

**Supported Living – What do you need to know?
Presentation and Q & A
Thursday 16th September 2021**

Professionals Attending

Jacqui Gilbert – Manager for the Community Connections team at OCC who work only with adults with a learning disability. Operational Lead for Learning Disability (LD) for the Council

Sam Harper – Operations Manager for the Moving into Adulthood and Sensory Impairment Team for Adult Social Care (ASC) at OCC. The team works primarily with young people from the age of 18, but have some involvement and do some assessments from the age of 16.

Alison Gackowski – Senior Practitioner with Oxfordshire Shared Lives

Rivka Stringer – Brokerage Manager for adults with LD's, Autism and enduring mental health conditions. Is in charge of sourcing supported living and outreach for people in Oxfordshire.

Michael Steed – works for Brandon Trust in the Business Development Department. Brandon Trust provide support for people in supported living who have learning difficulties.

Becky Speight – Operations Director, Style Acre

Tapiwa Moyo – Regional Director for Oxfordshire – Kingwood

Jill Bull – Managing Director of the ICE Centre based in Witney

This session is an overview for families who are thinking about supported living for the future and how you can start planning ahead as a family. Everyone's experience of developing supported living is different, there is no one set way of doing it.

It covers questions like 'How do you actually get started'? How do you go from thinking 'I want my son or daughter or relative to move in to supported living' to it actually happening?

Link to the You Tube [Supported Living](#) Video

What is Supported Living?

- It is an alternative to residential care or living with a family that enables adults to live in their own home with the help they need to be independent. It allows people to choose where they want to live, who they want to live with, how they want to be supported and what happens in their own home. (We do know, that in reality, people do not always get to choose).
- Supported Living should be available for everyone. The level of support that people get will vary depending on their needs.
- It is an arrangement where the contract for accommodation that is lived in is separate from the contract for care and support provision. The housing and support care is provided differently, unlike residential care.
- When someone moves in to supported living, they do not lose all their benefits as they need those to live on. If someone is unhappy with the support that is provided, the support can be changed but the person who needs support can continue to live in the same house.
- The real test is whether a person has their own tenancy agreement. Is the tenancy agreement separate from the care and support so a person does not have to move if they want to change support provider? Is the support provider in partnership or at arm's length from the landlord? If you cannot separate the two it is not proper supported living.

- [The National Development Team for inclusion](#) (NDTi) have a document, [The Real tenancy Test – tenancy rights in supported living](#) which outlines what a tenancy is. The [Reach Standards](#) published by [Paradigm](#) , which were developed alongside people with learning disabilities and their families also outline what good supported living looks like and is what is used to review supported living. We recommend looking at these before you start the process as they will help you think about the questions you may want to ask when you speak to support providers.
- CQC also oversee regulated activities. To qualify there needs to be a registered manager and an office in place. If the support does not include personal care it does not have to be regulated.
- Do they have a key to their own front door? (Even those individuals who may not be able to use a key should still be able to have one of their own which staff can use to help let them in).

Thinking and Planning Ahead

- Even though you may not be expecting your family member to move into supported living for a number of years you can always start thinking and planning ahead about what you might want their life to look like? We recognise that for some families they may struggle with the idea of their relative moving into supported living and handing over the support to other people, but with careful planning and groundwork it can work really well.
- We recommend starting to plan at least two years ahead. Sometimes there is a crisis and people need to move quickly but if you have the chance do some of that planning early.
- Start by doing some person-centred planning with your relative. What is important to them? What support will they need? What does a good week look like? What is a good day/bad day? There are a lot of person-centred planning tools which can be found on the [Helen Sanderson](#) website that can be used to gather some of that information early on.
- Think about who they might want to live with or even, if in fact, they do want to live with other people. What characteristics are important? If your family member for example gets anxious by loud noise, this needs to be known when matching people. It may be that people they have gone through school and college with may not be those they can live with. However, staff may have a good idea of who they think may work well together so always check with them.
- A good person-centred plan should inform the care and support plan that will be done by social care. It will also help any support provider you approach understand what kind of support your family member needs.
- Talk to other parents to see where they are at in the journey and whether supported living is something they are considering for their family member. If you find a group of parents who are interested you can plan the process jointly.
- Do your research and look at different providers. Where possible visit them. Ask lots of questions so you have a better understanding of how they work.
- Think about where they want to live? Do they want to stay close to family? Are they already involved in their local community and would like to continue to stay in that area? Do they need to be near open space, a path or a playground so they can get out regularly? Is there a certain place they like to attend regularly such as a club or a church? Do they have their own transport or will they be dependent on public transport – if so, are they near a bus route?
- When considering property – you need to think about what will be suitable for your family member. Is it disability friendly? Does it need adaptations? Is there car parking for the tenants' cars and support staff cars?

