

Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre
Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Introduction

Welcome

The 2022 – 2023 season of the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre was the busiest season yet, with a 40% increase in accesses to the service compared to last season. Operating again from the Haymarket Hub Hotel between 5th October and 3rd May, 1,167 individual people were prevented from sleeping rough on the streets of Edinburgh.

89% of those who stayed told us they would have had nowhere else to stay, which reinforces there is a need for emergency accommodation. 46% who came to the Welcome Centre had only become homeless in the last 7 days. Individuals come to us during a moment of intense crisis and we aim to put wrap-around support in place. This is done by having an excellent team on the ground and working with partner organisations.

Special thanks

We are very grateful to our partners The City of Edinburgh Council and The Scottish Government for not only providing essential financial support but being advocates for the Welcome Centre model. The City of Edinburgh Council paid for the rent of the rooms from the hotel as well as security and a grant for staffing costs. The Scottish Government provided a grant for staffing costs and lunches.

The Welcome Centre is made possible thanks to these major stakeholders.

This season brought new challenges, particularly navigating supporting those who are not eligible for homelessness services from local authorities. Coupling this with the management of risk due to the drug death epidemic in Scotland, the team worked hard to support everyone who walked through the doors.

The wrap-around support model is made possible thanks to working partnerships with over 29 organisations in and around Edinburgh. Building on the success of this model from previous seasons we continued to connect and signpost individuals to support that would continue after their stay with us. We acknowledge and thank the partner organisations who bring their expertise and champion the work of Welcome Centre.

Special thanks to volunteers who served meals on 181 nights this season, bringing food and warmth to the Welcome Centre each evening. Throughout all the changes and challenges that have come since the start of the pandemic and conception of the Welcome Centre, the volunteers have served consistently and selflessly and we are indebted to the churches and teams for again supporting the Welcome Centre.

Inside the report

Within this report you will find feedback from our guests, a breakdown of the impact of the Welcome Centre along with a detailed account of how the Welcome Centre met the needs of those who stayed and our recommendations moving forward.

If you are reading this report as someone who contributed to the service, thank you! Regardless of the part that was played - whether it was visiting a guest, donating financially, praying for the work or volunteering your time - we are grateful for your support. The Welcome Centre was richer thanks to your contribution.

James Milligan, Manager
Emily Millar, Deputy Manager
Eleanor McLachlan, Senior Team Leader

**“ I want to thank
Bethany, because you
help me in a very bad
situation. You don't
realise but you saved a
life. ”**

Photos taken by Simon Juho Photography.
Images used with consent of those featured.

Quotes found throughout the report were said by people staying at the Welcome Centre.
Names in stories have been changed to protect guest identities and are not connected to featured pictures.

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“ I was very nervous about coming here last night but it turned out to be – beautiful! The room was wonderful, it was peaceful and quiet. I’m so glad I came. ”

What is the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre?

What is the aim?

Historically, the need for a place to sleep for those who would otherwise be rough sleeping was met by the Overnight Care Shelter. During the pandemic there was a need to move away from the communal shared space model to what we know now as the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre. As the name suggests, we aim to quickly support people into more stable accommodation. Although the presenting need is accommodation, we seek to provide direct routes into the varied support available in and around Edinburgh.

Based on a foundation of Christian faith, the aim of the Welcome Centre is to offer a person-centred approach, placing high value on quality care, respect, dignity and empathy.

This model has been in place since March 2020 and has been continually developed in order to meet the need for emergency accommodation.



Why?

There is a need for emergency accommodation in Edinburgh. Before someone stays at the Welcome Centre we seek to source alternative accommodation for them. We can then be confident there is not an alternative for the guests who stay with us and that they have exhausted all available resources (such as family, friends and statutory options). Due to the housing crisis in Edinburgh compounded by the effects of the pandemic and with Immigration Controls, the Welcome Centre saw, on average, 39 people coming to the service for the first time each week.

How?

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre operated from the Haymarket Hub Hotel and each individual had access to an en-suite room, three meals a day and on-site 24/7 professional staff support. There was a dual service within the Welcome Centre, with Council temporary accommodation and the Welcome Centre co-existing in the same building. Despite the challenges that come from running two services in the same hotel we have seen this continue to work thanks to the co-operation and support from the team at the Haymarket Hub Hotel.

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre has a link worker who bridges the Rapid Access and Emergency Accommodation with The City of Edinburgh Council. This role allows individuals to have a homelessness assessment on site at the Welcome Centre. This role is hugely valuable as it supports those who struggle to access or engage with mainstream support.

