

Oxfordshire

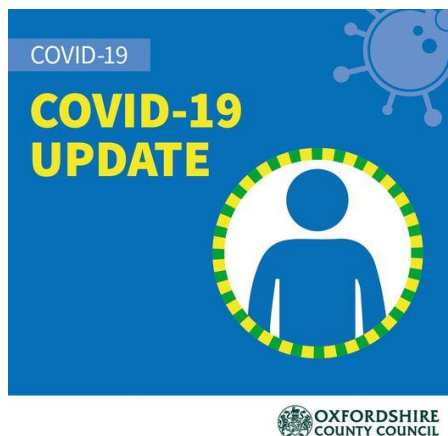
NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

25 March 2022

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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Three steps to make a difference

Following the lifting of national COVID restrictions in late February, the county's director of public health Ansaf Azhar has been advising Oxfordshire residents to take three steps to help make a difference:

1. Be considerate. If you feel ill, remain at home and avoid contact with others while you have symptoms.
2. Be aware. There will be members of our community who are nervous about the lifting of restrictions - adjust your behaviour accordingly.
3. Be cautious. Wear a face covering in crowded places, or if you're meeting others indoors, let fresh air in.

Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

As this briefing is sent out, the NHS has started the Spring COVID vaccination booster campaign to deliver top-up jabs as a precautionary measure to those most vulnerable to COVID-19, to ensure they are protected against serious illness.

In February, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised a spring dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for:

- adults aged 75 years and over

As of 18 March, the weekly rate in Oxfordshire stands at 1,126 per 100,000, an increase of 42 per cent over the past week. The increase, which is being seen across all districts, is being driven by a rise in social mixing as more people return to the workplace and to leisure activities, and waning immunity in those who were among the first to receive their booster jab.

Testing sites

All COVID-19 testing sites in the county will close from 30 March in line with the ending of mass testing. After this point tests will only be available for those groups and settings identified by government. The testing sites will then be decommissioned and handed back to their owners. As there are hundreds of sites across the country, this process may take several months.

The Witney test centre at Woodford Way closed, ahead of the national deadline, on 19 March so the car park could be returned to local use. Local residents will continue to be able to book tests at the alternative local, regional and mobile sites, or order a test online, up until 30 March.

- residents in care homes for older adults
- individuals aged 12 years and over who have a weakened immune system.

The NHS is contacting those who are eligible to make a spring booster appointment so they can book through the National Booking Service or by calling 119 when it is their turn.

Calls to 119 are free from mobiles and landlines. Lines are open every day from 8am to 8pm, and 119 can provide support in 200 languages.

In Oxfordshire, 19 GP-led local vaccination sites will be offering the booster, together with 10 community pharmacies and the Kassam Stadium in Oxford.



The NHS will prioritise those whose clinical need is greatest, starting with those people who have had a bigger gap since their last dose, then working through the cohort to invite others who have waited less time. Everyone who is eligible will be offered a top up between three and six months over the Spring and early summer.

At the same time, the NHS continues to encourage those who have yet to come forward for their first, second or booster dose, to do so at a time and place that is convenient for them. As described in the section above, COVID-19 infections are rising again, and the vaccine offers the best protection against becoming seriously unwell, staying out of hospital and passing the virus on to others. You can find details of all [Oxfordshire walk-in vaccinations clinics here.](#)

Since the start of the vaccination programme in December 2020, our Oxfordshire NHS system, working in close partnership with local government colleagues and the voluntary sector, has delivered more than 1.6 million jabs.

Vaccinations for children aged 5 -11 who are at greater risk from COVID and children living with someone who is immuno-suppressed continue to be delivered at two GP sites, five community pharmacies and four children and family centres across Oxfordshire.

Vaccinations also continue at the Kassam centre in Oxford. All these sites will also offer the vaccination to 5 -11 year olds when the roll-out begins in April. Parents and guardians can book the vaccine for

their vulnerable and healthy 5 to 11 years olds through the [national booking service](#) from 4 April.

Community Vaccine Champions (CVC) Fund

Oxford City Council was successful in its bid for £485k funding to help increase vaccination take up in the city among (harder to reach groups) low uptake communities – including BAME, young people, boat dwellers, homeless and rough sleeping population, pregnant women and Chinese community.

