

Annual Report 2021-2022

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It has been an unprecedented year of change and challenge for the organisation, staff and our young people as all readjusted to life beyond the Covid-19 health emergency. Throughout the pandemic our organisation, more than ever, remained open and committed to delivering its essential accommodation and support services to young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. For many young people hardship and isolation became more acute as a consequence of the various lockdowns and restrictions which had been reflected in the complexity of their challenges faced. Through the outstanding commitment, dedication and creativity of our leadership and staff teams we have been able to respond to the unprecedented challenge providing a reliable and vital lifeline for young people.

Despite these challenges the leadership team have developed the organisation's strategy for the next three years, working with external consultants from Pilotlight and wider stakeholders. The strategy builds upon the positive work already achieved and focuses on creating sustainable growth through four key pillars: our team; positive change; reach people and continuous improvement. As part of this strategy, the organisation has recruited three new Board Members and established a number of sub-groups to enhance good governance and control. Moreover, the organisation's name has been refreshed to Open Door Scotland allowing us to support young people beyond West Lothian.

There has been significant pressure on the organisation's finances and operating costs over the last year arising from the global energy crisis; high inflation and external funding uncertainty which are expected to continue in the coming period. The energy costs alone, to maintain our accommodation services, have already increased by more than 100% over recent months with further increases expected before the coming winter. The leadership team are all too aware that the rising cost pressures are also being felt by our staff and the young people we support. In response we have been looking at meaningful and tangible ways to support our staff and young people through the cost of living crisis. However, without an equal increase to our income the rising operating costs will apply pressures on the organisation's finances which have become constrained in recent years following a reduction to our core funding from our main funder West Lothian Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Nevertheless if there is anything that the past few years have taught us it is that through creative leadership, resilience and a willingness to embrace change, we remain ready to rise to any challenge to support and improve the lives of those young people most in need in our community.



TONY HOLLORAN - Chair - Board of Directors



CEO's REPORT

2021 to 2022 has been my first full year as CEO at Open Door. I have worked with the Organisation for 22 years directly serving and supporting young people, as well as serving in various leadership roles. This has stood me in good stead for my current role, I am aware of the difficulties and barriers young people may experience.

So what keeps me motivated? I am not satisfied when young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless face so many barriers: to employment, to learning, to having a safe place to live, to having opportunities to contribute and participate, to being highly valued. At Open Door we believe everyone has the right to a life in which they have opportunities to use their talents and skills, enabling them to participate within their community.

As we come out of the Covid-19 pandemic I am acutely aware of the impact this has had on young people, affecting everything from suitable accommodation, to training, to working, and to friendships. It has created a strong sense of uncertainty and insecurity that is likely to continue for some time to come.

I commend the staff, students and board members for their personal and combined efforts in maintaining 'business as usual' throughout this time. I have a great sense of pride in the way the staff teams went above and beyond. They showed creativity and innovation as they worked to reach all those that needed our help.

At the beginning of 2022 we launched a strategy which defines our business direction and addresses our vision where people are at the centre of what we do. The four key themes include; Our Teams, Positive Change, Reach People and Continuous Improvement. This allows us to be proactive in what we do. We are currently at the stage of turning the strategy and plans into actions in order to accomplish our strategic objectives and goals.

During this year the organisation's name changed from Open Door Accommodation Project to Open Door Scotland, it was felt that the previous name limited the organisation to an accommodation service. Not only is accommodation provided but also support with health and wellbeing, employability, financial inclusion and tenancy sustainment.

We have continued to increase our use of Social media, it is recognised that we still have a long way to go, to help with this we have set up a Social Media sub group.

We have worked hard this year on restructure, recruitment and the retention of people. We are now in the position where we have a full complement of paid staff as well as an increase in numbers of dedicated board members.

Throughout the year we have started a variety of groups; arts and crafts, jewellery making, photography and a weekly drop in offering support and advice. We have supported and encouraged young people in attending gym sessions, football and net ball. We need to increase our face to face resident's meeting as this is where young people can have a collective voice.

