

6. Living in the UK

Integration

This section is to help you adapt and integrate into British society and lead independent lives.

Politeness

People are generally polite in the UK, especially to strangers. It is common to say 'excuse me' if you need to pass in front of someone, 'please' when you are asking for something, 'sorry' or 'pardon' when you don't understand or don't hear something and 'thank you' when you receive something from another person. People will usually form a queue when waiting for something, for example, in a shop or getting on the bus. Some people, particularly women, do not like to be stared at by people they do not know. However, it is considered polite to make eye contact when talking to someone.

Time-keeping

People are usually on time. If your appointment is at 11am, you should try to arrive by 11am. If you are running late it is polite to let the person know and give a reason. For appointments at the doctors or bank, if you are late you could lose your appointment.

Equality

The UK has laws to ensure that people are treated fairly and equally regardless of their race, culture, gender, disability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, and age. Homosexuality is legal and not stigmatised. There are laws to protect the rights of children and to prevent discrimination against people who are disabled. Self-expression is encouraged.

If you ever feel that you or a member of your family is discriminated against, talk to your Community Support Officer.

Democracy and free speech

People are free to join and/or to vote for any political parties. Journalists are expected to check that information in their reports is true and they are free to report on anything that is not libellous. The majority of people are firmly law abiding and respect the law, while feeling free to express their opinions.

Things that are illegal in the UK

- **Racial harassment**

It is illegal for someone to threaten, harass, insult or treat you unfairly because of your race, religious belief, language, colour or ethnicity. If you are a victim of racial harassment, report it to the police. If you do not feel comfortable speaking directly to the police, you can report these to services or someone that you trust that can help make the report on your behalf.

- **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment and assault are illegal against both men and women. Sexual harassment means unwelcome attention such as sexual remarks, looks and advances from another person. Sexual assault is any physical sexual action against someone's permission and should be reported immediately to the police. If it happens to your child at school, encourage them to tell the teacher. You should also try to speak with the teachers/head teacher.

- **Intentionally harming children**

Any physical force that leaves a mark, bruise or scratch is illegal and is taken very seriously. Parents or carers should understand that if they harm a child by hitting them, they are breaking the law and could be prosecuted.

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- **Selling cigarettes to anyone under 18 years old**

It is illegal to sell cigarettes or tobacco to anyone under the age of 18, although anyone over the age of 16 is permitted to smoke.

- **Selling alcohol to anyone under 18 years old**

Whilst it is legal to buy and drink alcohol if you're 18 or over (proof of age required) you can be arrested by the police if you are excessively drunk in public. Although you cannot buy alcohol until you're at least 18 years old, if you're 16 or 17 and accompanied by an adult, you can drink (but not buy) beer, wine or cider with a meal.

- **Consuming and/or selling drugs**

Non-prescription drugs classified as illegal in the UK are divided into three categories (classes A, B and C) which carry different levels of penalty for possession and selling. The most common illegal drugs include ecstasy, LSD, heroin, cocaine, crack, magic mushrooms, amphetamines and cannabis.

- **Tips and bribes**

It is not acceptable to give tips to a person in authority like a police officer or officer of the council. This could be thought to be a bribe and is unlawful.

- **Domestic violence and abuse**

Any violence against you by family or friends is illegal in the UK. It can be physical, emotional, or psychological abuse and there is no shame in reporting harmful actions to yourself or others close to you. There are special organisations to help people who suffer from domestic violence. It is also possible to report harassment or domestic violence without going to the police. You can report the crime directly to a support agency.

National Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours)

Phone: 0808 2000247

Women's Aid Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours)

Phone: 0808 2000 247

Refugee Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours)

Phone: 0870 599 5443

If you feel at risk, don't be afraid to call the police: 999

Further support

Refugee and asylum seeker support

There are organisations in Oxfordshire that support refugees and asylum seekers. This can be support with employment and training, support groups and counselling, as well as practical help, for example if you need a bicycle or a laptop.

Asylum Welcome

Asylum Welcome offers information, advice and practical support to asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants living in Oxfordshire. They help adults, young people and families to feel safe, respected and understood as members of our diverse community.

Unit 7, Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RE
advice@asylum-welcome.org 01865 722082 WhatsApp: 07784 300683

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Refugee Resource

Refugee Resource provides psychological, social and practical support for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants to help them heal from trauma and suffering, and to build new lives as part of Oxfordshire's diverse community.

The Old Music Hall, 106 – 108 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1JE
info@refugeeresource.org 01865 403280 / 0845 458 0055

Prayer and Religion

The UK is a multicultural and multi-faith country where all religions and beliefs are respected. Those practicing the Muslim faith will find a variety of options. Most of the mosques in Oxfordshire are based in Oxford City and can be accessed through public transport.

