

FRESH START VALUES

Collaborate: we are committed to working in collaboration with one another, 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.

FRESH START SERVICES

Fresh Start meets our stated aims through services that are delivered around three themes:

Provision of goods: to ensure vulnerable people have essential household goods to help them set up a home, and improve the likelihood of them sustaining it successfully.

Social and Practical Support: to provide people who have been homeless, and others at risk of homelessness, with support and the skills to enable them to live independently in the community.

Employability: to help people that are unemployed gain skills, experience, and qualifications that will increase their employment prospects.



FRESH START AIMS TO:

- Enable people who have been homeless resettle in the community
- Provide volunteering opportunities that offer practical and emotional support to our clients
- Help our clients develop life skills
- Involve church members and the wider community in our work to help people avoid homelessness and gain skills and qualifications that will increase their employment prospects

So, 2020 has been a strange year for everyone, it has been a year of learning a new language and behaviours – lockdown, social distancing, furlough, face masks and hand sanitising to mention a few. Covid-19 has stopped us all in our tracks, but here at Fresh Start we couldn't stop; - people were in desperate need and we had to respond. It was apparent at the start of lockdown that we would not be able continue delivering starter packs and other core services to our core services users, those moving on from homelessness.

The week before lockdown we attended a meeting with other local organisations and the Covid Foodshare Group was established. Our partners and Fresh Start were clear from day one that we would focus on food delivery. We set up a phone line for local people in North Edinburgh to call if they needed help and the Fresh Start team referred them on to partners and / or to receive our food packs. Between March – July, Fresh Start and our partners delivered 155,638 meals and food packs to over 1,000 households.

In June, we transitioned out of the emergency food packs and in line with our values of providing people services with dignity, we opened our Community Pantry 6 months earlier than planned. We are pleased to say we have 200 members using The Pantry on a regular basis and we are supporting other organisations in Edinburgh to establish similar models across the city.

The hub development is coming along – we are just waiting for the planning and building warrant to come through and then it will be full steam ahead getting the building back to a good condition and we hope that we will open our doors to people early 2021.

We have had to adapt all our services – we have introduced the Green Grafters – a hit squad service for local people where we go in and tidy up their gardens so that the children can go out and play and neighbours can chat over the fence. We have been doing remote Hit Squads where we give service users paint, equipment and instructions on how to paint their tenancies and we are pleased to say we have resumed normal Hit Squads in September.

As we go into winter, people's anxieties remain at an all-time high; with worries about job security coupled with the constant fear of the virus. We are seeing a stark rise in the number of newly unemployed people accessing our services as a direct result of the pandemic. Our main concern is the long-term impact of people losing their jobs; having to navigate the already overloaded benefits system and the volume of evictions that will start taking place as people cannot pay their rent arrears. This is coupled with what we already know: - that the people we work with have already been living in poverty - financial, social and aspirational.

We have worked hard with our partners to develop a visionary plan to ensure we meet the ever-changing needs of local people, as well as making sure we can assist more people moving on from homelessness. We know the coming months / years are going to be difficult for a great number of people, but we are confident that, working in close collaboration with our partners, we will be able to respond agilely and quickly to whatever comes our way.

Once again, a huge thank you to all our third and statutory partners, funders, corporate sponsors and individuals who have assisted us in the last few months and who we are certain will walk alongside us in the coming months and years to build a resilient and cohesive community.

And last but certainly not least I want to give a personal thank you to the amazing Fresh Start staff team, I am so proud to be part of such a dedicated and inspirational team. Each and every one of you went above and beyond all expectations!

Biddy Kelly, Managing Director





STARTER PACKS

In mid-March 2020, a 20-organisation wide partnership meeting was called to see how we could respond to the oncoming crisis that Covid 19 was going to bring to our local community. Charity and community groups joined forces to deliver healthy meals, food packs, toiletries and cleaning products to vulnerable people and families affected by the lockdown.

The group met virtually twice a week during lockdown to co-ordinate community groups and volunteers to safely deliver record numbers of food. We set up a dedicated phoneline that was launched to coordinate the requests for support and assistance. The group worked as a collective to ensure that we had the funds and the food to provide our local community with 155,638 meals and packs.

Fresh Start were pleased to be a major part of this incredible response and we used the opportunity the crisis had granted us to develop deep and trusting partnerships with other local organisations. We are fully committed to work together to rebuild our community and be prepared and ready to respond to the devastating economic effects of Covid 19 that will be felt for a long time to come.

One local resident who received our packs shared her story, "My husband had lost his job, and we were 2,093rd in the queue to speak to someone about Universal Credit, had 14 hour wait, no money, no food. My health visitor referred us to the Covid-19 Foodshare Group and they just appeared with food and packed lunches for us. I have never cried to see food to feed my kids, but I just had no money. They turned up every day with packed lunches and for three weeks, a food parcel appeared at our door."

2021 January

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2021 February

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THE LOCAL PANTRY

At the end of June, as a response to the pandemic, we fast tracked the opening of our Fresh Start Local Pantry to allow those living in North Edinburgh who were struggling financially to do their weekly shopping with dignity, but at a fraction of the cost. The Pantry operates a unique membership system and was the first of its kind in Scotland, allowing members to take home up to 10 grocery items per week for only £3.50, and there are plenty of additional 'freebies' on offer too!