This season we again had a large team to operate the 24/7 service. Our team comprised of 33 members of staff who all had the shared values of love and respect for the guests who came to the Welcome Centre. Before the season started, staff were trained in how to provide trauma-informed care, Naloxone, de-escalation, suicide prevention and more, to ensure the team was equipped to provide support when people come to us in crisis.

The council provided door stewards from G4S who were often the first person to greet guests and are a key part of the team.





Tom's Story

Tom was imprisoned for offences he committed whilst under the influence of alcohol. While serving his time he was supported by Bethany's Connect to Community, where he shared his desire to access recovery when his sentence ended. Tom was released after his court case but had nowhere to live and became homeless. Bethany staff accompanied Tom to the Welcome Centre where a plan was put in place, giving him some valuable time to stabilise and re-adjust to life outside prison.

The next day Tom was given a smartphone and SIM card from Bethany's Click and Connect service. This enabled him to make an online claim for benefits and to provide evidence that he was eligible for homeless assistance. The phone allowed Tom to seek support from staff and his family.

The Link Worker completed a homeless assessment at the Welcome Centre. Tom was able to access emergency medication that he needed and he was able to resolve an issue with his bank card. With an open homelessness case he was able to self-refer to Bethany Christian Centre for recovery.

Whilst applying for a place in the Centre, Tom temporarily moved to supported accommodation at Bethany House. From there he was supported to apply for a bus pass and register with a local GP. Tom transferred from Bethany House to Bethany Christian Centre two weeks later to receive dedicated support towards his recovery. Tom was supported to look at the reasons he has used alcohol and to plan for a new future.



Erica - Trainee Paramedic completed her volunteer hours at The Welcome Centre

"I have absolutely loved being a part of the Bethany team, thanks again for making my placement so much fun."

Impact

-  **1,167 individuals** accessed our service
-  **39 new people**, on average, came to the service **each week**
-  **69 people** on average accessing the service **each day**
-  **14,564** total accesses to service
-  Accesses to service **40% higher** than previous season
-  **99%** of known **outcomes are positive**
-  Over **24,500 meals** provided
-  Over **300 volunteers**
-  **11 days** average stay
-  **92 presentations** on busiest day
-  **72 nationalities**
-  **152,875** presentations since 1996

I appreciated time you spent chatting and listening. It makes the difference seeing friendly face.



Danielle's Story

Danielle had been homeless for 5 years when she presented at the RRWC. She is a vulnerable woman, known to staff from previous seasons. Her life has been chaotic due to broken relationships, poor mental health and addiction. Since losing her tenancy she has stayed in temporary accommodation and has spent long periods sofa surfing with friends. Over the years she has struggled to engage with support and has been uncontactable.

Whilst accommodated at the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre, Danielle benefitted from having a safe space and being able to engage with staff. She was able to access medical support and discuss her housing situation. Danielle shared that she had previously lived in supported accommodation and had done well. The Link Worker was able to arrange an interview for her. The staff there remembered Danielle and were delighted to offer her a place. She moved into a freshly decorated room a few weeks later.



