

World Homeless Day 2023 – rough sleeping on the increase in Edinburgh

World Homeless Day 2023: Scotland's homeless charity the Simon Community Scotland warns that rough sleeping in Scottish cities is on the increase.

The charity also reports a surge in demand for their services.

More than 80 people were recently found sleeping rough in Edinburgh by their volunteers, and 35 people in Glasgow, with a single evening snapshot reflecting the scale of the challenge faced by the charity. This number does not include those housed in emergency shelters or temporary accommodation. Driven by the cost of living crisis, the charity reports that the number of people rough sleeping in Scotland is continuing to spiral, with no end in sight.

[Simon Community](#) has witnessed a nearly 20% increase in people seeking their help, placing a huge demand on their frontline support team. In September alone, at Simon Community Scotland's Glasgow Access Hub – one of their two hubs across Scotland – the team handled over 2,000 support requests, including helping people with accommodation needs, benefits, legal and financial advice, and wellbeing challenges.

Gillian Drysdale, Service Lead at the Edinburgh Support Hub, said; "Our team saved lives last winter. We got through some dark times. This winter is set to be even darker. It's only

October and our frontline teams are feeling it. We are seeing 100 people a day through the door of our Hub.”

To help cope with increased demand, the charity is today launching an emergency appeal titled ‘**A Safe Place**’, reflecting how the provision of safe places is crucial to helping people facing homelessness.

The charity provides end-to-end support, including street teams on the front line, who build relationships and direct people to further support, right through to Simon Community owned properties, which give people a permanent tenancy.

[Simon Community Scotland](#) are looking to raise £200,000 with this emergency appeal, with funds directed to their safe places, including community hubs, street teams and accommodation, as well as basic life essentials for people they support, including; warm winter clothing, food parcels and toiletries.

Lorraine McGrath, CEO for [Simon Community Scotland](#), said: “The number of people our frontline teams are supporting is reaching record levels, again. Last year we helped over 8,000 people and this year we are set to support over 9,500. We’re doing our very best to provide people with a safe place to access support and keep people safe from harm. But we are very stretched and desperately need more help. Whether you can support us as an organisation or as an individual, please consider supporting Simon Community Scotland’s ‘A Safe Place’ appeal.”

Fiona Williamson, Head of Services in Edinburgh, said: “Safe places for people experiencing homelessness has never been more important. In our hubs, emergency accommodation service, our own SCS Homes and through outreach support we can provide a safe place for people to talk, to listen, to heal, to build trust, to be. Safe places for a few moments, or for years.”

The charity has support hubs, street teams, accommodation and

helplines across Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth and North Lanarkshire, employing 275 staff and a team of 100 volunteers.

This winter, Simon Community Scotland are increasing their efforts and are calling on the public to help prevent more casualties from homelessness.

Lorraine McGrath, CEO, said: “If you see someone you are concerned about, please call our freephone in Edinburgh 0808 178 2323 & Glasgow 0800 027 7466. If you can, please consider making a donation to our ‘A Safe Place’ appeal by visiting <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/asafeplace>”

The latest warning from Simon Community Scotland follows the release of the Scottish Government [2022/23 Homelessness in Scotland statistics](#) which highlighted that there were 39,006 applications for homelessness across the country, a 9% increase on the previous year. Over 32,000 households were assessed as being homeless, including over 16,000 children.



Simon Community Scotland. A Safe Place campaign – Govanhill Service, Glasgow. PHOTO Iain McLean photomclean@googlemail.com



Simon Community Scotland.
A Safe Place campaign – Access Hub, Glasgow.
September 2023
Simon Community Scotland.

PHOTO

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Simon Community Scotland Holyrood Road, Edinburgh (Hub), Streetreads Library (Edinburgh) and SCS Homes – Granton, Edinburgh (accommodation). Simon Community Scotland. PHOTO: Iain McLean, 52 Harelaw Ave Glasgow G44 3HY 07901 604 365 photomclean@googlemail.com www.iainmclean.com



Simon Community Scotland. 25.9.23 Pics show: Holyrood Road, Edinburgh (Hub), Streetreads Library (Edinburgh) and SCS Homes – Granton, Edinburgh (accommodation). Simon Community Scotland. PHOTO Iain McLean, 52 Harelaw Ave Glasgow G44 3HY 07901 604 365 photomclean@googlemail.com www.iainmclean.com