

# cyrenians

5 YEAR PLAN 2020-2025



TACKLING THE CAUSES AND  
CONSEQUENCES OF HOMELESSNESS



For over 50 years Cyrenians has tackled the causes and consequences of homelessness. For the past 5 years I have been honoured to be part of this innovative organisation, and I am excited to introduce our strategic plan for the next 5 years.

We have grown and learnt a considerable amount about our own organisation and the landscape we operate in over the previous 5 years, and have used this learning to shape our next steps. We better understand the value of our relationship-based work and are proud to be leading the way for partner organisations and peers to put those we support at the heart of what we do.

Our core values of compassion, respect, integrity and innovation are intrinsic to our ambitious plans. We believe that the journey from exclusion to inclusion is as much about inner wellbeing and sense of self-worth as it is access to material things, or practical support.

Our previous 5 year plan saw a commitment to grow our organisation to mitigate the challenges of austerity. However, alongside our successful 37% income growth and 55% staff complement growth, we faced infrastructure and communication challenges which demanded close attention if we were to maintain our ethos as an organisation.

We know that the journey ahead is also not an easy one; we want to make as big a difference as we can for as many people as we can. We understand that to do this we need to maintain the sustainability of our organisation, strengthening the cohesion of our staff and volunteers as a force for good.

Looking forward, we intend to build on what we know works (our values-led, relationships-based approach), continue investing in our people, and bringing people's experience of homelessness, poverty and isolation to the heart of our decision making.

I hope you can join us on our journey towards building a more inclusive society, one in which everyone can lead a valued and fulfilling life.

With good wishes,

**Ewan Aitken, CEO**





With over 50 years' experience tackling the causes and consequences of homelessness we are in a strong position to reflect on what has worked, improve where possible, and try innovative new approaches to ensure those we journey with receive the support they need, when they need it.

To ensure our 5 year plan is as robust as possible, and meets the needs of those we wish to support, we invited six experts from different fields (including mental health, poverty, and homelessness) to consult on our organisation and provide guidance about where the key issues may lie in the coming years.

The evidence shows that those most likely to experience vulnerability and homelessness are people who face poverty and destitution, mental health challenges, addiction, social isolation, shame from past actions, including experience of the criminal justice system, and relationship breakdown. A key indicator of whether these are likely to be in an adult's life is the number of adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) in their early life.

To best support those who rely on our organisation our work will continue to focus in these areas, using our relationship-based, person-centred approach. Not only will we offer holistic support, but we will be conscious of enabling the individual being supported to shape their intended outcome, and the journey to it.

By linking all we do back to the Scottish Government's plan to End Homelessness alongside their national outcomes and strategies on social isolation, mental health and the alleviation of poverty, as well as responding to the outcomes of the Independent Review of Care, we will ensure our organisation has as wide an impact as possible. Viewing our work through this wider lens and putting lived-experience at the heart of what we do will ensure that we not only support individuals, but that we support system-change and help prevent homelessness where possible.

We look forward to continuing to share our values-led approach to tackling homelessness with those in our sector, those we support, and those who wish to support us and hope you'll join us on our journey towards creating an inclusive community for all.

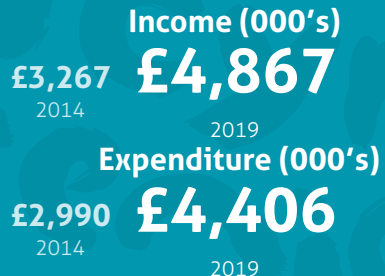
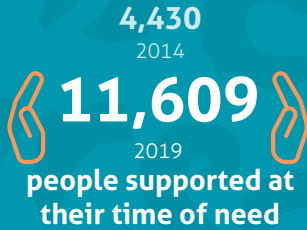
**Kirsty Bathgate, Chair of the Board**



# THE LAST FIVE YEARS

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The figures below provide a snapshot of how we've grown over the past five years



# OUR SERVICES:

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The next 5 years will be exciting and challenging; continuing to live our values, build trusted relationships, doing more of what we do even better, creating community in many different guises and looking for new opportunities that play to our strengths, our deep skillsets and our experience so we are more able to tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness in everything we do.

Our services and projects:

- **Corporate services:** HR and Finance, Marketing and Communications, Fundraising, Volunteer Support, Quality and Resilience, Learning Development
- **Older People, Active Lives:** Befriending, Telephone befriending, Social Activity Groups
- **Golden Years:** Befriending, Community Navigator, Social Activity Groups, Gamechanger Partnership
- **Mediation and Support:** Amber and Asked-to-Leave (East Lothian), Early Intervention Partnership, Conflict Resolution Workshops
- **Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution:** Digital resources, Conflict Resolution Training
- **Live Life:** Veterans and Family support
- **HMP Addiewell Visitor Centre**
- **Learning and Work:** Market-Led Training, Foundations to Employment, Key to Potential, Creative Natives
- **Outreach:** Lankelly Chase, Community Link Worker, Homeless Navigators, Housing First, Peer Mentors, St Martin's Frontline Network, All in for Change, Pathways for Hospital Discharge
- **Communities:** Farm, City, Crichton Place, Social Bite Village
- **Community Gardens:** Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Midlothian Community Hospital
- **Community Justice:** Peer Mentor Training, Recovery Peers, Fair Start, Community Justice Employability
- **Flavour and Haver Community Cook School:** Community Cook Clubs, Good Food Good Health courses

Our social enterprises:

- **FareShare:** Food Redistribution, Period Poverty, Food Pantries
- **Farm**
- **Food Education:** REHIS courses, Training and Events

Our social businesses:

- **Enterprise Training**
  - **Arnotdale House**
  - **Upcycling**
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**Cyrenians**  
**OPAL**

**Older People**  
**Active Lives**

**Tel. 01506 815**

[facebook.com/OPALCyrenians](https://facebook.com/OPALCyrenians)  
[www.Cyrenians.scot/OPAL](http://www.Cyrenians.scot/OPAL)

Cyrenians is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIC) Regd.