The programme aims to increase trust and vaccine uptake; tackle misinformation and access barriers; improve outreach and reach of Public Health messaging on vaccine safety to communities with low uptake.

To achieve this, the programme will recruit, up skill and support up to 100 community champions who are representative of Oxford's diverse community. They will work alongside key delivery partners including the NHS, Public Health and the community and voluntary sector.

The programme also seeks to address wider health inequalities among priority groups

To find out more about the programme please contact Azul Strong Corcoran at astrong@oxford.gov.uk or Fatou Badjie Ceesay at fbadjieeesay@oxford.gov.uk

Emergency and Urgent Care

There has been an increase in admissions to the OUH's Emergency Departments, and the average length of stay has also increased as both hospitals (John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford and the Horton General Hospital in Banbury) face issues with capacity and a lack of flow through the departments.

People across the county are being advised of alternative services to Emergency Departments if they do not need emergency care. Please share the advice that if they come to an Emergency Department there might be a lengthy wait as the sickest patients will be treated first.

OUH also continues to share messages with the public to help their relatives home from hospital when safe and appropriate to do so.

There is extensive work across the health and care system to help alleviate pressures and improve patient flow.

One of the main projects underway is to make sure people can be assessed in their own homes and to ensure they receive the same standard of care as they would in hospital.

The Single Point of Access, Urgent Community Response and Hospital at Home teams are working together to provide a central point for health care professionals to refer into, ensuring those who need an urgent assessment in their own home are assessed by the most appropriate clinician.

'Call Before Convey' – a day of action

Health and care organisations across Oxfordshire worked together in a one-day pilot to assist paramedic crews to assess and treat patients who had called 999 in their own home.

Following the initial 999 call, a clinician was available to facilitate each call with support from an Urgent Community Response specialist, and other medical colleagues as appropriate. A decision was then made to confirm where the patient needed to be assessed. A suitable assessor was asked to visit the patient at home within two hours for those who were well enough to be assessed in their home.

The learning from this will be evaluated for further implementation and testing.

Ukrainian refugee children begin life-saving NHS cancer care in Oxford

OUH is one of seven trusts across England that will be looking after some of the young people with cancer transferred for NHS treatment from war-torn Ukraine.

Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery, Chair of OUH, wrote to all staff on 15 March to inform them of the news before it became public.

He said: "We are honoured to play even a small part in this important effort, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who will be involved in providing excellent, compassionate NHS care to these young people and their families at such a challenging time."

Oxford Clinical Research Facility funding is boost for early phase clinical research

A new Oxford Clinical Research Facility (CRF) hosted by OUH, has been established following a funding announcement by the National Institute for Health Research.



The Oxford CRF, based at the Churchill Hospital, will provide purpose-built facilities and expertise to deliver early translational and experimental medicine research, from studies testing new treatments in patients to early safety and efficacy trials.

The new CRF enhances Oxford's ability to deliver a wider range of early phase studies for the benefit of NHS patients and offers more opportunities to develop the skills and experience of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals in carrying out early phase experimental medicine trials.

OUH has supported the new facility with a grant towards its operational costs and equipment. Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bruno Holthof said: "OUH and the University of Oxford have a great track record of working in partnership to deliver improvements in diagnosis and treatment for a range of condition. This CRF strengthens our shared clinical research infrastructure even further, allowing us to test new therapies that will ultimately benefit our patients."

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

RECOVERY treatment trial identifies another life-saving COVID drug

The Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy (RECOVERY) trial has demonstrated that baricitinib, an anti-inflammatory treatment normally used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, reduces the risk of death when given to hospitalised patients with severe COVID-19.

The benefit is in addition to those of dexamethasone and tocilizumab, two other anti-inflammatory treatments which have previously been shown to reduce the risk of death in these patients.

The University of Oxford-led RECOVERY trial has been testing a range of potential treatments for patients admitted to hospital for COVID-19 since March 2020. It is the biggest COVID-19 treatment trial in the world.

UK first sternum transplant operation carried out in Oxford

A cancer patient is looking forward to the possibility of watching her toddler grow up after undergoing a UK-first operation at the John Radcliffe Hospital, with support from NHS Blood and Transplant.



