EDINBURGH FOOD PROJECT

Strategy 2024-2027

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Acronyms

- EFP – Edinburgh Food Project
- OSCR – Office of Scottish Charity Regulator
- FCA – Financial Conduct Authority
- GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation
- FTE – Full time equivalent
- BME – Black and Minority Ethnic
- SWF – Scottish Welfare Fund
- TT – Trussell Trust
- OLM – Organising and Local Mobilisation

Introduction

Edinburgh Food Project is within a period of rapid change as we work towards a future without the need for foodbanks.

This strategy re-establishes our vision, mission, and values, and sets out Edinburgh Food Project's intentions over the next three years, including outlining specific key ambitions.

It represents an essential step in an ongoing organisational development process and will be followed by a corresponding three-year fully costed Action Plan and budget that will run from April 2024.

The strategy has been developed by the senior management team in consultation with the board, staff team, and volunteers, and incorporates learning from a period of internal and external reflection and research.

Summary

Edinburgh Food Project has grown substantially in recent years. We have moved from simply providing food to people in crisis, to providing a wider range of essential items and access to support and advice through our More than Food initiatives. Food provision alone is only a sticking plaster and does not resolve the root causes of poverty. We believe poverty is an income issue, not a food issue.

We have recently opened our first Community Hub, which provides a central location for advice and support by EFP and partners and offers a space for the community to come together.

The development of this strategy has been a collaborative process involving staff, volunteers, and trustees, with the people we support at the centre of our thinking. We have drawn on our own knowledge and expertise to develop a strategy that is aligned with our values and our vision for the future.

We have conducted extensive research and analysis and have taken into account the current socio-political climate and the work of other stakeholders and agencies. This research has shown us that we need to focus on long-term solutions and systems change to truly address the root causes of poverty and food insecurity. We are particularly aligned with the Scottish Government's move towards a Cash First Future, and the desire to design out the need for foodbanks.

We have a strong reputation and have earned our status as pioneers in this space. We are a Trussell Trust Pathfinder, placing us at the forefront of new thinking regarding foodbanks. Partnership working will be key to our success, and we are well placed to take a leadership role as we work to achieve our vision. While we are not a campaigning organisation, we look forward to sharing our knowledge and expertise, and lending our voice to the campaigns of others.

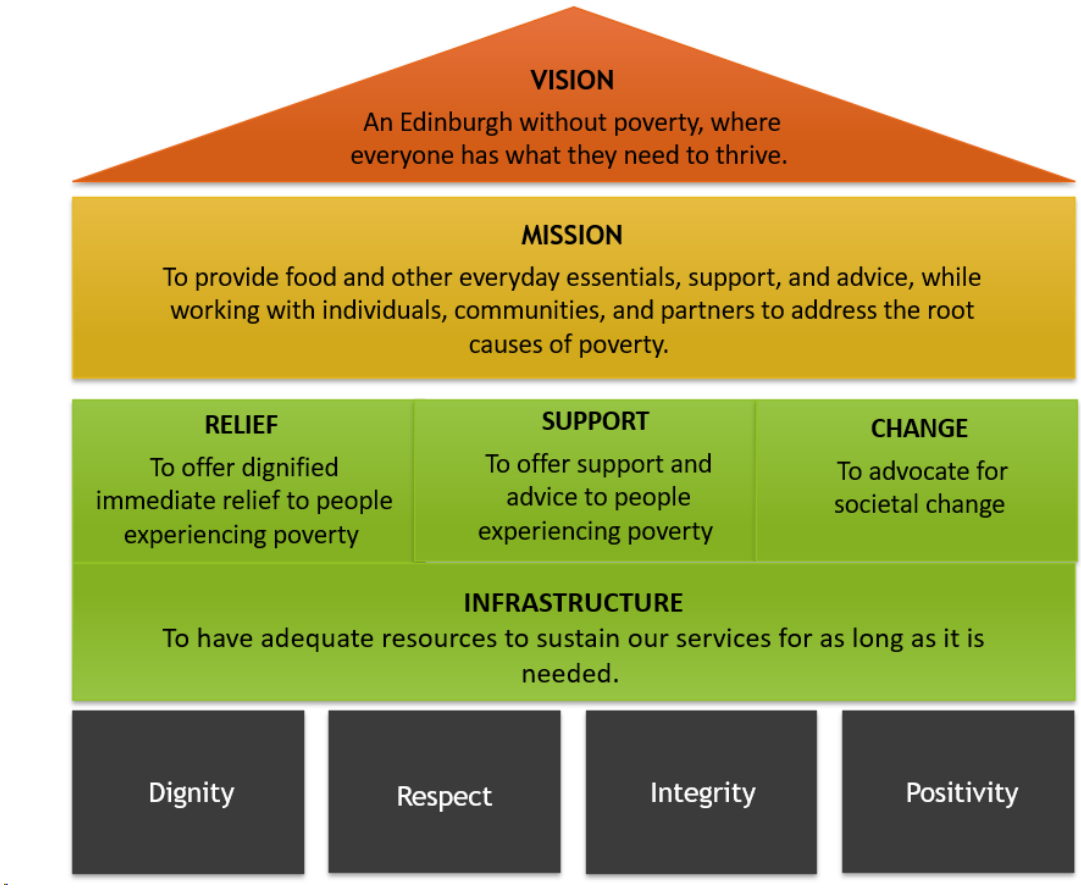
Recent performance and sound management mean that we are financially stable with strong internal capacity. A fundraising horizon scan has given us a cautious optimistic view of our

future fundraising potential and we are committed to financial transparency and accountability.

This strategy outlines not only our ambitions for the future but also the way we will conduct ourselves as we work towards our vision. We believe that the way we do things is almost as important as our overall impact. Our core values of **DIGNITY**, **RESPECT**, **INTEGRITY**, and **POSITIVITY** place the people we support at the heart of what we do and confirm our belief that things can and will change for the better.

Our defined Strategic Objectives and areas of activity acknowledge a three-phase approach to achieving our mission together with a strong infrastructure to underpin our aims: Immediate **RELIEF**, additional and longer-term **SUPPORT**, and wider societal **CHANGE**.

Our key ambitions all exemplify our commitment to a future without poverty and without the need for foodbanks. Over the next three years and beyond we will expand the Hub model to another site or sites, expand on the success of the **MONEY ADVICE SERVICE**, focus on changing **REFERRAL PATHWAYS** so that the people we support achieve better outcomes, increase **PARTICIPATION** across our planning and our work, and work to increase our **PROFILE & REPUTATION** with a view to developing our **LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY** work.



Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

An Edinburgh without poverty, where everyone has what they need to thrive.

Mission

To provide food and other everyday essentials, support, and advice, while working with individuals, communities, and partners to address the root causes of poverty.

Values

DIGNITY

We recognise the importance of the power to choose what, where, when, how, and with whom you eat and how and when you interact with services.

We involve people with lived experience in our decision-making and provide opportunities to contribute.

RESPECT

We treat individuals as a whole person.

We listen and are understanding of people's situations and will respect the choices they make.

We recognise difference and respond in a way that respects people and their protected characteristic or social situation.

INTEGRITY

We conduct ourselves with integrity and ensure our work is of the highest quality.

We are transparent, accountable for our actions and are committed to learning from experience.

POSITIVITY

We act with unconditional positive regard, and always assume the best of people and situations.

We do not accept the status quo.

We hold to a belief in a better future and that there is a way to achieve it.

Strategic Objectives and Activities

We have set four overarching objectives and organised our main activities under the headings. Each overarching objective has its own set of outcomes.

RELIEF

To offer dignified immediate relief to people experiencing poverty

Food

- Foodbank centres: To provide food parcels containing enough for three meals a day for three days plus a shop voucher to people referred to our foodbanks.
- Hub: To offer a choice of non-perishable items equivalent to three meals day for three days plus access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and a shop voucher to people referred to our community Hubs.

Other Everyday Essentials

- Items: To provide toiletries, household, and pet items plus other items needed e.g. socks and hot water bottles.
- Grants: To facilitate access to emergency grants through the Money Advice Service such as fuel, crisis, and clothing grants.

Outcome:

People have their basic immediate needs met in a dignified way.

SUPPORT

To offer support and advice to people experiencing poverty

Money Advice Service

- Phoneline: To provide initial income maximisation support to people who contact EFP because they are struggling to afford food.
- Outreach: To attend foodbanks and partner venues, to ensure everyone who comes to our centres can access income maximation information and support.
- Casework: To provide ongoing support on a casework basis (debt, budgeting, and benefits) to maximise the income of people struggling to afford food.

Advice and Support

- Drop ins: To partner with other specialist services (e.g. Changeworks, Vocal and Circle) to offer drop-in advice and support in our foodbank centres and Community Hub
- Referrals and signposting: To refer people to other services to support their specific circumstance e.g. Enable
- Partner Activities: To work with partners on delivering additional community activities and events e.g. digital inclusion courses
- Longer-term interventions: To support people beyond initial provision of food and other items.

Outcomes:

More people engage in additional support.
People have what they need to thrive.
More partners engage in actions to end the need for foodbanks.

CHANGE

To advocate for societal change

Promote

- Campaigns: To add our voice to campaigns by the Poverty Alliance, Trussell Trust, Joseph Rowntree Foundation etc.

Share

- EFP learning and experience: To attend and contribute to networks and forums in Edinburgh and further afield.
- EFP data: To share our data with the Trussell Trust to help show the scale of poverty in Edinburgh.

Lead

- Employment: To offer enhanced benefits and competitive salaries, whilst promoting wellbeing in the workplace.
- Advice Provision: to provide advice services which are not only compliant but also promote best practice in line with the Financial Conduct Authority and Scottish National Standards.
- Equality and Inclusion: To include people with lived experience in everything we do, to comply with non-discriminatory practice, and to safeguard those we work with.

Outcomes:

Public and politicians have increased access to accurate data about poverty.

People with lived experience are included in service design and delivery.

EFP promotes good practice.

INFRASTRUCTURE

To have adequate resources to sustain our services for as long as it is needed.

Finances

- To undertake good financial control and management.
- To maximise and diversify income streams whilst following good stewardship and ethical practice.

People

- To practice good governance with a strong leadership structure and appropriate board members.
- To have skilled and qualified staff and to commit to continuously training and supporting them.
- To have skilled volunteers and to commit to continuously training and supporting them.

Compliance

- To be compliant and follow best practice procedures related to GDPR, HR, H&S, OSCR etc.

Outcomes:

EFP finances are well managed, and income grows to match expenditure and ambitions.
The EFP Board is comprised of skilled and engaged trustees with relevant experience.
EFP staff are skilled and supported.
EFP volunteers skilled and supported and gain something positive from volunteering.
EFP are compliant with all relevant legislation and exemplify best practice.

Key Ambitions

To achieve our strategic objectives across activity areas, we have outlined key ambitions to focus our development activity over the next three years and help us work towards our vision in line with our mission and values.

HUB MODEL

To expand and adapt the Hub model to other Edinburgh Food Project foodbank centres.

MONEY ADVICE SERVICE

To expand the Money Advice Service to meet the increasing need.

REFERRAL PATHWAYS

To work across the city to change the way that referrals are made: training and guiding referral agents to work differently to reduce repeated foodbank use and resulting in better outcomes for the people we support.

LOCATION REVIEW

To review the locations of services to ensure that we are where we are most needed.

EVALUATION & IMPACT

To establish an evaluation framework and associated procedures to better understand our impact, and to ensure that our services and activities are achieving our desired outcomes.

PARTICIPATION

To increase the meaningful participation of people with lived experience across our activities including at board level, in our service design, and in our decision making.

PROFILE & REPUTATION

To develop the profile of Edinburgh Food Project locally and nationally, both within the sector and wider society to attract partners and funding, and to be included in key conversations.

LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

To develop our role as leaders within our sector, to advocate for the people we support, and to add our voice to campaigns and movements for change that support our vision.

Action Plan & Next Steps

Accompanying this Strategy will be a three-year action plan outlining KPIs by area and including how we will work to achieve our Key Ambitions. These will be established by the relevant managers in conjunction with the Senior Management Team and Director and reviewed on a 6-monthly basis.

The Strategy itself will be reviewed on a yearly basis in the light of the implementation of the Action Plan, any learnings from our evaluations, significant internal changes, or major social and political changes.

We are at an exciting point in our evolution, and have the vision, ambition, and resource to make a real difference to the people we support, and to the city of Edinburgh.

Bethany Biggar
Director
January 2024

Appendix 1: Background & Explanations

The Beginning

EFP began in our founder's garage in 2012 to tackle rising food poverty and inequality in one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Since then, we have expanded in response to ever-increasing demand and adapted to meet the community's evolving needs.

The Standard Model

The basic model is simple: generous members of the community donate food and essential household supplies, then a large team of skilled and committed volunteers collect, sort, and redistribute this food to the people who need it.

People in crisis are referred to our foodbank centres by referral partners including the City of Edinburgh Council, the NHS, and employment, housing, and mental health agencies.

