



be achieved, and whose responsibility is it; to see these you will need to see the full strategy document (details on the back of this leaflet).

How was the Strategy created?

- Oxford City Council consulted with a wide selection of organisations and also people who use the homeless services in Oxford.
- Focus groups were held, which provided valuable feedback and discussion about homelessness in Oxford.
- Questionnaires were sent to hundreds of households in Oxford, and also to people who were staying in temporary accommodation provided by the council.
- A large conference was held in the town hall, which contributed to the action plans in the strategy and the vision for the next 5 years.

This brief summary leaflet outlines the purpose of the Homelessness Strategy, the main issues identified, and the broad aims of the Strategy contained within the main document.

For a full account of the Homelessness Strategy, its detailed aims and targets please visit our website on www.oxford.gov.uk

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Homelessness Strategy

2008-2013

A brief summary





Housing in Oxford

Oxford is experiencing a housing crisis, with many people unable to afford to live in the city, one of the highest levels of homelessness in England and high demand for council and Housing Association homes.

Some Oxford housing facts:

- There are over 4,600 households on the Council's housing waiting lists
- There are over 450 households living in temporary accommodation in Oxford.
- There are over 170 people living in hostels in the city.
- Two thirds of homeless persons are aged under 25.
- There are over 6,000 over-crowded households living in Oxford.

What is the Homelessness Strategy?

- It is a document produced by Oxford City Council looking at homelessness in the city. It identifies specific issues and looks at ways of tackling them.
- The strategy's vision for the future is: The long-term vision for preventing homelessness in the city is to create choice by increasing opportunities for housing,

training and employment and to realise the potential of people experiencing, or who are at risk of, homelessness.

What are the main issues identified in the strategy?

- The shortage of affordable housing in Oxford has contributed to the level of homelessness.
- Working out how many homeless people there are in Oxford is difficult. Homelessness does not just mean someone literally without a roof over their head (e.g. sleeping rough). It includes people temporarily staying with friends ('sofa surfing'); living in overcrowded conditions; in poor conditions that affect health; people at risk of violence or abuse, and many other reasons.
- The four main reasons for a person becoming homeless in Oxford are:
 - being asked to leave by family or friends
 - the loss of a private rented home
 - relationship breakdown
 - leaving care or an institution (e.g. prison)
- The Council and many other organisations in the city do a lot of work on homelessness prevention. One of the very successful methods is using the private rented sector, through schemes such as the Home Choice Scheme.

What does the strategy say will be done about these issues?

There are 8 objectives in the strategy that will be worked on over the life of the strategy. Under each one is an example action point from the strategy. These are:

- 1. Increase the range of housing options and services available to prevent homelessness.** Review and develop housing advice services.
- 2. Reduce the numbers of homeless people against key targets.** Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation The first target for this (reduce by 50% from 2003/04 levels) action has already been achieved.
- 3. Support families in housing need to prevent homelessness.** Develop and implement a sanctuary scheme to protect victims of domestic violence and help them avoid becoming homeless.
- 4. Support rough sleepers into settled accommodation and develop clear pathways into independent homes, training and employment.** Apply for 'Places of Change Programme' (PCP) funding to improve existing services and to develop a social enterprise centre in the city providing training and employments

opportunities. This application was successful and £2.3 million has been awarded to the City to redevelop the Old Fire Station.

- 5. Support vulnerable young people in housing need to prevent homelessness.** Ensure wider access to advice and information for young people in housing need.
- 6. Improve housing options services.** Develop and improve service user involvement and consultation in housing options and homelessness prevention services.
- 7. Identify and address the specific housing needs of different groups in the community who are at risk of homelessness.** Undertake research into the housing needs of minority communities to establish the effectiveness of prevention work and any reasons for high levels of homelessness in different communities.
- 8. Ensure housing options services offer value for money.** Continue to reduce the cost to the council of providing temporary accommodation.

Each objective has a number of action points which detail how the objective will