

Housing Needs Common Operational Protocol- Temporary Accommodation

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Housing Needs Temporary Accommodation Common Operational Protocol

Oxford City Council delivers temporary accommodation services as part of its statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness. These services are provided in partnership with a range of internal teams and external providers and are aligned with the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Temporary Accommodation Policy.

The primary aim of temporary accommodation is to provide safe, suitable, and short-term housing for individuals and households who are homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness. This provision supports the Council's commitment to early intervention, rapid rehousing, and the reduction of rough sleeping. Temporary accommodation acts as a critical stepping stone, enabling people to stabilise their circumstances while longer-term housing solutions are identified.

Oxford City Council works closely with local housing providers, support services, and statutory agencies to ensure that placements into temporary accommodation are made fairly, consistently, and in accordance with legal duties. The Council also ensures that support is available to help residents sustain their placements and move on to permanent housing as quickly as possible.

This Common Operational Protocol has been developed to provide a clear and consistent framework for accessing and managing temporary accommodation. It outlines the roles, responsibilities, and procedures that underpin the delivery of this service, and is overseen by the Housing Needs team within Housing Services.

The document is laid out in five sections:

- **Section 1: Who Can Access Temporary Accommodation**
 - Prioritisation of applicants who qualify for temporary accommodation, eligibility criteria, and support for vulnerable groups
- **Section 2: Entry into Temporary Accommodation Services**
 - The referral process and placement procedures
- **Section 3: Decision-Making and Governance**
 - Governance and oversight, including reviews and complaints
- **Section 4: Other Guidance Documents, Forms and Policies**
 - Guidance on pets in temporary accommodation and the storage of belongings
- **Section 5: Appendices**

Section 1 – Who Can Access Temporary Accommodation

An initial duty to accommodate homeless applicants arises if Oxford City Council have reason to believe the applicant is homeless, eligible and in priority need, outlined in the Housing Act 1996 (amended).

The Council will provide interim accommodation using its own stock (including that leased from private landlords), or it will use bed and breakfast accommodation, including hotels. Whilst the Council always try to place within its boundary, accommodation may also be located out of area.

The type of temporary accommodation that will be offered to single people, couples and families who are owed an accommodation duty by Oxford City Council is determined by the following priority groups. These categories help ensure that placements are made fairly and consistently, based on statutory duties, vulnerability, and risk of homelessness.

1.1 Priority Groups

Priority	Definition	Placement Priority
Priority 1 – High-Risk Households	Applicants who are owed the main or interim housing duty under the Housing Act 1996, and who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Households with dependent children (under 18, or under 19 if in full-time education),• Pregnant women,• Individuals with family members expected to live with them and for whom they have a caring responsibility,• Young adults who qualify as Care Leavers or Former Relevant Children under the Children Act 1989.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed first access to available in-district or most suitable accommodation.• 6-week High risk household B&B cases must be prioritised for move-on to self-contained• Pregnant women and Families with children must not exceed 6 weeks in B&B under any circumstances. <p>Out-of-Area Guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only used if no suitable in-district accommodation is available.• Must be reviewed weekly.• Must consider school continuity, medical needs, and safeguarding
Priority 2 – Main Duty and	Applicants owed a main duty, or applicants owed the interim housing duty and who:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second-tier access to available accommodation, after priority one group.

Vulnerable Households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have complex needs that make mainstream housing difficult to secure and sustain. • Are in unsafe or unsuitable accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritised for in-district placements where possible. • Reviewed regularly to assess escalation risk and further prioritised when required <p>Out-of-Area Guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be placed out-of-area if in-district options are exhausted. • Must be reviewed for suitability and potential move-in to city when space becomes available.
Priority 3 – Adult Only Households who are owed a relief duty or pending formal notification of a decision	<p>Adult-only households (with no dependent children or pregnant household members), who are not owed a main duty but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are at immediate risk of rough sleeping and deemed to meet the required homelessness, priority need and eligibility threshold. • Are imminently homeless, sofa surfing or leaving institutions (hospital, prison, supported housing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to different forms of temporary accommodation subject to availability and risk assessment. <p>Out-of-Area Guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be placed out-of-area with on-going support plan. • Must be offered support to reconnect or move-on to settled accommodation.

1.2 Eligibility Criteria for Accessing Temporary Accommodation

In accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Oxford City Council will consider the following criteria when determining eligibility for temporary accommodation:

Legal Eligibility

The applicant must be eligible for assistance under immigration and housing law.

