

The Gatehouse Organisational Summary

The Gatehouse is an independent Oxford-based charity that supports adults who are homeless, vulnerably housed, experiencing poverty, social isolation, or other forms of disadvantage. Founded in 1988 by a group of Oxford churches as a winter daytime shelter, the organisation has grown over nearly four decades into a well-established community resource providing practical help, emotional support, advice, and opportunities for personal development. The Gatehouse became a charitable trust in 1991 and remains committed to its founding vision of offering welcome, dignity and hope to those facing hardship.

Today, The Gatehouse operates from its community centre on Woodstock Road in Oxford and provides open-access services to adults aged 18 and over. Unlike many services, guests do not need a referral, formal diagnosis, or proof of homelessness to access support. This low-barrier approach enables people who may struggle to engage with statutory services to find a safe, welcoming space where they can access help when they need it.

The charity provides a range of services designed to meet both immediate needs and longer-term aspirations. These include a daily community café serving food and refreshments, shower facilities, clothing and practical support, one-to-one casework, counselling, therapeutic and skills-based workshops, women's services, and opportunities for volunteering and peer involvement. The Gatehouse also hosts the Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF), enabling people with lived experience of homelessness and exclusion to shape services and influence wider systems and policy.

The organisation's approach is trauma-informed, person-centred, and strengths-based. We believe that lasting change happens through trusting relationships, genuine partnership, and recognising the skills, resilience and potential of every individual. Rather than focusing solely on crisis intervention, we work alongside people to improve wellbeing, strengthen social connections, address barriers to housing, health and employment, and support progression towards greater independence and stability.

The Gatehouse is supported by a dedicated staff team of approximately 20 employees and a large volunteer community of around 400 volunteers who contribute thousands of hours each year. Volunteers are central to the organisation's success and work alongside staff in delivering services, creating a diverse and welcoming environment that reflects the wider Oxford community.

Our vision is for an Oxford where everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity, connection and purpose. By combining practical support with community, advocacy and lived experience leadership, The Gatehouse seeks not only to respond to homelessness and poverty but also to address the underlying inequalities that contribute to them. Through partnership working and a commitment to inclusion, we continue to provide sanctuary today and support for the future.

In July 2026 the organisation converted its charitable trust to a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) this is a significant milestone in the organisation's history stabilising its governance structure for long term sustainability. In autumn 2026 The Gatehouse will be taking on a new lease of its building that will enable more activities and events to take place for its beneficiaries throughout the week. This is an exciting time to be part of this small and growing charity as we take these important steps to strengthen our work and better support people in need in Oxford.