There are hard financial times ahead, with the rise in the cost of living, the increased costs of gas and electricity and the worry of budget cuts. Open Door will continue to identify and apply for diverse funding streams that will enable us to continue with the good work we do.

AILEEN WILLMOTT - CEO



SERVICE MANAGER'S

REPORT

2021- 2022, Was a productive year at Open Door, we were able to expand our Community Outreach Service by adding much needed additional services to compliment the excellent work that we do. Offering, financial, employability and Health and Wellbeing support, these services have proven to be invaluable to the young people that have been supported. Feedback from young people and our partners has been very positive.

The Craigshill Service has used the opportunity of young people starting to receive moving on options to work alongside West Lothian Council in decorating the bedrooms. This has made such a difference to the rooms and the full unit is looking so much fresher and inviting. It is promising that we are still seeing some young people returning to the family home: this is down to the group work provided by staff and students around mediation.

The supported flats service has been getting back to some sort of normality, it has been challenging for staff and the young people but staff have persevered as have the young people and we are now back to having full face to face meetings inside the tenancies with all our young people. All have reported an increase in their wellbeing seeing each other face to face and been able to resume day to day task. The young people especially are exciting about the cleaning rotas.

I would like to thank all staff for their continuous hard work throughout the year and I know we will continue to grow and offer a complete wrap around service with the young people who are at the heart of our organisation.



AVRIL MOONEY - Service manager





FUNDRAISING

In response to growing demand, during 2021/22 Open Door Scotland were successful in obtaining further funding and were able to appoint a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Officer along with a Financial inclusion Officer and later in the year an Employability Officer Key successes were:

- £129790 from the Scottish Governments Third Sector Homelessness Fund over two years towards the running of the Community Outreach Project.
- £155470 from the Bank of Scotland Foundation Invest Fund over five years to deliver a Financial Inclusion Project.
- £17395 from the Scottish Governments Young Persons Guarantee Fund towards the employability element of the Community Outreach Project.
- £25000 from Crisis towards the employability element of the Community Outreach Project.
- £7000 from the Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund administered by West Lothian Voluntary Gateway towards the Health and Wellbeing element of the Community Outreach Project.

In addition to this, additional funding was secured from several smaller Trust Funds including The Ponton Trust (£1980), The Albert Hunt Trust (£3000), Youth Link (£4240), The Robert Turner Trust (£234) and DWF (£3600)

Throughout the year staff have also taken on the challenge of fundraising and have been successful in securing funding from the following funders:



OBJECTIVES

Open Door Scotland exists to support young people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless for a variety of reasons, e.g. Family breakdown, social, practical, behavioural and emotional problems.

Open Door Scotland aims to support young people in the short term, working towards longer-term, sustainable independent living and improved life chances.

Open Door Scotland aims to provide a flexible and innovative service to the population of youth homelessness; actively promote, encourage and highlight the needs of young homeless people and work in partnership with our funders and community towards addressing any needs identified; provide an environment that supports and encourages freedom of choice and promotes the learning process towards sustainable, independent living.

VALUES

- A person centred approach: To place the primary focus on the welfare, development and aspirations of the young person.
- Respect: To pay full regard to the individuality, integrity, humanity and right to privacy of the young person and to their wishes at any time. To apply Open Doors policy on confidentiality.
- Self Determination: As far as possible, to encourage the young person to exercise choice, to make or participate in decisions, which affect them, and to contribute to decisions about the running of the organisation.
- Participation: As far as their capacity and wishes allow, to encourage the young person to become involved in all the activities in which they are engaged.
- Openness: In relation to young people, to be honest and truthful, to allow them full access to information and ensure that the organisation processes are transparent.
- Personal Development: To promote the social confidence and self awareness of residents and to encourage and to help them to achieve their potential.
- Inclusiveness: To avoid discrimination on any grounds, to ensure that the young persons views are fully represented.
- Rights and Responsibilities: To encourage young people to exercise their rights and to achieve a proper balance between rights and responsibilities.