Outcomes

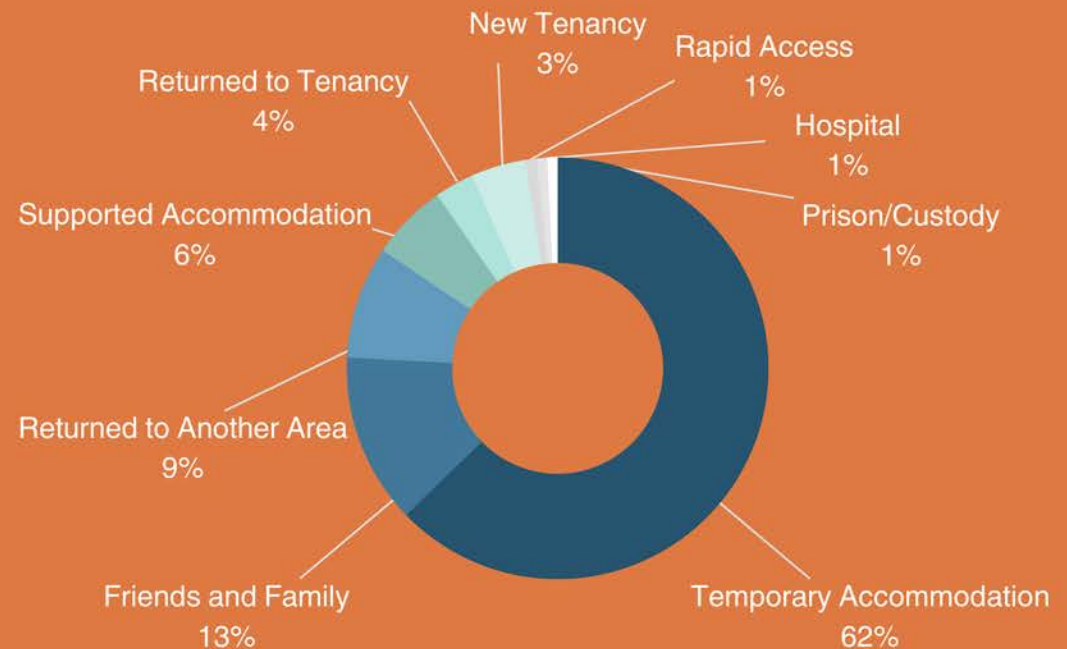
Due to the nature of the work done at the Welcome Centre it is not always possible to know where people move on to. We know the accommodation outcomes for 55% of guests. We believe this number is lower than previous seasons due to greater numbers of people unable to access mainstream services or not having accommodation options in the UK.

Additionally, we implemented a new 'Winter Contingency' policy this year in response to those people who cannot access accommodation. This was in place when the "feels like" temperature was below 0 degrees.

Winter Contingency accounted for 11% of our unknown outcomes.

Of the known outcomes 99% of the guests moved on positively.

Below is the full breakdown of known outcomes:



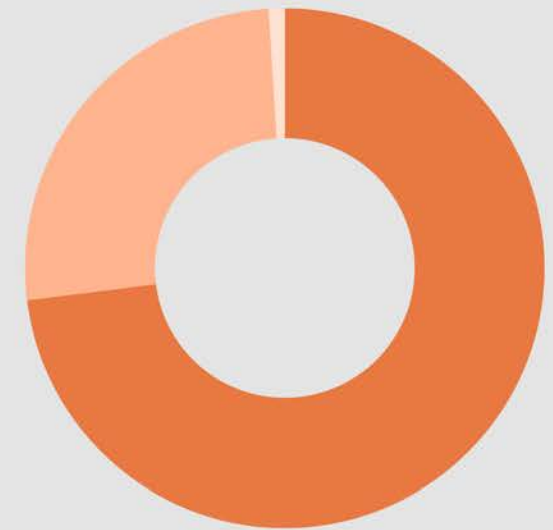
Who stays at the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre?

