



Impact report

2023–24

Homeless
Oxfordshire



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The past year has demonstrated that there is an increasing need for the vital services we offer residents



A message from our CEO



As you will see from the details in this impact report, over the past year Homeless Oxfordshire’s work has continued to make a lasting difference to people whose lives have been shaped by trauma and disadvantage.

“As homelessness in our county continues to rise and the effects of the housing crisis are still being felt on a national scale, the past year has demonstrated that there is an increasing need for the vital services we offer residents.

Against this challenging backdrop, I remain inspired by the passion of our skilled, diverse and dedicated team and by the people we support. Whether that’s Faye (page 14), who stayed at our Step-Down project, or Jamie (page 18), who successfully found his own home after living with us at Mawle Court in Banbury, or any of the other hundreds of people we have supported this year.

As you will see from the details in this impact report, over the past year Homeless Oxfordshire’s work has continued to make a lasting difference to people whose lives have been shaped by trauma and disadvantage. Each person’s story is unique, and we are proud to offer them the individualised support they need.

This concerted effort to become trauma-informed and person-centred is at the heart of our strategy for 2024-27 (page 27), which outlines the three main strands of our work where we have identified priority areas we intend to measure and develop.

We have also had plenty of cause to celebrate this year, particularly the many success stories from our projects, not to mention our residents’ art exhibition (page 22) and the amazing feats undertaken by our fundraisers (page 21).

We also welcome our new chair of trustees, Dr Carol Sweetenham who joins us having been a founding member and Chair for our alliance partner, Aspire. She brings a wealth of experience in sectors including social housing, alcohol harm reduction and disability benefits.

I am delighted to invite you to read our 2023-24 impact report which highlights some of these successes and demonstrates how our work is having a real-world impact on communities in Oxfordshire.”

Simon Hewett-Avison
CEO

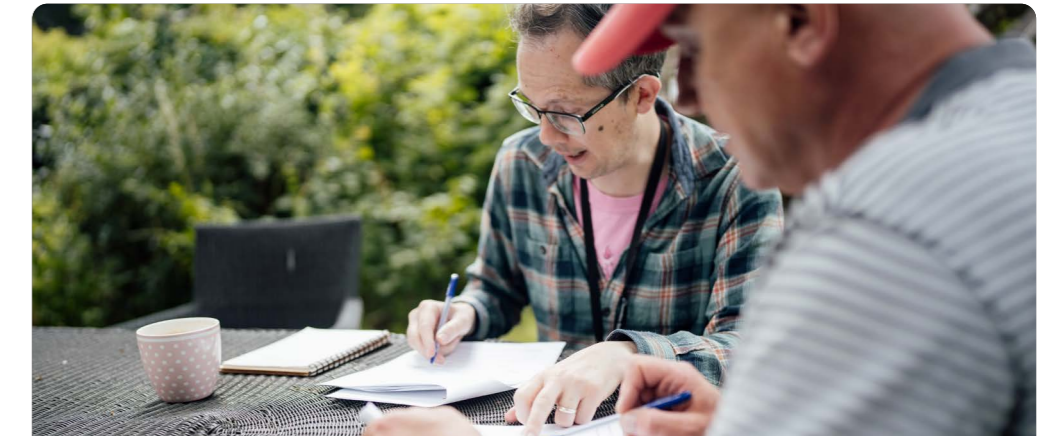


About Homeless Oxfordshire

Homeless Oxfordshire provides an open door for people whose lives have been shaped by trauma and disadvantage; offering safety, stability and support when it is needed most.

