



# HELPING PEOPLE MAKE A HOME FOR THEMSELVES

**FreshStart**  
*helping people make a home for themselves*

ANNUAL  
REVIEW  
**2021**

# OUR VALUES AND GOALS

## 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.



**The last year has been like no other for every person in the world and that is certainly true for all those involved with Fresh Start – service users, volunteers, supporters, and the staff team. It was a year of adaptation: services were quickly adjusted so that we could continue to deliver them in the logistics of a strange new world.**

From day one of lockdown, staff started making up emergency food, toiletry, and cleaning packs to meet the most immediate needs of our community. Shopping in the evening and weekends to make sure we had enough goods to go out to the hundreds of families we were supporting and lending an ear to those in need of help via our dedicated phoneline for local people. We were a key player in the North Edinburgh Covid-19 Food Share Group, working with partner organisations to make sure every person had what they needed, recognised with being awarded the Inspiring Partnership Award at the Chamber of Commerce Awards ceremony.

Our emergency response to Covid 19 saw us deliver 9,334 food, cleaning, and toiletry packs to over 1,300 households. The staff team got creative in how we could deliver our core services during these restricting times, leading to the development of Dish of the Day cook bags, 'Green Grafters' gardening hit squads, remote painting and decorating Hit Squads and the development of new services. We opened the first Your Local Community Pantry in Scotland

and were able to share our experience and learning to assist other organisations set up a network of pantries across Edinburgh. Recognising the importance of diversifying our services to allow us to keep running during these challenging and unprecedented times, when our help was needed more than ever.

During lockdown, we were unable to accept the much-needed donations of goods from the public for our Starter Packs. Thankfully, our supporters and funders quickly stepped in to donate money to purchase new goods for people needing these essential items when moving into their new tenancies and despite the pandemic, we still managed to provide 7,543 starter packs to over 1,000 households.

Looking back at the last year, I am stunned by what we achieved in such uncertain times. This really is a testament to the dedication of the staff team, board members, volunteers, and ongoing, steadfast support of all our funders. Their belief in the capabilities of what Fresh Start could achieve made all of this happen.

Looking forward, we will continue to deliver our core services supporting people on their journey out of homelessness, but we also want to develop our services to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place. With the development of our community hub, we will be expanding the range of services on offer in North Edinburgh and reaching more vulnerable individuals and families while providing a real asset to local people.

Never has there been a more pressing need to feel at home in your local community and feel connected with one and other. By working in partnership with local people and partner organisations, we believe that we can develop a community hub with a strong sense of community, provide access to vital services and create a space that local people can feel at home. I would like to acknowledge the dedication and passion of the staff team and volunteers of Fresh Start, who without none of this incredible work could have taken place.

And to those who have and continue to support us with their funding, time, and pro-bono support. I am honoured and privileged to work and lead an organisation with people always at the heart of everything we do.

**Biddy Kelly, Managing Director**





**OUR STARTER PACKS HELP PEOPLE TO SET UP THEIR HOME, FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF HOMELESSNESS, BY PROVIDING THE ESSENTIAL GOODS NEEDED TO TURN A HOUSE INTO A HOME.**

# STARTER PACKS



**ON RECEIVING THE PACKS,  
ONE RECIPIENT SAID:**

*"I'm a single parent with 5 kids. We had nothing. When we got the delivery, I felt really supported, it was like angels falling from the sky!"*

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**DUE TO RESTRICTIONS, WE CONTINUED TO OFFER THE REMOTE HIT SQUAD PAINTING AND DECORATING SERVICE THROUGHOUT 2020-21. THIS GAVE PEOPLE MOVING INTO THEIR NEW TENANCIES THE CHANCE TO TRANSFORM OLD, STAINED WALLS AND TAKE OWNERSHIP AND PRIDE IN UNDERTAKING THE TASK THEMSELVES!**

# 41

HOUSEHOLDS  
RECEIVED  
PAINTING  
MATERIALS  
TO CARRY  
OUT A REMOTE  
HIT SQUAD



# 15

HOUSEHOLDS  
RECEIVED THE  
HELP OF OUR  
VOLUNTEERS TO  
DELIVER A  
'TRADITIONAL'  
HIT SQUAD



## HIT SQUADS

As restrictions eased, we were able to bring back our 'traditional' Hit Squads with the help of our fantastic volunteers. Both services have been well received and have allowed us to help more people settle into their new home.

