

# 2019 - 2020

## OUR JOURNEY IN NUMBERS

Cyrenians supported

**10,754**

people at their time of need

**86p**

in every pound raised,  
is spent directly on  
frontline work

An additional  
**30,577**  
people participated  
in our events, services  
or training courses



**995**  
wonderful volunteers  
gifted a total of  
**76,642 hours**  
of their time, knowledge,  
support and experience to us

### Expenditure 2019/2020:

£4,741



**Direct costs of project delivery:** £4,096  
**Strategic development:** £140  
**HR, finance & IT support:** £197  
**Governance:** £77  
**Fundraising:** £186  
**Other:** £45

### Income 2019/2020:

£5,017



**Local authorities:** £1,888  
**Other public bodies:** £1,061  
**Earned income:** £430  
**Lottery funding:** £634  
**Companies and trusts:** £617  
**Donations:** £387

## AT CYRENIANS WE TACKLE THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

It is odd to be writing about a year's work which, bar two weeks, was "pre Covid"! Having spent much of 2019 drafting and agreeing our new Strategic 5 Year Plan for launching in April 2020, we couldn't have possibly predicted the impending pandemic.

Yet last year's work can only be seen through the lens of COVID19, in particular the impact on those in tough realities. I am proud of what we were able to do, supporting those most at risk in the crisis, thanks in large part to our work building community and nurturing trusted relationships, not just last year but for over 50 years.

We have spent over half a century tackling the causes and consequences of homelessness, journeying with thousands of individuals, all of whom have come to us from different walks of life, with different visions of where they would like to be in the future. Our task is to walk beside them, not leading, but lending a hand when times get difficult,

being there, never giving up, so they can realise their potential and lead valued and fulfilling lives. Whether that's helping them access additional support, accommodation, health services, food, company, education, employment - we have the skills to make it happen.

This impact report is a small snapshot into the vast amount of work that went into creating trusted relationships and real change across the last year. I am humbled by the life changing impact my colleagues have had journeying with those we support. I urge you to think of each of them as you read this report.

To colleagues on the frontline and in support services; corporate and individual volunteers, and you, our supporters – thank you for all you have done to tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness.

Thank you,

Ewan Aitken, CEO

# WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE



From acrobatic abseilers, to kilted-walkers, corporate events and volunteer days, regular givers and Christmas gift-ers, social sharers and fundraisers we could not do what we do without your support.

"I support a number of bigger charities. I like to make sure my donations support work around the world. But I also support [Cyrenians] because I can see the difference you make right here in Edinburgh. I feel a little bit proud every time I see the food van whizzing past, and I wave knowing I am a tiny part of the huge difference they make."

One of our wonderful donors

To find out how you could get involved and support our vital work, visit: [cyrenians.scot/supportus](https://cyrenians.scot/supportus)

Last year



**588** corporate volunteers gave **3,112** hours of their time, knowledge and support to us



**3** people generously left us a gift in their will



**56** supporters took part in, or hosted their own, fundraising event



Over **£75,000** generously gifted through our 2019 winter appeal, to fund our support throughout the hardest time of the year

# OUR COVID RESPONSE

This pandemic has highlighted just how interconnected we all are – across the country, we saw a commendable response from communities coming together to make sure everyone had what they need to be safe and well. The third sector's capacity for innovation alongside trusted relationships with partners and the communities we support played a key role in our collective response.

When lockdown came into effect, we had to react quickly to ensure that those rough sleeping had somewhere they could safely isolate, families had access to food, our elderly clients had social connection and someone to explain the changing quarantine rules. Speed was of the essence and the number of people relying on us skyrocketed.

The impact of covid19 will continue to be felt throughout our communities long after this pandemic. We are committed to contributing to our recovery by building up communities, and supporting those we work with through values-led, relationship-based work.



**60,000** meals produced and delivered for free through our community cook school food production service



**1 million** meals delivered through our FareShare depot in the first 10 weeks of the pandemic



**200** rough sleepers provided with accommodation to safely isolate in Edinburgh City Centre



Over **120** activity packs sent out to low-income families to improve their wellbeing



Over **£270,000** raised during our emergency fundraising appeal to make this possible

# OUR FALKIRK SERVICES



## Our Falkirk Services:

Camelon Connect  
FairStart  
HIVE  
Justice Employability Service  
Dollar Park Walled Garden  
Peer Mentor  
Lighthouse

Last year our Falkirk Services officially moved to our new premises at Arnotdale House in the heart of Dollar Park. The expanded offices provided the opportunity to create a new project, HIVE, supporting individuals with drug or alcohol addictions - adding more support to our already well-established Falkirk projects.