Catherine joined Fresh Start Pantry as a volunteer and a member when it opened in June 2020. She lives in the local area and she has been one of our biggest supporters since day one! She has spread the word about 'Fresh Start Pantry' far and wide and she is a dedicated and valuable member of our Pantry team.

"I enjoy volunteering because I enjoy meeting new people and seeing new faces, I hear what the members think, and they tell me how much it helps them every week and what a difference it makes to their food bills. It helps me out, it helps me big time; I can make ends meet and it tides me over until pay day. The products are good, and they can really feed a family, the choices are great like the cereals, it makes such a difference".

2021 March

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2021 April

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GARDENING

As a result of the lockdown and ongoing restrictions imposed during the summer of 2020 Fresh Start were required to think differently about how we could offer ongoing support to our clients as well as making the most of the goodwill and commitment of our volunteers.

We understood that, given the circumstances, people's outdoor space was even more precious than before and many people in Pilton and the surrounding area were clearly struggling to maintain their gardens. With the suspension of many services we felt there was a growing need and an opportunity for us to engage with the local community and make a small difference to individual tenants and their families.

Jade was one of the very first gardening hit squads we completed in early June following the lockdown restrictions. She had just been rehoused in a new flat following a period of being homeless with her two young daughters and was busy settling in.

The shared garden at the front of the house was overgrown and unloved. We were able to cut back the hedge, remove a lot of litter that was caught in the overgrown lawn, mow the grass and cut back overgrown tree branches which cut out the light into the lower flat.

Jade was pleased with the result and we hope it will have helped to make her feel at home.







HIT SQUAD

During the pandemic, we had to adapt our services in order to keep everyone safe. Our Hit Squad painting and decorating service adapted by offering people 'remote Hit Squads'. These involved dropping off decorating materials at a client's home and support being given remotely from our volunteer coordinators. Julie received her painting kit and made a fantastic job on her new flat.

When Julie split from her partner, she realised she was not on the tenancy agreement. Julie always lived in owned properties or privately rented flats, but when it came to move out, she couldn't afford the rent by herself. Julie had to live in a B&B for 2 years before getting her Housing Association Flat.

"I'd never had to deal with anything like that before. It's hard because you are confined to one room. For the first 11 months I didn't even have access to a washing machine or cooking facilities. I ate pretty badly during that time and felt grateful to have the routine of going out to work every day." "It was lonely, isolating and restricted; sometimes you would just crack up. You had to watch your back too, it's not an easy environment to be in when people kick your door or shout abuse."

Julie's work contract had finished by the time she received the keys to her new flat. A worker based at the B&B provided moving on information about benefits and support services. This is where Julie heard of Fresh Start. She contacted her housing officer who made a referral for a starter pack and the Hit Squad service.

"I was excited and filled with adrenaline the day I got my keys but its daunting, you are just left to it. All I had to move in was my clothes and a chair."

Julie had never lived on her own before but has now adopted a black kitten, enjoys cooking for herself and looks forward to getting back into work.

"It was great to get the help from Fresh Start, they provided the basics I needed including pots and pans and towels, and the decorating kit was absolutely perfect. Being by myself is not as strange as I thought it would be. The sense of achievement I got from painting my flat was great and I now feel content in my new home." client's name has been changed for anonymity





EMPLOYABILITY

Our employability training course, Jump Start, has developed over the years and we are now delivering the course in partnership with the Lifelong Learning team and People Know How.

When on the course the trainees will work towards two SQA accredited qualifications, a Personal Development Award (PDA) and Communications (speaking and listening), as well receiving digital skills sessions. Scott attended the course and said, "The course was helpful and motivated me to make many moves to improve my lifestyle and ideas for the future."

Theresa also told of how the course boosted her confidence, "It was good to learn new skills, as well as learn qualities about myself. The skills and qualities I have now gained help me set goals for myself within a time range. It is a good place to start for anyone that is wanting to challenge themselves."

2021 September

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2021 October

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CORPORATE SUPPORT

Our corporate partners provide us with fantastic support; generously committing their valuable time to volunteer with us, turning their hands to gardening, painting and assembling Starter Packs; arranging collections in their offices; walking alongside us at the Kiltwalk and cycling in our name at Ride to the Sun. Behind the scenes, they also support us with projects and funding; including our Christmas Presents Appeal and our Emergency Food Packs, assembled in response to Covid-19.

