

Fresh Start

helping people make a home for themselves

“WHAT WAS THE FIRST MEAL THAT YOU COOKED?”

Hear from our team about what it means to people to have access to White Goods after homelessness, and find out how you can get involved to support the Cookers For Christmas Appeal 2026.

What does life look like for those without access to White Goods?

One man we supported had spent several months living in a hostel. When he finally moved into social housing, there were no appliances in the property. He had to rely on a laundrette, sometimes going without washing his clothes because it was too expensive. Having access to his own White Goods made a huge difference.

What was the first meal he made?

“Pasta and tomato sauce” which might sound like a very ordinary meal, but that's the point. He could prepare his own food, wash his clothes and begin living more independently in his new home.

Is that something you hear often?

Yes. We recently helped an older woman whose cooker no longer worked properly and couldn't be repaired. She had no money to buy a new one and had been refused help through other funds. When we checked in with her afterwards, she spoke about the first meal she made for her and her neighbour: *“a very nice chicken curry.”* These are the small details that stay with us because they show what

a difference this service makes to people's life. Yes it means being able to make a meal when you're hungry, but it's also about being able to cook the food you enjoy and share it with your loved ones.

What do families tell you after receiving support?

One couple with five children told us what receiving a fridge/freezer had meant to them:

“Thank you so much for your help and support. It is perfect, and so great to be able to store and cook healthy homemade meals for the family again. It really has been such a big relief and is helping us move on from the last few years, which have been a nightmare.”

That sense of relief comes through again and again when we speak to people. People are really not asking for luxury, they just want to be able to cook dinner, wash their clothes, store food safely and begin settling into their home.

How can people support the Cookers For Christmas Appeal this year:

The easiest and most effective way for you to support those in need

to access essential White Goods this Christmas, and throughout 2027, is to donate to the Cookers For Christmas Appeal. You can do this by **scanning the QR code below**, or via bank transfer, cheque or cash donation.

As Christmas is a time when so many of us gather with our loved ones, we're also inviting our community to **#GatherForGood**.

Gather together with your family, friends, colleagues and community to raise funds for the appeal - from Christmas Carols and 'Friendmas' to festive events and cosy movie nights, every donation makes a huge difference.

Scan the QR Code below to donate, or contact us about hosting a **#GatherForGood** event at admin@freshstartweb.org.uk.



STARTER PACKS: A THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEER TEAM.

Throughout 2026, our incredible team of warehouse volunteers have been working hard to provide essential household goods to those in need.

When asked what motivates them to give their time to Fresh Start, our volunteers highlighted how rewarding it is to hear positive feedback from those we support, such as:

"Could not believe the amount of items delivered... quite overwhelming but what a

big boost to me and my new home.... Thank you so much!

We would not be able to do what we do without the hardwork of our volunteers, and the generous support of you, our community. With your help, the team have delivered **13,888 packs** so far this year, to more than **3500 households**.

If you have new or pre-loved household items you'd like to donate to Fresh Start, visit our [website](#) for more information.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION: THE IMPACT OF FRIDAY MEET & EATS.

The Friday 'Meet & Eat' has been running since the summer of 2022, intended as a project that would combat summer holiday hunger. Since then it has grown from a humble 8 attendees a week to an average of around 100 meals a week, winning two awards along the way.

To keep the weekly spend as low as possible we use surplus food from supermarkets, other partners like The Big House Multibank, and home grown produce from our Community Gardens.

Our dedicated volunteer team then cook up a delicious (and sometimes imaginative) two course meal for the Friday 'Meet & Eat'. The menus are as diverse as the people we welcome into the space, and crowd-favourite dishes have included dhal and gunpowder potatoes, mozzarella and tomato chicken and the ever-popular cheesy pasta.



"I cannot stress enough how fantastic it is. The staff are wonderful, pleasant, always have a smile on their faces. The food is delicious. I don't normally have a chance to taste different meals - when I come here and it always surprises me how well they put it together with what they have. The eat-in option is fantastic, it's so good to see the familiar faces in the community as well as new ones coming together.

Thank you all so much!"

MEET THE 'TROWEL BLAZERS', A TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS WHO TOOK ON THE KILTWALK FOR FRESH START.

The Trowel Blazers are a team from Fresh Start's Growing Spaces service, which offers those in need the opportunity to get outside, build confidence, connect with a community and grow fresh produce. They recently took part in this year's Edinburgh Kiltwalk to support the work that Fresh Start is doing across the city!

