



“Collective Voices for Positive Change”

OXFORDSHIRE
HOMELESS
MOVEMENT

Lived Experience Advisory Forum

LEAF Coordinator update

The forum is growing in numbers which is great, this has helped with having more views and experiences to support positive change within services. Reflective practice continues as the forum continues to develop and is firmly embedded into LEAF's team.

Due to ongoing demand for co production work with experts by experience, LEAF has developed and has recognised that homelessness has many connecting issues, such as criminal justice, physical and mental health, gambling and addiction to name a few. LEAF has been working with many organisations in Oxfordshire and nationally to coproduce more human focused services and to break down barriers for easier engagement for the service user to seek the support they need to fulfil their own goals in life. With this in mind, the forum members are currently reviewing the aims of LEAF.

The Gatehouse's new website is now up and running where LEAF's work will be easy to access. LEAF is committed to sharing their work to support services trying new creative and innovative ideas which work for the people using the services. A LEAF member will be allocated to manage the development/updating of the site.

The LEAF coordinator has increased her days to four days a week as from the 1st April 2023. This will support LEAF's goal to develop their consultancy work alongside Aspire. LEAF are currently looking for funding for Monica's hours to be increased so she and the LEAF Community Champions can continue to work with services to embed solutions from the barriers they found when looking into accessing health care within the homeless and vulnerably housed community.

January 2023 forum meeting included:

- Revisited LEAF's goals and aims for the year ahead – ongoing process.
- Wellbeing activities shared – free online Mindfulness class from Live, Work and Breath/
- LEAF members can now access the Gatehouse counselling service.
- A LEAF member designed and facilitated a benefits course for other LEAF members.
- A visit from the Centre of Homeless Impact on designing LEAF's impact chapter - discussion around building quarterly forums within Oxfordshire and bringing in groups from the Alliance - possibly members of the Alliance attending too.
- Two members of LEAF continue to work with clinical psychologists and sit on the steering groups to help design a seminar around research into homelessness.
- A forum member continues to support King's College and Connections Step Down houses by collecting feedback from service users to improve the service.

February 2023 forum meeting included:

- LEAF had 3 sessions on resolution training – provided by The Mint House.
- Members had an activity day where they went for lunch and a walk to build on relationships and a thank you for all their hard work.
- The forum held a focus group with Josh from Bullingdon Prison and shared ideas on how he could build better relationships and links between prisoners and services they require on release.

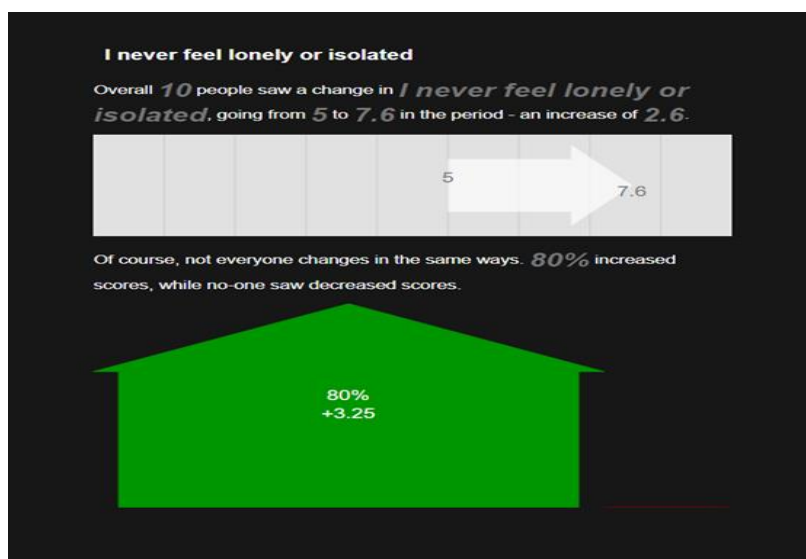
- Members attended a networking event with the Community Champions.
- Work continued on LEAFs own Impact Chapter with The Centre for Homeless Impact.

March 2023 forum meeting included:

- LEAF members completed Storytelling Training facilitated by The Old Fire Station,
- Nikki, the Homeless Alliance Programme Manager provided LEAF members with an overview of the Alliance.
- Mary Gurr from OWNS attended LEAF to start building links with the forum.
- LEAF members looked at LEAFs draft webpage and had input into what changes they wanted

Engagement of LEAF members and wellbeing

- LEAF understands that everyone has different lifestyles and is committed to helping break down barriers for people with lived experience to be part of a non-judgemental team, there are no time boundaries or DBS checks.
- We support people who join to try new roles, learn new skills and excel in the skills they already have.
- There have been five new members over the past three months.
- The forum is inclusive to all with lived experience with connecting issues to homelessness.
- 8 out of the 10 members who completed the wellbeing scale over the past 6 months had an increase of not feeling lonely or isolated. No one had a decreased score.



