

# **OXFORDSHIRE PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **Supported Living Adult Social Care**

**Report by Karen Fuller, Corporate Director of Adult Social Care**

### **Recommendation**

#### **1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**

- a. Note the role of supported living in delivering the Oxfordshire Way for people living with Learning Disability and/or Autism and the Council's plans to develop capacity and capability in line with the current and planned approach to supporting people living with "Having a Place to Live" theme as part of the Learning Disability 10-year plan.
- b. Note next steps in developing both the housing capacity and the appropriate forms of support being developed jointly between Adult Social Care and Property and Assets in partnership with experts by experience and carers and other stakeholders

### **Executive Summary**

2. This paper provides a comprehensive overview of Supported Living for adults with learning disabilities in Oxfordshire, detailing the local approach, recent developments, challenges, and strategic priorities as part of the county's Learning Disability 10-Year Plan.
3. There are other forms of supported living for adults living with severe mental illness, young people's supported accommodation and extra care housing which is mainly for older people. These are not considered in this report but form part of Adult Social Care's interface with housing and could be explored in a future report
4. Supported living is a person-centred housing and support model that empowers adults with learning disabilities to live independently, with their own tenancy agreements and tailored support.
5. Oxfordshire prioritises supported living over residential care, aligning with the "Oxfordshire Way" philosophy, which focuses on strengths, independence, and community access. The county has achieved a high proportion (83.9%) of

people with a learning disability living in their own homes, supported by a significant council budget and a range of commissioned contracts. This approach has also delivered efficiencies for the council, as support costs are separated from accommodation costs, with housing expenses often covered by central government or means-tested benefits.

6. Despite progress, challenges that remain include limited specialist accommodation, historic reliance on out-of-county placements, and some property quality issues. The Council has invested in new housing resources and a framework for procurement and Adult Social Care are working closely with the Property and Assets Directorate to meet demand for specialist provision and suitable housing types within County.
7. A new procurement framework (Live Well Supported Services Framework) was established in 2023, increasing the number and quality of providers, introducing flexible pricing, and embedding key performance indicators aligned with the Oxfordshire Way. The framework supports innovation, co-production with people with lived experience, and a focus on outcomes such as independence, community connections, and employment.
8. Contract models are evolving to ensure sustainability and consistency, with longer-term agreements and built-in efficiencies. Additional specialist housing resources and capital investment are being deployed to increase capacity, particularly for people with complex needs and young people transitioning to adulthood.
9. The programme is underpinned by robust governance, legal compliance with the Care Act 2014, and ongoing consultation with people with lived experience. There are no direct financial implications from this report, and equality and risk management processes are embedded throughout the Supported living developments.

## **Overview of Supported Living as a model**

10. Supported living is a person-centred housing and support model that allows adults with a learning disability to live in their own homes having greater control of their support to maximise their independence. Unlike residential care homes, individuals in supported living have their own tenancy agreements, giving them legal rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

## **Core Features of supported living**

11. **Separation of Housing and Support:** Accommodation and support are typically provided under separate contracts, meaning a person can change their support provider without having to move house.

12. **Flexible Living Arrangements:** Options include living alone or with a partner in an individual flat or house, sharing a house with a small group of people with similar needs, or a “core and cluster” arrangement where a group of flats, or houses are based on the same site. The “Core and cluster” element may include a central hub or office where people can access support, additionally there may be communal space available to reduce potential for isolation.
13. **Tailored Support:** Help can range from a few hours a week for specific activities to 24/7 round-the-clock support, this depends on individual’s identified support needs.
14. **Core and individual hours:** Where there is shared accommodation or “core and cluster” housing on the same site core hours shared between the residents can be used alongside 1 to 1 individual hours allowing for greater flexibility and these hours can be adjusted over time as people’s skills develop.

