



# Bethany Christian Trust

New Year Update 2023



Bethany Christian Trust  
[www.bethanychristiantrust.com](http://www.bethanychristiantrust.com)

# Introduction

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Thank you for all your support for people when they are at their most vulnerable. We are hugely appreciative of your generosity towards the work of Bethany Christian Trust.

We continue to be wholly committed to preventing homelessness, intervening in crisis, and sustaining people in their own homes across Scotland, but we could not do it without the generous partnership that you show us.

Your commitment to support our work not only enables just some of the services highlighted in this update, but also massively encourages us in our endeavours.

I hope you are well and please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would ever like to visit us or hear more about our services.

With grateful thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alasdair Bennett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Alasdair Bennett**

Chief Executive

# Care Vans across Scotland

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Bethany's Care Vans reach out to people across Scotland, offering food and support to people in crisis. Run in partnership with local churches and partner organisations, the Care Vans also provide much needed community to those who rely on them.

- » In Edinburgh we provided 9,719 lunches to hundreds of individuals. Volunteers prepare and serve filled rolls, fruit, biscuits and a hot drink for lunch. Freshly made soup, a buttered roll and a hot drink are served in the evening.
- » In Royston, Glasgow, we serve between 12 and 16 individuals each day offering hot drinks, bread donated by the Freedom Bakery and biscuits.
- » In Parkhead, Glasgow, we serve around 40 people, over half of whom are regulars, with hot drinks, soup, rolls and other food.
- » In Perth, teas and coffees are served to an average of 10-15 people every week. We also provide 1:1 support and signposting to other services.

The vital lifeline of the Care Van is well loved by the people who use it each week. As we navigate a difficult winter, we anticipate that this simple, practical help will be needed more than ever.

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The Care Van offers food and support for people in Parkhead and Royston

The Care Vans support lots of people who are struggling with poverty, poor mental health, loneliness and addiction. The help offered can assist in combatting so many of these issues. Immediate relief is provided by connecting people to other services and volunteers offer a consistent, friendly ear to those who are feeling lonely.

One regular visitor, Dave\*, waves from his flat as soon as we arrive. He's isolated and the van has become part of his weekly routine, as he enjoys the company and conversation. We regularly signpost people to other support networks available in the area, and to Bethany services such as Access through Advocacy.

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# Bridge to Freedom

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It is too easy to think of the work we do as just addressing problems and issues. In reality, we want people to experience life to the full and to enjoy themselves in freedom and security.

So recently, we took our Bridge to Freedom group in Parkhead – which is focussed on addiction recovery – on a day trip to Balmaha by Loch Lomond. It was a fun day, with adventures along the shoreline and a picnic on the beach. Similarly, we took three families on a weekend residential to the hills near Kinross for a weekend of archery, fire-making, marshmallows and more. We don't just want people to escape a crisis, we want them to thrive!

This opportunity for fun and relaxation, in turn, combats the causes of homelessness. The families who went on the break described the impact:

“I have learned to be a bit more patient. I have been less anxious and stressed.”

“I realised there is always someone else going through similar stuff in their lives... it helps to talk about what helped them or just that they have been through it and got through it in the end.”

“It helped me socialise... I have been a lot calmer and found patience I didn't know I had.”

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There's hard work to be done, and we'll continue to help through addiction recovery groups, working with people leaving prison, work placements and more. But we love these moments of community, restoration and freedom as people take steps on their journey to independent lives.



Recovery and Resttlement worker, Jamie, delivers Bridge to Freedom in Glasgow

Bridge to Freedom is a Christian addiction recovery programme delivered in the community which includes both group and one-to-one sessions. The service is delivered in several locations in and around Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness with the support of local church volunteers.

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# Statistics from last year's\* Scotland-wide work

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**8,904** bed spaces provided at our Welcome Centre

**384** young people and families supported through Upstream therapeutic support

**161** people supported with housing & move-on support across Scotland

**112** people supported upon leaving prison



Bethany's Community Support & Development team in the West of Scotland



The Gateway team help to furnish homes for new tenants in Edinburgh

**11,429** lunches provided through the Care Vans

**930** household furnished for new tenants

**73** supported flats

**567** recovery group sessions in Bethany Christian Centre

\*all figures are from 2021-2022

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# Access through Advocacy

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This year we launched a new service in Glasgow, Access through Advocacy, which exists to help people promote and protect their rights.

We have a team that signpost individuals to more specialist services and help people navigate challenges such as:

- » Applying for benefits and challenging decisions
- » Resolution of housing issues
- » Dealing with bills and understanding banking
- » Accessing both physical and mental health services

Already, the help we are able to provide people is making a big difference to the people using the service. We are exploring the possibility of expanding it to other parts of Scotland so that more people can find practical support for some of these common issues.

