

2025 IMPACT REPORT

A volunteer led charity based in Oxford providing a wide range of services for and with people experiencing homelessness, those who are vulnerably housed, or those experiencing isolation.



Charity No: 1002741

St Giles Parish Rooms,
10 Woodstock Road, Oxford
www.oxfordgatehouse.org

A WORD FROM OUR CEO

As we look back on 2025, we do so with deep gratitude for everyone who shaped another remarkable year at The Gatehouse. Our community of guests, volunteers, staff, and supporters have continued to create a sanctuary in the heart of Oxford, offering warmth, welcome, and dignity to adults facing homelessness, vulnerability, or isolation, with our daily drop-in café remaining at the centre of this work, providing hot and cold food and a place of companionship. Throughout the year, guests accessed essential practical support, from shower facilities, clothing and toiletries to sleeping bags and other items that make life safer and more manageable. Beyond basic needs, our creative and therapeutic workshops, counselling, and one-to-one casework helped strengthen wellbeing and offered pathways toward stability and confidence. A particularly joyful part of our work continues to be the role of lived experience in shaping our services. Through the Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF), guests contributed their insight, wisdom, and ideas, helping make our services more compassionate, responsive, and empowering.

The wider context in Oxford made our mission ever more vital. Rising housing pressures and the city's high cost of living continued to create significant strain on vulnerable residents. In this challenging landscape, our open-access model ensured that anyone needing support could find it without barriers. We were also uplifted by community solidarity supporting homelessness services across the region. As we reflect on 2025, we do so humbly and joyfully. Every act of kindness, every shared meal, and every moment of connection helped create a year filled with hope further strengthening the heart of The Gatehouse community.



Sasha East

DID YOU KNOW...?

Hamming it up. We like to get noticed, and in 2025 we were the number 1 buyer of breaded ham slices in England at Sainsburys. That's a hard act to follow!

What a shower! We provided over 350 shower sessions in 2025. That's enough showers for every man in England's World Cup squad throughout the whole competition. Plus the same for our opponents in the final too.

Haute cuisine. If we built a tower from all 9,150 of the jacket potatoes we cooked in 2025 it would reach about 800m high. That's over 15 times the height of Nelson's Column, and 490 times the height of the man himself.

Move along the bus please. Our team of over 300 volunteers is enough people to fill five double-decker buses. But they're not just along for the ride as they provide over 10,000 hours of voluntary help to keep our community centre running smoothly.

Write on man! We provided 50 sessions of our literary group The Write Place which is two full working weeks of uninterrupted creativity dedicated to expression, imagination, and voice.

Who wants to bean a millionaire? In 2025 we used 2,496 tins of baked beans in our café - that's over a million individual baked beans!

2025 IN NUMBERS

COMMUNITY CENTRE

Over **700** guests accessed our community centre drop-in services over the year. In total more than **15,000** meals were served in our café. **51** guests benefitted from **352** shower sessions which are now available 5 days a week including a women only spaces during **44** Women's Space sessions. Our clothes store handed out around **6,500** items including clothes, toiletries, sleeping bags, bedding and much more. We ran **50** sessions of our literary group The Write Place, together with **19** workshops on topics as varied as wellbeing, arts and crafts, dog training, and first aid.



VOLUNTEERS

Over **400** volunteers provided over **10,000 hours** of their time to help us in ways including: running our drop-in sessions, making sandwiches/soup as a member of a volunteer food group, or acting as trustees. This is the equivalent of having around **5 extra full-time employees** and it saves us around **£150,000** in salaries.

CASEWORK

Our Casework Team provided support services for **143** guests in 2025 including outreach activities, achieving **2,296** positive outcomes, and referring guests to over **100** external support agencies for specialist support on a wide range of issues. In addition the Team also obtained nearly **£5,000** worth of practical support items for guests from ID documents to household goods, and bus passes to mobile funds using funds provided by OxPAT and other grant providers.



L.E.A.F

During 2025 LEAF members co-produced projects with **38** external bodies. Following a major restructuring and relaunch mid-year an expanded staff team for our **Lived Experience Advisory Forum** is now in place and enthusiastically promoting a new **Experts by Experience** programme.