LEAF members feedback

"I heard about LEAF a long while back, but I didn't really know that much about it. A few weeks ago, I found myself feeling very disconnected and decided to try LEAF out. Everyone is welcoming and warm, and while I had only attended a few sessions, I'd learned a lot from each one, and I look forward to engaging with LEAF in the future."

"As soon as one comes to LEAF, one gets a sense that it is a real community, and that it gives people (who otherwise may not feel heard) a voice. As a newcomer, I also found the experience very heartening. When one meets people who had battled all sorts of difficult circumstances, and they are motivated to learn new skills, to share their experiences, and to be part of a better future – that is pretty special, and gives me hope that I can look forward to better days too."

"Since I have been with LEAF (be it on/off due to addiction issues) I have felt a sense of purpose on each Wednesday which has helped a lot. Going to LEAF got me looking people in the eye again sober and relearning how to hold a conversation or maybe not relearning but believing I could. I enjoy the debates which go on at times as I love to hear other people's view as it's a chance to potentially grow and learn. I have felt very supported by Lucy which I am grateful for. I hope to basically be a consistent and valued member moving forward as I believe in what LEAF is trying to achieve."

Development of the forum in 2023

The development of the LEAF forum is an ongoing process, and we are lucky enough to be able to make our own goals for the year ahead. These include at present:

- Developing LEAFs webpage on The Gatehouses website – This is now live please find the link here. www.oxfordgatehouse.org
- Consider if LEAF should write an annual impact report.
- Support ongoing training and development of the forum members.
- To continue to build healthy relationships with partners to ensure quality co-production work is produced.
- To explore how LEAF can expand to Countywide.
- Work with Aspire to help design a consultancy service for LEAF.
- Ongoing transitioning of forum members into lead roles that will support their future development and goals.
- Hold an annual LEAF Day.
- 1 member has started volunteering with Connections to follow her dream of becoming a support worker.
- Reevaluate who LEAF are and what areas they cover – adapt paperwork and website if required.

Co-production Partnerships & Projects in January – March 2023

Oxford City Council/LEAFs Community Champions worked together from October 2022 – March 2023 to research and evidence at the root causes of healthcare inequalities within the homeless and vulnerably housed population. Over the course of the project 3 forum members were led by Monica to manage the terms and conditions of the grant for the very first time and implemented all of the work relating to the research and planning of this project. LEAFs aim was to provide an independent voice for the homeless community and focus on those who are street homeless and/or who are in supported accommodation/vulnerably housed.

The evidence LEAF collated was through two streams of work. The first was through LEAFs work as Community Champions in collaboration with Oxford City Council and the second through work with the Lived Experience Advisory Forum. The people LEAF interviewed were either rough sleepers or in supported housing or vulnerably housed. LEAFs evaluation and evidence has been compiled through:

- Interviewing 137 participants
- Carrying out 2 workshops
- 6 outreach sessions in several homeless services
- Street outreach
- Various projects as part of the Lived Experience Advisory Forum

Out of 137 participants – 24 disclosed that they have not experienced barriers to health care.

For the other participants it was disclosed that healthcare access is a significant problem for the participants that LEAF interviewed. Through LEAFs research they identified that on a national level homeless people experience many forms of healthcare disparities; these include differences in

healthcare access, quality of medical check-ups, limited appointment times and health outcomes. LEAFs community Champions work has led to a request by Luther Street Medical Practice to help them re-establish a Patient Participant Group and we are in talks with Oxford County Council in regard to funding for LEAF to support services to embed solutions from the barriers they found. Well done LEAF's Community Champions we are all super proud of what you achieved!

Oxfordshire Homeless Movement –OHM commissioned LEAF to look at why some people may or may not want to move out of Oxford City. Questionnaires were designed and completed by LEAF. LEAF have now completed the findings and OHM will be sharing these shortly.

The Alliance – Nikki, the new Homelessness Alliance Programme Manager has attended LEAF and provided the forum with an overview of the Alliance structure and what is hoped to be achieved – Next steps are to revisit where LEAF fits into the Alliance and the Oxfordshire Homeless Strategy.

Connections, Step Down House and Kings College London – LEAF members are continuing to get feedback for Kings college at the Step-Down Project and the funding for this will finish in May. Talks are ongoing to access funding so this great piece of work can continue. A forum member who has their own experience of the Step-Down House has also supported qualitative data collecting. The report will be out soon.

Aspire – This year will be to focus on helping LEAF set up a consultancy service. LEAF will also be working alongside Aspire setting up workshops to build a Community Research Network in Oxfordshire. Aspire will update LEAF on previous work around an Advisory Committee and Housing First graduation process recommendations.

Arts at the Old Fire Station – Storytelling Training was facilitated by Arts at The Old Fire Station. The Storytelling research training will support LEAF being able to evaluate services in an innovative and inclusive way.

