outdoor playgrounds are open for people to exercise although it is really important that parents and carers of children using these outdoor facilities still adhere to social distancing requirements at all times.

Registration services are continuing to provide birth registration and notices face-to-face in COVID-secure offices, while death registration will continue by phone; and food traders can continue operating, such as The Covered Market in Oxford, which remains open for essential fresh produce, click and collect and takeaway services.

Entertainment and leisure venues, including museums and leisure centres have closed to the public. And, although Oxfordshire County Council's libraries have closed for browsing, 14 library branches are continuing to offer a limited number of

services, including pre-booked access to IT and digital services and click-and-collect services:

Oxfordshire County Library (Oxford), Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Botley, Cowley, Didcot, Headington, Henley, Kidlington, Summertown, Thame, Wantage and Witney.



Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is the biggest vaccination programme in the history of the NHS. Thanks to some truly outstanding work done by our clinicians, support staff, patient participation group members and community volunteers, the roll-out across Oxfordshire is well under way.

Across Oxfordshire 22 different sites will be offering COVID-19 vaccinations to the top two [priority groups](#) by the end of next week (15 January 2021). The first vaccinations were delivered to patients (aged 80 and over), care workers and frontline NHS staff on 8 December at the county's first hospital hub. Provided by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) and based at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford, the hospital hub was one of the first 50 hospital hubs to go live in England.

Since then 18 vaccination services have opened in a phased approach, led by GPs, across the following primary care network [sites](#):

- Chipping Norton Health Centre
- Hart Surgery, Henley
- Banbury Cross Health Centre
- Malthouse Surgery
- Bartlemas Surgery

- Jericho Health Centre
- Barton Neighbourhood Centre.
- Windrush Health Centre in Witney
- Leys Health Centre in Oxford
- Wallingford Community Hospital
- Morland House Surgery
- Clifton Hampden Centre
- The Heritage Centre
- Kennington Health Centre
- Didcot Civic Centre
- Islip Medical Practice
- Cherwell School
- Wantage Health Centre

The final three sites will start vaccinations next week in Carterton, Faringdon and the Grimsbury area of Banbury. Plans are also underway for the Oxfordshire Vaccination Centre to be operational by the end of January which will be the Oxfordshire site for mass vaccinations and provided by Oxford Health.

In Oxfordshire good progress has been made in vaccinating approximately one third of all those over 80 so far. The local NHS is working hard to deliver the vaccinations as quickly as they can and as quickly as supplies are made available. Because

there is a phased approach being taken, **some people are waiting longer than others**. Everyone in the priority groups, registered with an Oxfordshire GP practice, will be invited in due course. Enthusiasm from patients and the public has been huge and GP practices are finding their patients are keen to benefit from the vaccination when called.

OUH Muslim Chaplain leads community drive to encourage COVID vaccination

Tuesday 8 December 2020 marked the launch of the COVID-19 vaccination programme with the Pfizer vaccine. The Churchill Hospital was chosen as one of the first 50 'hospital hubs' to launch the vaccination programme; almost 6,000 vaccinations had been delivered at the hospital hub by the start of 2021. This represents a significant achievement by everyone involved.

However, we know that some people have doubts about vaccination in general and about the new COVID vaccines in particular – and that this is a particular issue among some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

A study from the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) found 57 per cent of BAME people said they would take the vaccine compared with 79 per cent of white people. Christina Marriott, RSPH Chief Executive, said "Anti-vaccination messages have been specifically targeted" at some ethnic and religious communities.

Imam Monawar Hussain (pictured), who is the Muslim Chaplain at OUH, has been working with community leaders in Oxfordshire to make videos in different languages for use on social media to encourage uptake of COVID vaccination and to address commonly asked questions.



[Monawar's video is on YouTube](#) and we have also posted it on the OUH [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Other videos tweeted so far include [Farsi](#) (recorded by

OUH consultant and Oxford City local councillor Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini), [Hindi](#) and [Arabic](#).



Deferring the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine

Last week a change was made to the national guidance in relation to the timing of the second dose of the vaccine.