Set in the heart of the community, our Falkirk projects provide safe spaces for those currently isolated from their community to gain confidence and plan for a more positive future. Whether that be individuals trying to gain employment whilst navigating the stigma attached

to their experience of the justice system; providing wrap-around support for individuals carrying out unpaid work through our gardening activity; supporting individuals on their recovery journey; or offering workshops that help manage stress, anxiety and support a healthy lifestyle – our Falkirk services offer a judgement free support network to move towards a more settled life.

“It’s great to speak with people who have lived it and who know what they’re talking about, most folk come out with their textbooks and have no idea how we are feeling.” HIVE client

From creating peer networks, learning valuable life skills, rediscovering their community pride through our gardening activities, uncovering a passion for cooking, understanding how to manage their day-to-day activity and more – our Falkirk Services have expanded in the last year to create a thriving and supportive community working to remove the stigma of the justice system and focus on the positive contributions each of our clients makes during their journey with us.

# OUR FALKIRK SERVICES



## 2019-2020 snapshot

**158** participants in our Street-A-Week Campaign partnering with Police Scotland and other agencies to improve community safety



We trained and supported **9** people to provide peer mentoring, with **36** people benefitting from more than **792** hours of support



Our outreach key work services supported **75** people to overcome some of their personal barriers to employment and progression



**7,357** unpaid work hours carried out in our walled garden creating a beautiful space visited by over **4,200** people in the last year



We engaged with **36** local employers to promote the benefits of employing someone with a criminal record



**157** people supported by our employability and training programmes

“For many of our clients, coming through the door is the hardest step – once they’ve gained the courage to come through and climb the stairs, they’ve reached their first goal! As each new door is opened, barriers are broken down and fears are faced and addressed. They join us as individuals, but leave us as part of a community.”

# OUR COMMUNITIES



**We have four thriving communities based in and around Edinburgh:**

Our City and Farm Communities for young people

Crighton Place supporting residents recently discharged from Hospital

Social Bite Village for those aged 18+

**Our communities are at the heart of what we do; directly supporting individuals experiencing homelessness in and around the Edinburgh area.**

From our two young person communities, to our newer additions at Crighton Place and Social Bite Village, we are proud of the thriving homes these locations have become.

We support our residents to develop their confidence living independently, providing them the life skills and experience they need to eventually move on and flourish in their own home. From shared meals, to support applying to education and employment opportunities, team building activities and navigating the day-to-day demands of household management, we support each of our community members towards a more sustainable living environment.

Our unique model sees us integrating residential volunteers alongside our residents, offering a peer-support model. For many of our community members, this will be the first time they have engaged with someone who "chooses to be there" rather than a paid member of staff. This dynamic creates a new way of engaging with others, and helps foster trust and respect while breaking down cultural barriers along the way.



# OUR COMMUNITIES



2019-2020 snapshot



**23** young people supported over the past year at our city and farm communities



**33,309** hours generously given by **39** volunteers



**16** community members have stayed with us for over **1 year** at our young people communities



**32** community members have called the Social Bite Village their home in the past year



We celebrated our **2 year** anniversary at Crighton Place



All **4** of our original residents at Crighton Place continued their recovery with us

"A community member joined us last July and kept commenting on the communal areas (kitchen and living areas), often excited about being encouraged to spend time with other community members as this is something he had never experienced in previous supported accommodation. Very quickly after joining us he stopped referring to the community as a 'hostel' and now calls it his home."

# OUR OUTREACH SERVICES

## Our Outreach services:

Lankelly Chase project  
Community Link Worker  
Homeless Navigator Project  
Hospital In-Reach (new)  
Housing First Edinburgh

Our outreach services provide support to those currently experiencing homelessness, including rough sleepers and those in temporary accommodation, those currently receiving medical care who may require additional support to be discharged, and those eligible to participate in our ground-breaking Housing First initiative.

Our outreach services offer person-centred support, meaning that the individuals we are supporting shape the way we provide that support. By empowering people to make decisions about what they need, and how they are comfortable receiving that support, we are able to create long-term relationships with individuals who may have previously had negative experiences working with support services.

