

# Oxfordshire

## NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

9 April 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.

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# Outbreak Management

## The roadmap out of lockdown

The government has now confirmed that we are on track for COVID-19 restrictions to be eased further on 12 April in line with the next phase of the roadmap out of lockdown.

**The roadmap out of lockdown**  
what's open and permitted, and what's not

**STEP 2**  
from **12 April**

- ✓ Indoor leisure including gyms (individual or with your own household only).
- ✓ Outdoor hospitality.
- ✓ Rule of six or two households outdoors.
- ✓ Indoor parent and child groups (up to 15 people, excluding under 5s).
- ✗ No household mixing indoors.
- ✓ Domestic overnight stays (with your own household only).
- ✓ Outdoor attractions, such as zoos, theme parks and drive-in cinemas.
- ✓ Self-contained accommodation (with your own household only).
- ✓ Libraries and community centres.
- ! Funerals (30 people). Weddings, wakes, receptions (15 people).
- ✗ Minimise travel. No international holidays.
- ✓ Personal care premises.
- ✓ Piloting of events.
- ✓ All retail.



This is reflected in the number of new cases in Oxfordshire, which - although showing slight variations over the past fortnight - has now dropped to 33.1 per 100,000 of the population. Among residents aged 60 and over, the rate has now fallen to 8.5 per 100,000.

The latest COVID-19 figures can be viewed on the county council's [interactive dashboard](#), which is updated on a daily basis.



In Oxfordshire, preparations are underway to reopen a range of council services as part of the second step of the roadmap. This includes public leisure centres across the county, including gyms

and indoor pools, and the phased reopening of [Oxfordshire's libraries](#) - 30 of which will reopen on 12 April and a further 7 the following week.

As shops, hairdressers and outdoor hospitality venues get ready to open their doors on 12 April, the county's COVID-secure teams will be on hand to ensure that businesses are operating safely, while the councils will be encouraging residents to shop local and enjoy local attractions safely.

## Symptom-free testing for everyone

Alongside the rollout of the vaccine, regular testing forms an essential part of the government's roadmap plan.

From 9 April, everyone in England will be able to access free, rapid lateral flow device (LFD) tests twice a week. This paves the way for businesses and society reopening.

One in three people with COVID-19 do not experience any symptoms and may be spreading the virus without knowing. Rapid testing detects cases quickly, meaning positive cases can isolate immediately and prevent the spread of infection.

Residents in Oxfordshire are being actively encouraged to make regular testing a habit. Getting into the habit of twice-weekly testing will help us all play our part in keeping our families and communities safe and enable the easing of lockdown to continue.

A range of options are available for people to access free regular testing as conveniently as possible:

- Community testing at council-run symptom-free testing sites in Banbury, Carterton, Oxford and Wantage, which are open Monday to Saturday
- Collection of home test kits from any local testing site
- A home ordering service so that people can order LFD tests online and have them delivered to their home

- Workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- Secondary school and college testing on-site or through home test kits provided

A new 'pharmacy collect' service is also launching, which will provide an additional route to regular testing. For further information, visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/covidtest](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/covidtest).



## Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

### Vaccination programme update

The summary below provides the position at 7 April 2021:

## Covid-19: Vaccinations in numbers across Oxfordshire



**Over 395,000 vaccinations delivered**  
Second doses now underway



**April key focus on second doses**  
Patients receiving second doses at 11 and 12 weeks



**95% take up**  
in over 80's, 75-79 and 70-74 year old population



### Vaccination centres

- 1 Large vaccination centre
- 2 Hospital hubs
- 21 GP-led hubs
- 3 Pharmacy sites with others due to open



**More than 90%**  
of our 60-69 year old population vaccinated



### Projected vaccine programme delivery

Everybody in priority groups 1 – 4 offered a vaccine  
On target for priority groups 1 – 9 by 15 April



**More than 93% take up**  
in our Clinically Extremely Vulnerable population



### Book your vaccination

We continue to offer the vaccine to those aged 50 and over, carers and adults with underlying health conditions aged 18 and over



**More than 85%**  
of our 50-59 year old population vaccinated



### Hands Face Space

Remain important rules to follow even if you have been vaccinated, as you may still be able to spread COVID to others

**For more advice**  
[www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk)

Based on data from NIMS, up to 07.04.2021

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System

### 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of COVID-19 vaccinations

The NHS in Oxfordshire has now vaccinated more than 320,000 people against COVID-19; over 40,000 people in the county have also now had their second dose.

