



Bethany
Christian
Trust

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in your key
card at
reception
before leaving
the building

Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre

Annual Report 2021-2022

Welcome!

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre (Welcome Centre) has seen its busiest season to date. The service saw over 1,100 individuals access the emergency accommodation with wraparound support which operated over seven months from October 2021 through to May 2022.

This last season has been challenging due to the high numbers of people and, of course, the effects of COVID-19 being felt throughout the service. Despite this, the Welcome Centre staff, along with our visiting partners, met that challenge and supported men and women to connect with vital, life-changing support.

Alongside the Welcome Centre, at the Haymarket Hub Hotel, there were 115 rooms utilised by the City of Edinburgh Council as temporary

accommodation. Even though this service was separate from the Welcome Centre, everyone within the hotel was supported and able to access the benefits of the Welcome Centre.

We are very grateful to the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government as strategic funding partners in the provision of the service.

It is with special thanks we highlight the visiting partners and our volunteers for their contribution to how well the Welcome Centre has run.

Thank you to every one of them.

James Milligan, Manager
Naomi Millar, Senior Team Leader
Eleanor McLachlan, Senior Team Leader



Contents

5	Executive Summary
9	What is the Welcome Centre?
12	How does it operate?
22	What impact does it have?
28	Who stays?
36	What are the challenges?
38	Conclusion

Photos 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 are changed to protect guest identities.



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

What is the Welcome Centre?

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre is emergency accommodation for people who would otherwise be rough sleeping in Edinburgh. It provides guests with individual, ensuite rooms, specialist support through various partner agencies and supports guests to move on to more suitable accommodation. The Welcome Centre operated from 4 October 2021 to 2 May 2022.

Why do we have a Welcome Centre in Edinburgh?

There is a need for it! We accommodated 1,137 different people this winter who were unable to be accommodated elsewhere despite best efforts. Through showing Christian love in action, the Welcome Centre aims to provide a warm, safe and secure place to sleep for those who would otherwise be rough sleeping; to offer nutritious meals and beverages; to provide high quality advice, guidance and signposting; and to treat each person with genuine care, respect and dignity.

How does the Welcome Centre operate?

Staff: Bethany's professional staff team supported guests and ensured the safe running of the service 24 hours a day. The Council funded a door steward from G4S.

Link Workers: Two Bethany Link Workers were joined by four Council Housing Officers to support guests with homeless assessments and housing.

Outreach: Weekly outreach connected people at the Care Van

with accommodation, offering lifts to the Welcome Centre to those that needed it.

Partners: City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government were major partners in funding for hotel rooms and staffing. 26 visiting partners also provided support to guests.

What impact does the Welcome Centre have?

- 1,137 individuals stayed
- On average 38 new people presented per week
- 10,468 daily accesses across the season, on average 50 people per day
- On 200 of the 210 nights in operation nobody was turned away because the Welcome Centre was at capacity
- The average number of nights any individual stayed across the season was 8
- 97% of known outcomes for guests were positive
- Positive stories from guests can be found on pages 26 and 27 and feedback is found throughout the report

Who stays at the Welcome Centre?

- People with nowhere to stay—93% of guests stated they would be sleeping rough if not at the Welcome Centre
- Newly homeless—42% of guests had been homeless for less than 1 week
- Gender—72% male, 28% female, 0% other
- Age—the average age was 36
- Nationality— 54 different nationalities stayed at the Welcome Centre with 65% of guests being British
- Presenting needs—most people stated the reason for their homelessness was a relationship breakdown, and mental health was the most commonly requested area for support



What are the challenges?

The management of risk: The Welcome Centre is a low-barrier, high tolerance service for individuals with multiple and complex needs who need emergency accommodation. The Welcome Centre is a place of trust and understanding. The professional staff team are highly trained in understanding issues such as domestic violence, trauma and addiction. Risk is constantly being assessed by staff due to the various scenarios that can open up including suicide attempts, drug overdoses and aggression. All staff are trained and equipped to make decisions aimed at keeping everyone safe.

Drug related deaths crisis: Unfortunately, drug related death numbers are continuing at very high levels in Scotland and the effects of this have been felt with a number of previous guests dying of drug related causes. Staff are trained in administering First Aid and Naloxone, guests have access to harm reduction nurses every weekday, regular welfare checks are made on guests in their rooms and anyone of great concern is highlighted to other support agencies by staff in multiagency meetings. There have been no deaths in the Welcome Centre service.

Recommendations

- The Welcome Centre should continue in its current format. It works well and is effective in linking individuals in with wraparound support and moving people on to suitable accommodation.
- In order to ensure no one is missing the support that they need, we will continue to build upon and strengthen our working relationships with external agencies and visiting partners.

What is the Welcome Centre?



What is the Welcome Centre?

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre was born out of the Winter Care Shelter as a result of COVID-19. Beginning in April 2020, at the start of the pandemic, it was a brand new approach to alleviating the suffering of homeless and rough sleeping people in Edinburgh. Developed and delivered by Bethany Christian Trust, in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council, the new service does as its name suggests, a 24 hour service which welcomes people who have nowhere else to go, providing a roof over their heads and nourishment for their bodies, in a safe and warm environment, with an emphasis on rapidly re-accommodating people.

Since 1996, the Winter Care Shelter has existed to tackle the most severe and immediate forms of homelessness and thus prevent people from dying on the streets in the depths of winter. Today, the Welcome Centre not only gives people somewhere to sleep, but works in partnership with the local authority and multi-agency support services to achieve a holistic approach to supporting people in a bid to end homelessness in Scotland.

The need

Over the course of the 2021/22 winter season, the Welcome Centre supported 1,137 individuals, all who found themselves in a crisis situation. This is a huge increase of 32% from the previous season. Even although the number of people sleeping rough in the city had greatly reduced due to COVID regulations and a city-wide effort to support people into accommodation at this time, the Welcome Centre continued to see new 38 people on average, every week, who had not previously stayed that season. With every guest who presents, there is an initial attempt to find accommodation before booking in to the Welcome Centre can begin, therefore, we can be confident that the person has nowhere else to go, and the Welcome Centre is the last resort.