At the foodbank centres volunteers provide a warm welcome and safe space for people; ensuring that their needs are met with kindness, dignity, and respect.

More than Food & The Money Advice Service

Our foodbanks have been offering more than just emergency food provision for some time. Through our 'More than Food' initiative we provide toiletries, household products, dog and cat food and other essentials. We also offer longer-term support in the form of our Money Advice Service and drop-in support from partner agencies and charities.

The Hub Model

Following on from 'More than Food,' and to maximise our offer to the people we support, we developed the concept of a Community Hub whereby a range of different services and avenues of support are available under one roof.

Our first Community Hub opened in Craigmillar in August 2023.

The foodbank aspect of the Hub is set out more like an ordinary shop – offering the people we support with more dignity and choice. We are also able to offer fresh fruit and vegetables.

While visiting the foodbanks, the people we support can meet with our Money Advice Service and connect with representatives from other agencies and charities whom we have invited to partner with us on a more consistent basis.

Terminology used

In developing this strategy we have considered some of the terminology that we use when describing the work we do and the people we work with.

We want to avoid generalisations and be specific wherever possible. This avoids lumping people together or 'othering' and promotes clarity.

A style guide and brand guidelines will form part of the future Action Plan. However, for the purposes of this document we have determined the following referred terminology:

People we Support– avoid Service Users or Beneficiaries. Clients may be used if necessary.

People with Lived Experience – defined for our purposes as people who have, are, or are likely to use foodbanks.

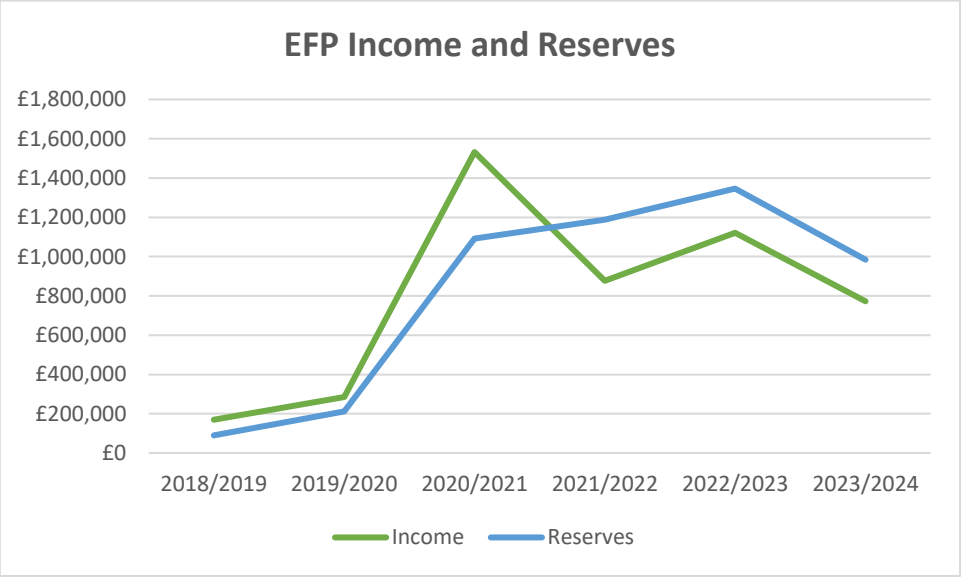
Poverty – avoid food poverty, fuel poverty, period poverty etc.

Appendix 2: Recent Performance

Overall Performance

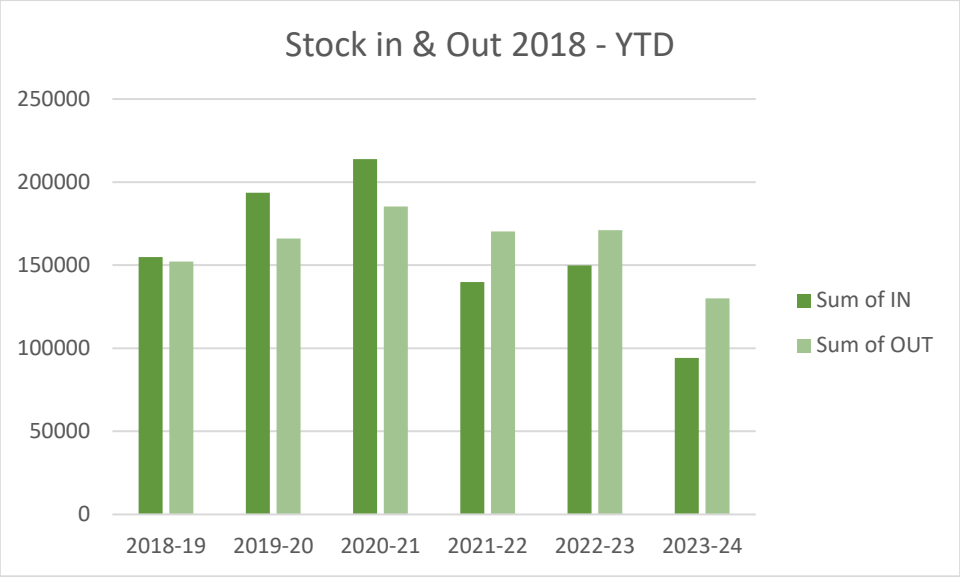
Our story is one of rapid growth. The development of new services has required an increase in paid employees (20 FTE), some of which were previous volunteer roles, to ensure consistent, professional, and sustainable services. Nevertheless, EFP continue to have a strong pool of over 150 volunteers who work frontline in the foodbank centres, warehouse and transport teams and is supported ten skilled Trustees.

In the last four years, we have successfully grown our income by 550% by securing grants, individual giving, community fundraising and corporate support.



Stock

Stock donations have stayed relatively steady pre and post COVID. During the pandemic there was a significant increase in donations that is not reflected in the graph, due to temporary processes been put in place to manage the challenging circumstances. The influx in donations during COVID resulted in us having enough excess stock to last through 2021/22 and 22/23 resulting in a higher stock out than stock in figures. We did not actively fundraise for stock in the last 2 years.



