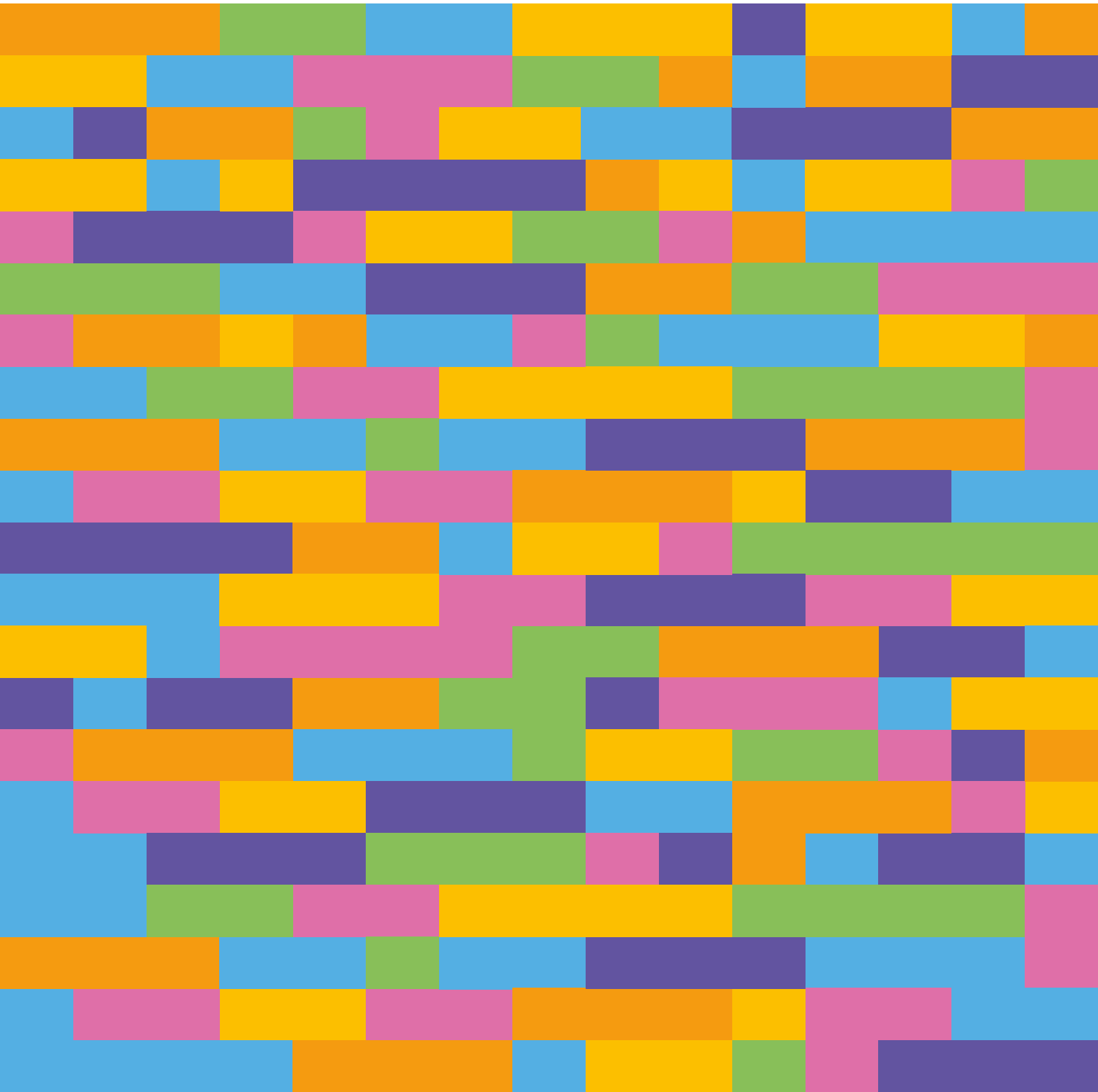




supporting  
social  
employers

# COST OF LIVING GRANT SCHEME





VOLUNTEER

# Introduction

Back in late 2021 the idea arose to create an EVH “fighting fund” to support the development of new support materials for members and their staff coming out of covid based operating models. EVH worked very hard over the next 12 months in creating this handsome “post covid recovery fund”.

As the year rolled along though it became abundantly clear that the focus should change. The brutal, pointless war waged by Putin, supported by his facilitators within the Chinese state, served only to deepen the widespread economic hardship across Scotland which had resulted from earlier political decisions. Old men governments still start all the wars!

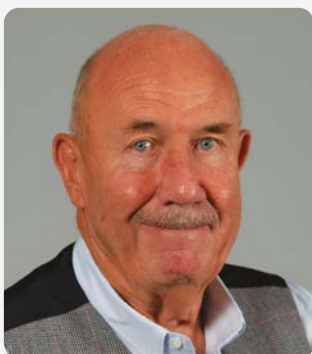
Thus, EVH set out a fresh ambition to help ameliorate the effects of all this chaos and so, the EVH Cost of Living Grant Scheme was born. This was a simple concept of using EVH members on the ground to max out the local impact of the small grant monies we were able to provide.

Initially the EVH Executive had set aside enough funds to cover 20 x £2,500 grants. It also put in place an Adjudication Panel from within its own number to supervise the process. Demand quickly outstripped supply, so on the back of staff redoubling their consultancy efforts and continued positive trading patterns within EVH this was stretched a fair bit and ultimately 33 grants were awarded at a total cost of £82,500. The Panel worked at a frantic pace throughout December 2022 and had all bids assessed and monies out the door just in time for Christmas.

We continue to marvel at the imagination of our members in stretching the money to do so much good. Whilst it is desperate to the depth of ongoing need out there, it is also uplifting to see so many of our colleagues and committee members doing so much (voluntarily) to help their fellow citizens.