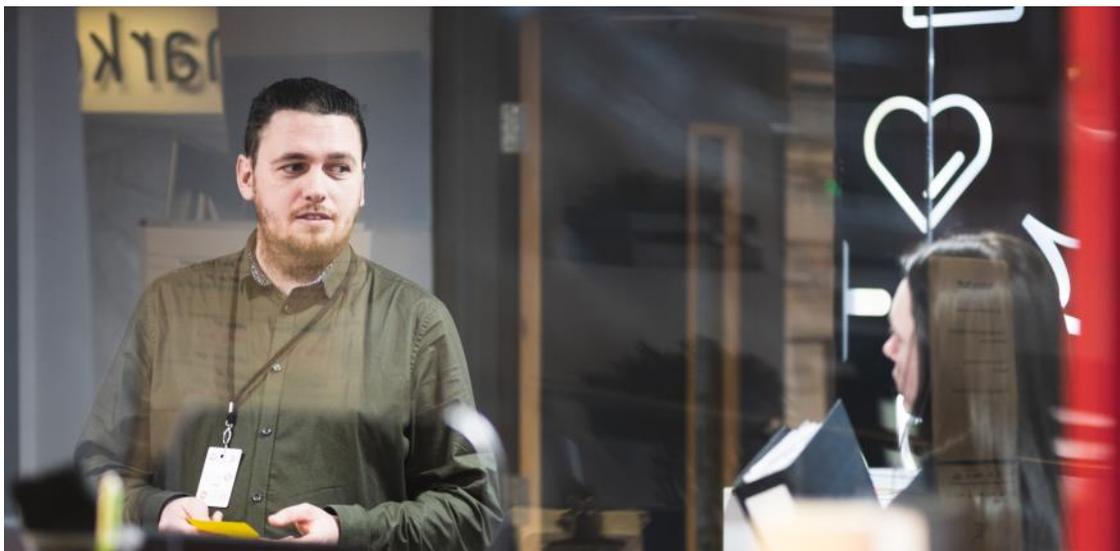
The aim

Through showing Christian love in action, the Welcome Centre aims to provide a warm, safe and secure place to sleep for those who would otherwise be rough sleeping; to offer hot nutritious meals, to

provide high quality advice, guidance and signposting and to treat each person with genuine care, respect and dignity. These four service aims are underpinned by an overall objective to provide opportunity of access to a wide range of partner agencies onsite, thereby helping individuals to gain more appropriate accommodation and improved personal outcomes.

It is as an expression of Christian love in action that motivates the staff to work at the Welcome Centre and spend the winter serving some of society's most vulnerable people. It is to this end that we have the privilege of providing this service.

“This is the best accommodation I've ever been in. Bethany can support me with everything I need and take the pressure off of everything I've been through the last few months.”



How does the Welcome Centre operate?



How does the Welcome Centre operate?

This year the Welcome Centre is based at the Haymarket Hub Hotel again and opened its doors on 4 October 2021. Staffed by 29 Bethany workers including two Link Workers and four Housing Officers from City of Edinburgh Council. The service provided rooms for 65 people. In addition to this, the Welcome Centre shared the premises with a City of Edinburgh Council temporary accommodation unit, which occupied the remainder of the hotel and was run by the hotel staff.

The model

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre model brings support to people where they are. The Welcome Centre looks holistically at a person's needs, not only with housing but in areas such as: mental and physical health, addiction, or pointing individuals to agencies that can help with immigration or financial problems. This wraparound care, coupled with highly trained staff and professionals from many fields, has seen individuals move on with good outcomes and not return to the service.

With the approaching new season, the aim is to provide tailored training for a new staff team, building on the present model and using the lessons learned from the past two seasons. More services will be invited to visit the Welcome Centre to meet any identified gaps in support.

Staff

The staff team are a vital aspect of the service with all team members recruited for their caring approach, compassion, and in many instances lived experience of some of the circumstances our guests are facing. The team are committed to working together and supporting each other in these difficult roles in order to best serve our guests. Together the staff bring their many years of experience to what can be a hugely challenging environment.

Season 2021/22 saw the need for a larger team than before in order to run the Welcome Centre, while at the same time helping to support the staff of the Haymarket Hub Hotel run the Temporary Accommodation side. One Bethany staff member supported the

temporary accommodation in the hotel on day shifts and night shifts.

Included in the 29 Bethany staff are two Link Workers. Being able to offer a provisional homeless assessment to someone at the Welcome Centre is of huge benefit to that person. Many are suffering from mental ill-health, trauma or just previously a bad experience of going to a local authority, coupled with a lack of knowledge of the system. The listening ear of the Link Workers, along with their knowledge of the housing services and other agencies can be a massive support.

In addition to the Welcome Centre staff team and Link Workers, CEC provided a Housing Officer to be on site to help with finding suitable accommodation for our guests.

The Council provided a G4S door steward 24 hours a day which was a great support to the staff team. The door stewards were often the first point of contact for people and coped with many challenging situations at the hotel door. The door stewards were supported by Bethany staff at all times.

Outreach

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre staff continued to go on a weekly Outreach alongside the Care Van. Experienced staff were able to engage with people attending the Care Van, and offer support on a number of issues. The Outreach team were able to bring much needed clothing for winter conditions. Basics such as underwear, hats, gloves, waterproof clothing, toiletries and much

Housing Officers
Chris Blackie
Daisy Barfoot

Graham Clark
Jake Milton

CEC Managers
Lesley Taylor
Marek Beaumont



more were made available to everyone. Conversation with individuals could range from a simple, “Hello, how are you?”, through to support in connecting with other agencies or contacting Out of Hours at the council if someone presented to the Care Van with nowhere to stay. The Outreach team were able to support seven individuals who were sleeping rough on the streets of Edinburgh into accommodation. It is known that not everyone sleeping rough feels ready to accept help, as poor mental health can be a barrier for some. This is why it’s important to continually engage with those struggling and sleeping rough, in order to build up working relationships, trust, and to bring a little comfort and community. This is achieved by our amazing volunteers who serve the people attending the Care Van with food, hot drinks, love and kindness as well as the Bethany team bringing expertise and follow-on support from our partners.

From 13 nights of Outreach:

- 258 interactions
- Donations of clothing/toiletries given out 235 times
- Advice provided on 99 occasions
- Follow up support organised for 51 people (contacting other agencies to connect with the person)

Partnership working

The visiting partners are an essential part of the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre. Each organisation brings its own expertise in different fields. The Welcome Centre enjoys strong working relationships with City of Edinburgh Council, Shelter Scotland, Crisis, Cyrenians, Streetwork, Edinburgh Access Practice, NHS, CLAO, Police Scotland and many more amazing professional organisations. Many attended each week to support our guests with a wide range of needs. On the opposite page is a list of many of the agencies and organisations that work alongside us and the support they provide to the Welcome Centre.