Homelessness Status

Temporary accommodation is usually provided only when the Council has a legal duty to do so. This typically applies when a household is already homeless, as defined under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 (interim duty) or Section 193 (main housing duty).

In cases where an applicant is *threatened with homelessness*, temporary accommodation may still be offered, but only in exceptional circumstances. This might include situations where there are significant safeguarding concerns or vulnerabilities that place the individual or household at immediate risk.

Priority Need

The Council must have reason to believe that the applicant is in priority need. This includes households with dependent children, pregnant women, care leavers, and individuals who are vulnerable due to age, disability, or other special circumstances.

Local Connection

Applicants should have a local connection to Oxford City, as defined in Section 199 of the Housing Act 1996. This includes:

- Current or recent residence in the area,
- Employment in the area,
- Family associations,
- Other special circumstances.

Where no local connection to Oxford exists, and the applicant is not at risk of violence, a referral to another local authority where a local connection does exist may be considered. However, the Council cannot refuse temporary accommodation solely on the basis of no local connection if a duty to accommodate has been triggered.

Intentional Homelessness

The Council will assess whether the applicant has become homeless intentionally. If it is determined that the applicant deliberately did or failed to do something that led to the loss of their accommodation, they may not be owed the main housing duty.

Age

Applicants must be aged 18 or over. Applicants aged 16–17 or care leavers aged 18–20 may be accommodated under joint protocols with Children's Services, where appropriate.

Support and Suitability Needs

The Council will assess whether the applicant has support needs that affect their ability to secure or sustain accommodation independently. These may include:

- Financial hardship or budgeting difficulties,
- Tenancy sustainment issues,
- Mental or physical health conditions,
- Substance misuse,
- Learning difficulties,
- Risk of domestic abuse or exploitation.

Where support needs are identified, the Council may refer the applicant to floating support, supported accommodation, or other relevant services.

Recourse to Public Funds

Applicants must have recourse to public funds. Those without recourse will not normally be eligible for temporary accommodation.

Alternative and More Suitable Provision

Applicants whose needs are better met through other services (e.g. mental health inpatient care, extra care housing, or supported living) will be referred appropriately. Temporary accommodation is not a substitute for specialist provision and will only be used where no suitable alternatives are available.

Young People (18–20)

Young people aged 18–20 will be assessed in partnership with the Young People's Pathway and Statutory Children's Services.

Where appropriate, referrals will be made to supported accommodation or mediation services to prevent homelessness.

Applicants Over 65

While temporary accommodation is not age-restricted, applicants over 65 will be assessed for more suitable housing options, such as sheltered or extra care housing. Where temporary accommodation is used, a clear move-on plan will be developed in partnership with Adult Social Care and other relevant agencies.

Vulnerable Women

Oxford City Council recognises that women experiencing homelessness may face distinct risks and vulnerabilities, including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, and trauma. The Council is committed to ensuring that temporary accommodation placements for women are safe, appropriate, and trauma informed.

Eligibility and Placement Principles for Vulnerable Women:

Vulnerable women will be assessed for temporary accommodation in line with statutory duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Consideration will be given to:

- Women fleeing domestic abuse or coercive control.
- Women with a history of experiencing sexual violence or exploitation.
- Pregnant women or women with dependent children.
- Women with complex needs, including mental health, substance misuse, or trauma.

Oxford City Council is committed to ensuring that trans and non-binary people are not discriminated against while accessing homelessness services. In April 2025, the UK Supreme Court ruled that for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, the term "woman" refers to biological sex. The practical implications of this ruling are that services

designated as women-only or men-only must now apply those categories by biological sex. However, the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty continue to provide protection against discrimination to those who identify as transgender or non-binary. Oxford City Council will work closely and compassionately with all homeless applicants who identify as transgender or non-binary, taking personal risk and safeguarding considerations into account, to ensure they are offered accommodation which is non-discriminatory, safe and suitable to their needs

Placement Considerations:

Where possible, women will be placed in women-only or women-preferred accommodation.

Shared accommodation will be risk-assessed to ensure safety and suitability.

Where no suitable in-district placement is available, out-of-area placements may be considered, but only where:

- The location is safe and appropriate.
- Support services are in place or can be accessed locally.