Age Breakdown



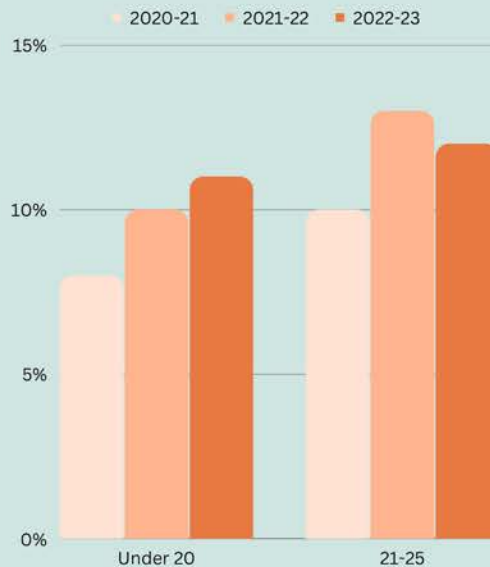
Gender Breakdown

- Male 73%
- Female 26%
- Other 1%

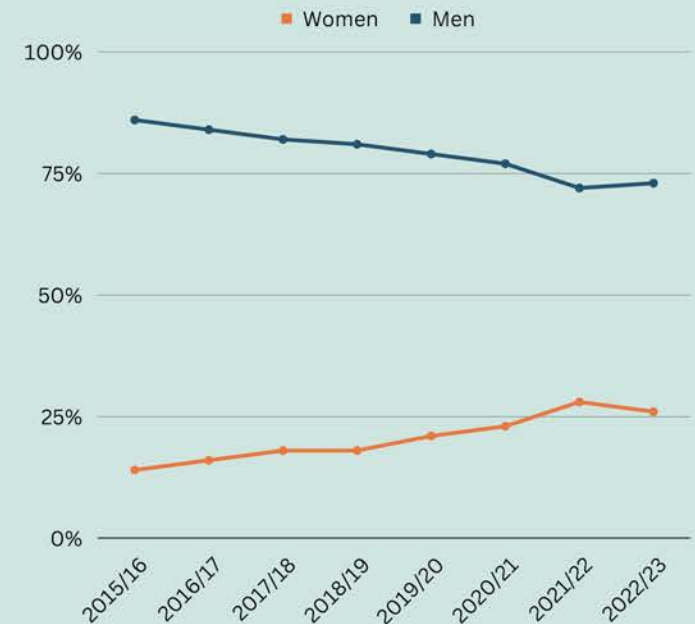


Trends Highlights

- This season 23% of the guests were under the age of 25
- A steady increase over the last 3 years of guests under the age of 20



- There is an increase in the ratio of women to men using the service.

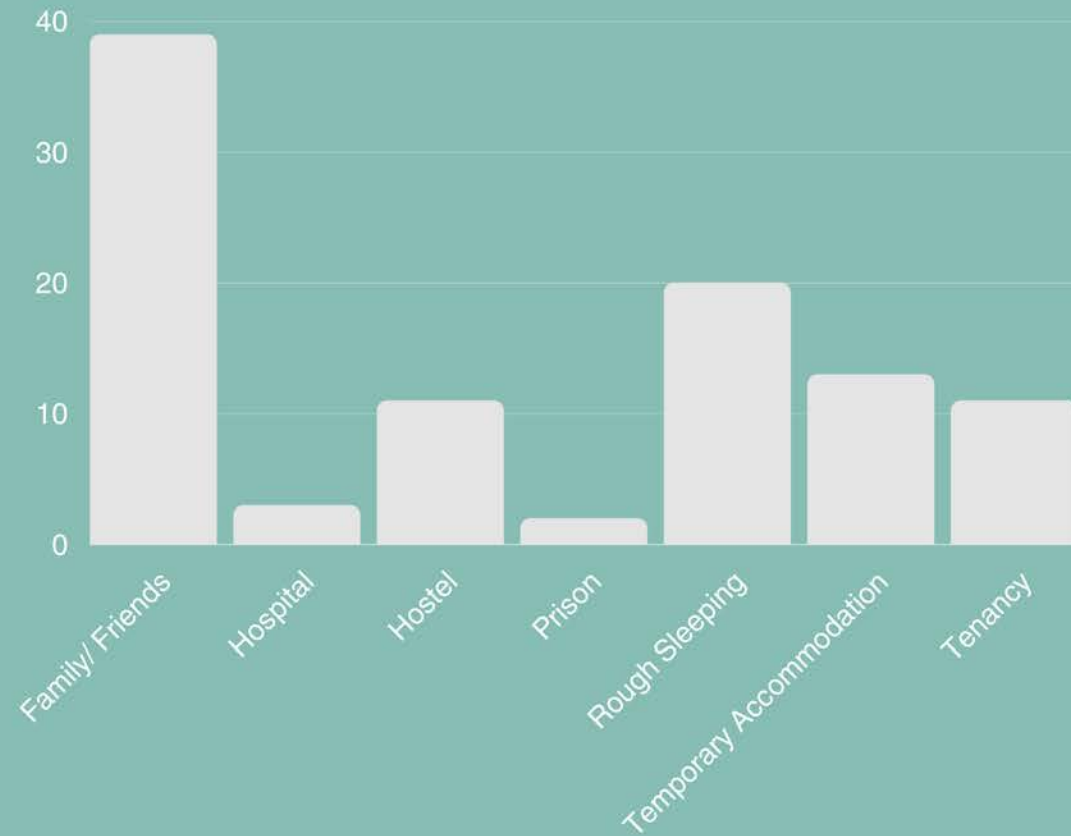


Nationality Breakdown



Full Nationality Breakdown			
British	55%	North, South and West European	5%
Romanian	17%	Africa	5%
East European	11%	North and South America	1%
Asia	5%	Other	1%

Where were you last staying?



Reason for Homelessness

3X

People are **three times** more likely to cite relationship breakdown as a contributing factor to their homelessness than any other reason.

