



## Annual Report

2022 - 23

### Trust in Fife

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# CHAIRPERSON FOREWORD



It is my pleasure to present the foreword to the 2022-2023 Annual Report.

It has, as always, been a challenging year for Trust in Fife with the company still adapting to being a standalone entity as opposed to lead agent for Fife's Housing Support and Homelessness Services PSP. It was felt that our hitherto reciprocal working relationship with Fife Council had been fractured, however, following face-to-face meetings this has been resolved, assurances given, and we are now back on track to move forward positively.

Our temporary accommodation units, the Oasis Project and Valley Accommodation Unit remain at near full capacity throughout the year, which demonstrates the continued need for our commitment to offering temporary supported accommodation and the prevention of homelessness.

Fife Private Rental Solutions is now in year two of its redesign and its move towards becoming an ethical letting agent. The Cairn Centre, Oasis Project and the Valley Accommodation Unit are still playing a pivotal role and Trust in Fife remains at the forefront of caring for our vulnerable and homeless clients.

Professional training continues to be a high priority with staff, as ever, keen to progress in their fields of knowledge and abilities. The dedication of our members never ceases to amaze and inspire.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to acknowledge and thank the management, staff and volunteers for their continued hard work and commitment. Without them so many people would still be totally lost.

**Jennifer Walker**  
**Chair**





# CEO INTRODUCTION

A year has passed since I wrote my first introduction to Trust in Fife's annual report.

The last year has seen a number of changes for the organisation with commissioning and staffing, alongside some challenges.

Financial year 2022/2023 was the first-year post PSP and saw the commissioning of services return to the local authority. This year was a transitional period, with a new commissioning team within Fife Council being set up and getting to know their partner organisations. This meant the creation of new service level agreements and performance monitoring outcomes.

Work has been ongoing throughout this year to complete rapid rehousing transitional plan applications for submission to Fife Council allowing Trust in Fife to change or tweak their services to fit with Fife's plans. Three applications were submitted, two for changes to current service and one to add an additional service. The new service was not accepted, however the changes to the two service already up and running were.

Trust in Fife's grant award remained the same for its Fife Private Rental Solutions and Residential services, however the Short-Term Housing Support service returned to Fife Council in June 2022, which saw this funding end. Additional funding was received for Residential services from the Scottish Government to allow Trust in Fife support staff be paid above the real living wage.

Frontline staffing changes took place in both Fife Private Rental Solutions and Residential Services through the financial year.

The redesign of Fife Keyfund to Fife Private Rental Solutions went into its second year and a review of Residential services began. More on these further on in the report.

Trust in Fife faced a number of challenges throughout the year. Staff sickness was high across all services at the beginning of 2023 with a mix of long- and short-term absences to manage. Thankfully all staff, including relief staff pulled together to help out, which was greatly appreciated. Further to this recruitment of staff has been very difficult, with job adverts being advertised multiple times due to low or no applications, along with lack of qualifications and experience in the sector.

**Caroline McCall**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# OPERATIONS MANAGER

As Operations Manager I am tasked with overseeing the Residential services, Fife Private Rental Solutions, and the Cairn Centre. Due to my colleagues situated in each department and their individual ethos and values my job is made so much easier than it could be.

Over the financial year 2022-2023 all of Trust in Fife's services have been impacted on with the cost-of-living crisis and the perceived housing crisis making the service delivery a more difficult journey to navigate for the client group and staff.

The Fife Private Rental Solutions team have been focusing on prevention and sustainability whilst striving towards becoming an ethical letting agent. The team have been fully focused on the trials both landlords and tenants face with the ever-increasing rents in the private rented sector, alongside the evictions ban. The number of applicants applying for available properties has never been seen before with up to 30 applicants per property. The staff team advocate daily for potential tenants, tenants, and landlords to achieve positive outcomes. It is our vision once an ethical letting agent to work alongside like-minded individuals in making homes available, affordable, and sustainable within the private rented sector.