To ensure we continue to protect our community, the NHS are urging people in Oxfordshire to come for their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccination when they are invited to.

Dr Kiren Collison, GP and Clinical Chair at Oxfordshire CCG, said: "We all want our lives to get back to normal and to do this we know that by getting vaccinated we can protect not only ourselves but others around us. By having the second vaccine you will have the best long-term protection from the virus."

NHS staff are still working hard to deliver the largest vaccination drive in our history, at the same time as

providing care for everyone who needs it. The public can help in the following:

- unless you are in the groups being invited now, please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, we will contact you when it is the right time;
- please attend your booked appointments at the time you're asked to, and make sure you come back for your second dose;
- whether you have had your vaccine or not, please continue to follow all the guidance in place to control the virus and save lives.

Everyone can help support by following the rules where they live to try to contain the virus and remembering hands, face, space at all times.

And if you have coronavirus symptoms – a high temperature, new continuous cough or loss or change to your sense of smell or taste, make sure you get tested and isolate for as long as is needed to help protect those you care for and others in your community.

### **COVID-19 vaccinations in Oxford Mosques**

The NHS has been working with Oxford City Council and the Mosques in Oxford to offer COVID-19 vaccinations at the Madina Mosque and the Central Oxford Mosque on 7 and 8 April. This initiative was open to anyone in the cohorts 1-9 still needing their first vaccination. The walk-in clinics vaccinated 81 people over the two days.

Following the success of this initiative, other opportunities are being explored for delivering vaccinations in community settings including at a Mosque in Banbury and a church in Oxford popular with residents from the black African community.

### **COVID-19 vaccinations at Kassam**

Oxford Health's vaccination centre at the Kassam Stadium in Oxford, is operating a skeleton service until Sunday, April 11 – providing first dose vaccination for over 50s and eligible cohorts who have booked via the online national bookings service or via 119. This is in line with the national drive to ensure that everyone in the most at-risk cohorts has had the chance to be vaccinated, ahead of the NHS target of offering all priority

groups their first vaccine by April 15 and when there is tighter supply of available doses.

From April 15, NHS staff will receive their second doses of the Oxford vaccine before appointments are opened up to the public for their second vaccines from April 19. COVID Operations Director Tehmeena Ajmal has been interviewed on BBC Radio Oxford about the next steps.

Oxford Health is also working with local authority and other health colleagues to run a series of pop-up clinics to improve access to the vaccine for people who are unable to travel to a vaccination site.

### **Vaccination milestone**

Oxford Health celebrated a milestone on Friday, March 26, in administering 100,000 COVID-19 vaccinations as the lead provider of three mass vaccination centres for the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS).



Vaccination staff at the Kassam Stadium, Oxford, at the Madejski Stadium in Reading and at the Bucks New University campus in Aylesbury, came together for a collective celebration. Thanks to the generosity of Oxford Health Charity, 250 celebratory cup cakes were quickly baked and iced and distributed to all three sites so that every member of staff involved in the roll-out could savour the milestone moment with sweet treat on their morning break.

Vaccines started being administered to the public at the Kassam on 1 February and in those 50 days, staff inoculated 50,000 people in priority groups – that's 1,000 people a day receiving a potentially life-saving Oxford vaccine.

The pace of the rollout significantly changed since those early few days and the centres in Oxford and in Reading both had capacity to see 3,500 people a day depending on vaccine supply and bookings.

### **Oxford AstraZeneca (AZ) COVID-19 vaccine**

The latest guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on the use of the AZ vaccine can be found on the Government website [here](#).

