

# FreshStart

helping people make a home for themselves

ANNUAL REVIEW  
22/23

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For more information about the charity or  
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Scottish Charity No SC029184



# MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REFLECTION

It has been yet again a busy year here at Fresh Start. Sadly, the need for our services is ever increasing and needs of the people we work for are consistently changing as well. The statistics around housing and the risk of people re-entering the homelessness system are quite stark. 20 years ago, people may have stayed in temporary accommodation for a few weeks, now the average stay is over 3 years. Social housing in Edinburgh had decreased by 37% in the last 40 years, but our population had grown by 13.3% over the last 10 years.

We knew that prior to the pandemic people were struggling to heat their homes and as we eased out of the pandemic, we thought things could only get better. But we went straight into a cost-of-living crisis, which really was the final blow for the people we work for after 12 years of austerity.

So, it seems I have only gloomy news – it is going to be another hard winter for the people we work for, and also us as a charity, the impacts will have long lasting effects and it will not be just this winter but years to come. But there is hope – hope for people having a better, brighter future and Fresh Start play a key role – we help people feel at home in their community as well as the bricks and mortar of their homes. This year the Community Hub became an award-winning space. We were delighted to win the SCVO Charity Awards Community Action Award. The Community Hub is busier than ever and providing an open access space for people to get help, support and advice, but also a space for people to be connected to each other.

This year we finally got the funding for NESSie (North Edinburgh Support Services) which is an innovative alliance of 4 very different organisations who all share the same guiding principles – start with love, care, compassion and dignity. The service is one of the first in Scotland to develop from conception with a Human Learning Systems framework. The 4 Development Workers work with anyone who needs help and support – we have no criteria and no referral system. Meaning we start with where people are at. We use the information to push for system change – thus allowing people to thrive not just survive.

Fresh Start staff team and all our volunteers focus on the small wins we can make on a daily basis to make people's lives better. Whether that is a cup of tea, a cooker, a welcoming smile or in-depth support – it really doesn't matter. The staff and volunteers work tirelessly to meet the needs of the people who need us, and we will continue to tackle poverty and inequality in our wee patch of the world.

I would like to thank the staff team, all our wonderful volunteers, the Fresh Start board and everyone who supports us in anyway, without you all we could not make the difference that we do and we do make a difference.

**Biddy Kelly**, *Managing Director*



# FRESH START VALUES & AIMS

## Our Values:

**Collaborate:** we are committed to working in collaboration with one and other, our partners, service users, volunteers, and communities to achieve the best possible outcomes.

**Respect:** we will treat people with respect and consideration and provide our services without judging or discriminating

**Empower:** we seek to empower all those with whom we work, building self-esteem and providing opportunities to learn new skills.

## Our Aims:

To provide goods and services which support people who have been homeless or at high risk of homelessness to make a home for themselves. (tackling financial poverty)

To provide opportunities for people to develop skills, confidence and social networks. (tackling loneliness and social isolation)

To provide volunteer-led services and opportunities for our service users to volunteer.

To involve partners in our work to end homelessness; statutory and third sector organisations, churches, corporates and community groups.



# OUR SERVICES:

## Starter Packs

A starter pack is more than just a pack of essential household items. A starter pack gives someone the ability to have a warm bed, eat their meals and make a cup of tea and toast.

*"There was a 4-5 day gap from when I moved in to when I got the pack. It nearly moved me to tears I was so overwhelmed by generosity of pack. I had nothing at that point. I was at a particular low point, and it was such a gift of kindness".*

## Hit Squads

Our painting and decorating service offers the chance for a new tenant moving on from homelessness, to choose how they want their home to look, giving dignity and empowering them to sustain their tenancy and make their house feel like a home.

*"The volunteers that came to paint were real gentlemen and the extra pair of hands was such a support. It gave me hope that I could do the rest. I would tell anyone that is going through it to get in touch with Fresh Start, they can help".*

## White Goods

Our white goods service provides our service users with the means to cook a hot meal, wash their clothes and store food – things we all take for granted. The service provides goods to those moving into their tenancy or struggling financially.

*"Someone suggested Fresh Start and honestly, they were amazing. I phoned them and explained the situation and I couldn't get any other help. Fresh Start did all the paperwork for it. They turned up on time. Really, really nice guys. It's working brilliant now. Absolutely fantastic".*

## NESSie (North Edinburgh Support Services)

Our new and unique service, offering bespoke 1:1 support based on exactly what the person needs at that given time. Building strong relationships and ongoing support to help people live with respect and worth and act as a preventative measure to homelessness.

*"It was unbelievable how gentle, patient and helpful [the NESSie worker] was. His work the past few weeks has been amazing. He really cares about his work and he seems to really take the time to do it the best he can. The determination he has to help is just fantastic. He put a lot of time and effort to help me out".*

## Community Pantry

Our community pantry offers a dignified alternative to food bank usage, giving our service users choice and ensuring that we continue to tackle food poverty and food waste.

