

Living in Oxfordshire

What it's like to live and
work in our county



CONTENTS

Our main towns and city	4
Places to visit	5
10 things you will love about Oxfordshire	6
'We moved here to work'	8
Housing options and prices	10
Getting about	17
Employment and schooling	18
Essential information	19

Oxfordshire life

Oxfordshire is one of the most desirable places to live and work in the UK. Its vibrant city, lively market towns and charming villages offer a choice of urban or rural lifestyles in an area famed for its architectural and natural beauty.

Home to the [University of Oxford](#) and [Oxford Brookes University](#), the county is a global centre of excellence for academia and research. This in turn energises innovation in the many enterprises located close to campuses and in its science and business parks.

Excellent transport links ensure easy access to London, Birmingham and international airports via fast train links and motorways.

Our towns



Oxford

Dynamic and cosmopolitan city at the heart of the county, home to two universities and a lively cultural, music and arts scene.

Abingdon

Traditional market town near to many scientific and technology employers.

Banbury

Traditional market town and industrial centre.

Bicester

Modern town with fast travel links to London.

Carterton

Traditional market town with strong military tradition.

Didcot

Modern town near to many scientific and technology employers.

Henley-on-Thames

Historic market town and world-renowned centre for rowing.

Kidlington

Large village on outskirts of Oxford and home to Oxford Airport.

Thame

Traditional market town with fast travel links to London.

Wantage

Historic market town between Oxford and Swindon.

Witney

Traditional market town in the beautiful landscape of the Cotswolds.



A year-round adventure

Oxfordshire is full of places to explore and enjoy, offering a year-round adventure. It is popular with tourists who return to the county again and again.

From the ancient University of Oxford to the rolling hills of the Cotswolds, there is so much rich history and culture to explore. On any weekend throughout the year, you can discover ancient civilisation at a world-famous museum, wander around some of the UK's most famous landmarks, go for a scenic walk or cycle ride, or relax with an afternoon tea. There's something for everyone. Key attractions include:

Ashmolean Museum – Leading art and archaeology museum founded in 1683

Bicester Village – Popular luxury shopping outlet

Blenheim Palace – UNESCO World Heritage Site and birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill

Cotswold Wildlife Park – Discover more than 260 species of animal

Crocodiles of the World – The UK's only crocodile zoo

Oxford City – Explore the historic streets which have featured in blockbuster films such as Harry Potter

Oxford Castle and Prison – 1,000 year old partly ruined medieval castle

Learn more: www.experienceoxfordshire.org

10 things you will love about Oxfordshire

Communities steeped in history: The UNESCO World Heritage site at [Blenheim Palace](#), Oxford's dreaming spires, and Banbury Cross are just a few of the county's landmarks.

Beautiful outdoor spaces: Many towns and villages sit within the Cotswolds, North Wessex Downs and Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Rivers and canals add to the landscape and offer many water-based activities.

Supremely well connected: The city of Oxford is an hour's drive from London and 45 minutes from [London Heathrow](#), the UK's largest airport. Trains run frequently from Oxford's two mainline stations, linking it to London in less than an hour as well as to Birmingham, and the north and the south coast.

A fusion of traditional and modern living: The historic streets of Oxford and thatched cottages in rural hamlets don't mean you have to live in the past - nearly 99% of properties benefit from fibre broadband.

Museums and culture: A wide range of museums, galleries and theatres means you are never short of cultural opportunities to explore, including the [Ashmolean Museum](#) in Oxford and several National Trust properties.

Retail opportunities: The [Westgate Oxford](#) shopping centre and [Bicester Village](#) offer a wide range of global brands alongside exceptional dining and leisure facilities. Small independent traders can be found on many high streets, offering boutique products manufactured locally and from further afield.

Excellent educational opportunities: In addition to the two universities, there are many fantastic schools in the state and private sector, ensuring choice for all.

Safe and welcoming communities: Newcomers are welcomed by communities, with many people willing to offer help and advice. The county also benefits from low levels of crime.

