

# ELREC NEWSLETTER



PROMOTING EQUALITY - FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION - FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS

## ***From the Chair Foyzol Choudhury MBE MSP***

“ Thank you dear esteemed members and ELREC supporters and users for your continued support and welcome to another newsletter. As with every quarter, this one has been busy and challenging too. The lockdown has eased massively, and I hope this is it and we move to our ‘new’ normal soon and enjoy life once again.



ELREC has been doing Covid specific work for over a year now including the food project which has helped hundreds of families with food support living in Edinburgh. This work came to an end in August 2021 as the demand had decreased due to people getting back to work and on their feet. It was a very rewarding project for ELREC, and we are glad to have been able to help in this small way.

All the regular projects have been doing well and continuing the best they could despite the limited conditions. Again, thank you to the funders for understanding and allowing much needed flexibility to both adapt and improvise some of the outcomes.

The Open Arms project has been renewed for further 2 years, so well done to Mitra for all her hard work on the project and taking it further to help so many women.

We have also been successful in gaining 15 kickstart placements which started in June 2021 doing various types of work with us for 6 months. We welcome you and hope you find your time with ELREC a rewarding one.

ELREC has also been awarded a grant from the Adapt and Thrive programme to help further its work and move towards being more sustainable over the coming years.

Finally, I want to Thank the staff and our wonderful volunteers who have been with us since the lockdown and have stepped up too many challenges. Well, done and I wish you all the best for the coming months.

## Honorary Members

Honorary Patron:  
The Rt. Hon. Frank Ross, Lord Provost  
of the City of Edinburgh  
Honorary President:  
Prof. Sir Geoff Palmer DSc OBE

## Board Members

Chair: Foysol Choudhury MBE  
Co- Chair Azra Sharif-Qayyum  
Vice Chair and Convenor of Personnel  
Subcommittee: Shami Khan DL  
Treasurer: Cllr Carl John  
Company Secretary: Rajnish Singh  
Convenor, Membership Subcommittee:  
Jessica (Zonghong) Yang  
Convenor, Finance and General Purposes  
Subcommittee: Irina Lazarenko  
Convenor, Education Subcommittee:  
Magdalena Sajnaga  
Board Members: Irshad Ahmed, Shahid Riaz,  
Rana Shams

## Staff

Office Manager: Parveen Ishaq  
Administrator: Franciele Sobierai  
Finance Officer: Adrian Barbascompa  
Equalities Engagement Project: Mizan Rahman  
Support and Advice Service: Parveen Ishaq  
True Colours Project: Didem Kaner Ural  
Open Arms Project: Mitra Rostami  
Communities for Conservation Project Lead:  
Jean- Matthieu Gaunand  
Community Link Officers (CLO):  
David Tai- Chinese CLO  
Ewelina Lukaszek- Polish CLO  
Fahmida Huczewska- South Asian CLO  
Verena Aedo- Spanish CLO  
Admin Assistant: Basimah Nadeem  
Mkt and Engagement Assistant: Iman Nadeem  
Digital Champion: Hassan Alaiban  
CFC Project Assistant: Medine Yasar  
Open Arms Project Assistant: Maria Raza  
Open Arms Project Assistant: Athanassia Malaj  
Fundraising Assistant: Aidan Pinkerton  
Volunteer Coordinator: Pryde Baxter

## About us

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional  
Equality Council (ELREC) founded in  
1971, is a voluntary body and charitable  
company made up of individual  
members and representatives from  
wide range of organisations. ELREC has  
a remit to work across the areas of City  
of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian  
and West Lothian Councils.

## Our Objectives

to work towards the elimination of  
unlawful discrimination  
to reduce inequality and promote a  
culture of human rights  
to promote good relations between  
persons of different groups without

## We pursue our aims through

Engagement with communities of  
protected characteristics  
Complaint aid for victims of  
discrimination and harassment  
Support for communities in influencing  
change by facilitating interaction between  
communities and authorities  
Consultancy on equality policies,  
procedures and delivery of customized  
training on equality matters.

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Charity Number: SC007896  
Company Number: SC183419



## **From the Honorary Patron - Lord Provost Frank Ross**

On behalf of the City of Edinburgh, I extend my heartfelt and warm wishes to everyone reading this month's issue.

As Summer comes to an end, it was fantastic to have our August festivals back in the city - as the Capital returned to its rightful place as the world's Festival City. While we recover the soul by attending live performances again, and enjoy more opportunities to meet and socialise with friends and family, we must remember that the pandemic is far from over. We will get there, but only if we take care of ourselves and others, by getting both vaccination doses, if eligible, and carrying out regular testing. We will beat this together.



In my role as Lord Provost I will continue to work with you to promote social inclusion across our city and beyond, as I feel that everyone should feel a sense of belonging to their community, our diversity should be celebrated, and that we each have the opportunity to play a full part across our communities. This remains true as Edinburgh stands ready to play our part in the Aghanistan crisis. Nobody can fail to be shocked and appalled to witness the ongoing desperate situation in Afghanistan.

Edinburgh has a long and proud history of welcoming people escaping desperate circumstances such as these. Our highly skilled team has forged a positive track record over the last five years, successfully welcoming, supporting and settling more than 500 people displaced by the Syrian civil war into our city.

We hope to be in a position to confirm the level of Edinburgh's involvement very soon. Meanwhile we continue to work at pace with the Home Office and our partners in the city to ensure support is in place for those fleeing for their lives as the situation in their homeland deteriorates.

The input of Edinburgh's interfaith groups will be central to this and to the city's recovery from the pandemic and I want to take this opportunity to thank all ELREC staff, its board members and volunteers for their continued hard work. The services you provide are vital to residents in the Capital and very much appreciated.

## **From the Co-Chair Azra Sharif-Qayyum**

I am thrilled be nominated as a co -Chair of ELREC by my fellow board members.

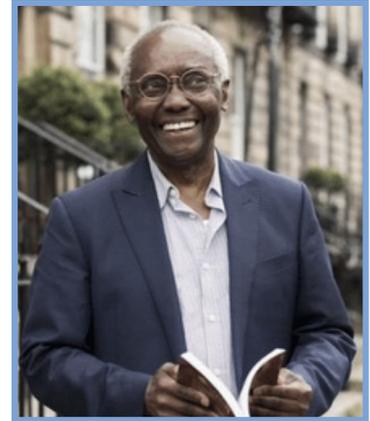
Welcome to ELREC's September Newsletter, as you will see, all the projects worked very hard as usual, and delivered their best services to help our communities.

Also, a big thank you to our funders and partners for the continuous support. I look forward to serving the organisation in this additional role.