Challenges

No Recourse To Public Funds (NRPF)

In October 2022 the Covid-19 public health legislation which saw everyone being accommodated, regardless of entitlement, came to an end. In practice, this meant that everyone seeking accommodation with the council who was 'ineligible' were no longer being accommodated when presenting for help. For anyone with NRPF who was already being accommodated, the City of Edinburgh Council worked to support these individuals into alternative accommodation. If you have visa restrictions, are seeking asylum in the UK without legal backing, or are from an EU country but don't meet the working threshold, you cannot access statutory homelessness services.

Due to the Welcome Centre having a wide door policy we did all we could to support all, regardless of immigration status.

Due to changes in legislation - primarily Brexit and The Nationalities and Borders Act 2022 - compounded with the impact of the global pandemic, it was necessary for the Welcome Centre to work closely with specialised support. Each week the EU Settlement Workers at Streetwork held a drop-in at the Welcome Centre and supported 196 people. This drop-in ran in parallel with SOTHIS (Survivors Of Human Trafficking In Scotland) to ensure we were mitigating the risk of individuals becoming at risk of exploitation. 50% of those who didn't have recourse to public funds accessed this drop-in. The people supported by these in-reach teams included people seeking asylum in the UK, people who are here from EU countries and have limited entitlement within the UK, and those coming from elsewhere in the world looking for a better life.

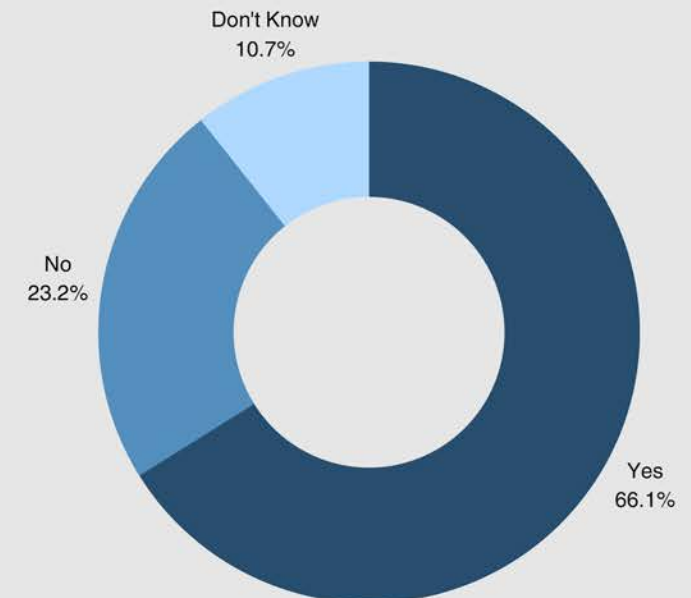


You guys embrace me, you give me a space where I can help myself. Bethany will stay with me forever, I will never forget you. You guys are the real deal and everybody should know about it.



During the sign in process, each guest was asked if they were entitled to statutory housing support. This was explained with the use of translation support and using terminology the guest would understand. If the answer was 'Yes' they could access homelessness services via City of Edinburgh Council. If 'No' or 'Don't know' this required further investigation and support.

On average, a guest who didn't have Recourse to Public Funds or didn't know, stayed **18 nights**, compared to **9 nights** if the guest did have recourse to public funds.



Piotr's Story

Piotr has been in Edinburgh for 6 years. Before that; Dundee and Manchester. He is a carpenter by trade. Piotr first engaged with Bethany Christian Trust using the Care Shelter while he tried to sustain work. Due to a change in legislation, Piotr - who previously had council accommodation in Dundee - could no longer be accommodated by a local authority as he was assessed as 'ineligible'.

In October 2022, Piotr was referred to us by a partner agency and at this time he had been sleeping rough for 2 months. Both his physical and mental health were poor, he had an existing heart condition and was experiencing suicidal thoughts.

During his time at the Welcome Centre, Piotr regularly met with the specialist EU Worker who helped him get official ID, gather evidence of his stay in the UK, and coordinate an EUSS (Settled Status) application with specialised Immigration Partner IOM.

In March 2023 we received confirmation that Piotr had been granted 'Settled Status' and is now able to present for council accommodation. Within 2 working days of receiving this status confirmation he was accommodated by the City of Edinburgh Council. Piotr will not have to worry about having access to housing again.