The Residential teams both at the Oasis Project and Valley Accommodation Unit provide a person-centred approach to all who accommodate within our services and recognise the difficulty in gaining social housing and the time frames for this. All colleagues have the duty to explain this to the individuals who can become exasperated with their homeless journey and length of stays within each environment. Staff proactively refer onto SAP and scatter flats though as previously mentioned the perceived housing crisis impacts on all aspects of housing with temporary accommodation being a safety net for some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The Cairn Centre continues to provide quality goods at reasonable prices, this is one of the services that has slowly improved during the cost-of-living crisis with more people making use of the charity retail sector, both purchasing and donating. The Cairn Centre is staffed by a Retail Development Worker and a small cohort of volunteers who have given their time and energy to the shop over a number of years. Trust in Fife are both lucky and thankful for the dedication given by all the volunteers alongside our gratitude to the community who choose to donate and shop within our service.

All Trust in Fife's services continue to adapt to the everchanging environment and challenges faced. This would not be possible without the direct buy in from all colleagues demonstrating their synergy towards achieving positive outcomes for both organisation and clients.

**Keith Westie**  
**Operations Manager**

# FIFE PRIVATE RENTAL SOLUTIONS



The 2022/23 financial year introduced the full return to the office after the pandemic and a period of hybrid working. This brought about a change to the enquiries by both tenants and landlords. The financial downturn also brought about additional challenges for both landlords and tenants.

## **Migrant or Refugee Application**

The Scottish Government's announcement of assistance to Ukrainians and those effected by the war saw many people being hosted in Fife. For some, this did not work out, 'staying with a host' came to a natural end and people living in hotels increased the number of people looking for advice. These enquiries came from applicants looking for a new property, people who had hosted families were assisting them to move on or Fife Council Housing Options Officers looking for assistance rehousing applicants where the relationship with hosts had broken down.

Staff had researched and understood the entitlements of these applicants and if the private rented sector was an affordable option. As many of the applicants spoke little English and translators were not always available, staff had to quickly adjust to verbal translation apps like Say Hi or Microsoft Translate. Staff also used Google translate to assist with emails to the clients.

After receiving advice many clients were able to secure property with independent funds.

## **Office Refurb**

A refurbishment of the Fife Private Rental Solutions office was undertaken. During the pandemic, the Cairn Centre utilised this space for storage. Therefore, at this point, it seemed the office environment was in the need of improvement. This included new flooring and decoration with new furniture purchased for meeting areas within the office.

## **Stat Submission & Rent Resolution**

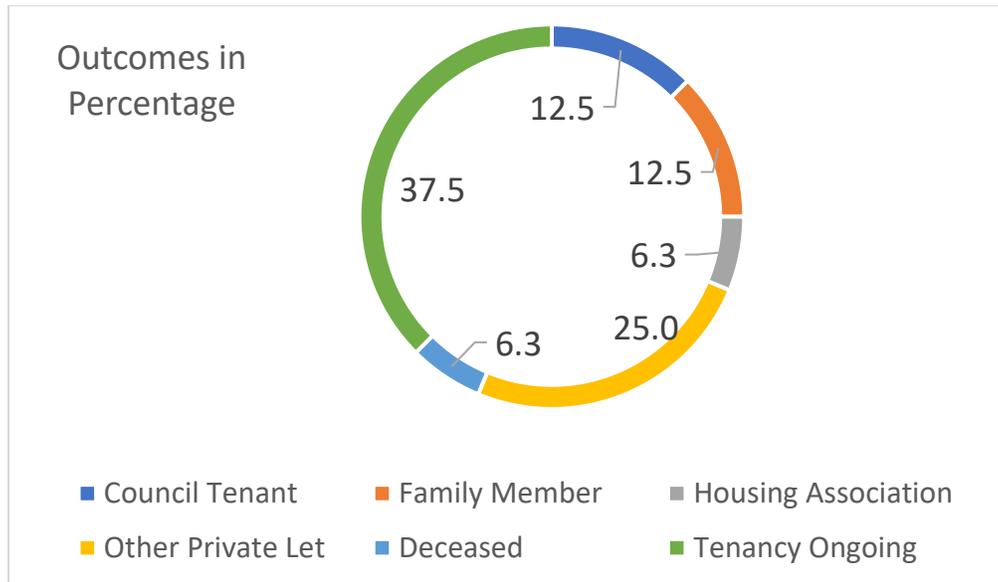
With the introduction of a new commissioning team the process for submission of stats was changed and in October 2022 and a new submission sheet was agreed. Time had to be allocated to ensure the appropriate information could be obtained from our systems and to recommend additional changes that were required to provide this information.