Following a review of clinical evidence and the latest public health data, the JCVI and the Department of Health and Social Care have published updated guidance for the NHS on the dose interval for the second dose of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. It now recommends the second dose of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine should be scheduled for after three weeks but before 12 weeks after the first dose, and that the second dose no longer needs to be held in storage.

The four UK Chief Medical Officers have therefore determined that:

"...Prioritising the first doses of vaccine for as many people as possible on the priority list will protect the greatest number of at risk people overall in the shortest possible time and will have the greatest impact on reducing mortality, severe disease and hospitalisations and in protecting the NHS and equivalent health services. Operationally this will mean that second doses of both vaccines will be administered towards the end of the recommended vaccine dosing schedule of 12 weeks."

They recognise that this would mean rescheduling second doses for most of those who have received their first dose, but for the reasons set out above by JCVI and CMOs, doing so should substantially improve individual and population-level protection against COVID-19 over the next three months.

It is extremely encouraging to see the enthusiasm for the vaccine and to have a sense of an end being in sight. NHS colleagues welcome the support of system partners and the wider public as they work hard to deliver this programme at the same time as

managing the demands of COVID infections and winter pressures.

It will still take several months for the whole population to be vaccinated. We can all help by asking people to be patient and to reassure them that they will be invited for a vaccination as soon as possible. The following messages to the public are intended to help reassure patients and reduce the number of telephone and email enquiries from individuals:

- The vaccination programme is being phased in across the county following the national guidance on prioritising patients. Some people have already been vaccinated and others are still waiting to be invited.
- Please do not contact your GP or another NHS service to seek a vaccine – GP practices are still open for providing care to patients and their phones could become swamped, please wait until the NHS contacts you.
- When the NHS does contact you, please be ready and attend your booked appointment.
- Please continue to follow all the public health guidance to control the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

Further information: A set of FAQs about the vaccine and the vaccination programme is available [here](#). You can also find further information about the vaccine on the www.nhs.uk website.

OUH first in world to deliver the COVID Oxford Vaccine

Monday 4 January 2021 was a momentous day for Oxfordshire and an historic day for the NHS as the rollout of the new Oxford AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine began at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford.

A dialysis patient under the care of Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) was the very first in the world to be vaccinated with the Oxford Vaccine at OUH's COVID vaccination 'hospital hub' at the Churchill.

Brian Pinker (pictured), 82, a retired maintenance manager who has been having dialysis for kidney disease at the Churchill for a number of years, was the first person to receive his vaccination from OUH Chief Nursing Officer, Sam Foster. Brian was pleased to be getting the vaccine and was very proud it was the one invented in Oxford.

Also vaccinated with the Oxford Vaccine on 4 January was Professor Andrew Pollard, an

Honorary Consultant Paediatrician at OUH and Chief Investigator of the Oxford Vaccine Trial.



The Trust is very proud of the strong partnership between OUH and the University of Oxford, especially in the area of ground breaking research. Hundreds of staff at OUH took part in the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine trial and so played a key role in its development. More information is available on the OUH [website](#).

The Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine will also be used within the GP led PCN vaccination services. Practices have received deliveries of both vaccines this week and more will be delivered next week which will enable practices to reach out, more easily, to housebound patients as well as care home residents.

Meeting the challenge of the COVID 3rd wave

The Christmas and New Year period was hugely challenging for the NHS here in Oxfordshire – and indeed nationally – with a steep rise in the number of COVID positive patients admitted to our hospitals.

Elective (non-urgent, planned) inpatient and daycase activity at OUH has been postponed, where appropriate, to focus on urgent and emergency care for COVID and non-COVID patients and to enable the redeployment of staff to treat this cohort of patients.

The Trust would like to thank all staff who have pulled together and shown great flexibility as clinical areas were converted for use with COVID positive patients and staff were in some cases redeployed.

The Trust is working closely with partners in the Oxfordshire health and care system, as well as more widely in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire

and West Berkshire Integrated Care System (BOB ICS).

Tighter restrictions on visiting at OUH have also been reintroduced in response to rising levels of COVID-19 cases in the community and COVID positive patients in our hospitals – no visitors are now allowed with limited exceptions and exemptions, as set out on the OUH [website](#).

