

# Oxford County Homelessness Response Strategy

*Presentation to Oxford County Council*

March 26, 2025



**SHS**

## Today's Presentation

# The Result of a Year-Long Journey

Today, we present

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## A Homelessness Response Strategy for Oxford County

A comprehensive strategy aimed at

### Preventing Homelessness

Acting before crisis

Upholding tenant rights

### Managing Experiences of Homelessness

Helping people grow

Providing equitable and stable access

### Accessing Housing and Services

Increasing access to housing across the continuum

Supporting lasting housing stability



***By 2033, experiences of homelessness are brief, and individuals in Oxford can access seamless supports to find and keep their housing.***

## Today's Presentation

1

PROCESS RECAP

How we got here

2

YOUR FEEDBACK

What we have  
done since we  
spoke last

3

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The opportunity to  
prevent and reduce  
homelessness in Oxford

4

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

How we will move  
toward action



# The Result of a Year-Long Journey

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## A Rigorous, Collaborative Process

### Collaborative Governance

#### Project Team



#### Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee was a main source of guidance throughout the project and consisted of experts working in the homelessness and housing sector.

#### Community Design Team

This group was a broad complement of representatives from across the homelessness service delivery system.

### Multi-Faceted Methodology

The methodology took a systemic, human-centred approach, involving people along the journey and complementing co-design with data analysis and secondary research.

#### Data analysis and Desk Research

#### Qualitative Research

#### Co-Design Workshops

# Expanding our Reach and Quantitative Analysis

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Since we Spoke in 2024...

## Your Feedback

You shared the following feedback at the Council Workshop in late-2024:

- A desire for inclusion of the **economic impact of homelessness** and the “cost of inaction” on this pressing issue
- A deeper understanding of the **challenges of service provision**, potential inefficiencies, duplication, and opportunities for more effective system-level coordination
- A better understanding of the **system’s capacity**
- A pathway to **continued engagement with a broad range of community members** in the implementation of the Homelessness Response Strategy

## Our Response

This comprehensive version of the Homelessness Response Strategy includes:

- Actions and tactics that incorporate new information about the system’s capacity (collected via service provider interviews and survey of current capacity)
- Secondary research on the economic impact of homelessness, which can be used for advocacy purposes to support the Strategy’s implementation
- A proposed Working Group to steward a community-driven implementation process for the Strategy

# The opportunity to prevent and reduce homelessness in Oxford

We identified ten critical system challenges to address.

## Priority Challenges for the Homelessness System in Oxford

### *Lived Experience*

**Challenges for those living unsheltered or facing housing precarity:**

- **Gap 1:** Lack of secure tenure
- **Gap 2:** Inconsistent access to services
- **Gap 3:** Stigma and discrimination

### *Service Provision*

**Challenges for organizations providing supports:**

- **Gap 4:** Lack of dedicated capacity to implement coordinated access systems
- **Gap 5:** External pressures influencing program design

- **Gap 6:** Lack of codified connections and knowledge sharing between partners
- **Gap 7:** Limited connections between healthcare and broader homelessness system

### *System*

**Challenges in how the system works as a whole:**

- **Gap 8:** Coordinated Access unable to connect the circle of care
- **Gap 9:** Lack of system capacity to meet high need
- **Gap 10:** Lack of stable and affordable housing

# Principles for Action on Homelessness in Oxford

## VISION

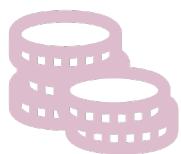


***By 2033, experiences of homelessness are brief, and individuals in Oxford can access seamless supports to find and keep their housing.***

Six principles, co-developed with the community, guide the implementation of strategies and actions to achieve this vision.

- 1 Foster community awareness, mutual understanding, and empathy for those experiencing homelessness**
- 2 Design for long-term and sustainable change informed by lived expertise and principles of health equity**
- 3 Promote transparency, collaboration, and accountability among service providers**
- 4 Prioritize dignity and self-determination of people experiencing homelessness**
- 5 Ensure consistency of service across the system rather than a 'luck of the draw'**
- 6 Have a bias towards flexibility and enable problem-solving to respond to individual needs**

The Strategy's focus on prevention and housing retention is anticipated to result in reduced costs.