Nathalie Brett, 34, (pictured above) was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer a decade ago and had the innovative procedure – an allograft sterno-clavicular reconstruction – last year. The 10-hour surgery replaced her cancerous sternum (the breastbone) with a healthy one used from a deceased donor. This has only previously been done in Italy.

Now Nathalie is virtually pain-free and, despite advanced cancer, has been given a better chance of living longer and can care for her young child

without support. She said the “once in a lifetime” surgery means she “can see a future”.

The operation was led by Francesco Di Chiara, Thoracic Surgery Consultant, and Tom Cosker, Consultant Orthopaedic Oncology Surgeon and Lead Clinician for Sarcoma at OUH.

Home blood test trial halves need for hospital admissions

A pilot study by OUH and South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) halved the need for frail and elderly patients to be transferred to hospital.



Rapid response vehicle with the new home blood testing equipment.

The study trialled specially trained paramedics taking blood samples at the scene and discussing the results with senior OUH clinicians remotely to decide on the next steps – 52 per cent of patients who were initially identified as requiring hospital admission were successfully managed at home.

The pilot demonstrated the feasibility of providing linked community-based diagnostic testing with acute secondary care decision support, as well as the potential for this to have a positive impact on healthcare provision for some of our most vulnerable patients.

UK first study of newborn screening for rare genetic condition

Oxford researchers have launched a pilot study to conduct routine testing of newborn babies for the rare, but treatable, genetic disease spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) for the first time in the UK.



SMA affects around one in 10,000 births and typically presents in infancy and early childhood. If treatments are delivered at birth, it increases the chances of babies living long and healthy lives. If the condition is identified and treated later, babies may survive but with a severe disability.

OUP is one of four NHS trusts in the Thames Valley where the study is being conducted. It aims to detect SMA within days of birth, before symptoms develop, so any affected newborn can be diagnosed and receive treatment as soon as possible. It is hoped the trial can ultimately pave the way for a national newborn screening programme.

Global Digital Exemplar accreditation for OUP

OUP has been recognised as a leading digital trust after receiving accreditation from NHS England & NHS Improvement's Global Digital Exemplar (GDE) programme.

GDE accreditation means OUP is now an internationally recognised NHS provider that delivers improvements in the quality of care by providing staff, patients, and partners with world-class digital tools and information.

David Walliker, Chief Digital and Partnerships Officer at OUP, said the achievements in digitalisation of care over the last five years, and specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic, have been remarkable.

They have had a powerful and positive impact on and empowering staff and patients.

State-of-the-art new radiotherapy equipment for cancer patients at the Churchill Hospital

A project to replace and improve radiotherapy equipment in the Cancer and Haematology Centre at the Churchill Hospital has continued with the arrival of a second new linear accelerator machine, also known as a Linac.



Therapeutic radiographers, from left: Victoria Friend, Naomi Phillips, Simba Chiridza and Sarah Ruane

Following delivery of the first Varian Halcyon® machine in September 2021, a second one is now operational and was used by patients for the first time this month. It makes a real difference to patient care by making personalised radiotherapy treatment faster and easier to plan and deliver.

This is the second piece of equipment to be installed as part of a project that will deliver three further Linacs, as well as two CT simulators in the coming years.

Thank you to the OUP COVID-19 vaccination team

A big thank you to all staff who played their part in the development and running of Oxford University Hospitals' COVID Vaccination Centre on the Churchill Hospital site, which came to an end on 24 February.

The team administered almost 60,000 first, second and booster vaccines since the vaccine hub opened its doors on 8 December 2020 as one of just 50 hospital hubs to launch the UK's COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Sam Foster, Chief Nursing Officer at OUP, said: the Trust was very proud of the special role that the

Churchill Hospital played in vaccinating and keeping as many of staff and patients, as well as members of the community, as safe as possible.

The vaccination team has helped save thousands of lives - From clinical to digital staff, and from estates to pharmacy colleagues, so many have played their part – it has been a true OneTeamOneOUH effort.

New Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre opens to patients

The Oxford Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre (OHTC) has opened its doors after relocating from the Churchill Hospital to the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC).