From the Welcome Centre, people were supported to:

- Gather the evidence of work required to be reassessed as 'accessing treaty rights' that allows the individual to be eligible to access accommodation from City of Edinburgh while working
- Work with immigration lawyers to successfully gain 'settled status' and receive the same entitlements as a UK citizen, including housing
- Move to accommodation funded by the Refugee and Migration Team in the CEC
- Move to Home Office Asylum Accommodation
- Make a National Referral Mechanism application, provide evidence and move to accommodation for Victims of Human Trafficking
- When safe to do so, and requested by the individual, be repatriated to their home countries including Malaysia, Sweden, Romania and Latvia

Managing Risk

Sadly, Scotland is still in the midst of a drug death epidemic. In 2021, 1,330 individuals died from drug related deaths. Due to the links between homelessness and drug use it's imperative that staff are prepared to engage with guests who are struggling with addiction issues.

Mitigating Measures

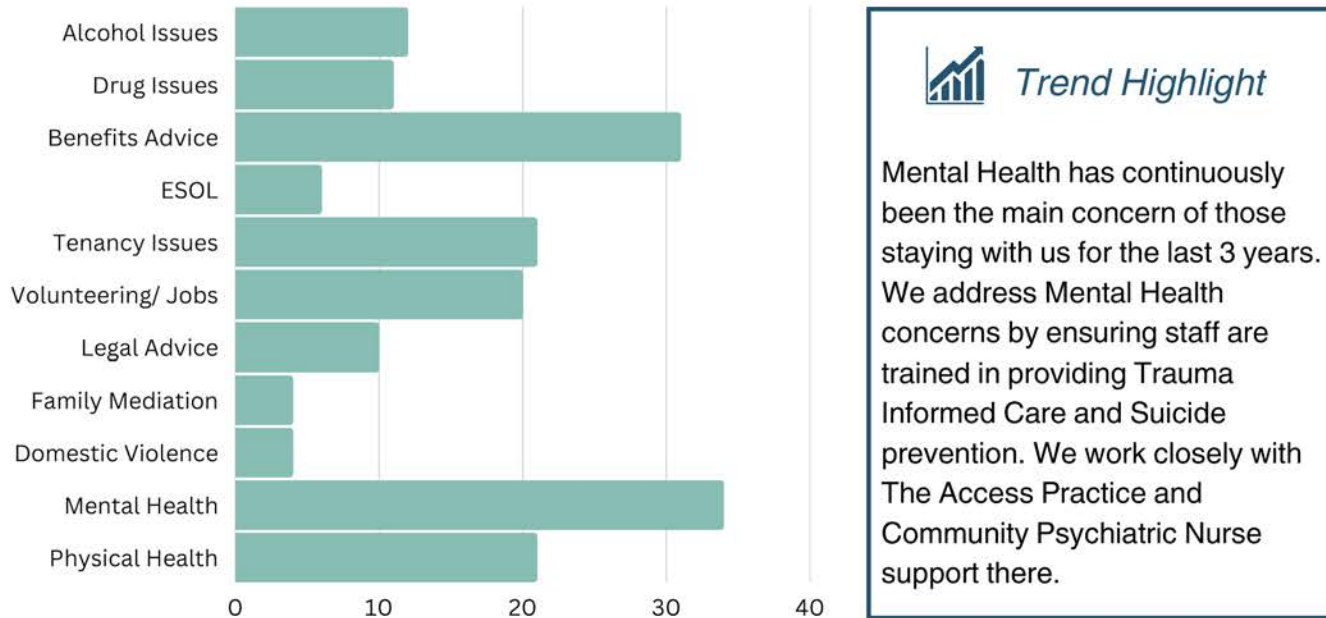
- Working closely with Harm Reduction Teams who provided an in-reach service at the Welcome Centre
- Working with Recovery Worker and Harm Reduction Teams
- Staff training in first aid and Naloxone
- Regular welfare checks on guests
- Attending regular multi-agency meetings

“ *Thanks for all your help, I have a job with accommodation now and really appreciate all you have done for me.* **”**

Partnership Working

What support do people ask for?

When guests arrive at the Welcome Centre we ask if there are any gaps in support they are receiving which they would like to be connected to. The results are:



As a partner agency, we have maintained close contact with the Bethany Welcome Centre. We attended every week as a regularly scheduled diary entry, as well as popping in on passing during outreach shifts as required. This year, there was clearly more of an awareness of the Welcome Centre amongst the homeless population. We regularly responded to the Welcome Centre's requests for assistance, made ourselves available and consistently attended the Welcome Centre throughout the season. Having experience of working with the previous Care Shelter style that existed pre-Covid, we certainly feel that the Rapid Re-Accommodation template is much more stable and provides a much greater chance of those using the service to make positive change away from transient lifestyles.