“This place is like paradise to me. Before I stayed here I was sleeping in the train station and hadn’t eaten in two days. Here, I got food, clothes, a shaver and a bed”

Benefits of providing support this way are:

- A guest can have access to a service that they might previously not have linked in with either by not knowing they existed or perceiving barriers to them accessing the service.
- Bringing the services to guests is a trauma informed way to provide access to support as it removes the barriers that people suffering trauma may experience, for example having to go to an unfamiliar place or clinical setting.
- Informal chats with services can build relationships which can help when attending meetings or appointments.
- Close working with the partner services improves communication and allows organisations to work towards the same goal with regards to rough sleeping.



List of visiting partner services

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

Anne Hope House: Multiple guests were referred to this recovery focused, therapeutic Centre for women.

Barber: Joe Monaghan provided free haircuts for guests.

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

Bethany House: 20 guests moved to this emergency & resettlement accommodation.

Bridge to Freedom: One-to-one and group support from a recovery worker.

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.

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

Edinburgh Access Practice: Weekly visits from a practice nurse, video consultations with Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) four days a week and weekly visits from a GP. The COVID vaccine was offered to guests.

EU Settlement Scheme project worker: Support guests with EUSS applications.

Foursquare: One-to-one visiting housing support to help with various issues including health, unemployment, rent arrears, benefits or any other issues preventing people from managing their housing situation.

Harm Reduction nurses: Advise guests who are actively

using substances and test for blood-borne viruses.

Police Scotland: Regularly popping in to provide assistance, support and advice and being a point of contact for any issues and feedback. The police brought people who were homeless to the Welcome Centre on 113 occasions. They also provide assistance in emergency situations and when there are concerns for someone's welfare. We are hugely appreciative of their support and assistance.

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

Right There: Previously named Ypeople. One-to-one visiting housing support to help with various issues including health, unemployment, rent arrears, benefits or any other issues preventing people from managing their housing situation.

Rock Trust: Everyone aged 16-25

is offered an appointment for support.

Salvation Army:

Worked together to support individuals and build effective 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 (SOHTIS):

Support guests who have been exploited.

The Advice Shop:

Support guests with benefits, debt and income maximisation.

“You guys are doing such a good job. Three meals a day and shelter is amazing. Wow.”



Volunteers

Another vital aspect of the service is the volunteers. Cleaning volunteers supported staff in cleaning bedrooms at the weekends and in the evenings when there was no hotel housekeeping. Catering volunteers provided and prepared hot, two-course meals each evening. The catering volunteers came from different church teams, purchased food for an evening meal and cooked two main course options and a dessert. Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse Church once again allowed the use of their kitchen due to the Haymarket Hub Hotel not having kitchen facilities. A massive thank you to everyone who gave up their time to serve the guests or contributed financially to meal provision.

We could not provide the service we do without the donations of clothing and other items which are given to the Welcome Centre. As a result, we are able to provide our guests with new underwear and socks, toiletries, warm dry clothes, books, sleeping bags (for those who were unable to access the service for some reason) and presents for people on Christmas morning.

Volunteer Teams: Barclay Viewforth Church • Bellvue Chapel • Bethany Fundraising Team • Capital City Church International • Central • Centrepoint Bathgate • Chalmers Church • Charlotte Chapel • Christ Church, Morningside • Church of the Sacred Heart • City Gates Baptist Church • City on a Hill • Craiglockhart Church • Cumbernauld Free Church • Currie Kirk • Cyrenians Community Cook Club • Dentons • Elcho Place Hall • Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse • Granton Parish Church • Greenbank Parish Church • Holyrood Evangelical • Hope City Church • Hope! Church • Kings Church, Viewforth • Liberton Kirk • Maddiston Evangelical Church • Palmerston Place Church • Portobello and Joppa Parish Church • Prestongrange Parish Church • South Edinburgh Cluster • St Andrew's and St George's West Church • St Anne's Parish Church • St Giles Neighbourhood Group • St John the Baptist, Corstorphine • St John the Evangelist • St John's and St Mary Magdalene • St Margaret's Church • St Mark's Portobello • St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral • St Michael's, Linlithgow • St Mungo's Balerno • St Ninian's, Marionville • St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church • St Peter's, Musselburgh

Finances

The income and the expenditure for the 30 week season of the Welcome Centre is shown in the tables below. The total expenditure for the season was £671,162 and the total income was £570,087.

Costs were higher than previous years as regulations around COVID were still active and the service was helping operating the City of Edinburgh Council's temporary accommodation unit in the same premises. Bethany staffed the daytime service for the Welcome Centre in full as well as overnight.

City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government met the cost of the hotel rooms, lunches and breakfasts and commissioned a proportion of the staffing provision. We are extremely grateful to them for partnering with us in this project.

Income	Amount
Individual Gifts	£56,259
Gift Aid	£12,420
Grants Received	£299,390
Church Gifts	£34,442
Trust Income	£107,133
Company Gifts	£53,383
Other Income	£7,060
Total	£570,087

Expenditure	Amount
Staff Costs	£497,553
Other Direct costs	£77,609
Central Costs	£96,000
Total	£671,162

Trusts & Organisations

The Graham Trust
 The Lady Marian Gibson Trust
 Pret Foundation Trust
 The Albert Hunt Trust
 Baillie Gifford & Co
 Wilson Family Trust
 The Netherdale Trust
 The Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust
 Nimar Charitable Trust
 The Alfred Haines Charitable Trust

Cruden Foundation Ltd
 The Meikle Foundation
 Stewardship Wealth
 Capito Ltd
 Inchcape Foundation
 Challenge Trust
 The Hinshelwood Gibson Trust
 The Social Bite Fund
 William Purves Funeral Directors

Leith Benevolent Association

Thanks also goes to those trusts, organisations and funds that also donated to the project who wished to remain anonymous.

Gifts in Kind

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre benefits from a large number of 'Gifts in Kind'. For example, the volunteers give their time for free and churches provide the food for the evening meal, Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse church opened up their kitchens for the teams to prepare the evening meal and people donated clothing and other goods. The Welcome Centre would not operate without these gifts in kind. We are indebted to those who support the Welcome Centre in this way. Whether they do this financially, with goods or with their time, they help to provide a safe place of shelter for those who need to access support and onward accommodation.