Literary, TV and film connections: Home to filming locations for productions including; Inspector Morse, Harry Potter, His Dark Materials and Downton Abbey. The annual Oxford Literary Festival celebrates world-class writers in the city of Lewis Carroll, CS Lewis, JRR Tolkien and Phillip Pullman.

Gastronomical delights: From exquisite cuisine offered by Michelin starred restaurants to a pint of locally brewed Hooky Ale poured in the village pub, there is no shortage of places to eat and drink.





‘We moved here to work’



Emre Karaselvi

Senior performance engineer
Reaction Engines, Culham

I was working in defence aerospace in Istanbul when I heard about Reaction Engines and decided I would really like to work for an exciting hypersonic project. I followed the company for a couple of years and applied as soon as a suitable job came up.

It is quite hard to move to the UK from Istanbul at the moment because of the new visa rules and it is expensive to move a whole household, but the company was very supportive and made it all happen. It was also more complicated with a dog – we arrived with her by train via France.

I imagined we would be living right in the centre of the famous historic city of Oxford, but we really like living in Abingdon. There is lots of green space and plenty of history too. People are friendly, especially when you have a dog. My wife was anxious about finding a job, but she found one within two weeks. There are lots of employment opportunities here.

I use a car to get to work because the public transport links are a bit limited, and we also use it to explore Oxfordshire, for example visiting the Cotswolds and shopping in Bicester.

It is very unusual to find a company like Reaction Engines situated in green countryside. Similar organisations in other countries are in the middle of industrial areas. Oxfordshire combines a lot of scientific development in business parks surrounded by countryside.

It is not easy to find a house or a flat – the population is increasing quickly. In some ways I would say there is not enough housing development but on the other hand I like the green space!

There are many nationalities working at Reaction Engines and good gender balance. I really love the work there.

Lucy Norman

Design Engineer
Siemens Healthineers Magnet Technology

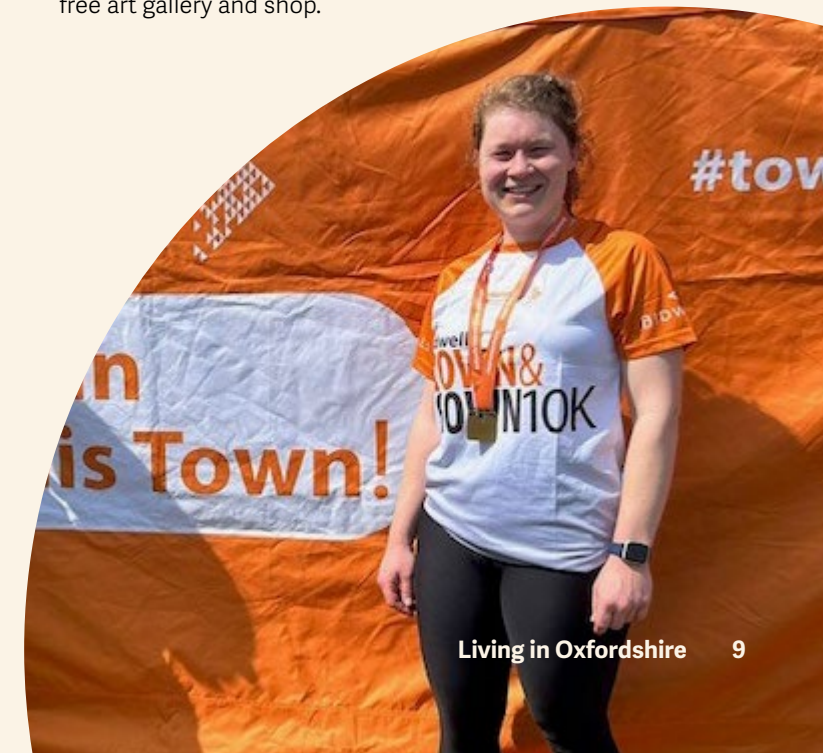
I moved here from Peterborough in the east of England in 2021. I didn't know the area, so when I came for the job interview, I stayed for the weekend, camping and cycling. I decided I really liked the Cotswold countryside with its pretty villages, coffee shops and pubs.