Nick Harold and Mark Diver | Homeless Navigator Project, Cyrenians

Partnership Approach

At the Welcome Centre, we believe in the power of partnership. Using a combination of in-reach on site and direct referral routes we work to help people connect into longer term support.

Advocard: Supported a guest with advocacy when presenting to City of Edinburgh Council.

Anne Hope House: Guests were referred to Bethany's recovery focused, therapeutic Centre for women.

Bethany Christian Centre: Guests moved to this abstinence based residential recovery programme for men.

Bethany House: Guests moved to this emergency & resettlement accommodation.

Bridge to Freedom: A Bethany recovery worker, Joe, was available to engage with anyone seeking to explore recovery.

Change Grow Live (CGL): Offer one-to-one and group support in addiction recovery, planning and accessing harm reduction information.

Civil Legal Assistance Office: Legal advice and information on housing rights. Crisis: Housing and employment advice, life coaches, courses and helping people move into private lets.

Bethany's Connect to Community: Prison in-reach and mentoring relationships for men and women leaving prison to reintegrate into their local community and achieve their goals.

Cyrenians: Assist guests with support tasks and accompany them to appointments.

Edinburgh Access Practice: Was able to support and assist with guests who stayed at the RRWC with all aspects of healthcare.

EU Settlement Scheme Drop-in: Support guests with EUSS applications.

FourSquare: Visiting housing support to help with people managing their housing situation and general support.

Harm Reduction Nurses: Advise guests who are actively using substances and test for blood-borne viruses.

Hairdresser: Hayley Gray provided free haircuts for men and women.

Junction 42: Engagement courses in prison and upon release. Befriending, employment mentoring and job club.

Police Scotland: They brought people who were homeless, provided assistance in emergency situations and when there are concerns for someone's welfare.

Public Health Scotland: Provide guidance around COVID precautions and testing symptomatic guests.

Right There: Visiting housing support and issues preventing people from managing their housing situation.

Rock Trust: Offered training and support for anyone aged between 16-25.

Salvation Army: Worked together to support individuals and build move on and support plans.

Shelter Scotland: Support guests with legal issues with their accommodation and homelessness.

Street Pastors: Supported people found in the city centre along to the Welcome Centre.

Street Pharmacist: Medical and general support interventions.

Streetreads: Provide a library of books for the guests, including foreign language books.

Streetwork: Support guests into accommodation and to attend other services.

Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland: Support guests who have been victims of exploitation.

The Advice Shop: Support guests with benefits, debt and income maximisation.

"For people we support, being able to have a safe place to stay while we try to remove or reduce the barriers to more stable accommodation has been a life saver. Knowing that they have a safe place to stay, with food and other essentials met & staff who understand the situation and can offer kindness and empathy, has had a huge impact on the people we support."

Kay Paterson | EUSS Support Worker, Streetwork

"For me, the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre is an important place and space where we can reach people who think they have no other option but the street. Sometimes there are no solutions but the person has the space and the time to understand their situation and their rights.

Without the Centre, we would not have been able to support a lot of people; it allowed them to not end up on the street but have a safe place to stay while they were coming to an understanding of their situation.

The Centre allows people to have a welcoming place where they can go and feel listened to."

Alice Castelnuovo | EUSS support worker, Secondment with City of Edinburgh Council

“ **You guys have done so much for me.** ”

Volunteers

We love our volunteers! From the previous model of the Care Shelter to the Welcome Centre now, the evening meals have played a significant role in caring for those staying in emergency accommodation. Each evening a two course hot meal is provided by volunteers who generously give their time and resources to serve at the Welcome Centre. We believe these meals play a critical role in the Welcome Centre service.

This season **39 different teams** catered **181 nights**, totalling over **9,000 evening meals**.

