



HOUSING AND RELATED SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 – 24 YEARS

OXFORDSHIRE JOINT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY 2009-14

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This is the commissioning strategy for housing and related support services for vulnerable young people and young families in Oxfordshire. It is a working document that will form the basis for future service developments.

Commissioners

In addition to young people in care, Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for ensuring that specific groups of young people are adequately housed and supported.

The Supporting People Partnership commissions housing related support services to help people achieve and sustain independence.

The District Councils are responsible for providing housing for vulnerable young people who are assessed as homeless and in need.

Consultation

Consultation with young people has been an important element in developing the commissioning strategy. Young people appeared to really welcome the opportunity to relay their experiences and make suggestions to improve future accommodation and personal support.

Assessment of need has highlighted some key issues.

For homeless young people and young families these include the continuing need to maintain the reduction in homelessness among 16-17 year olds. Of this age group threatened with homelessness:

Two-fifths have been cautioned or convicted of an offence.

Two-fifths in Oxford are pregnant or have children.

One-third were known to Children's Services before they were 16

For young people in care and care leavers, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children, key issues include the following

Care-leavers may have multiple and complex and need for a range of accommodation. This accommodation should be linked to flexible support packages which enable young people to develop independent living skills.

Service model

The aim of this commissioning strategy is to change the focus of current services and set out a service model that has a clear support pathway from prevention, assessment and referral to access, progression and move-through and then into independence. It places primary importance upon preventing homelessness. When assessed as requiring housing and related support young people and young families should be supported from the point at which they are assessed through to resettlement.

2 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to set out Oxfordshire's commissioning strategy to improve the quality, effectiveness and value for money of housing and related support services purchased for vulnerable young people and young families. This strategy should be read in the context of the national and local priorities identified below and the documents listed in appendix 2

Service Area

Oxfordshire County Council's Children, Young People and Families Directorate is responsible for ensuring that the following groups are adequately housed and supported: care leavers aged 16-17 who are living independently; unaccompanied asylum seeking children aged 16-17 years (UASC); UASC aged 18-21 who have no recourse to public funds; care leavers who are unable to claim benefits because they are in further education; families with no recourse to public funds; families classed as intentionally homeless

These groups are in addition to children and young people that are in care.

The Directorate purchases housing and related support services ranging from independent private sector housing, shared housing with low levels of support, housing that provides high levels of support and supported lodgings where young people live with a host family. These services vary in cost, quality and their ability to meet young people's needs

The Supporting People Partnership commissions housing related support services, which help people to achieve and sustain their independence. These include specialist services for young people and teenage parents aged 16-24 years and generic floating support services from which young people receive housing related support.

Oxfordshire's five district councils are responsible for providing housing for vulnerable young people who are assessed as homeless and in need. . Their duties are set out under the Homelessness Act 2002, and they work in partnership with the County Council to fulfil their obligations.

The Development of this Joint Commissioning Strategy

A small project team has acted as the core working group to develop this strategy. This team has reported progress to the Joint Housing Steering Group, the Children and Young People's Directorate, the Supporting People Core Strategy Group and Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust.

In developing this strategy the project team has consulted with key stakeholders.

Focus groups for young people have been held across the county seeking their views on what is working well and what not so well, the key areas for change and what changes would make a difference to their lives.

Meetings for stakeholders have been held in each district of the county to seek views on what is working well, what needs are not being met, how we could organise services differently and what examples of good practice exist.

In addition the project team have had discussions with some of the main providers within the county and with commissioners in other areas. Through doing this we have gained a better understanding of the key issues experienced by providers and commissioners in the supply of young people's housing and related support services.

National and Local Priorities

Children Act 2004 The Children Act 2004 provides the legal underpinning for the transformation of children's services as set out in the [Every Child Matters: Change for Children](#) programme.

Every Child Matters is a major government policy that aims for every child from birth to age 19 to have the support they need to: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. In order to deliver this policy, organisations involved with providing services to children and young people are expected to work together to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want from life. This policy emphasises that children and young people should have more say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively.

The National Outcome Framework was developed to support the implementation of Every Child Matters. The revised framework, published in April 2008, sets out national indicators and performance measures and illustrates the alignment between the goals of the Children's Plan, Public Service Agreements and the National Indicator Set.

In December 2007, the Department of Schools, Children and Families (DCSF) drew up the Children's Plan setting out plans for the next ten years under each of the Department's strategic objectives. The Plan identifies the need for more integrated service delivery with specialist and universal services working closely together and the establishment of multi-agency arrangements for allocating resources.

Working together to safeguard children, published as part of the Every Child Matters programme, provides guidance on interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Oxfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan was developed with the engagement of children, young people, families and partners from the statutory and voluntary sector. The plan addresses the five Every Child Matters outcomes for all children including vulnerable groups.

The Government's National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy focuses on the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy. One of the targets set by this strategy is to increase the proportion of teenage parents in education, training or employment and

reduce their risk of long term social exclusion. Ensuring young people have suitable, stable accommodation is a critical factor in preventing offending.

Accommodation is vital for young people to maintain consistent attendance at school, gain employment, engage with health services and benefit from programmes to address offending behaviour. It is a core component of resettlement post custody. Lack of suitable housing options contributes to overuse of the secure estate.

The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act was passed in May 2008. The Act introduces important changes to the youth justice system.

Ensuring young people have suitable, stable accommodation is a critical factor in preventing offending. Accommodation is vital for young people to maintain consistent attendance at school, gain employment, engage with health services and benefit from programmes to address offending behaviour. It is a core component of resettlement post custody. Lack of suitable housing options contributes to overuse of the secure estate.

In order to reduce recidivism, the Youth Justice Board has introduced performance indicators to ensure that all Youth Offending Services have a named accommodation officer and all young people subject to community interventions or on release from the secure estate have suitable accommodation to go to. These indicators are NI46 young offenders have access to suitable accommodation and NI19 the rate of proven re-offending by young offenders.

In January 2009 the DCSF produced non-statutory guidance which builds upon the guidance, Joint working between Housing and Children's Services: Preventing homelessness and tackling its effects on children and young people, that was issued by DCSF/CLG in May 2008 looking at joint working between housing and children's services with regard to youth homelessness. It is to be used specifically by housing and children's services staff when using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) with a young person who is homeless or at risk of being made homeless. It contains guidance on what areas to focus on when filling out the CAF and what should be the main areas of attention for the lead professional in coordinating appropriate support services for the young person

The Department of Communities and Local Government policy on Sustaining Communities includes; preventing homelessness; providing support to vulnerable people; tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness; helping more people move away from rough sleeping; and providing more settled homes.

Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy is the overarching strategy for the area and provides the main framework for all other strategies. It also gives direction for partnership working in Oxfordshire. The strategy outlines the long-term vision for Oxfordshire identifies the common priorities for partner organisations. These priorities will be delivered through the Local Area Agreement.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA2) is three year agreement between Oxfordshire and government in which commits to the delivery of a number of priority outcomes. This includes the following targets: NI117 16-18 year olds who are not in education training or employment; NI156 number of households living in temporary accommodation; NI141 number of vulnerable people achieving independent living.

In September 2008 the Oxfordshire Joint Housing Team, which brings together housing support staff from across the Children, Young People and Families service, the five district housing authorities and the voluntary sector, completed a Review of accommodation and support services for care leavers and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The review made recommendations on the restructuring and commissioning of services in order to continue to meet the statutory duties to this client group.

The Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2008-11 identifies the key issues for young people's services as: a lack of support to many young people with complex needs and chaotic lifestyles; a lack of emergency access, accommodation-based services outside Oxford City; and the difficulty experienced by many young people in accessing support services.

The strategy identifies the key issues for teenage parent services as: the lack of available support to some teenage parents with high and complex needs; the inability of most accommodation based housing related support services to support teenage mothers and their partners as couples; and the difficulty experienced by many teenage parents in accessing support services.

The Homelessness Strategies of the five district councils all identify the need to reduce young people's homelessness as a priority and they point to the necessity of doing this in partnership with a wide range of other organisations.

Oxfordshire's Public Health Action Plan 2008/09 includes actions to address the housing and related support needs of young people, care leavers and vulnerable families.

3 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, SOCIO ECONOMIC AND HEALTH DATA

The section below consists of information provided by the Oxfordshire Data Observatory website. Appendix 2 provides a link to this website.

The local authorities in Oxfordshire consist of the County Council and five District Councils, Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse and West Oxfordshire. Health care for the whole of the county is commissioned by Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust.

Population Growth <i>Source: Census data to 2001, and 2004 revised ONS sub-national population projections</i>	mid 2001	mid 2026
Oxfordshire	607,300	711,800
Cherwell	132,000	165,900
Oxford	135,500	171,100
South Oxfordshire	128,300	135,000
Vale of White Horse	115,800	127,700
West Oxfordshire	95,700	111,900

In mid-2006 an estimated 632,000 people lived in Oxfordshire and total population is forecast to grow by over 12% between 2006 and 2026.