DM: "(My key worker) Fee is the BEST! She has helped me so much and has helped me to set a healthier mindset. She has encouraged me to try things I never would have done. Having the support before during and after my interview made me so much less anxious. She really takes good care of everything she does."

DB: "Knowing Stuart is there to help and talk things through has really helped with my mental health"

LS: "If I never really got the support I had, I would not have took and tried my best to live here in what has felt more like home than anywhere else"

SUPPORTED FLATS

The supported flats service has continued to perform well, supporting and accommodating 16 young people at any one time. The service supported 40 young people during 2021/2022 of which 21 were males and 19 females. 32 young people departed to various accommodations.

- 16 secured their own tenancy
- · 5 moved in with family or friends
- · 1 unknown
- · 9 remained in the flats service
- · 1 was accommodated at the Craigshill Service as it better suited their needs at the time.

There were no evictions this year as the organisation tried to support young people back to the Craigshill service, where enhanced support could be provided particularly in relation to gate keeping.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the wait for housing has significantly increased and therefore young people were supported for a longer period of time, and we have seen less young people supported by the service than in previous years. A more intense level of support has continued to be offered during this period.

Some of our key challenges, like in previous years, continue to be supporting those with drug misuse and recreational use, poor mental wellbeing especially in light of the pandemic. Isolation, especially in conjunction with limited financial resources, has continued to be a challenge and staff have worked tirelessly to engage young people in the various supports and services we offer. Linking in with our Community Outreach team has been invaluable to help young people with; Health & Wellbeing activities, employment advice & support, financial advice & signposting and resettlement when they get their own tenancy.

ONGOING IMPACT

Flat's staff have continued to work with young people to develop collaborative support plans, taking into account each young person's current circumstances and support needs. Working with the young people we have been able to develop individual plans and identify specific areas for support. These have included; budgeting support, supported cleans, day to day living support, healthy living, and meaningful use of time, drug & alcohol support. This has allowed us to better prepare young people for independent living, giving them the tools, they need to sustain their tenancy beyond Open Door support.

Supported Flats staff have developed partnerships with organisations to help support young people into the world of work and improve opportunities. The Larder have provided funded work experience placements in partnership with Employability Scotland, including barista training, and 15 of our young people have been involved in this. We have worked with SDS to support young people to explore employment and volunteering opportunities and create CVs for potential employers. Our most recent partnership with Smart works and Grassroots has allowed us to further prepare young people for employment. They have provided 1:1 coaching prior to interview, along with appropriate interview clothing to increase young people's confidence and chances of employment.



INDEPENDENT LEARNING FUND (IFL)

Following on from last year's successful ILF applications, staff have continued to support young people to complete application and provide supporting letters advocating for the individuals.

In 2021/2022 we had 11 successful applications ranging from around £1,800 up to £3,000. The funding granted has been for; driving lessons, art and craft supplies, bikes, technology devices, start-up kits for new businesses, clothing, passports and many other life changing things for the young people.

These successful applications have further allowed young people to tackle their feelings of isolation and mental health struggles and integrate themselves back in to the wider community. For many young people the use of driving lessons, clothing and starter kits has opened up a new world of work and many more opportunities for employment.

STATISTICS

The supported flats service has continued to perform well, supporting and accommodating 16 young people at any one time. The service supported 40 young people during 2021/2022 of which 21 were males and 19 females. 32 young people departed to various accommodations:



Average length of stay:

Days	Number of Young Persons
0-90	7
91-180	10
181-270	12
271+	11

Throughout the year we have also supported 8 young people into employment, and 5 young people into education.



CASE STUDY

I was born in Livingston but spent most of my younger life in Bathgate. I really loved living there and I was happy living at home with Mum. My mum and dad had split up quite a while before and when mum met a new partner, she was really happy.