There are different routes in to supported living.

Families who want to set up their own service have different options:

- Some families have opted to provide both the housing and manage the support care.
- Some just provide the house and act as landlords, and support care is provided by a support provider.
- Some families have got together and approached a support provider who has then worked with them to source a house.

OCC have a guide that they have produced which looks at what is involved in this process. (Attached). Whichever approach is taken, it is important to establish a relationship with the provider from the start about expectations as to how you want to work with them as families. Even though you may be handing over the day-to-day support of your family member, you still want to be involved on a day-to-day basis.

For those families who do not want to set up their own service they can approach OCC who have their own spot contracted services in county which is a different system. OCC will find a place that is the right fit for your family member which is why it is important to get the person-centred planning right.

Personal Budgets, Individual Budgets and Direct Payments (DP's)

Anyone known to Social Care who meets eligibility gets a personal budget which is an allocation of funding. How you choose to have that budget depends on what you want to do with it.

- A personal budget is an allocation of funds from social care
- An individual budget is an allocation of funds from social care and possibly another source such as health
- A direct payment is the mechanism by which people get their money

The way a personal budget can be delivered depends on the individual. Some families prefer to have it as a direct payment and manage it themselves. Others may prefer to have a managed account where a direct payment can be held by a provider who pays bills on your behalf.

The Process

In Oxfordshire OCC Adult Social Care (ASC) have a pooled budget which means that health and social care budgets are combined unless someone is in receipt of Continuing Health Care. So, after your family member has their assessment, they are allocated an amount of money which determines the level of support your family member needs. For some people, they may only have a very small personal budget in which case the ASC team may work with their local district council to find accommodation for your family member to move in to and they may receive visiting (sometimes known as outreach) support. Other people may need 24/7 support. A lot is determined by the assessment and the personal budget which is an important part of the process.

You can opt to take a direct payment even if your family member is in supported living services contracted by OCC – however, it can be complicated due to shared hours and uplifts. OCC give their contracted support providers an increase every year where as Direct Payments are looked at differently so if it is a combination of payments in one household it makes it quite complicated for the support providers to sort out the money. Whilst it is not OCC's preferred route, it is possible to have a direct payment in a contracted service.

There are also other ways that OCC can purchase care. Even if a service does not have a contract directly with OCC, they can do **spot purchasing**. OCC will issue a contract to that provider for a person which is known either as a **person-centred contract** or an **Individual Placement Agreement** which will contain terms and conditions for the placement such as cost and notice, but also be tailored to that individual including their goals and outcomes. OCC are still developing these person-centred contracts. OCC will also do quality checks to check that they are satisfied with the quality of service that the Support Provider provide.

Some support providers prefer Direct Payments' if they are not contracted with OCC.

Family Carer Question:

Q: My daughter lives at home with me and my partner. She has five days a week of activities so she already has a personalised budget for that. She recently left college, so the personalised budget changed. We have said that we want her to move in to supported living and that has been agreed by Adult Social Care and we have been told that her file has been passed to the brokerage team. When she moves in to supported living, her personalised budget will need to change again and at the moment I have no idea what that will be. When does that part of the process happen?

A: (JG - OCC) As part of your (daughters) assessment, (she) will have an indicative budget. Part of that indicative budget is already been spent on her activities. When your daughter is ready to move, 'forum' will recommend supported living because your (daughter's) indicative budget will be enough to pay for it and it will go up to the cost of supported living.

Q: Do we get told what the indicative budget is and how many individual hours of support someone might get?

A.: (JG - OCC) That is all done with the brokerage team when a supported living place has been identified. The brokerage team work with the social worker who in turn works with the family carer.

A: (RS - OCC) Once it has been agreed by the family, their family member, the support provider and the social worker that the supported living service is the right place, the brokerage team don't necessarily base it on the amount of money but on the number of hours that everyone agrees is the right amount of support that is needed for that individual. So, we look not at the money first, but at the care and support required and how many hours a week of shared support and individual hours of support someone will get.

Therefore, it is key to do person centred planning beforehand to ensure all the detail is included as it is that detail which informs what support the person needs.

Family Carer Question:

Q: I've been told that my son who is turning 17 and currently still with children's disability services will be moving to the Moving into Adulthood Team with Adult Social Care. I have had no information and the social worker did not know who to put us in contact with. I am aware that my son will need to do an Adult Social Care Assessment but I do not know what that means for him and how we plan for supported living. I have no idea what he is

going to be doing from one year to the next which has a massive impact on the work that I can do and on our finances. There is no information published by OCC either for families or in Easy Read about moving in to supported living that young people with a learning disability or autism need.