## **Also in Glasgow:**

We are delighted to have opened our first charity shop in Glasgow, on Duke Street. The new shop will sell a range of pre-loved goods including clothing and furniture, with all profits going towards our work in ending homelessness.

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# Stornoway Church Partnership

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As well as Access through Advocacy we have been able to launch the following services throughout Scotland, in Stornoway and West Lothian:

## **Stornoway**

Since March 2022, we have been working within communities in the Western Isles, where we've been partnering with The Shed Project in Stornoway. The Shed Project is a purpose built facility running various services within and throughout the community, primarily aiming to provide a place of belonging, support and encouragement for anyone in need.

Bethany's work with the Shed Project is delivered in partnership and jointly funded by Martin's Memorial Church of Scotland in Stornoway.



Stornoway is the main town of Lewis and Harris, it is the largest town in the Outer Hebrides

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Iain, the Bethany staff member involved in Stornoway, has noticed a real need in the area:

“The problems in Stornoway are very hidden, but they’re there. The main reason people become homeless in Stornoway is family breakdown, people not being able to cope with the behaviour. The youngest are about 17 or 18, ranging to about 60-odd. People who can’t look after themselves and are looking to move on. It’s boredom probably, people getting caught up in the wrong crowd.”

At present, Bethany are working with The Shed Project to facilitate a number of recovery groups, including:

- » The Well - a community drop-in for men and women who are affected by alcohol and drug use, it is a safe place offering support to anyone seeking to take helpful steps and pursue a life of recovery. The Well offers one-to-one support as well as the opportunity to connect with others who are in similar situations and have an understanding of the difficulties faced.
  - » The Ark - a community drop-in offering support for women who are affected by drug or alcohol use. Individuals seeking to make positive changes in their lives are supported in their recovery journey through peer support and one-to-one support, with recreational activities and organised excursions also provided.
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# Bethany Homes West Lothian

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## **West Lothian**

Kharis Court is our 24-hour residential support unit for young people, situated in Bathgate. It is a place where young people can experience a supportive family atmosphere and interact with each other as they pursue beneficial changes in their lives. Our well-trained, sensitive and responsive staff focus on building solid foundations and strong relationships with young people to prepare them for maintaining and sustaining their own tenancy.

Building on the success we've seen with Kharis Court – our 24-hour support residential unit for young people in Bathgate – we have expanded Bethany Homes into West Lothian.

We are now able to offer dispersed supported accommodation through Bethany Homes West Lothian, working with young people as they move into community, providing safe and secure accommodation for those at risk of or with a history of homelessness. This enables them to build the capacity to prevent further recurrence of homelessness.

Currently we have two properties in which we are able to support tenancies, and we are looking to add a third.

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Young people thriving in our supported community in West Lothian.

# Daniel's\* story

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Daniel connected to our Access through Advocacy team as he needed help with a limited capability work form.

He was advised that he would have to go through a telephone assessment. We helped to prepare him for the assessment as he was nervous about it. He had to wait during a three-hour window for the call, so he took it at home in spite of his nerves. We talked him through what to expect so he was familiar with the process in advance.

He was relieved when the process was over, but it led to an immediately positive result. The next week he was told by the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) that he had been accepted – which would mean an extra £300 a month, along with £700 in back-dated payments.

The fact he got through the whole interview alone is amazing and has led to Daniel feeling more confident. He's since navigated conversations with his energy company to change his bills.

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Supporting people to promote and protect their rights



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The Rapid Re-Accommodation Welcome Centre operates from the Haymarket Hub Hotel in Edinburgh

# Thank you for your support

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We continue to serve people throughout Scotland, meeting them in their moment of need and looking for long-term solutions.

The multi-disciplinary support provided by our Rapid Re-Accommodation Welcome Centre allows us to connect people to the other projects we operate and to ensure continued help for those who need it.

One person came to the Welcome Centre in the depths of despair, having lost his job and accommodation to illness. He was feeling suicidal. In the Centre, he was able to receive immediate support, a homelessness assessment and some friendly encouragement while he stayed with us for some time. Ultimately, he was helped into his own flat and he's been linked to weekly, ongoing support.

We've helped women fleeing abusive relationships, young people who have gone through family breakdown and those who have turned to alcohol in desperation. Through a friendly welcome and 24/7 support, we are able to provide immediate relief for their suffering and work with them to find long-term solutions that work.

None of this would have been possible without your partnership and support in 2022. Thank you!

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**Bethany Christian Trust, 65 Bonnington Road, Edinburgh, EH6 5JQ**

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\*names have been changed to protect the individual's identity