

Divisions Affected – All

OXFORDSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

9 JULY 2026

PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS DIRECTOR'S GROUP UPDATE

Report by Caroline Green, Chair of Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group & Chief Executive (Oxford City Council)

RECOMMENDATION

The Health and Wellbeing Board is **RECOMMENDED** to **NOTE** the report.

Executive Summary

1. This report sets out countywide progress over the last six months and priorities in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping across Oxfordshire. It highlights the work being driven by the Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group (PHDG) as the strategic leadership forum for housing, health, and social care partners working together to tackle homelessness. PHDG has been focused on five key priorities over the last six months, aligned to the Countywide Strategy:
 1. Delivering a countywide consultation to inform the implementation of Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Refresh 2026-2028.
 2. Establishing and convening the Oxfordshire Registered Providers Forum to increase partnership working across housing providers.
 3. Strengthening Joint Work between Adult Social Care and Housing
 4. Co-commissioning Opportunities between Health and Homelessness
 5. Future of the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance

Background

2. Oxfordshire continues to experience high and rising homelessness pressures, particularly among single adults with complex needs. While rough sleeping numbers have stabilised compared to previous years, the use of temporary accommodation remains at record levels, with many individuals placed in hotels and other nightly charged accommodation for extended periods. This creates significant challenges for housing authorities and places additional strain on health and social care systems.
3. The Oxfordshire Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was implemented in 2021 for a five-year period, following a feasibility study led by Crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was signed by all Oxfordshire local

authorities—Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire, and West Oxfordshire District Councils— together with the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.

4. The strategy introduced a shared vision and five key priorities focused on prevention, rapid response, person-centred support, timely move-on, and securing the right home in the right place. Furthermore, it responded to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board’s Thematic Review of Homelessness (2019), which examined the deaths of nine individuals experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness in 2018–19. This review underscored the need for a system-wide shift in how homelessness is prevented and addressed. The Countywide Homelessness Steering Group (CHSG) was established to support the delivery of Oxfordshire Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. CHSG provides direction and coordination for joint work across partners, ensuring that actions and activities undertaken by the system contribute meaningfully to the countywide strategy.
5. The Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group (PHDG), established around five years ago under the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board, transitioned to the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2024 and was relaunched in April 2025 with refreshed Terms of Reference that reaffirm its role as the key strategic interface between housing, health and adult social care. The group benefits from multi-agency membership, enhancing system-wide collaboration. PHDG provides strategic oversight of the transformation of homelessness services, as set out in the Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, ensuring strong integration across housing, health and social care systems to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping. It plays a central role in shaping both strategic direction and operational delivery, including informing commissioning processes, with a clear focus on addressing key barriers to achieving countywide priorities. The group works in close alignment with the Joint Management Group (JMG) and Countywide Steering Group (CSHG) to support the effective delivery and transformation of adult homelessness services.
6. Homelessness support services are jointly commissioned through a partnership between the District and City Councils, Thames Valley Integrated Care Board, and the County Council, using a pooled funding arrangement. This commissioning partnership, a key innovation of the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, oversees a delivery partnership of agencies working across Oxfordshire to provide non-statutory homelessness support services for single homeless adults. The services provided include prevention, outreach and supported accommodation. This group of service providers is known as the Alliance, with the organisations listed below.
 - A2Dominon
 - Aspire Oxfordshire
 - Connection Support
 - Elmore Community Services
 - Homeless Oxfordshire

- St Mungo's

Key updates

Delivering a countywide consultation to inform the implementation of Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Refresh 2026-2028

7. In October 2025, the Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group (PHDG) requested a refresh of the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 to ensure it reflects current priorities and responds to the evolving local homelessness landscape.
8. The refreshed strategy is structured around five core priorities: Prevention first – Strengthen early intervention and tailored prevention to stop homelessness and rough sleeping before it occurs.
 - Housing-led accommodation – Continue our shift away from reliance on traditional supported accommodation models toward a focus on rehousing people into permanent accommodation, with wraparound support when required.
 - Rapid move-on – Reduce time spent in temporary and supported accommodation by accelerating access to settled housing options, enabled by increased supply of affordable housing options.
 - Person-centred approach – Embed trauma-informed, strengths-based practice and ensure services are tailored to individual needs, with a particular focus on long-term rough sleepers.
 - Strong partnerships – Deepen collaboration across housing, health, social care, and voluntary sectors to deliver integrated solutions for individuals.
9. In December 2025, the government launched a new strategy, '[A National Plan to End Homelessness](#)', which sets out a clear national vision focused on prevention, earlier intervention, and improved coordination across housing, health, and support services. The priorities within this plan closely align with Oxfordshire's own approach, particularly around partnership working, reducing rough sleeping, and delivering person-centred, sustainable housing solutions. This shows that the approach that we are taking and have taken is the right approach.
10. A draft strategy was developed in partnership with key stakeholders and endorsed by PHDG for wider engagement. A public consultation was subsequently undertaken to ensure that voluntary sector partners, people with lived experience, and residents had the opportunity to inform and shape the final priorities. The consultation launched on 27 March and ran for 10 weeks, closing on 6 June. A total of 136 responses were received. Feedback has been analysed and is informing the final iteration of the strategy.
11. The refreshed strategy also prepares for forthcoming changes associated with Local Government Reorganisation, ensuring a focus on stability, continuity of services, and a clear set of shared countywide priorities to support the transition.

