

# CASTLE

Enterprise Scotland



Annual Report 2024

# Welcome

During a challenging year marked by the escalating cost of living crisis, our organisation has provided over 800 essential household items and appliances through our referral system. Our support services are diverse, ranging from creating befriending partnerships and hosting a welcoming drop-in lounge for the elderly, to collaborating with community payback teams and the prison service for training placements, thus strengthening our rehabilitation initiatives. These are just glimpses of our commitment to serving the community. We invite you to explore this report, which celebrates our collective successes over the past year's challenges.

A special thanks to our incredible volunteers, whose tireless dedication and hard work have been instrumental in our achievements. Their contributions have enabled us to extend our reach and impact within the community. We would also like to express our gratitude to the community members who have generously donated their furniture to us. These donations have been crucial in helping us furnish the homes of those in need, we are deeply thankful.



Elizabeth  
Calderwood  
(Joint Chair)



Isla  
Lumsden  
(Joint Chair)

## Become a Board Member

As Castle continues to evolve and make a significant impact in our community, the role of our Board of Trustees becomes ever more crucial. Our Board meets monthly, we collaborate closely with staff to shape the charity's strategy, ensuring we meet our core objectives and uphold our commitment to the community. This year, we are looking to broaden the horizons of our Board by inviting individuals with specialised skills and expertise to join us.

We are open to individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences who can bring fresh perspectives to our Board. Whether its business planning, legal expertise, finance, HR or fundraising experience, knowledge in IT, or insights into community engagement. Being a trustee at Castle is a rewarding journey that goes beyond attending board meetings. It's about making a tangible difference, ensuring compliance with charity law, financial sustainability, and providing guidance to our management team.

If you have the skills, passion, and commitment to support Castle in its mission, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please express your interest by emailing [enquiries@castlefurniture.org](mailto:enquiries@castlefurniture.org), and your details will be passed on.

Together, we can continue to build a stronger, more resilient community.

Warm regards,  
Board of Trustees

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Working in Partnership

# Fife Council

Community Learning & Development  
& Welfare Support Team



The wider Community Learning and Development team in Glenrothes which includes the Welfare Support team has worked in partnership with Castle Furniture in development strong partnership links and collaborative working approaches.

The Big Hoose Hub co-ordinator post which has been in operation since March 2023 has supported families in the Glenrothes and surrounding areas who are experiencing the impacts from the rising costs due to the cost-of-living crisis.

The Hub has supported people with household goods, clothing, toiletries and cleaning products. The items are from the Big Hoose project which is a Fife-Wide initiative, however having a coordinator in post to manage and supply goods in the local

Glenrothes area, has allowed other professionals in the area to access the items, reducing travelling time and supporting families in a quicker timeframe.

The Glenrothes helping hands initiative has supplied individuals and families who have been working with the Glenrothes Welfare support team access white goods and household goods. The partnership agreement has meant that people are able to receive these goods in a quick timescale.

Rowan Young  
Anti-Poverty  
Local Development Officer

In the past year the working partnership between Castle Furniture and Community Learning & Development team has grown due to them taking on the Big Hoose Hub project for this area.

We have always had a good working relationship and found them an organisation who wants to do the best for the community. They sit on the Anti-Poverty group in the area and are an active member, from this group a discretionary fund was set up for those who fall through the net but need support with items and Castle Furniture is involved in supplying some of these items when they can. I know that all the staff are very helpful and friendly, they are always looking out for the vulnerable in the community, often going above and beyond.

I was tasked to set up a hub from the Big Hoose Project in the area, as Castle Furniture is an expert in logistics and already a great partner to work they were the natural choice in this area.

NE Fife and Glenrothes both use Castle Furniture as their Big Hoose Hub and it was agreed that we fund a coordinator to oversee these projects. I have been able to confidently take a back seat on this project as I trust the management and staff at Castle Furniture to progress this work and improve on the existing structures.

A recent meeting with them about the hub has highlighted their innovative ideas they have to progress this project and I am excited to see what happens in the next year.