The team moved into a former ward which had not been used clinically for some years. It was stripped out, modernised, and re-designed for the Haemophilia and Thrombosis teams and their patients in a new space to enhance patient care and experience and to provide an improved work environment for staff.



The team, who care for patients with bleeding and clotting disorders, welcomed their first patients to their new home on 14 March.

Visiting restrictions eased at Oxford University Hospitals

Following updated guidance from NHS England and careful discussion with Infection Prevention and Control and senior nursing colleagues, OUH has eased some visiting restrictions with effect from 17 March.

Since March 2021, the Trust has been following the 'Rule of One' – one visitor, for one hour, per day, per inpatient. Visitors have been prohibited in the

Emergency Departments and Outpatient Departments unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The changes include:

- Inpatients, including patients in ICU, can have up to two visitors a day between the hours of 8am and 8pm for as long as needed (it must be the same visitors for the day)
- Patients in Children's Services can have two parents or guardians with them for as long as needed (but no siblings)
- Maternity inpatients not on labour wards can have up to two visitors a day with them between the hours of 8am and 8pm (birth partner and one other nominated person) – this only applies to inpatients and not to outpatient or scan appointments
- Outpatients can have one person with them at their appointments

The Government's relaxation of most COVID-19 rules does not apply to healthcare settings including all hospital sites run OUH, to protect vulnerable patients and staff who care for them.

All staff – and visitors who see loved ones in clinical areas such as inpatient wards – must wear a face mask, and all visitors must wear a face covering when not in clinical areas on our hospital sites in Oxford and Banbury. Safe distancing (the 2 metre rule) also remains in place.

OUH staff offered wellbeing MOTs at interactive kiosks

As part of the Growing Stronger Together programme to support staff working at OUH, Health Needs Assessment (HNA) kiosks are being provided over the next six months for a 'wellbeing MOT'.

They have already proved popular - with nearly 500 staff using the kiosks at the Churchill Hospital and John Radcliffe Hospital in the first 10 days after they were installed in early March.

The kiosks allow staff to measure their weight, body mass index (BMI), body fat content, heart rate and blood pressure.

This health and wellbeing initiative has been made possible by funding from the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS).



OUH Chief People Officer Terry Roberts tries out the new Health Needs Assessment Kiosk at the John Radcliffe Hospital

Celebrating International Women's Day

Women across OUH participated in the International Women's Day global celebration on 8 March, which was themed 'Break the bias', by sharing photos and statements of how they are breaking biases in their respective fields.

The Women's Network within the Trust also launched a Menopause Survey with the aim of understanding its effects and developing a Trustwide approach to supporting staff through the menopause.



A video recorded to mark International Women's Day features staff from across the Trust sharing their personal experiences relating to the theme of 'Break the bias'.

[The video is available to watch on the OUH YouTube channel.](#)

The Oxford Health NHS FT family marked International Women's Day with solidarity and reflection – developing culture to #BreakTheBias.

The day was an opportunity to celebrate women by raising awareness, recognising achievements and applauding differences and diversity for equality.

The Trust held a week-long programme of events hosted by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team and the Women's Staff Support Group – to encourage, support and represent women across the Trust, activities include a wellbeing session, meditation and an inner critic workshop.

OUH Orthotics team win High Sheriff's Climate Action Heroes Award

The OUH Orthotics team, based at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC), was named as one of the winners at the Oxfordshire High Sheriff's Climate Action Heroes Awards.

Recognised for reducing, reusing, and recycling many of its materials, such as metal and thermoplastics, they were named as 'climate action heroes' for making significant sustainability improvements while improving patient care.

For example, the team's greener approach has helped them reduce the use of and spend on steel by 80% and 78% respectively.

Imam Monawar Hussain, the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, presented the award to Arron Jones (pictured below), Orthotics Production Manager and OUH Sustainability Network Co-Chair, who represented the 18-strong Orthotics team.

More than 2,000 OUH staff take part in Housing Survey

Oxfordshire is an expensive place to live, and finding good quality, affordable accommodation within an easy commute of Oxford and Banbury is a real problem for OUH staff and their families.

It is also one of the major issues affecting the Trust's ability to recruit and retain staff.



The Trust launched a survey to give people an opportunity to say what they want and need from a home, now and in the future.

Trust Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bruno Holthof, personally led the communications campaign to encourage staff to take part in the survey.

