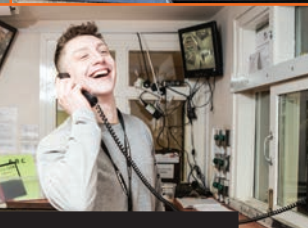
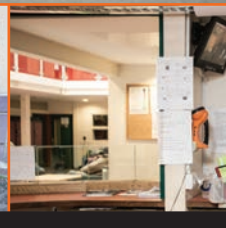
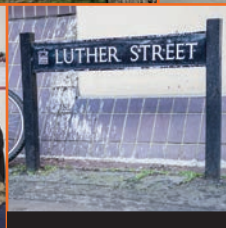
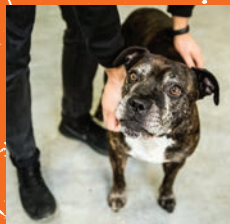


Homeless Oxfordshire

Housing today, hope for tomorrow



IMPACT REPORT



2018-19

A message from Claire...

As the CEO of the largest provider of accommodation for single homeless people in Oxfordshire, I am immensely proud of the work we do. And I am delighted to introduce our 2018–2019 Impact Report.

It's our clients' experiences over the coming pages that bring this report to life.

Each year approximately **200,000** single people experience homelessness in England¹. Locally, rough sleeping in Oxford has risen by **400%** since 2012² and over **100** households a month now approach Oxford City Council identifying as homeless³.

Homelessness is a structural and economic issue triggered by increased rents in the private sector, unaffordable housing, compounded by austerity and the effects of years of funding cuts.

Homelessness is a social issue; money issues, family breakdown, addiction, health problems or a



criminal history can escalate from a personal crisis into homelessness.

It's complex.

There is no single reason why people become homeless, just like there is no single way of ending it.

When I reflect on homelessness in this context it can often feel overwhelming. And yet the impact

we make as an organisation is demonstrated, not only in the pages of this report, but in the lives of people across Oxfordshire.

These stories show how our values drive our work; they are the lifeblood of our charity and they guide the way we work with our clients, within our communities and with each other.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, volunteers and all our supporters without whom we would not be able to provide our vital services in our Oxfordshire community.

Claire Dowan

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Dowan".

References

- 1 Crisis (2017), *Moving On: Improving access to housing for single homeless people*
- 2 Oxford City Council, *Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021*
- 3 Oxford City Council, *Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021*

About us...

We are the largest supported accommodation provider for homeless people in the county.

Each night we accommodate **220** people. But we are more than bricks and mortar. Through **11** innovative housing projects, we provide a range of support to help people rebuild their lives.

We have been supporting people across the county for over **30** years; providing meals, accommodation, training and education, welfare support and helping individuals to develop basic skills to run their own homes.



OUR VALUES

WE STRIVE TO BE
EFFECTIVE, APPROPRIATELY
CHALLENGE PERCEPTIONS
AND SYSTEMS, **INSPIRE**
CLIENTS, OUR PARTNERS
AND EACH OTHER. WE ARE
RESPONSIVE TO NEED
AND **COMPASSIONATE**.
ABOVE ALL WE ARE **BRAVE**
AND WILL NOT GIVE UP
ON PEOPLE THAT SOCIETY
MAY HAVE LEFT BEHIND.



In 2018-19... We accommodated 445 people



141

HOSTEL RESIDENTS

Our hostel, O'Hanlon House, offers **56** bedrooms for clients who might otherwise be on the streets. Here they are allocated a support worker who will help them to begin their recovery from homelessness.



30

PEOPLE USED OUR WELFARE SERVICES, EVERY DAY (on average)

Rough sleepers access our welfare services **365** days a year. They can enjoy two nutritious meals, use our showers and laundry facilities, access the internet and computers, use our clothing and toiletry banks and store their belongings in their own locker.



18

WE ACCOMMODATED 18 DOGS

We know how important client's relationships with their dogs are which is why we do all we can to accommodate canine companions.