Laiza Lorimer  
Area Policy Officer



**The Castle Home Hub initiative builds on our strong foundations and partnerships to provide vital support to families and individuals facing hardship across Fife. Working in collaboration with the Cottage Family Centre, Big Hoose Project and Poverty Action Groups in Glenrothes and NE Fife, we distribute essential household goods and other critical items to those who need them most.**

Through referrals from other voluntary and statutory sector, Castle Home Hub ensures that essential items, such as bedding, kitchen supplies, towels, toiletries, clothing, shoes, and ambient food are accessible to families struggling with the rising cost of living. This includes items provided through our hubs in Cupar and Glenrothes, as well as our new satellite hubs in Newburgh, Coast, St Andrews, and Auchtermuchty.

Our partnership with the Big Hoose Project allows us to extend this support further, ensuring a wide range of household goods can be distributed across Fife. The Cottage Family Centre’s agreement with Amazon UK and other companies enables this vital work, supplying essential items for children and families experiencing poverty.

#### Cupar Hub

“The Castle Home Hub in Cupar has become a crucial resource,” shared Pauline, the hub coordinator. “We’ve provided everything from warm clothing and shoes to food parcels and bedding to families in need.”

#### Glenrothes Hub

“In Glenrothes, we see the impact of small but meaningful items like toiletries or a warm blanket,” said Owen, who volunteers in the hub. “It’s about making a difficult time just a little easier for families.”

#### Newburgh Satellite Hub

“Our Newburgh hub has brought support to families who might otherwise have struggled to access these resources,” explained their volunteer. “The food parcels and household items we provide are helping families through incredibly tough times.”

#### Coast Satellite Hub

“The Coast satellite hub ensures that rural families have access to essential items,” said the project lead. “From bedding to kitchen supplies, we’re making sure people don’t have to travel far for help.”

#### St Andrews Satellite Hub

“The St Andrews hub is reaching families who are feeling the pinch of rising costs,” shared the coordinator. “We’ve been able to provide clothing, toiletries, and school supplies to families who need a little extra help.”

#### Auchtermuchty Satellite Hub

“In Auchtermuchty, the hub has been a lifeline for many,” said a volunteer. “Providing items like shoes, bedding, and food parcels makes a real difference in people’s lives.”

#### Partnership and Progress

Through our partnership with The Big Hoose Project and the Cottage Family Centre, as well as the dedication of our Castle Home Hub team, we are expanding our reach and impact. Together, we are providing practical support that makes a tangible difference, ensuring families across Fife can access the essentials they need to get through these challenging times.

Castle Home Hub

# St Andrews Community Hub

On the morning of Thursday, 15th of February, a small but significant event took place, marking the continuation of a burgeoning partnership aimed at enhancing community welfare and social inclusion.

Pauline and Owen, representing the Castle Home Hub. They took 6 boxes; they were filled with Vaseline Lip Care kits, a simple yet profound tool in promoting self-care among individuals facing challenging times. Their destination was the North East Community Hub located in St Andrews.

The North East Community Hub, with its primary objective of creating a sustainable community facility, stands as a testament to what can be

achieved when compassion and action come together. This facility is a vibrant hub of activities, each designed with the intent of reducing loneliness, enhancing both mental and physical well-being, and promoting social inclusion among the community members. It's a place where anyone, regardless of their background or current situation, can find support, a friendly face, and perhaps most importantly, a sense of belonging.

This recent delivery from the Castle Home Hub is part of a series of collaborative efforts between the two organisations. The North East Community Hub, though relatively new to this partnership, has quickly proven to be invaluable in the shared mission of supporting the local community.

The Vaseline Lip Care kits, though seemingly modest, represent a much larger gesture of care and attention

to detail. For individuals struggling to make ends meet, personal care items can often fall to the wayside, deemed as non-essential in the face of more pressing needs like food and shelter. By providing these kits, Pauline and Owen, on behalf of the Castle Home Hub, are sending a clear message: every aspect of a person's wellbeing is important, and no need is too small to be acknowledged.



# St Andrews Environmental Network

Representatives from the Castle Home Hub, undertook a heart-warming mission to the St Andrews Environmental Network, a distinguished Fife-based environmental charity. Known for its deep commitment to ecological preservation and community support, the St Andrews Environmental Network has been at the forefront of several pioneering projects, including the Eco Hub, Cosy Kingdom, and Climate Friendly Homes, all aimed at fostering a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society.