Tracey had to be rehoused due to ongoing threats of violence from an ex-partner and despite being in her new tenancy, she still felt anxious. Tracey made the decision to contact Fresh Start to see if we could help. To limit the risk of exposure and due to restrictions at the time, Tracey received a remote Hit Squad. Paint and equipment were delivered to her door and collected 5 weeks later, to allow Tracy time to tackle the job at her own pace. *'I had everything I needed, enjoyed doing it and love the result. Would recommend it to anyone!'*

MARCH

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APRIL

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**UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO RESTRICTIONS, WE WERE UNABLE TO RUN OUR COOKING CLASSES OVER THE PAST YEAR, BUT WANTED TO OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE COOKING OPTION IN A SAFE, BENEFICIAL WAY.**



# COOKING



**We created a new service called Dish of the Day, providing cook bags with all the ingredients needed to make the recipe on offer that week. These offered an opportunity for recipients to make nutritious, delicious recipes at home and to get the whole family involved in cooking and spending time together.**

Rob was housed in December, following a year in a hostel, and started receiving the Dish of the Day bags in January. He says this was perfect timing as he had previously enjoyed cooking so having the opportunity to prepare healthy, affordable meals for himself played a large part in helping him

settle into his new home, improving his health and getting his life back on track. He reported that the packs were generous and provided enough for 2 or 3 hearty meals, which was really helpful financially.

# 53

HOUSEHOLDS  
WERE REACHED  
WITH OUR  
'DISH OF THE DAY'  
COOK BAGS



MAY

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JUNE

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**SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS BECAME SUCH A SIMPLE JOY DURING THE VARIOUS LOCKDOWNS OF 2020-21. OUR GREEN GRAFTERS SERVICE CONTINUED TO HELP THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BY TIDYING UP GARDENS AND CREATING A GETAWAY FROM THE CONFINES OF THE FOUR WALLS MANY PEOPLE WERE STUCK IN OVER THE LAST YEAR.**

# GARDENING & GROWING SPACES



**Our Growing Spaces also offered access to outdoor space, giving service users and volunteers opportunity to learn about growing fresh produce and spend time with others.**

James received help with his garden, with the team even digging out a small plot to allow him to grow vegetables. James got stuck in alongside the volunteers and really enjoyed the day.

In conversation it transpired that James would like to visit our garden in Craigmillar to learn more about growing vegetables. *"We have some fun; we have a bit of a laugh. Sometimes in life we all need someone to lean on".* James is now a regular volunteer at our Craigmillar garden.

## 33

GARDENS IN THE LOCAL AREA WERE TRANSFORMED IN USEABLE, ENJOYABLE SPACES TO SPEND TIME

## 74

GARDENING SESSIONS WERE CARRIED OUT IN OUR GROWING SPACES AT FERRY ROAD DRIVE AND CRAIGMILLAR

JULY

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AUGUST

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**WITH CONTINUED JOB UNCERTAINTY, MANY PEOPLE RELYING ON FURLOUGH PAYMENTS AND CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE PANTRY OFFERED A REAL LIFELINE TO MANY.**





## FRESH START PANTRY AND SHOP

**The Pantry offers a dignified alternative to food bank use and helps tackle social isolation and find community connectedness.**

This year, we also opened our Fresh Start Shop, selling low-cost homewares, in keeping with our mission to help people make a house a home. The Shop has been well received locally and adds a new service to the area.