The process for submission of requests for Rent Resolution was also changed. This process allows Fife Private Rental Solutions staff to submit a request for payment of rent arrears to ensure the sustainability of clients in private property. This process involved further questions being answered and repayment of the fund to be considered.

## **Sustainability**

Fife Private Rental Solutions carry out an annual Sustainability study in January of each year. This study considered clients who were closed in a previous financial year and which tenure they were currently residing in. This was changed to consider clients moving into property between January and December. The study confirmed that 62.5% of clients that were spoken to have continued in the private sector in either the property that they were assisted into or into another private let. The report also considered clients that had received general advice or Rent Resolution assistance

providing further evidence that the private rented sector continues to be an essential housing option for many. A full copy of the sustainability report can be found on our website.



### Assistance with Income

An advanced income maximisation service has been piloted to further assist clients to secure additional or enhanced benefits, understand, and change their spending habits, negotiate with companies to reduce payments, and assist to set up payment plans or budgeting goals for anyone living in or moving into the private rented sector. A great deal of work has already been carried out, with several clients increasing their monthly income and in some cases, receiving a back dated lump sum. This additional work helped people sustain their accommodation in the private sector or allowed them to access accommodation, thus preventing homeless services being needed. The results have proved very positive and will be rolled out as a full service in the 2023/24 financial year.

### Joint Work With DPHS

Discussion and joint work commenced with the Disabled Persons Housing Service to consider the use of private rented property for clients who are disabled or less able and in need of a specific property. The property requirements could be a fully accessible property with widened doors and wet room for a wheelchair user or simply a ground floor property without stairs for a person in advanced years. This working group is considering how the private rented sector can be used to provide a housing option to these clients and how information can be gathered as to what adapted property is available.

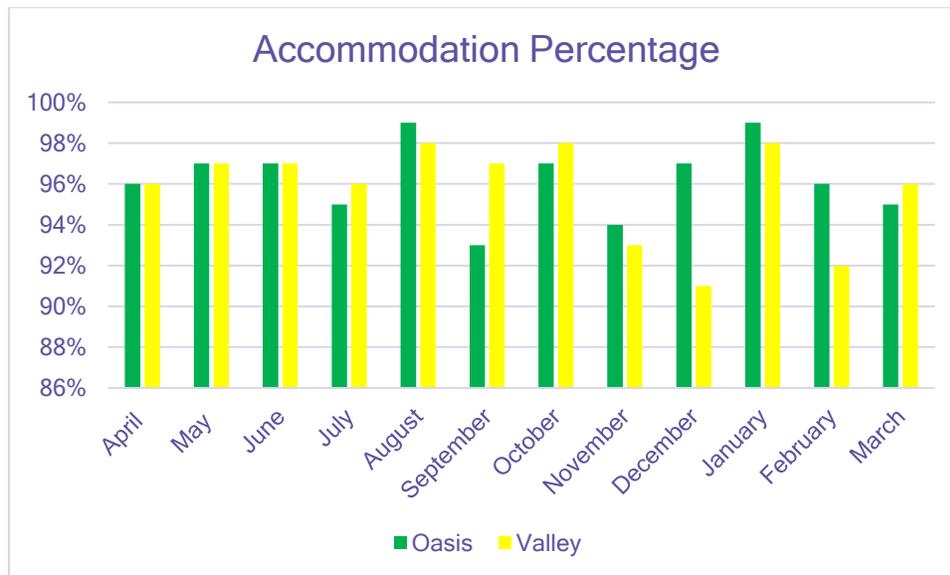
### Training

In the previous financial year two staff members completed training with Shelter Scotland. This is to update their knowledge and provide housing advice to clients. Two further team members completed a SCQF level 6 award in Housing Law with a third member of the team having almost completed the qualification. Both of our Senior Housing Consultants completed a Charter Institute of Housing level 3 qualification in Letting and Residential Property Management. This required Letwell training allows letting agent registration to be considered.



# RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The graph below shows the accommodation levels for the year 2022-23 at both of our residential units, Oasis Project, and Valley Accommodation Unit. Both units exceeded the 90% occupancy target set by Fife Council throughout the year.



In the year 2022-23 the residential service:

**Had 247  
referrals**

**Accommodated  
178 people**



# RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The residential team at Oasis Project have been busy this year with various training programmes, and two team members working towards their SVQ III Level 7 in social services and healthcare with the aim of enhancing the service delivery to the client group.

Staff and residents engage regularly through resident's meetings which are held monthly to ensure our clients voices are heard, this gives them the opportunity to express their views, opinions, and ideas about our service and what they would like to see more of and to advise of any issues or concerns they may have. Staff have facilitated several workshops with resident cooking, baking, arts and crafts, furniture restoration and some gardening work including painting and weeding. Both residents and staff members enjoy these workshops, and we look forward to working on some new ideas. The Oasis Project and Valley Accommodation Unit come together on a weekly basis to attend mindfulness sessions which has a great impact on the client's mental wellbeing. The main emphasis of our support is to enhance independent living skills and rights and responsibilities allowing opportunity to sustain current and future accommodation.

Due to what can only be perceived as a housing crisis, it's taking longer periods of time for clients to be moved on, this has both a positive and negative impact, it allows some of the younger residents to be supported longer which gives them a better chance of sustaining their own tenancy, however some of the older clients are affected negatively as they may not require the support Trust in Fife offers and just have the need to be housed. Some of our younger clients who have been referred to housing first as part of the rapid rehousing transition plan have met the criteria and been successful in being offered a tenancy with support from Rock Trust however some of our clients have not met the criteria and are still awaiting other options. It is important that as a support team we access all relevant options/external agencies in regards to assisting the client group with their housing and personal circumstances

Working with external agencies is having a positive impact on our client group. Adapts weekly drop-in sessions have been extremely effective, anyone having substance use issues can be referred into other external agencies such as FASS for alcohol counselling or addiction services for prescribing medication. Working alongside Kingdom Works employability team has also been a great success, they have supported Trust in Fife with not only training and employability placements but also fitness classes, gym passes and football coaching. We look forward to continuing these excellent working relationships.

**Lisa Pate**

**Residential Support Worker**

# RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The last year at the Valley Accommodation Unit has been a very productive and positive year. The refurbishments and updating that took place was completed making the unit look more homely and a fresher feel to it.

The residents and staff have completed some workshops that have added some new décor and home furnishing to the unit. We have completed numerous cooking workshops and BBQs that went down well, this also helps the residents that wish to socialise. There have been times when some residents have made new friends that they would not have met if not residing at the unit.

We held a McMillan Coffee Morning last September that raised over £120. This was enjoyed by all and was a great get together for all attending. We have signed up to hold one this year also and hopefully this will be as successful as last years.



The Valley Accommodation Unit have had several residents during the last year that have helped to make the garden more appealing by adding some new plants and pots which have given more colour. This has proven a success as residents now spend time relaxing in the garden area and under the new shelter. This can have a positive effect on Mental Health and socialising in general.

The Valley Accommodation Unit have had some staff changes during the last year, but all appears settled and working well with a great atmosphere for staff and residents.

**Julie Rigby**  
**Residential Support Worker**



# MINDFULNESS

I came across Dr Bill Paterson in December 2021 on social media. He is a Qualified Person-Centred Therapist and member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP Membership number: 00978490). As a member of the British Association of Mindfulness Based Approaches (BAMBA) he is recognised as a qualified and experienced mindfulness teacher/coach working with adults and young people (MBCT, MBLC, CBLC & MiSP. b).

Mindfulness sessions are held on a weekly basis and residents from both units, Oasis Project and Valley Accommodation Unit are encouraged to attend by staff members. These sessions are also open to previous residents, staff, and volunteers from the Cairn Centre. A core of 4 -5 previous residents have continued to attend the sessions over the last year. They have provided feedback stating that this transitional support has helped them maintain a daily routine and structure in their lives and that it has been great to have a place of safety and calm to connect with others.

