



Grassmarket Community Project

# SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2023



grassmarket  
community project

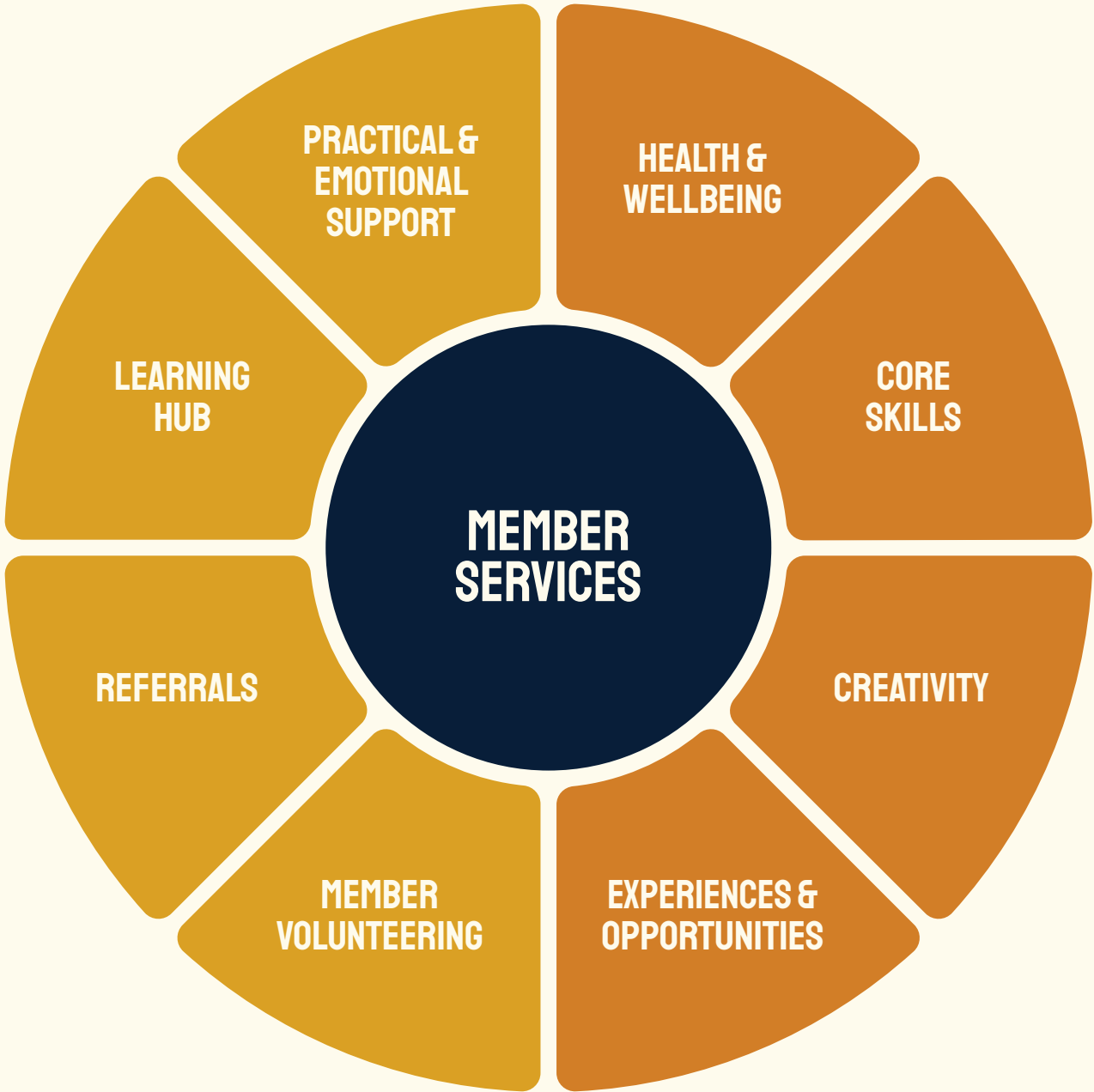


# MEMBER SERVICES

A dynamic range of free activities, classes and supported groups for our community members, the programme provides opportunities for social integration and education. Individuals enhance their life skills, develop confidence, increase their resilience, self reliance and independence.