The JCVI has weighed the relative balance of benefits and risks and advises that the benefits of prompt vaccination with the AZ vaccine far outweigh the risk of adverse events for people **aged 30 years and over and those who have underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease**.

However, the JCVI has advised that it is preferable for adults younger than 30, without underlying health conditions, to be offered an alternative first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, if available, eg Pfizer Biontec or Moderna. People may make an informed choice to receive the AZ vaccine to receive earlier protection.

To date, there are no reports of the extremely rare side-effects following the second dose of the AZ vaccine. If you have received a first dose of the AZ vaccine you should continue to have your second dose, irrespective of age. The second dose will be important for longer lasting protection against COVID-19.

### **Oxford COVID treatment breakthrough saves one million lives worldwide**

Oxford University researchers are leading the Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy (RECOVERY) trial, the world's biggest trial looking at whether existing treatments can tackle the symptoms of COVID-19 – almost 40,000 people have taken part in the trial globally including many patients at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH).

In June 2020 they announced that one of the drugs they were testing, dexamethasone – a cheap and widely available steroid – reduced the risk of death

in COVID-19 patients on ventilators by a third, and by a fifth in those on oxygen.

New figures published on 23 March show that use of the drug has so far saved 22,000 lives in the UK and an estimated one million lives worldwide.

Professor Fiona Watt, Executive Chair of the Medical Research Council, said: "It's incredibly encouraging that doctors now have additional COVID-19 treatments that can save lives and reduce the length of hospital stays. This world-leading study shows the power of well-designed clinical trials to discover which drugs can help patients."

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said: "This global pandemic has proven that the UK is a world-class force in identifying and rolling out lifesaving treatments to NHS patients. Finding dexamethasone through the RECOVERY trial was a true success story for British research and it's fantastic to see the real impact it's having saving lives here and around the world."

Find out more about the RECOVERY trial at [www.recoverytrial.net](http://www.recoverytrial.net)

### **New Osler Respiratory Unit improves care for respiratory patients**

Patients with respiratory conditions at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) are benefiting from enhanced inpatient care following the opening of a newly refurbished respiratory ward.



Based at the John Radcliffe Hospital, the new **Osler Respiratory Unit** welcomed its first patients on 16 March. The Respiratory team has moved several

times over the last year as part of the Trust's COVID-19 response, but is now based in a modern and refurbished clinical area.

Two wards have been completely renovated in order to provide a single Respiratory Unit with 24 beds, including 22 side rooms.

Staff on the Osler Respiratory Unit, who have adapted quickly and efficiently over the past year due to the pandemic, care for people with various breathing conditions, including [asthma](#), [interstitial lung diseases](#), and cystic fibrosis.

Sam Foster, Chief Nursing Officer at OUH, said: "The Respiratory Unit team have delivered outstanding care to patients throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They expanded their capacity rapidly and welcomed staff from across our Trust to learn new skills and be part of the response required for our patients.

"This exciting new area has been completely transformed, and it will make a really positive difference to patients. I would like to thank colleagues for their understanding, teamwork, and dedication to ensuring the continuation of excellent patient care during the last year, as well as for their patience while work was carried out."

### **Letter to a loved one – helping friends and family to stay in touch with patients**

While limited ward visiting is taking place, Oxford Health is continuing the successful "letters to a loved one" scheme to ensure families and friends can always keep in touch with patients and service users.



You can find out more about letters to a loved one [here](#).

### **170,000 digital consultations: making life easier for staff and patients during the pandemic**

Oxford Health's digital consultations project has been shortlisted for the IT & Digital Innovation Award in the HSJ Value Awards.

The project was set up in March 2020 to support clinicians and patients to respond to the COVID crisis. Assembled in just one week in March 2020, the project team engineered a systematic and seamless transition from face-to-face appointments to a trust-wide digital offer.



The team's ambitious target was to achieve 100,000 digital consultations in a year, more than any NHS trust had done. This was already reached in November 2020, and by the one-year anniversary of the start of the first lockdown, the trust had surpassed 170,000 digital consultations. Read more about the project and the awards [here](#).