Abingdon Muslims

Quran and Tajweed lessons, women's group, men's group, monthly children's socials.
Afternoon prayer held at the village hall on Fridays.
Radley Village Hall, Gooseacre, Abingdon, OX14 3BL
www.abingdonmuslims.org 01235 604 533 info@abingdonmuslims.org

Didcot Muslim Society (Sunni)

Friday afternoon prayer in the hall.

Fleet Meadow Community Hall, Sandringham Road, Didcot, OX11 8TP
www.didcotmasjid.co.uk 01235 511985 admin@didcotmasjid.co.uk

Central Oxford Mosque (Suffi)

Manzil Way, Oxford, OX4 1DJ
01865 245 547 info@coms.org.uk

Madina Mosque (Sunni)

2 Stanley Road, Oxford, OX4 1QZ
01865 366200 info@MadinaMasjidOxford.co.uk

Ahlul Bayt Centre (Shia)

1 Oxford Rd, Oxford, OX4 2EN
07881 295943 info@ahlulbaytcentreoxford.org

Swindon Mosque

124-125 Broad St, Swindon, SN1 2DR
01793 523831 www.swindonmasjid.com

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National holidays and celebrations

Bank holidays: These are national holidays when most businesses and services close. These are at Christmas, New Year, Easter, and during May and August, and occasionally at other times to mark national events. They are often on a Monday or Friday. You can always check when bank holidays are happening here: www.gov.uk/bank-holidays

Christmas - 25 December: Traditionally the celebration of Jesus's birth, Christmas is widely celebrated with the exchange of presents and spending time with family.

Easter - a date between March and April: A celebration to mark the resurrection of Jesus. People give chocolate eggs to family to celebrate.

Other religious festivals: Celebrations such as Eid, Diwali, and Hanukkah are celebrated by those who wish to and are respected by the community.

New Year's Eve - 31 December: People often celebrate this with a party and countdown to midnight to mark the start of a new year.

Valentine's Day - 14 February: A day associated with love and romance where people usually give cards or presents to someone they love.

Halloween - 31 October: Children dress up in scary costumes and go 'trick or treating' where they knock on neighbours' doors saying 'trick or treat.' The children will then be given sweets.

Guy Fawkes night/Bonfire night - 5 November: To remember when Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament and failed. This is celebrated with fireworks and a big fire called a bonfire.



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Local information – Shrivenham and Watchfield

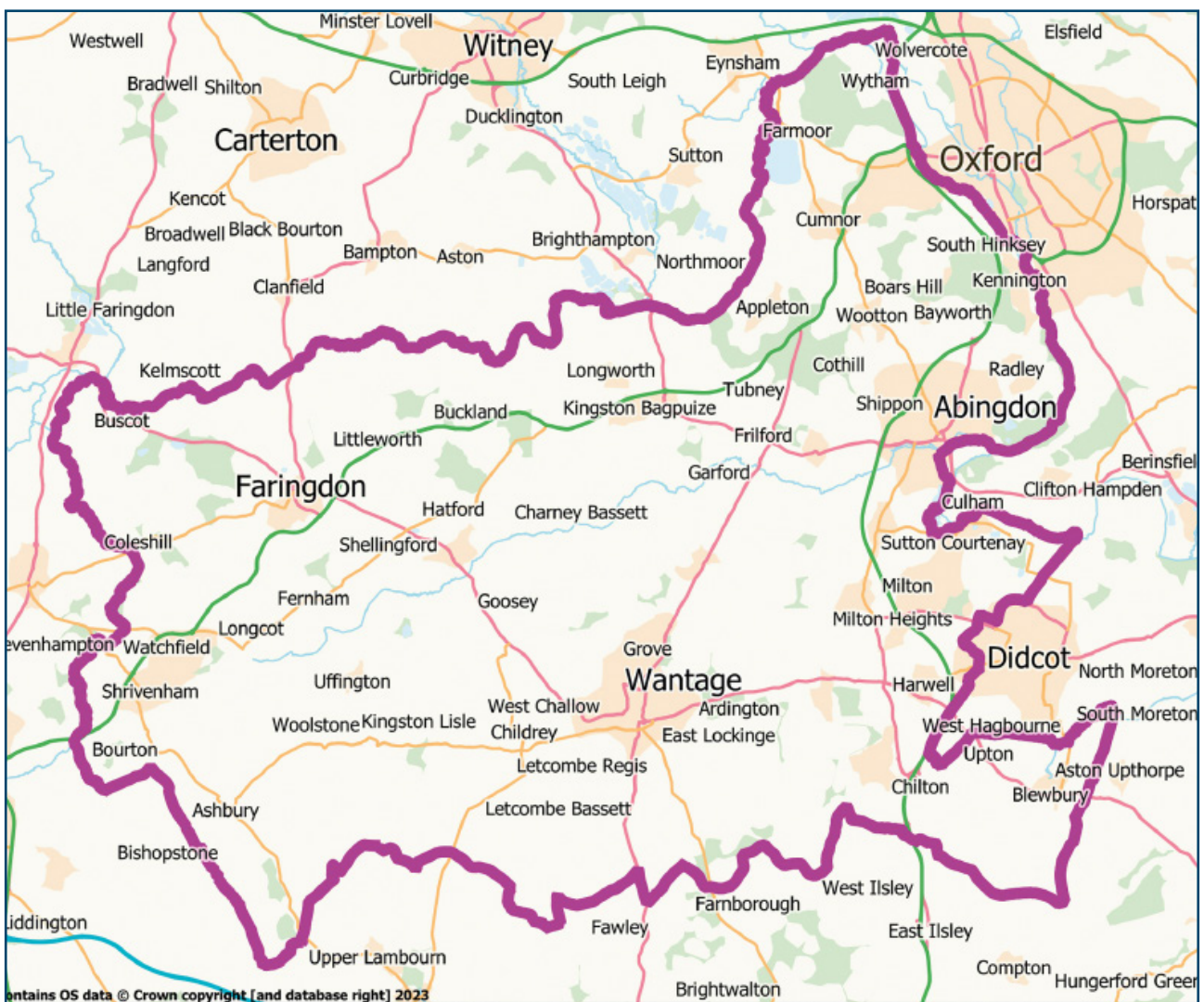
Where is Oxfordshire?