Of its statistical neighbours, Oxfordshire has the highest proportion of ethnic minority people in its population. The proportion of people from non-white ethnic groups grew from 3.3% of the population in 1991 to 4.9% in 2001

Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South East region with over 50% of the population living in rural settlements of less than 10,000 people and around 33% living in market towns. The largest settlement is Oxford City with a population of 149,100.

Because Oxfordshire is a rural county transport can be an issue and many young people are isolated with poor access to education and training opportunities and affordable housing.

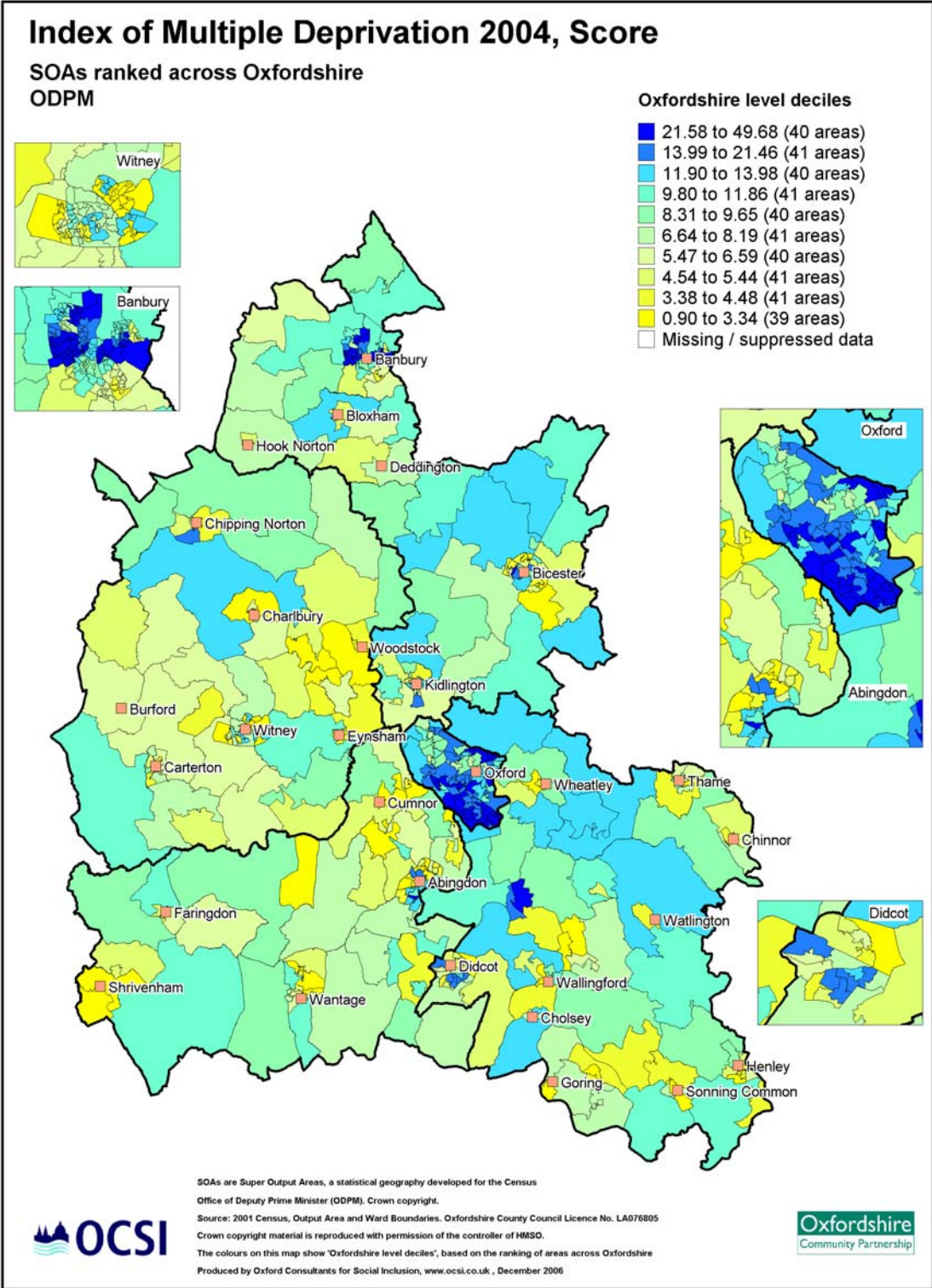
By contrast, Oxford City is a densely populated, diverse, urban area. Oxford has higher levels of migration, including residents born outside the UK, and Black, Minority, Ethnic (BME) communities than rural districts in Oxfordshire.

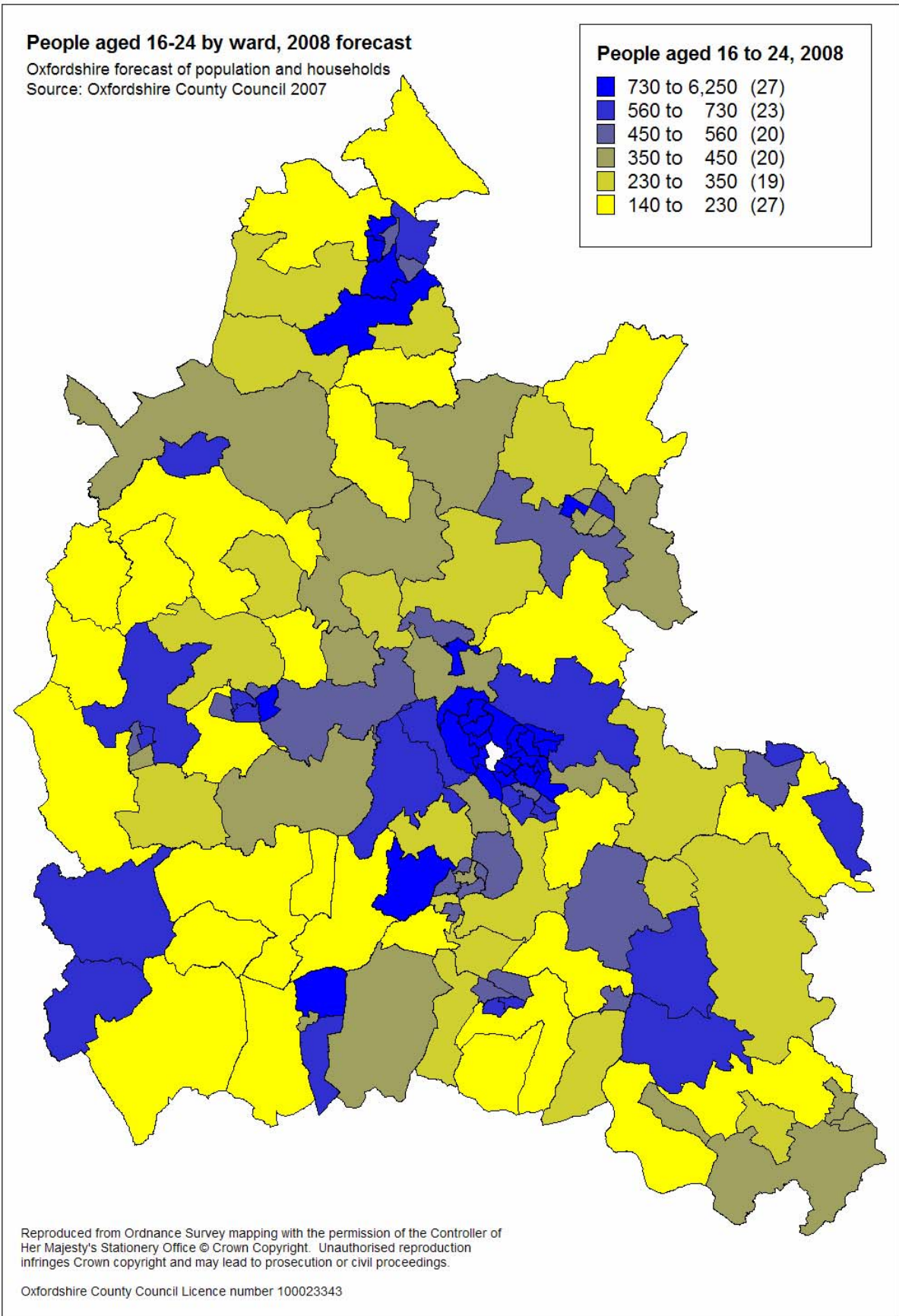
This mix of urban and rural and the inequalities of outcome, with specific areas of the county having significant levels of deprivation, demonstrates that one size will not fit all and there is a need to plan appropriate initiatives in different parts of the county

Overall the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks Oxfordshire 137th of the 149 English authorities. The majority of Oxfordshire areas are in the least deprived quartile for England. However 3% of the county features in the most deprived quartile. Most of these pockets of deprivation are in Banbury and Oxford. (see map 1 below)

Poverty for all age groups is often strongly correlated with poor health and lower life chances. Children and young people who experience deprivation find it is harder to get the same start in life as those living in more prosperous circumstances and the most significant dimensions of deprivation in Oxfordshire are barriers to housing, education and skills.