### **Horton hip fracture team among best in the country**

The Horton General Hospital's hip fracture team has been named one of the best in the country for hip fracture treatment – for the eighth year in a row – following publication of the annual National Hip Fracture Audit, which compares the performance of 174 trauma units in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The Horton team hospital met all best practice criteria in nearly **95%** of patients, compared with a national average of 58% – while more than **90%** of hip fracture patients underwent surgery either on the same day, or the day after, compared with a national average of 69%.

Mr Sam Anand, Orthopaedic Surgeon at the Horton General, said, said: " These results go to show the expertise and commitment of all our team, which is especially rewarding as our patient numbers have

gone up. We're so happy to be acknowledged for our continuation of excellent care.

"Hip fractures are very common and they're often suffered by elderly or frail people who need rapid care. We're really pleased we can help them in such an efficient and effective way."

### **Limited visiting resumes on pre-booked basis at Oxford Health wards**

Oxford Health has resumed pre-booked limited visiting hours at its community hospitals on Mondays to Fridays.

The trust is allowing one designated visitor for each patient for the duration of their stay, meaning a dedicated family member can visit for one hour once a day via a booking system at its hospitals in Abingdon, Bicester, Oxford City, Didcot, Wallingford and Witney and at mental health wards in Oxford.



This is in line with national guidance, regarding social distance, good basic infection prevention and control measures and appropriate use of protective equipment, including face coverings and, in certain circumstances, gloves and apron. Read more [here](#).

### **UK first use of cutting-edge radiotherapy machine in Oxford**

An NHS patient has received treatment using a cutting-edge radiotherapy machine for the first time, thanks to a new partnership between Oxford University Hospitals (OUH), the University of Oxford, and GenesisCare.

The new ViewRay MRIdian machine is the first of its kind in the UK and will help to improve challenging cancer treatment through faster, tailored radiotherapy.

The partners, with the support of the John Black Charitable Foundation, have collaborated to establish a 10-year programme of clinical treatment for NHS patients, with further research into

improving cancer treatment using the machine, based at GenesisCare's centre in Oxford.

Healthy tissue around a cancer tumour can be exposed to radiotherapy treatment, particularly when targeting soft tissue tumours deep within the body. It can be challenging to visualise these organs during radiotherapy with routine radiotherapy delivery.

The ViewRay MRIdian allows doctors to see the healthy soft tissue and the tumour in real time by combining MRI scanning with targeted radiotherapy. Incorporating MRI scans enables doctors to tailor doses in real time to the specific internal anatomy of the patient on the day of treatment.

Carol Scott, Lead Therapeutic Radiographer at OUH, said: "We are excited to be part of this collaboration offering NHS patients the opportunity to take part in these clinical trials. The use of daily advanced imaging that clearly shows us the tumour and normal soft tissue around it will enable us to take the next step in making our treatments even more personalised and effective."

[More information is available on the OUH website.](#)

### **New transatlantic partnership to transform research and clinical landscapes in mental health**

A new agreement between Oxford Health, the University of Oxford, the University of Toronto and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, has been formalised with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the four organisations.



The transatlantic partnership will enhance existing relationships between the universities and the two healthcare providers. It will enable the development of key structures to facilitate collaboration and help realise the benefits of the complimentary

capabilities of the participating organisations. Read more about the partnership [here](#).

### **Mo Patel a finalist in National BAME Health & Care Awards**

Oxford Health's Head of Inclusion Mohamed Patel has been shortlisted for the Compassionate and Inclusive Leader award in the National BAME Health & Care Awards.