**Many grant recipients fed back to us on how the money had been applied – we are delighted to showcase their efforts in this short publication!**

## Adjudication Panel Members:



David Rose



Teresa McNally  
MBE JP ret



Flora Wallace



Jennifer Young

## Argyll Community Housing Association

We were hugely grateful to receive the EVH Cost of Living Support Grant. Our plan was to distribute as many Warm Packs as we could to residents spread across the length and breadth of Argyll. On the back of the EVH monies, we were then able to encourage many of our local contractors and consultants to also contribute to the overall fund – again we are grateful for their support.



## Atrium Homes

We used the grant to purchase 'Eat, Heat, Light' goody bags, which included:

- Energy Efficient Light Bulb
- Hot Water Bottle
- Pasta, Tuna, Passata, Porridge
- Low-cost recipes
- Reusable shopping bag



Bags were distributed at Cost-of-Living Surgeries and the Warm Space Café (in our office). Staff also delivered bags to tenants aged over 80 and tenants who were unable to attend the events.



Tenants also received assistance with benefit checks, maximisation of income, fuel support and shopping vouchers. Our 'New to You' initiative consisted of staff donations of coats/jackets etc for tenants to take away. Other agencies attended and provided assistance to tenants i.e., Citrus Energy, providing 'Energy Support' including offering free air fryers/microwaves to tenants.

This grant enabled Atrium to purchase the contents and include these goody bags on top of a range of other activities to further assist tenants at this time.

### Benefits to tenants:

- 'One stop shop' for tenants to receive income/help/assistance they are entitled to
- Access to other agencies for advice/help/assistance
- Warm space, snack, free Wi-Fi, and access to clothing
- Access to a range of free products – Goody bag, air fryer or microwave, supermarket voucher, or cash amount to assist with fuel poverty, coats/jackets
- All activities have assisted tenants with fuel and food poverty
- Removing some pressure/stress from tenants dealing with Cost-of-Living crisis giving a positive mental impact
- Accessible for all tenants taking away any embarrassment

Feedback from tenants who received a goody bag has been extremely positive, tenants were pleasantly surprised with the contents. Some comments received:

*"A note to say a big thank you for the lovely surprise, the messages are great, you have been thinking of everything even a hot water bottle, so once again thank you".*

*"Thank you Atrium staff for delivery, it is very beneficial and really appreciated".*

*"Highly delighted with goody bag, what a lovely gesture".*

## Ayrshire Housing

We received £2,500 from EVH, from which we presented two cheques for £500 to South Ayrshire Women's Aid and to Seascope's Give the gift of Christmas Appeal. Ayrshire Housing work closely with both organisations and wanted to help support the work that they do with families with young children at a time of the year that many families find difficult.

We also gave out 60 x £25 love local vouchers to some of our tenants' children, which they could spend within the local community, and we received this lovely thank you from families that we supported.



*"I received three x £25 shop local vouchers. This was the first my wee family have ever been supported at Christmas, so I couldn't be more grateful and thankful for your generosity for my wee team, especially as times are extra challenging with the cost-of-living crisis and the pressure as a parent you feel at this time of year. Not to mention adding to strain, I have a child's birthday in December".*

*"It honestly couldn't have come at a better time, my little one who is five, took a massive sprout and needed new shoes (parents' worst nightmare in December). However, the voucher along with a sale meant I managed to get my daughter a high-quality pair of winter boots. She also wore them for her Xmas school party and felt like a princess in her red Payton boots from goody two shoes. Thank you".*

*"My seven-year-old is autistic and had recently done a sensory experience at a local event, at which he loved one thing in particular, a light board. As his birthday had just past and my Xmas budget spent on him already, I had it saved in a wish list to save up for him. However, Ayr toy town had the VTech Magic 3D Lights board, I therefore bought him this with the voucher and it's his most favourite thing ever. He Loves it and has had endless sensory fun and enjoyment with it. Thank you".*

*"My eight-year-old son has many complex medical needs and is also autistic. He therefore spends a lot of time in hospital. He had been desperate for the new FIFA to play on his switch. However, at £44:99 I explained he would have to wait and see if he got any money for Christmas which he could put towards this game. However, the voucher meant I only had to contribute £19:99 which made it affordable and in fact his Nana and papa gave him the difference. This made for a delighted wee boy who played it nonstop for three days while getting his infusions in December, which passed the time so easy for him. He of course continues to play it now. He also used his Xmas money to buy points and upgrades for his FIFA team. Having the game at the peak of its release was also the world to him, he very much so struggles socially so this allowed an easy talking point with his peers, and he didn't feel different by having to wait for it when others had it straight away. Thank you so much".*

*"This Mummy couldn't be more grateful for the generosity of your support for my family at Christmas. It made three kids extremely happy and relieved a massive financial strain off their mummy at a challenging time of year. From the bottom of my heart, thank you".*

## Bridgewater Housing

Bridgewater is delighted to announce that thanks to the award from Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) Cost of Living Grant (£2,500) we have been able to help alleviate loneliness and isolation by continuing to deliver, until the end of March 2023, our activities programme of free weekly Art Crafting Class and Strength & Balance Classes to our tenants in sheltered and extra care housing.



The EVH grant has also helped the Association work in partnership with Caulders Garden Centre, Erskine on their newly launched 'SOUP-ER Gift' to help customers with this great value offer during this cost-of-living crisis. We received a special discount from Caulders which has meant the EVH grant has gone further, and all our sheltered tenants (95) can enjoy a visit to the garden centre with a friend, family member or neighbour and be treated to a free meal for two people.

Tenants will enjoy a fantastic value three course meal, including delicious homemade soup, freshly prepared sandwiches to order, any drink (hot or cold) and a Caulders classic cake for each person. There is no doubt this will help our sheltered tenants enjoy a visit to Caulders, meet up with family/friends and help budgets go a little further.

