

Homes for Life being created in Peffermill

A property in Peffermill is to become the second homes for life development in Edinburgh.

Common Ground Against Homelessness (CGAH) will renovate and lease the homes to Rowan Alba who will use it to provide homes for life for nine men who were previously homeless. This mirrors the approach they have taken at Thorntree Street in Leith since 2004 where the average length of stay is seven years.

This model of home provision allows those with alcohol dependency issues or who have previously experienced homelessness to secure a tenancy. Community shares were sold at the end of 2020 to raise the funds to buy the property in addition to grant funding from Nationwide Building Society, The Clothworkers' Foundation, Crisis:Home for all Grants and The Screwfix Foundation. With an increase in homelessness in the capital the charity sees a need to step in and provide a home and ongoing care and support.

Helen Carlin, CEO and founder of Rowan Alba said: "We are the only organisation in the UK offering homes-for-life to those with a history of repeat homelessness. Current Scottish Government plans only accommodate 80% of those currently homeless in Scotland. Rowan Alba know the remaining 20% well and these are the people whom we support every day in homes-for-life in at Thorntree Street. The development at Peffermill will deliver the same pioneering service, offering safe and secure permanent accommodation, support with physical and emotional health and help with accepting and managing

alcohol use for service users.

“We want to establish a long-term, sustainable solution to homelessness in Scotland, using a model that can be replicated across the entire country. Our residents are accepted for who they are and are supported every day, without judgment, with every aspect of their lives. They are protected by Scottish-Secured Tenancies and this approach leads to a sustained 60% reduction in alcohol consumption. Most residents do not move on, instead accepting Thorntree Street as their ‘home for life’. The same will be true of Peffermill when it is completed.

“Working with Common Ground Against Homelessness, our vision is to develop at least two homes-for-life annually for however long it takes to eradicate street homelessness. Deaths among homeless people have risen by more than a third in just a year. 176 of these deaths were in Scotland. Our pioneering home-for-life model allows us to reach the persistent street homeless who are typically deemed ‘unsuitable’ or too challenging. Most have a long-term history of problematic alcohol use and a key part of our work is our volunteer Community Alcohol Related Damage Service (CARDS) which is available to anyone who needs it and provides a crucial befriending service for service users.”

Ms Carlin was named Director of the Year at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2021.

Homes should be ready for occupation in 2022.



Helen Carlin