1.3 Support and Safeguarding for Vulnerable Groups

Oxford City Council is committed to ensuring that all individuals placed in temporary accommodation—particularly those with additional vulnerabilities—receive appropriate support and safeguarding. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Vulnerable women, including those fleeing domestic abuse, at risk of exploitation, or with complex trauma histories.
- Families with dependent children, especially those approaching the 6-week B&B limit.
- Young people aged 18–24, who may be at risk of exploitation or estrangement from family.
- Older adults (65+), who may require more suitable or supported housing options.
- Applicants with disabilities, mental health needs, or substance misuse issues.

Key Safeguarding Measures:

- All placements will be accompanied by a support plan and subject to regular review.
- Referrals will be made to specialist services (e.g. domestic abuse support, mental health, youth services, adult, and children social care) as appropriate.
- The Council will work in partnership with safeguarding boards, health services, and voluntary sector agencies to ensure risks are identified and mitigated.
- Where possible, placements will be made in gender-appropriate, trauma-informed, or specialist accommodation.
- The Council's approach is informed by its DAHA accreditation aims and commitment to best practice in responding to domestic abuse and safeguarding concerns

Section 2 – Entry into Temporary Accommodation Services

2.1 Referral Process

All applicants referred for temporary accommodation must undergo a structured assessment process. This includes:

- Completion of a Homelessness Application under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.
- Where a relief duty has been accepted, a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) will be completed. In cases where accommodation is provided under interim duty, the PHP may follow shortly after placement.

A Housing Needs Support Plan is required for all placements and is used to capture support needs and risks.

Referrals should be made by a Housing Needs Officer and approved by a designated Senior or Team Leader within the Housing Needs team. The referral must include:

- Confirmation of eligibility and priority status (P1–P3),
- Summary of support needs and any safeguarding concerns,
- Any known risks or accommodation requirements (e.g. women-only, step-free access, proximity to services).
- For urgent cases (e.g. rough sleepers, domestic abuse survivors, hospital discharges), a partially completed referral may be accepted to avoid delays, with full documentation to follow within 48 hours

2.2 Placement Location and Use of Out-of-Area Accommodation

Oxford City Council uses temporary accommodation units both within Oxford and in surrounding districts, including Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. These include:

- Council-owned properties within Oxford,
- Private sector leased (PSL) units,
- Emergency hotel and B&B placements under the Emergency Housing Framework.

While the Council aims to place households within Oxford wherever possible, the use of out-of-area placements is sometimes necessary due to high demand and limited local supply.

Placement decisions will consider:

- The applicant's support needs and risk factors, proximity to schools, employment, medical care, and support networks,
- The suitability of the accommodation for the household's composition,
- The availability of in-city units at the time of need.

Families with children, pregnant applicants, and those with significant medical or safeguarding needs will be prioritised for in-district placements according to the

prioritisation matrix laid out in Section 1.1. Where this is not possible, out-of-area placements will be reviewed regularly, and efforts will be made to relocate the household back into Oxford as soon as suitable accommodation becomes available.

Where an applicant is provided accommodation out of area, the Council will notify the local housing authority in whose district the accommodation is situated in line with section 208 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

2.3 Emergency Housing Framework and Spot Placements

Oxford City Council operates under a flexible Emergency Housing Framework that allows for both block and spot procurement of accommodation. This enables the Council to:

- Secure rooms quickly for individuals in crisis,
- Respond to urgent safeguarding or health-related needs,
- Maintain a diverse and responsive supply of accommodation across multiple providers and locations.

Spot placements are made based on availability, price, and suitability, with priority given to providers offering the lowest cost in the required area. Providers must be able to admit service users within 1 hour of notification.

2.4 Temporary Accommodation Placement Procedure

The placement of households into temporary accommodation (TA) is a structured process designed to ensure that placements are safe, appropriate, and legally compliant. This procedure outlines the responsibilities of officers, the documentation required, and the steps to be followed from the decision to place through to post-placement actions.

Decision to Place

- The Options Officer determines whether a duty to accommodate arises under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- All placements must be approved by a Senior Options Officer (Options Team Leader or Reviews & Appeals Officer).
- A Support Plan and Risk Assessment must be completed and submitted to the TA Placement Team before any placement is made.

Risk Assessment and Health & Safety

All clients must have an up-to-date risk assessment. In the absence of information, clients should be treated as substantial risk.

Placement types include:

1. In-person (lone or joint visit),
2. Office-based appointment,
3. Remote placement

Property Matching and Suitability

The Allocations Officer (AO) will liaise with the Options Officer and follow the prioritisation matrix laid out in Section 1.1 to identify a suitable property based on:

- Household composition,
- Priority and Eligibility criteria for Accessing Temporary Accommodation
- Support needs,
- Risk factors.