My other concern is 'What if he is too 'good' for supported living? What if he seems 'too able' and he can do things? and what if that means he will not get the support he needs? Yet if the fire alarm went off in the middle of the night, he wouldn't manage that, or he wouldn't be able to answer the phone. Do I 'disable' him. Do I not support him now so that he gets low scores? Am I the only parent that worries as I do not understand how the scoring system or the money works?

A: (SH - OCC) The MIA team was created as it is recognised that moving in to adulthood is incredibly stressful. One of the things the team will be doing will be to get involved with young people from the age of 16 so that we can assess as early as possible so that we can get a clearer idea of what your family member needs are. It does not necessarily have to be about supported living. The team want to support young people to be as independent as possible but they may need support to achieve this which could be in a number of different ways such as outreach support, shared lives or it may be supported living in the future.

OxFSN are currently working on a Moving in to Adulthood Handbook which will contain information about supported living as well as supported employment, benefits etc. All the information parents need to know for a child going through this process.

Family Carer Question

Q: We are desperately trying to plan ahead. My son has just started his third year at residential college. For the last two years we have been very aware and very clear that when he finishes college, he will go in to supported living because that is what he wants to do as well as being the right way forward for independence and living with his peers. For the last two years we have been trying to plan ahead but we cannot get a social worker on board. For the last three months we have been contacting ASC and have been told that we will eventually get a social worker in December, even though my son's review is in November. It is very stressful. We are trying to get someone on board now as it is very important that we have supported living set up for him as soon as he leaves college, otherwise he is going to lose all the skills he has learnt. We want to start those assessments and planning ready for the review that will take place.

A: (SH - OCC) Previously, when a specific piece of work was completed by a social worker from ASC, they would then close that case and a new social worker would be allocated if that person needed support again. The difference with the MIA team is that for the entirety that someone is transitioning into ASC whether it be for one or four to five years, they will have the same named social worker so that families will know who to contact.

Family Carer Question

Q: If someone starts living in supported living but for some reason it does not go well, can they come back home to their parents?

A: (GH - OxFSN) It is a process of continually reviewing. Even though you do the best planning you can, sometimes things go wrong or they do not work out as you would expect.

A: (BS - Style Acre) With all the best planning and the best will in the world, you never really know how it is going to go until people actually start spending time together. We would work really hard with the people we support and their families to have those conversations around "How is it going"? "What are the things we can do to maybe tweak a few bits"? Sometimes people need a break and to transition in to supported living differently. Some of the people we support into a new home have stayed one night a week for a month, then two nights a week a month and that has worked for them. For others, they have gone straight in and have not wanted to see their families for a little while to make that transition for them really clear. It is all about thinking how it will work best (for the individual) and being responsive really quickly when things start to not feel quite right. My top tip would be that if you have that feeling that something is not right, have a conversation with the support provider as soon as possible. We have had scenarios where people have gone back to their parents because it hasn't felt right but have then found what is right for them. We have also had scenarios where it has worked brilliantly for a few years and then people have moved into another phase of their life so we have had a conversation about what that next phase might look like. There aren't really any rules – it is about doing what is right for that person at that point.

The key is that it has to be person centred and the support has to be built around what that person needs.

Family Carer Scenario

We are at the other end of the spectrum. We are in our mid 70's and we have a 44-year-old daughter with autism who still lives at home. We have done the two years of planning that you recommend. We have also been extremely well supported in the last few years through both OCC and Kingwood. However, we have been thwarted by Covid in that for the move in to supported living to be a success it was absolutely necessary for a good transition which couldn't happen due to lockdown, otherwise all the preparation by both us and the 28 hours of weekly support by Kingwood would have been wasted. We felt pressured by OCC to sign tenancy agreements which would have committed us to £2000 per month. We abandoned the move and feel that we are now back where we started. We know we left the whole process too late but we have found that there is not a lot of choice available. We had worked very closely with OCC, Kingwood and the housing provider to build an extension for our daughter at the house that was recommended, but because we wanted a good transition which was not possible because of Covid, we lost the flat. We now have no support in terms of taking things forward and we do not have a solution. (Family Carer aged 74)

Moving a family member in to supported living is a lot of work, as well as been very emotional. OCC will take this case to the complex case panel which has been set up by the interim commissioners to explain what has happened previously and how they might be thinking about going forward.

Family Carer Question

Q: With regards to setting up a complex case panel, how open and transparent is it going to be?

A: (JG - OCC) This panel is more of a commissioning panel. When brokerage have referrals which they cannot source accommodation for, as there isn't anything available in county, and OCC really do not want anyone going out of county, it will come to the complex case panel. Commissioners and contract managers will meet with the brokerage team and discuss the needs of the person in order to see how they can help

support the person and their family to achieve the outcomes that they want. It is not a panel like forum where recommendations are made about support packages, it is more about what needs commissioning to meet the needs of individuals. Sometimes support providers will come in to talk about a specific situation in order to see what they can do.