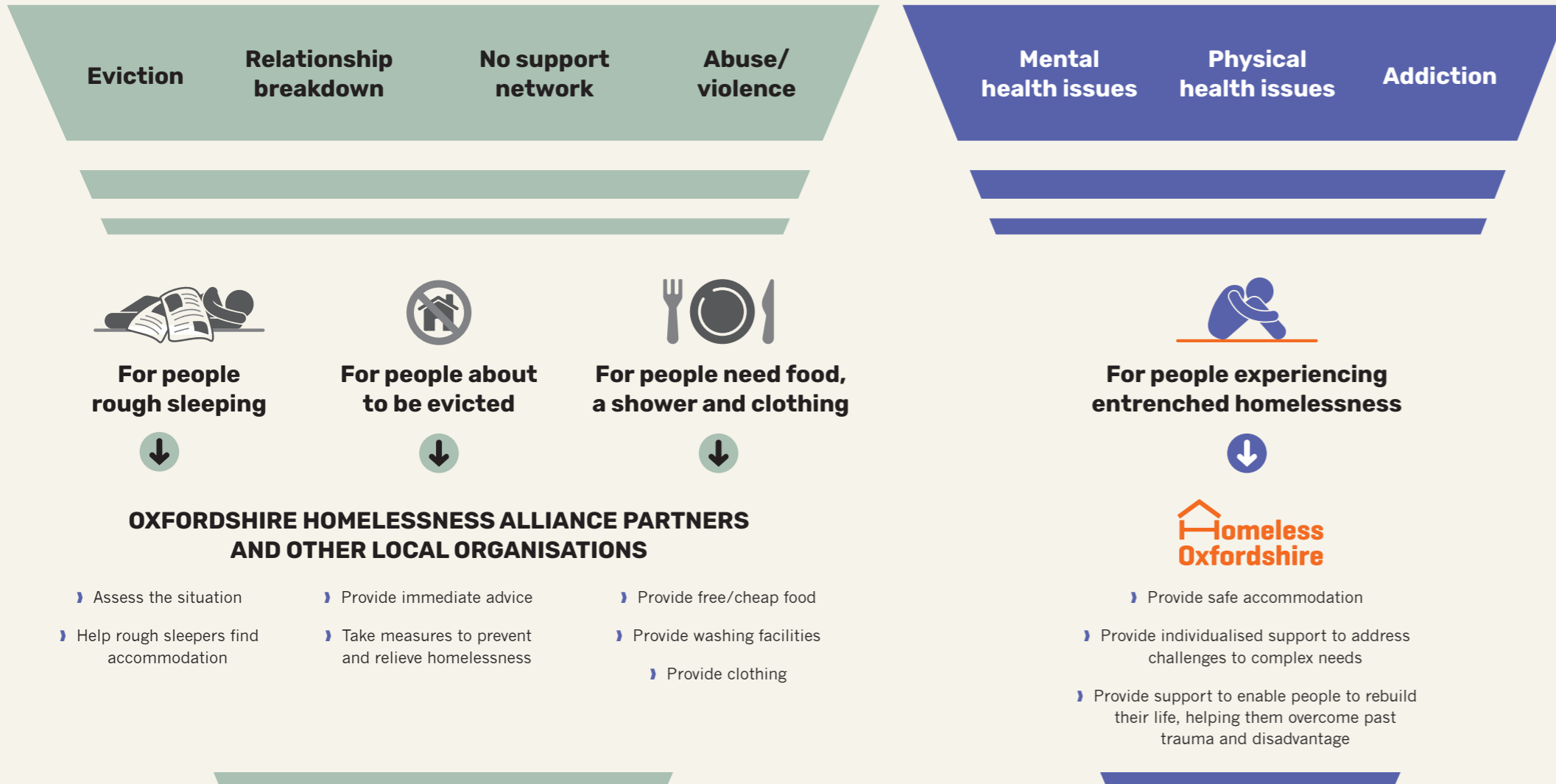
We are the county's largest not-for-profit provider of supported accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. Beyond bricks and mortar, we are also specialists in supporting those whose complex needs are often the result of life-long challenges such as poverty, childhood trauma, substance and alcohol use, institutional care, and deep social exclusion.

Our residents are mothers, brothers, aunties, cousins. They are artists, cooks, teachers, veterans. We walk alongside people on their journey through homelessness for as long as it takes to rebuild their lives because there is always the potential for things to be different.





Why we are needed


People in Oxfordshire experience homelessness due to:



We believe...

 ...there is always the potential for things to be different. We take risks and challenge stigma, systems and discrimination.

 ...everyone deserves a chance. We don't give up on people and always respond to their needs.

 ...we can make a difference. We use kindness and compassion when it is needed most.