115

SIT UP CLIENTS

Each night we accommodate an extra **20** people in the communal areas at O'Hanlon House through Sit Up. This service provides a safe and warm environment and nightly respite from the streets.



189

COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

Across the Oxfordshire community we have over **20** properties, offering **144** bed spaces. Our Community projects offer specialist tailored support to help residents move on from our services to live independently.



187

STAYS DURING SWEP

When The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was activated, our hostel provided a safe and warm place during the coldest and harshest of weather conditions.

Women and homelessness

Despite the increase in women experiencing homelessness, only 11% of services across the UK provide women-only accommodation⁴. We are proud to be one of them.

While life on the streets is tough for everyone, women are especially vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and sexual violence⁵. In March 2018 the Government announced its Rough Sleeping Initiative, pledging

£30m to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets by 2020. We received funding from Oxford City Council to run a specialist women's project; in a five bedroom, shared house,



11%

**ONLY 11% OF SERVICES
ACROSS THE UK
PROVIDE WOMEN-ONLY
ACCOMMODATION**

The Women's Project is a unique service enabling women, who have been on the streets, to be themselves after being in many male dominated environments. Clients can address and develop their needs, physically and psychologically, in a safe and secure environment.

The women I'm working with have shown amazing progression in a short period of time and I strongly believe this is because of the environment they're now living in.

Kelly, Women's Project Support Worker

References

4 Homeless Link, *Single Homelessness Support in England: Annual Review 2016*

5 Homeless Link, *Supporting women who are homeless*, March 2017

Lucy* – Life in the Women's Project

Despite having a successful career in recruitment, Lucy's relationship with alcohol had dominated her life since she was 17.

Her addiction eventually led to her being fired from her job. She put herself through rehabilitation five times but was unable – like so many – to support her recovery outside of rehab. Aged 30, she had exhausted family relationships and ended up sleeping on the streets.



For the past two and a half years Lucy has been using our services. And in November 2018, she moved into the Women's Project:

"There's five of us and we're all in recovery. It's about support, it's about moving on, it's not permanent, it's a stepping stone but it's one where you can evolve and you can find yourself amongst people who know where you're coming from and understand addiction."

"I think it's crucial for women to support each other when they're going through a period of recovery."

Speaking about the support she receives, Lucy said:

"Our support worker, Kelly, comes round to check in. She's someone you can always reach out to when you're having a moment or a wobble, or just a cry – anything. Making a diary and writing down what we're doing that week with her is so important because I do lose focus now and again, especially with depression and anxiety, there's the danger of staying in bed all day. But when you know that she's coming round it's an incentive to get up, get dressed and go to have a conversation and connect with people."

"She's been absolutely fantastic. I'm a bit of a serial re-lapser, although she said I'm a serial tryer so I think that's the term I'm going to use now."

Where would you be without Homeless Oxfordshire?

"Behind the Magistrates' Court, living on the streets under a bunch of duvets. Or dead. I wouldn't be alive without them."

* Name has been changed. Photograph is not the person depicted in the text.

Reconnect

Reconnect launched in 2016 and focuses on supporting people to build their work-ready skills and abilities to live independently.

The project offers clients – who need less support to run their own home – accommodation for up to two years. During their time with us Reconnect clients receive support from Simon, who helps them to find employment and develop skills and financial stability to reduce their risk of falling back into homelessness when managing work alongside a tenancy.

The project gives clients the best possible chance to leave homelessness behind them.

INTERVIEW

Name: Simon

Job: Reconnect Support Worker

Tell us a little about your job...

"Often when clients first become homeless, there are a lot of difficulties that mean returning to work is hard. The beauty of this project is that when clients in our other projects are ready to think about work, we're here and ready with Reconnect. By the time they come into the project, clients need less support and are working with me to find employment and move



away from homeless services, into their own accommodation that they independently manage."

What does a typical day for you look like?