After 6 years we have sadly come to the end of our Lankelly Chase project, working in partnership with the CPN team at the Edinburgh Access Project. This project offered an alternative way of working, where we acted as a link between the individual and all the services they needed to engage with. By being the 'glue' in this often-difficult journey we were able to support 34 of 35 individuals to access and maintain their accommodation.

Our Housing First project celebrated its one-year anniversary and has shown the impact of offering a new approach to tackling homelessness. The Housing First approach is a real attempt at system change, and we are proud to be leading the way in Edinburgh and are delighted that this project is being adopted across Scotland.

2019-2020 has been a real year of change in our outreach projects, with our Navigator project recognised as best practice in Europe; the development of our new Hospital InReach team supporting patients who are experiencing homelessness throughout their hospital experience ensuring better health outcomes for a historically disadvantaged group; and our Community Link Worker (the only link worker in Scotland that works exclusively with the homeless population) being shortlisted for UK Link Worker of the Year 2020.

# OUR OUTREACH SERVICES



## 2019-2020 snapshot

**6 weeks**

How long our Hospital InReach project has been running

**0**

The number of tenancies lost, abandoned or ended in an unplanned way through our Housing First initiative

**17**

The number of patients supported through hospital discharge and into accommodation through our Hospital InReach team

**93%**

of appointments with our community link worker attended – an exceptional achievement compared to similar roles across the sector

**100%**

of our Homeless Navigator clients have accessed or sustained accommodation since working with our navigators

"I can't believe how things have changed for me. I'm in my own house now. Hannah and Jenny never gave up on me and I'm so grateful for that." Housing First Client

# POLICY AND PARTICIPATION

Working alongside our outreach services, our new Policy and Participation project brings together all the work we have been doing through the Scottish Frontline Network since 2016 and our new partnership with All in for Change (Homeless Network Scotland).

Both projects provide a range of opportunities for those with lived experience and those 'on the frontline', delivering homelessness support services, to have their voices heard and share their experience to influence decision making.

At Cyrenians we believe lived experience is an essential part of service delivery, and we are proud to be part of two national projects taking this belief further, bringing to life policy changes in homelessness in Scotland. Our All in For Change work is a unique approach to tackling homelessness, bringing together lived experience and professionals to create the opportunity for long-term change.



**182 people have engaged in our policy and participation events and training this year**

The Scottish Frontline Network, delivered as part of a national network supported by St Martins in The Field, brings together staff working in homelessness to identify and respond to common themes impacting their work, and inevitably those they support. By sharing our practices and approaches we help shape working practices across Scotland and the UK and are able to create shared resources and opportunities, improving homelessness provision across the board.

# VOLUNTEERING

Our volunteers are an integral part of the work we do here at Cyrenians.

From residential roles, to volunteer drivers, gardeners to admin support, our volunteers help shape the way we deliver our services, the experience of those we journey with and much more.

We are exceptionally proud of the impact each and every volunteer has in our organisation. Their diverse skills and experience enrich Cyrenians as a whole and while it's said often, we truly mean it; we couldn't do what we do without their support.



Last year



**407 wonderful individual volunteers gifted their time and experience to us**



**73,530 hours of individual volunteering took place across Cyrenians**



**Over 100 volunteers attended free training, workshops and events**

# OUR FARESHARE DEPOT

**Our FareShare Depot is a thriving hub with multiple projects including:**

Distributing surplus food to our community food members

Access to Free Sanitary Products

Community Pantry

**At Cyrenians we believe that everyone has the right to dignified access to food. Our FareShare depot sits at the heart of this belief working across Central and South East Scotland tackling food poverty.**

Distributing quality, surplus food, provided in partnership with FareShare UK, we support over 150 organisations including school breakfast clubs, veterans' projects, homeless communities and more. By ensuring this food avoids landfill, we are not only providing an environmental benefit to our communities, but we are also enabling charities across our network to save money that can be spent on essential services for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

This year we celebrated the one-year anniversary of our Access to Free Sanitary Products project, which ensures women and girls have dignified access to essential sanitary products. By distributing these products through community groups and organisations that serve low-income or vulnerable communities, we are able to help remove a further barrier to inclusion for the women and girls in these communities.

We were also delighted to introduce our new Community Pantries offering another means to access quality food with choice and dignity. Our pantries are inclusive, offering the opportunity for members of the community to access healthy ingredients at low cost in a 'pop-up-shop' style. Our community pantries offer choice, providing fresh, chilled and ambient products to those who may struggle to access low-cost ingredients. Based in communities throughout Edinburgh, our pantries have offered a lifeline to many.