Potential cost of gifts in kind	Per Day	Per Season
Food	£200	£42,000
Cost of volunteering at living wage	£297	£62,370
Hire of kitchen for catering	£50	£15,000
Cost of cleaning volunteer time at living wage (weekends and evenings only)		£1,140
Donated goods	£100	£21,000
Total Gifts in Kind		£141,510

“Thank you so much, you are the first person to show me kindness in a really long time.”



What impact does the Welcome Centre have?



What impact does the Welcome Centre have?

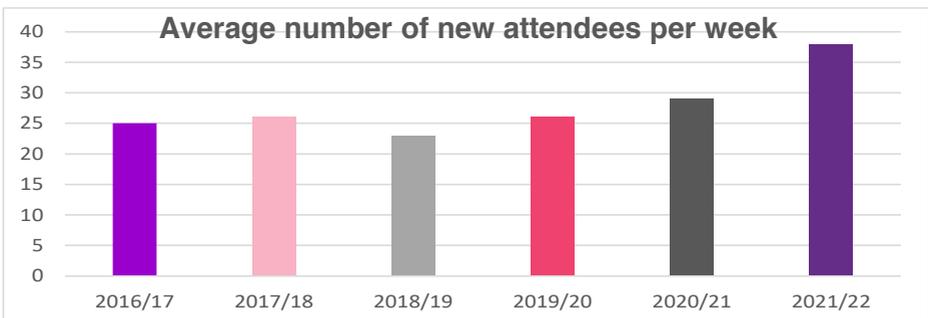
We can measure the impact of the Welcome Centre in different ways. We can look at the total number of individuals that have benefitted from the service and the many people who have moved on positively. We can also consider case studies and the effect the Welcome Centre has on individuals, or through hearing from our partner services.

Since 1996, people have been given access to the Care Shelter/Welcome Centre 138,311 times

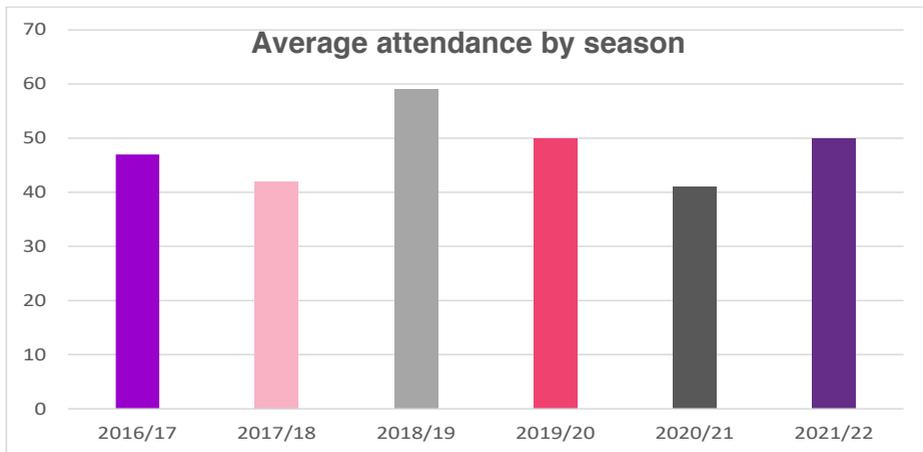
- 1,137 individuals diverted from a rough sleeping predicament
- 10,468 accesses to the service
- Average of 50 people per day
- 73 people attended on 10 January which was the busiest day of the season
- On 200 of the 210 nights in operation nobody was turned away due to capacity
- The average number of nights any individual stayed across the season was 8

Attendance statistics

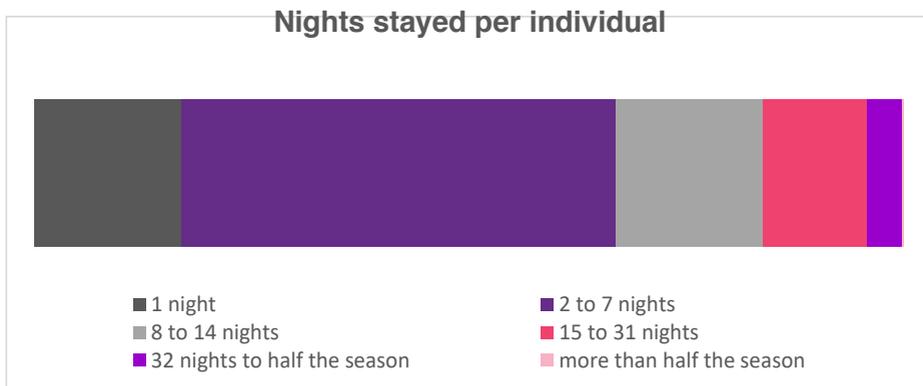
This season we had 1,137 individuals stay at the Welcome Centre across the 30 weeks of operation. 93% of individuals stated that without the Welcome Centre they would be sleeping rough. This shows that the Welcome Centre is meeting its aim of providing shelter to those without. The graph below shows the average number of new attendees per week across the last five seasons. This season we saw an increase in the number of new people presenting each week to an average of 38. This shows that people can become homeless at any time, finding themselves with nowhere to go.



The number of presentations compared to the previous two seasons has increased. This may be due to the ending of lockdown restrictions resulting in more people presenting from other areas of Scotland and the UK, or family and friends no longer being able to offer accommodation.



Guests stayed an average of 8 nights each. This will either be one duration of stay or split across multiple stays. There are less people staying over half the season and 31 days or less this season than compared to last. This shows the impact of the partnership with City of Edinburgh Council to move guests into more permanent and suitable housing.



Accommodation outcomes

Whilst we had 1,137 individuals stay at the Welcome Centre we had 1,471 stays recorded. Each time someone stayed an outcome was recorded once they moved on from the service. There were occasions when guests left without informing staff and it was not possible to record an outcome. Accommodation outcomes are known for 61% of stays and of those known outcomes 97% are positive.

Outcome	Total
Temporary accommodation	537
Supported accommodation	77
Rapid Access Accommodation	14
New tenancy	10
Supported back to existing accommodation	84
Secured job with accommodation	3
Family/friends	63
Supported to return to another area	75
Hospital	19
Police	12
Outcome unknown	577
Total	1,471

“I am so happy and so grateful, it does me proud. Thank you for all the help, you’ve got me a place in supported accommodation. I am so happy and going to really miss this place and everyone who works here.”

Case Studies

Pseudonyms used.