## **Benefits of supported living for people with a learning disability**

15. **Choice and Control:** Individuals have the autonomy to decide where they live, who they live with, and how their daily routine is structured.
16. **Enhanced Independence:** By managing their own household with support, individuals gain confidence and practical skills such as budgeting, cooking, and home maintenance. Alongside gaining skills and confidence to access chosen community resources.
17. **Privacy and Dignity:** People having their own "front door" provides a sense of ownership and personal space that is often not possible in more structured institutional settings.
18. **Community Integration:** Supported living focuses on helping people become active members of their local chosen community through social activities, volunteering, and employment.
19. **Person-Centred Support:** Support is designed specifically for the individual's unique strengths and goals, rather than following a fixed schedule that may be found in more institutionalised settings.
20. **Improved Well-being:** The combination of stable housing and tailored support can lead to better mental health, reduced isolation, and a higher overall quality of life.

## **Supported Living in Oxfordshire**

21. Supported living is part of a range of options to support assessed eligible needs through a Care Act Assessment (2014). Other support options for people with a Learning Disability may include:
22. domiciliary / home support for a smaller number of hours whilst living with family or in the person’s own property people with a learning disability can be

supported to access general needs housing where they are able to do so and may not necessarily have support needs.

23. short breaks providing respite to family carers when a person lives with family which enables families to continue to live together
24. outreach support providing specific support hours per week for an activity to reach goals such as accessing the community which could complement or extend housing support.
25. supported living is usually deemed as a step up in need as opposed to above models
26. residential care home includes support, accommodation and other living costs all in one and tend to be larger with more people than shared supported living homes leading to more restrictions and can lead to a more institutional environment.
27. Where someone is deemed as not safe to be supported in the community and is detainable via a Mental Health Act Assessment (1983) there may be short periods where a person is detained under the Mental Health Act. This detention can be for either assessment under a Section 2 order or Treatment under a Section 3 order. Clinicians and commissioners from across health and social care will work together with the person and his/her family to find an alternative to an in-patient bed wherever possible. If a specialist learning disability and / or Autism in-patient bed is required, this is funded by the NHS and would currently be out of County.
28. There are developments currently to deliver a "Safe Space" alternative to an inpatient admission by 2027. This would be in line with the Oxfordshire Way, supports a "home first" approach to support and would be in line with expected reforms to the Mental Health Act regarding the detention of people with a Learning Disability and / or Autism. The Safe Space due to go live in 2027 would offer 2 self-contained flats with appropriately staffed and supportive environment where someone can re-set during periods of escalation in behaviour due to the person's learning disability and / or autism, avoiding an unnecessary Mental Health Admission.
29. As a County the "Oxfordshire Way" has been developed to look at "what is strong not what is wrong" and maximise people's independence to access community resources and support. Supported Living is closely aligned to the Oxfordshire Way enabling people to live in their own home.
30. In Oxfordshire the models described above are used to identify the least restrictive and person-centred support model for the individual. Where people have a higher level of need the preference in Oxfordshire is to promote supported living over a residential model; therefore, strategic plans, operational, commissioning and property approaches have a focus on supported living and have no plans to develop learning disability residential models at this time in County.
31. As a greater level of complexity of support is required within Oxfordshire due to this approach to avoid residential or hospital admission an enhanced design

model is required to avoid people being placed out of county. A person's complexity could be linked to their physical, behavioural, psychological or communication needs.

32. Support costs are either solely funded by the council, joint funded with the NHS through Section 117 Aftercare when previously detained under the Mental Health Act or fully funded through Continuing Health Care where eligible needs are assessed. The council holds the learning disability pooled budget to fund supported living. This approach means that although the funding route might change, the person's home and support plan do not need to.

## **Current use of Supported Living**

33. Oxfordshire's promotion of a supported living model as opposed to residential has enabled the County to be ranked as 28<sup>th</sup> in the country against the national Adult Social Care Outcome Framework performance measure.

34. 83.9% of people with a learning disability are living in their own home, this includes people who live in supported living accommodation.

35. Over 653 (Dec 2025) adults with a learning disability accessing supported living services, 551 in Oxfordshire and 102 outside of Oxfordshire with a council budget for 25/26 of over £56 million.

36. There are currently 30 commissioned Supported Living Contracts held, as well as spot contracts purchased via the council's Brokerage team in and out of county.

37. As well as benefits to the individual to have choice and control over their support, where they live and increasing quality of life outcomes there are also efficiencies for the council compared to a residential support model as the council only pays support costs not accommodation and "hotel costs".