"On a typical day I will arrange meetings with my clients to talk with them about finding work and increasing their employability or volunteering. In these meetings we discuss any difficulties that are preventing them from being able to move on into their own accommodation, and make plans about what it would take for them to be able to leave homelessness and live independently."

What are the challenges Reconnect clients face?

"Moving on can be expensive (e.g. carpeting, furnishing a property, rent deposits) so the support of Trust Funds makes this more realistic for our clients. I remember when I got a grant through for £500 for one of my clients to move into a private bedsit and literally jumped for joy. Since April 2018, more

or less one client a month has moved into accommodation that isn't supported (e.g. with the council, private or with other housing providers)."

What do you love most about your job?

"It's been a great joy to work with clients for over a year, share their difficulties, encourage and facilitate them to get support and train/work, and then go with them to buy their furniture for their new property."

It's nice to look back and think that I've made a difference in someone's life, and that their time at Homeless Oxfordshire has supported them off the streets.

RECONNECT 2018-19:

 **23**

CLIENTS ACCOMMODATED

31-62

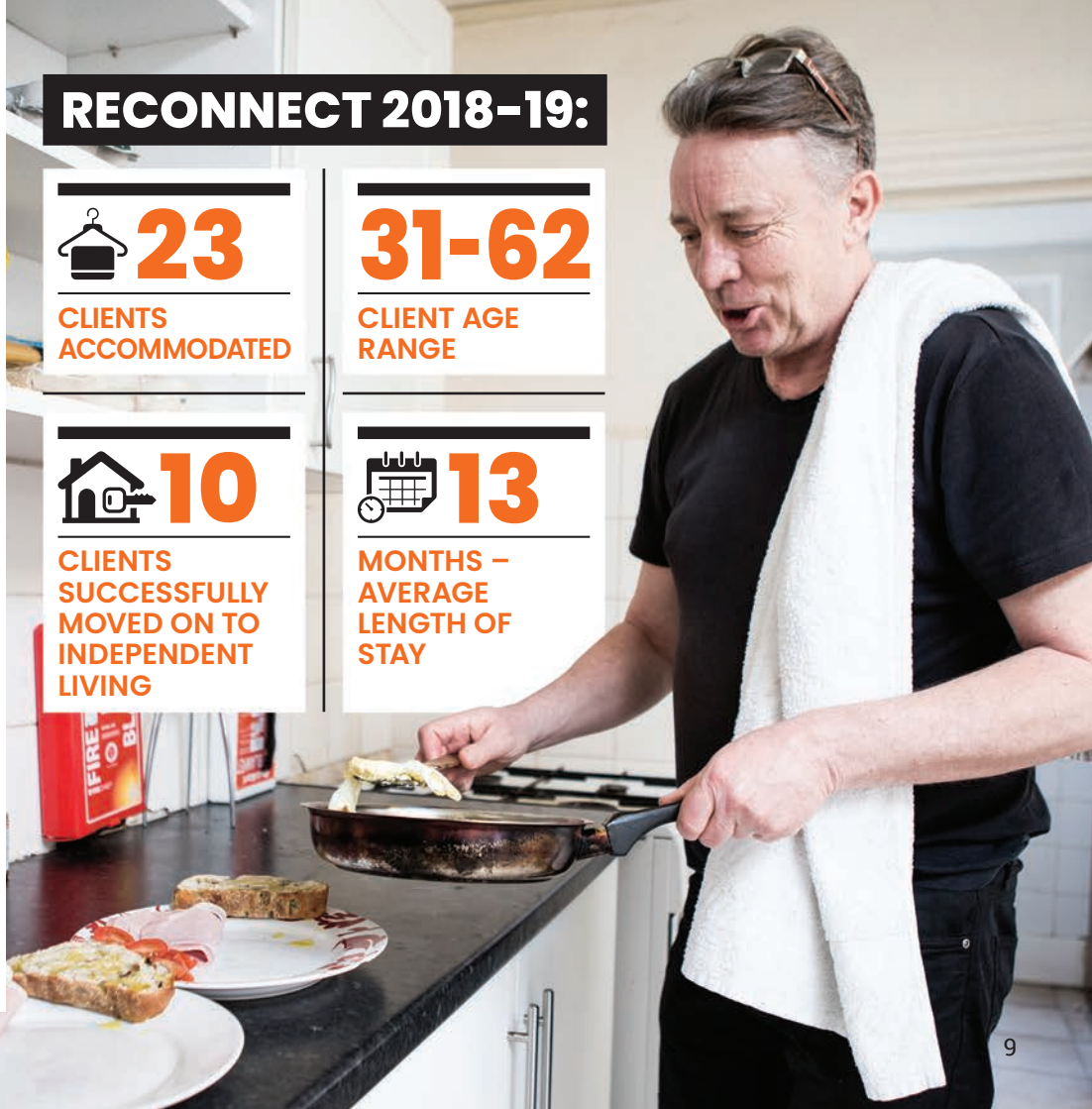
CLIENT AGE RANGE

 **10**

CLIENTS SUCCESSFULLY MOVED ON TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

 **13**

MONTHS – AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY



O'Hanlon House; our hostel

Our hostel provides welfare support for rough sleepers and offers accommodation to people coming in from off the streets. O'Hanlon House operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

When Penny* became homeless, she didn't want anyone to know. So she took her suitcases and headed to the train station: *"People would look at me and think I was just waiting for a train."* One day she woke up and someone had left her a sandwich; it broke her heart. Someone knew she was homeless.

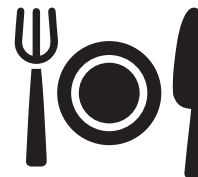
Shortly after, Penny started to use the Day Services at O'Hanlon House: *"...when I came here for the first time I was able to have a meal; an actual meal, I couldn't believe it."* When a bedroom space became available, Penny was officially welcomed as a hostel resident and her support plan began: *"The staff have helped me with things like benefits; there's a lot of paperwork, appointments, assessments."*

