

Oxfordshire

NHS & Local Authorities Stakeholder Briefing

30 November 2022

Oxfordshire health and local authority partners are working together to help the county restart, recover and renew after COVID-19.

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Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

NHS industrial action latest

Following the announcement earlier this month that Royal College of Nursing (RCN) members working at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) and at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust have voted to take industrial action, both organisations' Chief Executive Officers have written to their respective staff.

Outlining the planning and contingency arrangements which OUH has been making in anticipation of industrial action being confirmed, CEO Professor Meghana Pandit said: "We will work closely with Staffside and all colleagues to ensure that our business continuity plans are in place to continue to provide urgent, emergency and cancer care so that during any period of industrial action we continue to provide safe care for those who need it most. Please treat each other with kindness and respect during this challenging time."

Echoing her message, Oxford Health CEO Dr Nick Broughton added: "While we work with our union colleagues and put in place robust plans to ensure a continued provision of services, it is important that we respect our colleagues' right to take strike action. Whatever people's personal views and emotions are, it is imperative we continue to treat each other with kindness, compassion and respect."

This week it was confirmed that both OUH and Oxford Health will be affected by the industrial action on 15 and 20 December.

Winter plan for Oxfordshire

Winter officially launched in Oxfordshire when representatives from across the health and care system took part in an interview on BBC Radio Oxford to talk about plans to deal with increased demand and need for services over the winter months.

A [publicity campaign](#) has also started with particular focus on advising people which healthcare service to use and how NHS 111 online and pharmacies can help. This campaign will add to the existing promotion of winter vaccines that has been running since September.



Due to the increasing number of poorly children in the community and at local hospitals, [advice is available to parents](#) about how to manage coughs and colds at home and when to go to a GP or hospital.

There is a comprehensive [winter 'toolkit'](#) available on the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board website. It offers a huge variety of communications resources anyone can use to promote winter messages. Please cascade these through your networks.

A winter website is currently being developed which will contain information on how to stay independent and safe at home. This includes the importance of having a 'winter plan.'

Spotlight on GP appointments

From this month, the [NHS has started to publish data](#) showing how many appointments are taking place at each GP practice in England and how long people are waiting between booking an appointment and seeing a clinician.

The data also shows how the appointment took place – in person or on the phone; and who the patient saw or spoke to – GP or nurse.

Across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, GP practices performed well overall. The data shows that an average of 85.2 per cent of appointments took place within two weeks of booking, compared with 82 per cent for England.

Further analysis of the data will help the ICB understand why some practice waiting times are longer and why some practices offer fewer face-to-

face appointments. This information will be used to find ways to develop services.

Chief medical officer for England visits Oxfordshire

On 18 November, England's Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty joined representatives from local authorities, community groups, NHS partners, A2Dominion housing association and housing developer Grosvenor on a tour of projects across Oxford and Bicester that form part of the wider healthy place-shaping programme.



Professor Whitty's visit recognises Oxfordshire's achievements in improving people's health and wellbeing through close working across local authorities, health and social care, schools, businesses, volunteers and housing developers.

New patient care record systems launched Two new systems launch to replace Carenotes

Oxford Health is launching two new systems this week to replace Carenotes following the nationwide cyber-attack on business software and services provider *Advanced* in the summer. The outage has significantly impacted access to patient care records and appointments for almost four months.



Recovery work to transfer data collated over the intervening 16-week period will be ongoing. RiO will be used for Trust mental health services while EMIS system, used by GPs, will be in place for

Oxfordshire Community Services. Adastra will continue to be used in Urgent Care and GP out of hours services.

Residents urged to take up their free NHS health check

People aged 40 to 74 are being encouraged to take up an invitation for a [free NHS health check](#).

The county council-funded free health check can lower a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and (certain types of) dementia.

Since April 2018, a total of 51,965 Oxfordshire residents have taken up an invitation to have an NHS health check.



Children roll up for flu protection

Parents are being urged to take advantage of an offer to [protect their children against influenza](#) this winter as Oxford Health delivers nasal vaccinations to 80,000 children across 300 county primary schools.



Clinics with reception classes to Year 6 age group are taking place until mid-December. Later in the season, from January onwards, some secondary aged children (year groups to be confirmed) will also be offered vaccination across a further 54 schools.