COUNSELLING

With reduced forces throughout most of the year the Counselling Team still managed to carry out **172 counselling sessions** with **14** clients during 2025. With a new structure and expanded staff hours we fully expect to see numbers rise again over the coming year to more fully meet the high demand for this much-needed service.

CAFE & COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Community Centre and café remained a cornerstone of The Gatehouse throughout 2025, offering a vital blend of practical support, human connection and community led care. As a guest and volunteer driven service, its success is rooted not only in the volume of support provided, but in the atmosphere of kindness, consistency and respect that defines every session. During the year, we welcomed **696** named guests and an additional **150** anonymous guests. The scale of support delivered this year reflects both growing need and remarkable dedication from the volunteer team. Across the year we provided over **15,000** meals, **352** shower sessions, **2,421** clothing items, **417** toiletries, and **512** items of bedding. These are essential resources that help mitigate the impact of homelessness, hardship and poverty. Some evenings saw as many as **95** guests through the door, and thanks to an efficient and deeply caring volunteer team, every individual was met with warmth, compassion and professionalism.



Volunteers remain central to our achievements. Their commitment extends far beyond serving refreshments: they create an environment where guests feel seen, safe and valued, offering conversation, consistency and kindness, with guests supported through distressing or chaotic circumstances with patience and empathy. They also help with casework referrals, organise donations, and ensure the space operates smoothly under pressure. Their contribution embodies the ethos of The Gatehouse; hospitality without judgement, support without conditions, and care delivered with genuine humanity. This continues to be one of its most powerful assets.



Guests regularly describe the café as one of the few places where they can relax, be themselves and experience positive social contact. In a context where many face isolation, stigma or instability, such an environment has profound impact. In addition to core services, the year saw a vibrant programme of workshops that brought creativity and learning into the space. Sessions such as Wellbeing, Doggy First Aid, Pottery, and African History offered guests opportunities for learning, expression, skillbuilding and shared enjoyment — strengthening confidence and community bonds.

As pressures around homelessness and hardship continue to grow, the Community Centre and café remain a stabilising and restorative space, providing strength through high quality support and the spirit in which it is offered: kind, welcoming, and rooted in the belief that everyone deserves care, dignity and connection.



L.E.A.F

2025 was a year of rebuilding and renewed purpose for the Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF). Despite major structural changes, LEAF delivered **38** pieces of work across health equity, restorative justice, criminal justice, academic research, policy influence and national lived experience development—demonstrating the strength, resilience, and expertise of its members.

Throughout the year, **18 members** were actively involved in LEAF, including **12** regular members and **6** new joiners, contributing to a strong and stable community. Engagement remained consistently high, with an average attendance of 72% across workshops, meetings, and training sessions—reflecting the commitment of members even while many navigated challenging life circumstances. A major review in the spring reshaped the forum, introducing a new two-tier membership model and a structured **Experts by Experience**



training pathway. Members refreshed LEAF's values and governance, relaunched the group in July, and began delivering a new programme of wellbeing and skills building workshops in the autumn. Recruitment of new staff further strengthened capacity. As LEAF looks ahead to launching the LEAFmark accreditation scheme, 2025 stands out as a year in which lived experience not only guided internal renewal but continued to influence services across Oxfordshire and nationally. LEAF ends the year stronger, clearer, and more determined than ever to ensure lived experience leads to lasting change.

WOMEN'S SPACE



The Gatehouse Women's Space continues to provide an essential lifeline for women experiencing homelessness or vulnerability in Oxford, with growing demand reflecting the significant barriers women face when trying to access showers, clothing, casework and practical items in male dominated environments. To meet these needs, the Women's Space offers female-only showers, access to essential items, casework support and counselling referrals, helping women sustain existing tenancies, move out of homelessness or stabilise their circumstances. For many, this is the only accessible, safe place where these basic but vital supports can be obtained without fear or judgement.

The warm, friendly and uplifting atmosphere allows women to engage at their own pace and feel genuinely at ease. Throughout 2025 we welcomed visitors from a range of local services who provided practical information, advice, health resources and wellbeing materials offering direct access to specialists our guests may otherwise struggle to reach. We also distributed condoms and other essential items as part of our health-focused harm-reduction work, ensuring women had the resources to stay safe while managing complex and often precarious circumstances. As awareness of the service has grown, more women have participated, confirming the Women's Space as a uniquely supportive environment that continues to meet vital unmet needs with compassion, dignity and community.

