

# Oxfordshire NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing: COVID-19

2 June 2020

This week's COVID-19 briefing includes updates on the following:

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## Recognising Volunteers

Volunteers' Week is an annual celebration of the contribution made by millions of people across the UK through volunteering – it is a chance to recognise the incredible efforts of volunteers and to thank all those who volunteer their time. Throughout this week, local authorities and their partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector are shining a spotlight on the contributions of individual volunteers across the county and highlighting the range of opportunities that are available and the benefits that come with volunteering. Individual stories are being published on social media using the hashtag #oxfordshirevolunteers.

In the NHS, volunteers are also being recognised for their efforts to support during the pandemic. At Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT), volunteers have been at the heart of responding to the pandemic by providing vital help in distributing PPE to the nursing teams. The team has been sorting PPE from big deliveries into individual packs of ten of everything. Nurses can pick up their packs at a time that is convenient for them. Working in socially distanced groups, the team has been producing over 600 packs a day, freeing staff to focus on their duties.

Other volunteers have got creative in their own homes, making 1500 laundry bags, 300 headbands and 500 star-shaped cards that are used to write positive messages for palliative care patients. While not every volunteer has been able to do what they normally do as volunteers, the support and desire to help has been heart-warming.

All OHFT volunteers are asked to take part in the trust COVID-19 risk assessment. Volunteers and members of their household are also offered testing through the trust occupational health, should they experience symptoms.

Volunteers have also been the backbone of efforts to support staff at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) while they care for patients in their hospitals with COVID-19. The Trust are hugely thankful to all of their volunteers, whether they are helping through the Voluntary Services Department, the League of

Friends on all their hospital sites, or working with Oxford Hospitals Charity to support patients and staff.

Volunteers are also vital to the charity Supporting the Sick Newborn and their Parents (SSNAP), Sobell House Hospice and Maggie's Centre Oxford (both on the Churchill Hospital site), and the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy.

The Trust are also very grateful for the public and staff governors on their Council of Governors, all of whom have taken on their roles on a voluntary basis.

And last but definitely not least, the hospital radio stations (Radio Cherwell and Radio Horton) are run by dedicated and passionate enthusiasts, on an entirely voluntary basis.

### **Learning Disability Services**

From the beginning of the pandemic, OHFT's Learning Disability Service has been creating accessible easy read guidance on COVID-19 and collating material from other reliable sources. Everything is published online in one place on [the Oxford Health website](#) and is free to use.

The service has compiled over 400 COVID-19 Hospital Passports for people with LD, which include brief summaries of medical conditions, medicines, dietary requirements, eating/ drinking difficulties, and communication preferences and sent them to OUH to be appended to patient records. The service has also identified very high risk patients and checked with them and their GP what arrangements are in place should they contract COVID-19 and what their wishes would be. The service continues to make weekly, or more frequent, welfare checks.

### **50 years of service**

The Estates Team at OHFT celebrated gardener Chris Willis 50 years of working at the Trust on May 26 by creating a dedicated garden for him at the Littlemore Mental Health Centre. Chris started with the Trust in May 1970 as a 17-year-old straight from school. He works in all weathers: clearing leaves and snow, cutting grass, trimming hedges and tending flowers. Chris has always been passionate about creating an environment where staff on breaks or patients on ground leave can take a walk and enjoy the grounds and gardens at Littlemore. In 2019 his hard work was recognised in the annual Staff Recognition Awards when he won the category 'Living the Values.'

### **Test and Trace**

Test and Trace was launched across England last Thursday (28 May). The service is designed to help identify, contain and control coronavirus, reduce the spread of the virus and save lives. It forms a central part of the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy, which seeks to return life to as close to normal as possible, for as many people as possible, in a way that is safe and protects the NHS and social care.

There are responsibilities placed upon public health authorities to work with Public Health England and with local district, city and health system partners to investigate and control outbreaks and to support the community to ensure safe and effective self-isolation. Discussions are currently taking place across the Oxfordshire system about the development of a local outbreak control plan, and further details will follow shortly.