## Cost Savings by Preventing Chronic Homelessness

**\$9,000**

the estimated that the average annual per-person cost to the County of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in Oxford

**\$1,008,000**

the anticipated cost of supporting 112 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in Oxford over the course of 2025

This means a **30% reduction in chronic homelessness could result in an estimated savings of \$300,000**, a **50% reduction could result in over**

**\$500,000 saved**

## Finding Efficiencies

Other cost avoidance strategies include **reducing the costs associated with evictions or staff turnover.**

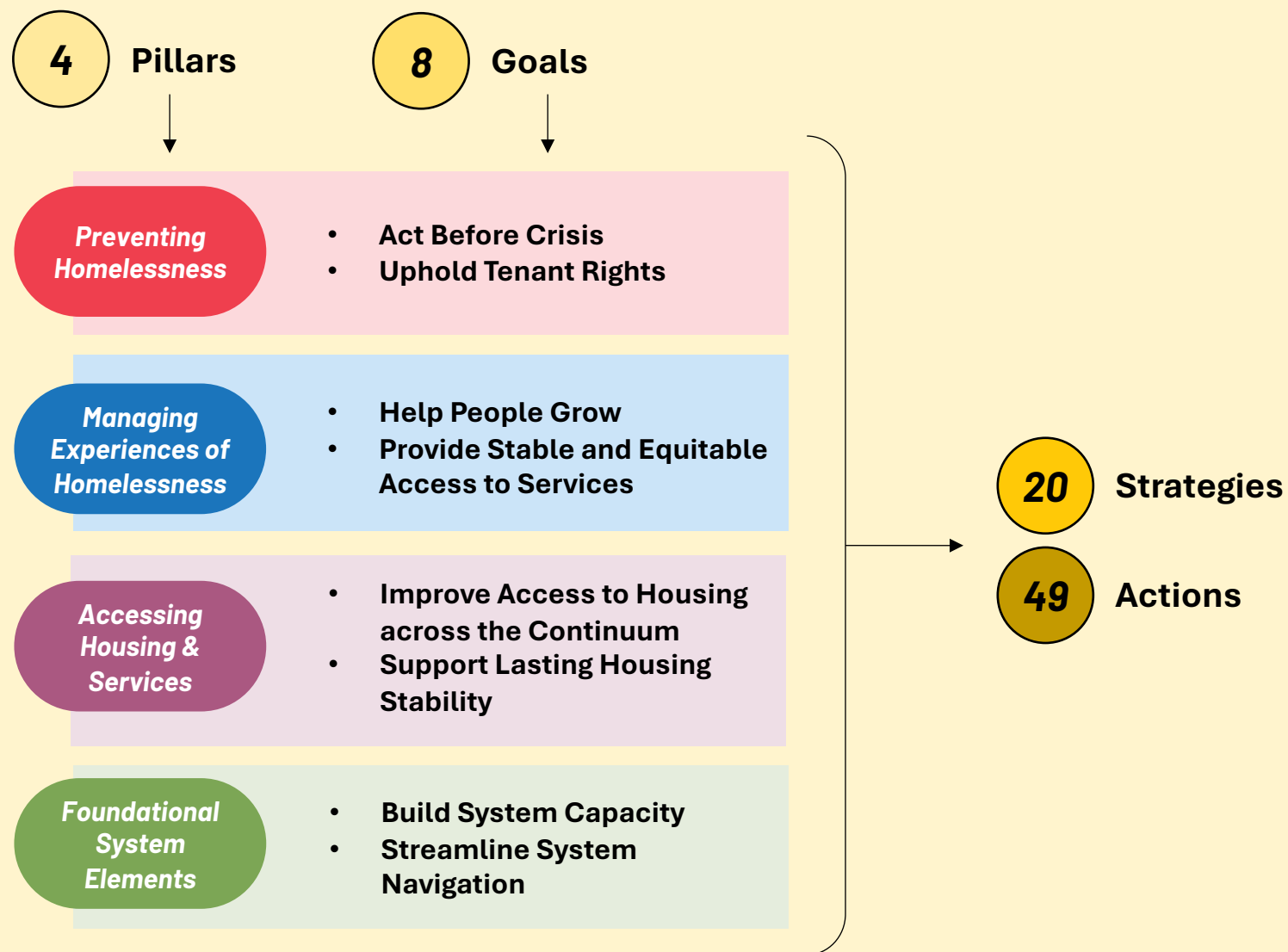
Several **tactics will reduce the duplication and administrative barriers** identified by the County and community partners. For example:

- Exploring opportunities to **improve efficiency and quality of programming**
- Improving the **quality and use of By-Name Data and Coordinated Access** to reduce administrative burden
- **Increasing connection** and information sharing between community partners **to avoid duplication**



# Oxford's Homelessness Response Strategy

The Oxford Homelessness Response Strategy articulates a plan to guide the response to and future prevention of homelessness.



## GOALS

### Foundational System Elements

#### Build System Capacity

Ensure individuals working in the system have the capacity and resources they need to provide excellent customer service.

### Foundational System Elements

#### Streamline Service Navigation

Ensure individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness are rapidly and seamlessly connected to supports they need.

### Preventing Homelessness

#### Act Before Crisis

Ensure everyone in Oxford can confidently access supports to maintain their housing and avoid experiences of homelessness when circumstances change.

## STRATEGIES

**Establish the necessary resources to implement the Homelessness Response Strategy (2 actions)**

**Build stability and consistency in staffing and resourcing across the County (2 actions)**

**Explore opportunities to improve efficiency and quality of programming (3 actions)**

**Improve the quality and use of By-Name Data and Coordinated Access in line with best practices (4 actions)**

**Formalize connections between the County's homelessness serving system and interrelated systems (2 actions)**

**Increase connection and information sharing between community partners (2 actions)**

**Increase access to financial assistance before crisis (3 actions)**

**Build public awareness of available services and programs (2 actions)**

GOALS

Preventing Homelessness

***Uphold Tenant Rights***

Ensure everyone in Oxford has secure housing tenure to prevent forced and unfair evictions.

Managing Experiences of Homelessness

***Help People Grow***

Ensure individuals experiencing homelessness feel confident, valued, and are well-supported to grow in the community.

Managing Experiences of Homelessness

***Provide Equitable and Stable Access***

Ensure individuals experiencing homelessness have stable and equitable access to services (including temporary accommodation).

STRATEGIES

**Create a Tenancy Resource Office to ensure accountability for landlords and tenants** (3 actions)

**Increase awareness of tenant rights** (1 action)

**Enhance access to legal aid** (1 action)

**Strengthen personal networks of support for individuals experiencing homelessness** (4 actions)

**Challenge stigma and discrimination in community** (1 action)

**Ensure person-centred services that prioritize dignity and respect** (4 actions)

**Provide equitable access to stable emergency shelters** (2 actions)

**Align HPP funding with strategic goals** (1 action)

GOALS

Accessing Housing and Services

**Increase Access to Housing Across the Continuum**

Ensure individuals can access permanent and stable housing in their communities to exit homelessness.

Accessing Housing and Services

**Support Lasting Housing Stability**

Ensure individuals with a history of housing instability have the supports and resources they need to maintain their housing for the long-term.

STRATEGIES

**Build and enhance pathways to exit homelessness**  
(4 actions)

**Increase the capacity and confidence of private landlords to offer rental units**  
(2 actions)

**Mobilize a cross-disciplinary Housing Stability team**  
(2 actions)

**Increase availability of wraparound supports in the community**  
(2 actions)

## How we will move toward action

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**The prioritized first steps for the County of Oxford include strategies and actions that...**



Result in cost savings by preventing chronic homelessness



Result in improved experiences for the people we seek to serve



Result in system efficiencies through improved service system coordination



Support alignment with Provincial and Federal funding opportunities

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