Quick Guide to the framework for mental health housing and support pathway services in Oxfordshire

Introduction
Users of mental health services, their carers, commissioning partners and providers in Oxfordshire have long recognised the need to address the housing needs of people with mental health problems alongside their broader support needs. Good quality, secure housing underpins good healthcare outcomes and improves overall quality of life for this group of people.

In recognition of this a needs analysis and a draft Mental Health Housing and Support Strategy for the county have been produced.

One of the main recommendations is that there should be a framework, setting out the principles, aims and objectives of the county’s approach to housing and support for people with mental health problems, with a clear emphasis on recovery. To achieve success this will need to be agreed by all the local agencies involved in aspects of care for users of mental health services.

The Framework
This framework is principally concerned with housing and support services for people between the ages of 16 and 65 who use mental health services in Oxfordshire. It is has a series of principles which are outlined in the main document. The main aims are to deliver:

- Improved pathways of care for people with mental health problems into/out of services from medium secure care to living independently in the community.

- An increased number of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation.

- An increased number of people with mental health problems supported to maintain independent living.

- An increased number of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment, education and training.

- A reduced number of delayed transfers of care from hospitals.

The outcomes will be to:
• Introduce a clear pathway to housing and support services, focussed on aiding recovery and delivering outcomes for independent living.

• Introduce a co-ordinated managed process for accessing services to improve experience of users and carers, and improve knowledge of all needs.

• Support and enable people to live in the least restrictive setting possible based on their level of need.

• Ensure clear focus on move-on planning and ensure support is available to those who need it.

• Increase availability of flexible support services to people living in independent housing by enabling support to follow people rather than be attached to accommodation.

• Ensure that effective and clear information on housing and support options is made available.

• Ensure effective and efficient joint working between all agencies involved in supporting people on their journey to recovery and independence.

To achieve these aims a series of rights and responsibilities has been developed. These are for people with mental health problems, their carers and all the agencies and organisations concerned. Full details of these can be seen in the detailed framework document.

The housing and support pathway

The services
Services provided within this framework have the following elements:

• The majority of provision is designed to be of ‘short term’ nature (i.e. an average stay of no more than two years).

• Floating support services are also specialist These services would be offered on short and long term basis depending on the level of presented need.

• The level of support provided would range from intensive to medium to low in both these services.

• Service availability would range from housing, support, and care services being available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to brief visiting support provided in people’ own homes, depending on the type of service and level of need.

Six service types
The Oxfordshire pathway would contain the following six types of service:
Universal and mainstream services – general needs housing, support and assistance from universal services (such as Citizens Advice Bureaux, Jobcentre Plus, Shelter housing advice).

Floating support – visiting at home service designed for people living in independent housing setting. Level of support would range from intensive less than 24 hours a day to medium and low, with on call service element where appropriate. Short and long term provision.

Intensive supported housing – designed to be a local alternative to residential care. Intensive support available on-site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Short term provision.

Transitional supported housing – designed to provide a bridge between more intensive services and independent living. The level of on-site rehabilitative support is generally higher than can be provided through home visiting floating support. Short term provision.

Long-term supported housing – designed for people who will not be able to make the transition to independent living. On-site support would be at medium to low level, with on call service element where appropriate. Long term provision.

Residential care – intensive, high level (24 hours a day, 7 days per week) care and support in a registered care home.

Referrals
Referrals to the pathway services would be managed in a co-ordinated and standardised way through a ‘one point access’ system. For example, by setting up referral liaison panels for co-ordinating and prioritising access to all services on the mental health pathway and by using standard referral forms.

The following options are being considered:

- A single referral liaison panel for the whole county
- Three referral liaison panels, one for each of the following geographical areas (Oxford, Vale and South, Cherwell and West)
- Five referral liaison panels, one for each district/city council area

Referrals to services would be made via an agreed list of approved agencies specified for each type of service, with options for self-referral by service users and carers on behalf of service users being given priority consideration.

Implementation
This draft framework for mental health housing and support pathway in Oxfordshire is now available for comment by stakeholders, service users and carers. Following this the framework will be finalised taking into account the
comments and suggestions received. The comments will also be taken into account in the planning for future commissioning of services,

A final version of the framework will be submitted for formal approval to the lead commissioning agencies and other participating organisations.

Prior to full implementation of the new arrangements, this framework will be widely disseminated to the following key audiences:

- Service users and carers
- Referral agencies, service providers and other stakeholders
- Members of the general public

We expect that over the next few years all existing mental health specialist housing and support services in the county will be re-commissioned in line with the framework. Tendering for the first group of services is due to start in the next 6 months. It is expected that some of the new services would be in place in the autumn of 2010.

Other aspects of the framework would be implemented as part of the main delivery plan for the Oxfordshire Mental Health Housing and Support Strategy.

**Contacts and how to join the consultation**

This consultation will be open until 26 October 2009. If you want to contribute you can complete a questionnaire by going to the following [LINK](#)

If you do not have access to the internet please contact Amanda Millward for a copy of the questionnaire

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If you want to write to us with any comments by 26 October 2009 please use the freepost address as follows:

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