Family Carer Question

Q: *Is there a way of securing a house or a group that want to live together without the families buying a home and becoming landlords?*

A: (JG - OCC) It would depend on whether you could get a social landlord like Advance or Green Square for example to work with you. They might source accommodation for you to set up your own service. This would have been a lot easier previously but now like us all they have financial restrictions. However, you could approach them to see if there is a way they could develop a service for a group of people.

Family Carer Question

Q: *Why is it such a big no for a young person to be placed out of county, especially if a group of friends who have met at college together want to live together and they are all coming from different areas of the country? And why does it cost more for a placement out of county especially in cheaper areas than Oxfordshire?*

A: (JG - OCC) It's because when we have safeguarding out of county it is very hard for OCC to mobilise out. For example, if you have someone living in Birmingham sharing with three other people and they all come from other areas, it is very hard for us to coordinate the safeguarding response when we don't have eyes on these people so we feel it is a bit risky to have people out of area.

A: (GH - OxFSN) The way we look at it, is that for families who have other kids, it is a normal thing for them to want to move in with friends they have made at university in other areas of the country so we need to keep it real for people. With regards to safeguarding, and we are happy to be challenged on this, we think families do the most of the safeguarding. We are the ones who have the eyes on our relatives at all times. We are the ones who see the photos that have been sent and know if they are unhappy just by looking at their faces or what they are doing. We recognise that there is a duty of care within OCC and that there has to be a way to monitor safeguarding but that the county council shouldn't just be saying no because of safeguarding.

A: (SH) - OCC It's not just safeguarding we have to monitor; we have had experiences where things have gone wrong not just for young people but for anyone out of county for example if they have needed additional health care support. If they are in crisis for whatever reason, it is very challenging to coordinate that with a health team you do not know. Which is something to bear in mind in terms of some of the struggles the county council has when trying to support a young person. Health input and what they are willing to do varies depending on the county and it is difficult for us to monitor it so far away.

Family Carer Response: The difficulty for me is that it is not person centred but county council centred and is more focused on the difficulties that the county council have, not what the young person might want.

A: (GH - OCC) We do also have to remember that we as parents are not going to be around forever. One family carer, whose son is out of county for a number of different reasons is now elderly and unable to get to see him as often as she did. Her daughter has told her that she will not be able to have her brother home or see him as often as her mother did because he is so far away, so you do need to think about the consequences of them living out of county. We do know of families who have moved to be nearer their family member which is also a possibility.

Family Carer Question:

Q: Is there a point at which if a young person does live in another area, that the care gets transferred to that new county council after a period of time?

A: (JG - OCC) This is known as ordinary residency and can be complicated. If someone has capacity and has chosen to live out of area, they can become an ordinary resident of the county they live in which will then take over the support and care. There are often a lot of disputes, usually about funding and it is often contentious between local authorities. However, it is to do with the capacity that the young person may or may not have.

Looking for property

- **Housing Associations:** There is a housing register in Oxfordshire where you should be able to find out what is owned by the local authority and housing associations. You would normally make your application through your local council but not every housing association makes their properties known to the local authority so you could try contacting them directly. OCC should be able to advise on which housing associations operate in your county. Each housing association has its own business strategy, so you can ask them what area of housing they are likely to be investing in and whether there is going to be any specialist provision.
- **Private Landlords:** Are there landlords who have property they can rent out?
- Make sure the person has been appropriately allocated and given the correct level of priority on the councils' **housing register**.
- Are there any connections through the person's circle of support?
- Is there somewhere that has been left empty for a while that might make a good home
- Consider an age override: are there lots of retirement properties in the area.
- Is **Shared Lives** an option?
- It doesn't exist in Oxfordshire but the Key Ring model does exist in other areas.
- Single or shared flats with a central office work well for people who may only need a small amount of support.

Everyone's needs are different so there is no one way to go about finding the right supported living set up. What might work for one family, may not be right for another. It has to be right for your family member. We recommend doing some research and looking in to the different options. [The Moving in to Adulthood Guide: Finding the Right Support](#) on the OxFSN website, although a little out of date does have a lot of information in it that covers some of the topics we have talked about including what you need to think about when looking for support.

OCC: What to do if you are thinking about supported living for your family member.

JG: If you are thinking about supported living, contact your local locality team (North, East, South, Vale or City) and ask for an assessment of need which is completed with a social worker. The social worker then comes to what OCC call the **Learning Disability Practice Forum**. The forum does not agree a budget, but they do discuss funding and requests for supported living, shared lives or outreach to ensure that services are equitable across the county and people are getting an equitable service. The social worker then goes back to the team with what the forum thinks. If it is supported living, the social worker then fills in a **service request form** that goes to the brokerage service.