Amidst their wide array of initiatives, the Network has been particularly focused on addressing the pressing challenges faced by families throughout North East Fife, who are grappling with the escalating cost of living and the dire impacts of poverty. In response to these challenges, the Network has devised a program to provide household packs

to those in need. These packs, thoughtfully assembled, contain essential items such as bedding, towels, and bathmats, offering not just comfort but a glimmer of hope to many families facing hardships.

On this particular delivery, Pauline and Owen transported 40 blankets.

Together, they continue to provide support, compassion, and environmental responsibility that extends far beyond the immediate need, touching the lives of countless individuals and families throughout North East Fife. It is through such collaborations that communities provide



# Cupar Hub

Pauline and Owen went out, stocked from the Home Hub to donate items to the Cupar Hub.

The donation of bathroom gift sets for both males and females, mixed toiletries, household cleaning products, along with essential staples like coffee, tea, and sugar, would have a positive impact on a local community centre, especially during the winter season.

These items, while seemingly basic, go a long way in offering some support, and a sense of belonging to refugees, the elderly, and the homeless, who often find themselves in precarious situations, particularly over the festive period.

For those seeking refuge and warmth in the community centre's warm space cafe, these donations are not just material goods but gestures

of care and understanding, acknowledging their needs and hardships.

The availability of gender-specific toiletries addresses personal hygiene needs with respect and sensitivity, while the inclusion of household and cleaning products helps maintain a clean and healthy environment for all.

Meanwhile, the provision of coffee, tea, and sugar fosters a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere, encouraging moments of connection and community among individuals who are most in need of support and companionship during the cold and often isolating holiday season.





Castle Home Hub

# See Scape

The second year of the Seescape Summer Picnic was an even greater success, thanks to the generous support from the Castle Home Hub team. With their help, we were able to expand our offerings, creating an unforgettable day for approximately 40-50 families.

This year's event featured a bouncy castle, face painting, a kids' corner play area, competition prizes, and much more. One of the highlights was the children's picnic boxes, packed with sandwiches, sausage rolls, fresh fruit, crisps, biscuits, and a bottle of water or juice, all for just £1.00.

Karen Russell, Hub Coordinator for Seescape, shared her gratitude: "We wouldn't have been able to provide the picnic boxes at such an affordable

price without the incredible help from Castle Home Hub. Their support truly made a difference for so many families."

Owen, a volunteer at Castle Home Hub, added, "It's great to see how something as simple as a picnic can bring smiles to so many children and families. Knowing we played a part in making this day special is what it's all about."

The picnic not only provided fun and entertainment but also brought the community together, creating moments of connection for families. These partnerships in communities are an example of what can be achieved through collaboration and community spirit. Here's to building on this success for years to come!



# CIC

Castle Home Hub recently partnered with Communities in Cupar (CIC) to provide essential support to families in need. A referral from Katy Scott, a CIC Caseworker, led to a meaningful collaboration aimed at helping Ukrainian refugee families establish stable, comfortable homes in North East Fife.

As part of this partnership, Castle Home Hub delivered a significant number of mixed household items to the CIC Community Centre and Café, located on Old Church Lane, Cupar. These items included essential toiletries, clothes, household cleaning supplies, and other vital household goods. By providing these everyday necessities, Castle Home Hub helped to ease the transition for families settling into a new country and unfamiliar surroundings.

The Castle Home Hub initiative reflects the organisation's ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable members of the community by addressing immediate needs. The

provision of toiletries and cleaning supplies helps ensure that families can maintain dignity and hygiene during a challenging time. Household items, such as kitchenware and other essentials, play a crucial role in transforming temporary accommodation into a home, offering comfort, stability, and a sense of normality.

This effort also supports children by creating an environment where they feel safe and secure, allowing them to settle into their new surroundings. When families are provided with the basic tools they need to thrive, parents can focus on rebuilding their lives, and children can enjoy a space where they can begin to heal and flourish.

Through partnerships like this, Castle Home Hub demonstrates the power of community-driven support. By working with organisations such as CIC, the Hub continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of families, helping them navigate periods of transition with dignity, security, and hope for a brighter future.

Castle Home Hub's proactive approach highlights the importance of addressing both immediate and long-term needs to empower families and create stronger, more supportive communities.