## INDIVIDUALS

## GROUPS



## MONTHLY AVERAGE ATTENDANCE IS SHOWN AFTER EACH SERVICE

### PRACTICAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT — 12

Group work and being part of a positive, inclusive community is key to supporting an individual's welfare and enacting positive change. There are times however that some of our members struggle to access our group activities and therefore require individual support.

Services: Drop-in, Digital & wellbeing, Befriending, CBT, Benefits support.

### REFERRALS — 8

The Grassmarket Community Project is well positioned as a community hub with links and partnerships with other organisations across Edinburgh.

Where: Coco Counselling, Employment, Support services, Outreach, Partnerships.

### HEALTH & WELLBEING — 75

We provide a range of different group sessions based around boosting positivity, self-esteem and confidence. All are led by 2-3 volunteers with the specific skills required.

Walks	12
Wild swimming	8
Mindfulness & meditation	16
Womens group / 16-30 groups	7
LGBTQIA+	5
Herb garden	5
Coffee break	4
Open book group reading	6
Dancing	12

### CORE SKILLS — 81

A big part of our weekly activity programme is devoted to ensuring members have access to learning core skills.

IT / Digital skills	28
History	5
Literacy	29
Numeracy	10

### LEARNING HUB — 11

Drop-in every Tuesday 10-4pm. This is a supported session to focus on their chosen learning path. Alongside this we have opportunities for training and paid work experience via our apprenticeships.

Services: Employability, Online, In-person, Modern apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships.

### MEMBER VOLUNTEERING — 13

Members can volunteer and train in our social enterprises. Make a huge difference to the lives of others by contributing to the income of the charity, learning valuable skills as well as building confidence as part of a fantastic and committed team.

Where: Woodwork, Hospitality, Tartan, Reception.

### CREATIVITY — 131

We provide opportunities for members to explore creativity in many forms. We have a fully functioning wood workshop, art & textiles space and the resources required to express yourself in a supported group setting.

Arts & crafts	32
Creative writing	11
Guitar	8
Music	11
Make and mend + tartan	30
Choir	17
Woodwork	22

### EXPERIENCES & OPPORTUNITIES — 176

Alongside our weekly programme of group activities, we offer opportunities to educational, holistic and wellbeing experiences.

Day trips or residentials	8
Cinema	124
Souper Thursday	40
Culture Club	4

MEMBER STORY

Before I came to the Grassmarket Community Project I was stuck in a rut where every day felt the same and I felt a sense of isolation and aloneness in my life.

Since coming to the Grassmarket Community Project to attend activities, including Open Book Reading, Creative writing, Literacy skills and social groups I feel much more motivated and positive about life. I have a better routine and feel able to deal with life's challenges in a more hopeful and positive way. I now feel that whatever happens in the future I will have a support network that I can rely on and help me get through it.

The sense of social engagement and intellectual stimulation is invaluable, it provides education, social, welfare and mental / emotional support that as far as I am aware, no other organisation in Edinburgh provides.

“THE SENSE OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION IS INVALUABLE”

The main benefits our Members have felt participating in GCP Activities

Meeting and making friends	79%
Feeling less isolated or lonely	59%
Learning or trying something new	58%
Feeling more motivated	52%
Having a safe place to go to	50%
Being more creative	48%
Establishing/maintaining a routine	46%
Feeling more positive about my future	45%
Feeling more relaxed	43%
Feeling good about myself	42%
Valuing myself	37%
Helping other people	34%
Feeling more cheerful	33%
Having someone I can trust to talk to	32%

Since joining Grassmarket Community Project I've been... (sometimes, often or all of the time)

Interested in new things	91%
Interested in other people	87%
Feeling relaxed	86%
Feeling good about myself	82%
Dealing with challenges well	80%
Feeling positive	79%
Feeling close to other people	79%
Able to make decisions on my own	76%
Feeling confident	75%
Feeling optimistic about the future	74%

MEMBER STORY

Coming to the Grassmarket Community Project has really helped with my complex PTSD and learning difficulties. It helps with my confidence and keeps me connected to others. Being here makes me feel protected and accepted, which I have never really had before. It is a family for me and it has been a life saver. No exaggeration.