RS - OCC: The Care Act Assessment is not good at identifying the specific information that the brokerage team need to know in order to find the right service for someone because

it is not the purpose of the form. Brokerage have designed a specific form for supported living that goes through the key pieces of information that the social worker is required to do on top of the assessment. These include things like basic primary need:

- Have they got a learning disability?
- Have they got autism?

This drills down in to:

- Why does this person need supported living?
- When do they need it?
- Can they share with people?
- What kind of house do they need to live in?
- Do they need ground floor?
- Do they need a wet room?
- Where is their preferred area of the county?

What level of support do they need?

- Do they need someone with them all of the time?
- Do they need someone awake all night?
- Can they have a staff member as a responsive night? - someone who will be asleep but will wake up if they need it.

Have also made sure to include whether a person is experiencing any temporary changes in their needs and circumstances, as quite often, when someone needs to move, they may or may not become upset. If someone needs to move, there is often a reason. It might be because something has gone wrong, so we do not want that person to be framed as how they are behaving or feeling. When someone is unhappy, the team want that person to be seen as who they are, all the time, day after day. Brokerage have asked social workers to describe the situation. For example, if someone is very poorly and they are having lots of support, but do not need it all the time, brokerage need to know that because the support providers need to know that. All questions asked have to be completed in detail by the social workers. **(See attached Social Worker completion form)** Brokerage also contact all the support providers in Oxfordshire and ask them to send over service descriptions **(See attached support provider template)** as brokerage need to know who is already living there and what kind of person the people already living there would like to live with them so that they can match people as far as possible before they meet each other. The social workers have access to all this information which means they are able to say whether any of the people they know who are looking for supporting living maybe a good match. Once the information is gathered, social workers have to attend another panel. This gives brokerage an opportunity to talk to someone who has met the individual as they do not want it to be a desktop exercise! At panel they decide whether to refer that person to a particular place. If so, they send that person's information to the provider.

Brokerage keep spreadsheets about all the data points about each person as well as a matching spreadsheet for all the vacancies so that they can match or rule out individuals to the properties available easily rather than wasting time sending off referrals for things that they know are not going to work.

They also use the information about the people waiting to send to the commissioners so that they can see how many people may need ground floor accommodation for example with how many ground floor vacancies are available. These reports are sent every month to commissioners to highlight those gaps in provision so they know what is needed in Oxford.

OxFSN Question:

Q: If brokerage have a list of all these people that are waiting and you are able to look at the needs of some of the people. If there were a group of people on the list who would

make quite a good match living somewhere, would brokerage consider commissioning a housing provider and a support provider separately for those people. Is that happening?

A: (RS - OCC) Not at the moment but it is a brilliant idea and something that JG and RS can take forward with the commissioners at the group meeting. Brokerage can also be gathering more information on which college they are coming from as they are likely to already know each other.

A: (GH - OxFSN) It could be that somebody is sitting on that list for a very long time waiting for the right place to come up, whereas there may be other people who they may well be able to live with also on that list. If the families do not know each other they can't facilitate that, but brokerage have an overview.

A: (SH - OCC) With regards to demand and the people that are needing supported living, OCC are led by age group. One of the things they are doing at the moment is to try and develop supported living services for younger people. There is a service in Banbury that has just started and there is a new service in Bicester starting soon. We are also in discussions about a new service starting down in Didcot. OCC are aware and recognise that there is an increased need for supported living for younger people and do try to respond to the demand and where the need is.

Family Carer Comment

Can families be involved in completing the carer request form? I would like to be involved in completing the form for my daughter about my daughter because although she has a social worker, the social worker has only met her very briefly at college, has not been involved very long and although she is great, she cannot possibly know a huge amount about my daughter. I would like to be more involved in completing the form and feel part of the process. I am surprised that we weren't aware of that form when my daughter's papers have already gone to brokerage and that we weren't asked those specific questions. It does feel like family should be involved and should understand what is happening behind the scenes rather than just been told that your daughter's information has gone to brokerage.

Family Carer Question

Q: My Social Worker mentioned that extra care housing might be a possibility near us and felt it was appropriate for my son as I did. She thought that OCC were piloting something like that in Didcot which is where my son wants to live but now thinks it may be happening in Goring. Is extra care housing something that is being considered?

A: (JG - OCC) We have got just under 30 people in extra care housing which works really well. For a lot of people who have been in supported living it's the next step as they are a little more independent now. It also works well for some people who were living at home with their families. We have a social worker in the community connections team who works extensively with the providers and helps social workers if they get stuck because it is slightly different.

Q: Is there going to be a pilot for younger people as it is usually associated with older people's provision?

A: (JG - OCC) OCC were going to do that in Goring but unfortunately it happened at the same time as a big tender and the implementation of new providers and became too complicated. There is now going to be an extra care scheme in Henley. OCC are talking to colleagues who commission extra care about having a specific bit for people with a learning disability whether it's a small wing or a separate building in the garden or how it can be a little bit different.