In what continues to be a challenging time for businesses globally, our corporate partners have remained steadfast in their support of Fresh Start; donating goods, money and time. Thanks to existing and new supporters, we delivered over 9,000 Emergency Packs to Edinburgh's most vulnerable in just six months. We will never be able to thank them enough for their incredible generosity and look forward to continuing our work together for many years to come. An example of this support was the weekly food deliveries, from May-October, funded and

coordinated by our long-term partner Investec: 'Investec have had a corporate partnership with Fresh Start for a number of years and throughout this time our staff have taken part in a variety of engaging and insightful volunteer days. The response and feedback from staff has been amazing, most staff who take part in the days are keen to do more and help support this amazing charity. Volunteer activities centre around supporting Fresh Starts clients such as decorating, painting and outdoor maintenance. Over the years our relationship has strengthened thanks to the brilliant Fresh Start staff who have always provided opportunities that work to benefit both parties, a recent example is through socially distanced outdoor maintenance volunteer opportunities. The importance of maintaining our partnership has been particularly shown during the coronavirus pandemic. As an organisation we committed to supporting Fresh Starts emergency packs by delivering weekly food supplies to ensure their clients could continue to receive the emergency support they needed. We hope to continue this partnership for many years to come and are proud of all the essential work Fresh Start continue to deliver to their clients on a daily basis.' -

Carole Anderson, Senior Investment Administrator at Investec



STARTER PACKS

- Number of packs delivered: 12,037 packs
- Number of white goods/cookers distributed: 333
- % who said Starter Packs made them feel settled in their homes: 93%
- % stated they would have gone without if they hadn't received starter packs: 87%

HIT SQUADS

- Number of Hit Squads carried out: 100
- Number of regular volunteers: 30
- Number of corporate volunteers: 95 volunteers giving 971 hours of their time
- % stated their house felt more like a home: 99%
- % more likely to invite others into their home 97%

COOKING CLASSES

- · Number of clients who have attended cooking classes: 89
- Number of volunteers: 22 gifting 971 hours of their time
- Number of clients attending 4 week block of cooking classes: 56
- % felt more settled in their home as a result of attending the cooking classes: 96%
- % felt more able to cook at home and manage their budget 90%

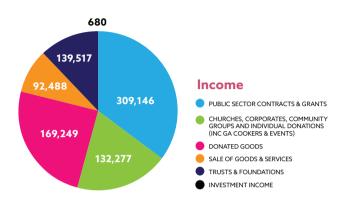
FACTS AND FIGURES

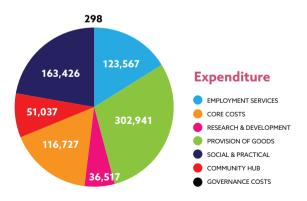
COMMUNITY GROWING SPACES

- Number of clients: 28
- Number of volunteers: 15 giving 971 hours of their time
- % stating that they understood the importance of doing more physical activity: 85%
- % who said they felt more physically active: 96%
- % stated it helped their mental wellbeing : 95%

EMPLOYABILITY

- Number of trainees gaining accredited qualifications: 20
- Number of trainees who completed vocational work experience: 31
- Number who moved on to paid employment: 2
- Generated through the PAT business: £75,000
- % stated they had improved their communication skills and interpersonal skills: 100%
- % stated they felt more confident in interacting with others: 100%





FINANCIAL SUMMERY

INCOME: £843,357

EXPENDITURE: £794,513

This information is taken from our annual financial statements, audited by Whitelaw Wells CA. The accounts are still to be finalised Copies of the annual accounts incorporating the auditor's and director's reports are available from admin@freshstartweb.org.uk

CONVENOR'S MESSAGE

Last year I wrote of our exciting plans for 2020, with the focus being the extension of our warehouse at Pilton, creating our new Hub. This would allow us to work closer with the local community and provide both our existing and new services to a greater number of people in need. We focussed our efforts on achieving this strategy early in the new year until the coronavirus pandemic changed all of our lives in March.

Almost overnight the priorities and needs of our community changed. Fresh Start, working in partnership with other local organisations, rose quickly to the new challenges and delivered new and much needed support services, all in a Covid safe manner. At the same time, our employees were having to cope with the lockdown rules and the impact on their own lives. It is a testament to the leadership of Biddy Kelly, supported by the senior managers and the whole of the staff team, that Fresh Start was able to continue to provide much needed services in this time of crisis for so many. Many of the team worked very long days, rolling up their sleeves to do whatever was necessary.

They are truly the Fresh Start heroes of lockdown and I hope that they take pride in knowing that they played such a big role in the lives of so many during that period. On behalf of the Board I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who went above and beyond and delivered a truly exceptional service.

Our lives continue to be affected with the pandemic. In addition to the health concerns, we are facing a period of severe economic downturn. Every day we hear of more job losses and businesses having to shut their doors. This has already resulted in an increased demand for our services and support and we remain committed to doing all that we can to meet that demand.

Since March, we have missed the practical help and assistance of so many of our regular volunteers. Many of you have given financial donations over the last few months and we thank you for your continued support. We are continuing to work on our Hub development and hope that in the not too distant future, we can welcome you to the Hub.

In the coming weeks and months, we, like so many across the world, are likely to face more challenges and difficulties. Many are anxious about health, family or money or are struggling with mental health issues due to periods of social isolation. Fresh Start remains committed to doing whatever we can to help alleviate some of these issues in our community. Our core values and years of experience provide us with an excellent platform to do so. We hope that you will continue to support us in whatever way you can. Together, we can make a difference.

Lindsay Wallace, Fresh Start Convenor