The company is based in Eynsham which is between Oxford and Witney. Not being a city person I quickly realised I would prefer to live in Witney. It has everything I want in terms of shops and amenities, along with access to lovely countryside for running and cycling. It's also easy to cycle into work.

It's quite competitive to find accommodation, but there are nice places to live. I rented at first and have now bought a flat.

It was easy to settle in – the company has lots of clubs and I also joined Witney Town hockey team. Sport is always a good way of meeting people.

At weekends I've enjoyed exploring attractions such as the brewery at Hook Norton Brewery which has a nice café and beautiful Shire horses. Waterperry Gardens is also a good destination with its gardens, free art gallery and shop.



There's a place here for you

Oxfordshire offers a wide range of properties to buy or rent. From studio flats in the city centre to large countryside properties with land, there is something for everyone. Oxfordshire has grown rapidly in recent years, resulting in many available new-build properties, but it remains the least densely populated county in the South East region.

Buying a property

Most properties for sale are sold through local estate agent companies. Many will place their listings online. The major property portals are Rightmove, Zoopla, and OnTheMarket. These allow you to search by location, price and type of property, as well as the details of the relevant agent to contact to arrange a viewing.

Renting a property

There is a mix of private and public rented property in Oxfordshire. The vast majority of people moving to the area will not qualify for public housing which has stringent requirements and often a long waiting list.

Private properties for rent are most often advertised through local lettings agent and estate agent companies in or near to the area where you wish to live and can also be listed on Rightmove, Zoopla, and OnTheMarket. These allow you to search by location, price and type of property, supplying you with the details of the relevant agent to contact to arrange a viewing.

Websites like [spareroom.co.uk](https://www.spareroom.co.uk) or social media platforms can be used to find spaces in shared houses.

Many people emigrating to the UK rent a property before deciding whether they would like to buy a home. A letter from an employer confirming income plus a deposit of one month's rent are standard requirements to rent a property.



Oxfordshire's main towns

Oxford

Population: 162,100*

Railway stations: Oxford, Oxford Parkway

Major employers:

- [BMW Mini](#)
- [Unipart](#)
- [University of Oxford](#)
- [Oxford Brookes University](#)
- [Oxford Science Park](#)
- [ARC Oxford](#)

A lively and cosmopolitan city at the heart of the county, offering a wide variety of housing stock from modern studio apartments to large detached period houses for families.

Oxford is the cultural hub of Oxfordshire and home to dozens of museums, galleries and theatres located on historic streets with stunning architecture.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£600,628	One bed	£1,737
Flats	£338,012	Two bed	£1,963
Terraced	£536,901	Three bed	£2,898
Semi-detached	£627,393	Four bed	£3,862
Detached	£971,343	Five bed	-

Abingdon

Population: 37,931*

Railway station: Radley (3 miles)

Major employers:

- [Miele](#)
- [Cap Gemini Engineering](#)
- [GKN Driveline](#)
- [Sophos](#)
- [Penlon](#)

A traditional market town in close proximity to many employers in the science and technology sectors offering homes ideal for families.

The town offers riverside walks and a lively events and festival calendar. It has several unique historic traditions which date back hundreds of years, from celebrating royal occasions with Bun-Throwing to counting the King's swans at Swan Upping.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£383,178	One bed	£900
Flats	£264,898	Two bed	£1,425
Terraced	£336,677	Three bed	£1,527
Semi-detached	£407,777	Four bed	£2,313
Detached	£636,225	Five bed	£1,800

Sources: Average house prices (12 months 2022-2023) [Rightmove.co.uk](#) House prices by size: [Zoopla](#) (12 months 2022-2023). Rental prices: [Home.co.uk](#).
*ONS, Census, 2021



Banbury

Population: 54,335*

Railway station: Banbury

Major employers:

- [Norbar](#)
- [Collins Aerospace](#)
- [Prodrive](#)

A traditional market town with a wide variety of housing to suit families or individuals, and home to a burgeoning industrial sector.