Q: What does extra care housing look like compared to other supported living set ups?

A: (JG - OCC) Extra care housing is a flat in a big complex so bigger than OCC would commission but mainly for older people who just need a little more support. There is a team of staff on site who can provide personal care etc and there is a charge for that

which is called Peace of Mind. OCC tend to do a mix of the extra care housing support team and bring in a specialist learning disability provider. At Mayott House in Abingdon, there are several people who are supported by Home Farm Trust which works very well.

Family Carer Question:

Q: What is core and cluster?

A: (JG - OCC) An example would be in Didcot where there are three properties on the same road and the staff team work across all three properties. There is a sleep-in over night at one property but there is not a need to have overnight support at all the properties. The staff team are based at the sleep-in property which is the core but they support the other properties in that road which are part of that cluster. People in the cluster properties may need less support than those in the core. There is also a similar set up in Henley. OCC are currently working with Brandon Trust who provide support at these core and clusters to see how the support may be delivered differently to be more creative.

A: (TP- Kingwood) Kingwood have something similar although it does not have as many houses. There may be a core house with someone living in an annex who does not need as much support as those in the core house. They might have a couple hours of support a day when Kingwood interact with them. It is a good model as it ensures that support is readily available. It is also possible to tie in assistive technology in terms of where concerns can be raised quickly if someone is struggling but they do not need to have someone in the house all the time.

A: (MS) The core and cluster model does work well and enables flexibility both for the support provider and the people receiving support as well as the commissioners.

OxFSN Question

One of the things we used to advise is that families contact the support providers directly. Do any of the providers get families contacting them? Sometimes there is a lack of understanding about what good supported living should look like. Families come in to this with a lot of anxieties about who is going to look after their family member in the same way as they have. Families hear horror stories about how people move in to supported living and are allowed to then make these sometimes disastrous choices without parents being involved because their child is now an 'adult'. Families are told that now their loved one is an adult they can step away. How do you work with families from a support provider perspective?

A: (MS - Brandon Trust) I take calls regularly from families looking for supported living that is not just based in Oxfordshire. The scenario in Oxfordshire is slightly different as we have a contract with OCC. We can talk about what supported living is and the benefits and the things to consider, but all roads lead back to the beginning of the assessment process and making sure brokerage are aware as OCC has the nomination rights to any vacancies in supported living within Oxfordshire that we have. So, the nominations have to come from brokerage to Brandon Trust, then we look at the individual needs and take it from there. We then like to apply our own process if those stages have gone through. Brandon Trust are happy to take individual enquires, but cannot place people independently in to one of the vacancies without the agreement of brokerage at OCC.

Q: If there were a group of families who got together and approached the support provider independently and not through OCC is that possible?

A: (MS - Brandon Trust) If there was anything new that came up that was outside the contract with OCC and the terms are slightly different, in theory I suppose that could happen. In other counties where we have supported living vacancies, the terms of those arrangements are different so Brandon Trust can work independently with relatives, but

how we are commissioned in Oxfordshire means we couldn't do that independently without discussing and agreeing it with OCC first.

A: (BS – Style Acre) Style Acre have a slightly different arrangement. Some of the houses where SA provide support have similar nomination rights and those placements need to come through OCC. In some of the other houses this is not the case so they can take calls from families to talk about the vacancies that they currently have. They also have families who are willing to share their experiences with other families whether they are receiving support from SA or not. SA are happy for people to get in touch and make connections if it's the right time for them to do that. They have worked with families in the past where people have grouped together. They have a sister charity, Acre Housing, who can and have purchased properties although Covid has made it interesting for residents which Style Acre are working on. However, they are always happy to have a conversation and will always be honest about what they can and cannot do and what they need to do to take it to the next step.

A: (TM – Kingwood) The majority of the properties have their commissioning done by OCC although they do have one commissioned by the family who use their direct payment to pay Kingwood to provide support and they have sourced the accommodation independently. So, it is possible depending on capacity needs and staffing levels.

A: (JB – The ICE Centre) The ICE Centre is an independent support provider and currently has four supported living homes and looking at more. They are often approached directly by families who are looking for supported living. In the last couple of months ICE have had 13 requests for housing support. They are not on the OCC commissioning list which is their choice.

Family Carer Question:

RS mentioned that there was a panel once brokerage go through the process of getting the form back. Who else, other than the social worker goes to that panel?

A: (RS - OCC) Jacqui Gilbert, Shared Lives and a commissioner as well as a supervisee from the brokerage team comes along to take notes on the actions that the brokerage team needs to take forward. That means they can get that early information about someone if brokerage do not have anything available for them. Someone from the contracts team who manages the contracts with the providers, a Learning Disability Practice Supervisor Lead, Angela Green who is operational lead for LD and Autism for the South and Sam Harper, (Moving in to Adulthood Team).