## **From the Honorary President Prof Sir. Geoff Palmer OBE**

For the future we should talk of one race... the Human race; all people but different. About the past, we must never forget that 300 years of the most brutal slavery was based on the contrived conclusion that the black colour of the skins of African people made them inferior and ideal material for distant legal enslavement. The consequences of human prejudice are invariably cruel and nothing was crueller than labelling people Chattel and then enslaving them, without a moveable word against the wicked deed, for centuries. The consequences of slavery have made us



what we have become... people affected in different ways by the most profitable evil the world has known. Although we commemorate and learn from other atrocities, there are some who begrudge that the horrors of British slavery, which killed untold millions of defenceless black people, is being remembered in 2007. This slavery was based on skin colour. It has taken more than 200 years for black people to regain the dignity of colour they had before slavery. The source of this dignity-regained was the holocaust of Chattel slavery. From this cultural source flows a lineage from which my black identity is derived. We who are not white share this identity. Any attempt to remove this identity sanctions racism against black people.

The white civil service system has never responded so quickly before to any of the needs of black people. Therefore, the reason for the proposed census ban on our black identity) in 2007 must be seen as no better than the beads or bullets which were exchanged for slaves. We must insist that the choice to be who we say we are must remain and that black, white or any other identity must not be abolished, changed or tampered with again. It is almost unpardonable that our black identity, so dearly earned, can be put out to consultation by ignorant people. People who gang together to lie and deny the rights of others should not be in charge of other people's freedom. A census that fails to capture, honestly, the human diversity of colour, class, race and creed cannot be used to monitor equality in any community.

Equality is dependent on identifying all the people of the community, so that their needs can be met. My colour is me and I shall not favour forms that exclude my black identity. It is evident that the civil servants involved are not aware of research that shows that a black identity is related to self-esteem and positive development. The arrogance with which this assault on black identity was carried out has done untold harm to race relations and the rights of black people.

The idiot that calls me black, as an insult, does me no harm...I am black. The right to call ourselves black or white is already in place on national documents and must remain.

## **From the Treasurer - Cllr Carl John**

Hi all members and staff The unusual year continues and just when things looked to be getting back to normal the pandemic appears to be hitting back. I am not allowed into my office in the Livingston Civic Centre so I am trying my best to be a councillor from my spare room. With people now forced to home working for 18 months or so you can imagine the cases of neighbour disputes and domestic troubles have multiplied. I am looking forward to the day when ELREC can once again hold board meetings in our Forth Street office which will give me a reason to travel into Edinburgh .



I am delighted that we have been able to continue with most of our projects and I would like to thank our Staff, Volunteers and Board members for continuing our good work in these hard times.

Locally in West Lothian I have been able to attend our revitalised Community Race Forum and Fair Justice system for Scotland meetings via Zoom and although not the same as meeting in a building face to face it has kept the momentum of these groups going forward. Although I am stuck out in West Lothian I often think of all our fellow members continuing strengthening our good name in the city and it fills me with pride when out here in the country how many times ELREC's good name comes up in our conversation. Keep Safe and may your God be with you.

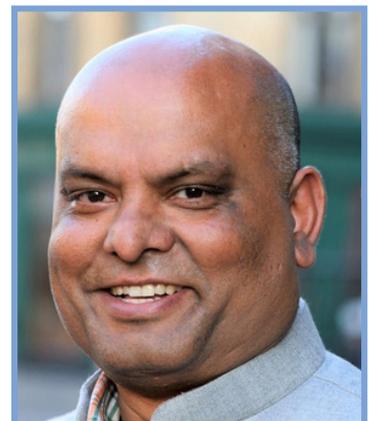
## **From the Company Secretary - Rajnish Singh**

Trust all well and enjoying the brilliant summer that we had this year.

This summer the excellent weather was supplemented with positive development on the Covid restrictions front, mainly due to a very good vaccination drive and people participation in it.

Would urge all across the community to get yourself vaccinated and help the authorities and wider population to get back to sustained normal.

The announcement of removing almost all restrictions from 09 August 2021 created an environment of optimism and excitement



in communities and organisations who had to live in an unprecedented world since March 2020. On the back of it, Edinburgh Diwali, the organisation I am part of since its inception and leading now, has planned to celebrate the only Public Diwali in Edinburgh in the format prior to 2020 -parade through City centre, dance & music at Rossband theatre and Fireworks as finale. It is a free event and open to all. We would be celebrating this on 21 November 2021 and would be delighted to welcome you all to the event.

## Police Scotland – Message to Communities



Our Prevention, Intervention and Partnerships team have been engaging with our communities across Edinburgh throughout the past month supporting victims of crime and taking part in several partnership initiatives.

Our Equality and Diversity officers have visited several victims of hate crime offering referrals to partner organisations and providing reassurance and crime prevention advice. Some examples of these visits are listed below:

- An eight year old girl had been receiving verbal abuse from a neighbour in relation to her disability. Officers supported the young girl and her family and have referred them to Victim Support Scotland.
- A restaurant owner was assaulted and racially abused in the presence of his family. Again, the team visited the family and provided support and a referral to a partner agency.
- Officers visited the owner of a shop who had been assaulted and racially abused. He was provided with personal safety advice and advised he was reassured by the manner in which his report was dealt with, understanding that Police Scotland will not tolerate hate crime.

In relation to World Suicide Prevention Day, in conjunction with the Edinburgh Health and Social care Partnership, the team facilitated outreach information events, supported by partners representing Edinburgh's communities. This collaborative approach was designed to acknowledge inequalities and we were grateful for the support offered by organisations including Scottish Trans Alliance, Waverley Care, Roam / NHS and Equality Network.

In advance of the return to Edinburgh of international students our team are providing information stalls at events at each of Edinburgh's universities. These stalls provide information on hate crime, personal safety and crime prevention. These have been supplemented by the creation of videos, recorded by our officers, which have been distributed to all universities and appear on their websites.

We have dedicated officers providing awareness raising sessions and training on the Keep Safe initiative. This is a joint venture between Police Scotland and the charity I Am Me. Keep Safe was created following feedback from the disabled community that there were times when people did not feel safe travelling independently. Over the past month we have provided training to two branches of Royal Bank of Scotland also to Waitrose in Edinburgh. Further organisations are now booked in for training including Lothian Buses and Morrison's.

We have been engaging with Edinburgh Inter Faith Agency and will be attending their AGM later in the month. We will be speaking about the provision of hate crime sessions and third party reporting opportunities. We can provide a further update on this in future newsletters.

