OPEN DOOR

Open Door St Albans Charity work with other local charities and services to assist people at risk of homelessness. In 1993 we opened the St Albans night shelter, and led the development of the Open Door accommodation and Drop-In Centre in Bricket Road. We continue to make grants to improve the facilities.

The Charity also coordinates the provision of volunteer – run direct services to rough sleepers, via the Winter Beds Project. In 2019/20, the project offered bed and breakfast for up to 6 rough sleepers every night from the beginning of December to the end of March, and was used on all but 2 nights during this period.

What has Lockdown Life been like for your group?

Because of the Covid-19 lockdown many UK services for the homeless have had to find new ways of operating to protect the health of their guests, volunteers and staff.

Since the beginning of March 2020 the Open Door charity has been working with other organisations in St Albans to co-ordinate the provision of food and accommodation in new ways.

The Charity is liaising closely with St Albans City and District Council, Hightown Housing Association, and several local charities – including Centre 33, Vineyard (FEED) and Druglink.

At the beginning of lockdown, all homeless people who accepted an offer of accommodation were housed, including those who had been accessing our Winter Beds provision. Since then we have been working together to provide food wherever needed and to support those who remain vulnerable or are newly homeless.

Lockdown forced us to find new ways of volunteering and adapt very quickly. Volunteers were phenomenal, and stepped up to the challenge, cooking, donating and delivering donations that have enabled us to continue supporting the most vulnerable in the community.

During each lockdown, Hightown Housing Association who manage the support service at Open Door, provided round-the-clock support and the night shelter remained open 24/7.

Find out more about <u>Open Door</u> volunteers and the <u>Winter Beds Project</u> on Soundcloud