Day to day now, I feel a sense of routine and camaraderie. I have some freedom, I can be myself and can think outside the box. I'm thinking about applying for college next year and I know would get support to do that. The most valuable things about the Grassmarket Community Project to me are the different types of services and activities, the one to one support, free lunches, it's a safe space and it's full of love.

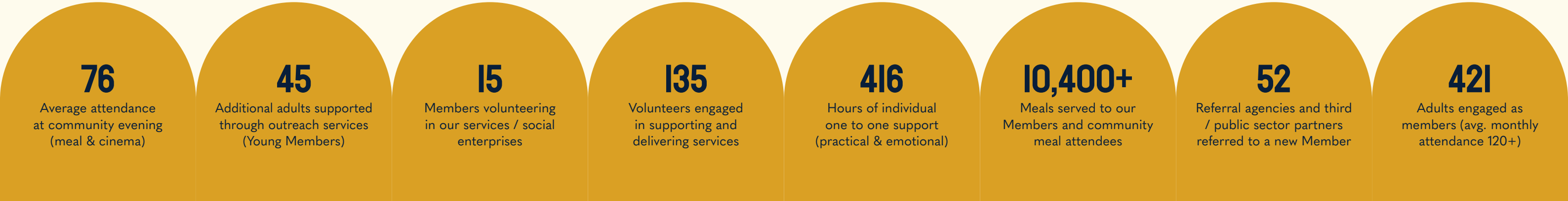
“BEING HERE MAKES ME FEEL PROTECTED AND ACCEPTED, WHICH I HAVE NEVER REALLY HAD BEFORE.”

Challenges that Members most identified as facing at referral or at check in (2023 Member Census):

Social isolation / loneliness	59%
Being on benefits	57%
Mental health issues	55%
Difficulty interacting with others	53%
Unemployment / insecure work	42%
Homelessness or temp. accommodation	30%
Neurological disorder / learning difficulty	28%
Long term illness	27%
Drugs or alcohol issues	20%
In low paid employment	19%
Physical disability	18%
Survivor of a serious crime or abuse	16%

# THANK YOU!

Thank you to our Partners, funders, trusts, and our many individual donors for your essential and continued support — we wouldn't be here without you.



MEMBER SERVICES

“THE PROJECT MEANS EVERYTHING TO ME.”

“A PLACE TO LEARN NEW SKILLS AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS.”

“IT HAS HELPED ME A LOT WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH.”

“THE GCP HAS HELPED ME INTERACT WITH OTHER PEOPLE AND GIVEN ME SOMETHING TO FOCUS ON.”

“IT IS A GOOD ESCAPE FROM MY TROUBLES.”

“IT FEELS A VERY SAFE PLACE AND IS VERY WELCOMING.”

“NO MATTER HOW FAR AWAY I’M FROM EDINBURGH NOW, THE GCP IS ALWAYS WHERE MY HEART BELONGS TO.”

“IT IS PART OF THE FAMILY. IF I’VE NOT GOT ANYONE AROUND ME, I GET UPTIGHT. I LIKE BEING HERE FOR COMPANY. GOOD FRIENDS HELP ME.”

“IT HAS SAVED MY LIFE.”

“IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT I DO EACH WEEK OTHER THAN ATTEND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.”

“POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT, CAN’T ASK FOR BETTER THAN THAT.”

“HELPS YOU GET OUT OF THE HOUSE. AS WE ARE A COUPLE WE GET TO DO OUR OWN THING AND MIX WITH THE PEOPLE WE HAVE THINGS IN COMMON WITH. KEEPS YOU FROM FEELING ISOLATED AND ALSO HELPS YOU TO STAY SOCIALISING.”

YOUNG PEOPLE & TRAINING

IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS...