COUNSELLING

Mental health remains one of the most significant and persistent barriers faced by people experiencing homelessness, and it is often the hardest area in which to access support through mainstream services. In recognition of this, 2025 was a year of major growth and development for our Counselling provision. Our Counselling service provides dedicated one-to-one therapeutic support free of charge in a context where such provision for adults who are homeless or vulnerably-housed is extremely limited.

In response to rising demand, we doubled the size of our Counselling Team, increasing both capacity and flexibility to ensure guests can access support when they need it most, and expanding to begin accepting referrals from external agencies, reflecting the high level of trust placed in the service by partners across the city. We also undertook a full review of our processes, embedding new ethically informed, BACP-aligned approaches to strengthen assessment, safeguarding and the therapeutic framework.

For many of our guests, we remain the only accessible therapeutic option. Complex trauma histories, unstable accommodation, and strict thresholds mean mainstream services frequently cannot offer support and leave individuals without help at critical moments. When other organisations are unable to step in, we fill that vital gap. Despite these challenges, engagement remains exceptionally strong: **73%** of those referred participate in Counselling, challenging misconceptions about the relevance or viability of therapy for people facing homelessness.

During 2025, the service supported **14** individuals, delivering **172** one-to-one Counselling sessions, each representing a meaningful step toward stability, wellbeing and hope. In 2026 we will be piloting therapeutic group sessions, broadening the pathways available for healing and building resilience. This growth reflects our commitment to ensuring mental health care is recognised as an essential lifeline for our guests.



“Through the compassionate and caring listening guidance and skill of the counsellor, I can look back at the really hard times and they are much sweeter because of the care and support I have received. I am discovering a new me and am beginning to see possibilities and a wider life, that would have made me feel anxious and overwhelmed before.”



CASEWORK

In 2025 our Casework and Outreach Service continued to adapt to the increasingly complex challenges faced by our guests. Many of the individuals we support fall through the gaps of mainstream provision and struggle to access housing advice, welfare guidance or financial support through traditional routes. In response, we strengthened our specialist pathways, ensuring guests receive support from practitioners who understand the realities of homelessness, trauma and long-term vulnerability. This evolving model allows us to offer timely, appropriate interventions to people who often have nowhere else to turn.

A central focus remains helping guests overcome practical and structural barriers that prevent them from securing or retaining housing. This includes assistance with ID documents, navigating complicated housing systems, stabilising income, improving budgeting, and providing advocacy during difficult decision-making processes. Alongside safeguarding, wellbeing support and efforts to reduce isolation, our aim is to give individuals the tools and confidence needed to progress toward independence and long-term stability.



To reach those most in need, our outreach approach underwent significant transformation. We expanded a single monthly static route into a four-zone city-wide outreach model, delivered fortnightly. This shift enables us to engage more consistently with people sleeping rough or in highly unstable situations, offering earlier intervention and building trusting relationships. Alongside this, casework is now integrated across all of our services and in partnership settings. Our welfare fund remains a vital lifeline, providing essentials such as mobile phone top-ups, bus passes, ID documents, furniture and household goods so often making the difference between sustaining a fragile tenancy or falling back into homelessness.

During 2025, the Casework Team supported **143** individuals and delivered more than **2,296** recorded outcomes, each representing progress toward safety, stability or independence. These outcomes included securing accommodation, improving financial resilience, addressing urgent health needs and helping individuals reconnect with supportive networks. Although many guests face ongoing and often severe challenges, their determination to engage with support continues to inspire hope. Our Casework Team remains committed to providing compassionate, practical and flexible support, ensuring no one has to navigate these barriers alone.

**“THE STAFF ARE SO HELPFUL,
WITHOUT THEM I WOULD NOT HAVE
MANAGED TO GET
THROUGH THE YEARS.”**

DAN'S STORY

When Dan* first came to The Gatehouse, he was experiencing the aftermath of a relationship breakdown which left him sleeping rough and cut off from his children. His physical health had deteriorated to the point where he required a walking aid, and he had no stable access to basic essentials. During community centre sessions, Dan shared his story with us, and we were able to provide immediate support in the form of a tent and sleeping bag for temporary shelter.

