

## **Report for Health Improvement Board**

### **Review of the Homeless Pathway and proposed re-commissioning of housing related support for homeless people**

Author: Clare Rowntree, Commissioning Manager

Date: 16 May 2013

#### **For discussion**

#### **Purpose of this document**

The purpose of this document is to set out the main findings from a recent analysis of the needs of homeless people, to outline the key commissioning principles for the future of these services and highlight where further discussion is needed.

#### **Housing related support**

Housing related support services are those which support a person's capacity to live independently in accommodation, sustain their capacity to do so, or prevent more costly interventions. As such, they are an integral part of the 'homelessness pathway'. The groups most commonly receiving housing related support include older people, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems and homeless people. The service that people receive will vary according to their needs but is likely to include support to:

- manage money and pay bills
- learn how to follow the rules in their tenancy agreement
- emotional support
- reduce offending, substance misuse or other anti-social behaviour
- access community services, eg day services, health services
- access training or education opportunities
- access assistive technology or aids

Under the previous Supporting People Programme, Oxfordshire spent about £13million per annum on housing related support. The commissioning of these services was led by Oxfordshire County Council in partnership with the five City and district councils, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust and Thames Valley Probation.

This budget is no longer ring fenced and can be spent according to local needs and at the discretion of the County Council. Since April 2013, £9million of this budget has been integrated into other related social care budgets, including the learning disability, physical disability, older people and mental health pools and the children's social care budget. The purpose of the spending is to support people to live independently in their communities. The remaining £4million funds services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness directly, and continues to be managed by the County Council, working in close partnership with health, probation and the district councils.

#### **Services for homeless people**

The £4million pa that Oxfordshire County Council spends on housing related support services provides accommodation based support for those fleeing domestic abuse,

homeless people and substance misusers. It also provides for community based 'floating' support for people requiring assistance to maintain their independence within their home, including offenders.

Provision for homeless people, substance misusers and floating support forms a pathway of services which need to work together to prevent people becoming homeless, and support them to regain their independence if they do. These services support people aged over 21 and spending on them amounts to about £3.6million per annum. It is these services that are included in the review of the Homeless Pathway. The remaining £350,000k is spent on services for people fleeing domestic abuse and the future shape of these services is being considered as part of a separate review and is out of scope for this project.

In addition to the £3.6million the County Council spends within the homeless pathway, Oxford City Council invests over a £1million into related services. These include:

- assertive outreach provision to enable rough sleepers to access the homeless pathway
- No Second Night Out which acts as a gateway, ensuring that clients move as appropriately as possible through the pathway
- Additional funding into existing accommodation based provision funded by the County as well as additional services such as Housing First and Emmaus
- Day centre and advice services, providing emergency services, tenancy support and prevention of homelessness advice
- Significant education, training and employment services at Aspire and Crisis Skylight
- A wide range of additional and specialist roles including a homeless liaison police officer, in-reach services for clients with complex needs, a jointly commissioned mental health practitioner, training on complex trauma
- Move on services to facilitate access into the private rented sector.

There are also a range of health investments in this pathway:

- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) contributes £150,000 from the Mental Health pooled budget to this pathway through a service level agreement with one of the commissioned services
- OCCG, as part of the Supported into Independent Living (SIL) mental health housing and support pathway, commissions complex floating needs support which may be used by people who otherwise use homeless housing and support services. The SIL pathway generally has a relationship to housing and support for homeless people, particularly as a possible move on route
- OCCG (from the Mental Health pool) and Oxford City Council jointly commission a mental health practitioner post from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust based in Luther Street Medical Centre. This post works specifically with homeless people
- NHS England commission the Luther Street Medical Centre which is provided by Oxford Health. This is GP-led primary care service specifically for homeless people. It sits within Oxford Health's Specialised Community Services division.

## **Policy, legislative and partnership context**

Some homeless people are entitled to accommodation from housing authorities under duties set out in housing and homeless legislation. However, these duties focus on supporting particular groups of people who become homeless - primarily families with children and people who are vulnerable due to their age, health or particular circumstances including being in care, prison or the military. Other people who are homeless have no statutory entitlement to accommodation and it is this group who benefit most from housing related support services.