*"Thank you very much for this lovely surprise - Bridgewater and Caulders have done great for the tenants".*

## Calvay Housing

Calvay Housing Association is a community-controlled housing association serving over 850 customers in the east end of Glasgow. As well as providing housing services to our community, we also operate a community centre which is managed in part by a team of volunteers.

We were delighted to receive £2,500 from EVH to allow us to throw two Christmas parties in December 2023. This included a party for pensioners and one for primary aged children.

Fifteen Pensioners had a party within the Calvay Centre and were provided with a meal, a card and gift. There was also an entertainer and karaoke provided using the funds.

Fifty primary aged children had a party in the Calvay Centre and were provided with a buffet, gift from Santa and entertainment at their Christmas party. Everyone who attended the parties had a great time.

Calvay HA are appreciative of the support given by EVH. This has allowed us to further support our community and give people the opportunity at what can be a tough time of year to come together.





## Cathcart & District Housing

We applied for the grant as a means to help tenants with the rising cost of living as we had spoken to some tenants who were struggling with the increasing costs of their heating bills.

We had already referred these tenants to our welfare team to apply for any vouchers they may be entitled to. We then thought this would be an opportunity to give our tenants items to help combat the cold.

### The money was used to purchase the following items:

- Thermal Blankets
- Hot Water Bottles
- Thermal Vests (in various sizes)
- Thermal Hoodies
- Thermal Hoodies for Children
- Hats
- Gloves
- Socks



The housing team then looked at tenants we knew had contacted us looking for assistance. We phoned and lettered them and either dropped the bags off to them or arranged for collection at our office.

We purchased 30 of the support bags and have handed 25 of these out so far. If we do not have any more queries over the next few weeks we will then advertise the packages on our website and Facebook page.



The feedback we've received from our tenants has been positive, and they are making very good use of all the items.

## Clyde Valley Housing

Clyde Valley Housing Association's Wellbeing Team were delighted to be awarded £2,500 from the EVH Cost of Living Grant. With these funds the Team were able to provide 105 young people aged 12 years and under with a winter jacket.

The ongoing cost of living crisis has put a huge strain on some of our most vulnerable families, many who are on low incomes and already struggling to make ends meet are in constant worry and stress around the continued rising costs.



As a Community Anchor organisation, we are well placed within our communities to provide direct and fast support to households in need, we are also well placed to work closely with our community partners to extend our support ensuring we are reaching some of the most vulnerable families within our communities.

As part of our winter jacket project, we were able to provide support to one of our local primary schools, a local nursery and our two local Women's Aid branches as well as providing direct support to our tenants.



We had a really positive response to this project, which came at a time of a particularly cold winter and families struggling with the increase in fuel costs. When families are struggling to make ends meet, simple items like new jackets can become a cost that households just can't meet. An increase in opportunities for Housing Associations to be able to apply for small grants such as this one can have such a positive impact for households as we have the resources and connections to be able to provide support in a quick and responsive way.

*"The Winter Jacket Scheme enabled us as a school to ensure that some of our most vulnerable children were appropriately dressed for winter weather. The delight on the faces of our wee people who benefitted from this scheme was an absolute joy to see. Parents were also extremely thankful for this support". This is an excellent scheme, and we were very grateful to be included, and to see the positive impact on some of the most vulnerable in our school community".*

**Tracy McCulloch (Head Teacher), Mossend Primary School**

*"The classroom assistant team told me that a child from a family in temporary accommodation said '...I have a new warm jacket...' she was over the moon; she'd been wearing a hand me down summer jacket in very cold weather. The children from SH primary school are so grateful for their new jackets. They are kept nice and warm in this cold weather and really enjoyed getting something new. The parents are also very thankful. It was lovely to see their smiling faces when they tried them on".*

**Angela Baker, Principal Lead, Orbiston Sacred Heart Nursery Class**

## Cunninghame Housing

Due to the EVH funding award, CHA was able to offer support to tenants across three local authority areas, North and East Ayrshire, and Dumfries and Galloway, in the form of three 'Winter Warmer Events'. These events provided a safe warm place to meet, helped reduce social isolation, provided warm food, winter clothing, and offered information and support to help our tenants deal with the severe cost of living crisis. In addition, we linked up with our energy advice service, Lemonaid. They supplied tenants at each event who took advantage of attending the free energy advice stand with an energy saving device, such as a microwave oven or slow cooker. Our Financial Inclusion officer also attended each event offering financial and benefit advice.

### Family Party – North Ayrshire – January 2023

A family party was held in the Three Towns area (an area with high levels of deprivation) for CHA tenants and the surrounding community. A professional party entertainer ensured children and adults got involved in the games and musical fun. The event provided a hot buffet and hot drinks. A care bundle was given to each person which included socks, gloves, scarfs, tv blankets, throws etc. Toys and prizes were also won in the fun games and activities. Over 70 children, parents and grandparents enjoyed the event. The winner of the shopping voucher prize draw commented *"I never win anything. We had such a fantastic time, and my son couldn't believe his truck and the warm clothing were actually for him, I cannot be more thankful"*.



### **Over 50's Event - East Ayrshire - January 2023**

A tea dance and bingo event was held in the Longpark area of Kilmarnock area for our tenants and members of the local community. The event attracted 36 older people from the local community who enjoyed the music, singing and dancing led by a professional musician. Catering included hot soup, sandwiches tea/coffee and cakes/scones. The prize bingo session also proved very popular. Everyone who attended were delighted to take away warm scarfs, throws, socks, and gloves. The event was in response to community feedback requesting more activities for older people in the Longpark area. Anne said *"I don't get out much and loved meeting other people. I can't wait to try my new gloves, scarf, and fluffy blanket"*.



### **Family Event - Dumfries and Galloway - February 2023**

Another successful event held in Annan with 61 tenants of all ages attending the Bingo night. They enjoyed the chance to chat during a hot buffet and lots of tea, coffee, and biscuits. Blankets, gloves, hot water bottles, woolly socks and heat able toys for the children were handed over. Thanks, must also go to Tesco for their donations of food, vitamins, clothes, and toys. Handing out reusable shopping bags allowed tenants to take what they needed/wanted. Feedback from the event was very complimentary and people were delighted with what they had received.