*"If this service were to end I would go into a tailspin...it would really affect my situation. I'm so grateful for this service and life would be incredibly difficult without it".*

## Community Hub & Advice & Information

Our community hub gives a welcome space and friendly face to discuss the most troubling matters that can affect the sustainability of someone's ongoing tenancy. Advice can be sought on debt, housing issues, fuel, employability and more.

## Cooking

This service not only gives the opportunity to learn to cook healthily and on a budget, it also battles social isolation and food poverty with bespoke cooking groups, and offering free community meals twice weekly to local people.

*"The community meals are a massive help to me and my children, the food is always good and the environment is like a restaurant, it's lovely".*



### **Growing Spaces**

These spaces give people the chance to get outside, gain confidence and exercise while growing fresh fruit and veg that will be used in our pantry and cooking services.

*"It's honestly the best thing I do all week. I like the fact that it doesn't feel like charity. Everyone here is different but everyone is really nice. The gardening feels really good. It tires me out and makes me feel I've done something".*

### **PAT Testing**

Our unique social enterprise helps to fund the work of Fresh Start, contributing all profits across our services. The service also allows Fresh Start to reuse and repurpose goods safely via our starter packs.

*"First time using the services of Fresh Start to undertake our annual PAT Testing requirements - excellent communication from start to finish, professional and efficient. Thoroughly recommend and will be using this Social Enterprise scheme, from here onwards".*

### **Volunteering**

As our services have developed, we have also developed and expanded our fantastic team of volunteers. From those who have been present and actively supporting us from day one, to the student with some spare time and looking to gain new skills, or the person wanting to return to work but needing some real experience – every one of you contributes to the work of Fresh Start and our services could not possibly run without your support. As always, a huge thank you for your time, consideration and generosity.





# FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR 2022-23

**Income: £1,064,992**

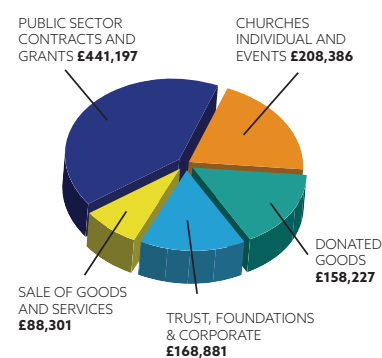
**Expenditure: £1,049,180**

We are extremely grateful to every single funder, business and individual who has contributed financially throughout 2022-23, these vital funds ensure Fresh Start can support some of the most vulnerable people across Edinburgh on their journey out of homelessness.

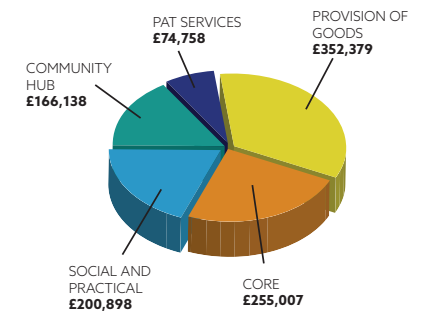
This information is taken from our annual financial statements, audited by Whitelaw Wells CA. Copies of the annual accounts, incorporating the auditor's and director's reports are available by contacting Fresh Start directly.

## PIE CHART WITH FINANCIAL INFO

### INCOME



### EXPENDITURE



## CHAIRPERSON'S REFLECTION

The annual review is always a time for reflection, to look back at what Fresh Start has achieved over the last 12 months, how many people we have helped and how our services have developed. The sheer volume of our work is very well represented in the numbers but the thing that remains the same is our core aim "To help people who have been homeless make a house a home".

Now more than ever we are helping individuals and families in the local community and the collaborative work with our partner organisations through NESSie will only further strengthen our role in being proactive, identifying those in need (needs that without help might result in eventual homelessness). It's truly inspiring to see the work going on at our community hub and pantry.

We are meeting with more people face to face that we have ever done, sometimes through cooking classes and sometimes just a chat but it's these small things in the face or mounting individual challenges that sometimes make the biggest difference.

When I was recently at our annual volunteers BBQ I remarked that when I first moved to Edinburgh as a student I had nothing to help me set up my first flat but the call went out and my family pulled their resources and all the small items that I might need to start my first home were gathered and donated to me. I sometimes feel that that is what Fresh Start is – that extended family. A family of volunteers, supporters and staff members that come together to give that help when it's most needed.

The need for our services is only increasing and Fresh Start will continue to grow and adapt to meet, where we can, and work alongside our clients to help them create a better and more optimistic future.

Our work is only made possible with the generous support of volunteers, businesses, organisations, Edinburgh Council and faith groups. On behalf of Fresh Start I would like to thank them all for their continued support that allows us to carry out our vital work.

*Gary Cameron, Chairperson*



# STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Fresh Start operates as a company limited by guarantee and is recognised as a charity with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

The overall governance and management is the responsibility of the Board of Directors. The Directors are either nominated by Christian denominations or co-opted as set out in our constitution and are legally bound to adhere to the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

## **Fresh Start's Board of Directors 2022-23:**

Gary Cameron (Chairperson)  
Dr Allan Gordon  
Michael Green  
Morag Hutchison  
Alan Morrison  
David Gaughan  
Miriam Newton

