

# **Edinburgh restores homeless centre at The Haymarket Hub**

**Edinburgh Council has restored its homeless centre set up last year during the pandemic at The Haymarket Hub Hotel. This is regarded as a last resort accommodation centre for people who would otherwise sleep rough during the winter months, and is linked with tailored support.**

The Welcome Centre was initially founded by Bethany Christian Trust along with support from the council and The Scottish Government as a response to the Covid-19 crisis and allowed homeless people to live in en-suite rooms at the hotel. This was a move away from shelter provision and is now used as a new model of support for those experiencing homelessness.

The City of Edinburgh Council's Convener and Vice-Convener for Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, Cllr Kate Campbell and Cllr Mandy Watt, together with Bethany's Chief Executive, Alasdair Bennett visited the Welcome Centre just before World Homeless Day on 10 October 2021, to meet some of the front-line staff from both the council and Bethany Christian Trust who manage, work and volunteer at the facility and offer vital support for its service users.



At the Welcome Centre l-r Jamie Nelson Haymarket Hub Hotel Manager, Ruth Longmuir Welcome Centre Manager, Cllr Kate Campbell and Cllr Mandy Watt

The Welcome Centre takes a new, person-centred approach, providing 24 hour tailored support for individuals all in one place. Guests receive their own en-suite room and three meals a day, including a hot evening meal prepared by volunteers. Importantly, they are also able to work with dedicated staff and visiting professional services with support to access longer term accommodation as well as on site assistance with mental health, addiction, wellbeing, health needs and accessing benefits.

The Centre relies on funding from The City of Edinburgh Council, The Scottish Government, local churches, trusts and businesses as well as donations from the public. There is a large professional staff, over 1,000 Bethany volunteers and around 20 visiting partner services. In 2020-21 the centre was a success in helping people move on to a more stable situation, helping more than 860 people who were homeless or sleeping rough. The centre reports that the success rate is known to be 97%.

Bethany's Buy a Bed campaign, which is vital in enabling the service, will launch on 18 October. Gift vouchers can be bought in Bethany Shops and [online](#).

Cllr Kate Campbell said: "It's been inspiring to meet residents and staff at the Welcome Centre. Everyone is united in a strong desire to end rough sleeping and the Welcome Centre plays a crucial role. It's somewhere that anyone who is at risk of rough sleeping can go and have a place to stay that night.

"But it can't stop there. Which is why it's been so good to see so many partners working together, from the third sector, health and social care and the council, to make sure that anyone who stays at the centre has support wrapped around

them. From advice to health care and support to register as homeless.

“Bethany’s Welcome Centre has to be a first step on resolving people’s homelessness long term. And the warm welcome and support they are given here is vital to building trust and relationships that enable that journey to begin.”

Cllr Mandy Watt, said: “It’s been fantastic meeting everyone here at the Welcome Centre and seeing the vital work that they do. But on World Homelessness Day it’s important to say that our long term goal is to prevent homelessness in the first place. Which is why our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is not just focussed on how we resolve rough sleeping, or improving temporary accommodation, but on long term actions we can take.

“It’s crucial that we prevent homelessness by supporting people early on when they’re at risk of losing their home. Ultimately I think we all want to get to a place where there isn’t a need for the Welcome Centre, because we’re able to intervene to make sure that in the future no one faces being without a home or having to sleep on the streets.”

Cameron Black, Director of Crisis Intervention, Bethany Christian Trust said: “People need genuine support when they are having the worst day of their lives and that is what they find at the Welcome Centre. The staff are there for people 24 hours a day to offer professional and real care. We are so grateful to the Edinburgh Collection Hotel’s accommodation and our partner agencies who go the extra mile to bring their expertise to where people are. All of the support from volunteers from the local churches and all who help fund this innovative project saves lives. We just couldn’t do it without you!”



Welcome Centre l-r Diana Monika Bethany Christian Trust  
welcome centre staff with Cllr Mandy Watt and Cllr Kate  
Campbell