These events helped offer a warm, safe place for families and elderly people to access hot food and drinks, and the warm clothing assisted in keeping them warm through the end of the winter period and the next. The community style events have helped develop community spirit and reduced social isolation in these areas of deprivation. The availability of key specialist services also offered tenants the opportunity and support to tackle poverty in the longer term.

Many tenants have taken the time to tell us that they were delighted with their warm clothing etc especially the energy saving appliances. Some of their own appliances were either broken or needing replaced and many did not own a microwave or slow cooker at all.

The Association is delighted with the positive impact the EVH funding made to some of our poorer families.

## East Lothian Housing

In December 2022 we successfully applied for £2,500 of winter support funding and made this available to tenants. The scheme was massively oversubscribed, and we added an additional £5,000 of funding before closing the scheme to new applications.

118 tenants applied for help before the scheme closed, and 114 received assistance. We offered a range of items, for example, food vouchers, heated clothes dryers, energy saving kitchen appliances, duvets, and warm clothing.

Almost all applicants chose food vouchers as well as the other items. We wanted to respond quickly and so the week before Christmas all available staff including the Senior Management Team, bought and hand delivered vouchers etc. to 114 applicants across East Lothian.

In January, we contacted everyone who had received vouchers/items, and found that six had received heated clothes driers and the other forty plus had opted for shopping vouchers.

Recipients were delighted with the schemes and the speed at which assistance was made available to them. Of the 49 who responded 45 gave our scheme a magic ten out of ten!

*"The East Lothian scheme enabled us to have a lovely Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and to buy fresh food to last us throughout the holidays".*

*"We as a family who get no benefits really appreciated the help we got. So, thank you very much".*



## Easthall Residents' Association

### Activities for Children and Young People

As part of our annual festive activity programme, we had originally set out to deliver one Children's Christmas Party. We were able to increase this because of support received from Easthall Park Housing Co-operative through EVH Funding.

We were therefore able to deliver two party events aimed at our Children and Young People. This allowed us to provide fun entertainment, a McDonalds meal for all attendees, a small gift and selection box from Santa for all attendees.

We had a total of 174 attendees across both events.

In addition to the two parties, we were further able to provide a Christmas treat for a further 70 young people. Many of these children and young people are vulnerable, have experience of or are Care Experienced. We work with these groups on a weekly basis through our Alternative Education projects:

- St Rose of Lima Nurture Group – A McDonalds meal, visit from Santa with small gift and Selection Box – 12 children
- Glasgow Virtual School P4-6 Group – A McDonalds, trip to Flip Out, visit from Santa with small gift and selection box – 8 children
- Lochend Secondary BGE Group – Trip to Flip Out and a McDonalds meal – 12 YP
- St Andrew's Secondary BGE Group – Cinema visit and a Monterey Jack's meal – 12 YP
- Glasgow Virtual School S1-S2 Group – Cinema trip and a Nando's meal – 12 YP
- ERA Young Volunteers Xmas Night – visit to World Buffet – 14 YP

Overall, through this support a total of 244 children and young people's Christmas was made better.





### Activities for Older People

Once again due to the support we received from Easthall Park Housing via EVH we were able to provide two fun filled Christmas Party afternoons. We had targeted Older People at risk of isolation and loneliness and were treated an afternoon consisting of a three course Christmas dinner followed by music and dance between 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM.

Each attendee was treated to a visit from Santa and were given chocolates and shortbread to take home. In total 80 individuals benefitted from these activities.

As part of this we were able to provide 50 Christmas Afternoon Teas and 50 vulnerable adults with a Christmas Hamper, meaning 100 households in total benefitted.

### Activities with Additional Support Need Adults

Having support from Easthall Park Housing Co-operative allowed us to provide four three course Christmas Lunches and activities including dance, fun and games afterwards. We had originally planned to deliver two of these events however having secured funds allowed us to double what we had planned.

We provided three course lunches and fun activities to a total of 285 individuals with additional support needs across the four days. On each of the days we planned for Santa to visit, and each participant received a selection box and small gift.

### Event for our Whole Community

We firmly believe that Christmas is a special time of year, where we should all experience something magical and create a lasting memory. This year perhaps more than most with all the external pressures families and individuals faced it was more important to attempt to create something special.

With this in mind we put on our annual Christmas Fayre and carnival, we always aim to provide all carnival rides FREE and a Santa's Grotto. This year we were able to provide a FREE selection box to all that visited Santa. This was only possible thanks to the support we received from Easthall park Housing Co-operative via EVH. In total we distributed 1,123 selection boxes on the day!



## Govanhill Housing



Cash for Winter Coats given to more than 50 children in Govanhill thanks to EVH.

This January, Govanhill Housing Association, with support from EVH have provided over 50 children aged 12 - 16 with cash for new winter coats and jackets. Govanhill Housing Association is a community-controlled registered social landlord with 2523 rental properties in the South of Glasgow. The area is one of the most diverse in Scotland and has experienced major population change in the last 15 years, primarily as the result of rapid migration from the Slovak and Romanian Roma communities.

Many tenants struggle to access work and benefits to which they are entitled. Beyond this 20% of Govanhill tenants are part of a larger family household so money must be stretched even further. As a result of these, and other factors, Govanhill is an area with high levels of poverty; many Association tenants were struggling before the cost-of-living crisis, which has worsened an already difficult situation.

