

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN OXFORDSHIRE

PREVENTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE FROM HOMELESSNESS

A proven project that works with people at risk of becoming homeless. The initiative empowers them to navigate complex systems, engage effectively and build their own resilience for the future, with statutory and other organisations, to address their housing needs.

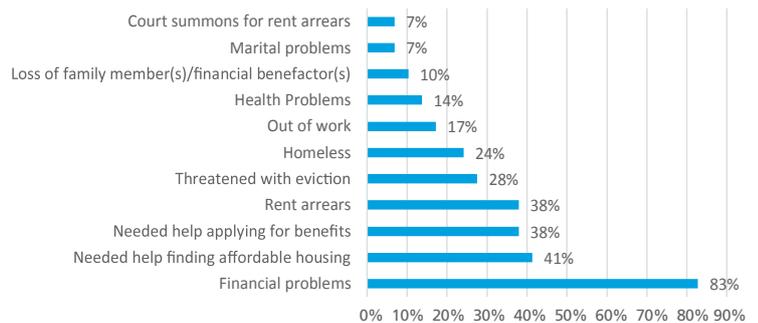
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Why homelessness prevention matters

By engaging with people at risk of homelessness before crisis point is reached, there is far more potential to work with individuals and use their energy, ideas and resilience to create a better outcome together. At the heart of the homelessness prevention approach is a commitment to a partnership working with local charities, statutory services, housing authorities and health partners to reach those most in need.

Of the people who may become homeless, 83% cited financial reasons. However, many also cited a range of social, legal, and health issues as key motivations.



Source: Aspire Self-Evaluation Enquiry, Q: "Why did you need our help?"



Success story

Sarah became at risk of homelessness after her partner left and she was struggling to pay the rent. She works part time but was left with just £35 per week after rent and bills to cover food costs for her and her five children and wasn't aware of the financial support and benefits that she had the right to claim. Sarah was due to be evicted in early November 2018, until Community Navigator Greg was able to provide her with support and advice and represented her in court to protect her from going into temporary accommodation. Thanks to the support Greg was able to give, Sarah's eviction was stopped, and she is now able to stay in her home. Aspire's Community Navigator team continue to work with her to ensure that she is accessing the correct benefits and support and putting her life back on track.



What is being done to help?

A team of Community Navigators is now working with people at risk of becoming homeless and offering the following support:

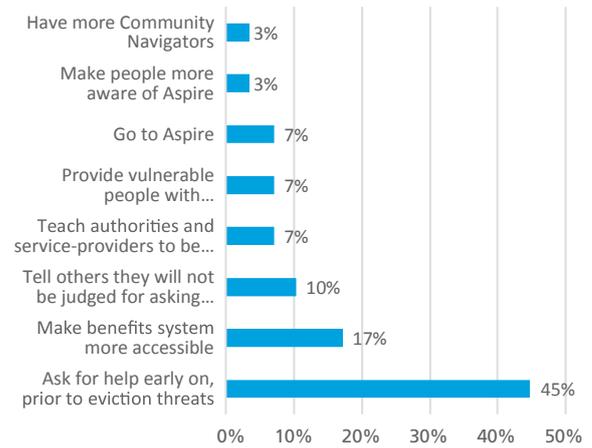
- An individual plan designed to build the skills and resilience needed to improve personal circumstances and access the right support for individual needs
- Advocacy and brokerage support to help maintain tenancies
- Housing advice, working directly with the experts
- Links to expert support on managing money and welfare issues
- Opportunities for training, work experience and employment
- Referrals to other agencies as needed
- Friendly and approachable team.



Our strategic programmes

For each of our key strategic programmes, Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) will carry out significant consultation, research and relationship-building, and our plan is to develop a suite of priority projects that we believe will deliver impact and make a genuine and lasting difference to those we are seeking to help.

As a founding partner of Oxford Homeless Movement, we have seen the evidence and benefit of prevention. OCF is providing match funding for this project through The Good Exchange - an online charity matching platform. This will ensure continued pro-active support for people facing housing difficulties.



Source: Aspire Self-Evaluation Enquiry, Q "Do you have any ideas about what could be done to prevent other people from facing housing difficulties?"



Our partners

The Aspire team are community-based, working within district councils, job centres, housing associations, advice and guidance centres. They proactively go out into GP surgeries, schools and food banks to ensure that they identify and reach people at the very earliest signs of homelessness. A core aspect of their homelessness prevention activity is to bring together local people who are vulnerable to homelessness with the services which can help them. This whole community approach reduces duplication by improving co-ordination and communication between all the local services.



Measuring success

During the pilot period, 45% of people who were supported would have been homeless or evicted without this support: we expect this to continue to be the case for the ongoing service.

Homelessness prevention activity will aim to work with at least 200 people every year who are vulnerable to homelessness.

Out of these, the project will directly prevent 50 people from rough sleeping, sustain at least 55 tenancies and help at least 20 people into new accommodation.

Homelessness prevention builds confidence and resilience in 100% of beneficiaries so that they can prevent their own homelessness in the future.



How can you help?

This is one of several projects we would like to see scaled up and you can help by donating money to support the continuation of this homelessness prevention project through the Good Exchange. Visit thegoodexchange.com/aspire.

Multi-year funding allows us to plan for the future. Our active involvement in Oxford Homeless Movement shows long term and preventative support is vital to transform the system.



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