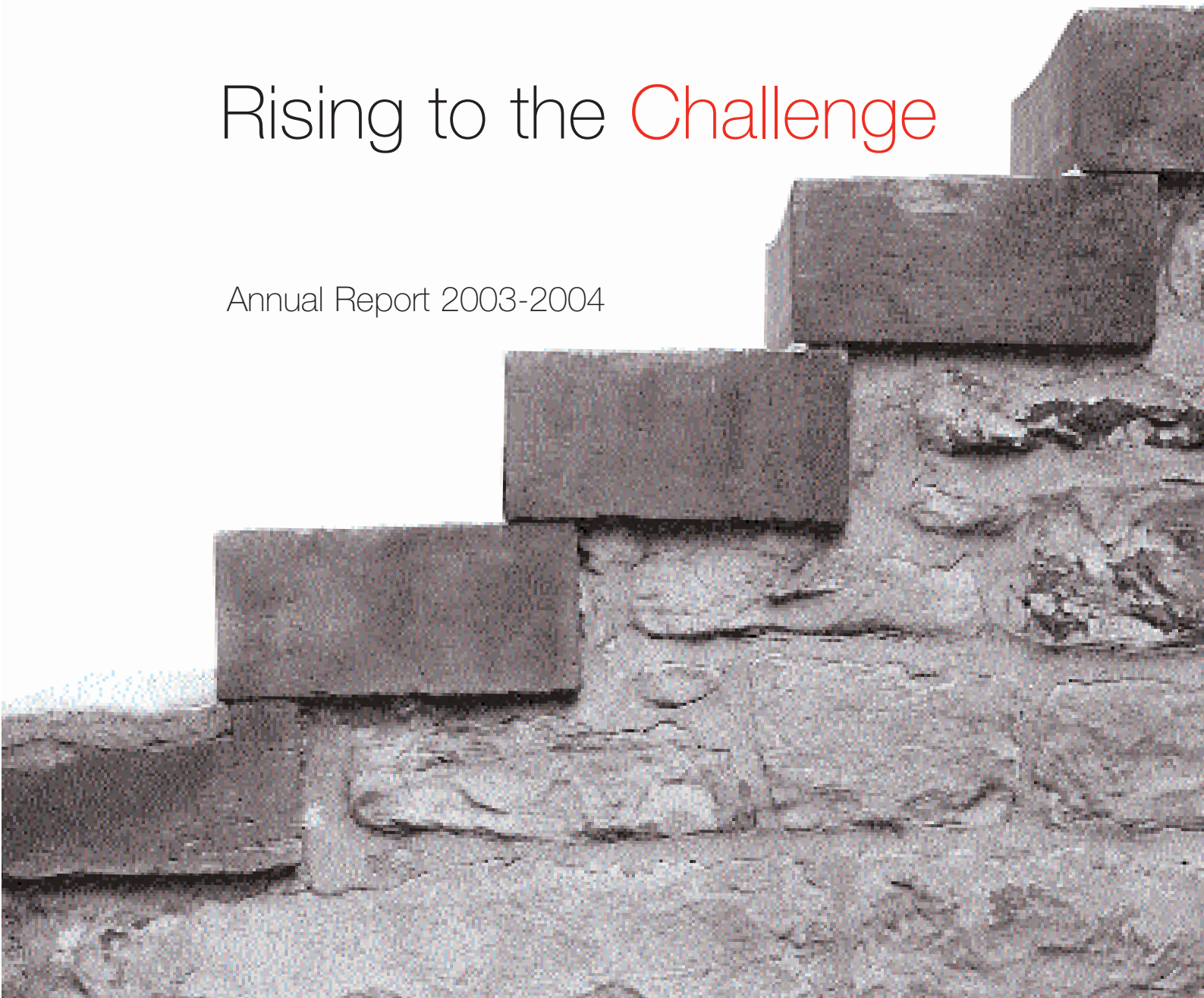


Rising to the Challenge

Annual Report 2003-2004



Director's View

Our first year under our new Four Square banner has indeed been one of 'rising to the challenge' – and the challenges have been extremely wide-ranging in nature.

We have emerged from fully three different investigations of our financial management and corporate governance with a clean bill of health and an endorsement from our main funding partner, The City of Edinburgh Council. We are enormously grateful for the professionalism of those involved in these investigations, and for the support of numerous agencies and individuals in the voluntary and public sectors.

Last year, in launching our new identity, our efforts were focused on defining and promoting our four different service areas of Accommodation and Support; Practical Assistance; Advice and Advocacy; and Education and Training. This year we have moved ahead significantly in our aim of providing an integrated service to all those with whom we work. This has meant, for example, developing ways of linking the employability work of our Partners in Education programme with the advice and support offered by all of our Accommodation and Day services.