We cover three areas of the county, housing over 170 people at any one time. We also take in our residents' dogs



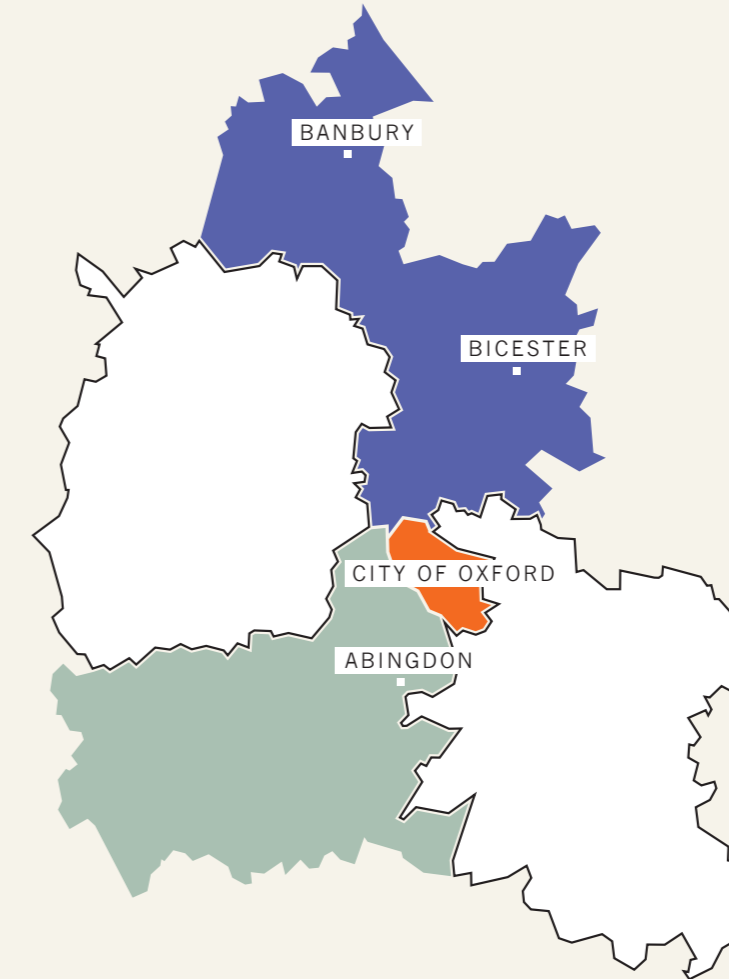
Where we are

Our locations

Cherwell
 Step-Down
 Oxford House
 Mawle Court

City of Oxford
 O'Hanlon House
 Project 41
 Women's Project
 Housing First
 Pre-recovery Project
 Sapling
 Step-Up Service