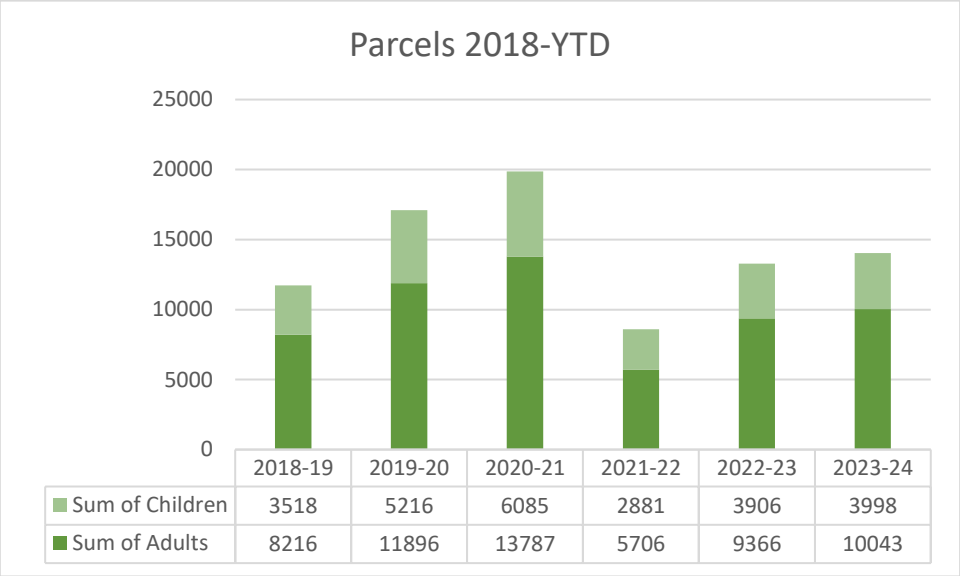
The significant increase in referrals in 2023/24 has meant we have used stock at a much faster pace than we have in recent years, resulting in EFP for the first time, having to purchase stock on a regular basis to supplement the donations. EFP no longer has a reserve of stock.

Going forward it is crucial EFP actively solicit food donations. The areas with the most opportunity are Supermarkets and Faith groups. EFP currently has over 20 supermarkets, 10 of which are large stores capable of holding instore collections. Frequent instore collections have the opportunity to not only raise large amount of stock but also increase the profile of EFP. Similarly, actively working alongside Faith groups, including talks and promotion of campaigns such as Harvest, provide an opportunity to increase regular donations from local communities.

Food parcels issued

Over the last 5 years we have provided almost 50,000 parcels to adults and over 20,000 parcels to children. There was a significant spike in food parcels issued during the pandemic, particularly in the first three months. As we entered 21/22 COVI-related referrals decreased as additional support was provided by local councils and national government.

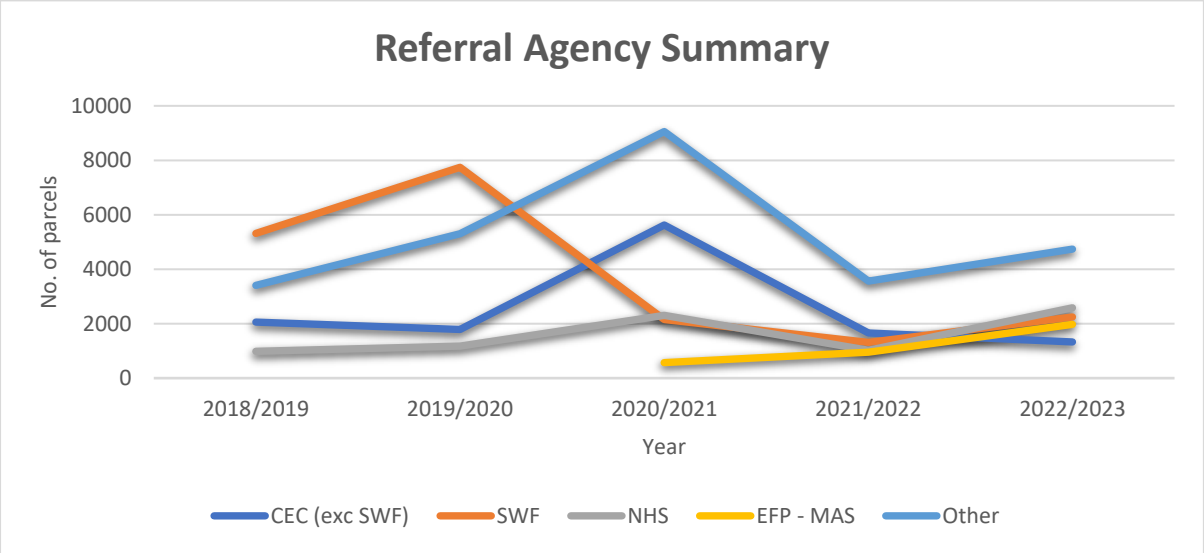
The cost-of-living crisis has had a significant impact with an increase in referrals started to show in the last four months of 2022-2023. 2023-24 to date has seen an overwhelming increase on the last two years and has already surpassed pre-COVID levels.



	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Sum of Children	3518	5216	6085	2881	3906	3998
Sum of Adults	8216	11896	13787	5706	9366	10043

Referral Pathways

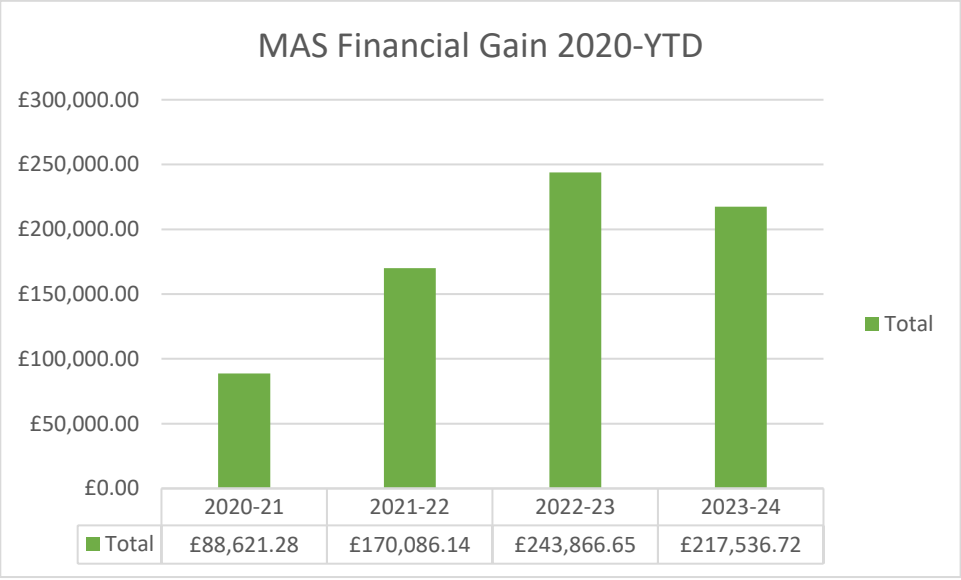
The way people are referred to the foodbank has changed post COVID, with significantly fewer people being referred via the Social Welfare Fund and an increase in referrals from the NHS, our own Money Advice Service and Other organisations (including non-statutory services e.g. charities, churches, and schools).