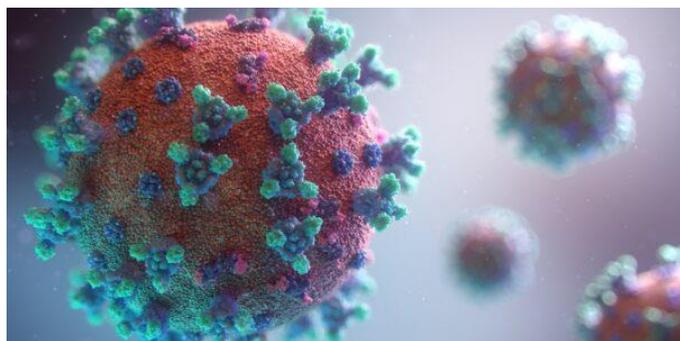
Mo, as he is known to everybody at Oxford Health, has been at the trust since December 2013. He, and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Team, support staff, patients and communities in many practical ways, from policy development and cultural change programmes to providing the interpreting services and delivering training, conferences and staff network events, amongst many other areas.



The winners for the Compassionate and Inclusive Leader category will be revealed in a virtual ceremony on April 15. See more on the [BAME Awards website](#).

### **Research and development team keep achieving during the pandemic**

Lockdown restrictions have not slowed the pace of the Oxford Health Research and Development Team. With it being more than a year since the pandemic began, the team has been looking back at its achievements over a very challenging 12 months.



From keeping existing trials on track and opening new pandemic related studies, to supporting the delivery of a vaccine trial and providing a staff vaccination hub, Research and Development (R&D) at the trust has gone from strength to strength over the last year.

Despite lockdown restrictions 47 new studies have been opened at the trust since March 2020, including ten related to the COVID pandemic. The new studies have spanned a range of specialties including mental health, dementia, young people's mental health, and public health.

As well as keeping regular studies running smoothly, R&D colleagues have risen to the challenge of supporting urgent public health studies around the development of vaccines.

In late 2020 R&D staff at the [NIHR cognitive health Clinical Research Facility](#) worked to an incredibly short timeline to set up the [Novavax](#) vaccine study in just four days. They went on to exceed recruitment targets in less than a month. Read more about the team's achievements [here](#).

### **Katharine House Hospice staff welcomed to OneTeamOneOUH**

An exciting new partnership between Katharine House Hospice and Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) came to fruition on Thursday 1 April as the hospice's clinical services transferred to be under the management of OUH.

The hospice, which is based in Adderbury in north Oxfordshire, was formed almost 30 years ago and now supports more than 900 families every year.

Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery, OUH Chair, and Dr Bruno Holthof, OUH Chief Executive Officer, wrote personally to all Katharine House Hospice staff to welcome them to our OneTeamOneOUH.

They said: "As you will know better than anyone, palliative care demonstrates some of the most admirable values that drive our work. We appreciate especially what we can learn from our palliative care colleagues about compassion and respect as you work with those at the end of their lives and those

who love and care for them, and as you enrich those final moments.”

Angharad Orchard, Chief Executive of Katharine House Hospice, added: "By working in partnership with OUH, our hospice services that people living with a life-limiting illness rely upon, will be strengthened for the long-term, creating a positive impact on future end of life care needs."

Dr Bruno Holthof and Sam Foster, OUH Chief Nursing Officer, also recorded short video messages to welcome Katharine House Hospice staff to our OneTeamOneOUH:

- [Dr Bruno Holthof video message](#)
- [Sam Foster video message](#)

### **BBC Songs of Praise and Aled Jones find hope at Oxford vaccination centre**

Oxford Health’s vaccination centre in Oxford has featured in a Palm Sunday broadcast of the BBC’s Songs of Praise television programme.



The episode is called Finding Hope and looks at the Oxford vaccine development and how it’s being rolled out in the city of its inception and by a dedicated team from Oxford Health. You can watch it [here on BBC iPlayer](#)

Presenter Aled Jones meet Professor Andy Pollard, the scientist behind the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine and also interviewed Oxford Health COVID Operations Director Tehmeena Ajmal, the Trust’s head of spiritual and pastoral care Rev Dr Guy Harrison and Imam Monawar Hussein MBE, the inspirational Muslim chaplain at Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust.

Read more [here](#).

### **COVID-19 survivors at risk of neurological and psychiatric disorders**

A new study from Oxford Health’s Biomedical Research Centre has shown 1 in 3 survivors of COVID-19 received a neurological or psychiatric diagnosis within six months.