Mark

Mark presented to the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre after being referred to us by one of our visiting partners. Mark had come to Edinburgh after a relationship breakdown looking for a fresh start. After the first few months in Edinburgh he had exhausted his finances paying for food and accommodation. Mark then had two weeks in recovery as he was trying to tackle his alcohol addiction. Once this was over, Mark was without a place to stay, no support and no money. So without the Welcome Centre and its support, Mark would have been at greater risk of relapse and homelessness. Mark was able to connect with a Link Worker, engage with an onsite medical support and a CPN. Mark was also able to work with one of our partners, the Cyrenians, during the time he was in the Welcome Centre. Once he had been given time to stabilise himself, Mark was referred to Bethany Christian Centre, a therapeutic, supported accommodation service with an addiction recovery focus. Mark has come a long way in a short time. He continues to this day being supported in Bethany Christian Centre.

“If I could rate this place out of 10, I would give you a 10!!!”



Roslyn

Roslyn presented to the Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre after leaving an abusive relationship. Unfortunately, this young woman is known well by the Bethany staff as she has had to repeatedly use our service in the past. Each time Roslyn presents to the Welcome Centre, staff come alongside her with a wide range of support and options to help her move on to a more stable life and out of the cycle of homelessness and drug use. It was incredibly hard for Roslyn to break from that lifestyle. We must never give up on anyone. After presenting a few more times during this season, Roslyn was supported to a place where she was able to accept the support that was there for her. Roslyn was willing to engage with our onsite Link Workers, finish a homeless assessment and this in turn led her to be referred to her own Bethany flat with on-going support. Roslyn was set up with a laptop and internet thanks to Digital Scotland, enabling her to contact family and friends online. To this day Roslyn continues to be supported in her own flat.

"It's the best Christmas I've had in three years, honestly!"

"Just to know that you guys were there to help me, I felt cared for and safe. Thank you."

"Thank you for everything you have done, you've made a difficult situation bearable."

"You all helped me so much, thank you, I feel 100 times better and my anxiety is no more."

"There is a fantastic culture in here! "

Who stays at the Welcome Centre?



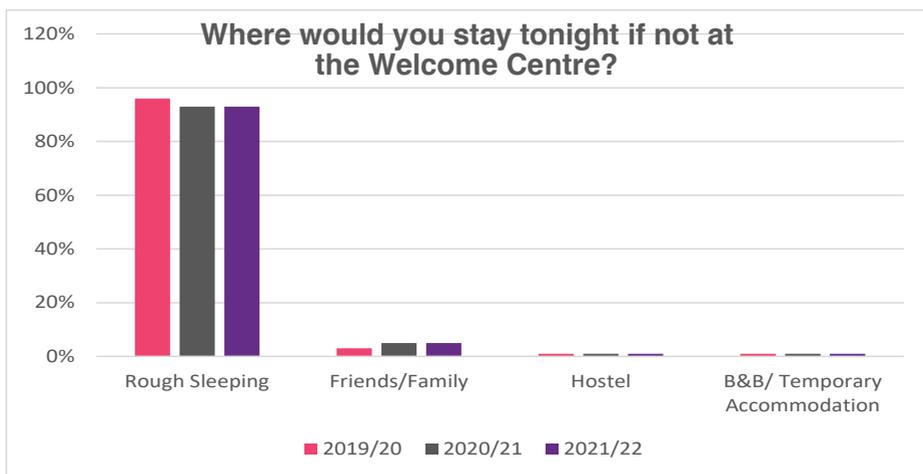
Who stays at the Welcome Centre?

Nowhere to stay

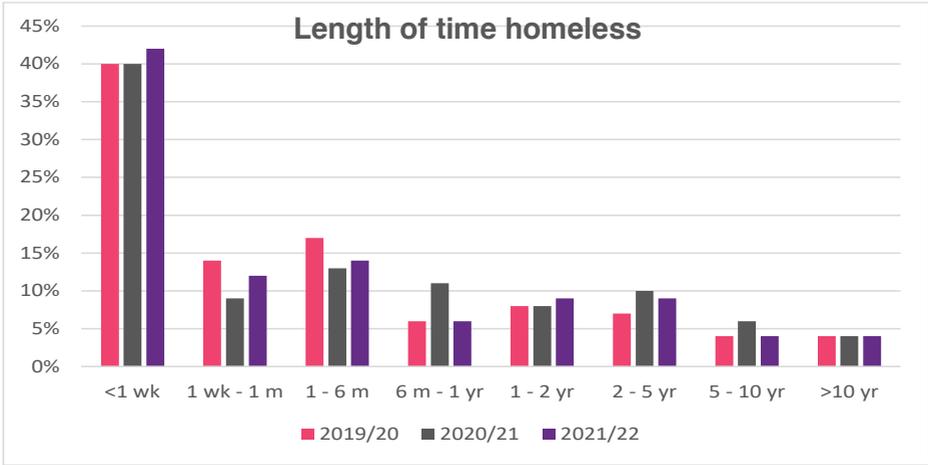
The individuals that use the Welcome Centre have nowhere else to stay. Many of us will have family or friends that can offer us a safe place to stay, this is not an option for many of the individuals we see.

When an individual presents to the Welcome Centre the council are contacted and if there is alternative accommodation available, the person will be sent there. The Welcome Centre is the last option. Without the Welcome Centre this season 93% of people accommodated said they would have been rough sleeping.

Newly homeless



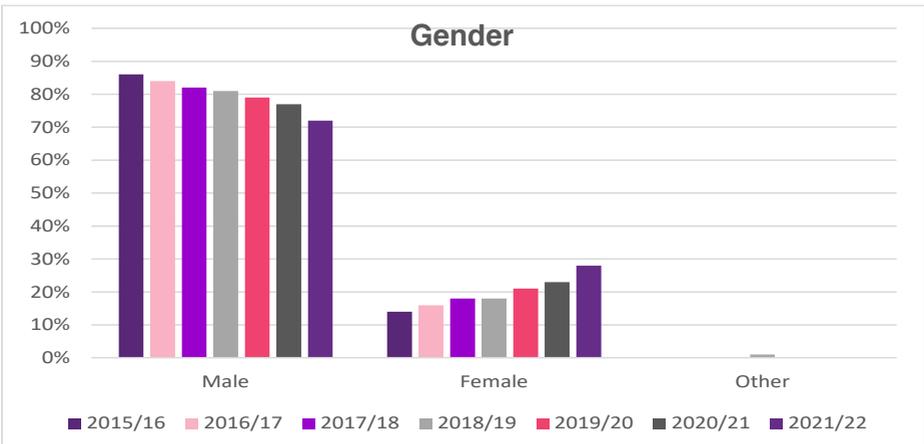
Most often, the Welcome Centre meets individuals that have recently become homeless with 42% of our guests this season sharing that they had been homeless for less than a week. We saw fewer individuals who had been homeless for a longer period this season. This shows the impact all the services within Edinburgh have made during the pandemic to help people previously longer-term homeless.



