

New food service helps rehomed families



Nearly 600 food packs have been distributed to Edinburgh families and individuals following the launch of a new service to ensure previously homeless households can enjoy a hot, home cooked meal when they move into their new home.

Fresh Start, Edinburgh's homeless resettlement charity, launched the Food Station in September this year. Part of its remit is to deliver the new Food Packs. Since then 580 packs have been distributed.

The new Food Station service aims to tackle health inequalities amongst people who have been homeless by giving access to refurbished cookers, cooking classes, food packs and budgeting advice.

The decision to deliver the new services around food comes after people who had been homeless said they struggled to provide home cooked food for themselves and their families when they moved into a new home, due to the costs involved in setting up a house.

The charity also said the current economic climate played a big part in people facing difficulties feeding themselves and their families.

The new services have today received praise for its innovation from the Edinburgh's Lord Provost.

Keith Robertson, Managing Director of Fresh Start, said: "I am delighted we can build on the services we already have at Fresh Start and develop them under one roof. Thanks to funding from a variety of sources, we can now reach out to even more

people who are going through the transition from being homeless to getting a new home.”

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Rt Hon Donald Wilson said: “Fresh Start has long been a part of the homelessness services in Edinburgh since it was set up in 1999, delivering a handful of packs to people who were homeless in the city.

“Since then it has become significant part of the solution for homeless people looking to settle into a new house, delivering around 2,000 Starter Packs each year and providing a range of services. This new Food Station and Food Pack service is an innovative development and will help people who have been homeless have a home cooked meal from the off, as well as teach them a range of new skills.”

The Food Station is one of a number of developments taking place at the Edinburgh charity.

A new Development Worker has been taken on to deliver the services at the Food Station. He is one of a number of new staff starting at the charity in recent weeks. A new Business Manager began recently to oversee the development and growth of the charity.

The Food Station has been made possible thanks to a real Edinburgh-wide community effort, with support from funders, Edinburgh businesses, community groups and individuals.

The service will be run from new premises at Harrison Place, Edinburgh, which is owned by the Phoenix Club, a small charity supporting people with disabilities.

The Food Station will house:

- A new Electrical Workshop to test donated cookers, which will then be passed on to clients.
- A new Food Packs service which will give individuals and families the basics to make a hot, cooked meal in the

first days of moving into a new house. This service is an extension of the current Starter Packs service operated by Fresh Start.

- The charity will also deliver cookery classes to help people learn to cook meals on a small budget.

- An allotment has also been created in the garden, which will provide food for the cookery classes.

Fresh Start's new Development Worker, Angus Maclean, will oversee the project at Harrison Gardens. He comes from a homelessness and care services background.

Mr Robertson added: "The transition between being homeless and moving into a new home can often bring challenges such as financial burdens so we want to give people the best possible start in their new lives by providing them with the essentials as well as offering them support with cooking, food budgeting and training opportunities. The support from our funders and other local community projects has been a key to enabling the Food Station to open its doors."

Fresh Start hopes to help over 60 people a year learn new cooking skills. The charity also aims to give around 150 people a cooker so they can cook for themselves.

The charity has received funding from the National Lottery Grant, NHS Lothian, Zero Waste Scotland, Rotary Club of Edinburgh and Hibbert Family Foundation. They have received help from Lloyds Banking Group, Bield Housing Association, John Redpath Electrical Contractors, G A Helmore Electricians, and CitySprint.

Fresh Start will work closely with Bethany Christian Trust and City of Edinburgh Council to ensure cookers and food reach the people that need them most. The cookery classes will be delivered and developed in partnership with Edinburgh Cyrenians Good Food Project.