Oxfordshire is a county in South-East England. The largest city is Oxford, best known for its famous university.

Where will you be living?

Your new home will be located in the Vale of White Horse, which is a district within Oxfordshire and is known for its large green spaces and countryside. The main towns in the Vale of White Horse include Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon.

An estimated 126,700 people live in the Vale of White Horse district.



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Nearest Amenities Shrivenham and Watchfield

Convenience store – small shop offering food and household essentials

- Co-operative Food - Majors Rd, Watchfield, Swindon, SN6 8TQ
- One Stop - 39 High Street, Shrivenham, SN6 8AN

Supermarket – large food outlet

- ASDA - Orbital Shopping Park, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 4BG
- Sainsburys - Oxford Rd, Swindon, SN3 4EW
- Aldi - Drove Rd, Swindon, SN1 3AD
- Waitrose - Unit 1, Henry Blake Way, Faringdon, SN7 7GQ

Halal Supermarket – fresh produce, spices, and halal meat

- Shahjalal Grocery Limited - 64 Broad St, Swindon, SN1 2DX

Pharmacy – medication without the need for a prescription from a doctor

- Shrivenham Pharmacy - 50A High St, Shrivenham, SN6 8AA

Doctors Surgery – qualified doctors helping assist with non-emergency healthcare (appointment required)

- Elm Tree Surgery - High Street, Shrivenham, SN6 8AG

Dentist – all kinds of dental care (appointment required)

- Smile Dental Care, Eldene Medical Centre, Eldene Dr, Swindon, SN3 3RZ

Eyesight and Hearing Tests

- Specsavers - Stratton, Oxford Rd, Swindon, SN3 4EW

Accident and Emergency Hospital – provide urgent healthcare in an emergency

- Great Western Hospital Accident and Emergency - Great Western Hospital, Coatside Way, Swindon, SN3 6BB

Minor Injuries Unit – drop-in centre for non-emergency injuries

- Great Western Hospital Urgent Treatment Centre - Great Western Hospital, Coatside Way, Swindon, SN3 6BB. Open 7am-10pm

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Travel

Bus Stop - where to access the local bus service (single fare is currently capped at £2 per person).

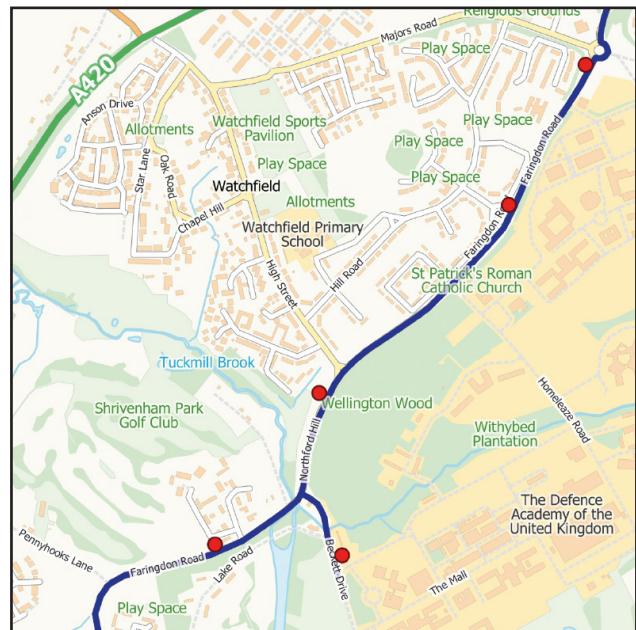
View the bus route and timetable online:

www.stagecoachbus.com/routes/west/s6/faringdon-swindon/xsas006.i

- High Street Surgery, Shrivenham to Swindon Bus Station - S6 Gold - every 20 minutes
- Military College, Watchfield to Swindon Bus Station - S6 Gold - every 20 minutes