38. Rent and eligible service charge costs for specialist supported housing are met by central government via exempt housing benefit (through the Districts and City) where a specialist / regulated landlord is managing the housing element of supported living. Some of those living costs that would be a cost to the council in residential care are met by the individual in supported living as people are able to claim means tested benefits to enable independence, maximising their rights and being able to fund their own living expenses.

## **Supported Living Challenges**

39. In 2021 a new joint-funded Council and NHS Commissioning Live Well Team came into place for working age adults, the team's work programme includes the commissioning of support for people with a learning disability.

40. At that time a previous framework to procure support providers had ended and there were limited support providers in county, with a lack of specialist accommodation and specialist support providers. Operational teams were unable to place people with more specialist needs in County due to the lack of availability of the right support for people. People were placed on a waiting list until the Council's brokerage teams were able to source and spot purchase an alternative in surrounding counties. There were a number of challenges:

- a. The preceding framework was broken up into small lots with a lack of pricing controls that fragmented the market and led to in some cases a mismatch between price and level of support provided
- b. A number of contracts were coming to an end with no framework in place as a procurement vehicle.
- c. Contracts had limited Key Performance indicators which limited the Council's ability to assure ensure quality of life outcomes, efficiencies and best value for people supported
- d. Oversupply of shared housing options some of which was hard to let owing to compatibility of potential co-residents and the suitability of the accommodation
- e. Lack of suitable housing for people with more complex needs
- f. Issues with the location and desirability of the accommodation offer in some cases
- g. The Council had agreed to invest in a Social Impact Fund model called "Resonance" to deliver additional accommodation, but there were issues with the in-house housing expertise at that time to develop the model, the costs of development and the lack of a suitable support model at that time to work into the accommodation

### **Supported Living Improvement Programme**

41. The Live Well team worked with procurement to develop a new procurement framework for supported living; working alongside operations and quality improvement to ensure the framework was fit for purpose.

42. The Live Well Supported Services Framework was developed in 2023 and now has 58 providers quality assured on it, with 22 Specialist Providers to support people who have a range of more complex needs.

43. The framework has provided Adult Social Care with a procurement vehicle for future commissioning intentions; it was designed to:
- a. Be flexible and commission adult social care contracts for a wide range of needs over a 10-year period.
  - b. Focus on Supported Living whilst having flexibility for Outreach and new models of support that may develop over time.
  - c. Stratify support contracts with price points reflecting the level of specialisms needed and level of complexity supported.
  - d. Have a flexible pricing structure that the council can use to be flexed over time to adapt to changing council and market needs.
  - e. Procure support models only with the Council delivering housing options allowing for "Choice and Control" and protecting people's rights with an independent tenancy separating out people's housing from support needs.
44. The framework has been used to commission support contracts linked to the Resonance properties and also for other developments that have been brought on board through work with specialist landlords and developers.
45. A Supported Living Template was developed for mini competitions to be called off through the framework; this approach included a template for Experts by Experience and Family members involvement in the selection of support providers.
46. The Supported Living specifications have been aligned to the Oxfordshire Way and have included the use of Outcomes Tools to improve people supported attainment of goals and quality of life.
47. There is a built-in requirement for support providers to pay Support Workers the Oxford Living Wage as a minimum to ensure recruitment and retention of support staff is sustainable.
48. There is a flexible pricing model that has been tested with providers through tenders, which although not fixed has been tested successfully at a range of £24.55 to £26.81 (2025/26) this range is structured to reflect the level of complexity of support required.
49. There are Key Performance Indicators built into the contracts to reflect the Oxfordshire Way, ensuring support is least restrictive, that there is a focus on maximising people's independence, that it is person centred and reducing reliance on paid formal support whilst widening people's community connections and steps towards voluntary and paid employment.

50. As existing contracts are coming up for replacement contracts have been bought together into larger more sustainable contracts that are more attractive to the market, whilst being more resource efficient for the council to procure and manage.

### **Contract Changes**

51. Contract changes are being tested from 5 plus 5 year extension to a 10 year supported living contract model to ensure consistency of support for people where support is good.

52. The new 10-year contract will include parity for support providers as there will be break clauses on both sides, with 1 years notice at year 5 and year 8. Previously support providers could be forced to stay within the contract for up to a 5-year extension, this could be unattractive to the market and not sustainable as the market place can change over that time period.