The Trust does not take these decisions lightly, however the Trust has a duty to protect its patients and staff. We have to do all that we can to keep everyone safe. The '[Keep in Touch](#)' service is available for those who cannot visit their loved ones in hospital.

OUH junior doctor and volunteer recognised in New Year Honours

Congratulations to Dr Gareth Hynes, a junior doctor at OUH, who was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours for Services to Medical Education during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Gareth is a Specialist Registrar in Respiratory Medicine at OUH and co-chair of the Trainee Physician Committee for Health Education England's Thames Valley Deanery, and co-represents the region on the national Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Trainee Committee.

He was involved in organising the regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic for junior doctors, including pandemic preparation, the education of clinicians on COVID-19 and its clinical management, regular communication and information dissemination, and caring for the physical and emotional wellbeing of colleagues during the response. You can read more about Gareth on the OUH [website](#).

Also congratulations to Andy Baker, who has been a volunteer at OUH since 2014, who was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours for his charitable work.

Andy is a brain injury survivor who has raised more than £250,000 for Oxford Children's Hospital and other charities through the fundraising group Play2Give. You can more about Andy's inspiring story on the [Play2Give website](#).

Oxfordshire's Home First approach reduces care needs by 55 per cent in four months

More people in Oxfordshire are able to live happier and more independent lives following a stay in hospital thanks to a service known as [Home First](#). A joint initiative by Oxfordshire County Council, OUH, Oxford Health, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Age UK Oxfordshire, Home First aims to help people to regain their independence and return home following an illness or injury that required a hospital stay.

The innovative approach – which sees a team of therapists, social workers, coordinators, reablement workers and support workers collaborate to carry out assessments followed by a seamless return to the home environment - has meant that people become more able more quickly and are less reliant on care services.



Over the four months from July 2020, the care hours needed by this group of people has reduced by over half. And as the county continues to cope with COVID-19 restrictions and winter pressures, the importance of reablement based in people's homes is more important than ever.

Offers of Help

Local authorities and the NHS in Oxfordshire are very grateful to local businesses and partners offering estate to be used as potential vaccination and testing venues. Given the number being received a single point of access has been organised; please send any offers of estate to Ben.Coleman@southandvale.gov.uk. These will then be forwarded to the relevant projects for consideration.

Community resilience

Support for vulnerable residents

As England goes into lockdown, Oxfordshire's councils are reminding residents about what support is available for those in need of help, including support to access food, medicines and essential supplies. Further information is available on the councils' websites.



Clinically extremely vulnerable residents are also being contacted to let them know what support is available. These are people who have received a government letter to let them know they are clinically extremely vulnerable and must follow new shielding guidelines. Local support includes help with shopping and prescriptions, support in accessing food if needed, and a phone links service to combat loneliness.

Helping rough sleepers and those facing homelessness to take Next Steps

Funding from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) – run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – is helping support those sleeping rough and facing homelessness in Oxfordshire.

In north Oxfordshire, rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness stand to benefit from 17 new specialist accommodation units after Cherwell District Council secured £230,400 of NSAP funding. The council's new accommodation will include eight 'Housing First' units spread across the district, and nine supported housing units in Bicester.

Housing First gives people immediate access to permanent housing together with a tailored support

package to help them to tackle any lifestyle challenges. The Housing First units, sourced in partnership with social housing providers, will be provided in addition to eight units already available in the district. The nine supported housing flats in Bicester will be made available for people who need help developing independent living skills so they can make a success of managing a tenancy. Once they are ready, they will be supported to move on to independent accommodation.

Oxford City Council has secured £967,901 in funding that will be split three ways:

- £251,400 will pay for three years' support costs in properties that **Aspire** are refurbishing for occupation by former rough sleepers. These include a women-only property and a COVID-secure winter shelter
- £150,000 will help the council to buy five one-bedroom properties as part of a programme to deliver 20 Housing First homes by March 2021
- £566,501 will pay for three years' support costs for the Housing First programme

Oxford City Council has also extended its severe weather emergency protocol (SWEP) for people experiencing rough sleeping. This means that emergency accommodation will continue to stay open until the morning of 11 January, when the council will review the situation again. As SWEP was first activated on 23 December, it will have been open for 19 nights by Monday morning – the longest continuous period ever. An average of 10 people a night have accessed SWEP accommodation so far this winter, with a peak of 17 people on both New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

COVID scam alert

Oxfordshire County Council's trading standards team is urging residents to be on their guard against scammers using the promise of a coronavirus vaccine to con them out of money. Criminals are contacting people out of the blue with offers of a coronavirus vaccination. These approaches have been made by text or from a recorded voice message on the telephone.