Vale of the White Horse
 Vineyard



Homelessness is on the rise in Oxfordshire

69%
 increase in Oxfordshire households estimated to be homeless

43%
 increase in Oxfordshire households threatened with homelessness

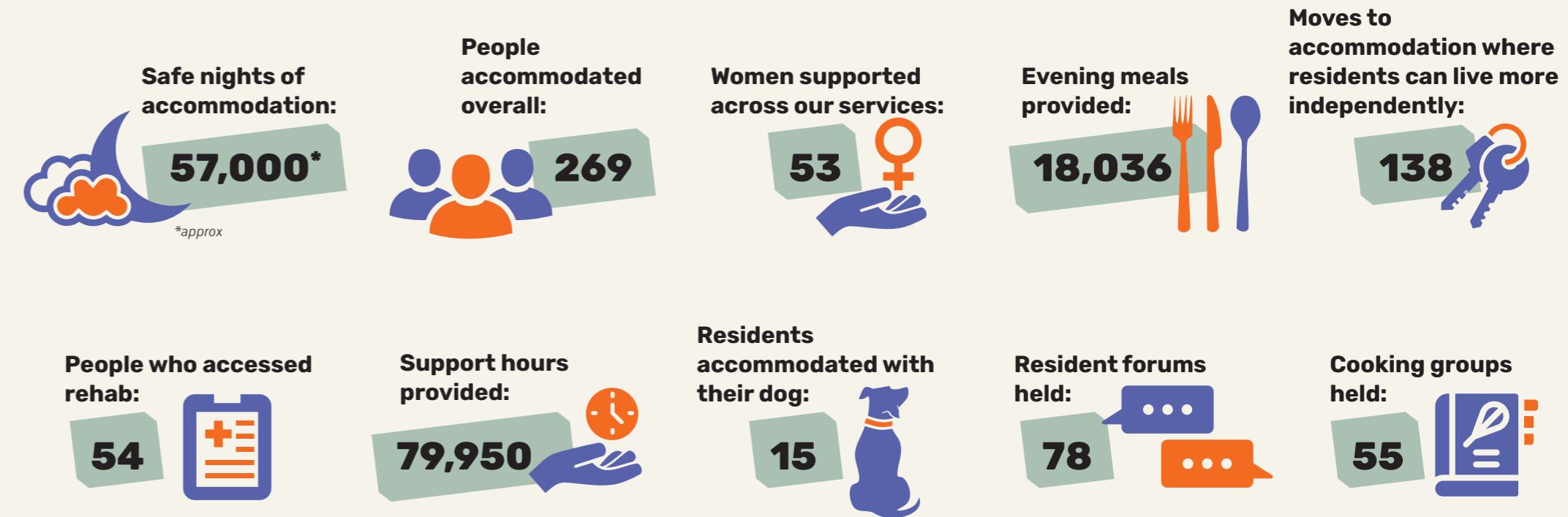
130%
 increase in Oxfordshire households in temporary accommodation

(March 2021 to March 2024)

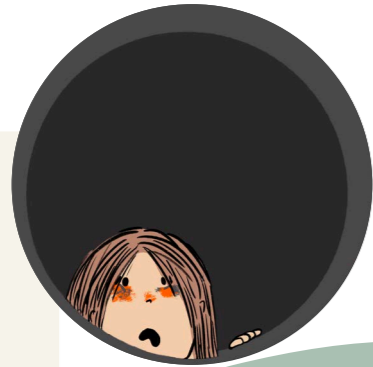


A snapshot of our outcomes

Over the last year our work made a difference every day, as the numbers show. Even the small things had a positive impact on the lives of people experiencing homelessness.



Faye joined us at our Step-Down program following a stay in hospital after taking an overdose. This is her journey through homelessness, showing the impact Homeless Oxfordshire's support had on her life and in society.



1 Faye experiences a difficult break up, escaping an abusive marriage.

Domestic abuse

Cost: **£74 billion per year (1)**

- Every year, Homeless Oxfordshire provides alternative accommodation to people like Faye, enabling them to leave abusive relationships safely.

4 Along with helping Faye rebuild her confidence, the program's support in accessing treatment and training helps Faye recover from her depression and lays the foundations for her future career.

Mental ill health

Cost: **£153 billion per year (4)**

- Homeless Oxfordshire's support helps residents negotiate systems and processes in order to access the healthcare, counselling and medication services they need, preventing conditions from worsening and aiding recovery.

Jobseeker allowance

Cost: **£307 million (£4,706 per person) per year (5)**

- The support offered by Homeless Oxfordshire helps residents access training and education opportunities that would otherwise not have been easily accessible to them and which can help open up their career options when they are ready to move on.



5 Faye is supported to apply for her own home through Homechoice.

Delays to moving on from temporary accommodation

Cost: **£1260 per person, per month (6)**

- Applications for social housing can take several months, are usually completed online and require many supporting documents (7), in addition to which around 50% of people experiencing homelessness have inadequate reading and writing abilities for daily life (8). Homeless Oxfordshire's support workers ensure residents get the help needed to apply and bid for properties when they are ready to move on.