Carrying out the placement

The Placement Officer conducts the placement, ensuring the client:

- Receives and signs all required documents,
- Understands the terms of the licence,
- Knows who to contact for support, repairs, and emergencies.

The property must meet the Temporary Accommodation Property Standard and be ready to let. (See appendix 4)

Financial Responsibilities

- Clients are informed of their occupational and service charges and the importance of payment.
- The PO supports clients to set up direct debits or standing orders.
- The role of the Rents Officer is explained, including consequences of arrears.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax

Clients are supported to complete a Housing Benefit (HB) claim at or before placement. For out-of-area placements, clients are advised to apply for Council Tax Reduction with the relevant local authority.

Keys and Access

- One set of keys is provided per adult: additional sets for families with older children.
- A spare set is secured in a key safe.

All placements should occur during office hours unless authorised through the out-of-hours process.

Section 3 – Decision-Making and Governance of Temporary Accommodation Placements

3.1 Governance and Oversight

The operational oversight of temporary accommodation placements is led by the Housing Needs Team, under the direction of the **Housing Needs Management**. This team is responsible for ensuring that placements are made in accordance with statutory duties, local policy, and safeguarding principles.

Decisions to place a household into temporary accommodation are made by the Options Team, based on an assessment of homelessness duties under the Housing Act 1996. All decisions must be authorised by a Senior Officer (**Options Team Leader, Reviews & Appeals Officer and Homeless Prevention Manager**) and supported by a completed Support Plan and Risk Assessment.

The Allocations and Assessment Team is responsible for identifying suitable accommodation based on the household's needs, availability, and risk profile. Where multiple placement options exist, the team will prioritise based on:

- Legal obligations (e.g. 6-week B&B limit for families),
- Vulnerability and safeguarding needs,
- Suitability of location and property type.

Where there is uncertainty or disagreement about a placement, particularly in complex or high-risk cases, a Placement Review Panel may be convened. This panel will include:

- A Senior Officer from the Housing Needs Team,
- Representatives from relevant support services (e.g. Adult Social Care, Domestic Abuse Services),
- A member of the Senior Housing Needs Management Team (as required).

The panel will aim to reach a consensus on the most appropriate placement. Where consensus cannot be reached, the final decision will rest with a member of the Senior Housing Needs Management Team, ensuring alignment with legal duties, eligibility, and priority criteria for accessing Temporary Accommodation and statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

The referring officer (typically the Options Officer or Homeless Prevention Officer) retains overall case responsibility, including move-on planning and ongoing support coordination.

The Placement Team facilitates the operational delivery of the placement but does not assume case management responsibilities.

3.2 Waiting List and Case Management

Priority for voids will be determined through the prioritisation procedure detailed above and on suitability for a placement, not the length of time on a waiting list.

Updates and Case Management Responsibilities

Case Managers must provide regular updates for individuals waiting for temporary accommodation, particularly where there has been a relevant change in the applicant's needs or circumstances that may affect the suitability of specific accommodation.

In line with Oxford City Council's Customer Service Standards, applicants should have an assigned case manager responsible for maintaining up-to-date case records and ensuring that Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) are reviewed regularly.

3.3 Property Visits During Occupation

During the period of occupation in temporary accommodation, Oxford City Council and its contracted providers may conduct visits to the property for the purposes of:

- Welfare and safeguarding checks,
- Property inspections,
- Repairs and maintenance,
- Compliance with the Licence Agreement.

Notification and Access

The Council or its representatives may enter the accommodation at any reasonable time.

Wherever possible, reasonable notice will be given to the licensee, except in emergencies or where unannounced visits are required for welfare or safety purposes.

Visits may be conducted by:

- The Placement and Property Officer,
- The Rents or Income Officer,
- A contracted provider under the Emergency Housing Framework,
- Maintenance or estate services (e.g. ODS).

Purpose and Conduct of Visits

Visits are carried out to ensure the accommodation remains safe, habitable, and compliant with the terms of the Licence Agreement.

Officers will check:

- The condition and cleanliness of the property,
- That the licensee is occupying the property as agreed,
- That there are no unauthorised occupants or pets,
- That there are no breaches of the Licence Agreement (e.g. anti-social behaviour, damage, or absence without notice).

Feedback and Action

Any concerns identified during a visit will be recorded and shared with the relevant Housing Needs officers.