## **Helping children return to school**

In preparation for the return of more children to the classroom on 1 June, hundreds of thousands of personal protective equipment (PPE) items have been delivered to Oxfordshire schools by Oxfordshire County Council. They include masks, aprons, gloves, visors and hand sanitiser. This PPE equipment will help local schools manage an immediate response in the unlikely event of a pupil becoming unwell. The council has also carried out risk assessments and has made changes to school bus pick-up points to ensure there is enough space for children to maintain social distancing.

In Cherwell, primary schools have been provided with a bespoke guide to help children gradually transition back to school after lockdown. The council has worked with outdoor learning specialist Muddy Feet to produce a resource pack detailing ways parents and teachers can help pupils adjust to the 'new normal'. The pack includes a range of nature-based activities and guidance on how the outdoor environment can be used to manage anxiety and enhance mental wellbeing, creating a safe and fun environment for youngsters to learn.

## **Infection Prevention and Control Training in Care Homes**

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic the importance of providing infection prevention and control (IP&C) training to all Care Homes was recognised. In many ways Oxfordshire was ahead of other areas having commissioned a Care Home Support Service (CHSS) with OHFT for many years. The CHSS already had a linked named Nurse to all Care Homes.

Although a series of National webinars were offered, it was felt that a locally run version, would be more meaningful to our care homes. On 16 April Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) hosted a training webinar, which included a panel of Public Health England, Oxfordshire County Council, IP&C leads and Care Home Association leads. Over 100 participants joined the webinar and topics including the correct use of PPE, isolation, managing waste safely and testing were included.

Over the past month OCCG and OHFT have supported the NHS England / Improvement (NHSE/I) initiative to train all Care Homes in the correct use of PPE. The "Super" training was based on a train the trainer model which required a number of key staff to attend training and then these staff would train other care home staff. This model allowed for every Care Home in Oxfordshire to receive either a Face to Face training or be trained using virtual training. By Friday 29 May all Care Homes had either received training (83%) or had training booked very soon.

## **Clinical Support to Care Homes**

Clinical Support to Care Homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been supported through the already established scheme providing enhanced care to Care Homes. This includes a named clinical lead, responsible for overall clinical oversight of residents including, but not limited to advanced care planning, access to secondary care and overall treatment plans. Guidance regarding care for residents during this time has been written specifically for care homes with input from Care Home representatives. This has been circulated to all Care Homes along with other guidance as it has emerged.

## **Rehousing those in need**

As the country went into lockdown at the end of March, the housing teams in the district and city councils worked with local hotels, hostels and Oxford University to make sure homeless people and rough sleepers could access safe self-contained accommodation during the pandemic. The focus then immediately turned to finding long-term solutions. Now that moving home is permitted in some circumstances, the councils are calling on landlords to help those in need find settled accommodation. In West Oxfordshire, where there are currently 39 households living in temporary accommodation, the council is calling for anyone with a property available for private letting to get in touch.

In Cherwell, landlords who can help will receive a package of support under the Cherwell Bond Scheme and up to £15,000, if needed, to improve the property condition or convert the property to a shared house. In South and Vale there are currently 44 people living in temporary accommodation and the councils are working with local registered providers and private landlords to provide long-term accommodation. The councils are also due to adopt a new Housing Assistance Grants and Loans Policy in July, which sets out how the councils will meet their statutory duties and exercise their powers when awarding housing assistance grants and loans.

## **Supporting Oxfordshire's business community**

In response to the unprecedented challenges that Oxfordshire's small businesses are facing as a result of COVID-19, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) are repurposing funding to create a business resilience fund. The fund complements the range of support available from the Government and – through a competitive process – provides eligible businesses with unmatched grants ranging from £1,000 to £10,000. The deadline for submissions is 5pm on Friday 5 June. Find out more [here](#).

## **'Thank you for saving my life'**

A patient treated for COVID-19 at the John Radcliffe Hospital has thanked staff for saving his life. Ken Wood spent nearly three weeks in intensive care and on a recovery ward before being able to leave hospital and continue his recovery at home. You can read Ken's story in full on the OUH [website](#).

## **Public recognition for staff working 'behind the front line'**

A new website and social media campaign to publicly thank some of the people who have been working to support frontline staff at Oxford University Hospitals during the response to COVID-19 is being featured on [OUH website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

## **Further information:**

Please email [occq.media-team@nhs.net](mailto:occq.media-team@nhs.net) with any queries and we will endeavour to get back to you.