### **Legacy Contracts (pre-2021)**

53. There is a plan over 26/27 to work with support providers on existing legacy contracts to negotiate variations to contracts ensuring greater consistency and improvements within the support provided and the key performance indicators delivered.

### **Housing resource and planning**

54. Additional specialist housing roles are now in place in the Property and Assets Directorate to deliver housing models to run alongside commissioned support contracts for supported living. These new roles were developed using Better Care Funding and priorities were to deliver the Resonance initiative with 23 homes additional capacity created. These roles, identify and develop specialist supported housing for people with complex needs, and review and make best use of existing housing stock.

55. The new roles supported work with private developers including leading on work with developer "Safe as Houses" and specialist landlord Chrysalis to deliver 12 units for 18- to 25-year-olds in Didcot; as a local alternative to / step down from out of county residential colleges. The new resource offers a supported living model linked to local colleges, maximising independence through skills building.

56. The Resonance scheme delivered 23 additional homes through:

- a. improved replacement property for 4 people in Banbury



- b. transitions shared accommodation for 5 young adults aged 18 to 25 year in Witney
- c. individual flats for 5 people in Kidlington
- d. complex needs shared accommodation in Bicester and Horspath for 9 people across the two sites

57. The Specialist Housing roles have now been embedded within the Property and Assets Directorate maximising alignment to wider housing developments across the County, City and Districts. These roles have oversight of 322 properties held by specialist supported housing landlords or where people are receiving some form of outreach support into the property (this includes other non-learning disability forms of supported living). They also lead on delivery of new developments in the housing pipeline working alongside Live Well commissioners who deliver the support contracts.

58. These new roles have now expanded to deliver the additional £5.9 million that is within the Council's capital programme to increase and improve capacity of specialist housing stock. These roles are also providing delivery support to the Safe Space (see paragraph 4 above).

59. To support strategic planning a Housing Needs Assessment for Specialist and Supported Housing was produced in September 2024 [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/oxfordshire\\_supported\\_housing\\_using\\_need\\_assessment\\_housing.odt](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/oxfordshire_supported_housing_using_need_assessment_housing.odt). A Live Well Housing Plan document has been drafted in response to the needs outlined.

**60. Strategic Priorities** include:

- a. **Complex needs** - To provide community models as an alternative to hospital - alternative to detention under the Mental Health Act
- b. **Transitions** - To ensure there are models of support for young people between the ages of 18 to 25 years of age - including alternatives to out of county residential college linked to local education offers
- c. **Prevention of out of area placements** - To provide accommodation and support in Oxfordshire - ensuring we have the right support and accommodation where it is needed in County including to meet complex needs
- d. **Better outcomes by moving from residential care to supported housing model** – This is where it is identified people could be supported in their own home with their own tenancy instead of residential care thus providing a least restrictive model of support
- e. **Better outcomes by maximising independence** – all support models will maximise independence however this will have a specific focus on progression and skills teaching linked to the Oxfordshire Way utilising

the strengths the person already has to build on those to access the community, universal services, education and employment.

61. The property and assets directorate are currently working with the council's Geographical Information Systems Team to map current housing stock held by local specialist supported housing landlords within Oxfordshire. This will provide a better way to capture, store and analyse housing data for supported living in the future.

62. Delivery of £5.9 million capital programme has been allocated to current projects that are now being delivered, these include:

- a. Improvement of the council's short breaks commissioned properties
- b. Delivery of an additional 8 to 10 self-contained units with low stimulus robust design to meet complex needs and reduce the number of people being placed out of county or admitted to hospital.
- c. Delivery of accommodation for three 18- to 25-year-olds coming through transitions requiring supported living.

## **Operational developments**

63. Better Care Funding has allowed the council to test out and embed the development of a new specialist social work team; the Dynamic Support Team to intensively case manage a smaller number of people with Complex Needs. This development has aligned well with the a "home first" approach for people with a learning disability and / or autism identified at the highest risk of admission through detention under the Mental Health Act through health and social care's Dynamic Support Register.