Published in The Lancet Psychiatry, the study looked at health records of over 236,000 patients to reveal the scale of complications affecting the brain and nervous system after contracting COVID-19.

The risk was greater in people who had severe COVID-19, but 1 in 9 patients not requiring hospitalisation, also received a diagnosis of conditions including stroke, dementia, psychosis and neuromuscular disorders, as well as psychiatric disorders like anxiety. You can read more about the study [here](#).

### **Oxford Health family mark COVID-19 National Day of Reflection 2021**

Oxford Health provides physical, mental health and social care for people of all ages across our communities in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Swindon, Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset.

Its 7,000 staff work around the clock to provide high quality care – and throughout the pandemic they’ve worked harder than ever before.

As part of the National Day of Reflection, led by the charity Marie Curie, Oxford Health observed a minute’s silence at noon across the trust to remember those lost during the pandemic. Board members, executives and service directors lit candles as a symbol of remembrance and unity, whilst offering condolences to those in our communities who have lost loved ones.



A staff webinar hosted by the Chief Executive Dr Nick Broughton gave staff the opportunity to share their reflections and thanks of the last year – a moment to reflect and look back.

### **Stop smoking service launches in Oxfordshire**

Stop for Life Oxon launched across Oxfordshire on 1 April. Commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, and operated by ICE Creates Ltd, it has increased the range of support options to those who are ready to quit and provides specialist stop smoking support and advice to increase people's chances of quitting.



The service is focused on achieving the priority outcomes for tobacco as agreed by the [Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2020-25](#): reducing smoking amongst adults, cutting the number of pregnant women who smoke, and reducing the prevalence of smoking in workplaces where smoking rates are high.

### **People asked to think 111 First before attending Emergency Departments**

People in Oxfordshire are asked to contact NHS 111 first via [111 online](#) or telephone if they are thinking of attending an Emergency Department, Minor Injury or First Aid Unit but aren't in a life-threatening emergency.

You will then be assessed and, if appropriate, booked into either a First Aid Unit, Minor Injury Unit or the John Radcliffe or Horton General Hospital Emergency Department for treatment.

Contacting NHS111 first means that you will get the most appropriate care for your needs, and enables hospitals to maintain vital social distancing in their Emergency Departments.

Launched in Oxfordshire in November 2020, the programme plays an important part in managing patient flow in healthcare settings and reducing overcrowding.

### **People should still call 999 and attend an Emergency Department if they are experiencing a medical emergency.**

For more information, visit the [OUH NHS 111 First webpage](#).

### **New short film puts PTSD in the spotlight**

Mental health has never been in the headlines more than at the moment with the pandemic focusing attention on recognising and helping people who may be experiencing problems.

To help build understanding Oxford Health has produced a range of videos focusing on depression, anxiety, psychosis, self-harm, personality disorders, neurodiversity, suicide prevention, good mental health, digital mental health and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The latest, about PTSD, can be found on [Oxford Health's YouTube channel](#).



The videos are the result of a partnership between the trust's music therapy lead, Stuart Hobbs, trust clinical psychologist Hannah Stratford and trust consultant Tony James who, together with some of the young people who have used Oxford Health's Adolescent mental health services, have produced the series.

### **Become an Oxford Health member now to have your say in May**

Oxford Health is calling on people to become a member of the trust by April 13 in order to vote in its Council of Governors elections 2021.

By becoming a member of Oxford Health, you can show your support and have a say in the trust's future. Trust members will elect 18 new governors in May.



Nominations for Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors elections are also open right now, and again the deadline for these is **5pm, Tuesday April 13.**

To find out more about becoming a Trust member and about the nomination process to stand as a prospective member of the board of governors, visit [this page](#).

### **A tree-mendous addition to Oxford Health's green spaces**

Oxford Health marked NHS Sustainability Day recently with some special tree plantings at four of its sites.



