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Homeless charity, the Gatehouse needs £10,000 for winter appeal

By **David Lynch** @davidintherain Reporter



Gatehouse is asking for help to feed and shelter homeless people. Pictured are case workers Monica, Hannah, and Lulu.

A CHARITY which helps homeless people to with food and daytime shelter is asking for help as it launches its annual winter appeal.

With winter approaching fast **Oxford** homeless charity the Gatehouse is launching a Winter Appeal to raise £10,000 of much needed funds from public donations over the next six months: from October 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.

Project Director Katrina Horne said: “the winter is a critical period for our guests, where food, warmth and shelter are needed more than ever simply to survive.

“As a local charity without national back up from a parent body, or funding from wider homeless fundraising campaigns we very much rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations within our community to be able to continue providing our services.”

This year the campaign is focussing on providing funds for two key services: the drop-in café which operates six evenings a week, and which the Gatehouse is best known for, and an extension to opening hours on Friday afternoons 12-3pm, which is a new initiative being launched in October.



Gatehouse Case Workers Lulu, Hannah, and Monica.

The extension of hours will enable the people using the service to access additional one to one support which is much needed.

The Gatehouse has been running a drop-in café providing a range of hot and cold food and drinks free of charge to members of Oxford's homeless and vulnerably housed community since the organisation began in 1988.

Free food donated mainly by other organisations and volunteers enables the Gatehouse to provide around £30,000 worth of sandwiches, soup and much more to its guests every year, but there is still a need to top this up every week with essential items, which costs the charity around £6,000 annually.

A donation of £1 will enable the Gatehouse to provide hot drinks for one guest for a week, or a £5 donation would cover all food and drink costs for one guest for a week.

Alternatively, a donation of £10 helps to fund an hour of one to one support for guests, and the need for this type of support is increasing.

One of the Gatehouse one to one project workers Hannah Smith said: “My role is to talk to individuals about their specific personal issues, whether that relates to money, health and addictions, or housing, to provide information, and to signpost people where further information and support can be found.

“Overall I help to lead them through the maze of paperwork and procedures, and where appropriate to refer them to other specialist support organisations.”

Hannah added: “Often there isn’t sufficient time to carry this out fully in our normal drop-in sessions, so the new Friday afternoon extension will be a major benefit, allowing me and my colleagues to talk to guests who have booked an appointment for a longer time and in a quiet environment.

“This should achieve speedier and better resolutions for these guests in their search for a better quality of life.”

Details about the Gatehouse Winter Appeal and different ways that you can donate can be found at **oxfordgatehouse.org**