83 Current Young Members (aged 16-30)	3 Weekly services specifically for our Young Members	128 Young people accessed our services inc. Outreach Services
117 Accredited qualifications achieved by 31 Young People	6 Pre-apprenticeships completed/ongoing	401 Hours of training delivered to young people
234 Hours of one to one support	46 Visits / collaborations / day trips*	126 Partners/referral agencies engaged with**
8 Outreach Training/Courses delivered to Career Ready, Action for Children, and the refugee and asylum service)	5 Internal & Outreach Courses delivered inc. Alcohol Awareness, Naloxone, Presentation Skills/Best Foot Forward, Interview Skills, H&S	15 Young People supported to positive destinations (work, volunteering, FE or HE college courses)

\*National Museum of Scotland (x5), Pink Saltire, Edinburgh Science (x6), Dynamic Earth (x3), Hampden Stadium, Hidden Gems Tour, Edinburgh Witches Tour (x2), The Hive (x2), Almondell Model Engineering Centre (x3), Museum of Flight, National Portrait Gallery, Scottish Seabird Centre, Robotarium (Heriot-Watt University), Museum on the Mound, St Abbs National Nature Reserve, John Muir Alpacas, Edinburgh Zoo, Level-X (last minute replacement for go-karting), Edinburgh Mosque, Edinburgh Pride, The Rock Trust (Pancake Breakfast), Canongate Youth (x2:mural painting and Easter Eggs), Edinburgh Christmas Market, The Meadows, McMake-up (make-up and prosthetics for film/TV), Princes Trust (x2: refugee explore course and development awards), Edinburgh Science Festival, The Edinburgh Remakery, Bake-off \*\*Simon Scotland, Westfield Training, Canongate Youth, Woodlands Special School, Kaimes Special School, The Rock Trust, Get2Gether, Mapal (Flow Hospitality), Capital City Partnerships, Career Ready, Unite Students, The Welcoming, Citizens' Rights Project, Action for Children, Skills Development Scotland, Scran Academy, Cyrenians, National Museums Scotland, LGBT Youth, James Gillespies, Edinburgh City Mission, Basecamp, Inspiring Scotland, Space Scotland, The Action Group, Pilton Youth and Children's Project, Boroughmuir High School, Queensferry High School, Northfield House, ASN post school transitions, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Training Matters, Edinburgh City Council, East Lothian Council, West Lothian Council, Midlothian Council, Edinburgh Chamber, Bernardos, Jet Academy, Move On, Inspiring Scotland, BBFF, Edinburgh City Mission, Spartans, Thistle Foundation, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Volunteer Edinburgh, Whitburn Academy, Scottish Refugee Council, Just Right Scotland, Soup 2 Go, The Larder, Migration Scotland, Granton Youth, Pilmeny Youth Centre, Beeslack High School, Citadel Youth Centre, FetLor Youth Club, Muslim Youth, Edinburgh Guarantee, Community Education Network, Saheliya, Intandem, VOCAL (Voice of Carers Across Lothian), Sunflowers, CAMHS, YPeople, Sacro, Lothian Sexual Health, Young Scot.

## This Young Person joined the 12-week programme for those with refugee and asylum status, which finished at the end of July.

Long-term ambition is to work in the kitchen as they love cooking, baking and want to embed knowledge learned via our Flow online learning platform and experience sessions in Coffee Saints, our social enterprise.

They are now on a pre-apprenticeship in catering and hopes to progress to a Modern Apprenticeship in Hospitality with Grassmarket Community Project. Feedback is that they engage and participate because they feel safe, confident, had time to get to know us, can go at their own pace, and have had made good friends, which makes joining in much easier; however,

they would struggle to work or learn outside GCP, somewhere unfamiliar or completely unknown.

This Young Person has been amazing addition to the young team and is involved in every aspect of the programme, loving music, and singing but has given everything a go and is noticeably more ready for new experiences rather than second guessing when it is unfamiliar.

The following has been written by this Young Person in their own words:

## “HERE, I FEEL INCLUDED, LISTENED TO, AND VALUED AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE TEAM.”

It's a great pleasure to share with you some of my experiences here at The Grassmarket Community Project that I began some months back, although it feels like I have been here for a long time.

Since I started coming here, I have a got a chance to engage in different activities that The Grassmarket Community Project offers.

My confidence has greatly improved as I can now perform some tasks that I couldn't do before, like handling food safely, seeking support when needed. I came here a little bit shy and with little or no idea about things like making coffee, how to operate a coffee machine, and health and safety in the hospitality industry. I have been interacting with different kinds of people, be it in the classroom or outside during our outings. This has greatly changed my perception about life, and I used to view social life.