## Manager's Update

Welcome to another quarter, ELREC has continued its services during this time as well as welcomed new faces as part of the governments Kickstart scheme. ELREC will have in total 15 placements which range from digital champions, project assistants and much more. The placements will last for 6 months and are aimed at 16-24-year-olds, so welcome to those young people who have already started with us.

We continue to work on helping alleviate digital poverty by not only providing tablets but digital training to many groups in our communities.

The projects are doing well however some changes are forthcoming in September/October 2021 with end of old projects and start of new ones.



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## Support and Advice

ELREC's support and advice provide free impartial advice and support on issues such as housing, benefits, racism, discrimination and other statutory matters. Its open and free for everyone and run by experienced volunteers.



This quarter we had queries on:

- Help liaising with the council
- Racism on the street
- Anti social nuisance/neighbours
- Racial assault
- Legal advice on asylum
- Rogue traders
- School admission issues
- Legal queries/solicitors
- Benefit and council tax
- This quarter we dealt with 14 enquiries.

E Q U A L I T Y

# Administrator's Update

On 10th July a thank you lunch was held in Leith to say thank you to all the volunteers who have worked with ELREC and have helped us deliver vital work during the pandemic.



## Kickstart Team

In July we welcomed our Kickstart team at ELREC, we wish them a successful and bright future with us!

The scheme is aimed at 16 to 24-year olds currently on Universal Credit who will be able to access a six-month paid placement for a minimum 25 hours a week. There are still some available opportunities. Talk to your Work Coach to find out about local Kickstart opportunities and how to apply.



In August, a successful mobility training course was completed in Rethymno, Greece, on Intercultural Competencies building.

ELREC staff members and volunteers learnt techniques for the work and social inclusion of migrants, as well as improved their intercultural communication and awareness.

Thanks to the Erasmus+ Programme and to European Education and Learning Institute for facilitating this wonderful project.



As the summer holidays come to an end ELREC and Unity came together to provide kids from disadvantaged backgrounds in Edinburgh and the Lothians free outdoor games. Every Saturday at a different Edinburgh park, more than 20 children attended games such as football, rounders, volleyball and many more. The purpose of this project was to help beat isolation and loneliness amongst young children post and during the lockdown.

We feel this has been fully achieved, thanks to our partner Unity and our funder Persimmon Homes.



*Franciele Sobierai*  
Administrator  
franciele@elrec.org.uk

# ELREC Food Project

On 6th August 2021, we ended our Food Support Project, until such need arises. We are very grateful to all hardworking volunteers and partners who supported the project. Thank you to the amazing funders who made our work possible and supported communities in need.



To celebrate the Food Support journey we created a video, please [check it out](#):



# True Colours

Welcome to True Colours corner!

We hope that you all had a great restful summer and managed to do new adventures.

We had a break for a couple of months as we had to say goodbyes to our lovely previous project coordinator Didem Kaner Ural, we wish her all the very best in everything she does.

We have been busy preparing a fun informative Anti-bullying toolkit which can be used by young people, teachers, and youth workers to help in raising awareness about bullying and activities and resources that can be used to challenge and tackle this issue.



Please find link to our toolkit [here](#).

Feel free to share it with anyone that you think would benefit from it!

As schools are back recently, we would like wish all the children and young people a productive year; full of compassion, kindness and respect.

We will be running a workshop with Multi-Cultural Family Base, Safe Haven's Refugee Girls Group and hoping to run a few in the future.

In the next few weeks, we will be busy doing different workshops with young people from Erskine Stewart's Melville School.

Those will be run to different classes from S1 to S5 and different topics including; Cultural awareness, Stereotypes, Refugees & immigration and a few more.



It was a great start to meet with the young people from S1 classes doing a few Cultural Awareness workshops. We asked them to draw things that they think represent their culture and they came up with fantastic drawings; you can check some of these in the picture!



We are very excited to meet the young people and looking forward to working with them and the wonderful staff there.

Lastly, we are very delighted to welcome new interns to True Colours who will be joining us near the end of September, a warm welcome to Catelyn and Kareem from Arcadia University.

Peace to all,

*Diline Abushaban*  
*True Colours Project Coordinator*  
*DAbushaban@elrec.org.uk*



# Open Arms

## Champions of Health (OACoH)



The project emerged and developed from the Open Arms partnership service (2018-2020) and kicked off in May 2021, set to run for 2 years, thank to the main grant received from The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) by Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC).

We ran a launch event on the 20th of May when we introduced the new project and our plans to our collaborators and the public. The event took place online a recording of that was sent to the people who were interested in the project but couldn't attend the event.

Our Open Arms service turned out to be even more vital and needed after the pandemic due to the adverse impact of lockdowns on mental and physical health of women from minority ethnic backgrounds. The other reason was the slowed down process of integration of those women because of deprivation from the opportunity of using and practicing English language in social settings.

We vowed to combat isolation and loneliness and the adverse impact of those on migrant women's mental and physical health by providing funded activities to them.



We also promised to take our clients on the direction and executive board and get them actively involved in shaping and delivering the activities.

Here is a brief report of what we have done and achieved over the first 3 months run of the service:

### **Outreach and registration**

We reached out to women from the BAME, migrant and refugee background via the following mediums:

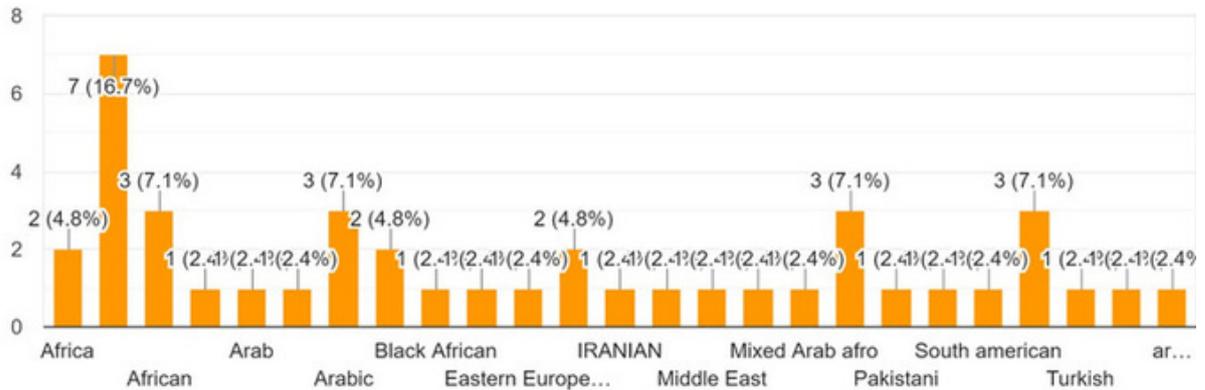
- 1- Our previous service-users (80%)
- 2- Our other projects within ELREC (10%)
- 3- Our usual collaborating organisations within the third and the statutory sector including City of Edinburgh Council, SACRO, Granton Goes Greener, Linknet Mentoring, Scottish Refugee Council, Edinburgh Community Food, Edinburgh Women's Aid (10%)

During this period, we signed up 42 service-users. After an informal chat, women have registered into the service by completing an online form. They have been helped in filling up the form.