Map 1





Map 2

4 CONSULTATION

Key Messages From Young People

Discern2 Consultancy was appointed to consult with young people aged between 16-24 years in a variety of accommodation and personal support settings across Oxfordshire. The purpose of this work was to gain a better understanding of the experiences and views of young people with regard to their accommodation and personal support and seek their recommendations for further improvements.

The following is an extract from the report by Discern2 consultancy commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council. The full text of the report is available on the Oxfordshire Children & Young People's Trust Website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ocyp

The consultant's role was to provide a series of focus groups in each of the five district council areas for identified special interest groups which included:

- *Care leavers*
- *Homeless young people.*
- *Teenage parents*
- *Young offenders*

Young people appeared to really welcome the opportunity to relay their experiences and make suggestions to improve future accommodation and personal support. Many young people had overcome considerable multiple and complex social disadvantage and were grateful for even minimum support and basic accommodation. Young people tended to enjoy coming together as a group to share the commonalities of their experiences and said they wanted more opportunities to participate in activities and developmental group work. Most young people talked about being displaced from family and friends, feeling isolated and lonely and having a fear of the future. The young people in the focus groups had realistic expectations and aspirations but many felt they would not be realised without support and this was not always forthcoming. For some young people life was about coping on an extremely meagre income and surviving the sub-culture of [supported housing].

When young people were asked about their dreams and visions of the futurethe majority said they wanted to own their own property which was clean, safe and free of intrusion. Many young people talked about having support in more informal settings outside [supported housing] and the need to acquire better interpersonal skills. Young people cited interpersonal skills as an indicator of success e.g. managing people - both staff and peers was likely to get you a quicker transition to independence. Some young people, believed that their quality of life depended on their relationship with staff e.g. "You have to give them, information to help them do their job or they act snubbed and get upset"

As a very minimum the Housing Strategy Team need to consider ways of standardising and embedding systems to enable qualitative feedback from young people on their services to capture a consistent user perspective. To also consider ways of ensuring young people have greater access to advocacy e.g. "staff say go and get yourself a job but they don't realise I need them to do this alongside me" and recognise the crucial importance of brokerage e.g. "I want help to get on a college course". Young people wanted the Council to have insight into their lived experiences e.g. one young person's proposal for a Council Officer to live in the [supported housing] for a week to get a sense of how young people live.

Key Messages From Local Stakeholders

What is working well?

- The Joint Housing Team is making a difference to young people's access to accommodation and related support services and there are some well performing and effective services in place.
- Housing and support services for young people vary across the county but overall there has been a lot of work on preventing homelessness and some innovative solutions to providing emergency housing.
- Prevention, mediation and family support services have developed in parts of the county and there is evidence of increasing links and co-ordination between statutory and non-statutory services.
- Funding has been secured to improve the quality of supported accommodation in Oxford and in Bicester.
- In Oxford, flexible supported housing is meeting the needs of high risk chaotic young people.

What needs are not being met?

- There are insufficient services to prevent young people presenting as homeless or moving out of their family home in an unplanned way.
- The needs of high risk, chaotic young people and their access to accommodation and related support are not being met within their local area. This includes young people with substance misuse, personality disorder, mental health problems and mild to moderate learning disabilities.
- There is little emergency or bail support accommodation outside Oxford City.
- The support needs of teenage parents are not always being met in a whole family way.
- There is insufficient support for young people moving on to more independent living.

How could we organise services differently?

- Housing and support services should help maintain young people's links to their local communities.
- Increase joint working across housing authorities and young people's services. Maintain existing well-performing services and ensure they are resourced properly.
- Increase prevention, mediation and family support services and develop countywide emergency access supported lodgings.
- Develop flexible models of supported housing to provide more choice and meet changing needs.
- Ensure a whole family approach to supporting teenage parents.
- Improve access to move-on accommodation and support.
- Develop the skills of people working with these young people and young families.

Good practice examples

- Long-term support in the home that includes mediation, crisis intervention and ongoing family work. (Alone in London).
- The provision of respite beds in existing projects with a link to mediation work (e.g. Hove YMCA).
- Assertive outreach that works with people with chaotic lifestyles and multiple needs. (e.g. Elmore Team in Oxford)
- Accommodation for non-engaging young people (e.g. Wet House in Bournemouth where the emphasis is on intensive housing management not support.)
- 24-hour supported housing that includes step-down accommodation to promote increased independence within a safe environment. (e.g. Julian Housing in Oxford, semi independent shared housing for people moving on from hostels).

Key Messages from Provider Organisations

- Providers emphasised the need to maintain a balance of levels of need across a service. In effect this meant working with a young person across the peaks and troughs of his or her support needs and having a mix and range of service users within a particular service.
- Providers said that eligibility thresholds are going up and they are working with more young people with complex needs and chaotic behaviour. They also felt that drug use was a major factor in the chaotic behaviour of some of the young people they were working with.
- In terms of gaps providers identified the need for more specialised support worker roles. Improved access to move-on accommodation and support was also a priority as was the need to have more private rented accommodation options.
- Providers said they were willing to work in partnership with other providers but it was important to address property and housing management issues at the tendering stage.
- Key market trends were identified as:
 - A reducing demand for large accommodation based projects.
 - The effect of Individual Budgets
 - Development of framework agreements and preferred provider lists
 - Concierge services funded from Housing Benefit
 - Night stop model for emergency housing
 - Competitive costs achieved in shared housing models.

Key Messages from Commissioners in other Authorities

- Of the authorities that responded to the questionnaire none had moved to full joint commissioning and there were no pooled budgets.
- Most commissioners said they had increasing collaboration between Children's Services, Supporting People and Housing Authorities but this often happening at an operational rather than a strategic level.
- Commissioning intentions included more homelessness prevention and family support services, provision to meet the needs of chaotic young people and improved access to move-on and step down provision. There was a move away from the use of large hostel provision.
- A consistent message was to resolve issues around the landlord, housing management and support functions at the tender stage.
- Commissioners said they valued diversity of provision and working with providers who were flexible and willing to work in partnership to develop and evolve interventions
- Supported lodgings were viewed as an effective model both for longer term support and linked to a crash pad / emergency bed service. There were differences in approach to managing this type of provision with services run by both local authority and external providers.
- There was a mixture of block and spot purchasing with an interest in moving towards framework agreements and piloting individual budgets.
- The key issues identified were meeting complex and multiple needs, homelessness prevention and the challenge posed by reducing budgets.

5 ASSESSMENT OF NEED IN OXFORDSHIRE AND THE IMPLICATIONS

The definitions of need & levels of support used in this commissioning strategy are set out in appendix 3

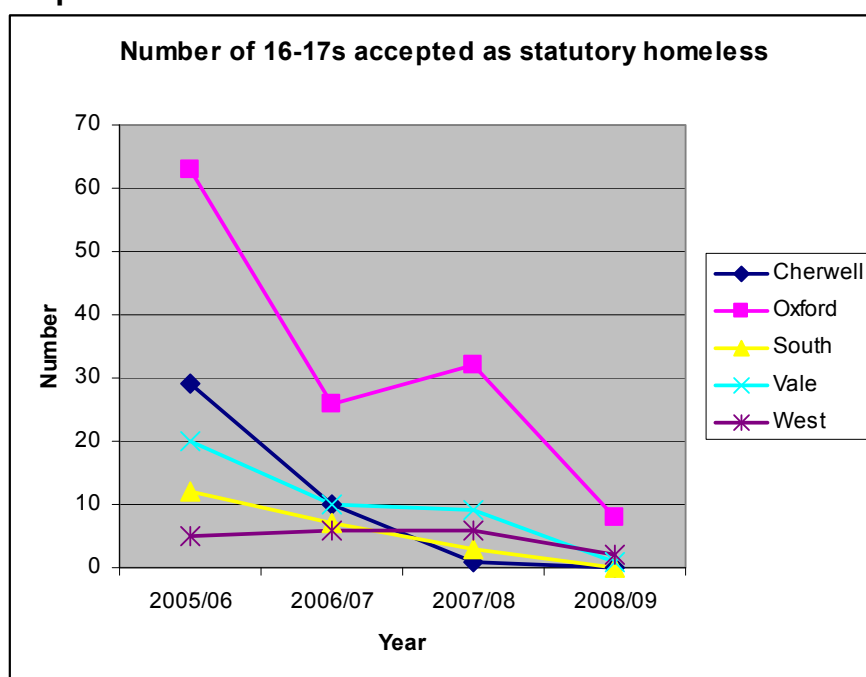
Analysis of statutory homeless acceptances

Single young people aged 16 and 17

Young people that become homeless are less likely to achieve their potential than other young people, and so preventing homelessness among young people has been a priority for organisations working with this group over recent years.

Oxfordshire's success at reducing youth homelessness is reflected in the decreasing numbers of young people that have been accepted as statutory homeless over the past four years. [see Graph 1]

Graph 1



NB 2008/09 data is from quarters one and two only

The number of homeless single 16 and 17 year olds across Oxfordshire has fallen from 129 in 2005/06 to 11 at the end of September 2009. Oxford continues to accept the highest numbers of young people as statutory homeless, accounting for 63 percent of acceptance across the County. Cherwell has had most success at reducing statutory acceptances, with numbers reducing by 96 percent between 2005/06 and 2007/08.