Known worldwide from its inclusion in the nursery rhyme ‘Ride a Cock Horse’, the town hosts several traditional events each year, including Canal Day to celebrate the role the waterways played in its history.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£300,895	One bed	£819
Flats	£166,654	Two bed	£1,056
Terraced	£256,630	Three bed	£1,347
Semi-detached	£291,319	Four bed	£1,817
Detached	£433,791	Five bed	£6,500

Bicester

Population: 37,020*

Railway stations: Bicester North, Bicester Village

Major employers:

- [Bicester Village](#)
- [BRITA](#)
- [E P Barrus](#)
- [British Bakels](#)

A rapidly-growing modern town with fast travel links to London and large quantities of family housing.

The town is home to Bicester Village, a luxury shopping outlet centre and the second-most visited location in England by Chinese tourists, second only to Buckingham Palace.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£378,863	One bed	£1,017
Flats	£208,727	Two bed	£1,289
Terraced	£308,724	Three bed	£1,819
Semi-detached	£363,075	Four bed	£2,190
Detached	£475,559	Five bed	£3,000

Carterton

Population: 17,949*

Railway station: Charlbury (12 miles)

Major employer:

- [Royal Air Force](#)

A traditional market town with strong military tradition due to its proximity to RAF Brize Norton. The Royal Air Force is the largest employer in the area.

Carterton has a wide range of family housing available in modern and traditional styles.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£283,312	One bed	£829
Flats	£182,367	Two bed	£1,077
Terraced	£275,182	Three bed	£1,400
Semi-detached	£301,364	Four bed	£1,617
Detached	£377,865	Five bed	-

Didcot

Population: 32,183*

Railway station: Didcot Parkway

Major employers:

- [Milton Park](#)
- [Harwell Science and Innovation Campus](#)
- [Culham Science Centre](#)

A modern town near to many scientific and technology employers in Science Vale, with a proud railway heritage. Designated as a ‘Garden Town’ in 2015, Didcot has funding to support sustainable and environmentally friendly town development.

[Didcot Railway Centre](#) is a museum home to many historic locomotives including working steam powered vehicles, and has been used as a location for a number of films featuring scenes with period trains.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£353,022	One bed	£950
Flats	£184,556	Two bed	£1,347
Terraced	£296,884	Three bed	£1,552
Semi-detached	£377,940	Four bed	£1,943
Detached	£461,923	Five bed	-

Sources: Average house prices (12 months 2022-2023) [Rightmove.co.uk](#) House prices by size: [Zoopla](#) (12 months 2022-2023). Rental prices: [Home.co.uk](#).
*ONS, Census, 2021



Henley-on-Thames

Population: 12,186*

Railway station: Henley-on-Thames

Major employers:

- [Invesco](#)
- [Pitney Bowes](#)
- [Stuart Turner](#)

An historic market town on the edge of the Chiltern Hills with the River Thames at its heart. In addition to Oxfordshire businesses it offers great access to the M4 corridor, home to many technology companies.

The town is a world-renowned centre for rowing and host to the annual [Henley Royal Regatta](#); a key event in the British social calendar which attracts thousands of visitors from across the globe.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£727,014	One bed	£1,657
Flats	£440,913	Two bed	£2,549
Terraced	£626,875	Three bed	£4,399
Semi-detached	£846,680	Four bed	£12,150
Detached	£1,086,957	Five bed	-

Kidlington

Population: 13,600*

Railway station: Oxford Parkway (2 miles)

Major employers:

- [Fortescue](#)
- [London Oxford Airport](#)
- [Essentra](#)
- [Airbus Helicopters UK](#)

A settlement on the outskirts of Oxford with large quantities of family housing which is considered to be one of the largest villages in the UK or Europe.

