

Fresh Start

helping people make a home for themselves

WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE CHANGE AND TO SUPPORT HAPPY, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

From the First Minister to corporate and community partners, we're proud to be working with industry, government and community leaders to support those in need.

Fresh Start was delighted to be selected as the official charity partner for the **Building Societies Association (BSA) Conference 2026**, held in Edinburgh in late April. The two-day conference provided a fantastic opportunity for us to connect with delegates and exhibitors from across the building society and financial services sectors. We were able to share more about our work, while also learning about the many ways businesses and charities can work together to create a fairer and more inclusive society.



The event concluded with a special closing dinner at the stunning National Museum of Scotland. Our **CEO Biddy Kelly** was invited to speak about Fresh Start's work across Edinburgh and the impact of community support on those we serve. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of conference attendees, more than **£10,000** was raised for Fresh Start's services - an incredible outcome!

In the same week as the BSA Conference, **First Minister John Swinney** and **SNP candidate Euan Hyslop**, also visited our premises to discuss the need for, and impact of, our services. They toured the Fresh Start Hub, Pantry and warehouse, seeing how we support the local community first hand.

Building relationships with corporate, government and community partners allows us to raise awareness of the impact of homelessness, and the tangible outcomes that community support creates. This awareness helps Fresh Start to work towards social, funding and legislative change,



with the aim of making homelessness a thing of the past.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to the BSA conference organisers and attendees who took the time to speak with us, or to make a donation. We'd also like to thank the First Minister for continuing to engage with us on how we can collaborate to support those in need across Edinburgh.

By working together, we can help those moving on from homelessness to make a home for themselves. **Visit our website** to find out how you can support Fresh Start's mission today.



“IT TAKES A BIT OF THE PRESSURE OFF”: A MUM FROM PILTON SHARES WHAT THE PANTRY MEANS DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.

At 32, Jenna* is raising two children and works part time while they are at school. Like many families, she relies on free school meals during term time to help make ends meet, but when the holidays arrive, the food bill goes up straight away. We spoke to Jenna about what **Fresh Start’s Community Pantry** and Holiday Hunger support mean for her family.

What changes for you when the school holidays start?

“It gets harder straight away, to be honest. During term time, the free school meals make a big difference. In the holidays, you’re suddenly needing a lot more food in the house all the time. The kids are hungry more, they want snacks, lunch, all of it. It adds up really fast.”

How does the Pantry help?

“I use the Pantry every week, but during the holidays it helps even more. It means I can get food in without stressing as much. It makes a big difference knowing you can pick up things you actually need and that the money stretches a bit further.”

What difference does that make for your children?

“It means I’m not constantly

saying no. Sometimes it means we can do something nice together instead of every penny going on food. We might go into town for a day out or take the bus to Portobello if the weather’s good, get an ice cream, just have a normal day. Even small things like that mean a lot to the kids.”

And during term time?

“It helps with all the other things that come up. Shoes, haircuts, school stuff, gas and electricity. It just takes a bit of the pressure off.”

Fresh Start’s Community Pantry is there for families like Jenna’s all year round, thanks to the kindness of others. The Pantry is supported through donations from the public, alongside surplus food from partners and grant support.

If you can support the Pantry, you are helping parents in our community give their children not just meals, but moments of normality too. Visit www.freshstartweb.org.uk/what-we-do/pantry to find the list of accepted Pantry items, plus how and where donations can be dropped off to Fresh Start.

Thank you!

**Name changed for privacy.*

FRESH START + THE ROCK TRUST: HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE.

Over the past year, we’ve been working with The Rock Trust in their fight to end youth homelessness, by offering volunteering sessions for young people in our warehouse.

The Rock Trust is a Scottish charity that supports young people to avoid and move on from homelessness, by helping them build the confidence, skills and stability they need to thrive in adulthood. They also work to influence policy and practice to create a Scotland where no young person is left behind.

Realising the parallels in both our missions, Fresh Start began working closely with The Rock Trust last year, offering volunteering sessions to young people and helping them to learn new skills, meet new people and give back to the community. “Our values are very much aligned” says Fresh Start Volunteer Coordinator, Sylvia, of our partnership with The Rock Trust. “It’s about empowerment, it’s about respect, and it’s about collaboration.”