Parents and carers have been contacted by the Trust to seek consent for their children to receive the vaccine. Children will not be given a vaccination

without it. If a child is home educated, parents and carers will receive a letter direct from the Trust.

Frank Bruno opens Oxford Health mental health and wellbeing centre

Former WBC Heavyweight Champion Frank Bruno has opened Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust's Keystone Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub and The Frank Bruno Centre at Oxford Stadium. The Blackbird Leys and East Oxford hub will be home to a Primary Care Mental Health Team which will take referrals from local GPs and improve mental health care for local people.



The team will include local people who have experience of mental health challenges themselves, mental health professionals, psychologists, peer support workers and employment experts.

The team will be a collaboration between the NHS and be linked to local GP surgeries and work alongside the Frank Bruno Foundation and Oxford Stadium. The hub will be able to work with up to 2,000 people each month.

NHS England Chair learns more about Oxford Health vision for 21st century brain health care

Oxford Health recently welcomed the Chair of NHS England, Richard Meddings CBE, on a fact-finding tour where he learned more about [the Trust's](#)



Prof John Geddes, Richard Meddings CBE, David Walker and Dr Nick Broughton

[ambitious plans for a new state-of-the art hospital](#) set within a brain health sciences campus.

During the [two-hour meeting](#), Chief Executive Dr Nick Broughton spoke with Mr Meddings about a [Warneford Vision](#); how momentum is building around developing the Headington site – currently home to the oldest inpatient mental health wards in the NHS.

Along with Trust Chair David Walker, Mr Meddings also met [Professor John Geddes](#), who leads the [NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre](#) which recently won £35.4m in funding to research 11 new brain health themes that will result in life-changing translational therapies for people with mental health conditions.

Keeping hospital patients, visitors and staff safe this winter

As staff prepare for another challenging winter at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH), the Trust is reminding patients and visitors of the rules around face masks in hospitals.

Patients must wear a mask if they have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or they have symptoms of a respiratory illness such as flu or a cold; they are **encouraged** to wear a mask if they are in a hospital area where the risk of infection is higher due to patients being immunosuppressed (for example, cancer treatment areas) or if they have an outpatient appointment or are in an emergency assessment area such as A&E.

Visitors must wear a mask if they are visiting someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and are **encouraged** to wear a mask if they are visiting a hospital area where the risk of infection is higher due to patients being immunosuppressed or if they are accompanying someone to an outpatient appointment or an emergency assessment area such as A&E.

The Trust has a duty of care to protect the most vulnerable patients and its staff from the impact of COVID-19 and other seasonal viruses and OUH thanks the community for its support in keeping everyone as safe as possible.

Combined COVID-19 vaccination and antibody treatment tested

People in the UK with impaired immune systems will have the opportunity to take part in a clinical trial investigating COVID-19 vaccinations in combination

with Evusheld, a new antibody treatment used for the prevention of COVID-19 infection – the [RAPID-PROTECTION study](#) is led by OUH in collaboration with the University of Oxford.

Despite repeated vaccinations against COVID-19, some people with weakened immune systems remain at high risk from the virus. Evusheld has been shown in trials to prevent COVID-19 infection, including from the Omicron variant, but it is not known how long this protection lasts.

Approximately 350 participants over the age of 18 will be recruited across the UK. They will receive an injection of Evusheld, followed four weeks later by a vaccination. They will then be checked regularly over the following year to assess their levels of immune protection.

Palliative care project enters second phase

The second phase of a project to [improve palliative care](#) in Oxfordshire and South Northamptonshire is now live.



Hospital Rapid Response is part of a [wider project](#), launched earlier this year to support those people towards the end of their life who would prefer to die at home. It is a partnership between OUH, Sobell House Hospice Charity, Macmillan Cancer Support, and Social Finance

Hospital Rapid Response aims to facilitate quick support for patients in hospital who are at the very end of their life and help them home with care and support in their final days.

Cost of Living support for OUH staff stepped up

Oxfordshire is an expensive place to live and the Trust Board at OUH is aware of the impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis on our staff.