The fall in statutory homelessness among 16 and 17 year olds can be attributed to several factors. Housing authorities are increasingly working with supported housing providers, and some private landlords, to enable young people to access their accommodation quickly, hence reducing the numbers that need to be placed in emergency housing under statutory powers. In addition, an increased level of joint work now occurs between housing, social workers and voluntary organisations to

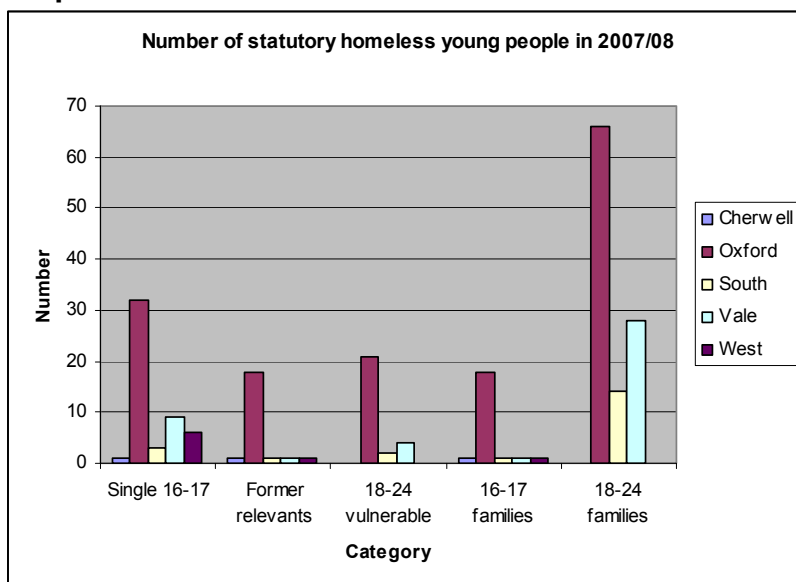
assess a young person’s situation accurately. This includes increased liaison with a young person’s family and support to that family to enable young people to remain at home.

Young families

While the number of homeless 16 and 17 year olds has reduced significantly, a similar reduction in statutory homeless acceptances has not occurred across all groups of young people.

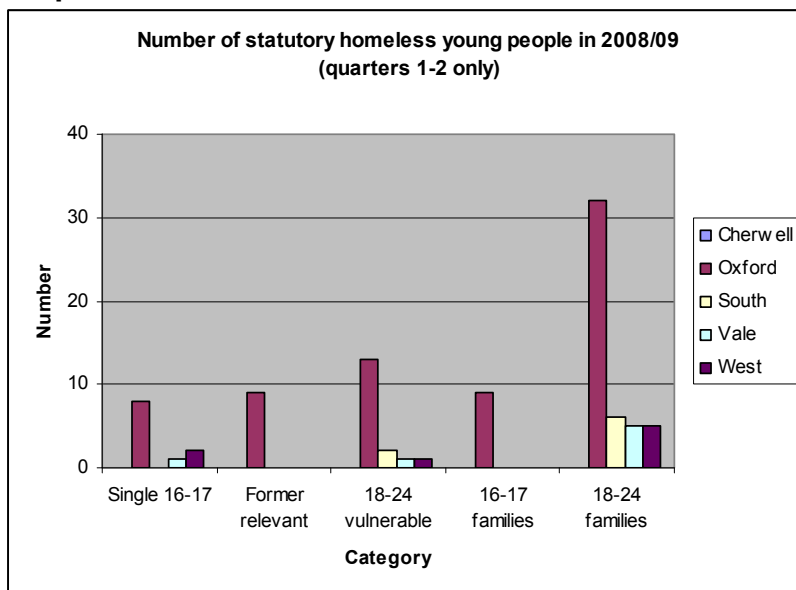
Although full year data is not yet available for 2008/09, the six month figures indicate that the number of young families that are accepted as homeless will be similar to the 2007/08 figure of 108. To date in 2009/09, all of the homeless families aged 16 and 17 are in Oxford, with over 80 percent being from Oxford in 2007/08. [see Graphs 2 and 3].

Graph 2



NB: Data not available for 18-24 vulnerable and families in Cherwell and West

Graph 3



Among young families aged 18-24 who were accepted as homeless over the past two years, around 60 percent were from Oxford. Information from Oxford City Council and the Families at Risk of Homelessness Group indicates that many of these families do require some level of support ranging from money management and help finding housing in the private rented sector, to support with parenting, domestic violence and substance misuse.

Single 18-24 year olds

As with young families, the number of single homeless 18-24 years olds has remained static, with 27 being accepted as statutory homeless in 2007/08¹ and 17 in quarters one and two in 2008/09². 75 percent of acceptances for this group were in Oxford. All of these young people have been accepted as homeless because they are vulnerable, with needs including substance misuse, poor mental or physical health, learning difficulties and domestic violence.

Further work is needed to understand fully why homeless acceptances have not reduced among this group, but may be the result of the focus on reducing homelessness among 16 and 17 year olds and the increasing thresholds for adult social care meaning that people who were supported by social workers until they were 18 do not receive support past this age.

Former relevant care leavers

Oxford City has the highest proportion of former care leavers that are accepted as statutory homeless - 82 percent, or 18 young people, in 2007/08. The majority of these care leavers are unaccompanied asylum seekers who arrived in Oxford aged 16 or 17. Since June 2008, CYPF and Oxford City Council have strengthened their joint work with this group, with many now going into private rented housing rather than becoming homeless. Thus, homeless acceptances for this group are predicted to fall in the final two quarters of 2008/09. The small number of 'indigenous' care leavers that have become statutory homeless are primarily those with multiple needs, including offending, substance misuse and mental health issues.

Analysis of Young Person's Housing Assessments (YPHA)

Whilst statutory homeless acceptances provide an indication of the level of need in a district, these figures exclude people who are homeless, but are housed and supported through non-statutory routes. For example, where the supply and structure of housing and support services means they can respond quickly, a higher proportion of homeless young people will access these services without being given a statutory homeless duty. The needs of these young people are unrepresented in an analysis based solely on statutory homeless acceptances.

Another measure of youth homelessness in Oxfordshire is the number of young people that undergo a Young Person's Housing Assessment (YPHA). These assessments are completed for all 16 and 17 year olds, and care leavers aged 18-21,

¹ Data from Cherwell and West not available

² Data from Cherwell not available

who are threatened with homelessness. This assessment determines the exact nature of a young person's needs and what housing and support should be put in place. The process for completing the YPHA varies slightly across Oxfordshire. If the young person is from Oxford, South Oxfordshire or Vale of White Horse, the YPHA is completed by a social worker in the Children and Families Assessment Team. If they are from Cherwell the assessment is done by BYHP, a voluntary sector organisation, and in West Oxfordshire it is done by the Housing Department.

As Table 1 shows, 256 YPHAs were completed between August 2007 and January 2009. These YPHAs have been analysed jointly with Connexions to determine the characteristics of the young people, including where they are currently living, the reason they became homeless and their educational achievement.

Table 1

	Oxon	Cherwell	Oxford	South	Vale	West
Number of completed assessments	256	85	94	13	24	40
Distribution of assessments	100%	33%	37%	5%	9%	16%

Oxford and Cherwell complete the highest number of assessment for 16 and 17 year olds who are threatened with homelessness, with numbers being lowest in the south of the County. When compared to the levels of deprivation across the County, [see Table 3] and the origin of young people in care, the number of assessments completed in Cherwell is higher than expected and may be linked to it being the only area where a statutory organisation does not complete the assessments.

Table 2

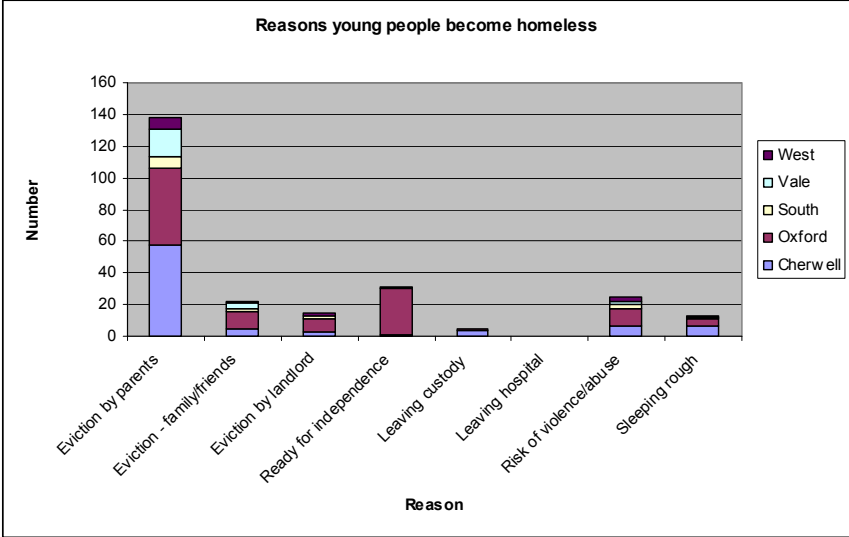
Cohort	Percentage in cohort	Distribution of cohort				
		Cherwell	Oxford	South	Vale	West
Care leavers	11 %	7 %	91 %	0	0	2 %
Pregnant or have children	20 %	27 %	41 %	4 %	10 %	18%
Have convictions or cautions	40 %	40 %	32 %	7 %	5 %	16 %
Previously known to C&F (not in care)	33 %	33 %	41 %	4 %	10 %	12%

One third of young people who are threatened with homelessness at 16 or 17 were known to the Children and Families Service prior to them being assessed under the YPHA process. Further analysis indicates that social workers were often contacted about these families several times when the young people were in their early teens before they were referred into the service and received support from a social worker. The nature of the contact was often around parenting problems and behaviour problems with the young person.