The following graphs show a brief background and information about the service-users:

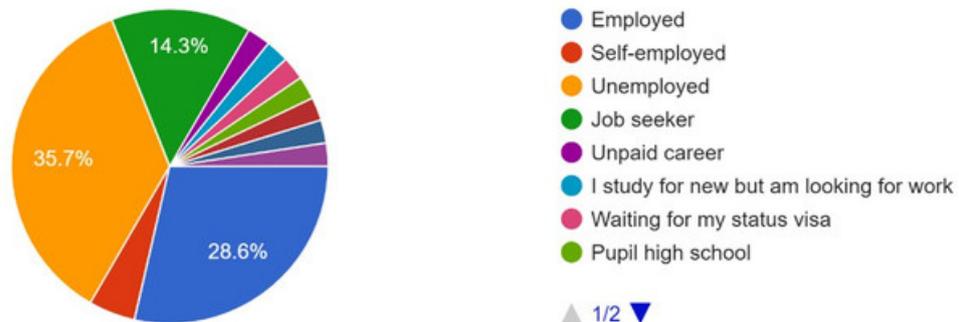
### What is your ethnicity?

42 responses



### What is your employment status? (Note, unemployed means someone who doesn't have a job and is not looking for one either)

42 responses



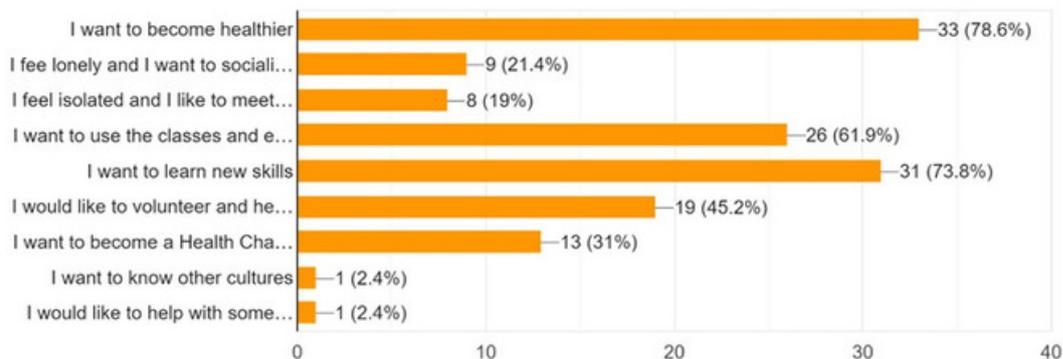
### How did you hear about the Open Arms service?

42 responses



What is/are the reasons that you want to join Open Arms group (please choose as many as apply to you)

42 responses



## Activities

We have been running the following services and activities for our women:

- 1- Daily exercise classes, including cardio exercise, body maintenance exercise, yoga, and head and face yoga
- 2- Weekly arts and crafts workshops (materials provided-secured via match funding received from Virgin O2)
- 3- Monthly Women's Health forums
- 4- Informal English class
- 5- Sewing club
- 6- Coffee and nature (Chat for Arabic speaking women)
- 7- Challenges & Rewards, which is a peer-support-based group activity run by volunteers amongst the service-users on WhatsApp. Introducing and managing weekly challenges encouraging active and healthy lifestyle. This is a very exciting and popular activity which has been turned out to incredibly effective in influencing women to take up active lifestyle. A very encouraging point-based program that leads to rewards (secured by separate match fund/sponsorship) and eventual certification as a "Champion of Health".

We have also liaised with other organisations and collaboratively have provided the following activities to our women:

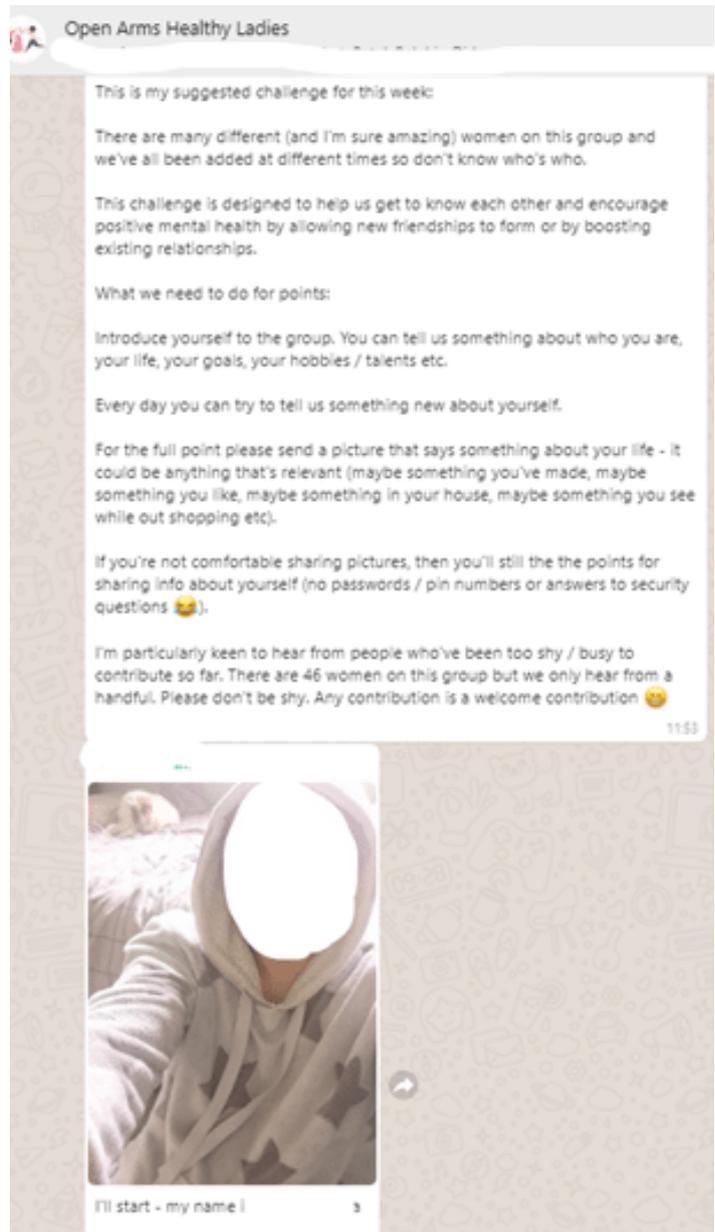
- 1- Weekly Cooking classes in partnership with the Edinburgh Community Food. Ingredients kits provided to the participants free of charge. 8 people attended.
- 2- 3 sessions of Cooking skills and workshop in partnership with TESCO community food and Fareshare. 15 people attended. £30 TESCO voucher to buy ingredients given out to each.
- 3- In collaboration with Family Holiday Association, we supported one Open Arms service-user and her family to go on a funded (accommodation and transport) holiday for 3 days in a Scottish caravan park resort in July 2021.