In each case the recipient is required to respond by clicking a link in the text message or by pressing 1 when receiving the call. They are then asked to give personal information, as well as financial details to

book their vaccination. However, these are scams, with criminals exploiting the pandemic to attempt to steal personal details and people's money.

in your community, consider becoming a Friend Against Scams at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

People are urged to:

- Monitor key financial accounts regularly.
- Keep software and apps updated.
- If you get a suspicious text asking you to click on a link, this could be a scam. Do not click on the link.
- If you receive a recorded voice message on your phone and are asked to press a number, this could be a scam. Do not press any buttons and do not call the number back.
- Report all scams via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.



To find out more about how scams work, the harm they cause and how you can help to protect people

Economy

Financial support for businesses

Financial support for business affected by the restrictions continues to become available from the government and is administered locally by the district and city councils.

The Chancellor has recently announced one-off top-up grants available for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses to help them through to the Spring, and a £594 million discretionary fund to support other impacted businesses. Further information is available at GOV.UK

UK transition support

In the lead-up to the end of the UK transition, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the local authorities worked together to support the local

business community and signpost them to a range of advice and resources. A communications campaign ran throughout December to support this, with targeted activity on LinkedIn, Facebook and Google. This resulted in:

- 3,654 clicks to the www.gov.uk/transition website
- 566,032 impressions - the number of times the advert was displayed
- 63,277 views
- 185 engagements - for example: sharing the advert, likes, comments or clicks

Place, Transport, Infrastructure

New bus services come onboard



The new year has ushered in a series of major changes to bus services and frequencies across Oxfordshire. The changes come as a result of the county council working with bus operators and major local employers to help support the region's recovery from the pandemic.

In the Science Vale services will now operate more frequently between Milton Park and Didcot, with improved links to the site from Wantage, Grove, Abingdon and Oxford, thanks to a new partnership between Milton Park and Thames Travel.

Abingdon will once again be linked to Oxford station by service X2; and service X3 will operate through to the John Radcliffe Hospital, while also serving the new Barton Park development and Barton. A higher frequency will be introduced between Abingdon and Oxford city centre on Mondays to Saturdays.

The county council is also working with local community groups and developers to restore services to Horspath and Littleworth. A new service 46, provided by Thames Travel, will run on

Mondays to Fridays between Wheatley, Horspath and Cowley Centre, with through tickets available onto Oxford city centre. Meanwhile, in the Bicester area, a number of services have been revised, with

the frequency of services doubling between Ambrosden and Bicester, and the introduction of a new service for the emerging Graven Hill development.

Children, Education, Families

Supporting schools during lockdown

One of the key differences between tier 4 and national lockdown is the new restrictions for schools and colleges. The county council's education team is working closely with leaders in schools and early years settings to support remote working and broader practicalities around the in-school provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. In addition, they are working closely with secondary and special school leaders regarding the rollout of lateral flow testing.

Winter support rolled out for struggling families and individuals in Oxfordshire

Families and individuals struggling with finances or needing help because of COVID-19 this winter can now access support provided by local authorities and voluntary and community organisations in Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire councils have received £1.37 million from the government's new [COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme](#) to run local support schemes for those in greatest need.



They are working closely together to identify residents requiring urgent assistance within the rules of the scheme and the most effective ways of delivering support. This includes working with local Citizens Advice services to continue and expand support already put in place during the autumn.

More than £400,000 of support for food and other essential supplies has been distributed to the families of children and young people entitled to free school meals, and younger children with qualifying eligibility in early years settings. Schools, colleges and early years settings worked closely with the councils to distribute this support in advance of the Christmas holidays.

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.