More than 2,000 OUH staff took the opportunity to have their say and when responses have been analysed, this valuable intelligence will be used in the Trust's future work with housing partners in order to get solutions in place.

Council of Governors election results at OUH

The OUH Council of Governors includes elected representatives of both members of the public and OUH staff, as well as nominated representatives of stakeholder organisations.

As a Foundation Trust, the Council of Governors helps guide and advise on how to meet the health needs of the community it serves. The governors play a valuable role by holding the Non-Executive Directors to account, ensuring that the interests of the Foundation Trust members are taken into account, and helping to shape plans for the future.

Public and staff governors are elected by members, and the Trust recently held elections for new public and staff governors in a number of constituencies.

[The results were published on 4 March.](#)

Sun shines on Fun Run in aid of Oxford Children's Hospital

Hundreds of runners came together last weekend for the OX5 RUN in support of Oxford Children's Hospital and children's services across Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The five mile run, organised by Oxford Hospitals Charity, was back at a sunny Blenheim Palace, after two years of virtual events.



Many hospital staff took part, including large teams from Microbiology, Haematology, Neurosurgery, Bellhouse Drayson Ward, and Therapies staff from the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC), as well as our colleagues from the Oxford Vaccine Group led by Professor Andrew Pollard (see pic above).

See [Oxford Hospitals Charity Facebook page](#) for photos and more information on [Oxford Hospitals Charity website](#)

Exceptional NHS leader to join Oxford Health in new director role

Amélie Bages, who currently heads Mental Health for NHS England, is to join Oxford Health NHS FT as the new Director of Strategy and Partnerships.



The post is a board level role that seeks to further develop and deliver an ambitious strategic vision which results in patients and service users receiving outstanding care by an outstanding team.

She will also oversee and lead on enhancing multiple connections with the emerging Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) as well as with other neighbouring NHS organisations and educational institutions.

[Amélie will start work with the Trust on April 25.](#)

Executive MD Grant joins to lead Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism

Grant Macdonald started his new role as Oxford Health's new executive managing director for Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism on 21 March.

An exceptional leader with 17 years' board level experience, Grant's NHS career spans 33 years and he remains a registered mental health nurse. He has worked in the region before, previously as Executive Nurse and Chief Operating Officer at Berkshire Healthcare before joining Central & North West London NHS Foundation Trust as Executive Director of Strategy & Workforce. For the past two years he has been the COO at Southern Health.



Grant, pictured above, is looking forward to working with colleagues to deliver the vision of outstanding care delivered by an outstanding team."

New funding for Oxford Health Clinical Research Facility

The Oxford Health Clinical Research Facility (OH CRF) has been [awarded more than £4 million](#) over the next five years by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

The OH CRF is one of 28 facilities across England to benefit from nearly £161 million that has been awarded to expand early phase clinical research delivery in NHS hospitals.

Opened in 2011 and based at the Warneford Hospital, the Oxford Health CRF is hosted by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. It is the only dedicated mental health CRF supported by the NIHR and delivers patient orientated early phase

experimental clinical research. During the pandemic the CRF rapidly adapted to the challenges of COVID-19, supporting the delivery of two major vaccine trials. [Read more here.](#)

Long COVID self-help book hits the shelves

Two Oxford Health Long COVID experts are now published authors following the release of *The Long Covid Self-Help Guide*.



Emma Tucker and Rachael Rogers (right) have contributed chapters to [the book](#), which is described by the publishers as "the first handbook for people struggling with Long COVID and cuts through the confusing advice and misinformation."

It is written by clinicians from Oxford Health and Oxford University Hospitals, who have been working with Long COVID patients at the Oxford Long COVID Clinic.

Rachael, who has contributed to three of the chapters, said the focus of the book is on self-management with a simple, consistent message about how to improve symptoms and facilitate recovery.

The book also contains valuable insights from patients, sharing their experiences and recovery stories.

Each chapter covers a different issue and offers clear, friendly and up-to-date guidance on things such as fatigue, breathing, sleep and returning to work.

Elections to Oxford Health's Council of Governors 2022

Nominations to election to Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors are now open. Whether you are a patient or carer, a member of staff or a resident, if you have an interest in health and care about improving the local health services, stand to serve on our Council of Governors. Find out more on [the Oxford Health website](#).