There is still much to be done if we are to be able to provide packages of care tailored to the individual needs of each of our service users. However, as the Homelessness Planning Group has recently embraced this approach to employability work as the way forward for all housing and care support services, we are pleased to have anticipated this strategic approach in our own work.

Enabling individual development through volunteering has been another major element in an integrated approach to our services, with over twenty highly varied volunteering opportunities on offer. These range from electrical workshop assistant to drugs peer educator, and from volunteer support worker to hairdresser / beautician.

We hope that this year's Report gives a good flavour of both the day-to-day and longer-term challenges our services face. Certainly, when we asked each Project Manager to state the year's five biggest challenges, we were not short of answers!

Four Square's larger organisational challenge is to build these different service efforts into a comprehensive force for **preventing homelessness and promoting inclusion**. Toward this end, I believe that we are as effective and co-ordinated a team as we have ever been.

Connie Krauss-Cuthbert
Director



Remarks from the Chair

Rising to the challenge this year has meant a whole host of things, not the least of these being completion of the process of registering all of our Accommodation Services as Housing Support Services with the Care Commission and, currently, moving towards registration of our residential projects as Houses in Multiple Occupancy.

This year has also seen the start of the process of applying for registration of our Cowgate Centre as a Support Service. We understand that we are the first such provider to embark upon this path.

Along with many colleagues providing homelessness services, we have been involved in a detailed training needs audit of staff in our registered services with a view to a phased and sufficiently resourced response to compliance requirements. As part of our continuing commitment to Investors in People we are, of course, equally focused on meeting the training and development needs of all of our staff throughout the organisation.

A comprehensive review of Four Square's employment and operational policies and procedures has required the considerable time and energy of Board and Managers Group members. While we are still not quite finished, I know that we all share a continuing commitment to this best practice approach.

This year, perhaps more than ever, I must recognise the huge – and successful – efforts of my fellow Board members, the Director and our Heads of Support Services and Accommodation Services in ensuring that Four Square can continue to make its contribution to Scotland's larger strategic challenges on the basis of its solid reputation and established expertise.

Charles Bowman
Chairperson

Challenges for Accommodation and Support

Stopover

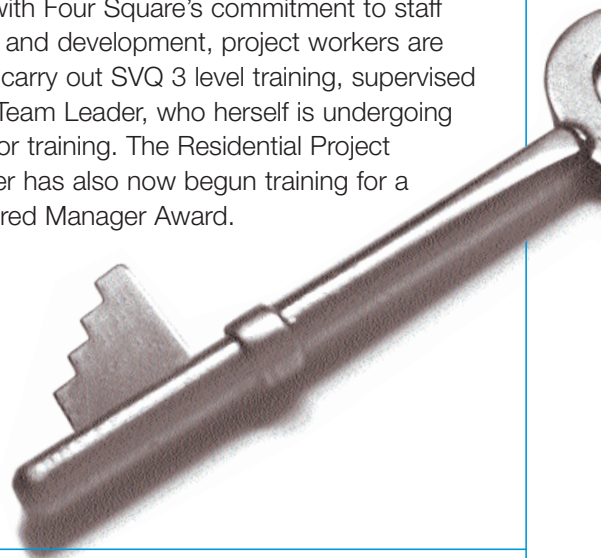
- ◆ Our daily challenge is to support 16 homeless young people, many with personal issues such as anger management, binge drinking, and mental health problems.
- ◆ Partnership working with other agencies allows us to provide a wider range of support. This includes an Independent Living Skills Programme; a fortnightly nursing surgery from the Lauriston GP's practice; and Art Therapy provided by students from local colleges.
- ◆ Stopover has achieved registration as a Housing Support Service with the Care Commission and as a House of Multiple Occupancy with The City of Edinburgh Council.
- ◆ The new ECHO monitoring system makes extra demands on staff time but will, we hope, demonstrate the volume and quality of work taking place at Stopover.
- ◆ In line with Four Square's commitment to staff training and development, project workers are able to carry out SVQ 3 level training, supervised by the Team Leader, who herself is undergoing Assessor training. The Residential Project Manager has also now begun training for a Registered Manager Award.

Follow-up

- ◆ Follow-up delivers eight citywide surgeries a week: in five Area Housing Offices, at Freshstart and at 28 North Bridge.
- ◆ Last year we provided advice and guidance to 517 individuals referred from a wide range of sources, including Area Housing Offices, Social Work Centres, TAP, other support and advice agencies and self-referrals.
- ◆ Follow-up also provided on-going support and advice to 145 clients, many of whom are moving in to their first tenancy. They would not flourish without our help to develop the confidence and skills needed to sustain their tenancies.
- ◆ We rise to the challenge of providing culturally sensitive support to the 11.6% of our clients who come from minority ethnic communities, many from a refugee background. We ensure that the support and advice they receive is appropriate and takes cultural issues into account.
- ◆ New standards for Housing Support from the Care Commission mean that all Support Workers must have a professional qualification to back up their extensive experience. Follow Up has developed a programme through which team members can use their experience to work towards the SVQ 3 in Care, and soon all team members will have reached this level.