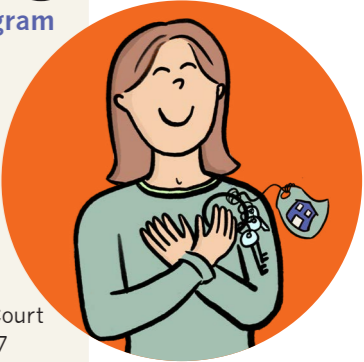


6 Faye successfully moves on from the Step-Down program and into her own home with a new career.

Reduced funding for vital accommodation and support like that offered by Homeless Oxfordshire

Cost: **Enormous additional demands on an already strained system and a vastly increased economic, social and human cost**

- Each year Homeless Oxfordshire offers vital accommodation and support to hundreds of people like Faye and in 2023-24 Mawle Court in Banbury (where the Step-Down project is based), supported 27 people, including Faye, to move into their own homes.



FAYE'S* JOURNEY through homelessness

2 Faye takes an overdose and stays in hospital, suffering from extreme depression. She has nowhere to go and will become homeless upon being discharged from hospital.

Delayed hospital discharge

Cost: **£395 per night (2)**

- Homeless Oxfordshire's Step-Down program allows for the timely discharge of patients from hospital who would otherwise be made homeless by being discharged and may have no other option than to be kept in hospital for longer as a result.



3 Faye is referred to our Step-Down program and has her own accommodation and a support worker.

Rough sleeping

Cost: **£20,000 per person per year (3)**

- Each year Homeless Oxfordshire provides accommodation and personalised support to over 170 people, many of whom would otherwise be rough sleeping with an immeasurable human cost including social isolation, barriers to education and paid work, and a negative impact on mental and physical health.



Homeless Oxfordshire's Step-Down program at Mawle Court in Banbury provides short-term housing and support for patients who are ready to be discharged from hospital but lack suitable accommodation.

Sources:

- (1) Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2021)
- (2) The King's Fund (2023)
- (3) Crisis (2015)
- (4) Centre for Mental Health (2024)
- (5) Statista (2024)
- (6) Oxford City Council (2024)
- (7) Homeless Link (2023)
- (8) Local Government Association (2023)

*Faye's journey is based on the real experiences of one of our residents, but her name and image have been changed to protect her identity.

Faye's* story

Thank you so much for all your support. Its been a long journey for me. Which has been made easier because of you all. I will definately miss you all.
Thank you

Faye joined us at our Step-Down program following a stay in hospital after taking an overdose. Here she recounts her story.

“When I came to Homeless Oxfordshire I was very depressed and my confidence was at rock bottom. I had just gone through a very difficult break up from an abusive marriage and I just couldn’t cope. I was worried about what would happen when I came out of hospital.

When I was discharged I was referred into the Homeless Oxfordshire Step-Down program and was given a support worker and my own flat. I finally felt safe for the first time in years.

When you’re in a situation like the one I’d been in, it’s hard to know where to start rebuilding your life or how to do it. Having the confidence to take that first step or to trust new people was a real challenge.

At the Step-Down project I had regular one-to-one sessions with my support worker, and the team showed me consistency, which I needed. Slowly I felt more able to let my guard down and began to open up to the team there, which was a big step for me.

I took part in lots of the activities at the project like tai chi and gardening which helped me build my confidence. I started cooking with the staff and even helped cook Christmas dinner for everyone. It was such a boost to my self-esteem and helped me start to feel independent again.

I started feeling stronger and began to grow as a person. My support worker suggested I enrol on a dog grooming college course. It’s not something I would have ever thought of doing before but I completed the course and plan to begin a new career in that field.

I had support to apply for my own property through Homechoice and I can’t wait to move in to my new home and begin living my best life.

It’s been a long journey for me which was made easier because of the team at the Step-Down project. I am so grateful to them for helping me to rebuild my life.”

*Faye’s story is based on the real experiences of one of our residents, but her name and image have been changed to protect her identity.

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Celebrating... **Mawle Court**

» | In 2023-24 we supported 27 residents to make positive life changes that enabled them to move from Mawle Court into the community and live in their own home.

Mawle Court comprises 28 self-contained flats with access to communal spaces like a lounge, courtyard and kitchen and offers two services.

One is our Step-Down project which provides short-term housing for patients who are ready to be discharged from hospital but lack suitable accommodation. The other offers accommodation for people with a variety of support needs who need a helping hand to find longer-term housing.