Oxford Health creates first Youth Board

A unique survey has led to the creation of a new Youth Board which will work with Oxford Health on mental health issues.



Around 1,500 young people in Oxfordshire provided their insights, experiences and emotions around mental health and wellbeing in the county through [the survey](#), which was led by the Trust alongside the not-for-profit organisation Unloc.

Now 19 young people, aged 13-18, have been appointed to be serving board members who meet with OHFT leaders and with Unloc every six weeks. Nine of them are current or previous mental health service users.

Conference learns of Oxford Health's eating disorder treatment success

International eating disorder experts learned of Oxford Health's ground-breaking approaching to treating eating disorders during the recent Eating Disorder Awareness Week.

Agnes Ayton, clinical lead and consultant psychiatrist and Sharon Ryan, quality lead and senior matron for the HOPE Eating Disorder

Provider Collaborative, led by Oxford Health, were joined by Lorna Collins (pictured) who is now flourishing after her own battle with a severe and enduring eating disorder, to speak at the [Eating Disorders Conference 2022 in London](#).



Oxford Health supported Eating Disorder Awareness Week with a series of stories and social media posts.

Survey aims to better understand patient involvement in research

The Oxford Health and Oxford Biomedical Research Centres (BRC) have developed a survey to better understand the demographic make-up of members of their various patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) groups.

The [Tell Us About You](#) survey was developed with input from the two BRCs' Diversity in Research Group.

The aim of the survey – which is available for use across the BRCs' PPIE groups – is to capture demographic information, such as age, gender, race to get a clearer picture of who is involved in research, how representative they are of the general population and which sections of society are under-represented.

Chat Health takes off in first month



Oxford Health's new [Chat Health](#) text advice service is already connecting with people.

The Oxfordshire service has three numbers – each aimed at meeting the needs of specific groups.

- Parentline 0-4 years: 07312 263081
- Parentline 5-11 years: 07312 263227
- Chatlhealth 11-19 years: 07312 263084

Experienced local public health nurses are on hand to respond swiftly to texts between 9am and 5pm on weekdays – apart from bank holidays. They reply to texts sent at night on the next working day, including during school holidays.

While all services are performing well, in just a few short weeks the service for parents of children aged 0-4 years old is almost at the top of the league for the number of conversations had with service users.

Call for carers to phone for support

Carers across the Oxford Health region are being urged to call a special phone line if they would like to find out about help and support.

Oxford Health has a [dedicated line](#) especially for carers who can call 01865 901012 at any time and leave their details for a call back between 11 am and 12 noon, from Monday to Friday.

Children, Education, Families

Large majority of Oxfordshire parents and children offered first choice secondary school place for 2022/23

Parents and children across Oxfordshire have been offered their first choice of secondary school for 2022/23 in the vast majority of cases.

A total of 88.27 per cent (6,606) of applications have been awarded their first choice. A total of 96.42 per cent (7,216) have been offered one of the four choices they listed on their application.

The service was launched at the start of the pandemic and is supported by staff from the Trust and is funded by the Oxford Health Charity, through the NHS Charities Together grant.

Want to thank a nurse? Say it with a DAISY!

Oxford Health is calling on anyone who has received excellent care from a Trust nurse to nominate them for a special award.

The [DAISY Awards](#) is an international recognition programme that honours and celebrates the skilled and compassionate care provided by nurses and midwives each day.

DAISY describes itself as a partnership with healthcare organisations to provide on-going recognition of the clinical skill and especially the compassion nurses provide to patients and families all year long.

Oxford Health employs more than 1,700 nurses who are eligible to be nominated and, especially given the extra challenges the pandemic has brought.





Oxfordshire's response to the war in Ukraine

Last week the Government announced the launch of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which will support the sponsorship of Ukrainian individuals and families coming to the UK in two phases.

Phase one, which launched on 18 March, is where individuals in the UK sponsor named guests to come to live with them in their home. Both the sponsor and guest can use a number of channels to find a match – direct relation, friend, friend of a friend or contact from an NGO, charity or other organisation. The second phase, which is still under development, is where the scheme will be expanded to enable organisations and community groups to sponsor multiple guests.