# FIF Halloween Event

Agata Trojanowska Employability Support Worker for Fife International Forum which is a charitable organisation based in Kirkcaldy that supports migrants and refugees in Fife made a referral to Castle Home Hub for a donation of any items such as used Halloween costumes, decorations or white, black and red sheets or fabrics for making costumes to support their October school holiday events dedicated to clients and their families to come together. These events are part of our Tackling Child Poverty Project.

This event will help to address some of the challenges faced by the families during the holidays when schools are closed and they do not have access to free school meals and activities.

The planned event will include fun activities for the children and will include a free breakfast and lunch. The first planned event will be held at the Mercat Shopping Centre in Kirkcaldy, to prepare Halloween costumes and decorations for children. The second event will take place at the Abbotshall Church Hall for the Halloween party the following week. These events are for about 60 adults and children.

Castle Home Hub was able to provide two boxes of white bedding and two boxes of fancy dress outfits.





### Tayport Lunch Club - More Than Just a Meal

**Thanks to funding from Fife Council Health & Social Care Partnership, the Tayport Lunch Club has become a weekly highlight for many members of our community.**

It's not just about providing a meal, though the delicious, hearty lunches are much appreciated. It's also about meaningful social contact, laughter, and a bit of healthy competition.

At the heart of the lunch club are the games. Dominos and Scrabble are firm favourites, and they're played with serious enthusiasm! For many, these aren't just games; they're a way to keep the mind sharp, practice counting, and get creative with words. The competitive spirit is always friendly, but

it's clear that everyone brings their A-game when it's time to play.

Recently, to make gameplay even more enjoyable, we purchased a swivel board for the Scrabble games. Some participants were finding it tricky to manoeuvre the board during play, and the swivel board has been a game-changer ... literally! Now, games move faster, and everyone can focus on their next big word. It's been a big hit with the group.

One regular attendee shared, "I never thought I'd enjoy playing Scrabble this much. It's not just about the game—it's the company and the laughs we have while we play." Another member chimed in, "I've made new friends here. The games keep my mind ticking over, but it's the conversations that mean the most to me."

The lunch club also offers a safe and welcoming space for people who might otherwise feel isolated. For some, it's their main social outing of the week, and it makes a huge difference to their wellbeing. As one participant put it, "It's more than a lunch. It's a lifeline."

By combining good food with good company and a bit of mental stimulation, the Tayport Lunch Club has created something truly special. It's a reminder that small, community-focused initiatives can have a big impact, we're looking forward to welcoming even more people to the table in the future.



# Befriending Lounge

**The Drop-In Lounge in Cupar funded as part of our Befriending service, is more than just a place to sit and have a cup of tea; it's where friendships grow, stories are shared, and people come together. It provides companionship, support, and a warm, welcoming environment for anyone looking to connect with others.**

## **A Place to Feel Heard**

Take Miss T, for example. She has been a loyal visitor to the lounge for years, relying on its community for friendship and emotional support. Living alone, she values the lounge as her safe haven where she can share both the joys and challenges of her life. When she faced health struggles, including a diagnosis of lung cancer, the lounge became her anchor. With regular check-ins via phone and text during her recovery, Miss T felt the strength of a community

that genuinely cared for her, even when she couldn't physically attend.

## **Finding Friendship and Guidance**

Mr S initially popped in out of curiosity, but it wasn't long before the lounge became his go-to place. As an army veteran, he had been battling frustration and loneliness. The lounge offered him a supportive ear and practical advice, helping him reconnect with veteran support services like SSAFA. More importantly, it provided a space where he could let off steam and feel accepted for who he is.

## **Moments of Comfort**

For Mrs F, the lounge was the first place she thought of after a frightening fall. Shaken and unsure of what to do, she arrived at the lounge, where she was met with kindness and care. After being encouraged to

visit her doctor, Mrs F returned with gratitude, saying, "I'm so glad I had you and the lounge to come to. I don't know what I would have done otherwise."

## **Building Courage and Community**

Mrs B's journey to the lounge took courage. New to the area and grieving the loss of her husband, she found herself isolated in a town where she knew no one. After gathering the bravery to step inside, she discovered a welcoming community that helped her slowly rebuild her confidence and make new connections.