Kidlington provides fast access to Oxford while maintaining its own identity and is home to London Oxford Airport.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£396,169	One bed	£1,219
Flats	£226,738	Two bed	£2,001
Terraced	£338,236	Three bed	£2,213
Semi-detached	£431,922	Four bed	£2,500
Detached	£531,311	Five bed	-

Thame

Population: 13,273*

Railway station: Haddenham and Thame (3 miles)

Major employers:

- [Kubota](#)
- [Booker Tate](#)
- [Lucy Electric](#)
- [CPM](#)
- [Logisnext UK](#)

A traditional market town with fast travel links to Oxford and London and a great selection of family housing.

Thame was used as a location for filming *Midsomer Murders* on numerous occasions due to its quintessentially English setting.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	£437,276	One bed	-
Flats	£226,738	Two bed	£1,200
Terraced	£338,236	Three bed	£1,717
Semi-detached	£431,922	Four bed	-
Detached	£531,311	Five bed	-

Witney

Population: 26,802*

Railway station: Hanborough (5 miles)

Major employers:

- [Abbott Diabetes Care](#)
- [JSP Safety](#)

A traditional market town set in the beautiful landscape of the Cotswolds with a blend of modern and period properties.

The bustling high street has picturesque 17th and 18th century buildings and the town benefits from several green spaces for recreation.

Purchase		Rent (per month)	
Average	-	One bed	£848
Flats	£208,202	Two bed	£1,231
Terraced	£350,946	Three bed	£1,556
Semi-detached	£376,044	Four bed	-
Detached	£517,637	Five bed	-

Sources: Average house prices (12 months 2022-2023) [Rightmove.co.uk](#) House prices by size: [Zoopla](#) (12 months 2022-2023). Rental prices: [Home.co.uk](#).
*ONS, Census, 2021



Getting about

Car travel times

	Oxford	Abingdon	Banbury	Bicester	Henley	Witney	Cambridge	London
Oxford		15m	37m	23m	39m	28m	2h	1h22m
Abingdon	15m		42m	26m	39m	29m	2h9m	1h29m
Banbury	37m	42m		24m	1h3m	41m	1h50m	1h34m
Bicester	23m	26m	24m		48m	28m	1h41m	1h20m
Henley	39m	39m	1h3m	48m		58m	1h50m	1h7m
Witney	28m	29m	41m	28m	58m		2h15m	1h34m
Cambridge	2h	2h9m	1h50m	1h41m	1h50m	2h15m		
London	1h22m	1h29m	1h34m	1h20m	1h7m	1h34m		

Train travel times

	Oxford	Oxford Parkway	Banbury	Bicester (any)	Charlbury	Didcot	Haddenham & Thame	Hanborough	Henley	Radley	London	Birmingham	Reading	Heathrow
Oxford		0h5m	0h17m	0h14m	0h27m	0h15m	0h27m	0h10m	1h8m	0h6m	0h52m	1h9m	0h23m	1h35m
Oxford Parkway	0h5m		0h49m	0h8m	0h42m	0h49m	0h21m	0h20m	1h20m	0h39m	0h58m	1h41m	0h33m	1h57m
Banbury	0h17m	0h49m		0h11m	0h57m	0h44m	0h26m	0h59m	2h17m	1h18m	1h3m	0h46m	0h41m	2h6m
Bicester (any)	0h14m	0h8m	0h11m		0h58m	0h57m	0h11m	0h32m	1h29m	0h48m	0h53m	1h07m	0h41m	1h48m
Charlbury	0h27m	0h42m	0h57m	0h58m		0h42m	1h6m	0h7m	1h57m	0h5m	1h13m	1h38m	0h38m	1h49m
Didcot	0h15m	0h49m	0h44m	0h57m	0h42m		1h33m	0h49m	0h56m	0h7m	0h39m	1h43m	0h12m	1h18m
Haddenham & Thame	0h27m	0h21m	0h26m	0h11m	1h6m	1h33m		1h13m	1h43m	1h32m	0h41m	1h20m	0h58m	1h38m
Hanborough	0h10m	0h20m	0h59m	0h32m	0h7m	0h49m	1h13m		1h16m	0h53m	1h4m	1h28m	0h34m	1h47m
Henley	1h8m	1h20m	2h17m	1h29m	1h57m	0h56m	1h43m	1h16m		1h44m	0h57m	2h51m	0h44m	1h10m
Radley	0h6m	0h39m	1h18m	0h48m	0h5m	0h7m	1h32m	0h53m	1h44m		0h53m	1h33m	0h27m	1h33m
London	0h52m	0h58m	1h3m	0h53m	1h13m	0h39m	0h41m	1h4m	0h57m	0h53m				
Birmingham	1h9m	1h41m	0h46m	1h07m	1h38m	1h43m	1h20m	1h28m	2h51m	1h33m				
Reading	0h23m	0h33m	0h41m	0h41m	0h38m	0h12m	0h58m	0h34m	0h44m	0h27m				
Heathrow	1h35m	1h57m	2h6m	1h48m	1h49m	1h18m	1h38m	1h47m	1h10m	1h33m				