Every person that comes to the Welcome Centre is unique and has a different story, but when data is compared over seasons we can see trends emerging.

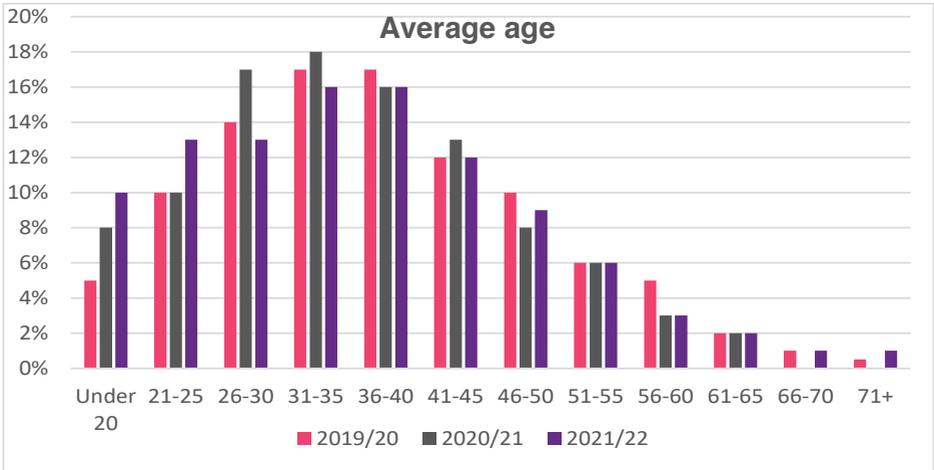
Gender

Over the last three seasons we have noticed an increase in the number of females presenting to the Welcome Centre. This season 72% of our guests were male and 28% were female.



Age

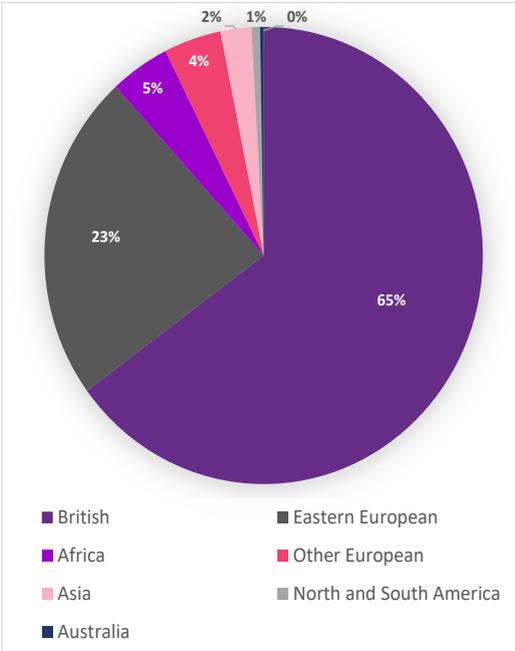
The average age of a guest this season was 36 which is the same as last season but there was an increase again in the number of young people presenting to the Welcome Centre. The youngest individuals that stayed were 16 and the eldest individual was 77.



Over the last three seasons there has been an increase of 16-25 year olds that are presenting. This may be due to an increase of young people leaving home after a prolonged COVID isolation. Whilst more younger ages are represented this remains inline with the trend. Last season a total of 44 females aged between 16 and 25 stayed at the Welcome Centre. This season that number more than doubled to 92. This increase is concerning due to the vulnerability of these young women.

“I really appreciate everything you have done for me, you have kept me alive and now I am in a place where I can get the help I need.”

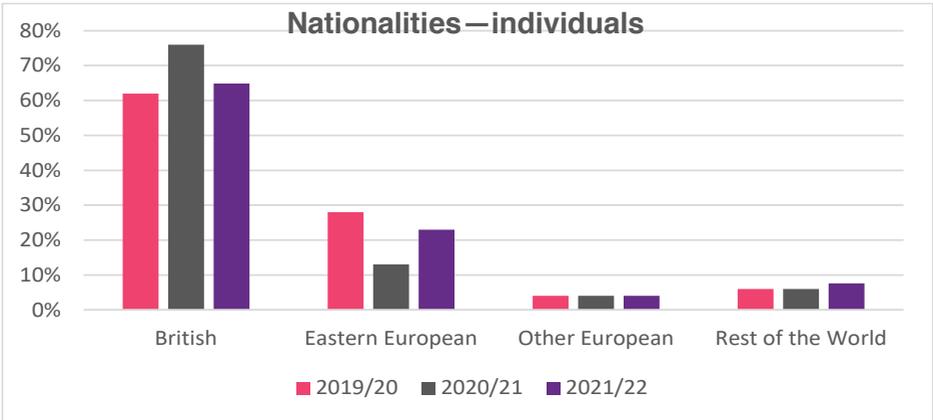
Nationality



This season at the Welcome Centre we had 54 different nationalities stay with us

There was a slight increase in the number of guests from Eastern Europe. This is likely to have been impacted by COVID restrictions lifting and travelling becoming easier once more. A number of the Eastern European guests that stayed with us stated that they had come to Edinburgh to look for work.

The community that was the

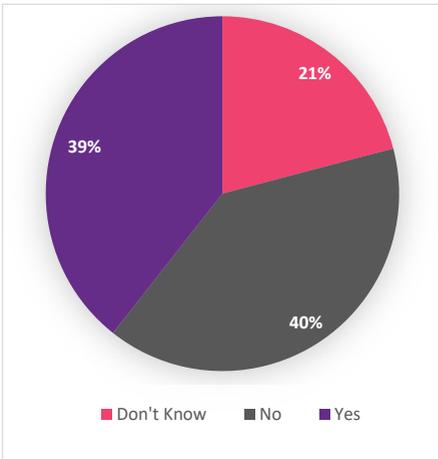


primary contributor to the increase of Eastern European people presenting was the Roma community. Previously, the Welcome Centre and the Care Shelter were seeing middle aged people often with children at home in Romania coming to the city to look for temporary work. At the start of the COVID outbreak many of those people who were in the country at that time could not travel home. These people were forced to remain and since then have decided to

stay. They found jobs which became available due to the recruitment shortage caused by COVID and other political factors. During this season the Welcome Centre saw a much younger demographic from the Roma community engaging with services, looking for jobs and opening bank accounts.