Where people have no statutory entitlement to accommodation, a range of statutory organisations have an interest in ensuring they receive appropriate support and housing. These organisations include:

- City and District Councils - although they have no statutory duty to house, they do have a responsibility to prevent homelessness and provide advice and assistance to those not entitled to statutory support. In addition, City and District Councils facilitate access to social housing, and housing related support can ensure people accessing social housing are able to maintain long term tenancies successfully
- County Council - the provision of housing related support prevents people's care needs from increasing and reduces the need for more costly social care interventions
- Health - housing related support services work with people who have mental health, physical health and substance misuse issues. Housing related support can form part of a care-planning approach which promotes self-care in respect of chronic conditions and promotes behaviours that reduce the risk of acute episodes of ill-health. This can both reduce use of emergency services and also reduce long-term reliance on community health support, including primary care
- Probation Service - there is evidence to show that homelessness increases recidivism among offenders. Ensuring that these people can access appropriate accommodation reduces the likelihood of them re-offending and receiving custodial sentences, both of which are costly to the individual and society.

Given the impact successful housing related support services can have on preventing homelessness and reducing social care and health interventions, the future shape of these services is best determined through strong partnership working between all partners.

## **Review of the Homeless Pathway**

Through working in partnership, the aim of the Pathway Review and re-commissioning project is to achieve the following outcomes:

- The needs of current and future service users are understood and a pathway of services is in place to prevent people becoming homeless, reduce the length of time they are homeless and support them to move on successfully
- Strong partnerships are in place to ensure people's health, housing and social needs are met in an integrated way
- The location of services reflects the needs across the County

- Services are efficient and deliver good quality housing related support within the available budget

The review of the Homeless Pathway is being led by a project group with officers from the County Council and City Council. This group reports to the Homeless sub-group of the Housing Support Advisory Group. Both of these groups have officer representation from the County, City and District Councils, Thames Valley Probation and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

The services listed below are within the scope of this project.

	Service Name	Service type	Size of service	Location of service	Type of accommodation
1.	O'Hanlon House	Homeless	56 beds	Oxford	Hostel
2.	Lucy Faithfull House	Homeless	61 beds	Oxford	Hostel
3.	Simon House	Homeless	52 beds	Oxford	Hostel
4.	Julian Housing	Homeless	83 beds	Oxford	Dispersed, shared housing
5.	Project 195	Substance misuse (abstinence based)	7 beds	Oxford	Shared house
6.	Osney Court	Substance misuse (abstinence based)	7 beds	Oxford	Single flats within one building
7.	Cherwell Connection Project	Substance misuse (abstinence based)	6 beds	Banbury & Bicester	Dispersed single flats
8.	Vineyard	Homeless	13 beds	Abingdon	Single flats within one building
9.	Community Floating Support	Floating Support	553 clients	Oxfordshire wide	N/A

### Budget

The details of the available budget are being confirmed but indicative figures are as follows:

Organisation	Amount available per annum	Comment
Oxfordshire County Council	£3,607,324	Figure includes total budget for floating support, homeless and substance misuse and the current £270,000 savings

		target
Oxford City Council	£133,432	Currently jointly commissioned with County Council. Dependent on annual budget agreement by full City Council
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	£150,000	Currently Service Level Agreement direct with a current provider
Total	£3,890,756	Indicative figure as at April 2013

### **Timescale**

Procurement rules mean that new contracts must be in place by 1 February 2015. In order ensure adequate time to make any alterations to the properties from which services are delivered, the aim is to complete the procurement process by January 2014, giving a 12 month transition period before the new contracts commence.

### **Needs analysis**

A needs analysis is being finalised and has gathered data from a range of sources including Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, district councils, current service providers and service users. The main findings are outlined below.

