

Fresh Start

helping people make a home for themselves

2025: A YEAR OF GROWTH, GENEROSITY AND CELEBRATING WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED SO FAR!

Last year, Fresh Start celebrated its 25th year in operation. As we look back at how we've grown as a community in that time, we're also looking ahead, and exploring how we can support those in need in an ever-changing social and economic climate.

2025 saw 20,020 Starter Packs distributed from our warehouse in Pilton. While we're saddened that our services are still so necessary, we couldn't be more grateful for the generosity of our community, or more proud of the efforts of our staff and volunteers. To help collect the essential donations required for our Starter Packs, we've expanded our community of alternative collection points, creating a wider network across Edinburgh to make it easier for anyone donating to get their goods to us.

Supporting our staff and regular volunteer team in the warehouse were corporate

volunteers from a variety of organisations - 2025 saw 811 corporate volunteers give their time to support our services. They worked alongside our regular volunteers, who gave an incredible 8,261 hours to supporting our services in 2025 - we couldn't do what we do without them!

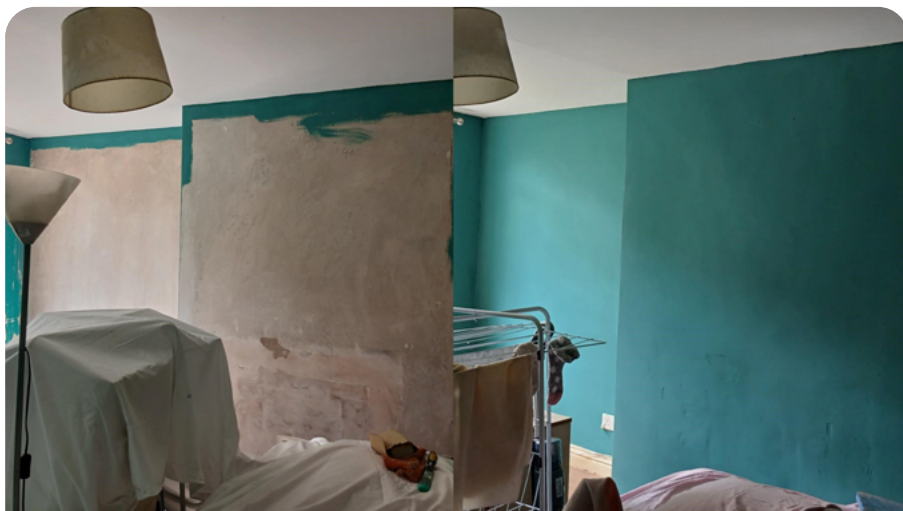
Ending the year on a high note, our Cookers for Christmas Appeal for 2025 closed on January 31st, having raised an incredible £30,126. We want to say thank you to all who donated - these funds will ensure our service users have access to the essential white goods that make healthy and safe day-to-day living possible.

With 2026 now upon us, we're looking forward to another year of supporting the community and growing our services to meet the evolving needs of those experiencing hardship in Edinburgh. Here's to another year of helping people make a home for themselves.



DONATE TO FRESH START IN 2026!

At Fresh Start, we're proud to be supported by an incredibly generous community - we couldn't do what we do without your help. Every donation, big or small, has a huge impact in the lives of those moving on from homelessness - donate today and make a difference in 2026!



FROM CRISIS TO COMFORT: HOW FRESH ROOMS HELPED JOHN KEEP HIS HOME.

In 2025, Fresh Rooms supported John, whose challenges and experience highlight the close link between mental health and housing stability.

John lived alone and had been managing his tenancy well. Following a period of poor mental health, however, John began to struggle with everyday home care. Over time, he accumulated an overwhelming number of pets, and his home deteriorated rapidly, placing his tenancy at serious risk.

With support from his social worker, the animals were safely removed by the RSPCA and a deep clean was arranged. While this was an important step, it came with unintended consequences: while the flat was now clean, it was far from liveable. John's furniture had to be removed during the clean and the walls were in very poor condition, with wallpaper shredded and plaster scratched. Not only did the property no longer feel like a home, but with very little money to replace furniture or do remedial work, John was at real risk of homelessness, and so John's support worker contacted Fresh Start for help.

Recognising both the scale of the task and the impact it would have on John's wellbeing, our volunteer team spent two days on the job. On the first day, they stripped the damaged wallpaper, repaired and prepared the walls; the following day, they filled, sanded and painted the living room and hallway. Thanks to the team's efforts, the rooms were almost unrecognisable - brighter, calmer, and transformed into a space that John could feel proud of once again.

Fresh Start also provided starter packs of home essentials, a washing machine and new fridge, while Bethany Christian Trust helped with furniture items. John told us: **"The Fresh Rooms team were brilliant and I really appreciate all the support I have been given. I am so proud of the work they did."**

Today, John is receiving ongoing support from mental health charities to help him maintain his home and rebuild his confidence. With the combined support of Fresh Rooms and partner organisations, he now has a real chance to sustain his tenancy and feel safe and settled in his home.