Cheryl Miller, a local mum, and Govanhill Vice Chair says:

*"As an Association we care deeply about the people who live in Govanhill, and we know this is a very difficult time for many of our tenants. We were pleased to receive this support from EVH to provide 50 teenagers with new winter coats. The years between 12-16 are challenging, and there can be a lot of stigma attached to how you dress. The thought of a child sitting cold and wet in school all day is heart-breaking, not to mention the negative impacts these experiences of poverty have on learning. This money has meant that these families have not had to choose between putting food on the table and providing warm waterproof coats or shoes for their children".*

## Knowes Housing



Over the past 25 years, Knowes HA has worked closely with the two local primary schools in Faifley – Edinbarnet Primary School (244 pupils) and St Joseph's Primary School (182 pupils). Knowes HA's award of £2500 from the EVH Cost of Living Support Grant was donated to the two local primary schools to help them provide additional support for families struggling with the cost of living. Both schools were extremely grateful for the donation and have advised how this has benefitted pupils and families in need.

One school advised that they have used the funding to top up their supply of food vouchers for families. Fortnightly they provide at least 20 families in need with a £30 food voucher.

The other school advised that the funding has been used to support the school food share which provides emergency food/supplies for families in need. They have also used some of the funding to provide emergency clothing etc for children being accommodated and to help with purchasing winter coats and boots for children who do not have these items. They advised that the rest of the money will be prioritised for working families who do not receive any support from the Government or West Dunbartonshire Council to help with the cost of the new school year.

We would like to thank EVH for their generosity in providing this funding that has positively impacted our community.



## Linthouse Housing



Linthouse Housing Association used the EVH Cost of Living Grant to purchase Asda gift cards that are being given to residents who are struggling to make their finances stretch during this cost-of-living emergency.

The gift cards were chosen as they would allow people to shop for items that suit their needs whether that be food, clothing, warm items, or something else they might need and our criteria for receiving a gift card is very open.

However, we don't want just to give someone a gift card, and not try to offer other support that might help them during this difficult time, therefore we always offer to refer an individual to our welfare rights and energy advice services.

The gift cards also supplement other support we offer residents, a food bank referral, a membership and shopping voucher for the Linthouse Community Larder – both of which are hosted within our offices – and assistance from our Income Maximisation Officers.

While the food bank and larder are important and of huge benefit to the community, they only take place on specific days and times therefore the EVH grant has allowed us to support tenants with an immediate need when we couldn't have done so otherwise.

Cards have been issued to single people and families in all different circumstances and have been well received by residents as it provides dignity and an element of choice.

Some recent recipients have been an individual recently discharged from hospital, someone who has just moved into their home after a period of homelessness, a person who had to be decanted due to an emergency, a kinship carer who is unexpectedly caring for young children and an individual in employment whose wages just wouldn't stretch across the month.

Unfortunately, the cost-of-living emergency does not look like it's going to ease soon, particularly with the increased costs of fuel and food, so we will continue to use the EVH grant to help our tenants for as long as we can.

## Maryhill Housing

Part of the EVH Grant monies helped our Shiskine residents enjoy a festive gathering within our sheltered housing complex. Due to the timing, we were unable to organise a Christmas lunch, so residents had a lovely fish tea instead!

Festive fayre aside, we were also able to distribute Warm Packs (throws, draft excluder, and radiator reflector panels) to many local people who needed these.

And not forgetting our young movers (YoMo) who run a programme of art for wellbeing sessions



## New Gorbals Housing

**NEW** ———  
**GORBALS**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION ———

New Gorbals Housing Association were successful with accessing the EVH Cost of Living Support Grant. The £2,500 award was used to support families in the lead up to Christmas with vouchers to buy gifts for their children or to support in anyway in lead up to Christmas.

As Gorbals still has high levels of child poverty rates the funds were used to buy a £45 voucher per child. We matched the funds via our Cost-of-Living Budget and by accessing the Cash for Kids Mission Christmas funds and were able to support 289 children. The funds were allocated to the most in need and prioritised to get to as many households as possible.

The Love2shop vouchers gave families an element of choice to pick gifts for children and followed a dignified approach to tackling poverty in the local area at Christmas time.



## Ochil View Housing

Ochil View Housing Association received £2,500 from the EVH Cost of Living Support Grant and we also added a further £1,000 from our own Community Initiative Budget giving a total budget of £3,500.

The EVH Grant Fund paid for four tenant events across three areas in Clackmannanshire and one in Fife. The events were over two Saturdays in January, and we called them “Meet, Heat and Eat” events. We provided hot soup, rolls, tea, coffee, and biscuits as well as juice and sweets for children. In attendance were Ochil View staff including our Tenancy Sustainment team to provide benefit advice. We also had the Home Energy Advice Team over the Clackmannanshire events and Cosy Kingdom in our Fife event to provide home energy advice or take referrals for further contact. We had a total of 80 tenants come along across all our events.



The EVH Grant Fund also purchased a total of 500 energy saving light bulbs which, we distributed to all who attended the events. We also purchased Slow Cookers and Air Fryers from alternative funding and five of each were given away in a prize draw at each event.

Tenants who attended the events provided some positive feedback some of which is below:  
Mrs M from Tullibody advised “The work that Ochil View are doing is great. Family members are with other housing providers and don’t get the same service or handouts that Ochil View offer. These events were a great idea and of a great help”.



Mrs B from Fife said *"I popped in at the Meat Heat and Eat Event in Tillicoultry today and was warmly welcomed. Thank you all"*.

Mrs B from Sauchie said *"I attended one of the Meat, Heat and Eat events the staff were brilliant, gave me a warm welcome and sound advice. Thank you for the goodies, was well appreciated."*

Ochil View have also carried out a Welfare Visit Check to all our tenants who are of pensionable age and those who are vulnerable. To date we have visited 300 tenants and provided each with a variety of information and energy saving goods including an electric throw per household. The EVH Grant provided 36 of these electric throws. The visits provided 1532 energy saving light bulbs of which, 500 were provided by the EVH Grant. We also issued power banks, sim cards, personal packs, and food parcels to those who needed it. A total of 86 tenants were referred for income/benefit checks and home energy advice. We also referred 54 tenants for a stage three adaptation e.g., grabrails, level access showers. The visits were worthwhile, and the feedback has all been positive, a common saying to staff during the visits were *"we didn't like to bother anyone"* or *"we didn't think we could get help"*.