**"One of the best things about the pantry is that it has allowed the kids to try different things."**

Community Pantry member



# OUR FARESHARE DEPOT



## 2019-2020 snapshot



**358 households signed up to become pantry members**



**1.4 million meals created from the 600 tonnes of food we redistributed last year**



**321 children directly benefiting from our community pantries**



**10,000 hours donated by our incredible volunteers at our FareShare Depot**



**6,366 cases of disposable tampons and pads distributed, supporting over 22,000 individuals**

**20 years**

**The length of time we've been operating our FareShare Depot in Leith**



**298 reusable sanitary products distributed, supported by 26 reusable sanitary product workshops**

**"We have service users who are struggling to afford food and are living most days on 'best before' items we distribute from local stores. If you're not able to buy food then it's safe to say sanitary items are deemed a luxury, which is insane logically but makes sense... since working with FareShare we've been able to support women a lot more and provide items for use at home."** Community Food Member

# OUR FLAVOUR & HAVER COMMUNITY COOK SCHOOL

**Our community cook school is a thriving Social Enterprise and Community space offering bespoke dining experiences as well as our community projects:**

Cook Skills Courses  
Community Cook Clubs  
Accredited REHIS training

**Our Flavour and Haver Cook School based in Leith is a multi-skilled, one-stop-shop community hub focusing on bringing people together over shared meals.**

**"Something to eat, Someone to eat with."** – our cook school motto

From multicultural experiences such as our Chinese Dumpling workshops and our Syrian Supper Clubs, to our comfort-food baking and vegan workshops, we offer a range of workshops for the culinary curious, helping provide vital funds to support our community outreach work across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife.

Through our enterprise experiences, we are able to offer those we support the space and opportunity to learn basic cookery skills. Unlike traditional cookery courses, we offer a community space where we not only cook together, but eat together helping to create support networks alongside confidence in the kitchen.

Food insecurity is both a cause and consequence of homelessness. At our welcoming cook school we provide beginners the confidence to try new things, budget, and approach cooking without the stress many associate it with. By teaching people how to nourish themselves through food, we also help them flourish in other areas of their lives.

We bring this same attitude out into the community where we hold our community cook clubs, inviting members of the community to join us for a free, nutritious meal, often accompanied by entertainment and an opportunity to meet new people and make local connections. Our community cook clubs also help people get involved in the kitchen; creating meals for others can be one of the most empowering acts and we know that our volunteers gain a sense of pride and connection through participating.

# OUR FLAVOUR & HAVER COMMUNITY COOK SCHOOL



## 2019-2020 snapshot



**210** REHIS accredited certificates achieved



**75%** of course participants tried new foods



**1,533** free lunches shared at our community cook school



**18** Sold out Syrian Supper Clubs



**3,322** free meals enjoyed at our community cook clubs throughout Edinburgh, Midlothian and Fife



**15** Weekend Workshops including a Peruvian masterclass



**88%** of course participants feel less worried about having enough food to eat

# OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Our Social Enterprises are essential for helping us continue tackling the causes and consequences of homelessness.

**Our Social Enterprises are values-led and help support the vital work of our charitable projects.**

**They include:**

Flavour & Haver Cook School  
FareShare Depot  
Enterprise Training  
Arnotdale House and Café  
Cyrenians Farm

From our work with FareShare UK redistributing surplus food, to our Syrian Supper Clubs and Peruvian MasterClasses, to our organic veg grown on our own farm, our Social Enterprises not only support our work tackling homelessness, but also provide opportunities for people to get involved with our cause, and understand more about the 'journey of food' and the impact it has on our community. Our Farm welcomes hundreds of volunteers every year to learn about sowing, seeding and harvest. Many volunteers continue with us long term, growing food, and their own confidence.

We pride ourselves on bringing communities together, and our newest social enterprise at Arnotdale House continues that ethos; working closely with our charitable services in Falkirk to provide employment opportunities for those with experience of the justice system in our local café. Established in the beautiful Arnotdale House in Dollar Park (below), our bespoke function rooms offer luxury meeting spaces, an intimate wedding venue and so much more. With catering on site, Arnotdale House is a functional space with the added benefit of access to a beautiful walled garden. Our Café and function rooms help fund our crucial work in and around Falkirk.

Further, we've brought the opportunity to support our work to your workplace through our Enterprise Training. Drawing on years of experience with our award-winning mediation teams our enterprise training team offer bespoke training packages to support your staff wellbeing, whilst helping you support your local community through our social enterprise activity.



# OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

## 2019-2020 snapshot



**19 Corporate Volunteering events at our organic farm supporting team building**



**4,058 visitors at our café since opening in September 2019**



**1,944 veg bags sold, full of fresh, seasonal produce**



**43.5 hours of training delivered through our Enterprise Training**



**£1,492 donated to our Pay It Forward scheme providing 298 meals or 597 coffees for vulnerable individuals at our Arnotdale Café**



**156 course participants at our training events**

"Before I came to the farm I used to just sit in my room... I started as a volunteer and I'm now employed as a Farm Trainee. It's amazing, I love it, it's the best thing that's happened to me in a while. Waking up in the morning is easier knowing that I'm coming to the farm."

# OUR COMMUNITY GARDENS



**We maintain community gardens at Midlothian Community Hospital and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. We also help bring some of the outdoors inside by providing in-ward activities for patients.**

Our community gardens create beautiful therapeutic green spaces that welcome thousands of visitors every year, from patients and NHS staff, to visiting family and members of the local community. By providing a range of activities we help contribute to patient wellbeing and recovery, whilst breaking down barriers and improving social interaction as part of our work preventing people slipping into homelessness.

It's not only the wellbeing of patients we've improved – by using innovative gardening techniques we've helped create a biodiverse space including bee hives, a wildlife corridor, wild flowers and care for Edinburgh's oldest orchard.

"We used to be able to offer patients gardening sessions amongst other activities but changes in the NHS has impacted on services and we no longer have the time to offer these sessions... having Cyrenians come in and run gardening sessions for our patients has made us so happy as our patients are happy!"  
NHS occupational therapist



**310 patients attended our activities**



**80 student placements facilitated including nursing students**



**9,884 volunteer hours generously given**

# HMP ADDIEWELL VISITOR CENTRE

Our visitor centre at HMP Addiewell welcomed over 20,000 visitors last year, many of whom struggle with working through the difficulties presented when a loved one is imprisoned.

At our visitor centre we provide a safe space for families, and individuals to receive support while navigating through the practical and emotional impact of imprisonment. Last year we worked with 719 individuals on a 1-to-1 basis providing information about accessing children's bonding visits, alleviating fears around visiting, support to access benefits, travel support and more.

Many families affected by imprisonment feel stigmatised by their circumstances. Visitors can feel confused, angry, isolated, ashamed and upset. This can mean that our volunteers and staff are the only people they feel comfortable being honest with for fear of being ostracised by friends and family. For many, imprisonment can result in a reduction in household income resulting in money worries and/or additional childcare needs. All of this can have a detrimental effect on wellbeing, educational attainment, life chances and more.

Over 4,900 visitors asked for help with forms and access to information last year. For many, this was their first experience of the prison system and our friendly team helped ease that transition by creating safe spaces for them and their children.

"I phoned for advice as I'm wary of people trying to offer me help – it wasn't specifically about prison or my partner, but I've built up relationships with the staff at the visitor centre and I trust their judgement. I just needed some reassurance."



# OUR CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION SERVICES

## Our Conflict Resolution and Mediation services:

Early Intervention Partnership  
Amber  
Asked to Leave East Lothian  
Conflict Resolution Workshops  
Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution  
Live Life

Our Conflict Resolution and Mediation Services are preventative services offering digital educational resources, family outreach and professional mediators to support families who are struggling. This includes supporting young people to stay at home, or move out in a planned way while maintaining healthy communication with their family support network.

We work with parents, families, professionals and young people and

were delighted to embark on our new project Live Life in October extending our support to veterans and their families.

Live Life aims to reduce the impact of trauma and mental illness by providing support to all members of the family, allowing them space as individuals to explore stresses and working together as a family to address these where appropriate.

Our conflict resolution workshops help young people understand what conflict is, why we feel the way we do and how to better express their emotions so they can communicate confidently and avoid feeling lost in situations that are difficult to handle. Our digital resources via our Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution provide psychoeducational resources and games that help share this learning on a national level.

By giving young people these skills, and offering support to families who are trapped in difficult situations, we are able to help maintain family relationships and break the cycle of youth homelessness.

This year our SCCR celebrated their 10th annual conference bringing together young people and professionals to highlight the benefit of understanding conflict. Our digital resources are being used across the globe including Peru, Australia, Tasmania and India!