Partners across the Oxfordshire system are working closely to look at resources and support that will be required for Ukrainian families and individuals arriving under this scheme, including initial checks and visits to sponsor homes, benefits advice and payment, finding school and early years placements and registering with local GPs.

The county council has a [dedicated webpage](#) providing details of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and how people can register as a sponsor, together with information about other Government support available.

Donations for Ukraine

On 9 March West Oxfordshire District Council opened a donation centre at Carterton Leisure Centre for residents to bring supplies to support the people of Ukraine.

The centre closed on 18 March to allow the teams to process all the items and get the goods shipped to where they are needed. In total 1,750 boxes were collected, which weighed 40 tonnes.



Residents across the county are also being asked to donate to the National Disaster Emergency Committee appeal at www.dec.org.uk. Funds raised will be distributed to a number of large charities supporting the people of Ukraine.

Ukraine: Anxiety and wellbeing advice for you and your family

Oxford Health is giving [advice](#) to anyone whose mental health is being affected by the war in Ukraine and for anyone who wants to support those around them.

The conflict is heightening concern and anxiety for many – especially for children and young people seeing disturbing scenes on the news and social media.

For some people there may be direct personal and psychological effects.

The advice from Oxford Health is to take some simple steps to help alleviate some of the impacts and to reach out to our free NHS talking therapies services if you need support with your anxiety.

End of twinning

Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council have both announced they are formally ending their twinning agreements with Perm in Russia. Oxford

City had an agreement with the city of Perm, while the county had a long-dormant agreement with the region of Perm.

Supporting young people into work and training

Oxford City Council has been awarded £316,000 in funding to extend a project supporting unemployed young people until the end of June 2023.

Unlocking Potential Oxfordshire is a partnership with community organisations across the county. It offers a wide range of activities to young people aged 17 to 21 who have not been in employment, education or training for six months or more, including:

- professional, one-to-one support that includes handling first steps into paid work or higher education and training
- accredited entry-level training including employability skills in construction, catering and digital media
- supported work experience placements in community enterprises to develop employability skills and work readiness

These activities enable young people to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, work readiness and employability – providing support into education, training and meaningful employment with a diverse range of local employers and providers.

Since its launch in 2017, Unlocking Potential Oxfordshire has supported 309 young people. Of these, 74 have found work, 56 have moved into education and a further 27 have improved their

employability skills and work readiness.

Oxfordshire County Council receives Bronze Award for commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion at work

Oxfordshire County Council has received a bronze award for its commitment and efforts to become an LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and others) employer. The award represents the steps taken by the council to promote inclusion in Oxfordshire's communities and in the workplace.



The award comes as part of LGBTQ+ equality charity Stonewall's 'Bring Yourself to Work' campaign, which highlights the importance of inclusive work environments.

Place, Transport, Infrastructure

Britain's first zero emission zone begins in Oxford



Britain's first zero emission zone (ZEZ) began in Oxford on 28 February. Launching as a pilot, the

streets included in the ZEZ are: New Road, between Bonn Square and its junction with Castle Street; Bonn Square; Queen Street; Cornmarket Street; New Inn Hall Street; Shoe Lane; Market Street, from Cornmarket junction east for 40 metres; Ship Street; and St Michael's Street.

The ZEZ pilot will operate from 7am - 7pm all year around. All petrol and diesel vehicles, including hybrids, will incur a daily charge unless eligible for a discount or exemption. However, zero emission vehicles, such as electric cars, can enter the pilot area free of charge.

The charge will vary from £2 to £10 per day depending on the emission levels of the vehicle. Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras have been installed to enforce the zone. A

range of exemptions and discounts are available for businesses and residents in the zone.

The ZEZ pilot will allow Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council to gain useful insights before introducing a larger ZEZ covering most of Oxford city centre next year (2023), subject to further public consultation.

UK first on-street electric vehicle charger

Thirty volunteers around Oxfordshire have been piloting the Gul-e scheme – a home EV charging solution which enables people without off-street parking to charge their cars at home.

The scheme provides a secure and durable cable ‘gully’ or channel that is seamlessly installed into the pavement so that cables will not cause a trip hazard. To charge their EV, the user parks in front of their home, inserts the charging cable into the Gul-e and plugs the vehicle into their household energy supply.