Parents do not come along; it is the social worker. However, having the parents fill in the referral form would be really helpful.

Family Carer Question:

My son is nearly 30. We are applying for him to go into assisted living. We started the process about three years ago. Covid drove the message home that anything can happen and that we need to do the best we can for him while we are still around. We have been to look at a property run by Seeability which we and they think is suitable. We have been well supported which surprised us as when he started using adult services, we found it really difficult. When my son goes in to assisted living what is the legal position on parents' involvement? What happens once he is in assisted living and wants to do something which we as parents do not necessarily agree with? Where do we stand legally? Would it be a good idea to apply for [Court of Protection](#)?

A: (GH - OxFSN) I went down the Court of Protection route for my son when he moved in because he was not able to sign his tenancy agreement himself and he lacked the capacity to do that.

A: (RS - OCC) Anyone going in to supported living needs to be able to understand and sign their own tenancy agreement or someone with deputyship needs to sign on their

behalf. Brokerage would ideally prefer that social workers have done capacity assessments before they come to brokerage so that they can have a discussion with families about tenancies. OCC can take on deputyship if a family does not feel able to take on that responsibility. You do not have to wait for it to fully go through the court to sign a tenancy as long as the housing associations have evidence that the Court of Protection for Finance and Property has been applied for. (If the Court of Protection refuses, this will likely be because the person either has capacity to sign their own tenancy agreement, or they feel another party would be more appropriate. Either way, there would be someone to sign.

A: (GH - OxFSN) It can take 6 months to go through the process at the moment. The Office of the Public Guardian are very helpful if you have any questions.

A: (KL - OxFSN) If you are not managing any other finances for your family member other than benefits and a social care budget for which you can be a nominated appointee, you can apply for a one off decision from the [court of protection for tenancy signing](#)

Deprivation of Liberty (DoLS)

If someone is moving into supported living or a similar set up, there will be certain circumstances where they will be viewed as sometimes being deprived of their liberty. For example, my son has to be locked out of the kitchen because it is in best interest that he does not get access to all the food in the fridge and the cupboards. The kitchen door in his house has to be locked. He also has to be strapped in to his wheelchair otherwise it is unsafe for him to go out in it. These actions are viewed as a deprivation of his liberty but they are put in place to help keep him safe. When other people are supporting your family member, there has to be a legal process behind it.

JG - OCC: If there is a need for a DoLS, this will trigger an internal referral into David Proudfoot and his team and that person will go on the waiting list for a DoLS assessment.

Family Carer Question: How many people do the brokerage have on their books at the moment and roughly how long do people stay on the list?

A: (RS - OCC) At the moment there are 79 people waiting for supported living. Approximately 45% of those people are currently living with their families (35 people). The second largest number of people are living in residential care. OCC want to try and move these people to give them more of an opportunity for independence versus living in a residential setting. A third of the referrals are under the age of 25.

The wait time is variable because OCC look at it as the person first and finding the right house for someone, so if someone has very specific needs and OCC have to create something for them, it can take quite a long time, especially if OCC are purchasing a property. Other times, the move can occur very quickly if the person been referred fits well with a house that has a room available and with the other residents.

The median is 164 days which is 23 weeks which OCC appreciates is too long but it can be difficult when trying to find the right service for someone.

OCC are putting a lot of work into building new services. The existing vacancies OCC can struggle with as Supported living is a home for life and usually when people move in they do not move because that is their home and they stay.

Out of the 79 people on the current list, only 10 people are moving out of supported living so OCC need to build new houses. There are 32 empty rooms currently available in

varying types of property sharing with all different kinds of people but there are 39 more due to open over the next 4-6 months.

A: (GH - OxFSN) Although it is a home for life, if someone is unhappy, they can move and live somewhere else.

JG: OCC A lot of the young people coming from children's services have not had the experience of formal support such as respite outside of the family home. So, when looking at supported living, we think it would be quite important for a young person to experience some time outside of the family home in maybe some shared lives or building based respite just to get them used to having support elsewhere that isn't provided by school or college. These days, so few children are coming through in to adult services with respite packages. We and the Moving Into Adulthood Team are doing some work on respite.

What is Shared Lives?

(AG: OCC) Shared Lives is a support and care service within OCC for people aged 18 and over who want to live in the community either as an alternative to either residential care or maybe before going on to supported living. People are referred for a whole number of different reasons.

The service recruits, trains and supports individuals in the community to become carers in their own home, to share their home and provide either long term arrangements, short breaks or outreach depending on what the individual moving in to shared lives is assessed as needing. Carers are paid.

How safe is Shared Lives? How is it regulated and supported?