In addition to expanding core operations to meet this rising need for emergency food supplies, in 2018 we developed our 'More Than Food' programme to help tackle the underlying causes of food poverty. We are currently partnering with seven specialist support agencies who currently provide a total of 20 drop-in advice and support sessions for foodbank clients free of charge at our centres each month.

Money Advice Service

Since 2020 we have operated a highly successful FCA regulated Money Advice Service. In 22/23 the services engaged with over 650 people, of whom 450 have seen a financial gain. As the service expands, the financial gains continue to increase.



Appendix 3: Internal Consultation

To create this new strategy for Edinburgh Food Project, we pulled together information from EFP commissioned research, recent internal work with staff, volunteers, and Trustees, as well as holding a Vision, Mission, and Values day for all staff.

Staff were also invited to join a strategy working group if they were interested. Individual strategy papers were shared with managers and the strategy working group. The final draft was shared with the full staff team for comment and input.

Board and Team Strategy Day April 2022

On this day we looked at where Edinburgh Food Project had come from, the context in which we operate, and what the people who use our project tell us they need.

This led to agreement on:

- developing a welcoming Community Hub to provide additional support
- developing a senior management team to strengthen the structure of EFP
- recognition of the need for additional research
-

All staff Vision, Mission & Values day March 2023

We discovered through talking to staff that the wording of the current vision did not reflect our ambitions as an organisation.

On this dedicated day we considered the current vision, mission, and values, as well as the Trussell Trust Strategy and views gathered from a volunteer survey.

There was broad consensus over the new vision, mission, and values, as outlined in the strategy and as can be seen in the following word clouds from the event.

- Edinburgh
- More than just a sticking plaster of food
- Provision of food and other essentials
- Provision of support and advice
- Addressing the underlying/root causes of poverty (prevention)
- The importance of the use of language, particularly to avoid emphasising a power imbalance

Vision

Mission

Values

Appendix 4: Internal Analysis

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Largest foodbank organisation in the city • Well known with a good reputation • Well established and strong partnerships – e.g. service partners, delivery partners • Trusted relationship with clients • Significant relevant expertise • Significant reserves • Well-honed logistics • Good governance – board are engaged and well qualified • Support of the Trussell Trust and Pathfinder status • Money Advice Service offering bespoke support • Evidence-based approach • Volunteer management system - Assemble • Good regular internal comms e.g. Lite Bite and Inside Scoop • Small and therefore agile organisation • Large pool of committed volunteers	• Lack of defined Strategy and Action Plan • Lack of established fundraising systems and infrastructure • Unknown and untested capacity for sustained income generation • Lack of diversity among staff team/board • Fast pace of change • Lack of physical space to accommodate growing staff team • Extra staff does not equal lots of extra capacity • Limitation in food provision (fresh food) and food storage space • Cannot yet offer advice as debt specialists (though deliver this through partnership with Salvation Army) • Staff and volunteers are not food hygiene trained • Our name may not reflect the services we offer
Opportunities	**Threats**

• Funded Projects bringing extra income, contributing to outcomes
• Broadening activity to include advice provision means we can achieve more
• Improvements to finance systems
• HR - training and development
• New fundraising team and infrastructure
• Trussell Trust referrals now collect equalities data
• Can grow external comms and establish and grow our audience
• Review the skills of volunteers and the opportunity for role development
• Can hone mission and achieve goals through the development of the new Strategy and Action Plan
• Fundraising factors:
  ○ Lots of potential for growth across income streams
  ○ Cost-of-living crisis means there is high awareness and support for us
  ○ Potential to approach trusts and foundations especially for the Hub
• Hub:
  ○ presents an opportunity to change what we do in a positive way
  ○ will generate more data and help us influence change for the better
  ○ will help us to support people better
	• Funded Projects additional workload
	• Increase in number of services offered could potential dilute or confuse our core mission
	• Foodbank centres are in temporary venues
	• Broadening activity to include advice provision to might make it harder to say no to opportunities
	• Involving expanding team in planning/decision making can make us less agile
	• Rapid rate of change will need careful management – danger of going too fast
	• Fundraising factors:
	  ○ Hub model will require rapid growth in income
	  ○ Historical lack of stewardship may affect future donations
	  ○ Edinburgh is a limited donor pool
	  ○ Cost-of-living crisis affecting ability to give
	  ○ Trusts and foundations changing the way they give
	  ○ Cash first model concept may affect donor support
	• Hub:
	  ○ Moving to more than one location may make communication difficult
	  ○ The shop type model may increase the number of people attending, who may previously have paid for a similar service at a pantry

Financial Review

Over the last five years, Edinburgh Food Project has grown very quickly, as can be seen from the figures below.

The rapid increase of donations during Covid, delays in recruitment leading to salary savings, plus the difficulty in planning big new projects with a small staff team, has meant that we have accumulated high levels of reserves.

As a result, Trustees have approved a deficit budget for 2023/24 and the Hub to make sure that we are using this money for our beneficiaries.

These reserves will not last forever, and our plans in the longer term need to be carefully costed and fundraising plans must run in tandem with developments - with the opportunity to scale up or scale down our plans in line with fundraising outcomes.

This has been carefully considered in the construction of specific aims within this Strategy and will be reflected in the Action Plan.

	Income	Expenditure	Surplus/Deficit	Reserves	Unrestricted Reserves	Restricted Reserves
2018/19	169,663	129,704	39,959	89,993	49,398	40,595
2019/20	285,039	163,067	121,972	211,965	155,742	56,223
2020/21	1,532,170	732,670	799,500	1,092,104	997,589	94,515
2021/22	876,860	780,109	96,751	1,188,855	1,012,784	176,071
2022/23	1,121,090	963,650	157,440	1,346,295	1,128,630	217,665
2023/24 (Budgeted)	772,969	1,135,155	(362,186)	984,109	N/A	N/A

Appendix 5: External Analysis

External Research

There is broad agreement that we should be moving away from the use of foodbanks. For example, the Poverty Alliance has said, "The Scottish Government should take a strong policy position against the further institutionalisation of emergency food aid within mainstream welfare provision."[1]

The Edinburgh Poverty Commission report stated, "Emergency food support should not become locked in as a fourth emergency service but serve as a gateway to other support that will ease isolation and build human connection and kindness where it has been lacking."