Jane is currently in temporary accommodation and is a member of the Pantry. *"The Pantry has helped me a lot as we struggle to make our money stretch, so we use the Pantry. I feel more connected to you all in the Pantry, you have helped me, and I feel I can be upfront and honest with you".*

### SEPTEMBER

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### OCTOBER

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**WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS, BOTH REGULAR AND CORPORATE FOR THE TIME, ENERGY, AND PASSION THEY GIVE TO FRESH START. WITHOUT THEIR SUPPORT WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REACH NEARLY AS MANY PEOPLE AS WE CURRENTLY DO.**

# CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS



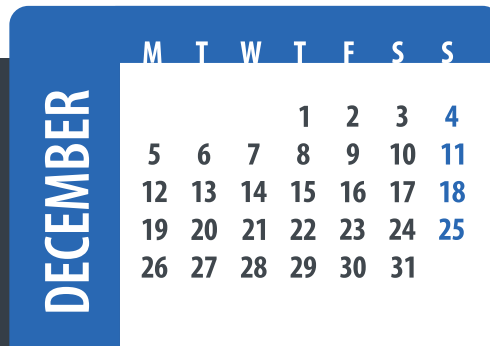
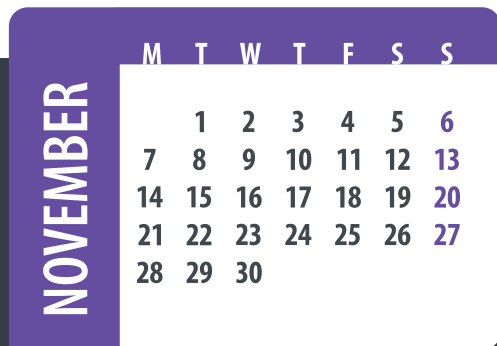
Despite many of our corporate supporters being forced to work from home, we received help in other ways. The 2020 Christmas present campaign felt more important than ever for struggling families, and we wanted to help as much as possible during this difficult time.

With the help of our corporate supporters from Azets, Dentons, Morrisons Construction, Sykes, SASA and Natwest we were able to provide 162 children with Christmas presents to open on Christmas morning.

Thanks to their help, we also were able to provide 146 families with festive food packs, filled with yummy treats and essentials to make the most of Christmas celebrations.

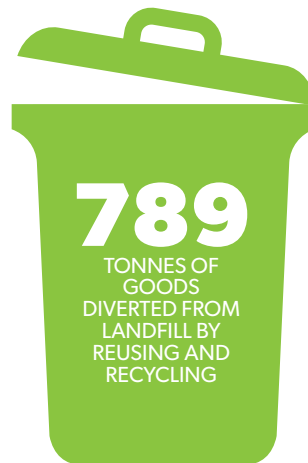


*"Coronavirus has caused so much stress for my family, so really appreciative of the gifts and food to help make Christmas how it should be with my kids"*





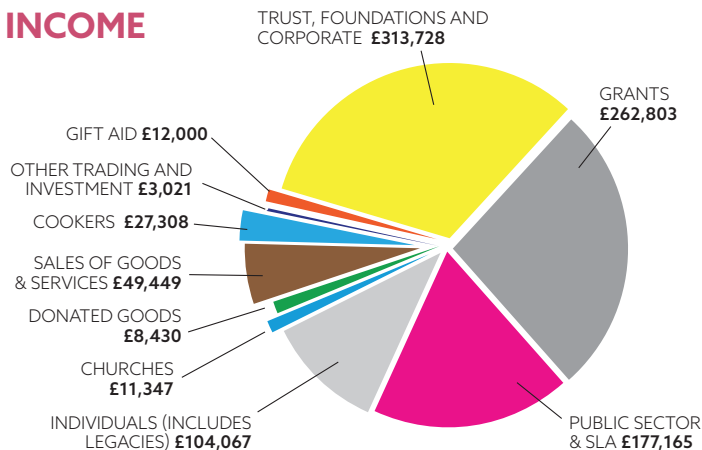
**DID YOU  
KNOW?**



*Our employability training programme took a little break last year due to restrictions, but has had a revamp and 'ReFresh' will be giving candidates a taster of all our services over the next year!*