# OUR CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION SERVICES

## 2019-2020 snapshot

8

the number of partner organisations collaborating on our Live Life Partnership



218 young people participated in our workshops



129 families benefitted from mediation and support



99% of young people stayed at home or moved out in a supported manner



17,115 users accessed our digital resources at [scottishconflictresolution.org.uk](https://scottishconflictresolution.org.uk)



96% of parents and carers who attended our SCCR 1 day training said they had an increased understanding of how to manage conflict at home



48 individuals referred to our new Live Life project

"Mediation really helps – it's hard to hear what my son is saying when I'm feeling lots of emotions, the mediator doesn't get stuck in the emotion and helps keep everything simple and clear."

# TRAINING AND SKILLS

## Our Training and Skills services:

Creative Natives  
Market Led Training  
Foundations to Employment  
Key to Potential

Working with people who face multiple barriers, early-school leavers, people out of work and unsure how to access the job market, to those closest to employment looking for specific training opportunities – our training and skills teams provided support to almost 200 people last year.

We help support individuals to realise their own potential. Our Creative Natives team for example work with young people who may have had a negative experience with services previously.

Often we're told they "don't fit in" but we don't believe in one size fits all and we work with each person towards a goal of their choosing – building an art portfolio, creating an online craft store and more!

"This is the first project I have kept going to because you actually do what you say you're going to so I feel like I can trust you here."

Creative Natives participant

Building trusted relationships is integral to all our skills based work, from keeping in regular contact to help keep things on track, to checking in after someone's moved on to paid work to make sure everything is going well. Our flexible arrangement means that there's no penalty for missing a session and this approach means those we support grow in confidence as they work with us, knowing they are always welcome.

"It helped me gain confidence, knowing there is something out there for me and having Hazel's support."

Key to Potential participant

# TRAINING AND SKILLS

## 2019-2020 snapshot



**19** young people experiencing multiple and complex difficulties participated in our Creative Natives courses



**79%** of the young people supported by our Key to Potential team moved onto post-school progression including employment, college and paid training



**79** individuals supported by our Foundations to Employment team



**74%** of participants on our Market Led training courses secured work in the care sector

Steph graduated from our course in February 2020 and started work in March. A single mother of two, Steph has been supporting patients, some of whom have contracted Covid-19 "I just get on with things, that's what the residents need."

"At no time do I feel like a bother, I feel important and like I could get help, unlike a lot of other organisations who treated me like I was a patient... I honestly don't know where I'd be without that regular contact." Foundations to Employment client

# GOLDEN YEARS

Our Golden Years project works to tackle social isolation in older people, which can otherwise lead to homelessness. We do this by blending together an offering of group activities, volunteer befriending relationships, and free to attend GameChanger lunches hosted at the Hibs Stadium on Easter Road.

From offering our unique befriending experience we are able to match volunteers with like-minded individuals who may simply want a chat and a cup of tea, or who perhaps want some company to help keep them active. Last year we matched over 70 individuals and volunteers.

"It's just lovely to see the lady I befriend. At first she was anxious and sad, but now she is smiling and excited about our outings."  
Befriending volunteer

This year also marked our first Big Slipper Event which provided a free meal, and the opportunity to be fitted for a free pair of 'safe slippers' to help prevent trips and falls, helping reduce the 300 older people admitted to hospital every year as a result of falls caused by ill-fitting footwear. 150 people joined us and took home their slippers and got the opportunity to chat with local community safety reps from Police and Fire Scotland and the NHS.

"Having a volunteer support me through a difficult time has inspired me to volunteer myself and help others who are feeling lonely."

Former Golden Years client and current volunteer

# OLDER PEOPLE ACTIVE LIVES

Our West Lothian service for older people found a new home this year on Bathgate high street, becoming a much more accessible place to visit for those we support and people interested in finding out about our service.

Our new premises has also allowed us to host training sessions, events and informal catch ups over a nice cup of tea, in the heart of Bathgate.

From offering telephone befriending and social activities, to signposting and care respite our OPAL team help support people who may be struggling with poor health, low confidence or social isolation which can often lead to homelessness.

Our activity groups include IT skills and even Ukelele workshops! We don't believe that being older means you can't learn new things and we even provide wellbeing opportunities such as laughter yoga, mindfulness sessions and nature walks for our clients and volunteers.

"I felt lifted, like I'd been saved." OPAL client

Last year



**481** people were supported by our OPAL team



**142** people received 1-2-1 support



**66** volunteers generously donated their time



**43%** of people referred to our service described themselves as having low mood/depression