Do you have recourse to public funds?

This question was only asked of non-UK nationals. Currently, City of Edinburgh Council can accommodate anyone with NRPF under COVID legislation. This means regardless of how individuals answered this question, they were entitled to accommodation. However, with COVID legislations ending it is



uncertain what will happen to those this affects. Accommodating people with NRPF has made a huge difference, but it is unknown as to the full number of people that will be left with no options after the legislation ends. A solution is difficult as the policy surrounding NRPF is UK-wide. The introduction of Settled Status following Brexit has meant anyone successfully qualifying for settled status is given automatic rights to benefits and homelessness assistance. For those who have pre-settled status

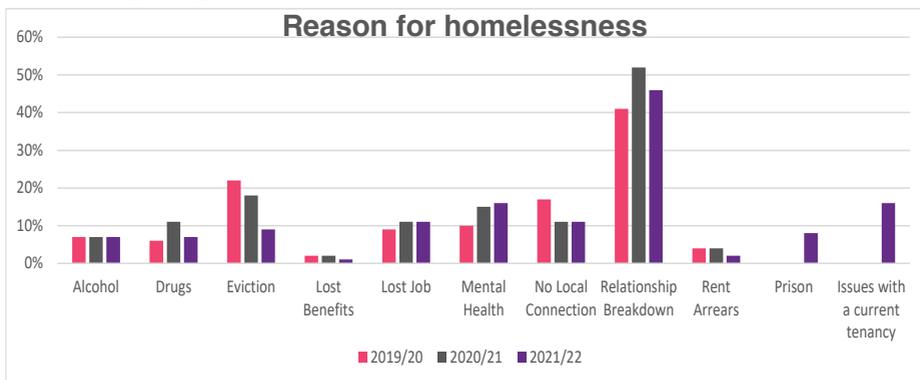
or are awaiting an outcome, they must demonstrate their treaty rights to be entitled. The Welcome Centre is accessible to people with NRPF but there may be very few other options or move on routes.

Presenting needs

Individuals can become homeless for a whole host of reasons but those who are vulnerable are most at risk. While we have seen a decrease in those stating drug addiction, eviction or relationship

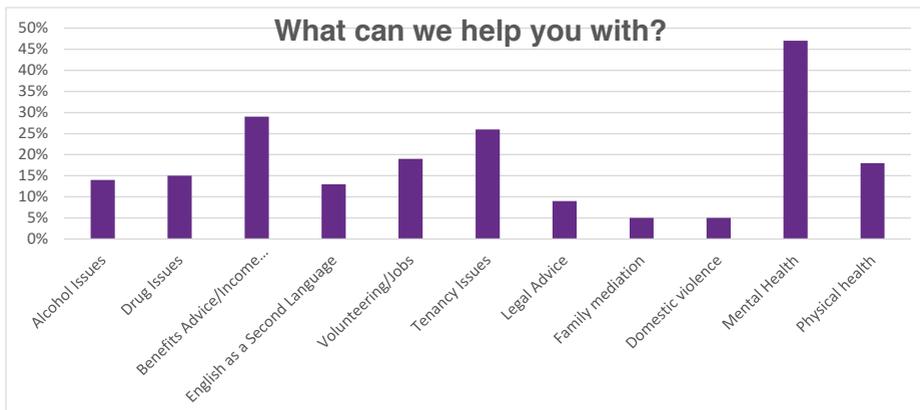
No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is an immigration status which limits benefit entitlement and can affect people with a right to reside in the UK, such as EEA nationals, as well as those from other places who may be here on specific visas. This group is not entitled to a full range of benefits or to homelessness support.

breakdown as a reason for their homelessness there was a slight increase yet again in the number that attributed their current



homelessness to their mental health. This season we added the options of prison and issues with a current tenancy as we had started to notice more individuals presenting due to these circumstances.

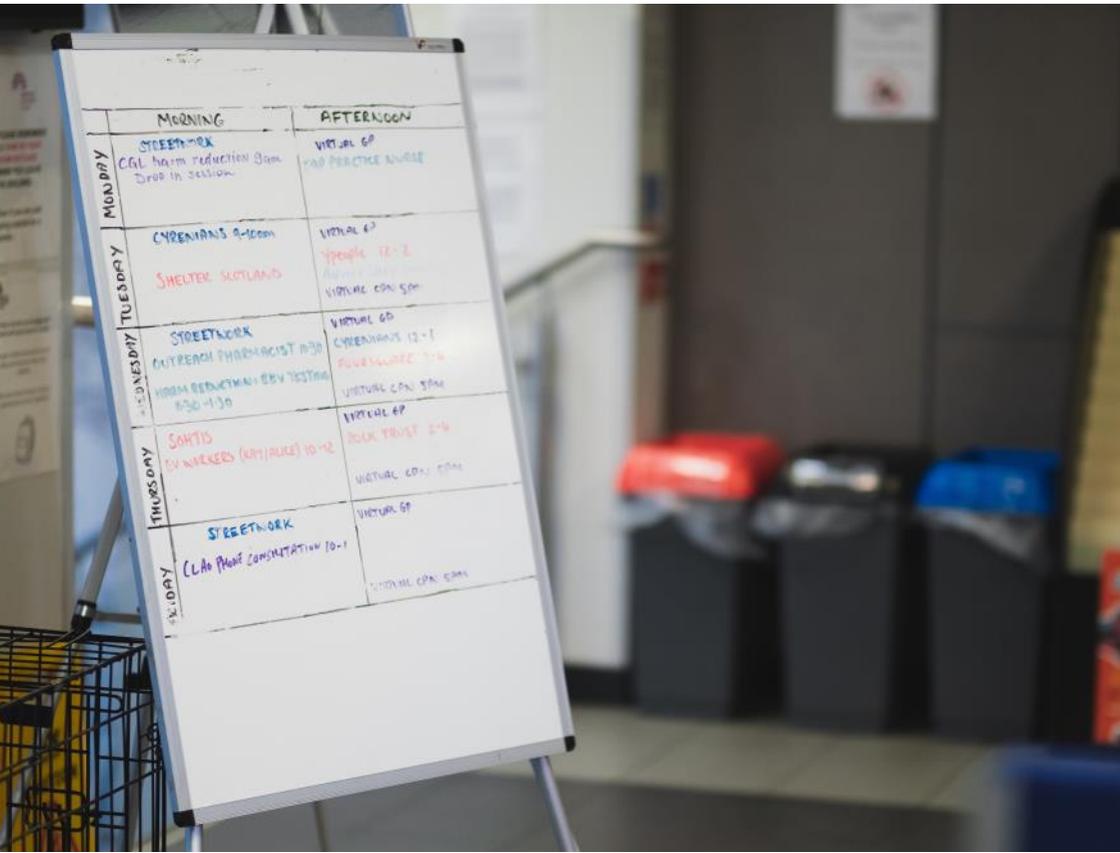
Likewise, when asked about what help individuals would like, assistance with mental health saw an increase from 33% to 47%. This was confirmed by the experience of the staff team at the Welcome Centre and on occasions we saw individuals arriving to us having been discharged from hospital mental health wards. This was a serious concern as these vulnerable individuals were then not