From there, we liaised with St Mungo's to get him verified, which led to an offer of accommodation at Somewhere Safe to Stay. When that provision closed, he was housed temporarily in a hotel. Throughout this time, The Gatehouse provided clothing, toiletries, bedding, and even a steamer so he could prepare his clothes for job interviews.

With ongoing encouragement, Dan engaged more with health services, eventually improving to the point where he no longer needed a walking aid. He also accessed counselling and casework support, which helped him rebuild his confidence and stability.

Over time, Dan secured permanent housing, gained employment, and was reunited with his children. His journey reflects the transformative impact of holistic support — addressing not just immediate needs, but long-term wellbeing and independence. In a moving gesture of gratitude, he later returned to The Gatehouse with cards and chocolates to thank the staff and volunteers who had walked alongside him in his journey.



**Not his real name, or photograph.*

GET INVOLVED

At the Gatehouse we rely on the help of the local community to enable us to continue providing support for Oxford's homeless community, and there are a wide range of opportunities for both individuals and organisations to get involved.

We have a large, enthusiastic team of volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life, and are always on the lookout for new recruits. The main roles taken on by volunteers include helping in our café by serving food and chatting to guests, being involved in group activities, joining a volunteer food group, or engaging in outreach activities.



Donations of all types are welcomed, both money and other items including food, clothes and other essential supplies which can be handed out to guests, and Gifts in Wills are an important way to secure long-term funding for the charity. Participation in sponsored events, buying lottery tickets, or purchasing items via Easyfundraising are other ways to fundraise for us.

A final way to help is to spread the word about the Gatehouse to friends, family, work colleagues and members of local community and social organisations. Promoting our charity, its services and its needs can be hugely beneficial.

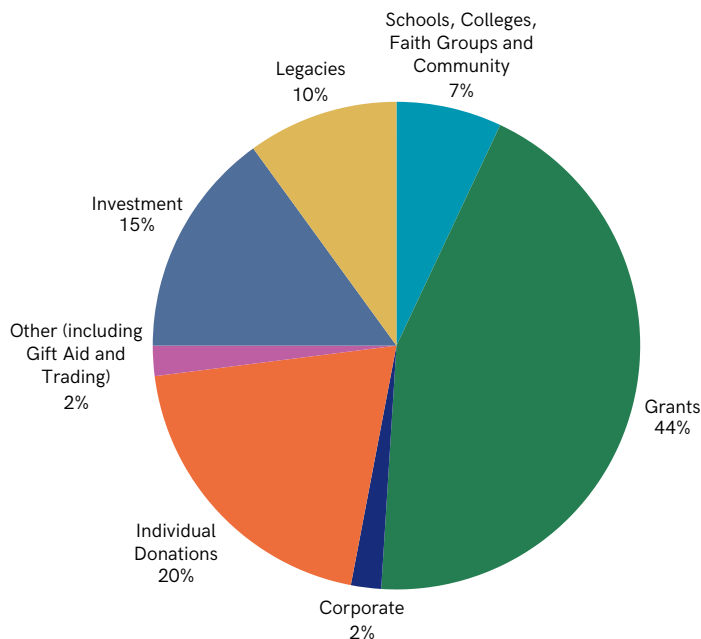
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You can find out more on the **Support Us** page of our website.



INCOME

In 2025 income fell significantly versus the previous year to £429,084. The main reason was a significant legacy of nearly £200,000 in 2024 making up 29% of income, with gifts in wills subsequently falling to 10% in 2025. This will continue as an important, but highly fluctuating source of funds over the long-term.



Grant funding remains the single largest sector, netting £189,412 in 2025, but this was over £90,000 less than in 2024, with increased competition impacting heavily on our success rate. Corporate donations have historically been relatively low, but we will be targeting this sector for growth in 2026.