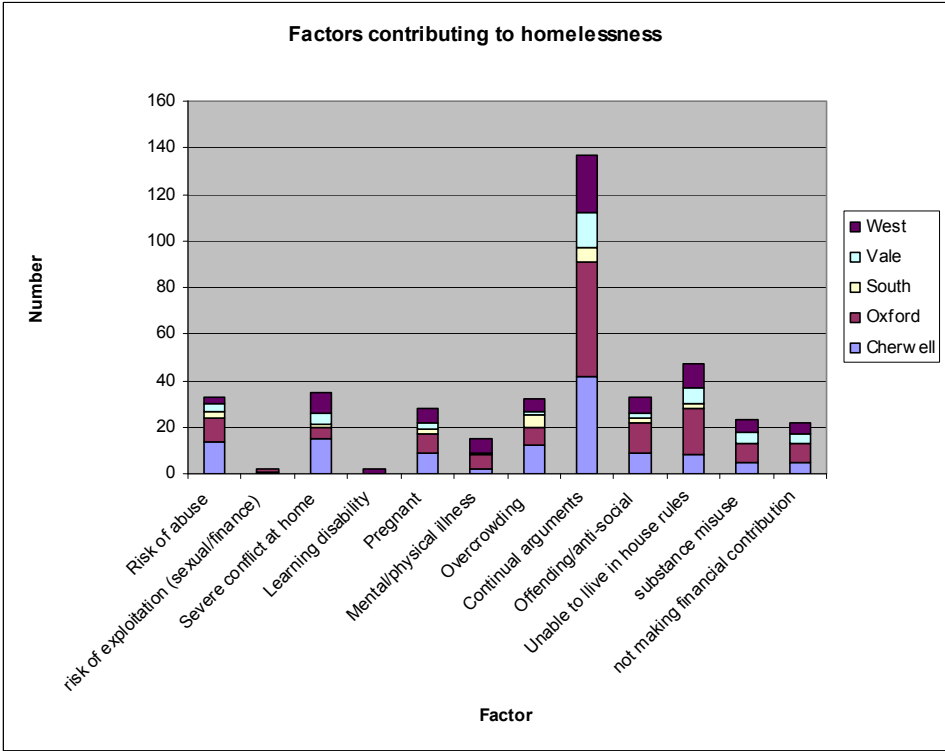
The high percentage of young people threatened with homelessness who have convictions or cautions highlights the link between offending behaviour and the loss of accommodation.

Graphs 4 and 5 show the reasons that young people who were assessed gave for being threatened with homelessness. In all districts conflict within the home between the young person and their parents, which led to the young person being asked to leave, was the primary cause of homelessness.

Graph 4



Graph 5



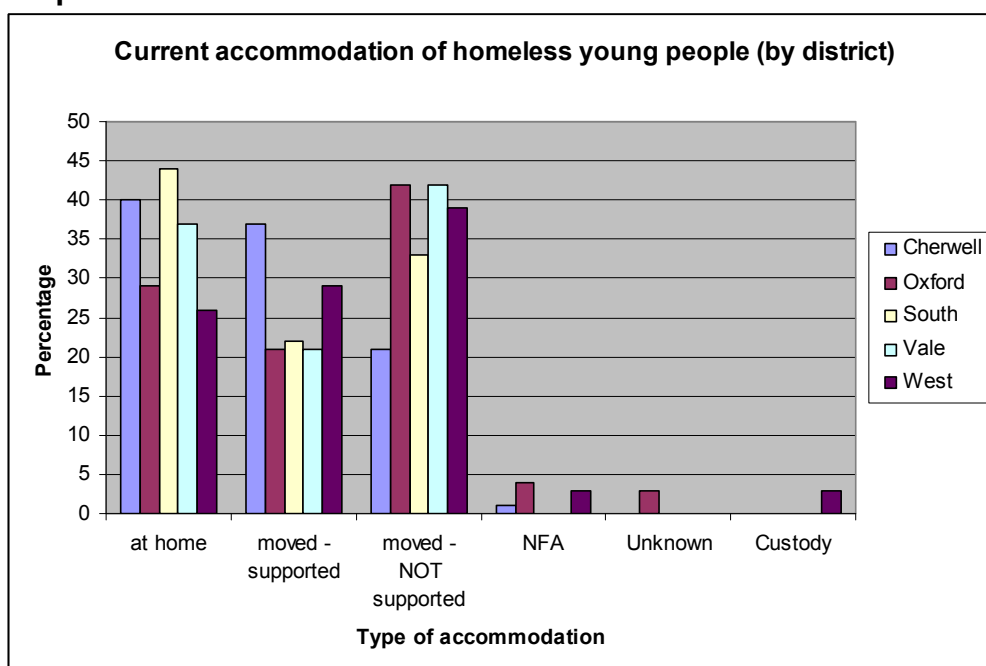
YPHAs are completed for young people who are threatened with homelessness, but not all of these young people do lose their accommodation. As Graph 6 shows, 44 percent of young people who were threatened with homelessness from South Oxfordshire, 40 percent from Cherwell and 37 percent from Vale are still living at home³ following the completion of a YPHA. This compares to 29 percent of those

³ Young people classed as still living at home, are those who at the time of this analysis were still living at the place they gave as their 'last settled address' during the YPHA assessment.

from Oxford and 26 percent in West Oxfordshire. Cherwell is the only area where there is currently a mediation service dedicated to working with young people who are threatened with homeless and their families.

Another group of young people do leave home, but move into one of the supported housing projects where workers are available to help them develop skills and knowledge and progress towards independent accommodation. Cherwell and West Oxfordshire have the highest proportion of homeless 16 and 17 year olds who move into supported housing projects, 37 percent and 30 percent respectively. This compares to about 20 percent of those from Oxford, Vale and South. Both Cherwell and West have strong referral processes in place for the supported housing projects in their area, which involve the district council prioritising which young people services should accommodate.

Graph 6

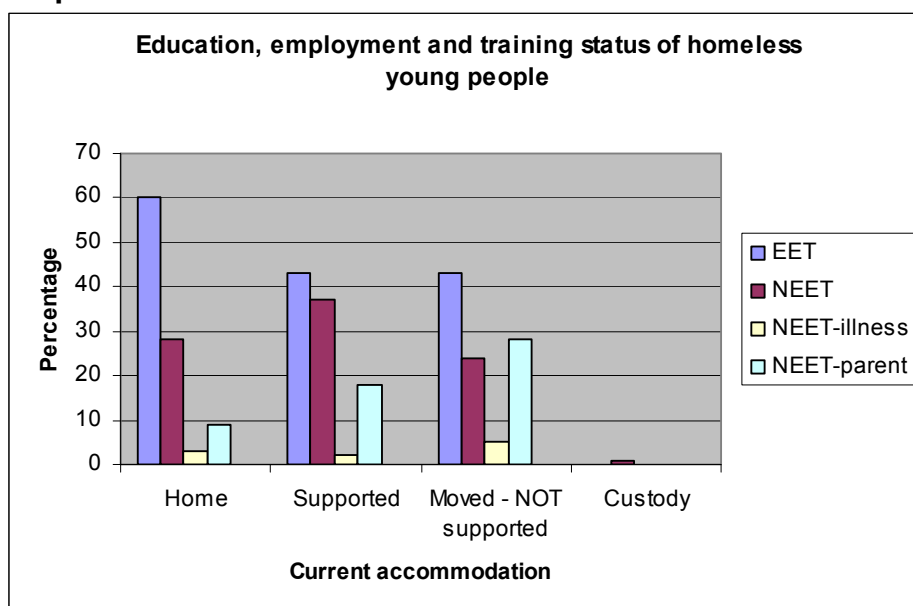


In all districts, 50 percent or over of young people who are assessed as homeless either remain at home or move into supported housing, with the highest proportion of 77 percent being in Cherwell, and the lowest proportion of 50 percent being in Oxford. However, over 40 percent of young people from Oxford and Vale who leave home following a YPHA do not move into supported housing. This includes 13 percent of young people in Oxford who move into temporary accommodation.