Bus stops: Shrivenham



Bus stops: Watchfield

Taxi Company – door to door transport service, including:

- Faringdon Cars - 01367 243838
- For more taxi companies, use Thomson Local directory: www.thomsonlocal.com/search/taxis/shrivenham-wiltshire

Trains

- Swindon Railway Station, Station Rd, Swindon, SN1 1DQ

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Things to do and places to go in the Vale of the White Horse

Libraries

Borrow books and use computers with internet access for free. Some libraries also offer free creative sessions for children and families. Libraries are usually open from Monday to Saturday. You can find your local library here: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/find-library

Your nearest library is Swindon Central – Regent Circus, Swindon, SN1 1QG

Leisure centres and swimming pools

We have three leisure centres and one seasonal outdoor pool in the Vale of White Horse. Have a look below to see what centres may be near you.

Faringdon Leisure Centre

Address: Fernham Road, Faringdon, SN7 7LB

Telephone: 01367 241755

Gym, swimming pool and fitness classes. If you are on Universal Credit you can apply for discounted membership.

Wantage Leisure Centre

Address: Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

Telephone: 01235766201

Gym, swimming pool and fitness classes. If you are on Universal Credit you can apply for discounted membership.

Abingdon Outdoor Pool and Splashpad

Address: 1 Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3ZB Tel: 01235 529321. Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool opens during the summer season. To avoid disappointment during hot weather you must book in advance. Visit our website for the latest updates: whitehorsedc.gov.uk/abbeymeadow



Abingdon outdoor pool

White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre

Address: Audlett Drive, Abingdon, OX14 3PJ

Telephone: 01235 540700

Gym, swimming pool and fitness classes. If you are on Universal Credit you can apply for discounted membership.

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Other attractions

The Beacon

Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BX

01235 763456

The Beacon runs a regular programme of events for the local community to participate in and enjoy, including classes, live music, theatre productions, drop-in groups and film screenings.

Visit their website: www.beaconwantage.co.uk

YouMove

YouMove provides free or low-cost activities for families across the county.

There is a fantastic range of activities to enjoy together, including during weekends and school holidays.

Take a look at our council website on what's on here: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/youmove

You can also contact the Active Communities team directly here:

Phone: 01235 422240

Email: active.communities@southandvale.gov.uk

Please visit the **Vale of White Horse District Council** website for an up-to-date list of activities in your area. www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/find-activities-to-suit-you

Families Oxfordshire has great things to do and places to go, giving you lots of information and ideas for all the family. They also bring you great offers, events and information from your area, to help make family life even more enjoyable.

www.familiesonline.co.uk/families-magazines/families-oxfordshire-magazine

Abbey Gardens and Abbey Meadow

The park's postcode is OX14 3JE

Beautiful community gardens with play area. In the summer you can visit the outdoor pool and splash pad. The gardens are next to the River Thames and you can take a walk along the canal.

Abbey Gardens are near Abingdon town centre at the end of Abbey Close.

Vale and Downland Museum

Church Street, Wantage, OX12 8BL

01235 771447

The Vale and Downland Museum is located in the busy market town of Wantage in Oxfordshire. The museum has a variety of things to do from galleries interpreting the cultural heritage of the Vale of White Horse region, to a cafe with a delightful terrace and garden. It also acts as a springboard for residents and visitors to enjoy and appreciate the countryside around Wantage.

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White Horse Hill Uffington

SN7 7UK

The famous White Horse is the oldest chalk-cut hill figure in Britain, perhaps over 3,000 years old. Nearby Dragon Hill, a natural mound about 10 metres high, is named for its association with the legend of St George.



Cornerstone Arts Centre

25 Station Road, Didcot, OX11 7NE
01235 515144

Cornerstone Arts Centre presents a high quality programme of live performances, activities, exhibitions and more. Visit their website: www.cornerstone-arts.org

There are lots of things to do in Oxfordshire, many are free to access. Visit Experience Oxfordshire's website for more information: www.experienceoxfordshire.org

You are living just a short way from Oxford and Swindon.

- Visit Oxford City Council's website for information on attractions: oxfordcity.co.uk/explore-oxford/travel-and-tourism
- Find out more about attractions and events on the Visit Swindon website: visitswindon.org.uk/

All information is correct as of June 2023