Vegetables sop we cooked with Theodora 🍷

## Service-users involvement in running of the service

Probably, the biggest achievement of the second run of the project can be seen as active involvement of service users in all aspects of the work, from outreach to planning and running of the activities. Within the period of this account, we have had 3 women who have regularly been volunteering to run activities and encouraging the others in the group to stay healthy and happy. It has also been noticeable that most of the service users have become generally more communicative and participating in discussions in the group chat platform on WhatsApp.



## The impact

The positive impact of the service has been noticed via monitoring the attendance and the pattern of referrals to the project. The feedback has also been constantly sought in an informal and natural way and the service-users have been made to feel comfortable to express their opinion and suggestions in relation to the service.

Here you can see an extract of a feedback account by one of the service-users below:

*" ... I don't know how I could had coped with all the adversity arising after the pandemic and the breakage of my marriage and illness of my child and all the loneliness on all on my own. I can't believe that a simple routine exercise class with Open Arms maintained my sanity. ..."*

## The team

The project has been managed and mostly run by the project leader, Mitra Rostami. 2 sessional workers have been hired on contact basis to deliver the weekly yoga and craft classes. An ESOL teacher, who previously delivered our writing workshops, have been running English classes for us every Wednesday on voluntary basis.

Up to this moment, the project has recruited and managed 2 young volunteers, 3 interns from abroad, and has recently added two young women as part-time (16 hrs/wk) project assistances through a funded employment scheme for young unemployed BAME people who are on social benefits (Kick Start).

All the young people have mutually benefited from the services and activities on offer by the project as well as contributing to the delivery of it, and have learned skills and gained experience helpful for their employment prospect.



**Hi everyone,** 😊

My name is Maria and I am an assistant for the Open Arms Project. I will be helping Mitra with running the project with the admin side of things. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you.

*Hello everyone,*

My name is Vefy and I am an assistant for the Open Arms Project. I am working with Mitra and Maria to ensure that the project runs smoothly. I can't wait to meet each and every one of you.

*Mitra Rostami*  
 Open Arms Project Coordinator  
[mitrarostami@elrec.org.uk](mailto:mitrarostami@elrec.org.uk)

# Communities for Conservation

"The Earth is what we all have in common."  
Wendell Berry



We have joined Climate Scotland's campaign as a partner to tell our leaders to protect the things we love from the climate and nature emergency. We want strong and meaningful commitments to protect the things we love, and to make a better future for us all. Help us reach 10,000 voices: <https://climatescotland.org/add-your-voice/>

## Energy efficiency

In the last quarter the team has been working hard to serve our communities and encourage climate action. Community Link Officers have helped numerous BAME families to save energy at home. There are many ways to save energy at home and become more energy efficient.

## Climate awareness

We screened and discussed the documentary Seaspiracy and organised workshops to raise awareness about climate change including our Monday climate café in Arabic run by Diline.

## Transport



Our beginners and intermediates' cycling class on Saturday are in full swing. They help to increase people's cycling skills and confidence with the aim of commuting by bike. Thank you to volunteer Zee for helping out every Saturday. You can check the [essential cycling skills guide here](#) and [here in Arabic](#), which we follow during the classes. If interested in joining, please email [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)



Testimonial: "This is to let you know that I am cycling actively now (...) for the past few weeks. I thought I should let you know, especially with all the help, advise and support you were keen to provide so I can cycle. So wanted to say, many thanks."



We have a few e-bikes available for free three weeks loans. If interested in borrowing one, please email [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)

Testimonial: *"Recently I've bought Gtech Escent e-bike thanks to experience with your bike and I'm very happy. Much appreciated".*

Are you nervous about **riding** on Edinburgh's roads? Join the bike buddies' programme. We can pair you up with an experienced bike buddy! Wherever you need to cycle, your buddy will help you become a confident cyclist by tackling specific challenges on your chosen route. Contact [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk) or 0131 556 0441.

Testimonial: *"The programme was fantastic, it really helped me build confidence in my cycling and getting to know different routes around the city. Sam was very patient and kind and made everything easier. The length was also appropriate, we managed to cover all safety measures and technical aspects of the bike whilst having fun around the city. I bought a new better bike and yesterday I had my first medium-distance cycle (about 10 miles) on my own. I really appreciated this opportunity and I recommend it to any cyclists who aren't very secure or confident. "*



Join us for our 1st social led ride of the year on Sunday 26th September from 12:15pm to 4:15pm! The ride will go from NKS (near the Meadows) to the new [Lauriston Farm](#) via North Edinburgh Arts, the Cramond promenade and back! More details [here](#) or on the [Facebook event](#). If interested, please email [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk).