12. A multi-agency project group has been established to design a strengthened performance and reporting framework for the strategy and its associated action plan. A refreshed action plan is in development and will launch in July to support immediate delivery. This approach is intended to enhance accountability across partners and drive measurable progress against shared priorities.
13. A suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) has been proposed to PHDG, with a focus on developing clear, consistent countywide measures of success. These include:
- The number of individuals rough sleeping on a single night
 - Delivery of one-bedroom affordable homes
 - Expansion and impact of Housing First provision

Targets and performance against them will be set out in future reports.

14. The next steps:

- Once the finalised version of the refreshed strategy has been agreed, it will need to be approved under the relevant governance structures of the seven strategy partners.
- The new strategy will be launched in Autumn 2026 (dependent on approval of seven partners).
- Countywide KPIs to be approved by PHDG in July and implemented to coincide with the launch of the refreshed strategy.

Establishing and convening the Oxfordshire Registered Providers (RP) Forum to increase partnership working across housing providers.

15. Following feedback from the Housing Summit in December 2024, focusing on the supply of homes across the county, it was agreed that an Oxfordshire Registered Providers Forum be established. The first of these took place on 15th January 2026 chaired by the Chief Executive of South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA). Membership consists of 12 Registered Providers who operate in Oxfordshire.
16. The Forum has been established to strengthen strategic collaboration between local authorities and Registered Providers in response to significant and increasing housing and homelessness pressures across Oxfordshire. It provides a mechanism to align priorities, share intelligence, and develop coordinated, system-wide responses.
17. As a structured platform for regular engagement, the Forum supports partners to:
- **Increase the supply of affordable housing** across Oxfordshire
 - **Rebalance the mix of supported accommodation**, aligning provision with a “housing-led” approach that prioritises settled homes with wraparound support
 - **Maximise the use of existing housing stock**, including exploring opportunities to repurpose or make more effective use of current assets

- **Support delivery of countywide ambitions**, including the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Oxfordshire Housing Summit priorities, and the work of the Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group
 - **Strengthen shared understanding** of pressures, challenges, and opportunities across RP portfolios in the county
18. The Forum also acts as a collaborative space for continuous improvement, enabling partners to share strategic updates, exchange best practices, and address key cross-cutting issues. These include lettings and allocations, tenancy sustainment, property and asset management, tenant engagement, and repairs.
19. Early meetings have focused on establishing a shared understanding of the scale of housing need and identifying opportunities for joint working. The January meeting set the strategic direction and highlighted key system challenges and collaboration opportunities. The April meeting included an interactive workshop on acute demand and temporary accommodation pressures, alongside a focused discussion on social and economic value, supported by examples of emerging good practice.
20. The Forum will now meet on a six-monthly basis, providing ongoing strategic oversight and momentum. Future sessions will focus on key system priorities, including Local Government Reorganisation and the strategic allocation of housing stock, with the next meeting scheduled for October.

Strengthening Joint Work between Adult Social Care and Housing

21. This programme of work sets out a series of jointly agreed priorities, established through the PHDG, to strengthen partnership working between Oxfordshire County Council's Adult Social Care (ASC) and district and city housing teams. The focus is on improving outcomes for individuals with complex needs through more coordinated, multi-agency responses.
22. The approach has been shaped through PHDG oversight, a review of complex cases undertaken in summer 2025, and subsequent senior-level discussions. Partners have committed to progressing a shared programme of work to address system challenges, clarify roles and responsibilities, and develop a more effective and integrated approach to service delivery.
23. To strengthen system-wide risk management, a new Multi-agency Risk Management (MARM) Officer role has been developed in partnership with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board. Funded by Oxford City Council and hosted within the Safeguarding Adults function, this role will work closely with housing services to coordinate responses to complex cases. This investment reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that risk is actively managed across the system rather than held within individual services. Recruitment is currently underway for a fixed-term post.
24. Following a multi-agency case review in August 2025, partners agreed actions to strengthen shared understanding and practice between housing and ASC. These

include delivering joint training, clarifying escalation pathways, and strengthening multi-disciplinary working approaches.

