

Friday 24th March 2023



Hi Everyone,

We hope you've had a good week. Welcome to this week's Roundup.

Starting with a quick reminder that the **clocks change** (*spring forward*) this weekend - especially relevant for those of you who have signed up for a shift on Sunday morning!

Thank you to everyone who responded to our shout outs for volunteers this week - we really appreciate you being willing to step in at short notice. It's been a little tougher of late. If you can - and it's always if you can - keep us even more in mind over the next few weeks - look out for those shout outs, as COVID and other bugs and viruses are having quite an impact here as they are everywhere, it seems. Please stay away if you're poorly, and get well soon, but if you have additional capacity,, we and our service users would be eternally grateful.

This week ... an update from the Service User Engagement (SUE) Team!

Leila is leading the SUE work and is supported by volunteers Maureen, Kirsten and Christine. EKFH aims to support as many people as possible who get in touch with us for support, whilst being mindful of the capacity constraints on the rest of the Operation - in particular the delivery team. Experience of regularly engaging at the 1 week after on-boarding point and then monthly thereafter is proving beneficial in building trust and providing opportunities for referrals to other support services. In the 3 months from November 2022 to January 2023, we are supporting **217 new service users (144 addresses) and 178 service users (130 addresses) no longer need our support.**

As part of our ongoing engagement, we have been able to distribute donated **Scotmid vouchers and direct energy support (funded by Edinburgh Council) - both have been really well received by service users.** We'd like to share a little bit of the feedback we've received ...

On the Scotmid vouchers **"every pound helps"** - some people mentioned it would be nice to buy some fresh fruit/veg; others said they need it to buy basics like bread and milk; and others said it would be nice to get a treat.

On direct energy support, we were able to provide support to a service user who had just come out of hospital and had no-one to care for her. She had no heating because the gas meter had run out. After we topped up her meter, we received this text message: **"I can't thank you enough for what you have done for me. I was minus in the gas, and now I have heating especially whilst I recover from my operation and no money until Thursday so thanks again."**

Another service user is a carer for his brother, and both had been living in temporary accommodation until recently. He lost his job in December and was struggling with his mental health. We received this text message: **“Once again, we thank you very very much for your help, especially in our present circumstances marked by the chronic lack of money and/or basic supplies, such as food, electricity, heating, and adequate furniture, all required for a decent living. This is life saving. I could not even hope for more. Thank you so much. I will not forget this. Thank you very, very much. This might even change my view on humanity.”**

And there's some good **funding news** for this week: we've been awarded funding from the **National Lottery Cost of Living Support Fund**. This funding is intended to support communities facing hardship as a result of the cost of living crisis, and will support a proportion of the costs of cooking, packing, and delivering meals to our service users over the next year.

Just a couple of things **Rota Central** wise...Firstly, thank you again for your wonderful response to the shout outs this week. Note that we have dropped the Friday afternoon gardening shifts - we don't think these were working for anyone. However, the Monday & Tuesday shifts are increasing in popularity - thanks for your support gardeners! And as you will see below work continues apace. Again just to draw your attention to the **Easter period** and our volunteering opportunities. If you have any capacity do look at what shifts are available and sign up for anything you can do. We appreciate this may not be possible for everyone. After that, it's the Coronation weekend - that extra Bank Holiday, rotas are published covering May on Rota Central so here, if you can, have a look at what you can do over that weekend, too.



Amazing progress is being made on the **Garden Project** - thank you to everyone who has been involved in this so far. If you'd like to get involved in the garden, Shifts are up **Rota Central**. Project days are Mondays and Tuesdays throughout March and the working window is - 10am - 1pm.

Finally, a reminder that we're working on an updated **Volunteer Page** and are extremely keen to include some volunteer testimonies and profiles. You can see the page [here](#). What do you think? Would you be willing to share what being a volunteer with us means to you and perhaps say a little about yourself? Let us or Emily know. You can have a look at the new [Team Page](#) which is now live, too.

On the Notice Board

Membership...Becoming a member puts you at the heart of the organisation. When we set out on this journey, the type of charity we elected to be - a charity with a two tier structure - signalled that we wanted those who volunteered with us to play a vital role in that journey. 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. The **Membership Registration Forms** are always available from the Welcome Desk, and applications will be put forward at the next Board meeting on the 29th March. The next Members Meeting will be in June. Please do consider joining.

Board Meetings...We'd also like you to have the opportunity to attend our **Board Meetings**. Again another way of becoming a little more involved and growing your understanding of how the organisation functions and the decisions being made. We cannot overstate how important volunteer and service user participation is at all levels of the organisation. If you are interested in coming along or finding out more do get in touch. You can email us at et@emptykitchens.co.uk or let Sam (Board Secretary) know at sam@emptykitchens.co.uk. The next Board will be held on **Wednesday 29th March (5.30pm-7pm)**.

Save the date...Friday 21st April. At the end of this month EKFH will have been preparing and delivering meals across Edinburgh for three years. And it is only because of you, our wonderful volunteers, that we have been able to do this and we want to celebrate that - and you! So please join us at **Leith Arches on Friday the 21st April** where we will have a super evening of food, drink and music - more details to come...Save the date!

There's still plenty of time to get involved and run Miles for Meals at this year's **Edinburgh Marathon Festival on May 27th and 28th!** How to get involved:

1. Sign up for your chosen distance at <https://www.edinburghmarathon.com/>
2. Go to <https://emptykitchens.enthuse.com/cf/edinburgh-marathon-2023> to register as part of our Empty Kitchens Full Hearts team and create your fundraising page.

Get in touch with Emily (emily.gifford@emptykitchens.co.uk) if you have any questions about any of this or need a hand with anything.

Building Capacity....Our seeking to build capacity continues: volunteer drivers & cyclists, the welcome desk, service user engagement, volunteer services and rota central all offer opportunities. We're still keen to develop a Language Bank - people with language skills - Ukrainian particularly - that can assist us with interpretation (written and spoken) as we don't want poor communication to be a barrier for people accessing our service. Please get in touch with Martin at martin.clarke@emptykitchens.co.uk for more detail.

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

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend,

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