



Friday 5th January 2023

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the first weekly update of 2024. We hope you had a wonderful festive season. We wanted to start the year by saying **A MASSIVE THANK YOU** to all our volunteers for all your hard work during 2023!

In 2023, volunteers gave more than **16,500 hours of their own time**. You helped to support **1200 people**, and provided **more than 300,000 meals** to those who needed them. We are so grateful for all the time that you give, and the huge difference you made and will continue to make.

We also wanted to say thank you to your **friends and family** members who joined us over the festive period. 23 shifts were completed over the festive period by family, friends, or new volunteers joining us for Christmas. Feedback was super and so...

If ever you wish to bring along a friend or family member along at any stage during the year, they are always welcome to join us! Do just let [Sarah](#) know in advance, and she can arrange this for you.



And while we're saying **thank you** for everything you've done over the past year... we'd like to add our thanks to everyone who spread the word about our **Winter Fundraising Appeal** and donated.

We were delighted to reach our **£15,000 target on Christmas Eve!**

The appeal page will still be active until the end of January, so do please keep sharing the link with friends and family so that we can keep helping even more people.

<https://emptykitchens.enthuse.com/cf/winter-appeal>

In the first update of the year from the **Service User Engagement** team, we reflect on the work over the past year and look forward in 2024 to strengthening our connections with service users and resources embedded in local communities. Over the course of the last year, we have supported more than **1,200 people** across deliveries to homes, temporary accommodation, and meal collection hubs. A further **5,000 people** have accessed support at outreach initiatives such as community lunches and after school programmes.

We have been delighted to continue to work with local organisations on these hubs and outreach initiatives. These include **Hibernian Community Foundation, Bridgend Farmhouse, Muirhouse Millenium Centre, Spartans Foundation, Streetwork, Pilton Community Health Project**, and **Royston Wardieburn Community Centre**.

The Service User Engagement team made around **90 calls to service users each week**. These calls are to check that we are still meeting their needs and to offer signposting or referrals for any additional support that might be needed. An additional 2 volunteers recently joined the team to help keep on top of these regular check-ins.

This past year, we have noted a sharp increase in service users suffering from **financial hardship** and struggling with their **mental health**. Social Care Direct have been prompt and helpful with housing and eviction concerns, as well as wellbeing checks. We have also seen an increase in **asylum seekers in temporary accommodation** and **women's shelters**, many of whom are young women with children.

Signposting and referrals have included:

- **Mental Health Support** such as Edinburgh Crisis Centre, CALM, and Support in Mind Scotland
- **Financial Advice** such as from Community Help & Advice Initiative, Edinburgh Council Advice Shop, and DWP Debt Management Centre
- **Clothing** from Edinburgh Clothing Store and Leith Collective
- Other support including **Fresh Start, Shakti Women's Aid**, and the **Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home**

We were also pleased to be able to offer some support with energy bills and Scotmid vouchers thanks to funding administered by the Corra Foundation, and also Edinburgh Council, and Scotmid Coop. Just before Christmas Scotmid got in touch to say they would be providing some more vouchers to support service users with the essentials.

We recently sent out a feedback survey to all of our service users. The responses to questions about our service including the food, deliveries, and follow-up support are overwhelmingly positive:

Overall satisfaction 4 out of 5	
Enjoy the meals - taste satisfaction 4 out of 5	
Delivery service 4.5 out of 5	
Communication & support 4 out of 5	

Within the feedback there were a small number of outlier scores, and we will focus on ensuring consistency in 2024 to address these. The survey will be carried out annually, and we will be able to use the 2023 responses as a benchmark on what is working well and where we need to improve.

And finally, we'd like to share some of the direct feedback from service users with you ...

"Polite, friendly service and great quality food with lots of veg which is great for me and my little one while we struggle."

"I am deeply appreciative of the service which I have received from EKFH - and it is not an exaggeration to say that it is playing a key, central role within a very revitalising phase of my life..."

"By receiving a home delivery I do not have to worry that "failing" mobility will mean missing a meal. Also, a delivery such as this goes a long way to tackle growing concerns of isolation due to age and increasing health problems."

"The drivers are lovely people and my mobility issues make this service a godsend for me."

And so everyone, we go again in 2024.

Thank you for being with us, for reading this, for everything you do. Have a terrific weekend,

[Mike](#), [Janet](#) & [Martin](#)

P.S. Do please let us know what's on your mind by email at et@emptykitchens.co.uk or just come and have a chat.

THE NOTICE BOARD

Volunteer Services & Rota Central

Shift availability is now live for **February 2024** on all departments.

Please, if you can, let us know if you're unable to attend for a shift, we know sometimes it's not possible to give us notice, but if you can it's really helpful!

If you are not receiving the Wednesday Rota Central email or you are but the role(s) are not the one(s) you signed up for, do let us know.

If you would like to leave anonymous feedback about volunteering with us, you can always complete [this form here](#). We check the responses regularly.

Let us know if you wish us to add or remove roles, have any volunteering or shift queries or problems with Rota Central or are leaving us.

Contact us via the WhatsApp channel (07918 121606) or to **Volunteer Services** at volunteer@emptykitchens.co.uk Our **Volunteer Coordinator**, Sarah, can be contacted on sarah.hutchison@emptykitchens.co.uk

Health & Safety

COVID and lots of other really quite nasty viruses continue to do the rounds. We hope you managed to avoid them over the holiday break. If you become unwell or are sensing the onset of symptoms, please do stay home and let us know you are unable to attend. We wish you a swift recovery.

If you have a gastro related illness or are displaying symptoms please remember that we ask you not to attend a shift until you've been symptom free for at least 48 hrs.

Board of Trustees

The next Board Meeting is on 23rd January.

If you are interested in attending future Board meetings then do let the Secretary, Sam, know.... sam@emptykitchens.co.uk

Membership:

We always welcome new applications to be Empty Kitchens Full Hearts Members! As a Member, you have oversight of what we do, you'll influence strategy, and be voting on matters of constitution and governance including electing our Trustees. Members' meetings take place approximately twice a year, so we hope it's not too big a commitment! You can always come and talk to us about it if you'd like to know more before you apply... Registration forms are available from the Welcome Desk.