Young people who become homeless are less likely to be in education, employment and training (EET) than their peers. As Graph 7 shows, 60 percent of young people who have remained at home are EET, compared to 40 percent who have left home. In addition, those young people who have remained at home are least likely to be a parent or pregnant.

Of those young people who have left home, the proportion of those in EET is the same regardless of whether they are in supported housing or not. Those who are not in supported housing, however, are more likely to be not in education, training or employment (NEET) due to being a parent or pregnant than those in supported housing.

Graph 7



Deprivation indicators

National research has shown that young people who live in deprived areas are more likely to become homeless than other young people. Information from Oxfordshire's Data Observatory which projects the future population in each ward identifies the following areas with the largest number of 16 to 24 year olds: – all Oxford City; Banbury and Bicester wards in Cherwell; Witney, Chipping Norton, Carterton wards in West Oxfordshire; Didcot, Thame, Wallingford, Chalgrove and Beckley / Stanton St John wards in South Oxfordshire; and Abingdon, Faringdon, Wantage and Marcham / Shippon wards in Vale of the White Horse

Table 3 shows information from Oxfordshire Data Observatory which weights the 16 to 24 year old population according to levels of deprivation. Over half of need within Oxfordshire is within Oxford City, indicating that the highest levels of youth homelessness are likely to be in the City.

Table 3	Cherwell	Oxford	South	Vale	West	Oxon
Distribution of young people living in deprivation (%)	16	58	10	9	8	100

Teenage conceptions

Table 2 shows that 20 percent of young people threatened with homelessness were either pregnant or had children. 41 percent were from Oxford, 27 percent from Cherwell and 18 percent from West Oxfordshire. Data from the National Teenage Pregnancy Unit also shows that teenage pregnancy is not evenly spread across Oxfordshire, but shows that levels of conceptions in Oxford and Cherwell are similar. The difference in the distribution of conceptions, and of homeless 16 and 17 year olds

who are pregnant or parents, may relate to the higher concentration of supported housing for teenage parents in Cherwell than in Oxford. As a result more pregnant young people and young families in Cherwell move into supported housing before they become threatened with homelessness.

Table 4	Distribution of conceptions (percent)				
	Cherwell	Oxford	South	Vale	West
1998 – 2000	24%	30%	15%	17%	15%
2001 – 2003	24%	34%	14%	15%	12%
2004 – 2006	27%	29%	14%	16%	13%

Summary: Key issues for homeless young people and young families

- There is a continued need to maintain, and further improve, the reduction in homelessness among 16 and 17 year olds
- Work needs to be done to reduce the levels of homelessness among single 18-24 year olds and young families
- Oxford has the highest level of need among all groups of single homeless young people and young families
- Cherwell completes a higher number of YPHAs than expected, but over 40 percent of these young people remain at home
- One third of 16 and 17 year olds who are threatened with homelessness, were known to C&F before they were 16, indicating the need to identify young people who are at risk of homelessness as early as possible and provide support to them and their families
- Two-fifths of 16 and 17 year olds who are threatened with homelessness have been cautioned or convicted of an offence, highlighting the need for joint working between housing and youth offending services to support these young people
- Two-fifths of 16 and 17 year olds who are threatened with homelessness in Oxford are pregnant or have children
- Young people are most likely to become homeless following conflict within the family home, indicating that services which support families and young people will help to further reduce levels of youth homelessness
- A higher proportion of homeless young people are able to access supported housing in the areas of Oxfordshire where the district council prioritises referrals for services
- Many of the ‘indigenous’ former relevant care leavers that become homeless have multiple needs
- Supported housing services need to increase the numbers of young people who are in EET

Young people in care and care leavers, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

In August 2008, C&F completed a review of the housing and support that it buys for children, young people and families. This section provides an update to the data set out in the original review.

Young people in care

In March 2008 there were 406 children and young people in care in Oxfordshire, a 15 percent reduction from a peak of 479 in 2005, and a five percent reduction on 2006 numbers. The origin of these young people has been remarkably consistent, with 47-48 percent coming from Oxford, 30 percent from the north of Oxfordshire and 22 percent from the south of the County.

The overriding reason that local children and young people enter care is due to abuse and neglect (57 percent), with the next highest categories being children with family in acute distress and UASCs who each account for ten percent of children in care.

Black and minority ethnic groups are over-represented in care, making up 18 percent of Oxfordshire's children looked after (CLA), with this over-representation being particularly high outside of Oxford.

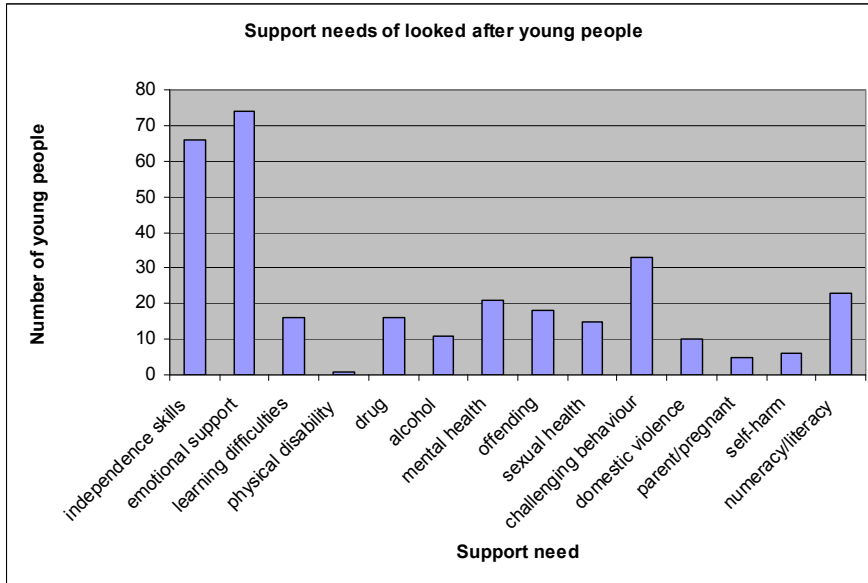
The proportion of CLA who have a disability rises steadily with age, and includes conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and speech and language difficulties. CLA are more likely to have mental health problems and special educational needs, with 40 percent of those in care in 2008 having an education statement. Due to the disruption many CLA experience in their formal education, many young people do not re-engage with learning until their late teens. Young people who start in further education aged 20 or over, or who turn 20 while studying, are not able to claim welfare benefits, resulting in C&F having an on-going responsibility for their housing and support costs.

Close analysis of the CLA figures reveals a slight rise in the number entering care – 163 in 2006 compared to 173 in 2008, but an equal number, about 30, exiting care to permanent placements (eg adoption).

The other main trend is the high numbers of teenagers requiring care. Overall three percent fewer young people aged ten to 18 entered care between 2006 and 2008, but at the end of 2008 67 percent of CLA were over ten and 18 percent over 16, compared to 65 percent and 16 percent in 2006. The needs of these young people tend to be high because they often enter care as a result of family dysfunction, family stress or socially unacceptable behaviour.

Specifically, this group of young people were not engaging in education, were offending, misusing substances or involved in anti-social behaviour before they came into care. Analysis of the 15 to 17 year olds that are currently in care, shown in Graph 8, indicates that 28 percent of these young people have challenging behaviour, 18 percent have mental health needs, 15 percent are offenders and 14 percent are using drugs. These young people will continue to need high levels of support after they leave care.

Graph 8

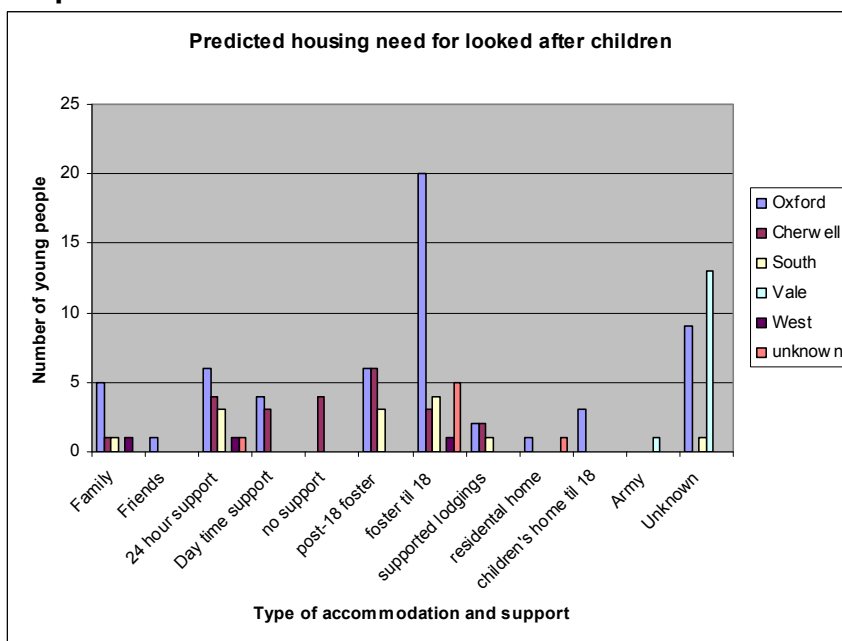


Care leavers

The 2007 white paper ‘Care Matters: Time for Change’ highlights the need for many young people to remain in care until at least 18, and Oxfordshire already enables young people to do this as part of the Rt2 BeCared4 project.