## **A Sanctuary for Reflection**

Miss S's story highlights the lounge's role as a sanctuary. Behind her ever-present smile was a deep well of grief and worry. Living with inoperable lung cancer, she often felt alone. The lounge gave her the space to talk, reminisce, and share her burdens. It became a place where she could find the emotional support she needed to maintain her positivity.

Each person's story is unique, but the common thread is clear: the Befriending Drop-In Lounge is a place of connection and support. It's where laughter echoes, tears are shared, and everyone is made to feel welcome. It's more than just a cup of tea—it's a space to feel valued and understood. Initiatives can have a big impact, we're looking forward to welcoming even more people to the table in the future.



## Befriending

# George

**George would seldom leave his home, if ever. He would have months at a time where he was completely isolated and shut off from the world. Since Aniela has been visiting George, he hasn't felt the need to do this once.**

One of our befrienders Aniela has been visiting our client George for almost year, in that time George has had many small victories with regards to regaining his confidence.

The frequent visits give George the opportunity to leave the house with company he trusts, which prevents him from avoiding social isolation until he becomes afraid to go outside.

George has found his passion again for his hobby fishing, which he works tirelessly at. Finding new equipment, setting it up in his flat and exploring for new destination he can access easily to fish.

On Friday Aniela took George out in her car to explore a new location George had heard about, the 'Tattie hole' near Clayton park. After driving a few minutes up the road Aniela and George made their way into the park, complementing the homes on the park, and even having a look at some of the cabins for sale- just to be nosey!!

At the bottom of the park they found the lake, next to the tattie hole, a picturesque scene with towering reeds and clear water, it was a pity about the Icey breeze, which didn't seem to bother George... Typical!

After securing the location Aniela and George headed home, picking up a coffee on route, George was excited to have found a new place locally he can go to when the weather improves, if it ever does.

Encouraging hobbies is incredibly important when supporting someone's road to independence and confidence. Sometimes having someone to go with you first, can make it all the more easier the second time.



## Befriending Helen

**When battling social isolation within Castle Furniture, it often times is far more complicated than a simple visit and a cup of tea. When an individual has been isolated due to a debilitating disability, they can often become distant from family members, friends and those they hold dear.**

Helen who lives with Lipoedema can only travel small local distances on her disability scooter, she finds public transport impossible and cannot afford taxis to take her to visit friends and family. However, this became a much bigger issue when Helens son moved out of their family home and into assisted living in Thornton. Due to the son's autism, he finds

communication of any kind very difficult, as well as this travelling to see Helen is simply off the cards. Christmas is an incredibly triggering month for him, due to his personal stressor; buying and receiving gifts.

This caused her son to go entirely no contact, Helen had not heard from her son in over 4 weeks, and due to confidentiality and his age, the housing team he lives with were not permitted to disclose any personal information regarding his current mental health, and how he was coping.

Helen was utterly distraught at the fact that she now found herself, unable to check on the welfare of her own child, she felt helpless, embarrassed and frustrated at her disability.

After Helen opened up about this problem to our befriender Aniela, she quickly perceived this issue to be an emergency, and scheduled to collect Helen herself to take her directly to see her son the following week.

Upon collecting Helen it was clear that she felt

worried and stressed, she was concerned that her son may refuse to see her at all due to a build-up of stress that had accumulated over the past few months. Aniela allowed the family their privacy, insuring that Helen gained access to the property and waiting for her outside.

When Helen returned 45 minutes later she was utterly elated. Her son was incredibly pleased to see her, they had a catch up and Helen was assured her son was thriving in his new environment.

Helen was made aware that our Befriender was more than happy to take Helen to see her son whenever she was

concerned, relieving Helen of an incredible amount of stress and guilt.

It is complicated situations like these, where we feel so honoured to be able to make a positive difference, allowing a mother to see her child should not even be a question however, financial and physical disabilities can make this impossible for some. Helen is and continues to be incredibly grateful for the service Castle furniture provides to her and her family, enabling her to feel confident, leave the house and massively improve her mental health.