The national day was held on 26 March to celebrate the importance of sustainable development and

## **Children, Education, Families**

### **Mental wellbeing hub for young people**

Young people suffering psychological challenges, made worse by COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, will have access to an information hub giving contact details of local professional support services and resources, thanks to a new scheme from Oxfordshire County Council.

champion green initiatives – something Oxford Health works very hard on.

Over 800 trees are already planted across the trust's sites, absorbing over 38 tons of carbon annually – helping to offset Oxford Health's overall carbon footprint.

The latest additions were funded by the Oxford Health Charity through NHS Charities Together. Read more about the tree planting and Oxford Health's commitment to sustainability [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Tom takes silver in Our Health Heroes Awards**

Community support worker Thomas Gregory-Smith from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust pocketed silver in the Our Health Heroes Awards 2021. He was a finalist in the Clinical Support Worker of the Year category.



Our Health Heroes are national awards, organised by Skills for Health, a not-for-profit organisation committed to the development of an improved and sustainable healthcare workforce across the UK, together with partners NHS Employers, UNISON and Bevan Brittan. The awards recognise the extraordinary people at the heart of the NHS and social care workforce.



Teenagers face daunting choices, such as deciding between continuing in education or entering the workplace. Disruption caused by the pandemic has increased fears that some might fall between the cracks when it comes to assistance and support.

The hub aims to help young people navigate a myriad of local and national services by conveniently signposting them to practical advice,

## Community resilience

### Support available to Oxfordshire residents most in need this spring

Financial and practical help continues for people struggling to feed their families or heat their homes this spring as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Oxfordshire's local authorities and Citizens Advice services are working together to offer support to vulnerable residents through a number of schemes.

The families of 14,500 eligible children and young people will receive food vouchers or equivalent support worth £30 through their schools, college or nursery ahead of the Easter holiday.

Financial help is also being extended into the spring for support with the costs of food and essential utilities. A further £425,000 is being distributed by the county council to the city and district councils, working in partnership with Citizens Advice and other local advisory services. More than 5,000 families have already received emergency help through this scheme.

resources and help tools. Social media and websites will be central to the initiative, designed to offer a one-stop shop where advice is just a couple of clicks away.

Further information is available from the county council's young people website:

[www.oxme.info/wellbeing](http://www.oxme.info/wellbeing)

Details of how to apply are available from [Oxfordshire County Council's website](http://Oxfordshire County Council's website).

### Young people illustrate the power of art in the battle against hate crime

An art competition designed to highlight and raise awareness of hate crime among young people has proved a real success.

Winner, 11-year-old Mya, produced a striking poster with the slogan 'Stop the Hate', urging people to report disability, racism and homophobia. While runner-up Maddy, 13, created a colourful artwork referencing the Black Lives Matter campaign and the number of hate crime offences reported to police last year.



Organised by the West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership (WOCSP) – which brings

together local organisations including Thames Valley Police, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, voluntary and community sector groups and housing organisations – the competition was designed to create artwork that inspired and educated, with participants learning about the issues facing people who suffer hate crime and discrimination.

### **Clinically extremely vulnerable people**

From 31 March, the restrictions for clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (CEV) – including

those already shielding and those recently added to the list by the government – have been lifted.

While the requirement to shield has been lifted, CEV individuals are still advised to take extra precautions and minimise social contacts, especially indoors. The district and city councils are continuing to offer ongoing practical support and guidance to CEV residents and can help address any non-medical concerns.

## **Economy**

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### **UK Community Renewal Fund**

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a £220 million government fund which aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK, creating opportunities to trial new approaches and innovative ideas at the local level.

Oxfordshire County Council has been designated by the government as one of the lead authorities, and is responsible for receiving bids; working with local authority partners to review applications; and paying grants to successful projects and managing their performance. The fund is open to local business and the voluntary and education sectors, and bids must be submitted by 5pm on Friday 28 May. Further information is on the [county council's website](#).

### **OxLEP Skills launches new online experience to inspire young people**

Young people from across Oxfordshire are set to benefit from a new online platform, giving an insight into some of the exciting career opportunities available in the county.