They've helped with basic things I just would not have been able to do by myself, like filling in a lot of online forms."

Penny had struggled with mental ill-health all her life, but it worsened when her mental health support reduced as a result of funding cuts. After her marriage ended, she had a breakdown and tried to take her own life. At the hostel, our staff helped Penny to live alongside her condition: *"Every time I needed something they did their utmost to help. And when I was quite ill they kept checking on me, and those little checks, they might not mean much*



to others, but to me it was really good, to know that someone is thinking about you."



Penny and her support worker, Sue, worked hard to claim benefits and plan Penny's Move On. In November 2018 she successfully moved into a social housing property and was able to go back to her job: *"Life finally feels good. I feel like I'm alive again."* She continues to live happily in her flat and often visits the hostel to see staff.

Knowing that they [Homeless Oxfordshire] saved my life, and knowing that they save other's lives, I'm just so grateful.

* Name has been changed

REVISITING THE HOSTEL

On a recent visit back to O'Hanlon House, Katy spoke about the support she received during the most vulnerable time in her life.

Battling with addiction, Katy used our services for years until she was ready for recovery. Today, Katy is working in the housing sector; she is two and a half years sober, drug free and is living independently.

"I became homeless through drug addiction; I started using at a really young age. I left home at about 15 and started using cannabis and then quickly went on to use Cocaine and Heroin. I then started drinking alcohol as well. My life went downhill from a really young age.

I was a nightmare when I stayed at O'Hanlon. This place [the hostel] was great to me but I wasn't great to this place. I was abusive; I caused a lot of damage to the rooms, I caused

fight and chaos. Just absolutely horrendous, but staff just never gave up on me.

Staff helped with clothing and 121s with a support worker. They would never give up on me even though I'd already given up on myself. Even at my worst, staff were still here to help me. Freddie [support worker] was amazing to me, he could see past my anger and I could sit and have a conversation with him. The staff don't judge you, they take the time to talk to you and they really do care.