New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square - The relationship between New Road Baptist Church is amazing and LEAF cannot thank them enough for all their support over the last year – a big thank you to all they do especially allowing us to have the space every Wednesday so LEAF can continue to grow.

Oxford Institute of Clinical Psychology – Two LEAF members sat on a steering group to help produce the Homeless Research Seminar Day held in February. The project was funded by Health Education England (HEE). The seminar's purpose was to bring together people that can develop research that has a practical impact on homelessness. The event looked into areas such Hoarding, Addiction, Autism and Trans diagnostic research in Homelessness. The two LEAF members who joined the steering group also participated in the day event by sharing some of their own experiences. Three other LEAF members were also invited to the event to join in with working groups in the afternoon.

Centre for Homelessness Impact – LEAF are currently working with CHI on their own Impact Chapter. The vision is to hold a Storytelling Day event for service users and staff of the Alliance to share their experiences. Date to be confirmed soon.

Homeless Link - Making Every Adult Matter MEAM – Two forum members sat on the first steering group for MEAM which is being started in Oxfordshire. A member of LEAF will attend on a regular basis to support continuity, relationship building, co production and ensuring the experts by experience voice is also heard.

The Mint House – Provided a short course on Resolution Training to thirteen members of LEAF.

Countywide Steering Group – LEAF has a new member who will be continuing to join the Countywide Steering group alongside Lucy. This group meets once a month for two hours. It is made up of representatives of organisations and departments who work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness such as Adult Social Care, Health, Criminal Justice, Mental Health, Councils, and the Alliance organisations who provide homeless services. The steering group provides leadership oversight and influence to enable the transformation of the existing homelessness services through effective joined up working that encourages innovative thinking and overcomes resistance to change.

Kings College Lived Experience Access Fund - LEAF shared their experience with Steve from Kings college as he wanted advice on their LEAF Lived Experience Access Fund - they work with lived experience around gambling and wanted support in good practise around supervision and looking after the members wellbeing. Steve was also given advice on what works well with working with lived experience. They have a funding pot specifically for lived experience people with gambling, to attend events but funders need to fit criteria around being supportive before, whilst and after people share their own lived experience.

Homeless link – LEAF was involved in a steering group looking at building a framework for services for gender informed practice. This includes LBGQT+ female specific trauma informed approach.

Homeless Link – LEAF were involved in a Community of Practice session looking at Recruiting and working with people with lived experience <https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/involving-and-recruiting-people-with-lived-experience/>

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants JCWI – Lucy has been working with JCWI on sharing good practice working with people with lived experience. JCWI are also sharing how their Advisory Board process is going, barriers, challenges and what's working well.

RESTART, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley – Two members of LEAF participated in a pre-recorded session on barriers to voluntary and paid work after being released from prison/criminal record. The videos were used at a training event called Employment and Employability. The audience was made up of the OPCC, frontline RESTART team and their host organisations, TVP IOM, DWP, HMPPS, University of Oxford and employers.

HMP Bullingdon – The forum feedback was used for coproduction work - Josh from HMP Bullingdon attended and asked for advice on how to build better relationships between prisoners and services.

Oxford City Council – LEAF are supporting a NIHR Local Authority Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration. The research covers Housing First and the impact on wellbeing.

Opportunities for LEAF coming up

CRISIS – looking at new opportunities for service users due to funding cuts in services.

Brighton and Hove Common Ambition NHS Lived Experience – Common Ambition wanted to find out more about LEAF - Common Ambition is a co-production project that harnesses the ideas and experiences of people with lived experience of homelessness to improve homeless health services. The project is funded by Health Foundation and run by a partnership of Brighton-based organisations including [Arch Healthcare](#), Justlife, University of Brighton, Brighton & Hove CCG, and Brighton and Hove City Council Public Health Department.

Common Ambition will be attending LEAF to discuss health inequalities in the homeless sector. They would also like to keep in contact to see how our new consultancy model develops over the coming years.

Amber Lights – The Gatehouse and LEAF will be joining a podcast 'Amber Lights in Oxford' which was set up in memory of the founder's sister in support of Homeless Oxfordshire. The 'Home is where?' podcast will feature conversations with guests surrounding homelessness, addiction, and mental health to raise awareness, reduce stigma and feature the brilliant work they do.

Newcastle University – an opportunity for LEAF to support research into accessing healthcare in police custody.

Hertfordshire County Council, Adult Care services - Introduction for both services - Alistair Flowers is interested in setting up a lived experience forum in Herts and would like LEAFs support in finding out best ways of practice. Alistair to visit the forum.

The Gatehouse – LEAF has been asked to undertake a Storytelling evaluation of the Gatehouse in April 2023.

OWNS – Oxfordshire Winter Night Shelter - Mary is interested in possibly setting up work for a mentor with lived experience at OWNS and would like support in how this would be possible.

Lucy Stokes – Lived Experience Advisory Coordinator

Monica Gregory – Member Development Coordinator