### **Summary of demographic and socio economic data**

Census data and information from the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis indicates the following:

- The population of Oxfordshire is continuing to increase, and grew by about 9 per cent between 2001 and 2011. Growth is uniform across the County with Oxford City continuing to be the most populous area followed by Cherwell
- Two areas in Oxford City rank among the 10 per cent most deprived in England, with a further 15 areas in the City, eight in Banbury and one in Abingdon being among the 25 per cent most deprived
- Unemployment levels remain low, compared to national and regional data. The highest levels are seen in Oxford City, followed by Cherwell, where unemployment is above the Countywide average
- Oxford has a higher than average level of private rented housing at 23 per cent of housing stock. This is a reflection of the high proportion of students living in the City which drives up demand for housing of this tenure
- Overcrowding is most acute within Oxford
- House prices within Oxfordshire are almost nine times higher than incomes, meaning home ownership is beyond the reach of many people working in the County.

### **Summary of homeless data**

District Councils collect information about the people they provide a service to under their homeless duties. While this information primarily relates to people for whom they owe a statutory homeless duty, and not the people using housing related support services, it provides a useful indication of pressures on the housing market which can result in people becoming homeless.

- Statutory homelessness remains highest in Oxford, followed by Cherwell, Vale, the South and West. Although the number of homeless households in each district has varied over the past four years, the ranking of the districts has remained the same
- While the overall number of homeless households has increased across the County, Oxford has seen a reduction in numbers over the past 12 months
- The number of single person households that are statutory homeless has decreased in all districts except West and South. However, numbers in these two districts remain low
- Oxford continues to see the highest number of people sleeping rough in the County. However, numbers have reduced over the past six months since the introduction of the No Second Night Out policy which prioritises access for rough sleepers to accommodation and support services
- It is becoming increasingly difficult for homeless people to access the private rented sector in all areas of Oxfordshire. While finding landlords willing to house homeless households has always been a challenge due to the demand for housing, particularly in Oxford, the recent welfare benefit reforms have heightened the difficulties due to the limits placed on the maximum amount that can be claimed through housing benefit.
- The difficulties in accessing the private rented sector are resulting in higher numbers of homeless households being placed in temporary accommodation

### **Summary of data from the current provision**

Work done by the Supporting People Team in 2011 using the South East Needs model, which compared population in need data with the supply of housing related support, indicated an under supply of housing related support in Oxfordshire across all client groups (Core Strategy Group, Agenda item 4a, 071211). There is no evidence to suggest that demand for housing related support from homeless people has reduced and information from current services indicates that demand for services remains high.

- The majority of current services are based in Oxford in three large hostels. Two of these hostels have been updated and meet best practice recommendations relating to building lay out. One hostel requires capital investment to make it fit for purpose.
- Utilisation of all provision is over 90 per cent, with the exception of one service for substance misusers
- During the four years of the current contracts, the number of service users supported within services each year has decreased, with the exception of one service. This appears to be linked to clients staying longer in services, with a higher proportion moving on in a planned way when they do leave services
- Finding accommodation to move to, once someone no longer needs these services is challenging. Private sector landlords can be reluctant to house this group of people, and welfare benefit reforms have limited the amount of housing benefit that can be claimed. In addition, access to social housing (housing association or council housing) is limited and people have to be able to prove that they are able to sustain a long term tenancy
- There is a small group of people who are unlikely to be able to live independently and will continue to need supported housing. This group,

primarily chronic alcoholics, require support to minimise harm as they are unlikely to change their behaviour permanently