(AG: OCC) OCC are regulated and monitored by CQC. They are inspected regularly to make sure that all compliances are met. Any potential carers go through a rigorous training and assessment process. Once they are approved by an independent panel, they are provided with ongoing support.

OCC currently have about 80 households registered with Oxfordshire shared lives and about 126 people registered as using the scheme which means they are currently being supported already or are in either long or short term arrangements or OCC are currently working with them to find a suitable match.

If someone has been referred to shared lives, someone from the shared lives team will get in touch with the person or their family and work with them to look in more detail at what is needed and what that person wants. It is wholly person centred.

The key is then to match that person with a suitable carer, so the more information OCC have about that person such as preferred location, physical needs, what type of house they envisage living in, what is important to them, their culture and values, sense of humour etc the easier it is to try and match them. Shared Lives is about matching and trying to tailor that experience more personally to individual needs and to hopefully broaden and enrich a person's network and give them a different experience to what they already have in their life. It is about adding and not replacing something.

Usually, people who are assessed as needing accommodation may be someone leaving hospital after treatment, young people moving in to adulthood, someone where fostering arrangements are already established where both parties want to continue will transfer in to shared lives, all who want to progress towards more independent living.

Q: (GH - OxFSN) *Is shared lived used as a steppingstone on a regular basis for someone getting used to being away from the family home? We know it works well for some people, but not for others.*

A: (AG - OCC) We recognise it is not for everybody. People come to shared lives for different reasons and for the majority of people that are referred it does work. We work in

a person-centred way and focus on what a person wants from that kind of living arrangement whilst also looking at what a particular carer has to give. It is a good steppingstone towards independent living. We have had people who have lived in a long-term shared lives arrangement for several years but have then gone on to be semi-independent in their own flat and kept up a relationship with their carer as well. If anyone wants to find out more about shared lives, please contact **Alison Gackowski** on 01865 897971 or visit the OCC [Shared Lives website](#) or the national [Shared Lives](#) website, even if your family member is younger than 18 and you are in the planning stage.

OxFSN recommend that families start the person-centred planning process even before thinking about the next steps of your family member leaving the family home.

Notes from the chat.

- You can have a Direct payment for support outside of the supported living services
- The Care Act Assessment needs to be rewritten to be about moving in to supported living, it seems to be written in terms of the elderly.
- It can be difficult for the provider when it doesn't work. Trying to move a young person on to a different service proves very difficult. For example, when someone needs mental health services that were not originally identified or not present. When they have a placement, they are not seen as a priority.
- The Deputy Director for commissioning is very keen to include more people we support and their families.
- We have a core and cluster set up in Oxfordshire – a little bit like [Keyring](#)
- If anyone has any questions for Michael Steed from Brandon Trust regarding Supported Living, he can be contacted on 07393 463098
- Style Acre have a [website](#) for further information

Additional Questions from the chat

Q: Family Carer - What is community living?

A: (JG - OCC) Living in your community either with visiting support or with 24/7 support, mostly shared.

A: (KL – OxFSN) Sometimes Community Living can also mean 'Shared Living' which may sometimes refer to 'intentional communities. Examples include [Camp Hill](#) which is probably the most well-known. Similar organisations include [L'Arche](#), [Thornage Hall](#), [Stanley Grange](#), [Nutley Hall](#) and [Home from Home Care](#). These communities tend to have a cluster of supported living accommodation with a range of opportunities on a campus site setting that also provide learning and working.

Q: Family Carer - What is extra care housing?

A: (JG – OCC) Extra care housing is a flat in a bigger complex, they are mainly for older people who just need a little more support. People with LD who need visiting support often enjoy living there, a sense of community, onsite activities. There is a commissioned team of staff on site who can provide personal care etc and there is a charge for that which is called Peace of Mind that the personal budget covers. OCC tend to do a mix of the extra care housing support team and bring in a specialist learning disability provider for more specific activities.

Q: Family Carer - What is a HOLD mortgage? Why take them out?

A: (JG – OCC) The housing association buys the chosen property with the disabled person and their family. ... When the person moves or dies, the property is sold and the grants from the HCA are paid back to be recycled and invested into other property. More information can be found [here](#).

Q: Family Carer - How important is it to put a young person on the housing register?

A: (JG - OCC) It helps the City/District Council know the needs of their population. If someone needs accommodation, they might be allocated a flat or work with the County Council to provide a bigger property, especially with the new builds going up.

Q: Family Carer: Is there a difference between assisted living and supported living?

A: (JG – OCC) No, it's just semantics.

Additional Information attached

OCC Oxfordshire Guide

OCC Brokerage Forms: Social Worker Form

Support Provider Form

OCC Service Spec Form 1

OCC Service Spec Form 2

Link to the live session on You Tube.