

Appendix 2 - Summary of Progress Made Against Accepted Recommendations

Recommendation	CEB Response on 14 November 2018	Updates from Officers – June 2019
<p>Recommendation 1: That the Council extends the exemption criteria within the Local Connection Policy to provide a more comprehensive narrative and make clear that discretion may be used to offer a local connection to a person in circumstances where:</p>	<p>I agree that changes should be made to provide much more clarity and transparency about how officers use the discretion granted to them to apply exemptions to NLC rules. Exemptions are an important tool in the box for this authority to provide support and assistance where it is needed. Discretion is important as individuals affected by homelessness do not always fall into neat boxes and officers need to be allowed to use their professional opinion and their commonsense in order for the best result to be obtained. However, examples of how this discretion is applied and case studies of exemptions should be publically available in order to increase transparency around the process and assist those advocating on behalf of individuals trying to access the pathway.</p>	<p>Oxford City Council will publish on its website by end of July 2019 case study examples of where exemptions have been made.</p> <p>In the period 1st April – 11th June, two exemptions were made, both on the basis that the individual had fled violence elsewhere and could not be safely reconnected to their home area.</p>
<p>a) They are known by the Council to have slept rough or ‘sofa surfed’ in Oxford for a continuous period in excess of 6 months, with no clear prospect of reconnection to another local authority area.</p>	<p>If someone has slept rough on the streets of Oxford and has been known to OXSPOT throughout this period then they should be considered as having a local connection for the purposes of the Adult Homeless Pathway. We should always have due regard to with the Code of Guidance HA 1996 and apply the principles to each case on their own merit.</p>	<p>Oxford City Council is already granting local connection status (for the purposes of access to Pathway accommodation only) for individuals who have been in the City for 6 months or longer, regardless of whether they have had settled accommodation and where they do not have a connection to another Oxfordshire District.</p> <p>There are a number of cases of clients who were rough sleeping prior to April 2018. For these cases, officers are working with OXSPOT to prioritise those with complex needs, for access to the pathway as and when a space becomes available. The Pathway is currently full.</p> <p>However, in implementing the revised statutory guidance and with regard to this particular recommendation, it is essential to work closely with the Oxfordshire District Councils to avoid creating a magnet effect which would quickly overwhelm services in the City. The Council is therefore seeking the Districts’ co-operation on the principle that where people are sleeping rough in the City but have a connection to another locality, the relevant District Council retains responsibility for their placement in the Adult Homeless Pathway.</p> <p>The issue is also necessarily entwined with the development and costing of plans for Floyds Row, including the protocol for responding to individuals whose connection is to another Oxfordshire District.</p> <p>The Task and Finish group reserved judgement on the grounds that this would represent a substantial change to the Common Operational Protocol, as currently a pathway connection is only granted on the basis of last settled accommodation. It was felt that there is a need to clarify certain legal issues¹ and that there is a need to appraise the impacts on move-on from the Pathway and potential allocation of social housing.</p> <p>The matter was discussed further at the HRS JMG Meeting 18th April where it was agreed that City Officers would track proposed changes to the Common Operational Protocol to incorporate Recommendations 1(a) and 3 to be considered for approval at the next HRS JMG meeting in August.</p>

¹ It was noted that Pathway Connection Policy & S.6 and S.7 of the Housing Act are not currently reconciled