The team ranged in age from 19 - 87 years old, with some having experienced homelessness themselves, and knowing first-hand the difference that support from Fresh Start can make.

They've all felt the benefit of Fresh Start's services and support, and love spending time together in the gardens, helping to grow and harvest the fruit and vegetables.

In the lead up to their walk, the Trowel Blazers **raised more than £1800**, an incredible amount which will go towards Fresh Start's services, so that we can continue supporting those in need - thank you team!





ESOL: ENGLISH AS A STEPPING STONE TO SUCCESS.

At Fresh Start we aim to remove barriers for people settling into their home and community.

A key part of this support is providing language classes for people who do not have English as their first language, making it easier for them to communicate with medical professionals, schools and other support organisations. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants make up a large proportion of our students, often having been settled in Edinburgh with very little resources or support.

Fresh Start offers four English classes per week: one for complete beginners, two for beginners and one for intermediate level. The classes are small, friendly groups of 10 with an ESOL qualified teacher. The strength of this service lies in the quality of the classes, and the relationships we build with the participants. Not only do we help them develop a skill that will help them thrive here, but we also provide a welcoming environment in which people can connect, make friends and access additional services at Fresh Start.

"There is a very friendly atmosphere in the classes, the teacher is patient, understanding and helpful. English is very difficult for me, but since I have been attending the classes, I have more self-confidence and I am learning the language with pleasure."

- A current ESOL Student.

FROM UNCERTAINTY TO A FRESH START: A NEW BEGINNING FOR DANNY*

Homelessness can feel like something far removed from everyday life, but an unexpected change in circumstances can quickly place someone at risk.



Danny* had a stable job and had lived in his home for 13 years. His life changed when he suffered a stroke, which affected his ability to read and write and made his work increasingly challenging. Without the workplace adaptations he needed, Danny became unemployed. Soon afterwards, his landlord decided to sell the property, leaving Danny facing homelessness.

Danny has now moved into permanent sheltered accommodation. However, following so much upheaval—and with décor that did not feel like his own—he initially struggled to settle in. Fresh Rooms volunteers worked alongside Danny to repaint

his bedroom and living room, transforming them into welcoming spaces where he could feel at home. The experience was as much about companionship, conversation and laughter as it was about redecorating the rooms.

"The day was not only about painting but great conversation and laughs," Danny said.



He also received essential starter items, including a lamp, blender, cleaning supplies, mirror, rug, bin and coat rack.

Danny is now looking forward to settling into his new home and getting to know his neighbours.

**Name changed for privacy.*





INTRODUCING THE VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT PROGRAMME (VPP).

Fresh Start's Volunteer Placement Programme offers a structured, supportive route into volunteering for people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness.

Placements are short-term, flexible and practical, giving participants the chance to volunteer across Fresh Start's services, including the Pantry, Starter Packs, gardens, cooking activities and Fresh Rooms. The programme runs for up to three months per participant, supporting them to build routine, develop confidence and gain transferable skills such as communication, teamwork and reliability.

The programme is designed as a stepping stone for people who may have limited work experience, be rebuilding

confidence, be in early recovery from addiction, or want to practice English in a community setting.

At its core, the programme aims to help people feel useful, connected and ready for their next step, whether that is further volunteering, training, college or paid work.

"I'm very happy to be here with Fresh Rooms, before I stay at home and it made me very sad but now I'm very happy. I meet new people, I'm busy learning new things in the warehouse and here with you. You give me support to apply for job, and to practice for my interview. If I get the job I will still want to volunteer with Fresh Start."

- A current VPP Participant.

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!

CALL OUT FOR FESTIVE FOOD DONATIONS!

Help us support hundreds of families and individuals with festive food hampers this festive season, and ensure everyone can enjoy a happy Christmas. We're calling out for donations of:

- Tea, Coffee or Hot Chocolate
- Oatcakes or Crackers
- Gingerbread or Biscuits
- Christmas Pudding / Cake
- Christmas Crackers
- Chutney or Jam
- Chocolates
- Mince Pies
- Candy Canes
- Fudge
- Crisps, Nuts or Snacks
- Advent Calendars, or,
- Selection Boxes.

These items should be delivered to Fresh Start by **Friday, 4th Dec:**

Address: 22-24 Ferry Road Drive, Edinburgh EH4 4BR

Mon - Thurs: 9am - 4pm
Friday: 9am - 1pm

← **Contact us using the details to the left for any questions!**

Fresh Start 22-24 Ferry Road Drive, Edinburgh, EH4 4BR.
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www.freshstartweb.org.uk

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