

Appendix 3 – Summary of professionals’ roles and powers in relation to guest houses

This table lists the services and organisations the Review Group engaged with during this review and summarises their roles and powers in relation to guest houses in Oxford.

Function	Organisation	Description of role and powers in relation to guest houses
Policing	Thames Valley Police	<p>Thames Valley Police are pro-active in trying to prevent and disrupt child sexual exploitation (CSE) and are working with guest houses and other parts of the night time economy to improve intelligence sharing through the Hotel Scheme partnership.</p> <p>Thames Valley Alert is a community messaging system that gives individuals and businesses the opportunity to receive crime and safety alerts that are relevant to them.</p> <p>Crime Prevention and Reduction Advisors can offer free advice to guest houses.</p> <p>Police powers to enter and inspect guest houses are less extensive than those for licensed premises. They require a warrant or evidence that justifies entry.</p> <p>Powers to close premises have been available under the Sexual Offences Act relating to prostitution and pornography offences. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 extended these closure powers to include wider range of offences and conduct preparatory to offences, such as grooming. Previously these powers were limited to prostitution and pornography offenses¹.</p> <p>The Act also allows a police officer of at least the rank of inspector to require the owner, operator or manager of a hotel or similar establishment to provide the names and addresses of guests, where the officer has a reasonable belief that CSE or conduct connected to it has been or will be taking place on the premises.</p>
Environmental Health	Oxford City Council	<p>Guest houses are deemed to be relatively low risk for food safety so unannounced visits take place every 2-3 years (min. every 6 years). If a guest house has been previously prosecuted for food safety, the premises may be deemed to be a higher risk and visited every 18 months. Environmental Health has a wider hazard-spotting role and inspecting officers are expected to look harder for issues if they had good reason to do so.</p>

¹ [Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Part 9, paragraph 33](#)

		There are no routine inspections of guest houses for health and safety at work. However, this legislation includes powers to close premises for serious breaches.
Community Safety	Oxford City Council	<p>The Human Exploitation Co-ordinator develops strategic responses to issues such as sex working, modern day slavery and child sexual exploitation, focused on prevention and intervention. The Human Exploitation Co-ordinator sits on National Working Group and the CSE sub-group of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board that is developing an action plan on the local delivery of the "Say Something if you See Something" campaign.</p> <p>The Community Response Team deal with environmental and noise nuisances. The Anti-social Behaviour Investigation Team investigates cases of anti-social behaviour. These teams can play a role in identifying establishments that are of concern.</p>
Policy and Partnerships Team	Oxford City Council	The Policy and Partnerships Team has a role in working with partners to strengthen general safeguarding arrangements. This includes working with the County Council to develop better local working with faith and community groups around safeguarding.
Fire safety inspections	Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (Oxfordshire County Council)	The Fire Service inspects compliance with fire safety law in guest houses every 1-3 years. Fire inspectors have powers of entry and can access all parts of a building if deemed necessary. The Fire Service can take formal enforcement action if they find a serious fire risk that the owner is not managing. This could involve issuing a notice of enforcement, alteration or prohibition, or in some cases, initiating a prosecution.
Trading Standards	Oxfordshire County Council	Trading Standards deal with consumer complaints about poor standards and misleading advertising. There are no specific standards relating to guest houses but general principles apply such as those around professional diligence. Trading Standards manage an approved trader scheme but this scheme is not currently open to guest houses.
Independent Trauma Advisor Service	Elmore Community Services	The Independent Trauma Advisor (ITA) service has assisted the Police in multiple operations and supported victims of sexual exploitation, forced labour, debt bondage and criminal exploitation. The ITA programme was launched in 2013 and in 2015 received a further 2 years of funding from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner.
Promoting and developing tourism	Experience Oxfordshire	Experience Oxfordshire is a destination management company operating to not-for-profit principles that promotes and develops leisure, business and cultural tourism in Oxfordshire. Until 2014 it was known by its constituent parts; Visit Oxfordshire and Oxford Inspires. Experience Oxfordshire currently has 72 accredited and non-accredited accommodation provider partners, of which 25 are guest houses.