Earlier this year a Cost of Living Working Group was set up, led by Chief People Officer and Chief Finance Officer with other key staff, trade union colleagues and Oxford Hospitals Charity, to explore ways to help colleagues who are struggling – actions taken so far include:

- All staff received a Cost-of-Living bonus payment of £100 in their April or May pay
- OUH has linked with Salary Finance, which gives useful financial advice, advice and help with loans and saving – 500+ staff have sought and received help to date
- Staff have been made aware of additional financial and other help which is available
- For staff travelling to work by bus or train, the Trust gave a £250 contribution to the cost of an annual pass
- For staff cycling to work, the Trust offered a £250 subsidy on buying a new bike
- For those commuting by car, the Trust has not reintroduced staff car parking charges

Now measures to support staff with access to good value food offers on hospital sites in Oxford and Banbury have been introduced:

- a free basic breakfast for staff who need it on all OUH hospital sites – porridge and a hot drink
- restaurant providers on each hospital site are providing a hot value meal at £2.99 for staff on weekdays

Terry Roberts, OUH Joint Chief People Officer, was interviewed on BBC Radio Oxford about our Cost-of-Living support for staff – it is available on [BBC Sounds](#), starting at around the 1.20 mark. **Oxford Hospitals Charity support for patients and staff this Christmas**

Oxford Hospitals Charity's [Give a Gift appeal](#) is raising funds to make sure all children being cared for in hospital over the Christmas period receive a

lovely gift, chosen by play specialists from OUH to suit the age and interests of the children.



The charity also works with community groups and volunteers to create and deliver gift bags with activities and a little treat for adult patients who are in hospital on Christmas Day.

The Charity's programme of support also includes OUH staff, with staff room treats and winter wellbeing support for the teams on hospital sites in Oxford and Banbury.

To find out more about the work of Oxford Hospitals Charity visit www.hospitalcharity.co.uk

OUH Chief Nursing Fellowship aims to improve patient care through research

OUH has launched an innovative [new programme to support research](#) and practice improvement by nurses, midwives and allied health professionals.

Funded by [Oxford Hospitals Charity](#), the Chief Nursing Officer Fellowship will support staff to find practical and effective ways of improving patient care.

The first five staff to benefit from the six-month scheme – three nurses, a midwife and a pharmacist – will research solutions to hospital challenges such as preventing falls and hospital-acquired ulcers.

Community resilience

Helping residents keep their homes safe and warm

A range of support is available this winter for Oxfordshire residents with health conditions through

Awards round-up

- The communications strategy underpinning the *Growing Stronger Together – Rest, Reflect, Recover* staff wellbeing programme at OUH won the 'Best Wellbeing Initiative' category at the [CorpComms Awards](#) on 17 November.
- *Beyond Words*, a book of images from the COVID-19 pandemic at OUH which was designed in-house, was Highly Commended in the 'Best Corporate Publication' category of the CorpComms Awards.
- OUH was Highly Commended in the Freedom to Speak Up Award category at the prestigious *Health Service Journal (HSJ)* Awards ceremony on 17 November.
- Oxford Health's Dr Gerti Stegen has been named Psychiatric Educator of the Year in the Royal College of Psychiatrists RCPsych Awards 2022. Gerti is a consultant psychiatrist specialising in psychological therapies and was coaxed into medical education by the Trust's then Medical Director Mike Hobbs, now a Trust governor. Read more [here](#).
- Dr Maxime Taquet has been named the Core Psychiatric Trainee of the Year in the Royal College of Psychiatrists RCPsych Awards 2022. This is the third national RCPsych award Max has received in five years: he was awarded the Foundation Doctor of the Year in 2020 and Medical Student of the Year in 2017 – quite a hat trick. Max is a Senior Research Fellow with NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre. More [here](#).

the county council's Better Housing Better Health service.

People with long-term health conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (also known as COPD) and high blood pressure can get advice

and support to help tackle housing problems which may make their health worse.

The service aims to support residents keep their homes safe and warm. It can also refer those who need it for further social and financial support to help people stay in their own homes for longer.



Learn more about the work of Better Housing Better Health, including how to access support, by visiting bhbh.org.uk or ring 0800 107 0044.



An initial fund of £250,000 has now been topped up to £354,200 by Cherwell District Council, meaning the council can give vouchers to all 3,542 households who get housing benefit.

Oxfordshire to increase payments for Ukrainian hosts

Hosts of Ukrainian guests in Oxfordshire, who are part of the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, will benefit from an increase in monthly support payments from 1 December 2022.

The decision has been made by the county's six councils to help support existing hosts because of the cost-of-living crisis and to encourage new hosts to come forward.