I am more time conscious than before, and I'm always here early for my classes, which is an important value that I learned will also impact my life in the future. I'm clearer and starting to pay attention to details in my communication with my family, friends, or any other person.

Here, I feel included, listened to, and valued as an important part of the team. I would encourage young adults to also join us to acquire these skills and many more offered by Grassmarket Community Project Team. Thank-you.

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

**Our social enterprises are core to our sustainability, generating vital income that is reinvested back into the charity, and providing valuable workplace opportunities for our members and volunteers.**

### WOOD WORKSHOP

The first of our social enterprises originally developed to recycle wood from discarded church pews, now producing fabulous pieces for private commissions and smaller items sold through our Cafes and Tartan shop that make for perfect gifts. Through our daily programme of instruction, members are taught to make the items for you to buy, developing their creative skills and sense of pride in what they produce. Exciting news is that we will be building our very own traditional Skiff rowing boat which we hope to launch next summer! — *“in the workshop I have been challenged in a positive way, by learning new skills and woodwork and being pushed to find my full potential”*

### TARTAN SHOP

Established for just over a year, our wee tartan gift shop on Candlemaker Row is a treasure trove of all things tartan and wood! Using our very own Greyfriars Tartan our volunteer team handcraft the signature Greyfriars Bobby dog, beautiful tartan rose brooches, bridal favours, and so much more. We are now supplying to Edinburgh Castle and Historic Scotland and taking commission orders too. Come in and see them hard at work whilst browsing the wonderful array of handmade items. *“I had never really sewn anything before but now I have learnt so much and it is lovely seeing customers coming in to the shop and showing them what I have made — I am so proud”*

### COFFEE SAINTS

We now have two Cafes; the original Coffee Saints by St Mary's cathedral on Little King St, and at our building on Candlemaker Row, with the amazing new pavilion. Delicious homemade food, welcoming surroundings and always dog-friendly, our Cafes are THE place to go! Our Cafes, hospitality and events offer fantastic, supported work environments for our members and volunteers to develop their skills and work towards apprenticeships for employment. *“Love working here! The team are brilliant and teaching me so much and make me believe in myself. They have given me so much confidence”.*

### HOSPITALITY & EVENTS

It has been wonderful to welcome back old friends and new, hosting events at both GCP and Coffee Saints. Our main hall offers a diverse space for all types of events from conferences to wedding parties, cabaret to show case events. This year we have hosted the brilliant Eurovision Fringe event and the hugely entertaining Elvis tribute show. We have many more events planned for the coming year and the hall, Pavilion and Coffee Saints are all available to hire — just contact our team at [events@grassmarket.org](mailto:events@grassmarket.org)

# 64,862

Hot drinks served between our two Coffee Saints cafes

# 500

PupCups sold to our furry customers

# 11,000

Delegates hosted in our events spaces and outside catering

# 50

Individuals supported and provided training in our Woodworking Enterprise

# 1,621

Hours of work experience in our social enterprises

# 1,000+

Products made from over 400 metres of tartan

# £772K

Of sales through all our social enterprises



## MEET FRANK: INSPIRATIONAL ARTIST, MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER

Frank joined the Grassmarket Community Project as a Member and thoroughly enjoys attending classes. He also uses his incredible artistic abilities to volunteer to support GCP's Art and Craft and other groups.

"Being an artist is solitary, so to be able to talk about art and share with others who are willing to learn and to help others, I can't explain it, it's just fantastic."

Frank's passion for art radiates from him and his eyes light up when he talks about it. We were interested to find out and share more about Frank. He is a remarkable man and we're so lucky to have him here at GCP.

"Ever since I can remember I was drawing and painting. I wasn't that bright at school but in the art room it was a different story, I felt excited."

After leaving school, Frank worked in factories and hotels, but continued to hone his art. He took night classes, building up his portfolio whilst gaining his Higher and A Level Art. In the early nineties, he was accepted into Edinburgh College of Art.

Frank is very modest, but he now keeps an amazing portfolio of the art he has created in, or inspired by, the Grassmarket Community Project. His portfolio includes work motivated by GCP's outings and his love of history. A visit to Melrose last summer inspired him to paint a poster and write a poem. The story of how Scotland nearly lost Robbie Burns also moved him. Robbie was about to emigrate, thankfully a publishing contract came through just in time!