<p>c) They are known by the Council to be fleeing violence from another area within the UK, with no clear prospect of reconnection to another local authority area that is considered safe.</p>	<p>This is already done through an exemption. This is an example of where better information about how exemptions are applied is needed.</p> <p>Note request from Members for clarity on how often this is happening, and to have visibility.</p>	<p>Officers continue to grant exemptions in such cases. Oxford City Council will publish on its website by end of July 2019 case study examples of where exemptions have been made</p> <p>Officers keep a log of exemptions made, with a brief outline of the reasons for making exemptions.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>That the Council grants a local connection to people confirmed as sustaining a contracted voluntary role within the City for a period of 6 months.</p>	<p>More work will need to be done on this to make sure that any changes will not be open to abuse. The council would need to be confident that despite being unpaid and voluntary the work is not casual, short term, marginal or temporary.</p> <p>I would also want to be sure that any local employer is not exploiting unpaid labour at the expense of providing paid jobs. However I agree with the principle in relation to the adult homeless pathway.</p>	<p>This recommendation was discussed at a meeting with JMG partners in March and all partners accepted this recommendation. It will be updated in the Common Operational Protocol, for agreement in August at the next Joint Management Group meeting.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>That the Council extends the close relatives connection criteria to include first cousins, grandparents and grandchildren. Deceased family members in the immediate family (mother, father, brother, sister or children) should also be explicitly referenced in the policy as providing a connection.</p>	<p>The nature of the relationship with family members should be the primary determinant of whether they are 'close' or not, not the strength of blood ties.</p> <p>Deceased relatives should not be considered as they no longer form part of a family support network which this policy aims to protect.</p>	<p>This recommendation was discussed at a meeting with JMG partners in March but was not accepted by all partners. It was felt that this could be an unwelcome change, given the difficulty of proving distant family relationships, and the amount of work likely to be involved in determining the veracity of claims. Therefore a policy change has not been agreed.</p> <p>Oxford City Council understands the strength of these concerns. However, we will continue to make decisions on a case-by-case basis, and in circumstances where the existence of and strength of the family relationship are beyond doubt, it will be taken into consideration</p>	
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>That a person's stay into institutions such as hospital, prison or rehab should not invalidate their local connection. Specifically, time spent in these institutions should not affect a person's residency connection time (six out of the last twelve months or three out of the last five years), and entry and exit into these institutions should 'freeze' the accounting period.</p>	<p>This is already the case for the AHP.</p> <p>The provision for special circumstances means that in practice the recommendation is already normally followed under Part 6 and Part 7</p>	<p>This is already the case and will be confirmed with the information that Oxford City Council will publish on its website by end of July 2019</p>	
<p>Recommendation 9:</p> <p>That the Council makes representations to the other Oxfordshire District Councils to:</p>	<p>a) Increase their funding for bed spaces in O'Hanlon House, particularly for those individuals with complex needs.</p>	<p>We will absolutely continue to make representations to our neighbouring district councils and the county council to maintain or increase their funding for homelessness services.</p> <p>See the officer advice on a,b,c.</p>	<p>These discussions continue to be held at senior levels. Both Cherwell and South & Vale district councils have commissioned additional beds outside of the joint pathway, showing they are aware of the need to increase supply.</p>

<p>b) Adopt any changes agreed to Oxford's Local Connection Policy, and that any agreed changes be updated in the Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway Common Operational Protocol.</p>		<p>Please see main report and comments in relation to Recommendations 1 (a) and 3. City Officers are proposing changes to the Common Operational Protocol and recommending approval at the Joint Management Group meeting in August.</p>
<p>c) Collectively review the system for allocating bed spaces to remove procedural barriers to 'lending' beds between the Oxfordshire District Councils, to adjust for varying demand between the localities.</p>		<p>It is existing practice to 'lend' beds between the Oxfordshire district councils, in order to remove barriers to access. For example, in May, a client with a connection to South Oxfordshire was given a bed in Simon House, and Oxford City Council gained a bed in O'Hanlon House in return.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: That an individual's refusal to engage with the Council, or to reconnect to another area, should not restrict their access to the sit-up service, except in circumstances where they pose a risk to the safety or progress of other people using the service.</p>	<p>Current capacity in sit-up is limited (even with the RSI funded expansion to 20 places), so it is right that priority is given to those willing to engage with services and so have the prospect of moving on, freeing up their sit-up place as they do so. Longer term and subject to resources, officers are working on proposals which would allow for an expanded sit up service and/or a night shelter service which could take people of the street with only a minimal level of engagement.</p>	<p>Officers are progressing the plans for "Floyds' Row" – comprising of the winter night shelter, Somewhere Safe to Stay and the Staging Post. All services will be open to those without a local connection. The latter two services will require individuals to engage with reconnection where this is their service offer, however the winter shelter will admit clients regardless of engagement.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: That the Council trials a reconnection log for 12 months to monitor the outcomes and effectiveness of reconnections to other areas. The reconnection log should be presented to the Housing Panel when there is sufficient data to draw conclusions. Note: members raised that people being reconnected could also be asked to report back.</p>	<p>OxSPOT have a dedicated reconnection service. A report of their work could be made available to the Housing Panel. Efforts will be made to attempt this, bearing in mind some of the difficulties in keeping in touch once people have moved out of area, and moved on with their lives.</p>	<p>OxSPOT has commenced the use of a reconnections log from 1st April. This will include follow-up of clients after reconnection, where possible. OxSPOT will be required to report this log to the rough sleeping team as part of quarterly contract monitoring arrangements.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: That the Council commissions a report to be brought forward in 2019 setting out options for establishing a county wide reconnection service having regard to lessons that can be learnt from the London-wide reconnection service. Additional comment by Members to consider the pan-London reconnection approach and any lessons that can be learnt from there.</p>	<p>Oxford City Council will continue to work to reconnect rough sleepers in the city to their home district, who are the body with responsibility to support the individual, whenever this is possible. Officers will be asked to look at what improvements can be made to make reconnections more successful. This should include dialogue with neighbouring districts and the county council. This could be the subject of a report to the Housing Panel if required.</p>	<p>This recommendation has not been taken forward so far partly because officers wish to learn from the information captured by the reconnections log, but also because the plans for Floyds Row include strengthening the focus on reconnection where this is appropriate and agreed with the individual. Future reporting to Cabinet on the Floyds Row development is therefore expected to address the thrust of this recommendation and as this will be made available to the Scrutiny Panel, it is suggested that a separate report is no longer needed.</p>
<p>a) Accept any person onto the Housing Register who is confirmed as having lived in supported accommodation continuously within Oxford for more than 6 months, including accommodation services that are</p>	<p>Officers should explore reviewing some supported accommodation in the city, to determine whether residence of greater than two years, should be considered 'settled' including Emmaus, some Response accommodation, and some other provision (inc ACT). 6 months would not be considered a significant enough stay.</p>	<p>The newly revised Allocations Scheme reflects this recommendation</p>

