

Oxfordshire Trailblazer Homelessness Prevention

NPSS Workshop – 3rd July 2018

**Collaborative working to deliver prevention
focused services**

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Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021

What are the priorities for action in the new Housing & Homelessness strategy?

1. Increase housing supply and improve access to affordable housing
2. Prevent homelessness and meet the needs of vulnerable people and rough sleepers
3. Make best use of private rented accommodation and bringing back empty properties back into use
4. Invest to create sustainable communities that are safe and healthy
5. Oxford City Council to be an effective landlord and deliver quality services.

Summary of Oxfordshire Trailblazer bid

- 2 year national programme, funded by MHCLG that started in Sept 2017
- Innovative, new approaches to prevent homelessness ‘upstream’, focussed on **health, criminal justice** and **children’s social care**
- Systems, outcomes and person-centred approaches to reducing homelessness
- More strategic and integrated approach in local areas, involving all partners

The First 3 months

a) Hierarchy of Data

- Hierarchy of evidence created to validate initial findings and set benchmarks to measure impact. Key statistics:
 - 40.5% cases where a duty has been accepted relate to an approach as a result of losing private rented or tied accommodation.
 - 43% of prisoners released from Bullingdon Prison into Oxfordshire are either discharged with 'No fixed abode' (NFA) or their expected housing outcome is 'Not known'.
 - 88% of Oxon prisoners that enter Bullingdon Prison NFA, leave NFA.
 - The average Delayed Transfer of Care (DTOC) in Oxfordshire is 19.8 days. If only considering cases that have indicated housing as a reason for the delay this number increases to 31.8 days.

b) Appreciative Enquiry

- Programme run as an appreciative enquiry - strength-based approach, giving value to front-line expertise, people with lived experience and professionals working across the systems.
- First 3 months of the programme spent running workshops, focus groups, talking to people and building relationships to gain better insight into system blocks. People told us :-
 - They'd like better access to housing and homelessness advice, earlier, ideally on their own front-lines
 - better relationships across systems, named contacts
 - not to be judged by the services meant to be supporting them;
 - they experienced a sense of hopelessness, lacked self esteem to approach the right support services.

The Oxfordshire Trailblazer Approach

The data analysis and appreciative enquiry led us to develop the following models based on early prevention, improving quality & timeliness of advice and support through 3 interlinked initiatives:

- Targeted upstream prevention - Embedded Housing Workers
- Person centred resilience service - Community Navigators
- Strategic and integrated 'systems change' - Homelessness Champions' network

Targeted Upstream Prevention Embedded Housing Worker Model

- Establish housing expertise within **health, criminal justice and children's social services** who can provide “added value” to cases by providing advice on the suite of housing and prevention options.
- Skill up the teams in those systems whilst building relationships
- Test whether this approach works, and has value
- Collect observations and data on how hospital and prison systems interact with housing and what we can learn
- Help think through what might be a sensible cascading system to enable the earliest possible indications of homelessness as well as the development of a hospital discharge policy
- Provide accessible on-line information

EHWs – What, Where, How?

- Commissioned 6 embedded housing workers, with 2 operating in each of the identified systems.
- In respect of **health** the officers are embedded in all of general hospitals across Oxfordshire and Mental Health wards. The work started at DTOC and progressively moved upstream by attending ward rounds with social workers, enabling hospital staff to spot indicators of homelessness
- In the **criminal justice** system, EHWs are based in CRC and NPS offices in the community, as well as at Bullingdon and Spring Hill prisons to support resettlement staff to prevent individuals leaving prison NFA.
- The officers embedded in **Children's Social Services** sit with LCSS and Early Help, to provide robust housing assistance at the earliest possible opportunity.

Resilience Community Navigator Model

- In the first 3 months , TB team developed a Resilience Map highlighting the wealth of services available across Oxfordshire.
- A broad spectrum of services but people lacked the confidence to approach them, or unaware of how to access the services.
- As a result we co-developed an innovation that would embed a number of community navigators across the county in specific settings.
- The navigators both support and broker services with a focus on empowering individuals to engage effectively and confidently with what they need to prevent homelessness.

CN – What, Where, How?

- 3 x Full-time Community Navigators & 3 x part-time Grow Workers.
- Most have a lived experience of homelessness which helps with advocacy and peer support
- One of each located in the North, South and Oxford City
- Link in with and align with existing social prescribing initiatives across Oxfordshire and work in the gaps where possible
- Align with the Options teams to carry out robust prevention activity
- Align with Housing Associations to prevent evictions and stabilise tenancies
- A particular focus on worklessness and the link between worklessness and homelessness

Trailblazer as a Learning Programme

- Adopted an active research and learning approach to enable Trailblazer and the funded projects to adapt as we progress.
- Working closely with Ratio (Dr Michael Little - formerly Dartington) as our learning partner.
- Monthly ‘learning loops’ that enable us to refine the frontline practice, but also permits open conversations between the frontline and the commissioners, leading to better reach , quality and impact.
- Helps us to determine whether we are getting to the right cases.

Champions' Network

Why do we need it?

- **Create knowledge** – it's about being the eyes and ears, identifying early risk factors, knowing what to do next or who to ask for help.
- **Support each other** – the relationships we build, the people we know, appreciating colleagues across the system and helping each other
- **Create a system approach** - it's about working in the “gaps” between systems
- **Put people first** – putting people not process at the heart of the system
- **Place-based** – we need to do something that works in Oxfordshire
- **We have to do it** – “Duty to Refer” under HRA.

Champions' Network

What is it?

- **A series of workshops** – to disseminate knowledge and build relationships. So far we have delivered training on the suite of options available in Oxfordshire, the early indicators of homelessness, HRA and Universal Credit
- **18 month commitment** - with ongoing support from the Housing teams thereafter
- **Create a network of people** - with housing expertise, who are based in other statutory and voluntary organisations. Between 55-60 people attending each event, representing approximately 25 separate organisations. This includes all bodies under the Duty to Refer and other interested parties
- **Similar to other networks** e.g. Safeguarding Champions Network or the Domestic Abuse Network

Duty to Refer and a Commitment to Cooperate

- Champions' Network is helping us to co-design the 'duty to refer' process in Oxfordshire.
- The ambition though is to mirror the commitment to cooperate that exists in Wales.
- Consultations with network about how they want it to look, not what we (housing) think they need
- For example: an uniform county approach, with named contacts and a rapid response time.
- Working with Crisis to develop and test this between now and October.

Trailblazer Legacy

- Increasing capacity, resilience and relationships across systems and partners.
- Identifying what can be absorbed as business as usual and system change, and what needs additional attention and who can pay for it.
- A range of simple protocols and procedures to capture new ways of working
- Ongoing training on housing and homelessness

Workshop – Delegate Discussion

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- What is your local authority / agency doing in this area?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges you need to overcome?
- How do you plan to overcome these challenges?
- How do you think this work will improve service for your customers?
- What support or guidance would help you to do this?



Questions?