Person-centred support

Our support is person-centred and puts the residents' individual needs at the heart of our approach. Residents have weekly one-to-one support sessions with our team so we can get to know them as individuals and help them work towards their goals.



Therapeutic activities

We provide a range of enriching and therapeutic activities designed to build residents' confidence and bring a sense of community, such as tai chi sessions, cooking classes, communal meals, art therapy sessions, and gardening. Residents can revisit old interests or discover something new.



Wider interventions

We work closely with partner agencies such as Turning Point, Cherwell housing officers and the HepC Trust enabling residents to get the support and interventions they need, whether that be for substance or alcohol use, exploring move-on options, or health screenings.



“

I feel so proud to be able to provide a home where my children can come and stay

Jamie's* story

Thank you for helping and supporting my daddy to get get his own place and my brother can spend more time with him



During Jamie's two-year stay at Mawle Court the support team helped him overcome anger and financial issues. Here he describes the experience and what it has meant to him and his family.

"I was so angry when I moved into Mawle Court. I had to move out of my previous property where I could have my kids to stay, to a one-bedroom flat where children weren't allowed on site.

It felt so unfair and I realise now that I took my anger out on anyone and everyone - particularly the staff. I didn't really want to engage with them or listen to what they had to say. For a whole year I would get into arguments with other residents, avoid my keywork sessions and I got into arrears with my service charge.

The team at Mawle Court were persistent in trying to get me to engage. Eventually I realised they were on my side and I gradually learned to trust them. I would agree to their suggestions and support, but I was still so frustrated at not being able to see my kids on a regular basis that I didn't really act on any of it. I suppose at that point I was just engaging on a surface level, and I was still in arrears.

I started asking staff how and when I would be able to move on to another property where I could have my children to stay. The team explained to me that we couldn't begin the process until I'd engaged properly with my keywork sessions and paid off my arrears.

This gave me the motivation I needed to start making some changes. The team wanted me to succeed in my goal and they worked with me to overcome my anger issues, finding new ways to approach frustrations and disagreements.

I paid off all my owing service charge, and quite soon after beginning the housing application process my case was prioritised as Band 2, meaning my housing need was seen as urgent.

But the process still took a really long time and it was very hard to cope with the delay. A year before I would have let the rage take over but I have changed a lot and I was able to handle my frustration in a more productive way.

With the support of my support worker I was also able to come up with a savings plan so I could save money for a deposit and some furniture ready for my new property.

After staying there for two years I moved out of Mawle Court into my new home. I feel like I've changed as a person and I feel so proud to be able to provide a home where my children can come and stay so we can spend more time together."

*Jamie's story is based on the real experiences of one of our residents, but his name and image have been changed to protect his identity.

Celebrating... our volunteers

From wrapping Christmas gifts for our residents to gardening at our properties, our individual and corporate volunteers bring additional skills and new perspectives, enhance the quality of our work, and help promote the wellbeing of our residents.

During Volunteers' Week in June, Paul Berry, a volunteer in our Fundraising and Comms team told us why he gives his time and what volunteering means to him.

"I'd never volunteered with a charity before but it was in my heart to support a local homeless charity. It has been encouraging to see the services and activities Homeless Oxfordshire offer their residents and to see how this community is being supported.

It has also been very insightful from a professional point of view being part of the Fundraising and Comms team and it has meant a lot to be able to help my local community and support an urgent cause.

I would encourage anyone thinking of volunteering to go for it! There is lots of important work going on at Homeless Oxfordshire which will always need more support. The team here are nice and welcoming too."

“ It was in my heart
to support a local
homeless charity



Celebrating... supporters and fundraisers

We are always astounded by the generosity of our amazing donors and the determination and creativity of our fundraisers.

As ever, we are incredibly grateful for all their support and this year donations and fundraising has helped raise over **£350,000**. Not only will this enable Homeless Oxfordshire to accommodate people experiencing homelessness, but it means that we can provide the vital one-to-one care and support that helps people make positive changes towards living as independently as possible.

Here are just some of the ways our fundraisers have raised money for us this year:



Windmill Primary School's sale

Children in year one at Windmill Primary School in Headington, Oxford, raised over **£200** from their sale of cakes, books, handmade comics and sculptures - enough to fund two trauma-informed counselling sessions.