And there's more! Frank's creativity is also put to good use in GCP's classes such as Health and Wellbeing, where he helps visually represent group discussions, such as the benefits of sleeping and eating well.

Earlier this year working alongside our team, Frank became a founder member of our LGBTQIA+ group and helped to create the banner for our first ever GCP Pride march.

**“YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF AS YOU GUIDE OTHERS  
YOU BECOME LESS JUDGEMENTAL AND IT FEELS GOOD.”**

Although he has had to have other jobs, Frank has always kept up with his art and he loves supporting others at the Grassmarket,

"I share my experiences with others. Everyone has different capacities and we all learn in our own way, but I like to help people think, explore and get better."

The Grassmarket Community Project has supported Frank too. Recently we introduced him to one of our partner social enterprises, Scottish Design Exchange (SDE). Frank now exhibits and sells his work at the Tron in Edinburgh. He hopes the relationship with SDE will extend to other galleries in the future too.

135

Volunteers in total

£32.5K

In gross sales making items in the Tartan Shop

9

Corporate partners<sup>1</sup>

81

Volunteer inductions

9

Training courses held with 58 attendees

64

Different volunteers at our weekly Open Door Meals

10

Corporate days held<sup>2</sup>

5,993+

Volunteer hours. Not including trips, general assembly week, Greyfriars cafe opening for 24hrs or Tartan Shop hours

37

Volunteers involved with our Members Programme, assisting & leading our weekly sessions

1. eKal Solutions, Visit Scotland, PWC Lawyers, Ooni, Expedia, Edinburgh Airport, HSBC, John Lewis, Mercat Tours 2. HSBC, Edinburgh University, Visit Scotland, eKal Solutions, Price Waterhouse Coopers LLP, Mettle Bank & Edinburgh Airport

## WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS THINK ABOUT VOLUNTEERING AT GCP:

"Just do it! Don't be daunted. Members are so welcoming and it's a non-judgemental space... you may feel out of your comfort zone at first, but it becomes like a family, a comfortable community feeling, not just with Members but with the other volunteers too."

**Sophie**

"Painted the art room for the day & have since been volunteering on a regular basis in my own time"

**Nathalie, HSBC**

"I love it, it's hard to express. I enjoy myself here and if I wasn't working, I would come in every day! I actually think it helps me more than I help others, but I hope I am helping others too."

**Mustapha**

"A fantastic year supporting GCP in maintaining collaboration spaces for all members in the heart of Edinburgh knowing the efforts help run day to day learning & development events, but also providing a safe space for all. Very humbled to continue providing time to this great charity."

**HSBC**

"I couldn't bear having nothing to do. It's nice to do something now that's my choice. I think it's important if you have a skill to give back a bit of what you have learned."

**Liz**

"We are inspired by the work of the Grassmarket team and look forward to supporting you again soon."

**eKal Solutions**

"Volunteering is a win-win, as you can help others whilst learning from others too, everyone is comfortable with each other and it's fun."

**Dennis**



## VISION

We believe in a world where people reach their full potential, feel positive about themselves, valued and connected to others and the wider community.



## MISSION

We will create an inclusive person-centred environment where people feel empowered to develop skills, build positive relationships and enjoy an ongoing sense of belonging.



## FIGHT SOCIAL EXCLUSION

An inclusive community and programme of activities along with support that is accessible and benefits all individuals facing social exclusion by lack of opportunity, skills, mental health and aspiration, where they can achieve greater self-esteem, improved health, employment skills and a purpose in life.



## BRING TOGETHER

An inclusive community where individuals can, through membership and volunteering, contribute to the wellbeing of those facing social exclusion or with experience of trauma.



## A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Sustain a building which provides a safe home for the Grassmarket Community Project Members, moving the project towards self-sufficiency through social enterprise.



## PARTNER

Sustain the Grassmarket Community Project as a partnership comprising Greyfriars Kirk, the Grassmarket Mission, statutory and voluntary agencies, local and national businesses and local residents.

Report design by Ruth Kirby Organ | @kirbyorgan\_