- The predominant age of service users is 23 to 45 but the age of service users ranges from 18 to over 65
- 85 per cent of service users are male, which is in line with national data for these services
- 81 per cent of service users define themselves as white British
- The complexity of the support needs of people receiving these services has increased over the past four years, and in particular over the past year following the introduction of No Second Night Out in the City based services. At least 85 per cent of people using these services have support needs over and above their need for stable housing. Over half have two or more support needs including mental health, drug or alcohol use
- Current services are most successful at supporting people with their physical health needs, offending behaviour, contacting external services and accessing welfare benefits or managing their income
- Current services are least successful at supporting people with mental health and substance misuse issues. Both of these issues require input from specialist health services in addition to housing related support
- 29 per cent of people in the accommodation based services (not floating support) are also receiving support from a statutory service. The majority of these are supported by the Probation Service or Mental Health services, with lower numbers receiving personal care, or a service from a social care team due to their physical or learning disability
- A further eight per cent of service users may be eligible for a statutory service but have not yet been assessed for one. Information indicates that many of these have mental health needs
- Homeless people with mental health issues often struggle to access the specialist mental health housing services due to their additional needs, including substance misuse or challenging behaviour. These services, commissioned jointly by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the County Council, focus on providing support for mental health needs and were not set up to work with more challenging behaviour
- Analysis of the cost of services in Oxfordshire indicates that the hourly rates charged by providers are higher than in other local authorities in the south east and London.

### **Summary of service user consultation**

A group of people who are, or have, received support from homeless and substance misuse services have gathered information from a broad group of service users regarding the current services. They have identified the issues they think are important for commissioners and providers to consider.

- Personalised support is important within services with service users valuing individual support plans that have clear goals, broken down into manageable tasks. Plans should be written together with key workers and reviewed so people can see what they have achieved
- Support for service users should be consistent but challenging. Workers should encourage people to do things for themselves rather than doing too

much for them, as this does not help prepare people for living independently. A balance needs to be struck between giving people second or third chances, and the needs of other service users who are trying to avoid destructive behaviour

- Having structure to your day was felt to be important and having opportunities to participate in training, education, employment and leisure activities helps provide this
- More advice and support needs to be available around budgeting, benefits and managing debt
- Having clear move on routes from services is important. There is not enough move on accommodation available and service users can feel held back when they were ready to move into independence. This can result in people becoming institutionalized. In addition, remaining in services can limit people's ability to work as high rent levels can limit the amount of financial benefit of entering employment
- Smaller services are less chaotic and hectic. Sharing communal areas is easier on a smaller scale. Service users feel they can build up relationships with staff and other service users more easily and can support each other. Smaller services create a more community minded environment.

### **Principles for a framework for re-commissioning**

The needs analysis has collated information from a range of sources including overarching demographic data and more detailed evidence from providers, commissioning partners and service users. This information has been used to establish some key principles for the re-commissioning of these services. These are:

- Accommodation based, housing related support services continue to be important to supporting homeless people from Oxfordshire successfully
- The highest demand for these services continues to be in Oxford City, but services need to be available and accessible to people from across Oxfordshire
- A pathway of services should be designed with clear entry, progression and exit routes. It should include a range of services including provision for people with complex needs, people who are working towards recovery from substance misuse and those who will continue to lead chaotic lifestyles
- Services need to be designed to ensure they are able to support the increasing needs of homeless people, including enabling access to specialist support around substance misuse, mental health and challenging behaviour
- Services need to provide individualised, personal support including links into education, employment and training opportunities
- Services should be structured to enable the development of smaller, supportive environments

### **Area for further discussion**

While the key principles outlined above have been agreed between commissioning partners, the detailed shape of a pathway of services is not finalised. There are several factors that are key to doing this, including determining:



1. If it is appropriate to establish a countywide pathway of services, with a shared set of entry criteria. The advantages of doing this are that it would provide clarity about who services are for, and consistency across the County, potentially facilitating a more efficient use of resources. However, this could change the entry criteria to services and impact on current practice around homeless prevention
2. How far the review of the housing and support pathway should seek to be aligned with review of mental health commissioning. OCCG are developing outcomes based commissioning for mental health services which is likely to include: housing and support including floating support for people with complex needs; reviews of psychological support for people in primary care; reviews of complex needs services for people with a personality disorder. The aim of this work is to produce recommendations in respect of the scope of outcomes based commissioning, the shape of a future contractual structure and the recommended procurement route in September 2013.
3. The number of units needed at each stage of a pathway, and their location. This needs to take into account the current buildings from which services are delivered and the potential to redesign these or secure new properties
4. Realistic hourly rates for services, which provide value for money while ensuring appropriately experienced workers are employed within services