SPRING CLEANING THAT MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE.

In 2025–26, Fresh Start distributed just over 20,000 Starter Packs. With an average of 10–12 items per pack, the scale becomes clear: more than 250,000 individual items are needed every year to meet a demand that is sadly on the rise.

Many don't realise that when those moving on from homelessness finally get the keys to a new tenancy, it is often empty. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we're able to put together Starter Packs for families like Neil's. After months of living in overcrowded conditions, Neil and his three young daughters were offered a place of their own. As a single parent on a low income, this placed new financial stresses on Neil's shoulders, that we helped to lift.

"Thanks for the support ... the help was huge. It really made moving to the flat easier. I didn't have to borrow money to buy all the things we needed to furnish and live in the flat. It's been a real life saver."

For Fresh Start, this kind of impact depends entirely on donations from people like you. As the spring-cleaning season arrives, we're asking you to donate your household goods to us, to be put into Starter Packs for families like Neil's. For a full list of accepted donations, and our warehouse opening hours, visit our website, scan the QR code below, or call our offices on 0131 476 7741.



FRESH STARTS FOR FRESH START.

It's never too late to take on a new challenge or to turn something you already enjoy into support for Fresh Start.

Whether you're keen to be more active, bring people together or simply do something kind for others, fundraising for Fresh Start can easily fit into your daily life.



Want to be more active?

If you're looking for a gentle challenge, why not sign up for the Edinburgh KiltWalk? With options for all ages, abilities and fitness levels, it's perfect for families, friend groups, work colleagues and individuals alike. Looking for something a bit more challenging? Walking events, fun runs, sponsored cycles, dance events or swims are all great ways to combine wellbeing with fundraising.

Make it social!

Fundraising doesn't have to be all about Lycra or finish lines. You could host a morning tea or bake sale, or you could run a quiz night, games evening, or film screening, and pair entry with a small fee or offer a raffle. Why not organise a

team from work and spend time doing something together outside of the office, while supporting a local cause? Your employer might even then match what you raise!

Use your creative hobby to fundraise!

Love crafts or making things? Host a knitting marathon, craft-ernoon, or creative workshop (sewing, card-making, painting, crochet — anything goes!) - these are all brilliant ways to fundraise while doing something you enjoy.

Give your existing event a community-focus.

As the days get lighter, other options open up! Organise a sponsored dog walk, or group activity with friends and family. This can be a fun, low-pressure way to raise funds and awareness, while connecting with your community.

However you choose to fundraise, every pound helps Fresh Start support people moving on from homelessness by providing practical help, warmth, and stability when it's needed most.

For support with ideas, resources or to request a Fresh Start fundraising pack, please get in touch with admin@freshstartweb.org.uk - we appreciate your support!



A QUIET WAY TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

Thinking about the future?

Many supporters ask us how they can continue making a difference beyond their lifetime.

Leaving a gift to Fresh Start in your will is one way to do this. After taking care of loved ones, even a small percentage can help ensure people moving on from homelessness receive practical support and a warm welcome into their new home.

Legacy gifts help sustain our work long-term and respond to future need — offering stability, dignity and fresh starts for years to come.

For any questions, please reach out to us at:

admin@freshstartweb.org.uk

or call our offices on:
0131 476 7741



SPOTLIGHT ON: HEALTH EQUALS CAMPAIGN STRIKES A CORD.

A few months ago, the Hazmat Loungewear campaign from Health Equals* exposed a reality that too often remains hidden: that across the UK, people are living in homes affected by damp, mould and cold so severe it harms their health.

At Fresh Start, we see the extent of this issue firsthand. Many of the people we support are doing everything they can to move on from homelessness and poverty. However, even once they have a roof over their head, poor housing conditions can continue to undermine their health, wellbeing and ability to move forward.

Good housing is more than shelter. It is the foundation

for health, dignity, stability and opportunity. When homes make people ill, they trap families in cycles of poor health and poverty, no matter how hard they are trying to move forward.

Campaigns like Hazmat Loungewear shine a light on this reality and remind us, and those in power, that safe, warm, healthy homes should be a basic standard, not a privilege. No one should have to protect themselves from the very place they live.

*Health Equals is a campaign launched in 2023 and supported by 67 organisations in a cross-sector coalition, including the Health Foundation, Shelter, Mind and People's Health Trust.

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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!

GET INVOLVED WITH OUR GROWING SPACES.

With Spring upon us, we're excited to get out into our Growing Spaces - and we want YOU to join us! Volunteer with Fresh Start, and help those who are struggling to get outside and build connections with the community.

Interested? Contact us at the email address below to learn more:

admin@freshstartweb.org.uk