They got married and he became my stepdad. Things were okay until my parents decided to move abroad. I was quite saddened by this, and I met some people who were doing cocaine. Unfortunately, I started using and dealing in cocaine and it took over my life.

I was travelling around quite a lot at this time from Inverness to Jersey and all stops in between. I was trying to make some fast money with drugs that I could use to get my own place.

Eventually I moved back to Bathgate to stay with my gran, and she encouraged me to apply for Edinburgh Napier college where I moved into halls. I studied computing and the college course helped me to move away from drugs.

When my course was finished, I went to stay with my real dad but this never really worked from day one. My dad would tell me to leave on a regular basis.

One night I went to a party with friends. some of whom were taking drugs. I tried taking some drugs again thinking to myself, "What harm could it do". It did me harm right enough. I took a drug induced psychotic episode and ended up being sectioned. It was like a living nightmare as I thought I was a spy and other spies were out to kill me. On my release from hospital, I promised myself that I would never touch a drug again.

I still smoke, or rather I have moved to vapes and I am even trying to give them up. My fright with drugs was over a year ago now but it still scares me. I went homeless and was placed in several hotels.

I was eventually placed with Open Door. They have been great with me and made me feel accepted and more confident. The hostel was great. I was given my own space to carry on my hobbies and activities without being constantly disturbed. The hostel had Wi-Fi which is very important to me to be able to keep in touch with friends. I was offered a flat and I am really starting to think of it as my own place, in fact if I could take it over as my own I would, I was supported to set up my gas and electric account. I keep myself to myself and the only visitor I have had is my worker, my gran and my dad. I want to make the best of this opportunity.

Thank you Open Door.



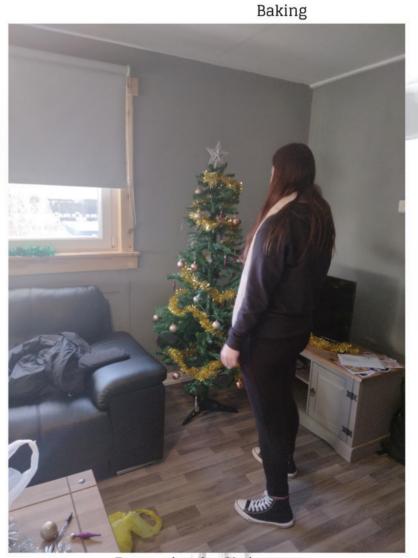




Camera Club



Burnt Island trip



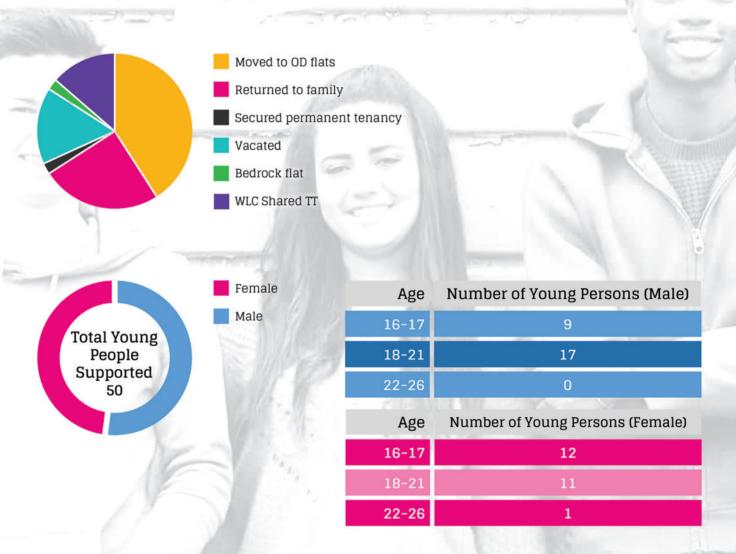
Decorating for Christmas



CRAIGSHILL SERVICE

2021/22 has been another busy and productive year for Open Door Scotland. The Craigshill Service has continued to provide much needed accommodation and support to 50 young people (26 males and 24 females). Whilst this service is available to young people up to aged 26, most were in the 16 – 19 age group. The service accommodated two more young people than the previous year as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic being eased, with young people having their move on options reinstated. The young people supported by this service achieved the following outcomes:

- · 18 young people moved on to Open Door Scotland's Supported Flats service;
- · 11 returned home to family;
- · 1 moved on to a single tenancy supported flat with the Rock Trust;
- · 6 moved on to WLC shared TT
- · 1 secured their own tenancy; and
- 7 young people vacated the accommodation service (but were offered support from our Community Outreach Project).





