

Employment Support Worker

Location: The Gatehouse and The Living Room, Oxford

Hours: 35 hours per week

Salary: £25,589 per annum

Contract: Fixed-term for 2.5 years (subject to funding)

Reports to: Casework Manager

Based: Across The Gatehouse and The Living Room, Oxford and other partner organisations.

About The Gatehouse and OWNS

The Gatehouse and Oxford Winter Night Shelter (OWNS) are working in partnership to provide support for adults experiencing homelessness or who are vulnerably housed in Oxford.

Both organisations provide welcoming, trauma-informed environments where people can access practical support, community and opportunities to move towards greater stability and independence. This project has been developed to strengthen access to employment, training, volunteering and financial resilience opportunities for people who may otherwise face significant barriers to engaging with these pathways.

Staff receive a 5% pension contribution, cashback healthcare scheme and other benefits.

Job Purpose

The Employment Support Worker will provide specialist support for people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity who wish to move towards employment, volunteering, training or other meaningful activity.

The role will help individuals identify their strengths, interests and aspirations and overcome practical, emotional and structural barriers that prevent them from progressing. This may involve confidence building, CV preparation, job searching, interview preparation, digital skills development, accessing training opportunities and sustaining employment once achieved.

Working across both The Gatehouse and The Living Room, the postholder will build trusting relationships with guests, delivering one-to-one support, workshops and practical activities that increase confidence, skills and independence.

The Employment Support Worker will be part of The Gatehouse's established Casework Team and work closely with colleagues, volunteers and partner organisations to create positive pathways away from homelessness and towards stability and independence.

This is a rewarding role that provides an opportunity to support people facing significant challenges to achieve their goals, develop their potential and improve their life chances.

Key Responsibilities

Employment, Training and Volunteering Support

- Provide one-to-one employment support to guests experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.
- Assess individuals' skills, interests, aspirations and barriers and develop tailored action plans.
- Support guests with CV preparation, job applications, interview preparation and job searches.
- Assist guests to improve digital skills required for employment and training.
- Identify appropriate education, training and skills-development opportunities.
- Promote volunteering as a route to confidence building, experience and employability.
- Support guests to sustain engagement with volunteering, training and employment opportunities.

Confidence Building and Personal Development

- Help guests identify and overcome barriers to employment, including low confidence, poor mental health, lack of experience, financial difficulties and social isolation.
- Deliver workshops and group sessions focused on employability skills and personal development.
- Support guests to establish realistic goals, routines and achievable next steps.
- Encourage participation in practical activities such as gardening, cooking, maintenance tasks and other work-related experiences.

Partnership Working

- Develop positive relationships with employers, training providers and community organisations.
- Work collaboratively with The Gatehouse Casework Team, OWNS staff and volunteers.
- Liaise with external agencies and refer guests to specialist services where necessary.
- Advocate on behalf of guests to improve access to opportunities and services.

Monitoring, Recording and Evaluation

- Maintain accurate and confidential records in line with GDPR requirements.

- Record outputs, outcomes and progress using organisational systems.
- Gather case studies and evidence demonstrating the impact of the project.
- Contribute to monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities required by funders.

General Responsibilities

- Deliver services using ethical, trauma-informed and person-centred approaches.
- Follow safeguarding procedures and work closely with the Safeguarding Lead and Casework Manager.
- Participate in team meetings, supervision and training.
- Contribute to service development and continuous improvement.
- Undertake any other duties reasonably required by the Casework Manager.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- Experience of supporting people into employment, training, volunteering or education.
- Experience of providing advice, guidance, coaching, mentoring or support on a one-to-one basis.
- Understanding of homelessness, poverty and social exclusion.
- Understanding of barriers that can prevent people accessing employment and training opportunities.
- Ability to motivate and encourage individuals with complex needs and varied life experiences.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to build effective relationships with guests, colleagues and external partners.
- Ability to work independently and manage a varied workload.
- Experience of maintaining accurate and confidential records.
- Ability to collect and record outcomes and case studies demonstrating impact.
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Commitment to delivering services using ethical and trauma-informed approaches.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience of working within homelessness, housing or community support services.
- Knowledge of local employment, volunteering and training opportunities in Oxfordshire.
- Experience of facilitating workshops or group activities.
- Understanding of welfare benefits and financial inclusion.
- Experience of working with people facing multiple and complex disadvantages.
- Training in trauma-informed practice.
- Experience of developing relationships with employers, training providers or voluntary sector organisations.