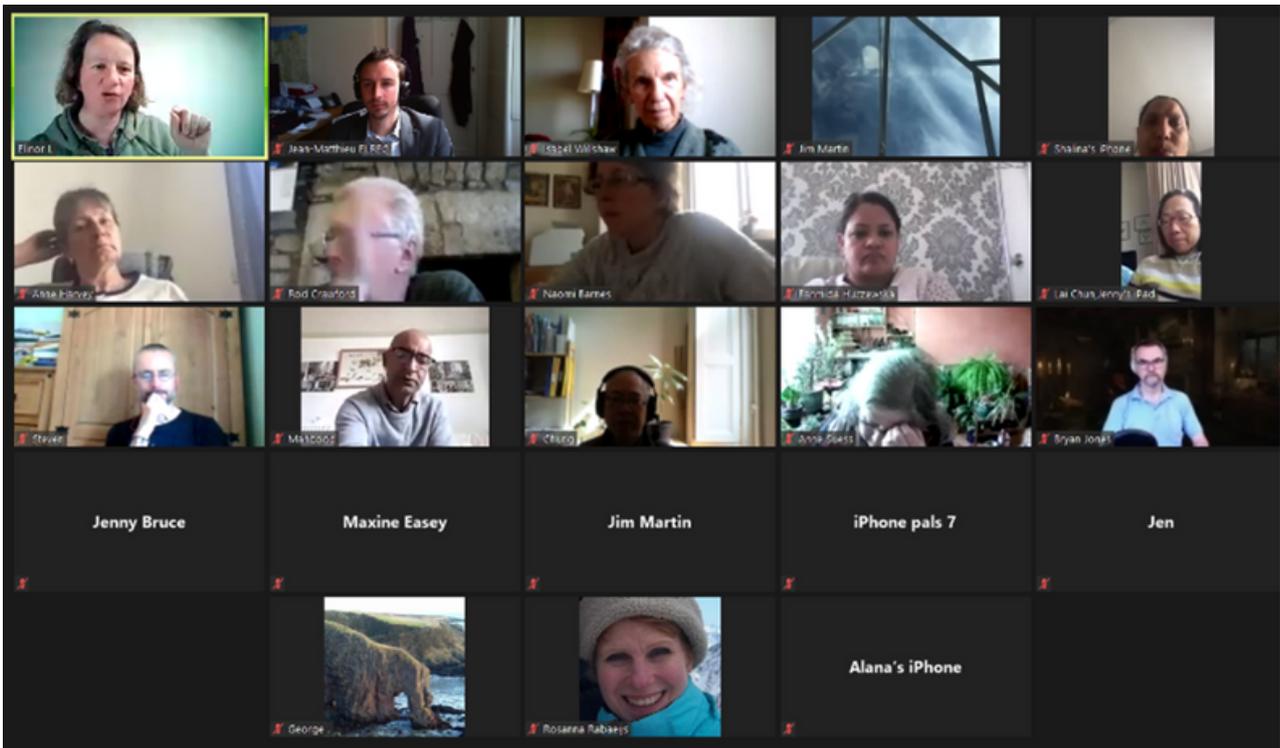
We will be riding on cycle paths. We will be going at a reasonable pace and the ride will be led by cycle ride leaders, so everybody can join! Lauriston Farm has invited us to visit their [new community farm](#).

When: Sunday 26th September at 12:15pm to 4pm.

Where: NKS, Darroch Annexe, 7 Gillespie St, Edinburgh EH3 9NH

## Food growing

In the last quarter, our Friday educational 'grow your own' online sessions with the Royal Botanic Garden have helped tens of participants to grow veggies at home. We have also organized 2 tours of the botanic garden guided by Elinor. Our other community gardens saw a very good crop this season at Iqra, Milton road, Drumbrae, etc. Mahboob, one of our 'grow your own' participant was interviewed as part of the BBC Gardeners world. Watch [here](#) episode 22 from 5:30min.





### Monday Sewing & Repairing Club

Our sewing club is welcoming regular new members who come to repair and alter their clothes. Come in on Mondays from 11am to 1pm to repair, alter or upcycle your clothes. You will get access to equipment and expert guidance. If interested, please email [cfce@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfce@elrec.org.uk)



### Hire our electric van

You can hire out our electric van at competitive prices. We offer a 30% discount to organisations or individuals who can evidence an environmental purpose. If so, please email [cfce@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfce@elrec.org.uk)

### SOMRA Project

Our Erasmus project named "Supporting meaningful Occupations for Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum seekers" or "SOMRA" is running smoothly with our European partners. Our volunteer Odeta has been of tremendous in the infield and desk research. SOMRA offers an innovative approach for tackling two major challenges of the 21st century, namely climate change and refugee crises, by engaging refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in meaningful occupations that transform them into environment role models with a sustainable impact in their new and previous home. More info here: <https://somra.eu/>



## The Edinburgh Climate Festival 2021



Funded by the [National Lottery Fund Awards for All](#) and the [Scottish Government Climate Challenge Fund](#) and organised by ELREC, the Welcoming, SHRUB Coop, the Salisbury Centre, Earth in Common and supported by Transition Edinburgh and CEMVO, the [Edinburgh Climate Festival 2021](#) saw over 3,000 people from diverse communities in Leith Links on Saturday 14th August 2021 from 12noon to 7pm. The festival aimed at inspiring celebrating climate action in advance of COP26.



There was a DJ, live music, an arts installation, yoga, tai chi classes, storytelling, a labyrinth, and 55 stalls from different local organisation focusing transport, energy, COP26, waste, upcycling, art, food, wildlife and climate justice and spirituality. Organisations offered activities, climate change games and discussions or workshops, bike repairs, ebike and cargo bike trials, clothing repairs, upcycling, crocheting, henna painting, planting workshop, swap shops and more. The equipment was mostly delivered by cargo bike with Farr out Deliveries.



### Stalls' feedback:

The Woodland Trust: *"We had an amazing time and really enjoyed the whole day. We're used to attending a lot of events, and this was one of the best, if not the best event we've done - both in terms of organisation and the atmosphere and community vibe. We're super keen to come again next year!"*

Transition Edinburgh: *"We were very glad to support this tremendous event! Amazing to see so much interest - nearly 50 new sign-ups and lots of interest in the idea of a wider pan Edinburgh alliance under the banner of ["Our Future Edinburgh"](#)."*

Edinburgh University: *"The festival was very organised, from application to transporting to the actual event day. I was conducting the workshop for my doctoral research, mostly by myself, but the staff and other stallholders were so friendly and helpful to help me set up and close the workshop. The event was way busier than I expected where I collected so much useful data. I really appreciate that it went so smoothly especially during the difficult covid time. Excellent work!"*

Granton Goes Greener: *"As usual, it was an amazing experience for all our volunteers and service users to be part of the festival . We were really impressed by how the Climate Festival was organised this year. There was plenty of space around our stall and people were coming in a steady flow allowing for social distance and following all the health and safety."*

Greenpeace Edinburgh: *"I just wanted to say thank you for organising the festival. We had a great time and got lots of people involved in sending a message to the government for our campaign. Big thumbs-up for organising cargo bike transport. I don't envy the cyclists going up and down hills in Edinburgh with the huge boxes, but I hope that more of that can be established in the future in various parts of Edinburgh"*



Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign: *"It was a pleasure to take part in your event and to see so many people enjoying themselves and taking part in so many different activities - especially the cargo bikes! For Spokes it was a very successful day, we sold 60 active travel maps and more importantly had many conversations about cycling infrastructure and Spaces for People and how to campaign to retain and improve these. The fact we used a cargo bike as the basis of our stall was positively commented on and it was good to be independent of motorised transport. It was also great that you positioned us between the bike repair stalls! "*

Changeworks: *"We really enjoyed it and it was a great way for us to meet a range of people and speak to them about home energy issues. There was a good turnout and I felt the event was well organised and it was clear where we were to be for unloading and setting up."*

### Participant's feedback:

*"Let me congratulate you on a successful climate festival. "*

*"I just wanted to say thank you for this great Event. We had a very good time and I was especially impressed by the diversity of stalls. Great to see so many voices and organisations represented."*



Edinburgh cycling festival *"The thing that was different about this event from others that I have been to was the number of mother's wanting to try and ride the cargo bikes, not just wanting someone to take their kids for a ride. I got a real sense that we are reaching a tipping point where cargo bikes are being seen as a viable mainstream option. Not just a novelty. It is also interesting to hear the number of kids in the street who know what a cargo bike is and that it is a fun means of transport."*

Neil Walker from the Edinburgh reporter: "Well done to everyone involved for a very enjoyable and successful day."