CASE STUDY

It all started with my mum and I arguing about little things and me arguing with my little brother. Sometimes we would get really heated and it was not fun. On one occasion I said that I wanted to leave, but I didn't really mean it. My dad phoned the homeless however and I was put into the Torphichan Inn. I felt sad and lonely, but also extremely angry about what was happening to me. I was passed around various hotels all the time still feeling very angry.

I had a few of my own belongings with me, but a lot of personal and sentimental things were at home and my mum would not allow me home to get them until months later.

I kept in contact with my dad, but there were also times when there was no contact at all, because I was still hurting. My brother kept in touch with me for a while until his text messages became abusive. That was hard to take as was the fact that he was still at home with mum and dad.

In the hotel, I started my relationship with alcohol. I don't know if it was to cope or if I really enjoyed it. I do know that it was a way to deal with the pain. I don't think that I enjoyed it.

The alcohol got me in with the wrong crowd and there were times when I found myself in some dangerous situations. I was still managing to go to college, however.

The council moved me to Fauldhouse, and this is where things became a real struggle for me with bus fares, money and my bursary was never processed correctly. It still isn't. I became secluded and lonely in the flat as my flatmate left and never returned.

I was moved from the flat to Open Door where a future was opened for me. I was given a safe place to stay. I am allowed to speak openly about my feelings. There are people here that I can talk to, and I have made friends. My confidence is being rebuilt. I am learning new practical and artistic skills. Travel to my college course is easier and I have participated in physical activities such as cycling and football. The staff here are all lovely and approachable. I am really enjoying Open Door and I can now see a bright future for myself where before things were dark, painful, and hopeless.









Weekly Art Group in the Craigshill Service was able to start again after lockdown restriction being eased.

Healthy cooking classes
- Fruit smoothies

Christmas was a big event in the Craigshill Service with all young people receiving a parcel put together by our staff full of goodies. Santa also visited with presents for our young people and many activities took place including cooking, baking, decorating and a Christmas meal enjoyed by all.







COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Open Door Community Outreach Service was, established in May 2018 to provide visiting support within the boundaries of West Lothian, to young people aged 16-25 years of age who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The young people we support are either, sofa surfing, living in bed & breakfast accommodation, a temporary tenancy or have recently moved into a permanent tenancy.

This project targets hard to reach young. Several have lengthy care histories, and most have experienced a breakdown of family relationships. Many suffer from high anxiety, depression is common, confidence levels are low and there is a constant struggle to move forward positively with their lives.

With additional funding secured the project appointed in 2021-22 a Financial inclusion officer, a Health and Well-being officer and an Employability officer. Those appointments have allowed us to further our reach and this year we have supported more than 130 young people. We have also forged new links with partner agencies and have increased our knowledge base of available services and resources that our service users are now accessing.

The Community Outreach service supports young people throughout the period that they are homeless, linking them in with community-based services where appropriate. Once the young person is offered a permanent tenancy, we provide a 12-week programme of resettlement with a view that if longer term support is still required, we link them in with an appropriate Support Service.

OUTCOME 1

Put together a range of 'Health and Mental Wellbeing' groups and activities and facilitate wellbeing groups, such as mindfulness and fitness activities, for 40 young people.

While COVID-19 played a restrictive part in the delivery of some groups our activities did not stop and 12 groups, including cooking classes, dance sessions, workshops tailored to young adult learners during a pandemic, a bike club, photography group, Art groups and gym sessions, were delivered to name just a few.