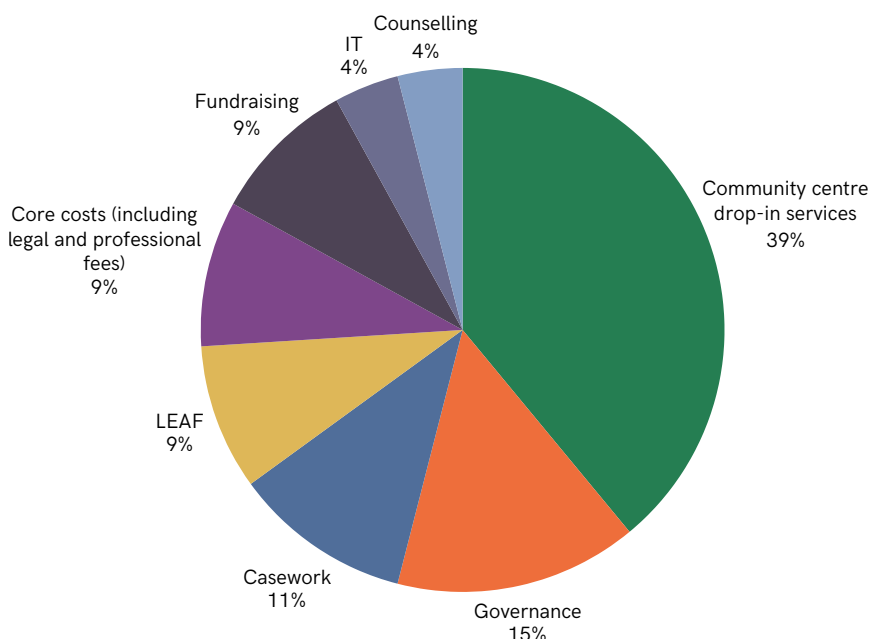
Our permanent endowment, which is managed by professional fund managers continues to perform well, with investment income rising to over £65,000 this year. Another good news story was the resurgence of donations from individuals and local community organisations, which rose to record levels. We are hugely grateful for all of this support.

EXPENDITURE

After rising in each of the previous 6 years to c.350% of the 2018 level, 2025 saw a reduction in expenditure by around £35,000 versus 2024. A restructuring of several services has enabled us to maximise benefits to our guests over the long term whilst ensuring careful management of fund usage.

Overall percentage expenditure by category remained similar to 2024. Drop-in community centre activities including our café, clothes store, shower services, workshops and Women's Space constituted the largest costs. These services also provided support for the largest number of guests: around 700 out of 1,000 across all of our services.

A further 24% of expenditure related directly to three further key services – Casework, Counselling and our Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF). We are aiming to expand all of these services further over the coming year with LEAF in particular seeing the development of exciting new programs.



THANK YOU

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all of our supporters, past, present and future. There isn't enough room to name everybody individually, but we really appreciate each and every one of you, and are grateful for your support, whatever form that has taken. On this page we are highlighting some of our key supporters across the various funding sectors in 2025.

GRANTS

Grant providing organisations are of particular importance to the Gatehouse as on average they provide around half of our annual income. We'd like to say a special thank you to the National Lottery Community Fund RC London & South East Region, Lloyd's Bank Foundation for England and Wales, Oxfordshire Homeless Movement and Oxfordshire Community Foundation, all of which have provided major grants over several years.

Other grants awarded in 2025 included those from St Aldate's Parochial Charity, Benefact Trust, OxPAT, Thames Valley Police Community Fund, Oxford City Council, St. Joseph's Province Passionists, B&Q, Hobson Charity, and Good Food Oxfordshire.



DONATIONS

Many faith groups in Oxford and the surrounding area are long term supporters of the Gatehouse, and we also receive support from a number of schools and colleges, along with community organisations including the Oxfordshire Freemasons. Corporate supporters in 2025 included Tessell8, Shaw Gibbs, and Audley Travel. Alongside them a huge number of other individuals and organisations have donated food, clothes and money, and raised funds through sponsored events, concerts, raffles, cake sales and many other activities.

VOLUNTEERS

Without the hard work of our dedicated volunteer team we simply couldn't provide the wide range of services that are available to our guests. As well as helping to run our café and other community centre drop-in services there are a large number of volunteers within food groups that provide soup and sandwiches for handing out in our café. We are truly thankful for their support.

FIND OUT MORE



CONTACT US

Charitable giving / fundraising / publicity:
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General enquiries / volunteering / services:
admin@oxfordgatehouse.org

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