“I am so glad to have this bed otherwise I would have been sleeping on the street last night. It was the best sleep I have had in weeks”

accessing the level of support that they actually needed. Our staff receive mental health training during the induction week at the beginning of the season but were seeing people suffering acute mental health issues that would require professional mental health intervention. This used huge staff resources.

Similarly to last year, more individuals asked for help with drug issues, 15% compared to 13% last season. The drug deaths crisis in Scotland is still prevalent and the effects of this were keenly felt within the Welcome Centre this season.



What are the challenges?



What are the challenges?

The management of risk

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre, like the Care Shelter before it, is a low-barrier service with a high elastic tolerance. Many of the individuals arriving at the Welcome Centre are presenting with complex issues including trauma, addiction issues and the consequences of domestic violence. Others are coming from broken relationships and feel constantly let down by others. The Welcome Centre is a place of safety, trust and understanding. The Bethany staff team are professionally trained in understanding the needs of the people accessing the service. Each individual that accesses the Welcome Centre is able to have their own room, their own facilities and their own space. From this point, each guest is able to connect with Bethany staff, Link Workers and 26 visiting partners that help with a wide range of needs.

Drug related deaths

The Welcome Centre has continued to see an increase in drug use and heard of increased reports of drug related deaths in Edinburgh, with many familiar names from past seasons amongst those who have sadly died. The National Records of Scotland shared that there were 1,339 drug related deaths in

Scotland in 2020 which is a 5% increase from 2019. In order to keep our guests safe we have the following measures in place:

- Harm reduction nurses attending regularly and “on call” to attend immediately to speak to a guest of concern
- Weekly multiagency meetings to highlight anyone of concern for additional support
- Regular welfare checks on guests with an increase in frequency if someone is under the influence
- All staff trained in First Aid and administering Naloxone with some of the team receiving additional training in order to provide guests with Naloxone to keep on their person.

On rare occasions, individuals have been found unconscious at room checks and emergency First Aid was needed as well as calling 999. Unfortunately, it looks like this trend is continuing which raises our concern for next season.

Conclusion



Conclusion

The 2021/22 season was again affected by the pandemic, and although there was no lockdown, public health regulations regarding COVID were still in place. Everyone who presented to the Welcome Centre was entitled to council accommodation under COVID rules. Now that COVID regulations have relaxed, an end to this protective legislation is anticipated. Until this happens, it is unclear how many people with No Recourse to Public Funds may be in a position that they have nowhere to stay.

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre continued to build on the successful model this season in the Haymarket Hub Hotel. A larger staff team was employed and trained in order to support not only its own guests but to help the hotel staff support the temporary accommodation guests. The wraparound care that was available to all of the Welcome Centre's guests was made available to the occupants of the temporary accommodation if they wished to access it.

Bethany and hotel staff worked hard in what was a very demanding situation with two different large services operating under the same roof, for the benefit of all guests. The partnership was very successful.

Working with our partners towards greater communication

and thus tailoring the services to the needs of each individual resulted in positive known outcomes for 97% of stays. We aimed, as always, to have a holistic approach in the support of individuals.

Similar to last season, we saw an increase in the number of young people and women accessing the service and a trend in people with severe mental health issues who were hard to place being referred to the Welcome Centre. We will continue to direct our training to equip the team with skills and a greater understanding to support these individuals.

In addition, it was noted that it was common for people who were homeless or trapped in addiction to be unaware of the services and support that was available to them. The wraparound support that the Welcome Centre offers fills this gap, however this is not the sole answer to the problem of addiction and homelessness, there still needs to be a greater response to supporting people further upstream.

Next season's plans and recommendations

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre will be back for the winter season 2022/23. We plan to continue building the service to meet the demand for people seeking emergency accommodation with access to practical help, advice and support with move on and recovery options. We are looking to engage with current and new visiting partners to offer a greater range of support packages. We will also look to strengthen our working relationships with our current partners, our goal always to seek to support those in crisis.

The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre will again be advertising for a new staff team to move forward and develop the work from previous seasons.

As the 2021/22 season came to an end, the leadership team have begun planning for the coming season in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government. The Welcome Centre is a last resort emergency accommodation service with a high level of intensive support and successful move on rates that has proven yet again to be necessary in Edinburgh this last season. We expect there will be a similar strategic need for this provision ongoing.

“I was feeling quite desperate yesterday and now I'm feeling hopeful. Thank you for the support.”



Thank you

There are so many individuals and organisations that make the Welcome Centre possible and we are very grateful to you all!

This list of people and services is not exhaustive; the Welcome Centre has a vast number of supporters. No matter what you contributed, please accept our grateful thanks.

City of Edinburgh
Council

The Scottish
Government

All of our visiting partner
services

Staff at Out of Hours

Mark Healy and Susie
McCartney, SAVOLO
team

CEC staff at The
Access Point, the
locality offices and the
Temporary
Accommodation teams

Mark Hamilton and the
city-centre community
police team

Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse
church for kitchen use

All the church teams

Rab Burnett

Haymarket Hub Hotel
staff

The Edinburgh
Collection

G4S staff

Chris Blackie, Daisy
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Graham Clark

Empty Kitchens, Full
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#Fish

All our major funders

The staff team:

Andries Lindeque

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David Gillan

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Kevin Chalmers

Leah Martin

Mairi Findlay

Eleanor McLachlan

James Milligan

Naomi Miller

Ruth Longmuir

Cameron Black

Alasdair Bennett

**Everyone that gave
financially,
volunteered, prayed,
donated goods and
sent encouragement!**



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