In total there were over 120 attendances to these groups and activities. The number of sessions attended by the young people reflects the level of engagement and enjoyment they received with the understanding that they are having a positive impact on their lives; providing a social opportunity while also delivering a healthy lifestyle message whether that is around physical activity, importance of creative hobbies, or coping with stress.

OUTCOME 2

Provide at least 50 people with one-to-one support.

Across the community outreach service, health and wellbeing support has been offered to more than 130 young people through their engagement with the Project. This is documented in client meeting notes thus reflecting the housing & wellbeing support offered by staff to the young people navigating a stressful, and often traumatic, time of their life. To give examples of these moments include "helping [a young person] attend a GP appointment", "spoke to [a young person] at night when they couldn't sleep [due to anxiety]", and "supported [a young person] coping with the loss of a family member". Having a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Officer meant many support opportunities were explored and recorded but also highlighted the wellbeing support that is being delivered across the Project.

Over the last 12 months 131 food parcels were distributed to young people, 25 young people were referred to the Advice shop, on 49 occasions young people were supported with utility top ups.

CASE STUDY

Employability Case study.

Being a young person (MMcC) with ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome this young school leaver is finding getting a job challenging. More recently he has got his first tenancy and is already getting support from other members of the outreach team: Financial Inclusion and Homelessness and Resettlement Officers.

The Employability Officer (EO) visited him initially to discuss where he was on his employability journey. They discussed his experiences of school education and his transition into being a sole tenant. Then a general chat was had around job aspirations, interests and career ambitions. He aspires to join a trade either in: joinery, bricklaying, roofing and scaffolding.

A second meeting took place where the EO explored with him what skills he thought he had. As expected, like many young people he felt he had very little. But when the EO started to use examples from his daily routine to show the skills being used without being aware he began to feel more confident. The EO drew mind maps of his skill sets as they chatted then showed him the diagram with them on it; he was surprised. He knows these skills are mostly at a basic level in part but he will now work with the EO to find routes to develop and improve them.

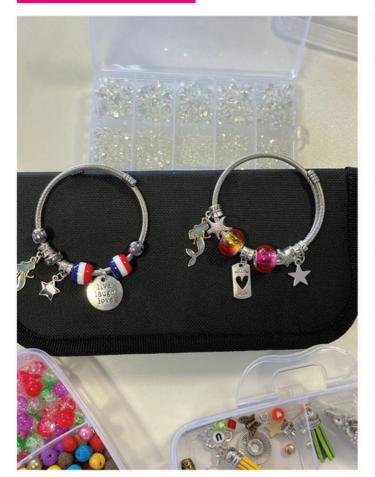
An action plan was agreed which includes: redrafting CV, doing a job search, scheduling a meeting for him, accompanied by the EO to meet the Skills Development Scotland's team member from two years ago whilst at school. When setting up the meeting the EO emphasised that this young person had moved on from when they last met and was more in control of his life, ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome. The meeting is early May.





ILS Course







Health and wellbeing jewellery class



Health and wellbeing netball

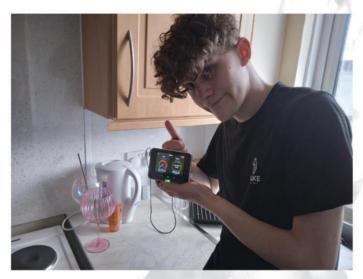




Collecting bike



New home



Smart Meter



Starter Pack



Fundraising Insight Tesco Cheque



Playing Pool



STUDENT'S VIEW ON ODS

I was very anxious during my first day of placement at Open Door Scotland as I had never worked with young people and I did not know what to expect. Open Door Scotland members of staff are very welcoming and friendly providing a good working atmosphere that helped me settled in very well. Open Door Scotland are paperless on teams which enables staff to quickly locate information, share and access documents from different locations and diverse devices, helps save the environment, easier to protect the access to confidential information of service users as only authorised members of staff are able to access classified data and ensure staff safety when lone working. This made me feel safe when lone working and also built up my IT skills going into future social work practice.

