

# Community Newsletter



**emmaus**  
**Oxford**  
working together to end homelessness

Spring 2020 | Covid-19 Emergency edition



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### How Emmaus Oxford is working to protect and help

Like many others, Emmaus Oxford is trying to figure out how to keep going in the face of coronavirus. This newsletter provides information on how the outbreak is affecting our work, what we are doing and how you can help.

We're taking all the steps we need to keep our companions, staff, trustees, volunteers, supporters and customers safe. That will remain our number one priority over the coming weeks and months.

We're also asking for your help. We usually rely on our charity store to keep us running. As we all follow government advice, there are still some steps which you could take to really help us to keep supporting the most vulnerable people in our society.

Thank you for bearing with us and still helping us to support homeless people in these very challenging times.

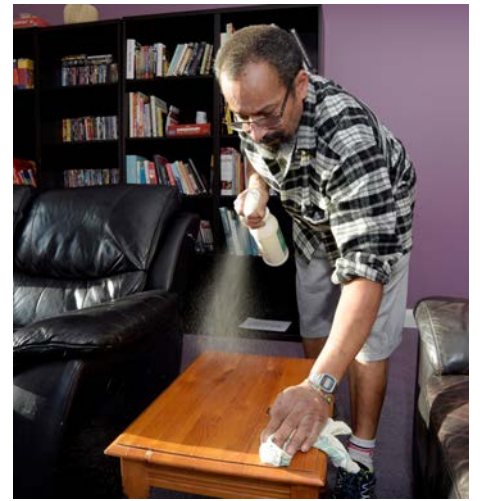
working together to end homelessness

# Can you become a Friend?

£10 a month can help homeless people get through this crisis.

Emmaus Oxford is proud that our charity store and other social enterprises usually bring in 52% of our income. We're now facing the reality that this will drop dramatically.

We're asking if you could donate £10 a month – or whatever you can afford – to become a Friend of Emmaus Oxford. These are very uncertain times for us all, but a regular donation can help us keep offering safe accommodation and support to homeless people through this crisis. You can become a Friend online at [www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford/support-us/donate](http://www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford/support-us/donate) or complete the enclosed Standing Order form and return it to your bank. Thank you.



## How we are protecting companions

**Emmaus Oxford knows that the Covid-19 outbreak presents specific risks to the homelessness sector. Some of our companions are in the high-risk group, with long term conditions that mean they need to take extra precautions.**

As of 24 March we closed our store. At the time of writing we have:

- Stepped up our cleaning rota
- Implemented proper hand washing and sanitizing
- Put in extra precautions to avoid spread of the virus
- Created a workable plan for companions and staff who need to self-isolate
- Asked our volunteers to stay at home for now
- Started a daily risk assessment update.

We will continue to monitor official guidance carefully and will announce any changes to our services on our website and social media channels.

Please feel free to contact our Chief Executive Officer Eddie if you have any questions or concerns at [eddieblaze@emmausoxford.org](mailto:eddieblaze@emmausoxford.org)





## "It feels like one big family"

**Emmaus Oxford is helping Shelly turn her life around. She shares her story:**

I lived in Kent all my life and raised my five children there. My job was working with special needs children but it was part-time. I did this as my kids grew up and started to leave home to lead their own lives. Eventually though the debts piled up and I couldn't afford to pay my rent. Nobody told me I could get a rent top up because I was working part-time; eventually they just kicked me out.

I ended up staying on my friend's sofa. I was very lucky not to be rough sleeping. I don't like to think about what could have happened. The experience of being homeless would have a huge impact on anyone, but I think being a woman out there alone is a scarier prospect.

I used to visit a local day centre for meals and advice. After six months, someone recommended applying to Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire. I had a phone interview and moved in the next day. I was there for eight months and then moved to Emmaus Village Carlton where I stayed for three years. A few months ago I decided to move to Emmaus Oxford and I've settled in well.

Emmaus is brilliant and feels like one big family. Everybody's been in the same situation but we all have different stories. It's helped me do so many things and opened up so many opportunities. I'm now qualified to use a forklift truck and achieved NGQ Level 2 in

Warehousing and Storage, Level 3 Food Hygiene and Level 3 First Aid. The support team at Emmaus Oxford is amazing. They know I'm ready and so they push me – in a good way – to try new things. I now have a diploma in Special Needs Education and am working to complete a course on Children and Young People's Mental Health. I plan to start another soon, to learn more about children's cognitive behaviour. All my training has been paid for by the Emmaus UK Companion Training Fund.

I've helped out in many different roles during my time with Emmaus. I really enjoy getting hands-on, collecting and delivering furniture for customers. Every week I also like to help out by cooking hot meals for the Emmaus Oxford solidarity project; it's great that once a week, local homeless people can drop in for food, supplies and advice.

I now feel ready to plan for the future. I've been applying for lots of volunteer roles and was really excited when a local special needs school recently invited me in for a chat and offered me a position helping out in classes. I'm really looking forward to starting this. It's the next step of my journey. My plan is to volunteer and get my foot in the door so I can eventually look for a part-time job, get on the housing register and find somewhere to live. I'm on a new adventure now and the future's exciting, thanks to Emmaus.

## Help us change lives

If you would like to help us continue our work supporting ex-homeless people like Shelly turn their lives around, you can donate online: [www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford/support-us/donate](http://www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford/support-us/donate)  
Thank you so much.





## Help us as you shop online

Looking for a way to help homeless people when you shop? You can support Emmaus Oxford each time you use eBay and Amazon!

eBay for Charity makes it easy for people to support Emmaus Oxford. Sellers can donate a portion of sales and buyers can shop while supporting our charity.

Visit [www.charity.ebay.co.uk/charity/Emmaus-Oxford/3144622](http://www.charity.ebay.co.uk/charity/Emmaus-Oxford/3144622) to find out more.

If you're an Amazon shopper, visit [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) and select Emmaus Oxford as your charity to find out more and sign up.

## Support Emmaus Oxford

### Donate to us

You can donate securely online:

[www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford/support-us/donate](http://www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford/support-us/donate)

Or complete the enclosed Standing Order form and return it to your bank. Thank you in advance.

### Shop with us

Whilst our store is currently closed until further notice, we are looking into the possibility of reopening our online eBay and Depop shops. Please check our social media for updates.

### Other useful info

Let Streetlink know if you see someone sleeping rough: [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk)  
This helps the local Council to make contact with them.  
If someone you see who is street homeless seems urgently unwell, call 999.

## Get in touch

Call 01865 402073 or visit us at

[www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford](http://www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford)

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