The Gul-e project was driven by the need to support the predicted rapid uptake of EVs in Oxfordshire. If successful, it is hoped the scheme will be opened up to other local authorities across the UK. The scheme supports the delivery of the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, providing benefits to people and the environment.

Funding for the Gul-e project was awarded by the government’s Office for Zero Emission Vehicles and Innovate UK. The project partners are Oxfordshire County Council and ODS, working with Oxford City Council as the shareholder of ODS.

Accelerating the delivery of affordable homes

Significant investment of Government funding by Cherwell District Council is set to speed up the

delivery of affordable homes across north Oxfordshire. The council is investing £2.636 million, the majority of which is Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal funding, to deliver 39 affordable homes. Developer contributions are also being used.

Elsewhere, an environmentally friendly development of 12 homes at The Bourne in Hook Norton is being led by the Hook Norton Community Land Trust and supported by the council. The homes will be built to the Passivhaus energy efficiency standard and offer a mixture of rental, shared ownership and privately owned dwellings. The development will also include community facilities for the benefit of residents and the wider community.



Grant funding of more than £300,000 has also been pledged by Vale of White Horse District Council towards the cost of creating affordable homes in Botley for those on the council’s housing register.

The council has signed a funding agreement with Oxfordshire Community Land Trust to build five one-bedroom and three two-bedroom flats for affordable rent on land at Dean Court. In addition to the £305,000 from the council, the trust also secured private finance with a further £600,000 from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal towards the cost of this project. Work is due to start on site shortly, with the homes ready for new residents to move in by 2023.

Marsh Lane will be pilot scheme for longer-lasting road surface

Two identical stretches of an Oxford road will be resurfaced with different materials to test the

benefits of a product which can significantly increase the life of a road.



Marsh Lane in Oxford, which carries around 10,000 vehicles a day along a key city route, will be used to trial GiPave – a graphene-enhanced asphalt

material. Half of a 700-metre stretch of the road will be laid with GiPave, while the rest will be resurfaced using conventional asphalt, so that the two surfaces can be compared accurately.

Oxfordshire County Council is carrying out the trial with its contractor Milestone Infrastructure to develop the use of innovative materials. Marsh Lane will be the second trial of GiPave in Oxfordshire, following a successful pilot scheme in Curbridge in 2019 – the first use of the product in the UK.

Economy

New enterprise centre opens at Oxford Brookes University in collaboration with OxLEP

Last month the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) announced the completion of a new project, delivered in collaboration with Oxford Brookes University, to support start-up businesses and entrepreneurship in the county.



The Oxford Brookes Enterprise Centre – based at the University's Headington campus – offers companies access to lab and office spaces, experts and professional networks. It will support the creation of at least 17 start-up companies and 74 jobs, and will advance the growth of small and medium businesses by providing them with an inspiring and relaxed co-working space.

OxLEP secured £837,000 of investment for the project via the government's Local Growth Fund.

Phase one completed of OxLEP-backed project to 'further enhance Oxfordshire's global capabilities in connected and autonomous vehicles'

The first phase of the Connected and Autonomous Vehicles project at UKAEA's robotics facility has been completed.

Phase one of the RACE (Remote Applications in Challenging Environments) project at Culham Science Centre has seen the construction of the 'Pit Lane' facility, with the creation of four new state-of-the-art workspaces, allowing those at the forefront of autonomous vehicle innovation to undertake testing and development on-site.

Two of these units now have commercial tenants in place, with the other two workspaces available to take on further tenants. To date 44 jobs have been created as part of this project, and this number is set rise as new commercial tenants take space.

OxLEP secured £1.8m of funding for this phase of the project via the government's Local Growth Fund.

And finally....

Development of the BOB ICS

As part of our ongoing commitment to engage with our key stakeholders throughout the period of ICS transition, we have developed a public-facing engagement [website](#). The site is an opportunity for the public to submit ideas and comment on key draft documents, such as our developing constitution and

engagement strategy. It also contains a range of information relating to the evolving ICS, including key papers and submissions in a single, easy-access digital library.

We are also in the process of reviewing and updating the BOB ICS website – it is hoped this will be complete by the end of March 2022.

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