I worked with between the Supported Flats Service and Community Outreach Team which gave me the opportunity to work with young people who have the duty of compulsory engagement as part of their tenancy agreement and those in the community outreach who are not under any compulsion to engage.

Working with young people at Open Door Scotland was challenging but very rewarding as it provides me with the loads of hands on opportunities of working with young people who are in various stages of their transition journey from being homeless, sofa surfing and potentially roofless to having their own tenancy.

One of the piece of work that stood out for me was supporting a young person in the flats who has selective mutism and presented with very complex issues due to various adverse circumstances surrounding his past. The young person was reluctant to interact during the initial meeting, always covered his face with his hair and simply nodded in response to questions. Prior to moving to the flat, the young person lived at the Craigshill Supported Accommodation and mainly had written interactions with staff. They had grown accustomed to this mode of communication. I built up a good rapport to earn the trust of the young person using relationship based practice, and learning from the great wealth of experience of my link worker and practice educator during supervision sessions. The young person now engages with members of staff using sentences and continues to improve on his independent living skills.

During my Placement I got a recognition certificate and an Open Door Scotland award star for my engagement and to do attitude with young people. I was excited and teary when I got the recognition as this made me feel much appreciated by Open Door Scotland. I sincerely appreciate the robust team of link workers at Open Door Scotland that nominated me for this award.

Finally, as a social work student, I will highly endorse and commend Open Door Scotland for students who wants a positive placement opportunity. Open Door Scotland has a great reputation for providing excellent quality and diverse learning opportunities for social work student from various universities in Scotland. My placement at Open Door Scotland has helped me to be a reflective social worker and relate my experiences in future practice when working with young people.

SUCCESS AMEH - Social Work Student 2022







Recognition certificate and an Open Door Scotland award star for engagement and attitude with young people - Success Ameh

FEEDBACK FROM A UNIVERSITY

I know having a student is always a big task and the unpredictable nature of Covid has certainly not helped anybody. As a programme team, we have been incredibly grateful to all our placement agencies for providing such good learning experiences for our students, who felt very well supported. I know that Caitlin very much enjoyed her placement and benefited greatly from the experience.

Thank you for providing a placement for this student. She has clearly benefited from a wide range of learning opportunities and has been able to work in a supportive environment where her enquiring approach was welcomed and encouraged. I enjoyed reading about the student's work with a range of young people and particularly about the street soccer project, which allowed her to use her transferrable skills. It is really refreshing to see such creativity in social work placements.

Thank you again for all your support. I have really enjoyed working with you and Open Door. Such a wonderful organisation.

Susanne



- "I think the staff have really improved my independent living skills"
- "All the staff here are amazing support and I couldn't ask for a better Open Door family"
- "All the staff are lovely and have helped me through a lot my problems"
- "Open Door has helped me become the person I am today"
- "Up until now I feel all my support needs have been met and there is always help if I need it"
- "Staff are great and they have helped me open a bank account this month which has allowed me to receive my benefit payments"
- " Having someone there during a crisis is really nice", " Nice to have face to face conversations helped connect me with reality especially when socially isolated"
- "Thanks to Stuart I am fully registered with my local GP and have my UC and Council Tax sorted out. Stuart has also supported me with my mental health and reminded me that I won't always be depressed and gave me ways to cope and change."
- "Helped me with problems if I was feeling down". "Made me take steps in the right direction to help with a future for me".
- "I feel like Success has helped me a lot and I like the support".
- "The support from open door is helping me to feel more confident in my ability to live independently".
- "Open door has helped me go to college".
- "Open Door has supported me throughout everything (my homeless journey) and made me more confident in getting my own house".



Thank You to our funders and to everyone who donates their time money and gifts to Open Door. You are truly making a difference in people's lives.

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