

Stepping in to give hope to Edinburgh homeless

A charity which is feeding the homeless in Edinburgh has come forward to fill a gap caused by other providers forced to close because of Covid-19.

[Steps To Hope \(STH\)](#) provides three course meals and hosts a soup kitchen in addition to supporting and mentoring people with addiction and alcohol issues.

While

other charities which operate from church halls and other venues have been required to shut up shop because of social distancing, STH has become more active by using a mobile catering van it took possession of just as the coronavirus was taking hold.

The

charity, which receives no Government or local authority funding and relies solely on public donations, has gone from providing 150 meals a week to more than 450.

STH founder

and operations manager, Richard Roncero, said its Sunday to Tuesday food service was saving lives, and it had recently taken over the operation of the

Souper Saturday soup kitchen which was about close.



Steps To Hope is helping feed Edinburgh's homeless during Covid-19 pandemic – Photo by Euan Cherry

He

said: "Fortunately we had been campaigning for several months to buy a catering van and it arrived at exactly the same time as Covid-19 was taking hold. We have gone from providing two food services a week to five as lots of the other food services have closed or had to reduce operations.

“People

using our services are telling us that they have not eaten all day. Those who were reliant on begging can't survive because of lockdown as there is no one around. One person said they sat out for 10 hours and made £2, so with little support about, Steps To Hope is keeping people alive.”

The [charity](#) has more than 70 volunteers and in normal times helps people in to rehab and supports them through the process of becoming clean and sober.

Richard

added: “Once Covid-19 over we will have access to halls and other meeting places again and we can hold 1-1 meetings and mentor people to a better way of life. We are really reduced to just a food service at the moment but we are looking forward to getting back to helping people to change their lives.”



Steps To Hope is now serving more than 400 meals a week to Edinburgh's homeless – Photo by Euan Cherry

[Steps To Hope](#) food services:

Saturday,

Old St Paul's, Jeffrey Street, breakfast 8am-1pm.

Sunday,

St Cuthbert's Church courtyard, three course meal, 5-7pm.

Monday,

St Columba's Church, Johnston Terrace, three course meal
6-8pm.

Tuesday

and Friday, 5pm, three course meal at Jeffrey Street followed
by Holyrood Road
and Grassmarket.

<https://www.stepstohope.co.uk/>