The direction of travel is to frame emergency food provision in the wider context of antipoverty initiatives, to promote cash first approaches and to prioritise dignity in transitioning away from emergency food aid as the primary response. The emphasis in Edinburgh is on developing a more co-ordinated response that supports cash first with a range of free and low-cost food provision and related supports and services where people live.

Scottish Government

Tackling food insecurity is now embedded in three areas of Scottish Government policy: human rights, social security, and food.

The Scottish Government is working towards ending the need for foodbanks, locating this within a wider context: "Ending the need for foodbanks aligns with our national mission to eradicate poverty, our Tackling Child Poverty Plan Delivery Plan, and our Good Food Nation ambition. This is linked to our National Performance Framework Outcomes on poverty and human rights. This will contribute toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal commitments on ending hunger, eradicating poverty, and ensuring good health and wellbeing. It also contributes to our commitment to realise the right to food as part of the right to an adequate standard of living."[2]

Scottish Government Ministers are also required to consult on, publish and report on progress against a cross-cutting food plan. As part of this they must have regard to the impact of the food plan on child poverty and to "the fact that adequate food is a human right."[3]

To address the issue of dignity, the Scottish Government has placed emphasis on a 'cash first' response to food insecurity, with an aim of reducing the need for emergency food aid such as that provided by foodbanks.

City of Edinburgh Council

Ending poverty by 2030 is one of three priorities of the City of Edinburgh Council.[4] Outcome 12, "people can access the support they need in the places they live and work", is supported by the

[1] Poverty Alliance – Emergency Food Aid in Scotland (2015)
[2] Scottish Government 2021 Consultation on "Ending the Need for Foodbanks"
[3] Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act (June 2022)
[4] City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan

City's aspiration to create 20-minute neighbourhoods. This is about finding ways to deliver public, private, and voluntary services in a local, accessible, and sustainable way, enabling residents to "access most of their daily services and amenities in a single 20-minute round trip, either by walking, cycling, taking public transport, or using wheelchairs and other 'wheels' like scooters or prams".[5]

Edinburgh Partnership is developing a new strategy "Ending Poverty Related Hunger in Edinburgh." Its scope includes:

- **Cash first supports:** Cash grants for people experiencing food crisis through statutory and third sector programmes. Cash first supports also include income maximisation and money advice services which aim to help prevent future need.
- **Free or low-cost food provision:** In most cases these projects also promote access to cash first, advice and other supports alongside direct food provision.
- **Community food initiatives:** Including projects which provide support for wellbeing, skills, and capacity building alongside free food provision or low-cost food provision.

Edinburgh Poverty Commission has stated "To end poverty in the city, the pre-condition and the single biggest transformation Edinburgh could achieve would be to make the experience of seeking help less painful, more humane, and more compassionate."[6]

In the same report, the scale of the problem is explained in a different way, "No official estimates on benefits take up in Edinburgh are published, but based on the city's share of population and income our estimates suggest that some £70-80m of these key income related benefits may be unclaimed in this city every year."

The Local Outcome Improvement Plan Update has several relevant recommendations:

- Co-produce and co-design services with those who access them and those who do not to understand local need and barriers to access.
- Design person-centred services which are holistic where possible - reducing the need for clients to re-tell their story and ensure seamless handovers between services.
- Provide a mix of universal services, targeted outreach in communities, and specialist services - with local services delivered within the 20-minute neighbourhood plan.

Trussell Trust and other wider research

Ninety-four percent of people referred to a foodbank in the Trussell Trust network are experiencing destitution.[7]

Trussell Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation are campaigning for introducing an Essentials Guarantee, ensuring that the basic rate of Universal Credit at least covers the essentials (food, utilities, vital household items) and that deductions (such as the repayment of debts to the Government; "40% of people referred to foodbanks are having money taken off their benefits to

[5] 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy: Living Well Locally
[6] Edinburgh Poverty Commission: A Just Capital: Actions to end Poverty in Edinburgh
[7] Trussell Trust Together for Change strategic plan 2020-25

repay debts, with the vast majority repaying the Government"[8].) can never pull support below this level. £52 - the average weekly income after housing costs of people referred to a Trussell Trust foodbank.

Two-thirds of people referred to foodbanks have had a problem with the benefits system in the last year. Key problems are reduced payments, being turned down for disability benefits, being sanctioned, and delays in payments, like the five-week wait for Universal Credit.[9]

NHS Lothian agrees that cash first and dignity are important "The moral economy of social security has in the past framed poor people as undeserving and careless with money resulting in high levels of stigma being experienced by those most in need. But there is minimal evidence that people choose to spend their money on luxuries instead of essentials and we should stop treating people in this way as it is discriminatory, unfair, and unwarranted."[10]

Other groups also recognise that cash first is important, alongside campaigning for change to tackle the systemic causes of poverty: "Adopting a 'cash first' approach to food insecurity is vital to ensure people can access income before charity, but equally vital is the prioritisation of systemic changes to truly tackle poverty and inequality".[11]

Rocket Science report has detailed findings[12] which include:

- People need help quickly, often at crisis point, so it needs to be easy to engage and not present a big mental load.
- Advice providers should develop a network of partner organisations for referrals and collaboration to support clients with the full range of issues they present with.

EFP Commission Research

SKS research September 2021

In September 2021, as a response to the increased financial donations and change in the food provision landscape post COVID EFP commissioned SKS research to investigate what stakeholders felt the key areas of focus for EFP should be. One prominent area was alternative models of food provision.

An extract from the SKS report: "In recent years, there has been a growth in the number and variety of alternative models of food provision for people on low incomes. Some of these have received a reasonable amount of favourable attention from policymakers. This led to some internal reflection within Edinburgh Food Project about the appropriateness of the Project seeking to adopt those models.

[8] Trussell Trust Together for Change strategic plan 2020-25
[9] Trussell Trust Together for Change strategic plan 2020-25
[10] NHS Lothian Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022
[11] The Guardian: Expanding foodbanks is no substitute for tackling poverty, charities warn. Includes the Independent Food Aid Network in the UK, as well as academics.
[12] Review of welfare rights and debt advice in Edinburgh (Rocket Science report)

Alternative models include:

- Community Fridge[13] - A community fridge is a space where everyone can share surplus food, including donations from local food businesses, producers, households, and gardens. Occasionally not a fridge at all but a shelf, table, or other point of presentation.
- Pantry [14]– A pantry is a subscription-based club where members pay a fee and then have access to a choice of a set number of items in a given period. Often presented as a community-based solution, allowing people to meet, mix and develop productive community relationships.
- Communal kitchens – Shared community spaces where people can prepare and eat together, regardless of income status. Similar arrangements can be found in cohousing or other communal living initiatives.
- Excess Stock Redistribution Models[15] [16]– Presented under a number of different names, the essential feature of these is that they function as redistribution points for unused or unsold produce from other sources, sold for a flat, inexpensive fee. Normally no means test or referral criteria. Often presented as an alternative to food waste.
- Food cooperatives – Community based and led initiatives where a group may bulk or wholesale purchase food and other items for sale at cost or with minimum markup.