Jesus College Boat Club's row from Oxford to Putney

A crew of 15 from Jesus College Boat Club rowed the 170km from Oxford boathouse to Putney over two days and raised almost **£300** - which will help keep residents warm and safe for six months.



Alex's Radcamerathon

Alex ran a marathon doing laps around Oxford's Radcliffe Camera, all while wearing academic dress. He raised over **£650** - enough to set 10 residents up with kitchen equipment.



Pete's cycle to Amsterdam

Pete cycled from London to Amsterdam, clocking up a whopping 338 miles in the saddle and raising over **£1000** - enough to provide 42 of our residents with one good meal a day for a week.

Thank you to the generous trusts and foundations that awarded grants towards our work this year:

Mactaggart Third Fund • The Albert Hunt Trust • Cherwell District Council • Social Bite Fund • Oxford Poverty Action Trust (XPAT) • Dalgleish Trust



Celebrating... **Through Our Eyes** art exhibition

» | Visitors were invited to view life from a different perspective and see the daily challenges and joys through the eyes of individuals experiencing homelessness.

In February, we held our first exhibition at a gallery in Oxford featuring art created by residents living in our projects.

Much of the art on display was created during our regular art therapy sessions which provide an opportunity for everyone to be creative, with the notion that everyone has the potential to create meaningful art.

Along with a packed launch event, the exhibition enjoyed a range of media coverage online, and a piece on BBC South Today evening news in which some of Homeless Oxfordshire's staff and resident artists were interviewed.



Celebrating... our Corporate Membership Club

The Homeless Oxfordshire Corporate Membership Club is a way for businesses to build a meaningful relationship with our charity while at the same time helping us to generate sustainable annual income, which allows us to plan for the future.

Members enjoy a range of benefits, including free entry to regular business breakfast networking events and to the annual Homeless Oxfordshire Golf Day.

We are extremely grateful to all our valued CMC members for their support over the last year, and we are excited to continue building lasting relationships with these amazing local organisations.





“ We are proud of the plans we have created for the future of Homeless Oxfordshire ”

Our strategy for the next three years

» Our plans have strengthened our purpose to offer people an open door when they need it most

Our strategy for 2024-27 sets out the context of Homeless Oxfordshire’s work and our vision for the future; outlining the three main strands of our work where we have identified priority areas we intend to measure and develop.

Our plans demonstrate that, just as we are adapting to a changing landscape of legislation, public funding and welfare provision, we are also moving to put a person-centred and trauma-informed approach at the heart of everything we do.



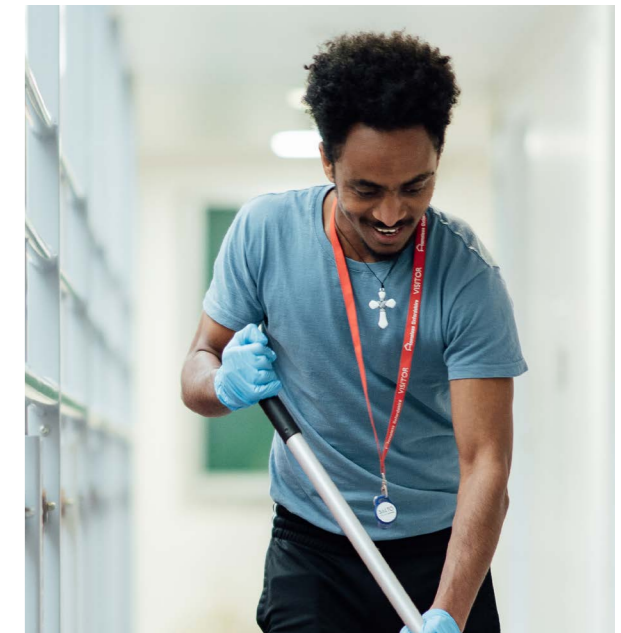
Specialist housing and support



Homes and property





Resilience and sustainability




Find out more and connect


You can find out more about Homeless Oxfordshire
on our website, including how to donate or contact us.


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