64. The team have been able to ensure agencies come together to prevent admissions supporting people to stay in their home with specialist support wherever possible. The team work with commissioning, property and assets to find solutions and are working collaboratively with new developments within the Capital Programme for complex needs and the Safe Space.

65. The council's recent re-design has provided an opportunity to review the locality teams identifying an improvement through developing a Learning Disability Team which will also include the Dynamic Support Team this will provide a greater alignment to the commissioning, property and assets approach to supported living going forward.

## **Strategic Development**

66. Over the previous 12 months the Live Well team have been working with people with a learning disability, families and a range of organisations to develop a 10-year plan “The Learning Disability Plan 2025 to 2035”. As part of the 4 key areas for priority “Having a Place to Live” is theme 3 within the plan.
67. The theme looks at a range of options for having a place to live including supported living, reviewing; what goods looks like, people’s stories, what needs to improve and the key actions of work to be taken forward. The work plan for theme 3 provides the system’s shared high level priorities and is overseen by a subgroup made up of representatives to co-produce delivery and additions to the plan in later years.
68. The plan includes 5 key aims as seen below, with the detail available for year 1 and 2 in annexe 1:
- a. We need different types of housing in Oxfordshire which provide a choice for people with a learning disability to meet their individual needs and preferences
  - b. Housing and support are safe and of a good quality for everyone.
  - c. Information and communications about the options available for housing and support should be easily available and accessible to everyone in a format that suits them.
  - d. People should understand their rights and responsibilities as a resident, tenant, or homeowner.
  - e. People need to be able to access information and the right equipment, aids, and adaptations to support them in their homes.
69. Oversight of the overall plan is managed by the Live Well Improvement Board which has a range of representatives and is co-chaired by an expert by experience.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

70. Link to achieve priorities of the council’s Strategic Plan:
- a. Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire
  - b. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
  - c. Support carers and the social care system

## **Financial Implications**

71. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

- a. Comments checked by:
- b. Stephen Rowles, Strategic Finance Business Partner,  
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## **Legal Implications**

- 72.** The Care Act 2014 specifies that where it appears to a local authority that an adult may have needs for care and support, the authority must assess whether that adult does in fact have such needs and, if so, what they are. The authority is then further required to meet those assessed eligible needs but is given considerable discretion as to how it does so, including by the provision of accommodation and care and support in the community.
- 73.** In addition, the Act creates a general responsibility for an authority exercising its functions under the Care Act 2014 in respect of an individual, to do so in a way that promotes that individual's 'well-being', as defined by Section 1 of the Act which includes, for example considering the suitability of the person's living accommodation, promoting the participation in work or education, and the individual's social and economic wellbeing. There is also a requirement to act in a way that prevents or reduces the person's need for care and support.
- 74.** This report provides an overview of the authority's proposals for the development of supported living as a model of support for those with assessed eligible needs, designed with the intention of meeting these statutory responsibilities.

Comments checked by:

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## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

- 75.** An impact assessment is completed as part of new supported living contract commissioning and was also completed as part of the Learning disability 10 year plan.

## **Risk Management**

76. Sub-groups established for the different themes in the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan representing experts by experience, organisations, support providers, and other professionals will continue to be involved in the delivery of the Plan. The groups contribute to identifying and managing any risks associated with the implementation of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan to ensure its successful delivery.
77. The Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan will be a standing agenda item for the Learning Disability Improvement Board. Risk management will be covered as part of the updates provided to the Learning Disability Improvement Board and escalations will be made as appropriate where needed.

## **Consultations**

78. A Data Protection Impact Assessment was carried out prior to the engagement stage of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan.
79. The council's Engagement and Consultation Team has been actively involved in the development of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan, including theme 3 "Having a Place to live". The consultation phase of the Plan was carefully planned to ensure wider engagement with the public during the consultation period, prior to publication of the final Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan.
80. The draft Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan has been signed off by various governance boards, including the Health and Wellbeing Board on 26 June 2025. The Plan is being presented to Cabinet on 27 January 2026 with the recommendation for it to be approved as the final version.

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Appendix:                      Appendix 1 – Dynamic Workplan for Having a Place to Live



Theme 3 Work Plan -  
Accessibility Checked.

a.

Background papers: Nil.

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