“ *I absolutely loved dinner tonight, food doesn't always go down well but with me, I have my appetite back. I'm very grateful for the work of the staff and volunteers.* ”

A huge thanks to this seasons Churches and Catering Teams:

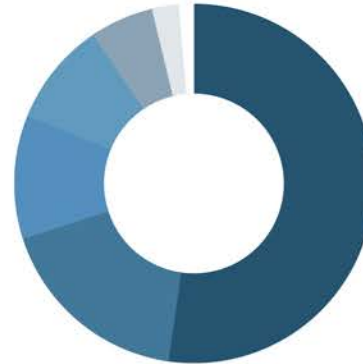
Barclay Viewforth Church | Bellevue Chapel | Bethany Fundraising Team | Bethany Internal Services Team | Caroline Cowan | Centrepont Bathgate | Chalmers Church | Christ Church, Morningside | Church of the Sacred Heart | City Gates Baptist Church | City on a Hill | Craiglockhart Church | Cyrenians Community Cook Club | Dentons | Gorgie Parish Church | Grace Church | Greenbank Parish Church | Holyrood Evangelical | Hope City Church | Hope! Church | Jenny and David Paton Williams | Josephs Accommodation LTD | Kings Church, Viewforth | Liberton Kirk | Liberty Church, Dunfermline | Maddiston Evangelical Church | Palmerston Place Church | Portobello and Joppa Parish | Prestongrange Parish Church | Simon Faval | South Edinburgh Cluster | St Andrews and Georges West | St Annes Church | St Giles Neighbourhood Group | St John the Baptist, Corstorphine | St Johns and St Mary Magdalene | St Margarets RC Church | St Marks, Portobello | St Marys Episopal | St Michaels, Linlithgow | St Mungo's Balerno | St Ninians Marionville | Trinity Community Church



Finance

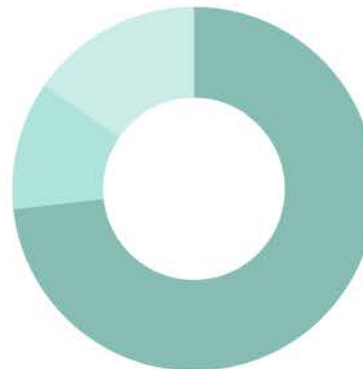
Income

Grants Received	£300,162
Trust Income	£101,929
Individual Gifts	£64,010
Company Gifts	£53,843
Church Gifts	£32,883
Gift Aid	£13,932
Other Income	£7,732
Total	£574,491



Expenditure

Staffing	£470,068
Central Costs	£98,800
Other Direct costs	£73,153
Total	£642,021



Gifts In Kind

Thanks again to the volunteers who provided innumerable hours of service, meals and clothing donations, which has a huge beneficial financial impact on the project and we simply could not do it without them.

Trust and Grants

With thanks for the generous trust and grants that we have received which have supported the work of the Welcome Centre this season.

Cruden Foundation Ltd
 Edinburgh Bar Association Benevolent Trust
 Eliza C Pedersen's Charitable Trust
 J K Young Endowment Fund
 Inchcape Foundation
 Nimar Charitable Trust
 Pret Foundation
 Stewardship Wealth
 The Albert Hunt Trust
 The Alfred Haines Charitable Trust
 The Graham Trust
 The Hinshelwood Gibson Trust
 The Lady Marian Gibson Trust
 The Netherdale Trust
 The Social Bite Fund
 The Wilson Christie Fund
 William Purves Funeral Directors
 Wilson Family Trust

Welcome



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

Since 1996 there have been 152,875 occasions where someone has been prevented from sleeping rough due to emergency accommodation provided in Edinburgh by Bethany Christian Trust. Bethany Christian Trust is committed to continuing to support those who face the risk of rough sleeping and will be running the Welcome Centre again this coming winter season.

Despite the acute challenges this season, the Welcome Centre worked to provide life-saving accommodation, support people into stable accommodation and connect people to the appropriate support.

Trends seen in 2022-2023

- A rise in under 20 year olds
- More people subject to Immigration Control
- People not knowing their rights, entitlement or the support available to them
- Longer stays for those who cannot access mainstream homelessness services

Our Commitment

Based on the trends we have seen we will look to expand and strengthen the support available to those who stay with us.

During training we hope to improve staff knowledge of the needs and rights of those staying at the Welcome Centre.

Our Recommendations

We recommend the Welcome Centre continues to operate and provide the necessary emergency accommodation in Edinburgh.

To continue to develop our approach and expertise with people who have no access to public funds to help those in this situation.

In response to the growing female and younger populations in the demographics, to further develop a tailored and expert approach which helps mitigate the particular vulnerabilities of women and young people.

To create a Move On Project Worker role to help people into the correct and appropriate accommodation and support people through that transition with some follow-on support.

“

I appreciate staff at the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre for their empathy, all the staff are amazing.

”

“

Thanks for all the help guys and God bless you.

”



**Bethany
Christian
Trust**

**Ending Homelessness
in Scotland,
one person at a time**

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