25. The development of a countywide homelessness database remains a priority, as set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021–2026. This programme aims to improve data sharing, system visibility, and evidence-based decision-making across partners. While progress has slowed following initial development work, partners have reaffirmed the importance of delivering a solution that is robust and fit for purpose.
26. PHDG has also committed to strengthening the system's approach to learning from complex cases. Following a multi-agency case in winter 2025, partners agreed to implement a lessons learned process. This will support understanding of roles and responsibilities, escalation and decision-making processes, and enhance the interface between housing, health and social care services. The process will be overseen at a senior level and will result in a clear set of actions to drive system improvement.
27. Overall, this programme represents a significant step towards a more integrated, partnership-led approach across housing, health and social care. It is designed to ensure services are better aligned around individual need, improve system effectiveness, and support the delivery of shared countywide priorities.

Co-commissioning Opportunities between Health and Homelessness

28. As referenced in the December report, a cross-organisational group comprising Oxford Health, the City Council and the County Council is now meeting regularly to oversee this programme of work, reporting to PHDG. This update reflects progress to date.
29. A research project has mapped current provision of mental health and homelessness supported accommodation, tracked move-on destinations and flow rates over a six-month period, and assessed the support needs and future housing options of people currently in residence.
30. Early analysis of the data suggests that a significant proportion of individuals currently living in supported accommodation could potentially maintain a more independent lifestyle and accommodation type with lower-intensity interventions, for example visiting or floating support. At the same time, the study suggests that some people living in our services may benefit from a more bespoke, specialised form of supported accommodation. The research group is currently conducting 'deeper dives' into these areas of need.
31. There is an opportunity to use this data to help us redesign our health and homelessness provision - with greater integration, shared accountability and, potentially, co-commissioned services that align with an equitable, housing-led approach and deliver better outcomes for people.

32. The study so far has identified and reinforced a number of emerging system priorities to support a more effective and sustainable model:
- **Establishing a clear, system-wide move-on proposition** to increase access to settled accommodation and unblock flow, supported by a coordinated approach across local authorities, Registered Providers and the private rented sector.
 - **Rebalancing provision towards lower-intensity support**, transitioning from a predominantly supported accommodation model to housing-led and flexible support offers tailored to individual need.
 - **Improving flow through temporary and supported accommodation** by accelerating move-on and ensuring support is proportionate and enables independence.
 - **Strengthening multi-agency working and risk management**, including housing, health, Adult Social Care and voluntary community and social enterprises (VCSE) organisations.
 - **Prioritising early intervention, particularly for younger cohorts**, to reduce future demand and long-term system pressures.
 - **Developing a shared language and more integrated services**, including common datasets, to improve consistency, coordination and overall system performance.
 - **Mapping and better integration of wider service provision**, including drug and alcohol services, to address gaps and support more joined-up delivery.
 - **Translating insights from analysis of data into clear commissioning propositions**, aligned to funding opportunities and system priorities.
 - **Leveraging Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** as an opportunity to embed a more aligned, countywide approach to commissioning and delivery.
33. Further work is required to identify the key drivers of success for clients moving on, as well as to ensure meaningful involvement of people with lived experience. Proposals for a co-commissioned approach will be presented at the next PHDG on 29th July, and will include recommendations and timelines.

Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance Transformation

34. Following the service reviews and revising of service specifications, new service offerings have begun to be mobilised. Current progress includes:
35. Prevention
- The prevention of homelessness service has been mobilised; Aspire and Connection are delivering the service across Oxfordshire.
 - The service is providing short term intervention and long term case work to prevent people from becoming homeless.
36. Outreach
- To ensure equitable outreach provision across the County, Alliance providers have been invited to submit expressions of interest to deliver a single, countywide outreach service. This will replace the current two-provider model, in line with recommendations from the outreach review group to improve consistency. Applications will be assessed this month, with the new service launching in September service specification is being developed to ensure that

a more equitable service is delivered across the county, with different options on delivery models

37. Move on

- A move on panel to review people who have been in supported accommodation for over two years has been established. This will enable move on and further improve understanding of move on barriers.
- We are working with colleagues within Mental Health services to share our approaches and the resources developed for front line staff and residents to enable move on. We share some of the same systemic and cultural challenges which have merit in being addressed collectively.

38. Housing led support

- The housing-led support service has been mobilised, the service supports individuals who no longer need to live in supported accommodation to move on to more suitable independent accommodation, saving funds and increasing capacity in the system. There is ongoing support for individuals, to help them sustain their new tenancy, and avoid repeat homelessness.

Financial Implications

39. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

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Legal Implications

40. The report provides a progress report on the work being undertaken to address homelessness across Oxfordshire and as such there are no specific legal implications arising from the same.

41. Nonetheless it is worth noting that District and City Councils have statutory responsibilities to provide homelessness and housing advice services, and it is not permissible to circumvent the statutory framework for the provision of such services. It is possible however to utilise the authority's wider powers to support those with particular vulnerabilities or needs, prevent the development of needs for care and support and promote the general well-being of the local population: for example, using the prevention powers of the Care Act 2014 (s2), the powers as to improvement of public health of s2B (1) NHS Act 1996 and the general power of competence set out in the Localism Act 2011.

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Background papers: Nil

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July 2026