Many of the above also claim to deliver other benefits around health, climate, community, etc.

More established models of food provision, e.g. free school meals, soup kitchens, lunch clubs, street-based distribution, etc are not discussed here as they all have an established role within the overall ecology of food provision and are not under any type of consideration by stakeholders in Edinburgh Food Project.

Of all the above models, the food Pantry has probably received the most policy attention and exercised more thought from Edinburgh Food Project stakeholders. There were mixed views, but in general stakeholders felt that pantry models risked normalising and disguising the extent of food poverty in that they were presented as offering greater dignity to users, but this in fact simply sanitised the fact that there are populations who have insufficient income to access food through mainstream market sources."

Following a detailed review of pantry model it was agreed by EFP board and staff that the current foodbank model alongside more than food activities was most suited to achieving EFPs objectives.

Animate Research November 2022

EFP commissioned Animate to undertake research into the conditions that underlie the recent changes in referrals to the Edinburgh Food Project foodbanks, in the context of changes in the

[13] https://www.hubbub.org.uk/the-community-fridge
[14] https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/whats-best-way-to-reduce-stigma-of-food-poverty-your-local-pantry/
[15] https://www.basic.org.uk/food-in-2020
[16] https://www.mis.quebec/en/actualites/fighting-food-insecurity-alternatives-banks/

wider Edinburgh food network as a result of the pandemic, and how the Edinburgh Food Project could transition from being simply understood as a food project to becoming an anti-poverty project.

An extract from the Animate report: “The research comprised: a review of the national and local policy context, a review of EFP data from 2018-22, and a consultation with Service Users, Staff, Volunteers, and Referral and Strategic Partners through a series of surveys, focus groups and individual interviews. The policy review indicated a fundamental shift away from emergency food aid as a primary response to food insecurity, towards the promotion of cash first approaches that prioritise dignity, with the emphasis in Edinburgh on developing a more co-ordinated response that supports cash first with a range of free and low-cost food provision and related supports and services where people live…

…Partner organisations and strategic partners consulted were generally appreciative of the strengths and impact of EFP as an organisation, recognising it as the largest foodbank in Edinburgh, with the MAS being well known to the majority. Referral partners reported their very positive experience of working with EFP and emphasised the continuing need to provide emergency food provision. They felt that the contribution that EFP makes to the provision within the city should be relevant, accessible and build on its strengths, that it should keep to its core purpose, avoid duplication of provision, promote collaborative working and closer consultation with Service Users. Strategic partners saw a key role for EFP to come together with other players in Edinburgh to develop a coherent approach to food poverty and build a robust, resilient, networked city-wide system responsive to changes in policy, economic climate, benefit changes, and service user need.”

PEST

Political • Cash first approach • Dignity in Practice principles • Ending the need for foodbanks consultation – Scotland wide and local • Edinburgh Poverty Commission Report • Aligning with current local and national policy • Increased sustainability focus	**Economic** • Cost of living crisis • Essentials Guarantee • Trialling of universal basic income • Trust funding landscape • Major donor landscape • Individual giving trends • Interest rates (loans or savings)
Social • Change in client demographics • Language barriers – e.g. Ukrainian • Public perception – understanding of how easy it is to end up in poverty • Stigma of accessing foodbanks • Using pantries instead of foodbanks/using both • Population becomes more diverse so do diets/expectations – impact on stock • Cultural barriers to accessing services - More BME people being in poverty • Females are more likely to be in poverty and we do not have a female adviser • Females more likely to ask for help.	**Technological** • Benefits/Universal credits are all online. Clients need to have access to internet and IT skills to achieve it. • GDPR • Access to internet – e.g., zoom meetings, providing spaces/facilities • Access to phones – providing facilities • Wi-Fi at drop-ins

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	Our role/purpose in the relationship	Their role/purpose in the relationship	What benefit could be added, in terms of developing our strategic objectives	Input / involvement in forming objectives
Clients	• Providing food and other essentials. • Providing money advice, access to partner support services, and signposting. • Providing a safe, non-judgemental environment that is accessible and close to their homes.	• Engaging with our services and benefitting from the support offered if they choose to. • Receiving food and other essentials, support, and signposting	• Removing barriers to support • Offering services in one place using a person-centred approach • Offering longer term support alongside crisis intervention (food) • Offering increased choice/autonomy/dignity • Strengthening cash-first approach - interventions - fuel advice/ cash grants • Proactive engagement to reduce reliance on emergency food provision	Seek input from people with lived experience of using a foodbank: • Own volunteers who have lived experience. • People we support through foodbanks. MAP can recommend and identify individuals to form an advisory group.
Volunteers	• Providing volunteering opportunities to: ○ Enhance citizenship ○ Promote community engagement ○ Improve to physical and mental health and well-being ○ Develop skills and employability benefits ○ Facilitate corporate social responsibility	• Delivering food provision through foodbank centres • Supporting the warehouse • Signposting to the Money Advice Service and other partner services • Providing a safe space for clients • Promoting Edinburgh Food Project in the community • Providing informal feedback and insight • Influencing procedure and processes	• Diversifying the volunteer offer and expand volunteer roles. • Increase corporate fundraising through volunteer engagement. • Ensuring continued volunteer engagement and training	• Regular volunteer feedback surveys • Regular team meetings