Where a breach of the Licence Agreement is identified, the licensee may be issued with a warning, or in serious cases, a Notice to Quit.

If the property is found to be unsuitable or unsafe, the Council may consider a transfer or alternative placement, in line with its Framework obligations and safeguarding responsibilities.

Framework Compliance

All providers operating under the Council's Emergency Housing Framework must:

- Allow access for Council officers and contractors,
- Cooperate with inspections and compliance checks,
- Report any concerns about licensee conduct or property condition to the Council immediately.

Notice and Eviction

While the aim is to support residents to move on positively, there are situations where a household may be asked to leave the temporary accommodation provided.

When Notice May Be Issued

A Notice to Quit (NTQ) may be issued if:

- The household breaches the licence agreement (e.g. serious anti-social behaviour, non-payment of rent) or, where applicable, the terms and conditions set out by a supplier on the temporary accommodation procurement framework.
- The Council's legal duty to provide accommodation has ended,
- The household refuses to engage with support or move-on planning,
- The property is abandoned.

This applies to all types of temporary accommodation provided by the Council.

Eviction Process

If the household does not leave after the notice period:

- The Council may apply to court for a possession order.
- If granted, an eviction warrant will be requested and a date set.
- The eviction will be carried out with appropriate support and risk management in place.
- In some low-risk cases, where the property is unoccupied and no legal duty remains, the Council or Accommodation provider may recover possession without going to court.

Support and Safeguarding

The Council will:

- Review any safeguarding concerns,
- Refer families to children's services where appropriate,

- Refer adults with support needs to adult social care or other relevant services where appropriate.

Support and Engagement

Before any formal action is taken, the Council will make reasonable efforts to engage with the household. This includes:

- Offering advice and support to help resolve issues such as rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, or tenancy sustainment,
- Referring residents to relevant support services (e.g. welfare advice, mental health, substance misuse, or domestic abuse support),
- Encouraging residents to participate in move-on planning and maintain communication with their case officer.

The aim is always to prevent eviction where possible and to support residents in achieving a positive outcome.

3.4 Right to Request a Review

Applicants may request a review under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) if they believe a decision is incorrect or unfair. This includes decisions relating to:

- The suitability of temporary accommodation,
- The ending of interim or main housing duty,
- The refusal to provide accommodation due to conduct or eligibility.

Requests must be made in writing within 21 days of the decision being communicated.

Submitting a Review

Reviews should be submitted to the Reviews and Appeals Officer via:

✉ housingneeds@oxford.gov.uk

📍 Housing Needs Team, Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX

The appeal should include:

- The applicant's full name and contact details,
- The decision being appealed,
- The reasons for the appeal and any supporting evidence.

Review Process

The review will be conducted by a senior officer not involved in the original decision. The officer will consider all relevant information, including any new evidence submitted. A written decision will be issued within 56 days of the request, unless an extension is agreed.

Temporary Accommodation During Review:

Where an applicant requests a review of a homelessness decision, the Council has a discretionary power under Section 188(3) of the Housing Act 1996 to provide temporary accommodation during the review period. This discretion is exercised based on factors such as the strength of the applicant's case, any new information provided, and the potential impact on the applicant if accommodation is not provided.

However, where the review specifically concerns the suitability of accommodation offered under the main housing duty or as a final offer under the relief duty, the Council is under a continuing duty to provide accommodation until the review is concluded and the applicant has been notified of the outcome. This is in line with the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, particularly paragraphs 7.24–7.27 and Chapter 17 on suitability.

3.5 Escalation and Complaints

If the applicant remains dissatisfied after the review, they may make an appeal to the County Court under s204 Housing Act:

Complaints

If an applicant wishes to submit a formal complaint, they may:

- Submit a formal complaint through the Council's complaints procedure
- Contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for further advice.

Section 4 – Other Guidance Documents, Forms and Policies

4.1 Pets

In accommodation that is neither owned nor leased by Oxford City Council, pets are usually not allowed. If the pet is a recognised emotional support animal, the Council will take this into account when considering move-on options from temporary accommodation.

4.2 Storage of belongings

It is the applicant's responsibility to make arrangements for storage of furniture and belongings that may need to be stored during a stay in temporary accommodation. The Council has a number of garages that can be rented to applicants for this purpose. If storage is required, an applicant should let their case officer know as soon as possible. See appendix 3 for more detailed information.