"What a lovely sunny day to come together with so many like minded people, community growers and environmental groups. We made some great connections and look forward to more collaborations in the future "

"Leith Links was buzzing today with the @edclimatefest taking place. So many organisations and people are trying to make a difference to save our planet. Very humbling to see. Have a great weekend all 🙌"

"Some happy upcyclers @edclimatefest They've diverted bicycle inner tube and broken jewellery from landfill by making them into cuffs."

The Creative Climate Activist: "Absolutely loved Edinburgh's climate festival last Saturday. 😊 So many activities and workshops and education to inspire positive collective action. This kind of creativity as a community is what activism is all about and I loved to be a part of it!"



"I loved the festival so much and would love to see more community creativity and care such as this. It was such an amazing day to get involved with."

"Two years ago Luca attended his first festival, the #ClimateChangeFestival. Sarah and I introduced Luca to the festival and it was there when I tried #reusable napkins for the first time and never looked back. 2021 and Luca, Matti, Lucy and I went to the festival together. Luca left a message to mother nature. We went for a wonder, there was live music, we bought #bambootoothbrush, yummy #organic fresh fruits from @eastcoastorganicsfarmshop Organics. We also got some free repair kit for our bike and free heat panels for our radiators to save energy from @changeworks @edclimatefest And ...no rain!!!! We finished the day by going to the playground, Luca and Matti had a great time! They were tired towards the end but I thought it was worth the trip. They are our future, good to engage soon in the green planet conversation. The blue top I was wearing was the same one I wore when Luca got discharged from the neonatal...unforgettable day."

Follow us on social media:



# **Equality Engagement**

## **Diversity in Public Life**



Diversity in public life (Equality Engagement) project has been working with supporting PLC members to get involved in the Scottish local authority election 2022. Over the months, major political parties have been carrying out the candidate selection and interviews. We have been provided support to our PLC members those expressed their interest to be a prospective councillor candidate at the next year election.

Also, we have worked to promote the Scottish youth parliament election which will be held on November 2021. Number of young people from BAME background has come forward to stand as a MSYP (member of Scottish youth parliament) at the election.

Please note, funding of the ELREC Equality Engagement (Diversity in Public Life) project will come to end by the end of October 2021. The project was funded by Scottish Government Promoting Equality and Cohesion Grant. We would like to thank our funder for their continued support to deliver the project works over the years. Also thanks to all clients, partners and supporter for their cordial support in our work.

### **Public Speaking Workshop**

The course aimed at BME individual committed to public life position within community and local government setting, board members and community councillors.

Date: 22 September 2021

Time: 6pm -8.30pm

To register: <https://elrecpublicspeaking.eventbrite.co.uk>

Limited spaces, booking is mandatory. For more information, please contact: [mrahman@elrec.org.uk](mailto:mrahman@elrec.org.uk)

### **Head of Engagement (Full-time)**

The Scottish Labour Parliamentary Group is looking for a full-time Head of Engagement to join their team.

- Location: Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh
- Hours: Full-time; 35 hours
- Salary: Commensurate with experience
- Closing date: Thursday 30th September 2021
- How to apply: Send a CV with a covering letter to the Labour Group's Business Manager, Neil Bibby, MSP, via email [adele.black@parliament.scot](mailto:adele.black@parliament.scot)

See more information about this vacancy: <https://bit.ly/3EfbesX>

## SCOTTISH PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

### **Non-Executive Board Member , Edinburgh College**

- Location: Usually Edinburgh
- Salary: Non-remunerated
- Closing date: 07 October 2021 at midday
- How to apply: To download the application form, go to this link: <https://bit.ly/3A8nylZ>

Further Information: Contact: Board and Governance Advisor, Marcus Walker on Tel. 0131 2979326, or [Marcus.Walker@edinburghcollege.ac.uk](mailto:Marcus.Walker@edinburghcollege.ac.uk)

### **Trustees - National Galleries of Scotland**

- Location: Edinburgh
- Salary: non-remunerated
- Closing date: 01 October 2021 at midnight

For further information and application, please visit the link: <https://bit.ly/2YJ0Jh0>

### **Chair - Accounts Commission for Scotland**

- Location: Edinburgh
- Salary: £346.20 per day
- Closing date: 20 September 2021 at midnight

To find out how to apply and more information: <https://bit.ly/3ldiZa0>

### **Member - NHS Education for Scotland**

- Location: Edinburgh
- Salary: £8,842 per annum
- Closing date: 17 September 2021 at midday

How to apply and for more information: <https://bit.ly/3hv0iO5>

### **Police Scotland Recruitment (Thai Community)**

Aimed at our increasingly diverse Thai population

Date: 28 September 2021

Time: 6.30pm - 8pm

Online: Microsoft Teams

For more information and reserve a place email to:

[recruitmentpositiveactionteam@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:recruitmentpositiveactionteam@scotland.pnn.police.uk)

### **SNP Extended Vetting Deadline for the BAME Candidates**

The SNP has extended their vetting deadline to 24 September to encourage more candidates from different diverse background at the Local Government election in May 2022.

The SNP BAME Network source says, # vetting applications have opened again for Women

and Ethnic Minorities until the end of 24 September'. Any SNP member from BAME background interested to submit their interest, please get in touch with SNP BAME Network by email: [snpbame@hotmail.com](mailto:snpbame@hotmail.com) or your local branch.



## COVID-19 Vaccination/Testing Support

Covid-19 Vaccination/Testing Support was a project funded by EVOC and Edinburgh & Lothians Health Foundation which consisted in producing printing and mailing material on public health information regarding COVID Vaccination and Testing. We have created material in English, Bengali, Chinese, French, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu and Spanish, please check it out [here](#).