General Public	• Promoting understanding of our service • Developing our reputation as a transparent, credible, responsible organisation • Raising awareness of poverty in Edinburgh • Encouraging food and financial donations • Providing opportunities to "give back" in an individual capacity	• Donating food and/or money • Supporting the charity and raising awareness • Helping us build our reputation and public profile	• Sustained monetary and food donations. • Ongoing public support and awareness of EFP as a key player in the Edinburgh anti-poverty landscape.	• Trussell Trust public opinion surveys
Funders / Donors / Supermarkets	• Demonstrating need • Garnering support • Facilitating corporate social responsibility, • Facilitating specific projects funders wish to fund Supporting larger agendas through local/central government funding • Delivering on expectations of those funding / donating • Clarifying those expectations through our Strategy • Being transparent about aims and activities	• Providing financial support / stock donations / project specific financial support / general funding • Facilitate public food donations to support EFP and increase awareness with the public	• Secure sustained funding to allow long term stability and growth. • Managing reputation- ensure funders/donors continue to view us as stand out organisation in terms of staff/volunteer/fundraising culture. • Nurture relationships - supermarkets continue to be biggest donor.	• Grant funding opportunities indicated what is expected of charities – i.e. many will not fund just food provision but will fund the advice services that go alongside. • However, EFP aim not be donor driven in the services that it offers.
City of Edinburgh Council/Scottish Welfare Fund/Scottish Government	• Delivering on Local/Central government agendas and the move towards cash-first and ending the need for foodbanks • Providing emergency food parcels where the SWF cannot provide other support e.g. when people do not qualify for crisis grants • Providing a Money Advice Service to address the lack of capacity within	• Providing restricted and unrestricted funding • Specifying certain funding remits like the fuel grants etc. • Providing referrals for individuals in need of food • Providing subsided rent for EFP premises • Influencing our strategic direction e.g. Scottish Government	• Use our profile, insights, and data to influence policy at local and national level.	• CEC Cash first report has been considered

	Local Authorities to deliver thorough diagnostic benefits advice	• Influencing the public e.g." no more foodbanks" message		
Referral partners (NHS, support agencies)	• Signing them up to refer to foodbanks • Supporting their clients better • offering emergency support to their clients	• Providing referrals	• Referral Pathway project to ensure meaningful and cash first led referrals are made • Improve communication and engagement on what EFP do – more than just a foodbank • Work with them to ensure database is up to date	• Animate research report spoke to some partners and fed into the objectives.
Trussell Trust	• Aligning with TT's values and strategic plan • Working in partnership to achieve long term goals • Delivering funding specific projects • Providing data and feedback. • Take part in pilots or initiatives - pathfinder. • Pay Members fee.	• To provide support via area manager / funding / training / resources. • To provide the TT database. • Credibility of EFP • Voice at the table on a more national level. • Network of aligned organisations and foodbanks. Secure supermarket deals. Lobbying government.	• Increased pathfinder opportunities – OLM, participation, and financial inclusion • More opportunities to engage in public forums/events – increasing EFP profile	• Our strategy has been inspired by TT and the Pathfinder work and the research they have completed – e.g. Hunger in scotland
Foodbank host buildings	• Offer a service in their area – increase the profile and use of the building • Ensure responsible use of premises, undertake risk assessments, clear communication.	• Provide free or low-cost spaces for use for Foodbank centres and MAS meetings/appointments. • Safe, risk assessed working environments	• Increased use of the spaces • Increased fundraising within the churches • increased volunteering opportunities for congregation	• none
Faith organisations	• Promoting understanding of our service • Raising awareness of poverty in Edinburgh • Encouraging food and financial donations • Providing opportunities to “give back” in a local capacity	• Donating food and/or money • Supporting the charity and raising awareness • Helping us build our reputation and public profile	• Sustained monetary and food donations • Ongoing public support and awareness of EFP as a key player in the Edinburgh anti-poverty landscape	• none

Charities / Community partners	• To work in partnership with other support agencies, charities, community groups to address underlying causes of poverty. • To facilitate access to most vulnerable and hard to reach client groups.	• To work in partnership with us, support clients who we refer and signpost, as applicable.	• More joined up working and structured data sharing to allow softer referrals / more streamlined client journeys. • Better data and evidence of what is and is not working for real people and feed this back to government.	• MAP group consultation • Animate research spoke with other charities and community partners
Staff	• To attract and retain high calibre and expert staff, to embed positive organisational culture, to provide well-being and health focus, providing training and support, tools, and equipment to do the job, career path, development opportunities, fair employment and pay - living wage, transparent robust policies, good governance.	• Embody culture, perform roles effectively, promote and represent EFP, take a client-centred approach, undertake relevant training, be flexible and reactive, communicate, be respectful and empathic.	• Develop the training offer to enhance the skills of the teams – particularly MAS •	• Trustee and manager session 2022 • All staff session 2022 • All staff invited to be involved ongoing– 2 accepted. • Regular feedback and updated and manager meetings

Fundraising Horizon Scan

The pandemic, followed by the cost-of-living crisis has made it more difficult to spot giving trends. In uncertain times, we will need to stay vigilant and adapt our strategy to economic changes as they happen.

Individual Giving

The total amount given in the UK in 2022 was £12.7 billion, increasing from £10.7 billion in 2021[17]. However, this figure needs to be considered in the context of high inflation.

The typical donation of £20 has remained unchanged for many years meaning that the real value of donations has been eroding for some time. EFPs typical donation in January 2023 was £40, in May 2023 it was £30 though the data sample is small.

We recognise the importance of a smooth giving process and will improve our processes to enhance the donor experience. Similarly, we recognise the importance of social media to engage new donors.

Regular Giving

According to the Charities Aid Foundation 14% of people plan to cancel or decrease their regular donations, and 60% are finding it harder to give than they were six months ago[18].

EFP have c. 300 regular donors with a typical monthly donation of £30.

We plan to find out more about our donors and roll out a specialised stewardship plan to ensure retention and increase both engagement and giving levels.

Community & Challenge fundraising

This area of fundraising has less of a monetary return on investment but is crucial to developing good will and creating a positive public image. Nearly half of the public (44%) say they are interested in getting involved with fundraising events[19].

We will continue to encourage supporter-led events and develop fundraising packs. We also acknowledge the importance of embracing recent technology in this area and will invest in the use of QR codes and tap to give technology.

Corporate Support

Companies are increasingly looking to enhance their reputations and engage their staff and customers through Corporate Social Responsibility Policies and charitable activities. This has traditionally been a strong area for EFP and there is good potential for growth through Charity of the Year partnerships and employee fundraising.

We will actively seek higher value Charity of the Year partnerships nominations, and work with the warehouse team to maximise volunteering opportunities and build on long-standing relationships.

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[17] CAF UK Giving Report 2023
18 CAF UK Giving Report 2023
19 Enthuse Donor Pulse Spring 2023

Trust Fundraising

Increased need across the sector has meant an increase in charities applying for limited funds. This has led to trusts and foundations placing additional criteria on grants or focussing their areas of giving.

High levels of reserves have prevented us undertaking a lot of activity in this area, but it is likely to be an area of growth in the coming years.

Fundraising Conclusion

Investment in fundraising means that we will be able to retain, regain and grow supporters.

Given the current climate, and our planned growth in capacity and activity, we can hope to grow steadily over the period covered by this Strategy.