Section 5 – Appendices

Appendix 1 – Duty to Protect Belongings

DUTY TO PROTECT BELONGINGS

Introduction

Some licensees of temporary accommodation leave their belongings in their room or other accommodation when they leave. This might be, for example, if a licensee has returned key or fob, or has left with no notice, including being recalled to prison for those on probation. Whilst this property remains, the accommodation cannot be re-let. This document explains procedures to be followed to help ensure the accommodation can be re-let quickly.

The law

Where a Local Authority (LA) has provided interim accommodation for an applicant (or similar accommodation having accepted the main duty to secure accommodation) there is a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent the loss of, or to prevent or mitigate damage to, any personal property of the applicant.

Where a duty has been discharged a LA may take any steps they consider reasonable for the purpose of protecting property, although a LA can absolve itself of this duty including disposal of personal property. The circumstances under which this can be done must be clear to licensee.

Procedures:

To enable the Council to comply with provisions allowing disposal of personal property it has decided to notify licensee that it will remove and store personal belongings for 14 days from the end of the license.

To ensure legal compliance before personal property is disposed of the procedure is explained in the letter provided to the licensee accompanying the licence agreement at the outset of licence. (Perishable property and property involving unreasonable expense or inconvenience in storing can be disposed of without storage.)

It is also made clear in the letter provided to the licensee accompanying a Notice to Quit. Any letter is either given personally or sent by post. Furthermore, if an e-mail address has been provided, the notice will also be e-mailed to this address.

In circumstances where the licensee has abandoned or left the property and it is unclear where the person resides, the notice will be left or sent to the last known address (if an e-mail address is unavailable).

I have read and accept the above.

Signed
(the Licensee)

Name: **Date:**

DRAFT

Appendix 2 - Temporary Accommodation Void Standards

Introduction

This guidance sets out the standards which Oxford City Council aims to achieve when placing families in Temporary Accommodation.

Although there is no specific standard for the provision of Temporary Accommodation, Oxford City Council recognises that good practice and a consistent approach is paramount. This Guidance aims to underpin this approach.

Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended). Households may be placed in Temporary Accommodation pending the completion of enquiries into their application, or they might spend time waiting in Temporary Accommodation after an application is accepted until suitable alternative secure accommodation becomes available.

Whilst there is no sole standard for the delivery of Temporary Accommodation for homeless households Oxford City Council recognises that the quality of temporary accommodation should be of good standard and should largely meet the day to day needs of families. Oxford City Council has over 130 Temporary Accommodation properties with the majority owned by Oxford City Council and a number of properties leased from Private Landlords. These properties are essential to meet the short term needs of households whilst inquiries are made and more suitable alternative accommodation is obtained. During the stages of Temporary Accommodation Oxford City Council will strive to provide accommodation that is suitable for the needs of families. This guidance aims to set out the standards that Oxford City Council will strive to achieve when providing temporary accommodation.

This standard should be read in conjunction with the Temporary Accommodation Service Standard. The Temporary Accommodation Service Standard sets out the service that residents can expect to receive whilst in their temporary home and the expectation Oxford City Council places on its residents whilst they are in situ.

1.0 Living Environment and the Community

The building should be in reasonable condition, clean, tidy and safe. Oxford City Council has arrangements in place to ensure that maintenance needs can be delivered promptly through our Multi Skilled Operatives or the relevant Landlord. Officers log all maintenance requests to the Multi Skilled Operatives or relevant landlord together with a response time.

2.0 External Parts

2.1 Structure

The building should be structurally stable, free from disrepair and weather tight and in good repair and condition.

2.2 External walls and windows

External decoration must be sound and in reasonable repair.

Defective joinery should be appropriately repaired or renewed and decorated.

Rendered surfaces and parapet walls should be in good condition with coping and flashings secure and complete.

All brickwork must be sound and vertical with continuous pointing. Chimney stacks must be in good repair with chimney pots securely fixed.

2.3 Roofs and rainwater goods

Roof and rainwater goods must be in a good and serviceable condition.

Loose slates, tiles or aerial which presents a possible hazard or that could cause defects to the property must be made safe.

Gutters and down pipes must be securely fitted, in good condition and clear of blockages.

2.4 Soil Pipes and Drainage

Soil and waste pipes must be in good and serviceable condition and securely fixed to the structure.

There must be no evidence of leaks or damage to the soil or waste pipes, and seals at ground level must be good.

2.5 Doors

Internal glass doors in houses must be fitted with safety glass.

2.6 Windows

Windows must provide adequate light and ventilation to the room.