recognised but not directly funded by the Council.		
<p>Recommendation 15:</p> <p>That the Council continues to commission at least one female only overnight accommodation provider in the Adult Homeless Pathway and keeps demand for this provision under review. Opportunities should be sought to extend this provision for women with no local connection where possible, if further spaces are needed to meet demand.</p>	<p>It will be important to learn from the experience of the women only house we are currently piloting to see if this is a service which should continue. If there is demand for it then it should.</p> <p>All provision within the AHP, including that accessible to people without a local connection should take into account the needs of female service users.</p>	<p>The RSI project for women is funded until the end of 2019/20. The project is being continually monitored to capture service outcomes and evaluate success.</p> <p>A member of the Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Team recently visited women's services in London to learn about best practise and has met with several councillors to give feedback on this.</p> <p>The issue of gender specific provision was a priority in setting out the requirements for Floyds Row, and as a consequence, separate provision for women has been made in each wing/service.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16:</p> <p>That the City Executive Board, as part of its budget setting process, identifies provision for:</p>	<p>a) Free room hire and refreshments for a female homelessness forum. The Council should also ensure these women's views are represented within the Council's decision making process on homelessness issues.</p>	
	<p>b) Free sanitary products to be available for women experiencing homelessness 24 hours a day. The location of distribution for these products should be agreed in liaison with women currently experiencing homelessness.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 17:</p> <p>That the Council makes on site provision for domestic pets a material consideration as part of the supported accommodation commissioning process.</p>	<p>The demand for accommodation with capacity for pets should be kept under review and provided where possible.</p>	<p>Officers are aware of the need to provide further accommodation for clients with pets. Over the past six months, several meetings have been held between the council, service providers and Dogs on the Street. The most recent meeting concerned provision for dogs at Floyds Row. We had a very positive conversation and Dogs on The Street have been instrumental in providing advice to the architects designing the building so that it includes features that are dog friendly. They have recommended that around 10 dogs</p>

		<p>can be accommodated in the service and offered to provide various facilities e.g. food and vet services. These proposals are being built into the plans for Floyds Row.</p> <p>Further enhancing the supply of supported accommodation which accepts pets continues to be looked at.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18:</p> <p>That the Council engages with Crisis and the City Conversation to see what further opportunities exist for piloting innovative Housing First and Critical Time Intervention programmes, given their rates of success and relative cost-benefit ratios.</p>		<p>In 2019, Oxford City Council will be increasing the number of units in our Housing Led units, from 10 to 13. South Oxfordshire has also recently started a Housing First project.</p> <p>Further to this, we were successful in bidding for a “Supported Lettings” project with funding from the Rapid Rehousing Fund. This will provide supported access to five units of Oxford City Council housing for social rent, for clients moving on from the Adult Homeless Pathway but still requiring some support. We expect this to lead to further availability in Housing led projects.</p>
<p>Recommendation 20:</p> <p>That the Council writes to Central Government to welcome the new funding made available through MHCLG this year, and lobby for greater assurance about the necessity of long term funding to sustain new support services which will help deliver their Rough Sleeping Strategy.</p>	<p>The portfolio holder also welcomes this recommendation!</p> <p>Request to connect to Matt Downie at Crisis. Meeting being scheduled with Crisis/NP to ensure we work together on Plan to End Homelessness.</p>	<p>Officers continue to raise with MHCLG the need for increased and continuing funding for rough sleeping and single homelessness. The Officers made particularly robust representations on the need for funding to support the development of services at Floyds Row, which it is felt, was instrumental in the Council being awarded approximately £750,000 in RRP Funding.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21:</p> <p>That all future Council policy documents referencing homelessness should recognise the net positive contribution that people experiencing homelessness can make (e.g. the skills, experience and diversity they bring). Homeless people themselves should not be framed in a negative light and this should be reflected in the Council’s communication’s plans.</p>	<p>Positive stories should be shared whenever and wherever appropriate. Homeless people themselves should never be framed in a negative light.</p>	<p>During 2018/19 our “More than a bed for the night” video campaign highlighted the experience of homeless people, service users and frontline staff working with homeless people from Aspire Oxford, Connection Support, Crisis Skylight and Homeless Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Recent press releases have featured the feedback of people using SWEP and the involvement of people experiencing homelessness in the development of Floyds Row.</p> <p>More generally, we have modified some of the terminology we use to describe homelessness in communications. We did not use the phrase “the homeless” but instead “homeless people”; rather than “rough sleepers” we now generally refer to “people experiencing homelessness” To avoid any suggestion of fault we now talk about the difficulty that services can have engaging with people rather than the difficulty people can have engaging with services.</p> <p>We are also hoping to learn from the findings of an event taking place in June 2019 organised by the emerging Oxford Homeless Movement and involving Lankelly Chase on ‘reframing narratives around homelessness’</p> <p>The Housing Needs Communications Plan for 2019/20 will</p>