As the Cost-of-Living crisis continues to hit our tenants hard this grant funding has enabled the Association to make a difference to tenants who are our most vulnerable.

## Paisley Housing



### **Background**

Paisley HA proposed to use this funding to support vulnerable families across Paisley at Christmas to make sure that families were able to have a stress-free Christmas.

We recognised that many families would be under significant pressure over the period of Christmas 2022/23. This was due to significant inflation of family essentials such as food and utilities which disproportionately affect those on lower incomes as they spend a higher percentage of their income on essentials and have a lower disposable income.

As such Paisley HA worked with Renfrewshire Women's Aid to put a present under the tree of the most vulnerable households this Christmas. Alongside this we provided eligible recipient households an emergency fuel voucher to ensure that they remained connected and warm over the festive period, this was met from match funding from Paisley HA.

### **How we delivered**

We took an approach to protect the dignity of the recipients that we would deliver this assistance as vouchers. This allowed families to have choice in how they spent the assistance and to tailor this to the ages and stages of the children. To give a wide choice we used Argos vouchers. We were able to support 47 households using the fund, including 19 households who receive support from Women's Aid.

### **Impact**

This fund allowed us to address poverty within the Paisley area and improve wellbeing of families by allowing them to have a Merry Christmas at a very challenging time.

### **Feedback**

Sharon from Renfrewshire Women's Aid said, "this has been a very challenging time for victims of domestic abuse, and it was heartening to have support from the community".

One parent contacted us to say, *"thank you so much for this help, I'm genuinely in tears with gratitude"*.

## Paragon Housing

### A big Paragon thank you!

From Bearded Dragons to [shy] cornsnakes, and kittens to grateful pups, staff and tenants at Paragon Housing Association would like to say a big thank you to EVH for its support. The grant of £2,500 has helped us to offer a little bit of support to tenants (and their beloved pets) at a time when the cost-of-living crisis is forcing many to consider difficult choices.

We recognise that pets are as much a part of the Paragon 'family' as our tenants and helping to support them is an important aspect of our 'see the person' approach to tenancy support. We have used the grant to offer individual vouchers as well as assistance to local charities offering support to households to feed and maintain their pets. Alongside other projects supported by Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Energy Action Scotland (William Grant Foundation) & Vodafone, the EVH grant has enabled us to tailor support around specific needs, moving away from the one size fits all.

As one of our tenants put it *"I was nervous about telling Paragon about how I was struggling to feed my pet in case they told me I should rehome them and that was what I would have hated. It was such a relief when they said that they might actually be able to help, I was able to use my voucher to buy pet food for the next couple of weeks and that along with the other help Paragon offered, has given me some breathing space, so thank you Paragon"*.



## Prospect Community Housing

Over the last couple of months, we have been distributing warm and well packs after receiving funding from EVH. The funding from EVH has supported the distribution of 100 warm and well packs. We targeted tenants aged over 70, and those who had health conditions that limited their mobility. We also gave some packs to one of our key partners The Health Agency to distribute to clients with a cancer diagnosis.

We identified a company that supplied packs in canvas bags ready packed with warm items, and we added dehumidifiers and torches to these. We also used some of the funding to provide door curtains at a front or back door to help cut down draughts and keep homes warmer. A range of our staff took the packs out and delivered them direct to tenants' doors. The packs were well received by tenants and created several impacts.

- ▶ As well as providing practical warm items such as hats, scarves, blankets etc, the packs gave us engagement opportunities with tenants we sometimes have less contact with. With some we were able to pick up on a range of other support issues including making referrals to our welfare rights officer, debt advice service, and partner agencies.
- ▶ The Health Agency gave their packs to clients with a cancer diagnosis and those with long term health conditions. Sharing the packs with a key partner encouraged us to think about expanding partnership provision and we now have some Cost-of-Living funding that includes the provision of similar packs through other key partner organisations. We have had a range of energy support projects this winter and visiting this group of tenants has also provided opportunities to give them further support including home visits from an energy advisor, and access to further items such as duvets, slow cookers, and fuel vouchers. Whilst we have advertised the energy project support to all tenants, some of our older tenants can be reluctant to request help or agree to it over the phone. Visiting them in their homes and offering them the packs has made them more likely to agree to further help.
- ▶ We have also used EVH funding to provide thermal door curtains. The home visits highlighted for us that some vulnerable tenants were using their heating as little as possible. Thermal front or back door curtains will help their homes feel a bit warmer. We have been able to provide curtain poles and a contractor to install the poles where required from another of our energy support projects.
- ▶ Visiting older tenants also helped us identify that there was an ongoing loneliness/ isolation issue for some, particularly those who were isolated during the pandemic. There has been a loss of confidence in going out or in meeting other people. Offering the packs opened up broader conversations about isolation and wellbeing. We are now keen to develop a project focused on our older tenants to help reduce loneliness levels and increase their opportunities to connect with others.





**Quotes from Health Agency clients:**

*"It is really nice to receive this pack, especially because I really struggle with having cold hands with my arthritis so helps when I'm sat at home watching telly".*

*"Love my warm pack as I work part-time at home and during treatment (cancer) I'm at home a lot and having an extra blanket helps with heating costs".*



**Quotes from Prospect tenants:**

*"Thank you for the thoughtful gift you gave me yesterday, it's very much appreciated".*

*"The scarf is really warm, and I use the blanket when the room gets a bit cold".*

## Shire Housing

We came up with the idea of starting a community cinema project. Even though we are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, families still need and want to spend time together, socialise and do things as a family unit.