The increase from £350 to £550 will be funded using the £10,500 being provided by the government to the county council to support every guest. The payment, which will be made in arrears from November 2022 until March 2023, will not be subject to tax and will not affect entitlement to any benefits.

Existing hosts or potential new hosts can find out more about the scheme and support available at oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine. They can also contact any of the district councils or the city council with housing or community support queries.

Thousands of north Oxfordshire households to receive food vouchers

Thousands of north Oxfordshire households will receive £100 food vouchers in time for Christmas.

People do not need to apply for the vouchers; they automatically qualify if they were in receipt of housing benefit as of 5 October. They will receive a letter from the council to advise them of the next steps.

Council renews its commitment to the armed forces as new law comes into place

A new legal duty to consider the needs of armed forces personnel, their families and veterans when planning and delivering services has come into force and has been welcomed by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Armed Forces Covenant, first signed by the council in 2011 and renewed with civilian and military partners in 2018, was a voluntary 'promise from the nation' that those who serve or have served in the armed forces (and their families) should be treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives.

Oxfordshire County Council is proud to have long been an enthusiastic supporter of the armed forces community. The [new duty](#) is being viewed by the council as a chance to reflect on what's working well and what could be done even better.

Strengthening sports provision in West Oxfordshire

West Oxfordshire District Council has adopted a new Playing Pitch Strategy to help communities secure the provision of facilities to support rugby, football and cricket and other pitch sports in the future.

2017 the council secured two full-sized football pitches and facilities from the Downs Road Development in Witney, which will be ready for competitive fixtures in autumn 2023. The new

strategy will enable the council to include further pitch provision through its planning policies.



The strategy will also help protect the existing supply of outdoor sports pitches and changing facilities through local plan policies, enhance existing pitch provision, and provide the evidence for new outdoor sports facilities where feasible. Pictured are Marty Clements from Chipping Norton Swifts and Cllr Joy Aitman.

Children, Education and Families

Service improvements for children with special educational needs and disabilities

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) children are benefiting from service improvements provided by the county council and its partners, despite major funding shortfalls from central government.



Principal changes already implemented or in development include:

- More special school places. In addition to looking to expand existing special schools, new schools at Bloxham Grove and Faringdon are in development and the county council has submitted to the Department of Education bids for two further special free schools.
- A project to support the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and staff in schools, being piloted with 10 schools in the north of the county until summer term 2023.
- A SEND support helpdesk is being launched for schools. It will initially be for schools in north Oxfordshire, aimed at both experienced SEND coordinators and those new to role. The initial pilot will be evaluated and, if successful, offered county wide.

- A review of arrangements involving local schools, to ensure a smoother transition when children with special educational needs move schools, an experience they often find difficult. New practical guidance will focus initially on those moving from primary to secondary school. Similar steps will be introduced to help those in early years provision into primary school, and secondary school children into further education.

Love... that's what you need'... Emotional appeal for Oxfordshire foster carers

Residents in Oxfordshire are being encouraged to become foster carers in a heart-warming campaign that launched last month.



Posters appearing in local libraries and as digital adverts feature the close bond between child and foster parent, accompanied by the words, 'love, that's what you need'.

There are also two social media films: [Sue, foster carer](#), who explains that: "These children don't want money. They don't want things. They just want love

and attention, and they want your time.” And [Shaniya, adopted daughter and foster sister](#), who talks about being a foster sister.

Oxfordshire County Council foster carers receive:

- A welcome payment of £1,500 to help make the transition to foster carer.
- Generous fees, paid in addition to the child’s allowance, based on experience and skills.
- Dedicated social worker support.
- Access to professionals involved with the child/children.
- Links with support groups, specialised training and therapeutic advice.

Education Commission launched in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council has launched an Education Commission, tasked with further improving educational outcomes for all children and young people.



The commission will speak to all interested and concerned parties about what a world-class education system might look like for Oxfordshire and what needs to change to make it happen.

Place, Transport, Infrastructure

Action taken to help deliver affordable housing



The commission will be independent and will listen to the voices of young people and their families, educators, businesses and wider stakeholders. It will take evidence from a wide a range of sources, gathering views and experiences.

The commission will be independently chaired by Gail Tolley – an experienced former director of children’s services

New primary school opens in Faringdon

Pupils in Faringdon will be able to enjoy learning and playing in a new purpose-built school, Folly View Primary (pictured below), which officially opened on 24 November.