Since residents regularly move in, through and out of the residential units, it is vital that the sessions can be easily picked up and integrated into each participants life. Sessions normally begin with a check-in, which invites each participant to say something about themselves how they feel that day. This is met with a welcome from the group. To help the participants focus on the present and begin the process of connection to self and others we begin by throwing and catching a tennis ball. This exercise opens the way for conversation to flow, and to shift from the sense of isolation and separation that can develop. We practice poly-vagal tuning exercises which includes breathing and stretching exercises designed to release tension and stress from the body, but also to shift the autonomic nervous system from fight, flight, and freeze mode towards pro-social and ease. Qi Gong tapping exercises are used to enable clients to feel present in the body rather than only in the mind. The group also practices grounding exercises so that they can learn to self-regulate and self-manage traumatic memories and difficult emotions. Participants are told to try these at their own pace and comfort, and it is explained that the more these are practised the more effective the exercises can be in creating space to ease everyday struggles and difficulties. We also introduce different forms of interactive psychoeducation to help normalise the experience of participants, this might involve explaining trauma effects or how thoughts, emotions and physical sensations are connected. This has been a challenging but effective experience for the residents who have attended these sessions.

**Cheryl Allan**  
**Residential Support Worker**

# THE CAIRN CENTRE



The Cairn Centre has had a great year, our income generated by kind donations from the local neighbourhood, town of Kirkcaldy and parts of Fife helps to promote what Trust in Fife and the Cairn Centre holds dear, which is great quality products at an affordable price, we promote re-use and recycling, through Nathan Wastesavers, an organisation that recycle clothing and rags, Best UK which processes all forms of surplus bric a brac, games, cd's and DVD's, to our free book table in store. Which inevitably reduces landfill, also helps to reduce fast fashion as people hopefully turn away from throw away culture towards more sustainable patterns of consumption. Hopefully by donating unwanted goods to charity shops, we all help create a cleaner, greener environment.

The Cairn Centre follows Revolve and Circular Communities standards and practices, keeping up to date with online forums, meetings and discussions that are relevant to the shop.

We have our small and dedicated group of volunteers, who are the backbone of The Cairn Centre, each with their own unique set of skills and personalities.

Our van is out on the road daily with Dave at the helm, it really is the lifeline of the shop, servicing collections and deliveries, always with great customer service as feedback is always fantastic.

We all look forward to an ever-evolving environment, looking after each other and keeping the Cairn Centre firmly at the heart of our local community.

**Claire Crawford**  
**Retail Development Worker**



# EVENTS

## Summer BBQ

The annual BBQ took place on a very sunny day at the beginning of July. It was well attended by staff, residents and volunteers who all enjoyed the food and fun of the day.



## Christmas Night Out

The staff Christmas night out was held at Dean Park Hotel and was a great evening of food and dancing. It was good to see the staff let their hair down after another challenging year.



# GIFTS AND GRANTS RECEIVED

## FUNDING FROM DONATIONS & GRANTS

Amazon Smile	£155.37
HMRC – Gift Aid	£155.45
PayPal Giving Fund	£7.60
KindLink	£1,468.80
B&Q Foundation	£7,000
Fife Voluntary Action – Wellbeing Inspired	£8,360
Inspiring Scotland	£3,500

## FUNDING FROM STATUTORY AUTHORITY

**Fife Council** **£846,797**

Fife Council funding was allocated as follows:

Residential Services	£380,053
Scottish Government Real Living Wage Uplift	£34,442
Fife Private Rental Solutions	£432,302

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS

## Chief Executive Officer

Caroline McCall

## Operations Manager

Keith Westie

## Trustees (year of first appointment)

George Proudfoot (2008)

Jennifer Walker (2018)

Gary Wright (2018)

Qasim Ahmad (2020)

Richard Barnett (2021)

Verdi Clark (2022)

Steve Gough (2023)

Geoffrey Proudlock (2023)





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