

OxWell Virtual Internship Programme

"It has made me reflect more deeply about adolescent mental health and reinforced the importance of improving the support and care to young people."

In July 2026, 25 sixth form students (aged between 16-18 years) participated in the first **OxWell Virtual Internship Programme (OxVIP)**. We wanted this to be a unique opportunity for students to explore mental health research through interactive learning and practical research experience to witness first-hand the power of the OxWell data.

Students could explore real national OxWell data in the 'OxHub' data platform, connect with our research team, conduct their own **micro research project** & develop research skills.



Schools & colleges that have participated in OxWell 2025 were given priority places, before applications were opened to all sixth form students. Delivering the programme online enabled us to:

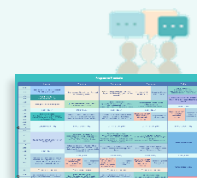
- Offer places to far more students than would have been possible in person.
- Reduce barriers to participation.
- Connect students with members of the OxWell team from across the UK.



Summary of Activities

Students received a welcome pack containing resources and information to support the week. Activities, all run by OxWell team members, included:

- **Interactive sessions** & small-group tutorial discussions.
- **A series of talks** showcasing recent research, giving insight into how research is planned, conducted and translated into real-world impact.
- **Opportunities to meet OxWell team members** and learn about different research careers, including for psychology, medicine, statistics, health economics, and more.
- Bringing their unique insights to **help shape questions** for the upcoming **OxWell 2027** survey wave.
- **Special access to national (anonymised) OxWell data to develop research skills by designing and conducting a micro research project and making a research poster.** Students were supported throughout the process through tutor group check-ins and dedicated office hours.



To support learning, students could access **resources** via a dedicated OxVIP webpage, with recordings of talks, poster templates, example posters, and other supporting materials. They could also submit questions anonymously on Padlet throughout the programme.

Students **presented their research posters** on the final day. Their enthusiasm, thoughtfulness and ideas made this a highlight of the week.

"I am really interested in the mental health field and this has helped me to develop my curiosity more and has encouraged me to learn more."

25 students participated in the first OxWell Virtual Internship Programme.

Who took part in the internships?

Participants came from **10 schools and colleges** across Liverpool, Oxfordshire and Reading, where OxWell has established school partnerships.

Liverpool	9	Girl/Woman	23	Year 12 (aged 16-17)	9
Oxfordshire	13	Boy/Man	2	Year 13 (aged 17 to 18)	13
Reading	3				

In total, **22 OxWell team members** contributed to the programme including:

- Designing and planning the programme
 - Being Course Tutors
 - Delivering research talks
 - Leading sessions to allow students to help shape questions for OxWell 2027
- Sharing their career pathways
 - Hosting office hours, and supporting students

Feedback Survey: At the end of the programme, students were invited to provide feedback on their experience and identify opportunities for future improvement. Nineteen students (76%) completed this.

Overall, how would you rate your experience of the OxWell Virtual Internship Programme?

Scale: 1 (Poor), 10 (Excellent)

The average rating was: **9.4**

How useful was the internship in helping you understand what research actually involves?

Scale: 1 (Not useful at all), 10 (Extremely useful)

The average rating was: **9.5**

“It was the enthusiasm from every participant and the staff that made the week as insightful and amazing as it was.”

“I will definitely be using this experience on personal statements, and I will be going away with plenty of new books and articles to read and a better idea of how to approach data.”

After the programme students told us they:

- ✓ Better understood the process of conducting research.
- ✓ Learnt more about different careers in research and health and that they would consider a related career for themselves.
- ✓ Became more curious and engaged with mental health research and recognised the potential for research to improve young people's mental health.
- ✓ Valued the opportunity to learn from researchers and found it engaging & inspiring.
- ✓ Developed practical data analysis and statistical skills through conducting their own micro research project.

OxVIP was led by **Dr. Emma Soneson**, Senior Postdoctoral Researcher, who coordinated the programme and facilitated sessions, with support from **Shreena Patel**, OxWell Project Manager, who helped with logistics, communications and resource development. The programme was overseen by **Professor Mina Fazel**. Supported by Bukhman Philanthropies and the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) Thames Valley.

Scan the QR code or visit our website to learn more about the OxWell Student Survey