As part of the program, young people from The Rock Trust’s Youth Hub spend time in the Fresh Start warehouse, helping to put together Starter Packs for people moving on from homelessness.

Speaking further about the partnership, Sylvia said: “I think it works brilliantly because they get an idea of not only what we do, but the different ways in which you can help people to help themselves, and to potentially give back through volunteering with the service as well.”

To learn more about The Rock Trust and the brilliant work they’re doing across Scotland, visit: www.rocktrust.org.

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY AT THE NORTH EDINBURGH COMMUNITY FESTIVAL.

The Fresh Start team were delighted to attend the North Edinburgh Community Festival in May, joining local residents, families and organisations for an afternoon filled with fun, creativity and community spirit.



The festival brought together people of all ages to enjoy a fantastic programme of activities, including live music, dancing, arts and crafts, delicious food, and even the much-loved "Scruffs" dog show. It was wonderful to see so many members of the local community coming together to celebrate everything that makes North Edinburgh such a vibrant and welcoming place.

The Fresh Start team enjoyed meeting local residents and connecting with fellow community organisations. We had the opportunity to share information about our services and discuss the different ways we can support individuals and families across the area.

One of the highlights of the day was our craft stall, where children were invited to explore the questions: "What makes a home?" and "What is your favourite thing in your home?" Their thoughtful responses and colourful artwork created a beautiful display, while also encouraging conversations about Fresh Start's mission of helping people to make a home for themselves.



The creativity, enthusiasm and kindness shown by the children and families who visited our stall was truly inspiring, and served as a powerful reminder of the importance of **home, belonging and community**.

It was a joyful, inspiring and community-driven event, and we are already looking forward to being part of it for many years to come!



INTRODUCING OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS!

Since the beginning of 2026, we've welcomed a few new faces to the Fresh Start team!

In February, **Maisie** hit the ground running as our new **Fundraising & Community Engagement Officer**. Maisie is the main point of contact for community organisations, individuals and schools who want to get involved with Fresh Start.



More recently, **Pippa** joined us as **Fresh Rooms Service Coordinator**, working alongside Caitlin and our Fresh Rooms volunteers to create welcoming spaces for those moving into permanent accommodation after homelessness.

Please join us in giving them a warm welcome to the Fresh Start community - they're already doing some amazing work!



WALK TO SUPPORT FRESH START IN 2026 AND BEYOND!

What if your Saturday stroll could help someone turn their house into a home?

Take part in the **Edinburgh Kiltwalk on 13th September** in support of Fresh Start and help those moving on from homelessness make a home for themselves.

Each year, participants raise vital funds, ensuring people across Edinburgh can rebuild their lives with dignity, stability and a sense of community connection.

Whether you choose to take on the **Wee Wander** (4.5 miles), the **Big Stroll** (11 miles) or the **Mighty Stride** (21 miles), the Kiltwalk is a great opportunity to take in the sights of the city and have fun with friends, family

or colleagues. All 3 routes end at Murrayfield Stadium; a memorable finish to a meaningful day out.

As one previous participant put it: "I liked that you didn't have to be a serious walker to take part. It just felt inclusive, fun and really worthwhile."

We'll support you throughout your fundraising journey, offering tips and ideas for fundraising and sending over our handy Community Fundraising guide.

Ready to get started, either solo or as part of a team?

Get in touch with our Fundraising & Community Engagement Officer Maisie at maisie@freshstartweb.org.uk.



STAY CONNECTED SUSTAINABLY!

If you would like to receive a digital copy of our Newsletter instead, then please reach out to:

admin@freshstartweb.org.uk

Include your full name and email address, and we will update our system to add you to our e-newsletter mailing list instead.

Thank You!

SOME DATES FOR THE DIARY:

We have some fun and exciting events coming up at Fresh Start!

Friday September 4th
Fresh Start Volunteer BBQ

Saturday September 13th
Edinburgh Kiltwalk

Thursday October 1st
Fresh Start AGM 2026



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