Windows should be able to be opened and free from decay and reasonably decorated.

Ideally, all windows should be fitted with restrictors; however, windows with a cill height of below 1100mm must be fitted with restrictors. The restrictor must prevent the window being opened by more than 100mm.

Restrictors must be fitted with an override for escape purposes. Curtain tracks should be provided where necessary.

2.7 Gardens

Gardens must be free of debris and reasonably well maintained with anything presenting a significant hazard removed.

Patio, paths and other concrete areas should be in good repair. Boundary walls and fences should be in good repair.

Ponds must be filled in.

Large trees and vegetation should be pruned or lopped back subject to any tree preservation orders.

Ideally, vertical/near vertical drops in the garden greater than 1 metre should be protected by secure fencing.

3.0 Inside Finishes

3.1 Ceiling and Walls

Any areas of live plaster, damp saturation, cracks, excessive condensation, mould growth or structural movement must be remedied and made good.

3.2 Floors

All floors should be level and even and free from trip hazards and dampness.

Floor finishes in kitchens, bathrooms and WCs should be good quality sheet vinyl ideally.

Floor finishes must be of appropriate quality and in good repair.

Carpets are preferred in the remainder of the dwelling including any stairs.

3.3 Decoration

All walls, woodwork, ceilings and metal work should be clean and in good decorative order with a minimum of scuffs, marks or abrasions. Wallpaper should be free from tears, marks or gaps.

3.4 Stairs

Stairs bannisters and handrails must be strong and well fixed. Stairs must be clean and well painted where necessary.

Handrails must be provided.

3.5 Sound transmission

Every reasonable effort will be taken to minimise sound transmission.

4.0 Services

4.1 Gas Safety Certificate

All properties will have a valid CP12 certificate.

On void turnaround a visual check should be undertaken.

4.2 Electrics

The property must have a full electrical periodic safety test certificate, and should be checked at property inspections/void that there are no loose broken incorrectly installed electrical points.

All rooms are to have either a pendant light fitting, or a florescent light fitting.

Where space and layout permits two double sockets at worktop level in kitchen, living room and main bedroom and one double socket in other rooms.

Electric meters will be boxed in if required. Communal areas will have adequate lighting.

4.3 Refuse Disposal

Appropriate refuse disposal bins will be provided with appropriate recycling information.

4.4 Energy Efficiency

All properties must be provided with as a minimum hot water tank and pipe lagging.

Thermostatic temperature controls will be fitted, where necessary.

5.0 Facilities

5.1 Kitchen

All floor surfaces should be reasonably smooth and impermeable and capable of being easily cleaned.

Wall surfaces must be smooth with the ability to be easily cleaned. All kitchen areas must be provided with adequate lighting.

Storage units should be in reasonable condition to enable food storage.

A refrigerator with adequate freezer compartment to be supplied and maintained and displaying a valid PAT label.

Refuse disposal should be provided to include non-food recycling disposal, food waste disposal with instructions in line with Oxford City Council's green agenda.

A fire blanket will be provided in the kitchen hung on the wall at least 1 metre away from the cooking appliance.

5.2 Toilet and personal washing facilities

Basin, baths, and showers must be well sealed to the tiled splash back with waterproof silicone sealant.

Toilet pan and seats must be clean and free of cracks or chips and should be well secured to the floor.

Where a resident is disabled a safety rail will usually be provided in shower unit.

5.3 Communal areas & garden

Communal areas and gardens should be easily accessible to all occupants. All areas should be kept free from items and not used as storage areas.

Communal gardens/hedges will be maintained by the Multi Skilled Operatives.

Hedges around external doors and windows must be kept trimmed low to avoid providing a safeguard for burglars.

Fencing and walls must be properly maintained.

The Multi Skilled Operatives will carry out a one off cut for individual self- contained void properties thereafter resident should maintain the garden.

Trees should be visually inspected seasonally for condition and safety. Pruning and maintenance should be carried out as necessary, under specialist advice if required, subject to any tree preservation orders.

5.4 Pets

Whilst in temporary accommodation alternative arrangements should be made for pets. The Dogs Trust may be able to assist with finding a new home for pets or temporary pet fostering schemes may be able to assist alternatively ask if friends or family can look after them.

6.0 Health and Safety

6.1 Fire Precautions (Flats)

The entrance door to the flat must be fitted with a 30 minute fire door. The door should be provided with intumescent strips, cold smoke seals (where appropriate), and a self-closing device.