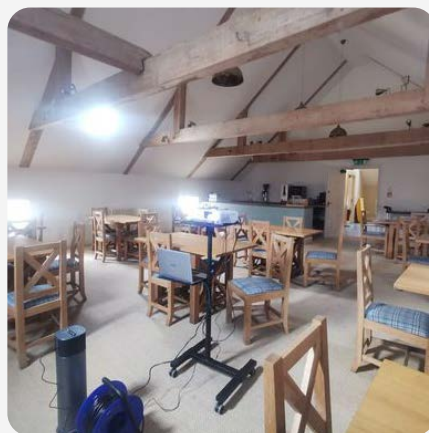
Given the rural locality of many of our villages and towns, families must travel to enable them to do something as simple as going to see a movie together. The costs involved in doing something such as this are ruling this out for many families. Cinema going has been a staple form of entertainment for decades. Cinema is about an experience, it's about people engaging positively with film and entertainment; people should be able to relax, engage, and enjoy time together.

We purchased equipment for a mobile community cinema project, enabling us to take movie screening to the people, rather than them having to pay to travel to a cinema. We also pay for the hire of the space the films are shown in and will also provide snacks for kids making these events completely free to attend.

So far, we have been taking the purchased film equipment to various locations in East Ayrshire where "Warm Spaces" have been put in place. While the attendees are present, this provides them with some entertainment while they make the most of free teas/coffees and lunches provided by these warm spaces. This has been well met and appreciated by all those who have attended. So far over 50 people have benefitted from our cinema project, we have more film showings lined up for the next few weeks, and once we are in summer we shall be able to undertake outdoor showings, so the numbers of people we are helping shall continue to rise.

Amongst the equipment we purchased we bought an extremely large, outdoor inflatable screen and as the weather improves, we shall be facilitating outdoor film nights across East Ayrshire. We did similar in partnership with a local charity last summer, the event was extremely popular, we have been repeatedly asked if this is something we will be doing more of.

The grant has made it possible for people within our communities to enjoy free entertainment, to socialise and to spend time together as a family. Our community cinema events can, and do, cater for all age groups making this an intergenerational project ensuring that nobody needs to feel left out.



## Southside Housing

Southside Housing Association (SHA) applied for funding to organise two pensioners' celebrations to support our older tenants in the two main areas that we work in: Pollokshields and Cardonald. The pensioner's celebration came from the demands from our tenants to have their Christmas Lunch re-instated after the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the Christmas Lunch was a costly event and in the current financial situation it felt that SHA resources were needed more in other areas.

While organising the celebration, it was made relevant that it was possible to merge the celebrations into one and offer extra support. Therefore, we distributed cost of living bags including basic goods that are necessary for everyday life, amongst all the attendants and a free raffle was carried out during the celebration. People fasting because of Ramadan were able to get take away food home with them.

The Spring Celebration took place on Friday the 31st of March, and different means of transport were offered for the residents to get to the venue depending on their abilities. During the celebration, a festive buffet-style lunch provided by a local caterer was served, there was a musical act and a raffle in which the attendants were able to obtain different perks such as a Morrisons gift card or a coffee and tea hamper. We had the opportunity to keep the festive spirit by toasting with non-alcoholic prosecco.

We were aware that many residents that were invited to join us were not able to attend at the last minute because of various reasons such as health issues. SHA has discussed trying to direct some resources on the future to generate further impact in our residents and still connect with the most vulnerable.

Some quotes from those who attended:

- It was brilliant, so necessary.
- I had a great time.
- The food was fantastic, I really liked the soup.
- I am so pleased I got this extra hamper to take home, thanks a lot for putting this together.



# Tollcross Housing

We were delighted that our Association, supported by EVH, was better able to bring festive joy to many of our residents at this very challenging time.

Over 200 kids attended our event, each receiving a Christmas card with £15 inside (we were able to top it up) and a selection box. We had some cards left (all with £15) and donated these to the two attached schools. The Head Teachers were delighted with this gesture, and it has helped form a better bond.

We held the event at Tollcross Advice & Learning Centre, and whilst waiting (in the very long queue!), staff were on-hand to greet parents and gently advise them of the facilities within the centre (welfare rights; debt service; food and fuel assistance; IT classes). A programme for the Centre was also given out. This greatly helped to promote the Centre and going forward, hopefully encourage residents to drop in.

We knew a lot of the kids and parents personally and have no doubt that their families have benefited from this timely initiative.



**Tollcross Advice & Learning Centre**  
Serving the Communities of Tollcross, Lilybank/Newbank & Carmyle and surrounding areas

**Benefits Advice/Money Advice/Form Filling Provided**

Our Welcome Space is a warm inviting place where you can spend time during our opening times without spending money. A cuppa and biscuits will be provided. There is a large television, library and computer area.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Computer Use Drop-In</b> 9.15am – 12.30pm 1.30pm – 4.30pm	<b>Free Computer Class</b> 9.15am – 12.30pm <b>Computer Use Drop-In</b> 1.30pm – 4.30pm	<b>Computer Use Drop-In</b> 9.15am – 12.30pm 1.30pm – 4.30pm	<b>Computer Use Drop-In</b> 9.15am – 12.30pm 1.30pm – 4.30pm	<b>Computer Use Drop In</b> 9.15am – 3.45pm
<b>The Welcome Space</b> Refreshments & Biscuits	<b>The Welcome Space</b> Community Cafe - Free Hot Rolls or Sandwich 10.00am - 12.00pm	<b>The Welcome Space</b> Community Cafe - Free Hot Rolls or Sandwich 10.00am - 12.00pm	<b>The Welcome Space</b> Community Cafe - Free Hot Rolls or Sandwich 10.00am - 12.00pm	<b>The Welcome Space</b> Community Cafe - Free Hot Rolls or Sandwich 10.00am - 12.00pm
<b>Benefit &amp; Money Advice</b> (by Appointment) <small>Jobs &amp; Business Glasgow Help with CVs, applying for job/training 10.00am - 4.00pm</small>	<b>Benefit &amp; Money Advice</b> (by Appointment) <small>Tollcross Community Food Project open Tuesday 10.00am-12.00pm, Thursday &amp; Friday 1.00pm-5.00pm. Contact the Centre</small>	<b>Welfare Rights Drop-In</b> 9.00am - 12.30pm <small>Welfare Rights Drop-In (am, Mond, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri) Glasgow Life Computer Class 1.00pm - 3.00pm</small>	<b>Benefit &amp; Money Advice</b> (by Appointment) <small>Jobs &amp; Business Glasgow Help with CVs, applying for job/training 9.30am - 12.30pm</small>	<b>Benefit &amp; Money Advice</b> (by Appointment) <small>Jobs &amp; Business Glasgow Help with CVs, applying for job/training 9.30am - 1.00pm</small>
<b>Credit Union</b> 9.30am – 11.30am <b>Low Interest Loans</b>	<b>Credit Union</b> 9.30am – 11.30am <b>Savings Accounts</b>	<b>Credit Union</b> 9.30am – 11.30am <b>Junior Accounts</b>	<b>Credit Union</b> 9.30am – 11.30am <b>Foreign Currency</b>	<b>Credit Union</b> 9.30am – 11.30am <b>Applications Available</b>