<p>Recommendation 22: That the Council recognises the value someone’s homelessness experience can potentially bring to the employed officer workforce, and that it be given due weight in the recruitment process for staff supporting the homelessness function.</p>	<p>Note the need to consider this more widely across the board and the opportunities across the Council for enabling more people who have experienced homelessness to come into the workforce.</p> <p>Give further consideration to how Manchester went about this element of the work.</p> <p>PM/RL to raise more widely with colleagues across e.g. ODS</p>	<p>explicitly reference recommendation 21.</p> <p>Many providers recruit clients with lived experience, and do so partly by offering “Grow Posts” or apprenticeships. Officers are keen to encourage services to do this and at least three posts in the services at Floyds Row will be offered through this route.</p> <p>This issue has also been raised with Oxford Direct Services who are working closely with the social enterprise, RAW and are interested in partnering with their recruitment pathway for vulnerable groups.</p>
<p>Recommendation 23: That the Council revisits its approach to communicating with people experiencing homelessness, local service providers and the public to better convey information about the Local Connection Policy, how it is applied, and what wider support services are available in the City. Any significant changes (e.g a new notice board or public leaflet) should be presented to the Housing Panel for comment prior to implementation.</p>	<p>As set out earlier, the council should publish anonymised details of case studies where discretion has been used to grant an exemption to our local connection policies in relation to the AHP. This will increase transparency and confidence in our procedures and assist those working with rough sleepers to make their case for an exemption.</p> <p>Officers are working on a business card for public circulation to publicise the work of OXSPOT.</p> <p>I have also asked officers to commence work on a booklet which could be a resource for rough sleepers, those working with rough sleepers and concerned members of the public which sets out the wide range of support services available in the city.</p>	<p>People who have lived experience of rough sleeping should be aware of and understand the policies and services that support them. Interest in this particular recommendation is shared together with commissioners and also the Oxford Homeless Movement.</p> <p>Officers are currently in discussion with stakeholders about establishing a consistent approach to engaging with people who have experienced homelessness. In broad terms, officers’ view is that service providers must have in place effective systems for engaging with service users and securing the feedback on services. However, a separate mechanism is needed to enable the Council and others, for example, other Pathway commissioners and providers, to engage with service users and people with lived experience on specific issues.</p> <p>Our approach requires not just the Council, but also its commissioned services, to participate fully and effectively. There may be potential to use existing structures. Plans are emergent but will be confirmed in the coming months, and officers will report on what has been agreed in the Autumn.</p> <p>The Oxford Homeless Movement is also creating, with the support of the Council, a website with people who are rough sleeping as a key audience about services available to them – this will include a short section about local connection policy and what this means for individuals.</p> <p>In the meantime, OxSPOT/OCC ‘business cards’ were published and distributed. These are to let members of the public and people experiencing rough sleeping, know how to get in touch with OxSPOT.</p> <p>In addition to this, a leaflet is being produced that will set out the different services funded by the City Council for the prevention and reduction of rough sleeping. This is intended to provide the public with improved information and will be published in the early Autumn.</p> <p>The new edition of the service directory 2019/20 was again recently circulated to professionals and is being kept up to date.</p>
<p>Recommendation 25: That the Board Member responsible for Homelessness considers attending the quarterly contract management meetings of the largest supported accommodation provider(s) commissioned by the Council.</p>	<p>I will attend the next meeting that I am available for and will continue to attend if my attendance proves to be useful.</p>	<p>The portfolio holder has been attending key contract management meetings since February.</p>