The county council has delivered the £9 million school building for Faringdon Learning Trust to replace and expand Faringdon Infant School.



The school – for children aged two - 11 years – has 17 classrooms over two floors, a spacious hall and studio, a library and several staff work rooms and group rooms. There is also a covered outside play space, playground and sports pitch.

Plans to help provide genuinely affordable homes in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse have been approved. A new housing delivery strategy was agreed by cabinet members at South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council earlier this month.

The new housing delivery strategy aims to meet current and future local housing needs and intends to bring more well-designed net zero carbon housing to help tackle climate change. For example, 25 net-zero homes have recently been built in Kingston Bagpuize by Ssassy Property and

Greencore Construction. The new homes have been constructed in a way that means they do not produce any additional greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

Work to improve safety for cyclists at The Plain in Oxford

Oxfordshire County Council has been exploring ways of improving safety at The Plain since the death of a young woman on her bike at the junction in a collision involving a lorry on 1 March 2022.



It was one of several tragedies that prompted the council, in June, to adopt the [Vision Zero](#) strategy – an ambition to eliminate all road deaths and serious injuries by 2050.

Roadworks at The Plain roundabout, Cowley Road, Iffley Road, Cowley Place and St Clement's were completed in late November. They include:

- amendments to road markings and traffic signs
- installation of road studs, bollards and cycle stands
- installation of light cycle lane segregation units
- vegetation clearance.

Plans for Botley Road traffic closure set out with Network Rail

Network Rail has issued an update about its plans to replace the rail bridge over Botley Road in Oxford, as part of its wider project to expand the station on the western side.

Due to the scale and nature of the works on the highway – including the need to divert water, gas and electricity – the impact on Botley Road will be significant.

Following discussions with the county council, there will be a 12-month closure of Botley Road to motorised traffic for the duration of the work. The current proposed start date for the works and closure is 9 January 2023.



Pedestrian and cycle access through the closure points is planned to be maintained throughout, although the route through may change. It is planned that buses will operate to either side of the closure so that those on through-journeys will need to do a short walk and change buses. Emergency services access will be provided, with arrangements likely to vary depending on the stage of works.

More detailed information will be sent by Network Rail to local communities via letters, briefings and drop-in sessions. Further information about the project can be found at www.networkrail.co.uk/oxfordphase2.

People can sign up to receive email updates about the work at <https://lineside.networkrail.co.uk/oxford-phase-2>

Free cycle stands for businesses and community groups

A new cycle parking scheme has been launched in Oxford, encouraging businesses and community organisations to apply for free bicycle parking.

The scheme, which is being introduced by Oxford City Council and managed by social enterprise ParkThatBike, aims to provide more bike parking for businesses and community groups.

The project will support the introduction of up to 135 new cycle stands, providing up to 270 cycle parking spaces. The bike stands are free of charge, but businesses and groups are responsible for installing them on their own land. The stands must be available for the public to always use and priority will be given to those providing the most public benefit.

Low traffic neighbourhood bollards in east Oxford to be replaced



Plastic bollards installed as a part of the experimental low traffic neighbourhoods (LTN) scheme in east Oxford are to be replaced by steel ones. The county council has allocated £100,000 to install new steel bollards at all LTN filter sites in east Oxford.

The decision was made following high levels of vandalism to the plastic bollards initially installed as a part of the trial. The steel bollards will continue to allow exempt vehicles to pass through, such as emergency services vehicles.

Economy

Nearly £6.5 million awarded to help local businesses in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse



More than 2,000 businesses have received a much-needed relief award totalling almost £6.5 million to help reduce their business rates thanks to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils.

The funding was allocated to businesses using the Government's COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund to help organisations unable to receive previous COVID-19 grants, despite having been badly affected by the pandemic.

OxLEP grant scheme supports businesses to embrace apprenticeships

Businesses across the county are being reminded to make use of a [grant scheme](#) to remove potential barriers experienced by apprentices.

The scheme sees grants of between £1,000 and £1,500 made available to eligible Oxfordshire-based businesses. Grants are being awarded to companies on a first-come, first-served basis, with some grants of up to £3,000 available under certain circumstances.

We hope you find this information useful.

Please email bobicb.media-team@nhs.net with any queries and we will get back to you as possible.