I'm truly grateful to O'Hanlon House, and I felt it was really important for me to come back."



CLIENTS SUCCESSFULLY MOVED OUT OF THE HOSTEL EITHER ON TO INDEPENDENT LIVING OR INTO FURTHER SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION.

Housing First and support

Since we first piloted Housing First in Oxford in 2013, the project has been hugely successful. We have accommodated some of the city's most marginalised and excluded people, supporting them to sustain their own tenancies.

Housing First uses housing as a starting point rather than an end goal. Our Housing First project focuses immediately on enabling our clients to successfully live in their own space as part of a community. This allows us to focus on improving the health, wellbeing and social support networks of the homeless people we work with.

"Our Housing First is a two year, supported housing project and we support our clients for further two years following on from their Move On.

The project uses a hands-on support intervention to break the cycle of homelessness. Housing First clients normally have issues with substance misuse and mental ill-health, and

have slept on the streets for a number of years.

Our support work helps clients to build their skills and learn to be accountable for their responsibilities, such as managing a tenancy, paying bills and attending medical appointments; things we all take for granted but that can be challenges for those with a history of entrenched rough sleeping.

Client engagement can be challenging which is why I work alongside a Peer Support Worker who has lived experience of homelessness. My colleague's experience and knowledge is vital in building trust with a client. Together we work to tailor our engagement approaches to suit each individual."

One client, who had spent years outside, was very reluctant towards the offer of accommodation. Originally he didn't want the burden and responsibilities that come with living in a property. We had to persuade him, explaining the benefits of indoor living. Now we've accommodated him for longer than any other accommodation provider has ever managed to.

Marc,
Housing First Resettlement Worker



HOUSING FIRST:

SINCE 2013
WE HAVE
WORKED
WITH 10
PEOPLE AND
OF THESE:

 0

CLIENTS HAVE
RETURNED TO
ROUGH SLEEPING

 5

CLIENTS CONTINUE
TO THRIVE AND
MAINTAIN THEIR
HOUSING FIRST
ACCOMMODATION

 5

CLIENTS MOVED
ON INTO THEIR OWN
ACCOMMODATION

Why you are so important to us!

WHAT UNITES OUR SUPPORTERS?

The belief that no one should be homeless.

From once-in-a-lifetime challenges, mouth-watering bake sales and school presentations, to corporate fundraising and donating to our 2018 Christmas appeal, our supporters have been busy taking action.



£4,929

RAISED BY OUR
CORPORATE PARTNER,
HEDGES LAW



£535

RAISED BY DAREDEVIL
RHIANNON WHO JUMPED
OUT OF A PLANE



£2,000

RAISED BY ANGUS AND
TOM WHO WALKED THE
THAMES PATH FROM
OXFORD TO LONDON



£1,071

RAISED BY DAVE WHO
RAN A MARATHON
FROM HIS HOUSE IN
WOODSTOCK TO OXFORD



£48,987

RAISED BY OUR 2018
CHRISTMAS APPEAL
WHICH WAS INCREDIBLE



Thank You

In a time of austerity, a whole-society approach is crucial to tackling homelessness across Oxfordshire.

We could not support so many without help from our local community. From councils to individual supporters, we want to thank everyone who makes our work possible. With your help we continue to support people through one of life's most challenging situations.

A special acknowledgement to those who supported our work in 2018-19, thank you. And above all, a huge thank you to staff, volunteers and trustees.



CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

CHURCHES

CITY OF OXFORD CHARITIES

CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

COLLEGES AND STUDENTS

COMMUNITY GROUPS

CORPORATES

CRISIS SKYLIGHT

HOPER DIXON

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

JACK FM

LINACRE COLLEGE

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

OXFAP

OXFORD FOOD BANK

OXFORD POVERTY ACTION TRUST

PUBLIC HEALTH, OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANTON BALLARD

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

VOLUNTEERS

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Housing today, hope for tomorrow