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) Skills team – with the support of several partner organisations – have launched a 'Find Your

Future' platform, which aims to support young people to make informed choices about their future, as well as inspiring them about the opportunities that exist in the county across a range of sectors.

Over 70 Oxfordshire-based businesses are involved in Find Your Future, each benefiting from a virtual 'pod'. Participating companies include the Harwell Campus-based Diamond Light Source and Rebellion, one of Europe's biggest independent multimedia studios and a key part of Oxfordshire's creative industries sector. Find out more on [the OxLEP website](#).



## **Place, Transport, Infrastructure**

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### **New underbridge and underpass to support active travel in Bicester**

A huge civil engineering project to build a bridge and underpass underneath the Marylebone to

Aynhoe railway line has been completed this Easter.

Led by Oxfordshire County Council, working in partnership with Cherwell District Council, the £14.7m project is part of the first phase of the

proposed A4095 realignment in Bicester Garden Town. The new road and enhanced walking, cycling and equestrian networks underneath the railway line are designed to help traffic and people move more easily around the town in the future and support the allocation of 6,000 homes in North West Bicester.



During a 100-hour railway closure between 2 and 5 April, the railway embankment was removed and two prefabricated structures - a steel underbridge and a concrete underpass with a combined weight of 2,200 tonnes - were inserted using remote-controlled transport.

The successful operation was the culmination of three years of planning, design and construction work involving highly effective collaboration between Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council, designers Stantec, Network Rail and their delivery contractor Story Contracting. The work is being funded by Homes England and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

You can watch a [time-lapse video of the build online](#).

### **Green Homes Grant will improve conditions for 150 households**

At least 150 homes across Oxfordshire will be made more energy efficient thanks to a successful bid for £1.5 million of government funding.



Oxfordshire County Council was awarded the Green Homes Grant by the government. The council will be working together with expected delivery partner the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to help less well-off households retrofit their homes with energy saving equipment – cutting families' fuel bills while at the same time helping to reduce the county's carbon footprint.

In Oxfordshire, 20 per cent of properties fall into the worst energy efficiency categories, according to the Energy Saving Trust. 8.5% of Oxfordshire households were in fuel poverty in 2017, while respiratory conditions are estimated to affect 50,000 people.

As well as improving the quality of life of the individual households, the scheme will also help the council work towards its goal of enabling Oxfordshire to become zero carbon by 2050. Residential carbon emissions make up 25 per cent of emissions in the county.

### **Building affordable homes in Botley**

Vale of White Horse District Council has agreed to allocate £344,000 to help build eight new affordable homes at Dean Court on Eynsham Road, Botley, which falls in Cumnor Parish area.

Members agreed to provide the funds to the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust (OCLT) using Section 106 contributions – money that developers have paid as part of agreements to build new developments in the district.

OCLT is seeking to use the money towards building eight energy efficient homes. The apartments could include high levels of insulation and PV solar panels to reduce carbon emissions and to help reduce the running costs for its occupants. The one and two bed apartments will be available for an affordable rent with priority given to residents living in or having connections with the local area. Read more on [Vale of White Horse website](#).

### **Funding award boosts Cherwell's climate action**

Cherwell District Council has been awarded £6 million by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to help the council achieve its aim of reaching a net zero carbon footprint by 2030.

The funding will enable the council to refit ten of its buildings - including its four leisure centres, three sports pavilions and museum - with air source heat pumps and other cleaner, greener improvements. This will help slash the environmental impact of heating the buildings, cutting overall carbon emissions by up to 25 per cent.

### **Oxford City Council develops root and branch urban forest strategy**

Oxford City Council is developing an Urban Forest Strategy to maximise the benefits trees have on the local environment and communities. This will play a part in helping the city achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

Anyone who lives or works in Oxford will be able to have their say on the proposals to develop the city's urban forest to help tackle climate change and the ecological emergency, build flood resilience,

promote sustainability and increase health and wellbeing for people and nature. Find out more on [Oxford City Council's website](#).



### **And finally...**

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