Join the hotbed of talent

Oxfordshire has exceptionally low levels of unemployment. At 2.8% (May 2022, source: <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/unemployment-claimants-may-2022>) it is almost 50% lower than the UK average, and the wide range of businesses mean that there are working opportunities for everyone, from school-leavers and graduates to post-graduates and researchers.

56% of the working-age population is educated to degree level or above (ONS, 2023). The high level of skill in the

workforce means that companies working in some of the world's most innovative and fast-growing sectors have chosen to base their operations in Oxfordshire.

The focus on innovation has created a strong and resilient local economy, forming part of the Golden Triangle, encompassing the universities of London, Oxford and Cambridge, and creating a halo effect for fast-growing technology businesses, including many spun-out from the universities.

Going to school in Oxfordshire

All children in the UK aged 5-18 must receive a full-time education which is generally divided into three separate stages:

- Primary – between the ages of 5 and 11.
- Secondary – between the ages of 11 and 16.
- Post 16 – between the ages of 16 and 18.

Most Oxfordshire children go to free-to-use state schools and a very small number are educated at home by their parents. The county also has a wealth of well-regarded independent fee-paying [private schools](#), some of which also have a boarding option. The [Europa School](#) in Culham offers a multilingual European education; its students study in at least three languages and take the International Baccalaureate.

Travel to school is a key consideration and it is important to investigate nearby schools when selecting an area to live. Schools in Oxfordshire usually have a 'catchment area' within which they accept children.

The school year in the UK begins in late August or early September and is split into either three or six terms. Each term is between about seven to 13 weeks long. Schools close for at least two weeks at Christmas and for two weeks at Easter. There are short breaks in the middle of each term, called half-term. The school year ends during July, when schools close for about six weeks.

Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for schooling in the county and administers school admissions. Further information [here](#).

Essential information

Banking

To open a UK bank account, you will need to prove your identity and address. If you have recently arrived in the UK, banks may accept a letter from your employer or a letter confirming your National Insurance number. Find out more online from sites such as [how to open a bank account](#).

Local services

Oxfordshire residents, like all those in the UK, are legally required to pay council tax to cover essential public services such as rubbish collection. The amount you pay depends on the size of the property. There are three layers of local authorities. [Oxfordshire County Council](#) is responsible for services such as education, transport, fire and public safety, and social care. The City or District [councils](#) take care of service such as waste collection and recycling, housing, planning and leisure services. At the local community level there are town and parish councils.

Health

The National Health Service is free for people lawfully resident in the UK. Treatment in A&E departments and at GP surgeries is free for all. Find out more [here](#).

Tax

Use this [link](#) to find out about paying taxes in the UK.

Broadband

Oxfordshire has high levels of superfast broadband. Nearly 99% of properties benefit from fibre broadband.





investservice@oxfordshirelep.com
www.oxfordshirelep.com



 @oxfordshirelep

 Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership



HM Government