## INCOME



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

**INCOME: £969,498**

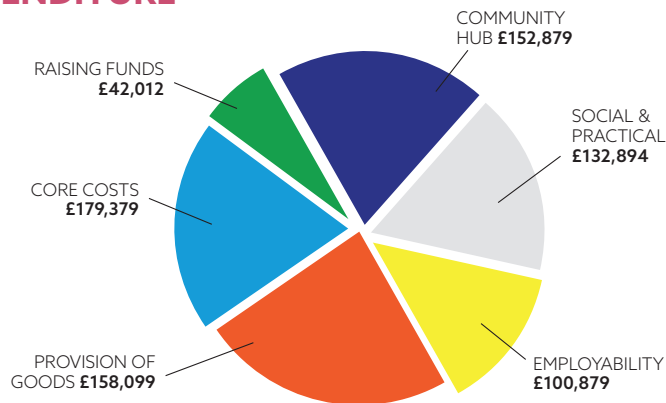
**EXPENDITURE: £766,176**

This is a surplus of £203,322. A large amount of the income for this year was specifically restricted for Covid 19 emergency response (£82,420) with an additional approx. £50,000 of one-off Covid-19 related grants. An additional £70,000 is restricted capital funds specifically allocated to the renovation costs of the community hub.

General Reserve: £259,573. This includes the equivalent of 3 months running costs and £30,000 ringfenced for ventilation costs in the community hub and the warehouse to make it Covid 19 safe. We are extremely grateful to every single funder, business and individual who has contributed financially throughout 2020-21, 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.

## EXPENDITURE



# CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

**Having started out as a volunteer for the befriending service and then joining the Board for 10 years, I was very humbled when I was asked to step up to the role of Convenor.**

**Over the years I've seen first-hand the impact and huge difference the services we offer make to people's lives, which I hope will give me some real perspective when carrying out this hugely fulfilling role.**

Without doubt my first challenge has been stepping into the shoes of Lindsay Wallace who worked tirelessly during her time as Convenor leaving Fresh Start in a very healthy position. Everyone involved with Fresh Start owes Lindsay a huge thanks for her energy, dedication and willingness to tackle the big and the small head on.

In Lyndsay's Annual Report message last year she talked of the impact the pandemic had been having on our clients,

I wish I could be telling you a different story today but the truth is our services have never been more in need. However there is some great news in the opening of our Community Hub in Pilton along, with the new and strengthened partnerships being forged by Biddy Kelly and the staff team with other charities and organisations in North Edinburgh.

From the very first days of lockdown it was truly inspiring to see how everyone at Fresh Start adapted ways of working and service delivery to make sure that folk most in need got vital food, toiletries and cleaning products, continuing our grand work in the most challenging of circumstances.

It's thanks to that willingness to adapt and to the dedication shown by all at Fresh Start that we are now in a stronger position than we were going into lockdown, and we should all be very proud and grateful for that.

Our mission statement is "making a house a home" and the past couple of years has shown all of us, whatever our circumstances, just how important a home is. For those of us lucky enough, our homes have become offices, gyms, classrooms and more importantly a refuge. This has shown all of us just how important a home, in the truest sense of the word, is and it should certainly make us all determined to help as many people as possible feel this way.

On behalf of Fresh Start's Council of management and staff, thanks to all the volunteers, businesses, organisations and faith groups that support us and allow us to continue our vital work.

**Gary Cameron, Chairperson**



# STRUCTURE, 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:**

Gary Cameron (Chairperson) | Dr Allan Gordon  
Michael Green | Morag Hutchison | Sabina Kadic-Mackenzie  
Louise Stirton | Alan Morrison



# FreshStart

*helping people make a home for themselves*

For more information about the charity or to find out how you can support us, contact:

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[www.freshstartweb.org.uk](http://www.freshstartweb.org.uk)

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