FREE CERTIFICATED COURSES – CHILDCARE, FOOD HYGIENE, HEALTH AND SAFETY, FIRST AID AND MORE  
COME IN AND FIND OUT WHAT FREE COURSES ARE AVAILABLE OR TELL US WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN

All Welcome - Opening Hours: 9.00am-5.00pm (4.00pm close on Friday). Closed 12.30pm-1.30pm Mon-Thurs

We are at: 84 Braidfauld Street, Glasgow, G32 8PJ Telephone: 0141 764 1234 Email: advice@tollcross-ha.org.uk

## West Of Scotland Housing

### Let's Meat and Veg

The funding from EVH has enabled us to provide over 840 meals to people living within our communities. The cookery demonstrations have not only been an effective way to teach cooking nutritional meals on a budget, but also a valuable way of bringing people together to socialise and enjoy each other's company.

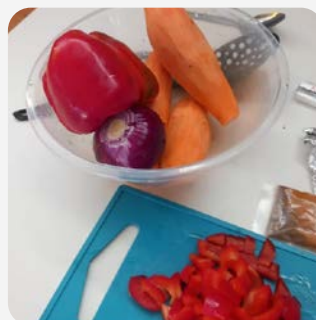
The hands-on sessions of the cooking demonstrations have successfully increased the knowledge of the participants, and the feedback we have had has been great with quotes such as:

*"I have enjoyed it; I don't normally do a lot of cooking but after attending the cooking class and receiving a bag of ingredients to take home I was amazed that I could do it myself and it tasted yummy to". Frances H*

*"I have really enjoyed it and I am now cooking more at home". Sharon*

*"Not only have I enjoyed the cooking I have also enjoyed meeting new people at the sessions".*

*"Thanks for offering our wee group at the Mungo foundation the wonderful opportunity to participate in your weekly cooking sessions. These fully inclusive activities have really boosted our groups confidence as the facilitators have been encouraging, enthusiastic and always welcoming. These sessions are always fun and filled with useful information and tips. The classes are friendly and a great way to integrate and interact with the Barrowfield Community. Christine is a great host and always willing to go that extra mile, e.g., sourcing pitta bread to dip into our curry, making adjustments to accommodate wheelchairs. I would definitely recommend the cooking classes and love seeing the positive effects it is having on our group".*



# Cost Of Living Grant Scheme

## List of all recipients:

- ▶ Argyll Community Housing Association
- ▶ Atrium Homes
- ▶ Ayrshire Housing
- ▶ Blochairn Housing Association
- ▶ Bridgewater Housing Association
- ▶ Calvay Housing Association
- ▶ Cassiltoun Housing
- ▶ Cathcart and District Housing Association
- ▶ Clyde Valley Housing Association
- ▶ Cunninghame Housing Association
- ▶ East Lothian Housing
- ▶ Easthall Park Housing Co-operative
- ▶ Fair Deal
- ▶ Ferguslie Park Housing Association
- ▶ Govan Housing
- ▶ Govanhill Housing Association
- ▶ Hillhead Housing Association
- ▶ Jeely Piece Club
- ▶ Knowes
- ▶ Linthouse Housing Association
- ▶ Maryhill Housing Association
- ▶ New Gorbals Housing Association
- ▶ Ochil View Housing Association
- ▶ Paisley Housing
- ▶ Paragon Housing Association
- ▶ Prospect Community Housing
- ▶ Rosehill Housing Co-operative
- ▶ Rural Stirling Housing Association
- ▶ Shire Housing Association
- ▶ Southside Housing Association
- ▶ Tollcross Housing Association
- ▶ West of Scotland Housing Association
- ▶ West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative

# EVH Main Partners



### ACS Physical Risk

Safety, wellbeing, landlord safety services



### Chiene + Tait

Annual accounts, audit services



### Alexander Sloan

Payroll, VAT, bookkeeping, internal audit



### SupportKey

IT support, cloud services management, disaster recovery and occasional dance partners at joint festive nights out



### Rowan

Employee counselling services to members



### Thistle

Main corporate sponsor



### Optima Health

Occupational health services to members



### Chiene + Tait Financial Planning

Pension group support, treasury management



### McMahon Employment Law

Supporting EVH HR Team, EVH member protect, keenly priced legal work for members

EVH Limited  
Fifth Floor  
137 Sauchiehall Street  
Glasgow G2 3EW  
0141 352 7435  
Contactus@evh.org.uk  
Events@evh.org.uk  
Finance@evh.org.uk  
H&S@evh.org.uk  
HR@evh.org.uk  
Recruitment@evh.org.uk  
www.evh.org.uk



supporting  
social  
employers