# COVID-19 VACCINE

*Anyone who gets COVID-19 can become seriously ill or have long-term effects (long COVID).*

*The COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and others.*

*Research has shown the vaccines help: Reduce the risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19, reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19 and protect against COVID-19 variants.*

*The 1st dose should give you some protection from 3 or 4 weeks after you've had it. But you need 2 doses for stronger and longer-lasting protection. There is a chance you might still get or spread COVID-19 even if you have a vaccine, so it's important to continue to follow all social distancing guidance.*

## TYPES OF COVID VACCINE

The COVID-19 vaccines currently approved for use in the UK are:

Moderna vaccine

Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine

Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine

Janssen vaccine

## WHICH VACCINE WILL I GET?

You cannot usually choose which vaccine you have. When you book, you'll only be offered appointments for vaccines that are suitable for you. Most people can have any of the COVID-19 vaccines, but some people are only offered certain vaccines. For example, if you're pregnant or under 40 you'll usually only be offered appointments for the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccines. You should have the same vaccine for both doses, unless you had serious side effects (such as a serious allergic reaction) after your 1st dose.

## SIDE EFFECTS AND SAFETY

The COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness. They can cause some side effects, but not everyone gets them. Any side effects are usually mild and should not last longer than a week, such as: a sore arm from the injection, feeling tired, a headache, feeling achy, feeling or being sick. More serious side effects, such as allergic reactions or blood clotting, are very rare.



## PROTECTING ALL OF US, TAKES ALL OF US.

Remember, after you get the vaccine, it's still important to follow the FACTS:

Face coverings;

Avoid crowds;

Clean hands;

Two metres distance;

Self isolate.

**EVOC**



Edinburgh & Lothians  
Health Foundation

# ELECTRIC BIKE LIBRARY



Try an electric bike  
for up to 3 weeks  
**£20 hiring charge**

Electric bikes help you:  
Save money  
Get to places faster  
Be sustainable  
Improve your fitness

**If interested:**  
**Email [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)**  
**Tel 0131 556 0441**





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Drop in Mon-Friday 9am to 5pm  
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Special orders (dress making, pillows and cushions, chair cover).

### **Suggested Donation**

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Email: [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)



*Quality service. Quality Finish.*



# Bike Buddies

Linking you with experienced cyclists



Do you want to learn to cycle but nervous about riding on Edinburgh's roads? We will pair you with one of our experienced **bike buddies!**

Whether you need to cycle to work, college, or to the local shops, your buddy will help you become a confident cyclist by tackling specific challenges together.

To get paired with a buddy

[cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)

0131 556 0441



Funded by **Paths for All** and also supported by **CCF** and **Greener Scotland**



# MONDAY SEWING CLUB

JOIN OUR FREE SEWING CLUB



Come to repair and adjust your own clothes



Learn simple sewing techniques



Socialise

**MASK  
REQUIRED**



*Relaxed  
environment*

*All welcome!*



Equipment & refreshments provided

Every Monday 11am- 1pm

ELREC, 14 Forth Street, EH1 3LH

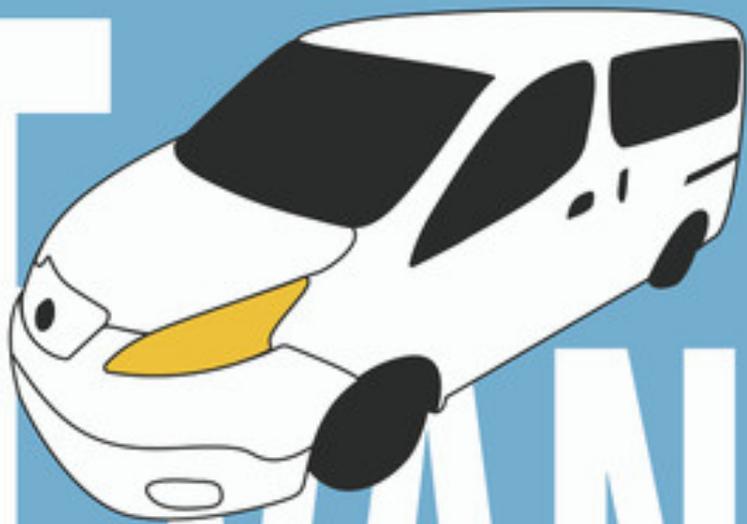
Spaces are limited

Booking **REQUIRED** by emailing [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)

More info: 0131 556 0441



# HIRE VAN



AN **ELECTRIC** COMBI

Hireout ELREC's  
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**30% discount** for  
environmental uses.

**If interested:**  
**Email [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)**  
**Tel 0131 556 0441**



## VOLUNTEER WITH ELREC

As a volunteer you can give your time and skills and get something back in return, whether it is learning new skills, helping to build confidence, having the chance to meet new people, or gaining the satisfaction of helping a cause you believe in.

**WHATEVER YOUR REASON IS, WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**



## THANK YOU!

*A huge thank you to all the volunteers that contributed to*

*ELREC*

*in the last month.*

*Your involvement in*

*ELREC is*

*very much appreciated.*

*We are very proud and grateful*

*to have you in our*

*organisation.*

We welcome organisations to advertise in the ELREC community newsletter for:

- promoting services
- Disseminating flyers
- Campaigns
- Vacancies
- Consultations
- General Marketing

This service is available for a contribution of £50-£150 depending on the size and placement of the advertisement.

For more information, please E-mail: [admin@elrec.org.uk](mailto:admin@elrec.org.uk)

Our newsletter is published every quarter in March, June, September and December of each year.

## Support Our Work!



### ROOM HIRE @ ELREC

- You can book our 20-seat meeting room on an hourly basis.
- For £20 per hour (reduced rate for small charities & community groups)
- Tea & coffee £1 per head
- Please contact ELREC office for additional information or to make a booking.
- For more info, contact us: [admin@elrec.org.uk](mailto:admin@elrec.org.uk)

### Calling for new members at ELREC!

ELREC strives to embody the principles of transparency; integrity; equity; mutual cooperation; and participatory democracy. ELREC welcomes all individuals and organisations who share our aims, visions, and values to join us as members. As a member you will have the opportunity to shape ELREC policy direction; participate in ELREC's annual Management Board election; and attend ELREC events and lectures. Our members also act as links to various communities.

We welcome membership from individuals

from diverse groups as this results in the better representation of all protected characteristics. We would be much obliged if you would consider joining us, as well as helping us by encouraging individuals and organisations known to you to join ELREC.

Please contact our office: <http://www.elrec.org.uk/join-elrec-member/>



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[elrec.org.uk/](http://elrec.org.uk/)