Number Twenty

- ◆ Number Twenty has seen an increase in referrals of homeless young women with complex needs which include binge drinking, mental health issues, self-harming and learning disabilities.
- ◆ There has been an increase in referrals of pregnant women.
- ◆ Working in partnership with colleagues from both statutory and voluntary agencies, Number Twenty staff ensure that 50% of service users attend college or employment training programmes.
- ◆ We are pleased to report that over the past year only one young woman has left Number Twenty in an unplanned manner, to take up tenancy with the City of Edinburgh Council. All others have been helped to find supported accommodation or a permanent tenancy with visiting support.
- ◆ Service users are now much more involved in the running of Number Twenty. They organise weekly meetings, to which outside speakers are invited, and proudly show off Number Twenty to visitors from external agencies. Last year our service users participated in an alcohol policy consultation exercise and organised a successful Open Day, and are currently looking forward to running an information stall at the Four Square Gathering in Edinburgh City Chambers.

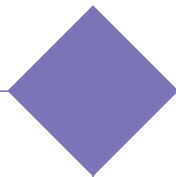




Challenges for Practical Assistance

Edinburgh Furniture Initiative

- ◆ EFI gathered 20,000 items of household furniture, including 1,100 domestic appliances and 700 small electric appliances, from individual households and local businesses. These were distributed to nearly 1,600 homes in Edinburgh.
- ◆ We managed to attract extra funding, which allowed us to supply much-requested cots, mattresses and bedding to new parents.
- ◆ We greatly value the contributions made by our partners, both statutory and voluntary. This help enables us to provide a broader and more flexible range of services, tailored to our users' needs.
- ◆ EFI benefits from the generous amount of voluntary time that individuals contribute to the work of the project. In the past year, more than 6,000 hours were contributed in this way.
- ◆ EFI continues to take an active role in the Furniture Re-Use Network (FRN) and the Community Recycling Network for Scotland (CRNS). Involvement in these networks is a continuing challenge to respond to ongoing legislative changes, and meeting the highest quality standards in our services.



Challenges for Advice and Advocacy

Prison Outreach Project

- ◆ POP is in discussion with the Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland and other local authorities, with a view to establishing funding arrangements which will enable us to pilot a more co-ordinated housing advice service to prisoners from outwith Edinburgh.
- ◆ The City of Edinburgh Council housing department has purchased some laptop computers for us. This has greatly improved the efficiency of our time-consuming ECHO database work, and our communications generally.
- ◆ POP staff are closely involved with the training of prison staff in providing basic housing advice to prisoners. We hope to roll this out to the three prisons we work with – Edinburgh, Corton Vale and Polmont – in the near future.
- ◆ We are piloting a unique prisoners' peer support group, where trained prisoners help others to complete housing forms.
- ◆ We are actively implementing the National Standards for Housing Information and Advice Services.

The Cowgate Centre

- ◆ With up to 170 client visits in 24 hours, attendance records have been broken this year. Our linguistic skills have been put to the test as a significant number of these service users have been from overseas.
- ◆ The fact that approximately 50% of the Centre's service users have an addiction to drugs reflects the serious under-provision of detoxification and rehabilitation facilities and appropriate supported accommodation in Edinburgh. We have persisted in assisting our service users to access support and in the meantime have contributed to harm reduction.
- ◆ We have worked hard to make the Centre a more therapeutic environment by redecorating and refurbishing and by running various support groups, outdoor activities and outings.
- ◆ Responding to the whole spectrum of issues that surround homelessness and social marginalisation, we need to constantly update our knowledge and skills. Between them, our staff have attended a total of 112 training events this year.
- ◆ The Cowgate Centre has pro-actively built close joint working relationships with both statutory and voluntary sector agencies for the benefit of our service users.



Edinburgh Clothing Store

- ◆ In partnership with the Social Work Department, we worked on further expanding our 100-strong list of referral agencies. One objective of this effort was to ensure that we reach black and ethnic minority community organisations.
- ◆ As always, we could not meet the demand for certain items, such as jeans, sheets and duvets. The City

of Edinburgh Council has kindly allowed us access to its intranet, to encourage donations of good quality items of clothing and bedding.

- ◆ BBC Children in Need's assistance this year meant that we were able to provide new children's clothes and bedding. These were of enormous benefit, and we will be renewing our fundraising efforts in the coming year so that we can continue to meet this need.

