

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Supporting people with No Recourse to Public Funds

An opportunity to help some of our most vulnerable neighbours find a home and rebuild their lives

Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (OHM) is seeking support to change the lives of some of the most disadvantaged homeless people in the region.

Specifically, we need funds to run the programme, and suitable properties to house people who will be destitute without support. The purpose of this document is to give a brief overview of the issues, and of the programme that has been designed to deal with them. It should generate interest from philanthropic people or grant-funding organisations who will ask us to provide more detail, leading to discussions about how they can help.

**OXFORDSHIRE
HOMELESS
MOVEMENT**
Nobody should have
to sleep rough on
our streets

The homelessness issue we are targeting

200 homeless people who were sleeping rough in Oxfordshire have been housed in temporary accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been a significant achievement, brought about by a combination of government policy and the combined resources of a wide number of charitable and government organisations. Its success proves that homelessness can be ended if given priority and adequate resources.

However, these arrangements start to come to an end from 31st March 2021. After that, under current government policy, local councils are not permitted to use their resources to house people with a status referred to as "NRPF" (No Recourse to Public Funds). Whilst many of the affected homeless people will potentially have access to benefits and public-funded services, people with NRPF do not. 21 people have been identified in this category and it is these that the project aims to help, accepting additional referrals up to a maximum of 30 people. As people successfully move on, their place can be taken by others in the county in a similar position.

Potential participants in the programme are all individuals, so their circumstances and needs vary. What they have in common is that they are all people with NRPF and they are all homeless. Some are from EEA countries and so are allowed to work, though finding work when homeless is problematic. The majority are from outside the EEA and have a pending or unresolved asylum claim. They are not allowed to work; neither are they eligible for benefits, nor allowed to use public services except for basic health care.

Providing good longer-term solutions for these people not only helps them, it also helps to protect the wider community during the current pandemic.

Key aspects of the programme

The objective of the programme is to provide tailored support for each person, to the point where they become self-sufficient and contribute positively to the Oxfordshire community. The approach involves:

- **Following 'Housing First' principles.** The core insight of Housing First is that without stable accommodation and support fitted to their needs, no person is likely to remain safe, mentally well and able to start looking after themselves or contributing to their society. So finding accommodation for these 21 people is the first priority, starting with the first five. It can be the first step in creating an upward spiral to replace the downward one that many of them have experienced for a whole range of reasons.

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- **Assessing needs.** The obstacles blocking personal progress will vary. We recognise this, and that each participant has their own personal strengths, weaknesses and aspirations. Understanding these and designing a support and development programme suited to the individual is a cornerstone of the approach.
- **Resolving immigration status.** Invariably the participants will need practical help to resolve their immigration status, which is typically the main barrier to enabling them to make progress. Each person has a unique situation and there is a wide range of potential outcomes. In some cases, a voluntary return to the person's home country could be a successful outcome. For most, this will not be a practical option. Some will achieve settled immigration status, and for others no doubt the outcome will be negative. This part of the programme will lift people from being in a state of 'limbo', so that each of them can be helped to develop a plan that offers the best available outcome in their circumstances.
- **Measuring success.** We will work with the Centre for Homelessness Impact (CHI) to ensure the project is evaluated independently. CHI is the leading organisation developing evidence-led decisions about homelessness solutions. Going forward, the project is expected to provide a model for future development of support for people with NRPF.
- **Providing resources and funding.** The programme will run initially for five years. It requires an annual budget estimated at £258,000, excluding property costs. These are projected to range between £39,000 and £105,000 annually, depending mainly on the terms under which properties are secured. Therefore, a project budget in the range £1.4 to £1.9 million will be needed over the five years.

Programme management and governance

The programme was initiated by OHM and designed by a coalition of leading local organisations covering the specialist areas needed. OHM's Steering Group will oversee the project, supported by charitable funding from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF). Delivery will be managed by three well respected organisations in this field:

- **Aspire** will be responsible for property management and maintenance services.
- **Asylum Welcome** will provide professional advice to support asylum claims for those from outside the EEA, and applications for settled status for those from within the EEA.
- **Connection Support** will create individual plans to help clients move forward – including providing support related to any trauma clients may have experienced.

Next steps

This introduction to the programme had to be brief, but we hope you have the impression that:

- The programme serves a genuine humanitarian need that is worthy of support
- It is well thought through and managed by respected charitable organisations that will provide professional input and the appropriate support to give it the best chance of success.

We invite you to consider providing some of the funding, either in cash or by facilitating the use of properties that are available either temporarily or in the medium-term. There are ways in which we can remove the risk to property owners of participating, and we are able to agree flexible arrangements to suit both parties.

If you would like to look into the programme further, we can provide detailed information and discuss the project and your potential support.



If you would like to find out more about this project, please contact Yvonne Pinner, OHM Project Manager, at

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