Of the 15 to 17 year olds that are currently in care reveals [Graph 9] 43 percent want to stay in their current foster or residential placement until they are at least 18. However, 23 percent who are predicted to leave their current placement, will require housing with support. Of these 44 percent are from Oxford, 33 percent from Cherwell, 15 percent from South Oxfordshire and 4 percent are from West Oxfordshire.

Graph 9



Unaccompanied asylum seekers

50% of care leavers, in Oxfordshire, are unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs) who arrived in Oxfordshire before their 18th birthday. While the number of new arrivals fell by 37 percent between 2003 and 2007, numbers aged 16 and 17 increased in 2008 to 32.

The needs of UASCs differ significantly from other young people in care, and centre around familiarising them with British society, including support learning English and understanding the cultural. Many engage successfully in education, but do require support to learn independence skills.

The direction of central government policy is uncertain for this group, but may result in higher numbers being removed shortly after their 18th birthday and new arrivals being dispersed to a limited number of local authorities

Summary: Key issues for young people in care, care leavers, including UASCs

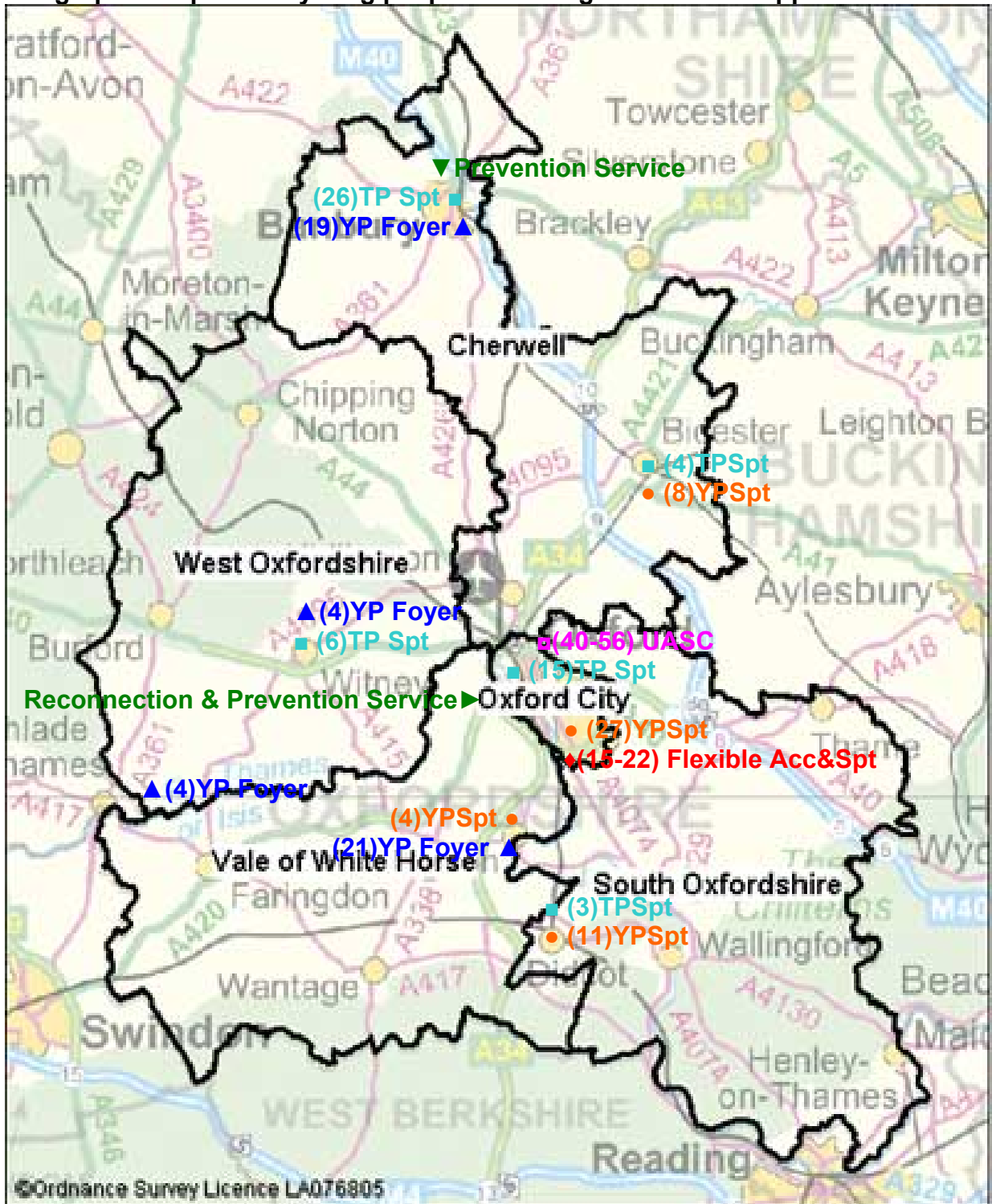
- The number of young people in care has dropped over the past three years and is predicted to remain relatively constant at just over 400 children and young people each year
- Increasing numbers of young people are coming into the care system between the ages of 10 and 15 years old, and an increasing proportion of CLA are aged over 16. These young people have multiple, complex needs while in care, and many will have these same needs when they leave care
- Increasing numbers of young people will remain in care past their 16th birthday. While around 40 percent of these are predicted to remain in their current placements, about one quarter will require independent housing with support before they are 18.
- There is a gradual increase in the number of care leavers aged over 20 who are in further education and, therefore, not entitled to welfare benefits
- About 50 percent of young people in care, and care leavers, are unaccompanied asylum seeking children, with the number of new arrivals rising slightly in 2008. Due to the difficulties in predicting how many UASCs will arrive in Oxfordshire each year, and uncertainty over central government policy for this group, retaining separate housing for these young people may be appropriate
- Around 50 percent of children and young people in care have a local connection with Oxford City, with a further 20 percent having a link to Cherwell
- A range of accommodation is required to meet the needs of care leavers, including supported lodgings, shared housing and self-contained housing
- Accommodation for care leavers needs to be linked to flexible support packages which enable young people to develop independent living skills

6. CURRENT SERVICES

Type of provision	Number of units	Properties	Geographical location
Homeless prevention service		n/a	Cherwell
Reconnection & Homeless prevention Service		n/a	Oxford
Accommodation & support	15-22	Mixed	Oxford
UASC emergency	6	Mixed	Oxford
UASC private shared	40-50	Private	Oxford
Supported lodgings	8-15	n/a	Countywide
Young people's foyer	19	Mix shared & s/c in one property	Banbury (Cherwell)
Young people's foyer	21	8 co-located, 2 co-located, 11 shared	Abingdon (Vale of White Horse)
Young people's supported housing	9	One property with 9 self contained units	Bicester (Cherwell)
Young people's supported housing	9	8 dispersed: 1 shared; 7 s/c	Oxford
Young people's supported housing	18	Group home - shared	Oxford
Young people's supported housing	11	Group home - shared	Didcot (South Oxon)
Young people's supported housing	4	4 dispersed properties	Abingdon (Vale of White Horse)
Young people's supported housing	8	Three dispersed shared properties	Witney & Carterton (West Oxon)
Teenage parents supported housing	20	Co-located bedsits and self contained	Banbury (Cherwell)
Teenage parents supported housing	6	6 dispersed properties	Banbury (Cherwell)
Teenage parents supported housing	4	One shared property	Bicester (Cherwell)
Teenage parents supported housing	10	S/c flats in one property	Oxford
Teenage parents supported housing	5	One shared property	Oxford
Teenage parents supported housing	3	One shared property	Didcot (South Oxon)
Teenage parents supported housing	6	Three adjacent properties	Witney (West Oxon)

Map 3

Geographical spread of young people's housing and related support services.



Plus 8-15 County wide Supported Lodging Units

Key:

- ▼ (Number Units) Prevention Service
- ◆ Flexible high level accommodation and support
- Emergency and shared housing UASC
- ▲ Young People's Foyer
- Young People's Supported Housing
- Teenage Parent's Supported Housing

7 CHANGING THE FOCUS OF SERVICES

Outcomes to be Achieved

- Care leavers, homeless young people, unaccompanied asylum seeking children and teenage parents are able to achieve greater independence through improved housing and related support services.
- Effective measures are in place to prevent young people from becoming homeless, to reduce the length of an episode of homelessness and to prevent recurrence of homelessness.
- Through focusing on service capacity, quality, security and cost control, greater value for money and high quality housing and support are achieved from the available funding.
- Partner agencies have an agreed protocol for providing housing and related support services to families deemed as intentionally homeless or without recourse to public funds.

These aims sit within the framework of the Every Child Matters five outcomes, public service agreements and local area agreement national indicators.

Be Healthy

PSA 12 – Improve the health and well-being of children & young people

Stay safe

PSA 16 – Increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training.