# OUR STRATEGIC AIMS:

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- **Reduce the number of people who experience homelessness or its root causes**
- **Seek system-change through the introduction of values-led, trusted relationships-based services across all sectors**
- **Build community and communities in all we do**
- **Keep the voice of lived experience at the heart of our decision-making and our contributions to public debates**
- **Grow our resilience by investing in nurturing our people and increasing the diversity of our supporters and income**

Throughout the next 5 years, to ensure we meet our strategic aims while remaining true to our values-led, relationships-based way of working, we will be using the following 8 anchor questions to ensure the integrity of any new decision making:

Will it reduce homelessness due to poverty, social isolation or mental ill health challenges?

Will we be better able to support more people facing the causes or consequences of homelessness?

Will more people understand our values and our commitment to trusted relationships by their experience of our work?

Will we be able to continue to invest in our staff and volunteers so they can best work to our values and our way of working?

Does it build community and/or communities?

Does it play to our strengths and skills, growing out of what we already do?

Will it improve the diversity and strength of our funding base?

What is the risk this work would breach our reserves policy?

# OUR STRATEGIC AIMS:

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## REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS OR ITS ROOT CAUSES

There are many routes into homelessness, and much of our work is about preventing homelessness from becoming a reality.

We offer services that support those both at risk of, and those currently experiencing homelessness.

Whilst our service delivery is adaptable, we recognise the value in having projects with specific expertise, projects that can reach the most vulnerable members of our society, and those who may not think they could benefit from our support.

Our model of person-centred support is furthered by the inclusion of volunteers throughout our organisation offering experience and expertise from all different walks of life. From service delivery, to admin support, we are humbled by the ever-changing range of skills so generously given to us by those who choose to volunteer at Cyrenians.

## SEEK SYSTEM-CHANGE THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF VALUES-LED, TRUSTED RELATIONSHIP-BASED SERVICES ACROSS ALL SECTORS

At Cyrenians we incorporate our values of Compassion, Innovation, Integrity and Respect in all that we do. By building trusted relationships with those we work with and for, we are able to create services that work dynamically, offering a flexible service to those who need it.

We are ambitious that we can take this flexible approach further, helping influence system-change by valuing the feedback from those at the heart of our work and encouraging others to do the same.



## BUILD COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITIES IN ALL THAT WE DO

At Cyrenians we understand that being part of a supportive, welcoming community is as important as being able to access services designed to meet specific needs.

We aim to continue supporting the development of community throughout the areas in which we work, ensuring that even without our direct input, people are part of a supportive network with shared values helping to prevent individuals reaching crisis point.

## KEEP THE VOICE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE AT THE HEART OF OUR DECISION MAKING AND OUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC DEBATE

Creating services that genuinely serve those who need them requires expertise from across the board. We're proud of the work we do to involve those with lived experience in our decision making and are actively working to increase this input across our services.

We are keen to see the inclusion of those with lived experience on a broader scale, both within our own work and that of our sector. We will continue to provide opportunities for the voices of those with lived experience to be heard while leading by example to our partners both in the public and private sector.

## GROW OUR RESILIENCE BY INVESTING IN NURTURING OUR PEOPLE AND INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF OUR SUPPORTERS AND INCOME

In order to best support those experiencing the causes or consequences of homelessness we need to ensure that our organisation is resilient, both internally in the way we support our staff and volunteers, but also financially.

Over the next 5 years we want to help change the conversation around homelessness, encouraging people to understand the complex routes into homelessness, and the difficulties around the current systems designed to support those who are currently homeless.

By diversifying our income streams, improving people's understanding of the kind of organisation we are, and increasing external support we will be better placed to offer support to those who vitally need it.



“THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE  
IS ABOUT THINKING  
ABOUT POSSIBILITIES”



# OUR THANKS

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This plan has been created with the thinking, contributions and wisdom of many people, including staff, volunteers, those we support and partners from the public sector, third sector, and business sector. Our thanks go to each and every one of them.

In particular, our thanks go to Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick (Heriot Watt University), Dr James McCormick (Joseph Rowntree Foundation), Karyn McCluskey (Community Justice Scotland), Fiona McHardy (Poverty Alliance), Dr Linda Irvine-Fitzpatrick (NHS Lothian) and Paul Lawrence (City of Edinburgh Council), who set the scene for our thinking with clarity and passion.

# OUR TRUSTEES:

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- Kirsty Bathgate (Chair)
- Isobel Wylie (Board Secretary)
- Pete Flockhart
- Carolyn Girvan
- Veronika Gunn-Boesch
- Elinor Jayne
- Luke Jeavons
- John Lawrie
- Ciaran McGuigan



“IF WE EXPERIENCE COMPASSION, WE WILL BE  
COMPASSIONATE. IF WE EXPERIENCE RESPECT,  
WE WILL BE RESPECTFUL. IF WE EXPERIENCE  
INTEGRITY IN THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS  
TOWARDS US, WE WILL ACT WITH INTEGRITY.”

Ewan Aitken, CEO



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