The kitchen must be fitted with a 30 minute fire door with self-closing device.

All partitions on the common escape route and between separate units of accommodation there must be 30 minute fire-resisting construction.

Emergency lighting should be provided where means of escape is particularly dark (e.g. no borrowed light from street lighting) or is a long and complex route.

Smoke alarms should be provided in the common escape route and heat alarms in each flat in the lobby opening onto the common escape route. These alarms should be mains fed with a battery backup and linked so that they all activate simultaneously.

Additionally, there must be single point smoke detectors, mains fed with a battery backup, in the lobby of the flat. Units/flats consisting of 2 to 4 storeys must have interlinked detectors.

6.2 Fire Precautions (Self Contained Units)

Smoke alarms will be provided in all units.

6.3 Maintaining the means of escape in case of fire

All fire doors should be checked regularly to ensure that they are not damaged and that the intumescent strips, cold smoke seals (where fitted) and self-closing devices are working effectively.

Fire alarm systems must be checked regularly to ensure that there are no defects. They must also be checked annually by a suitably qualified Contractor.

All extinguishers, where provided, must be serviced annually by a suitably qualified Contractor.

6.4 Lighting

All rooms (excluding the bathroom or shower room) should have a lighting pendant or batten holder with bulb points and on/off switch. An appropriate rated fitting should be provided in the bathroom/shower room.

External lighting should be provided where necessary for the safety and security of residents.

6.5 Ventilation

All habitable rooms should have external air by an opening window.

6.6 Water supply

Where possible a stop tap should be situated in an appropriately reachable place.

6.7 Legionella

Properties with infrequently used outlets will be flushed through on a weekly basis whilst void.

6.8 Laundry facilities

Laundry provisions will be advised at the time of placement.

6.9 Security measures

Front entrance and rear doors should have locking doors and where possible suited mortice deadlock openable from the inside without a key using a thumb turn release.

External doors should be timber or metal framed UPVC construction or specialist laminated security doors. Where there is glazing this should be wired or toughened laminated glass.

Windows should be of sound construction, and where possible, fitted with window locks.

Hedges around external doors and windows must be kept trimmed low wherever practical to avoid providing screening for burglars.

All fencing and walls will be properly maintained.

6.10 Furnishing standards and storage space

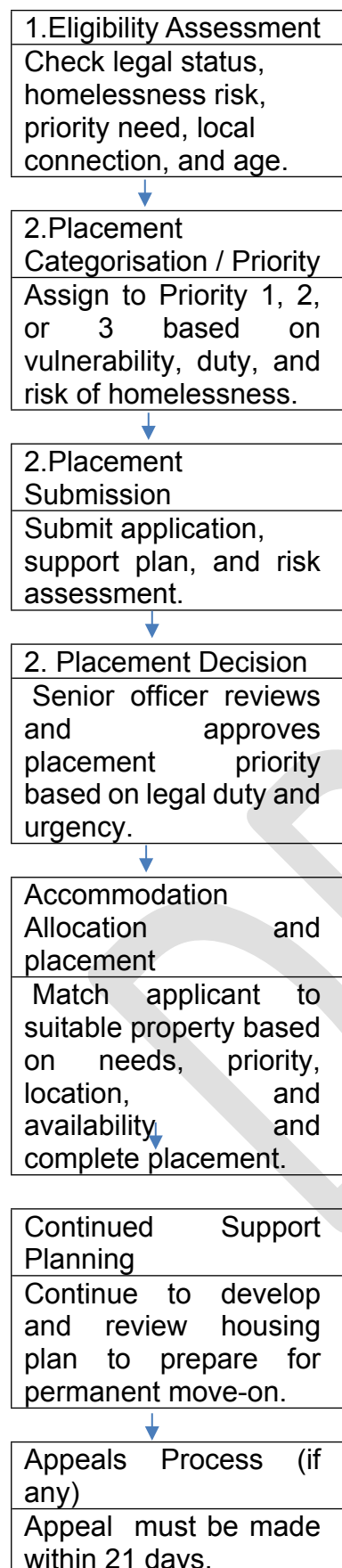
All furnishings and furniture must be clean and in a reasonable condition and comply as appropriate with the Furniture and furnishings fire Safety Regulation.

All rooms should be adequately furnished for the purpose intended.

Any large or potentially dangerous mirrors should be removed, however small bathroom mirrors can be retained but should be well fixed and secure.

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Appendix 3 – Temporary Accommodation Process Flowchart



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