Enjoy and achieve

PSA11/DSO 4 - Gap between initial participation rate in full time higher education rates for young people aged 18, 19 and 20 from the top three and bottom four social-economic classes.

Make a positive contribution

PSA14 - Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success.

NI79 - Achievement of a level 2 qualification by the age of 19.

NI80 - Achievement of a level 3 qualification by the age of 19.

NI90 -Take up of 14-19 learning diplomas.

NI91 -Participation of 17 year olds in education or training.

NI110 - More participation in Positive Activities.

Achieve economic well-being

NI117 - 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training

NI147 - Care leavers in suitable accommodation

NI148 - Care Leavers in employment, education or training.

Youth Justice Board

NI 46 Young offenders access to suitable accommodation

NI19 Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders

Oxfordshire's Local Area Agreement 2 includes the following housing specific targets:

NI141 Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living

NI156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation

Objectives

The future commissioning of provision needs to achieve housing and support that:

- Provides high quality, well maintained accommodation;
- Provides value for money;
- Retains a flexibility to respond to the changing needs of young people;
- Enables young people to learn independence and life skills in a safe environment;
- Meets young people's cultural and religious needs;
- Allows young people to move on from the accommodation when they are ready, rather than this being triggered by their birthday or a change in their leaving care status;
- Maximises the numbers of young people in education, employment and training;
- Reduces the number of homeless young people in Oxfordshire;
- Contributes to a reduction in the levels of teenage pregnancy in the County;
- Builds on, and develops, current partnerships within Oxfordshire

Service Model

The aim of the service model is to put in place improved services that achieve the outcomes and objectives set out above.

The model is based on a support pathway for vulnerable young people and teenage families aged 16-24 years. It places primary importance upon preventing homelessness. When assessed as requiring housing and related support young people and teenage families should be supported from the point at which they are assessed through to resettlement.

Prevention Assessment & Referral: All young people and young families will enter the pathway at this point, and an assessment of their needs will be undertaken. Where possible, the young person will be supported to remain in their current accommodation, but if this is not possible, or appropriate, they will be referred to another service within the pathway.

Access: These services will be able to support and house young people at short notice. For many young people this will be the first housing and support service they enter in the pathway, and the focus will be on assessing young people's needs and engaging them in support to determine their future housing and support requirements. Where young people in the access services are not able to return to the family home, they are likely to remain in the pathway and move on to the progression, or move-through services.

Progression: Some young people and young families will enter the service pathway directly into the progression services, whereas others will have been in the access services previously. These services will focus on building young people and young families' capacity to live independently, including beginning to link them into agencies external to the service that will provide support once they move on

Move-through: Young people and young families in these services will have entered the pathway through the progression services, although the length of time they will have been in that service will vary. Move-through services will provide support for young people who have demonstrated they have many of the skills and knowledge necessary to live independently, but still require the structure of supported housing

Independence: On leaving move-through services young people and young families, will live independently. However, outreach support will be available from the move-through service for a limited time. The purpose of this is to support the transition and ensure a clear handover to any other service that will continue to work with the young person or young family.

The approach to commissioning these services is to tender services packages that will deliver this pathway from referral through to independence. These service packages are

- Homeless reconnection and referral service which will assess young people's links with Oxfordshire and manage referrals into and through services in Oxford City.
- A service for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children offering an assessment phase, accommodation and housing related support.
- A countywide supported lodgings service with emergency access where the focus is on working to assist the young person to return to the family home.
- A housing and support service for young people with multiple needs who present a high level of risk to themselves and others. This service will be able to accept young people at short notice, and enable young people to achieve some stability and begin to engage with support. Although current provision is for care leavers, eligibility for this service will extend to non-care leavers.
- Accommodation based supported housing for single young people and young families with children, incorporating step down accommodation and outreach resettlement support during the transition to independent living. The focus of this service will be on the development of independent life skills, including participation in education, training or employment.

Where services are housing and supporting both single young people and young families, separate accommodation will be provided the different groups.

Supporting links and documents

<http://www.oxfordshireobservatory.info/>

'Review of the accommodation and housing support provided by Oxfordshire County Council for children, young people and families'. August 2008

'Draft Placement Strategy for Looked After Children in Oxfordshire'. February 2009

Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2008-11

Relevant City and District strategies can be found at the following links:

<http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3836>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/housing/strategy.cfm>

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/housing-strategy/>

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/housing/default.asp>

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/living/housestrategy.cfm>

'Taking Risks: an analysis of the risks of homeless for young people in London'. Safe in the City, February 1999

Oxfordshire Core Strategy Group papers, June 2008

<http://www.spclientrecord.org.uk/webdata/>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/goodpracticeguide>

Definition of need and categories of support

These definitions are a guide only, but indicate the behaviours and needs of young people who will use the housing and related support services.

LEVEL 3 (High)

- Severe emotional health problems, in which a young person requires support to manage issues identified under the Care Programme Approach (CPA).
- Has a current history of difficulty in managing boundaries that impact significantly upon managing life constructively
- The young person's needs are complex and requires a multi agency support package
- Has a current history of offending, which causes disturbance to the local neighbourhood
- The risk indicator for self-harm, substance misuse and risk to community/violence exceeds score of 19.
- Within the first three months of release from detention (i.e. custody, rehab or psychiatric unit) and then review needs level
- Within the first three months of leaving an agency looked after placement
- Young person has a recent history of refusing to engage in plans

LEVEL 2 (medium)

- A reasonable standard of health and development is unlikely to be maintained without active support
- A young person requires significant support to enable them to develop independent skills
- The risk indicator for self-harm, substance misuse and risk to community/violence exceeds score of 14
- Has mental health diagnosis but is able to manage with active support from the CPA and manages their medication independently
- The young person is receiving treatment under dialectic behavioural therapy (if not covered above)
- Regular misuse of drug and alcohol that is impacting upon support input
- Not being able to manage boundaries and visitors consistently where it impacts upon others in the household.
- Young person has difficulty engaging in plans

LEVEL 1 (Low)

- Young people where there is minimal concern in relation to their level of need but they require a safe and supportive environment to develop their emotional well being and resilience skills.
- Is able to develop skills to manage life constructively with some support

- Active support is focused upon practical independence and social/resilience skills
- Requires a safe and support environment to enhance their development

Resilience Skills:

For example: self-esteem and identity, communication skills, negotiation and problem solving skills, interpersonal skills, understanding and identifying with others, exploring and managing feelings, action planning and reviewing

Practical skills:

For example: accessing community resources (i.e. health, leisure), managing money and paying bills, understanding housing options and tenures, personal self care, cooking, healthy diets, basic household maintenance (i.e. changing plugs), applying for jobs, benefit information

Risk indicators

Level	Severity (or need)
1	Very little or no impact
2	Reputation/nuisance type impact. Minor complaints from neighbours
3	Minor financial impact <£250/ harmful if no suitable intervention
4	Significant impact on self or others – physical hart to self / threats to others / medium financial risk <£1000
5	Sever impact on self or others – Life threatening to self / physical threat to other. Major financial risk <£1000

Level	Probability
1	Unlikely / vague threat of action
2	Specific threat / depends on unlikely set of circumstances
3	Even chance
4	Likely
5	Almost certain

Severity x Probability = Level of Risk

- 0 – 8 Low risk .
- 9 – 15 Medium risk .
- 16 – 25 high risk .

Glossary

C&F	Children and Families Service. This is the children's social care department of Oxfordshire County Council, which sits in the wider Children, Young People and Families Directorate
CYPF	Children, Young People and Families Directorate of Oxfordshire County Council. CYPF includes social care, youth and education services for children and young people in Oxfordshire
Children Looked After (CLA)	Children and young people that are in the care of the local authority
Relevant children	Young people aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after by the local authority for at least 13 weeks (need not be consecutive weeks) since the age of 14 and who have left care. These young people receive a service from the Leaving Care Team who are responsible for paying for their housing until they reach 18 years old
Care leavers	Generic term for young people who have been looked after by the local authority but have now left care
Former relevant care leavers	Care leavers who are aged 18-21
'Indigenous' care leavers	Young people who originate from Oxfordshire. This term is used to distinguish these young people from care leavers who are UASCs
UASCs	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. These are young people who arrive in England before they are 18. As they are under 18, the Children and Families Service have responsibility for their welfare
No recourse to public funds	People who are not entitled to claim welfare benefits
Statutory homeless acceptances	People who the City or District Council's housing department have accepted they have a duty to provide accommodation for under their duties set out in the Homelessness Act 2002
Intentionally homeless	People who have deliberately done or not done something that has led them to lose their housing. Housing Authorities do not have a duty to house them under the Homelessness Act
JHT	Joint Housing Team, a multi-agency team working to reduce homelessness among young people and vulnerable families in Oxfordshire
Registered placement	Placement with a foster family or a children's home that is approved by the local authority
LCPA	Leaving Care Personal Advisor. Worker in the Leaving Care Team who supports care leavers
EET	Education, Employment and Training
NEET	Not in Education, Employment and Training
CLG	Communities and Local Government department. The central government department with responsibility for housing and homelessness