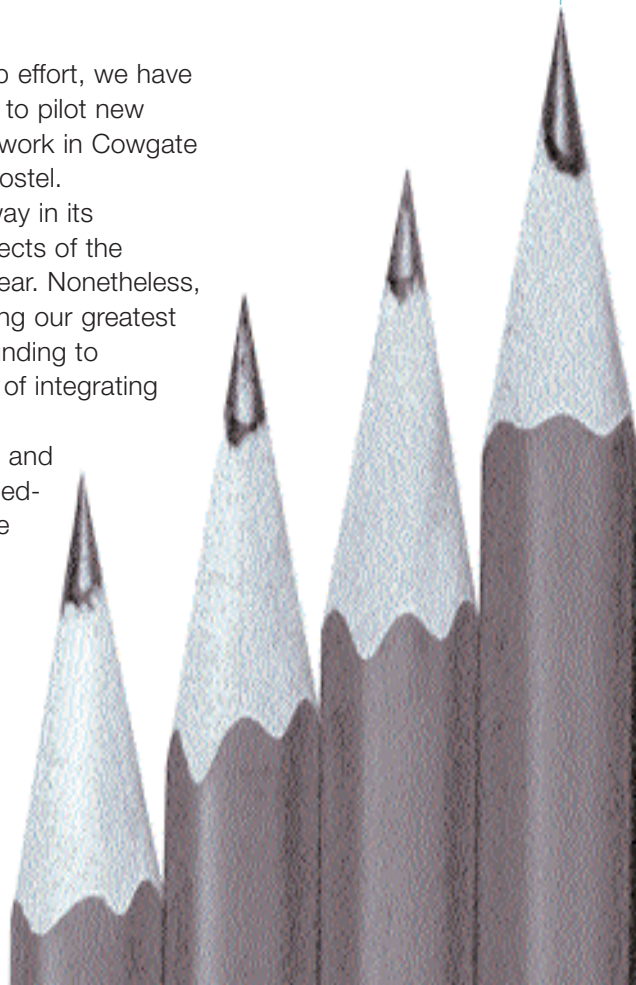
- ◆ Our entire workforce consists of four teams of five or six committed volunteers, who operate our four sessions each week. We will continue to encourage caring new recruits.
- ◆ We operate an appointments system for clients, and will continue to work with our many referral sources to encourage a lower rate of unkept appointments.



Challenges for Education and Training

Partners in Education

- ◆ With the end of New Futures funding in sight, PIE was successful in securing funding from ESF Objective 3, Big Lottery and Scottish Enterprise to continue to develop its employability service.
- ◆ A key priority this year was to develop a strong network of referral links with homelessness agencies and education, training and employment services. The appointment of a new Employability Links Worker will help to strengthen our joint-working links and protocols.
- ◆ PIE has played a key role in helping to establish a co-ordinated approach to, and expansion of, the portfolio of volunteering and 'New Deal' placement opportunities on offer within Four Square. PIE is currently engaging with further education colleges to explore the potential for accreditation among these opportunities.
- ◆ As part of a partnership effort, we have secured CLAN funding to pilot new literacy and numeracy work in Cowgate Centre and Stopover hostel.
- ◆ PIE has come a long way in its development of all aspects of the service over the past year. Nonetheless, we are once again facing our greatest challenge – securing funding to continue the vital work of integrating employability into homelessness services and delivering a quality, joined-up service to vulnerable people.



Financial details



Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2004

	2004 (£)	2003 (£)
Incoming Resources		
Donations	45,161	33,173
Local Authority income	1,744,880	1,196,199
Grants from public bodies	810,398	899,284
Care costs	-	96,578
Rent and Housing Benefit	94,545	49,912
Bank interest	22,354	13,249
Management Charge	242,074	231,732
Other Income	81,016	-
Total incoming resources	3,040,428	2,520,127
Resources Expended		
Provision of Services	2,579,107	2,240,147
Management and Administration	298,011	227,621
Total resources expended	2,877,118	2,467,768

Acknowledgements

Four Square gratefully acknowledges the support for our work over the last year from our major partners and funders:

City of Edinburgh Council
The Scottish Executive Rough Sleepers Strategy
Supporting People
Scottish Enterprise New Futures Fund
The Community Fund

Biffaward, BBC Children in Need Appeal, Edinburgh Environment Partnership, The Tudor Trust, Barclay's Bank, Nationwide Foundation.

We would also wish to express our appreciation for the many contributions in cash or kind received from individual supporters and local groups.

To contact us direct:

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Prison Outreach Project	0131 270 5004
Number Twenty	0131 557 1739
Partners In Education	0131 225 6662
Stopover	0131 229 6907

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