## Befriending Julie

**Julie has faced numerous challenges in recent years that have contributed to her becoming housebound. Eight years ago, she received a promise from Fife Council that she would be getting a new kitchen, which prompted her to remove her existing flooring in anticipation of the renovations. Unfortunately, the new kitchen never materialised, leaving Julie with outdated and unsightly flooring for the past eight years.**

Around the same time, Julie faced significant personal losses that further isolated her. Her husband passed away, leaving her grieving and alone. Shortly thereafter, her only son moved to

Austria to start a new life with his wife, which left Julie feeling abandoned and without support. The combination of grief, loneliness, and the deteriorating condition of her home caused Julie to lose her confidence, and she eventually became housebound. For five years, Julie rarely left her home, unable to face the world outside.

Two years ago, Julie was referred to Castle Furniture, where she was introduced to Aniela. From their very first meeting, Aniela recognised the depth of Julie's struggles and the profound impact that isolation had on her life. Aniela approached the befriending relationship with patience and empathy, gradually helping Julie rebuild her confidence and regain a sense of connection to the outside world.

A turning point in their relationship came when they arranged a day trip to Kirkcaldy to help Julie address the issue of her flooring. This was not just a practical task but also a significant step in Julie's journey toward reclaiming her independence and improving her living environment. Julie needed both emotional support and practical assistance to take this step.

On the day of the trip, Aniela arrived at Julie's, although Julie was nervous. Together, they travelled to Kirkcaldy, where Aniela had arranged for Julie to choose and book the installation of her new flooring.

The experience was transformative for Julie. With Aniela by her side, she was able to confidently make decisions about her home, something she had been unable to do for years. The trip also provided Julie with a sense of accomplishment and a renewed belief in her ability to make positive changes in her life.

The day out in Kirkcaldy had a profound impact on Julie's well-being. Not only did it result in her finally getting new flooring after eight years of waiting, but it also gave her a renewed sense of independence. Julie expressed her deep gratitude to Aniela, acknowledging that she would never have been able to achieve this without her support. The trip strengthened their bond, and Julie began to feel more hopeful about the future, knowing that she had someone she could rely on.





# Laura

**Life as a single parent is never easy, but when the parent struggles with mental health and the children have behavioural problems, things can often feel impossible.**

Laura is a client of castle furniture, she herself is a single parent with two children. Laura experiences crippling and debilitating anxiety, and because of this she finds herself experiencing social isolation. Laura began down the complicated path of selfmedicating, trying to overcome these issue on her own which quickly led to an opioid addiction. Laura is seeking the appropriate help for this substance abuse problem, and is on the road to recovery as we speak.

Laura's children have some of their own behavioural problems, with her youngest

becoming violent towards her, fearing this behaviour has been learned from the child's dad, Laura finds herself in an almost impossible position. Her eldest child has recently entered their teenage years, facing a whole new set of emotions and expectations, this has caused her child to shrink into themselves, showing signs of depression and they too experience social isolation. Laura again has sought the appropriate help for her child, having them referred to CAHMS.

In Laura's pursuit of peace, she has made it her mission to clear all her outstanding debt, which is substantial and is costing her a fortune in interest. In order to do this Laura has been researching and cooking home meals that are affordable and made in bulk, to cut the families monthly costs down.

Unfortunately Laura's home cooker has blown, leaving her with only the use of one hob, which is incredibly hard for her to prepare food for her whole family on a budget. Alongside this barrier



there is another, her current fridge freezer is malfunctioning and is freezing the food in her fridge randomly, earning that when it comes time to prepare food, often she is unable to use it that day due to it being frozen, costing her more money by replacing that nights home cooked meal.

By Providing Laura with a fridge and cooker we are helping Laura achieve her goals, get herself out of debt by making proactive money saving choices, which in turn will improve her and her children's quality of life.



### Expanding Training Opportunities with CES Training Academy.

The CES Training Academy is proud to deliver high-quality training that equips individuals with essential skills for personal and workplace safety. Among our key programmes, the fully accredited First Aid at Work and Mental Health First Aid courses ensure participants are well-prepared to respond to physical and mental health emergencies with confidence and professionalism.

In addition to these accredited programmes, we offer Emergency First Aid, providing practical skills for managing immediate medical situations.

The Academy also delivers a growing suite of CPD training, including Manual Handling and Bankperson Training, with an accredited Health

and Safety course currently under development. This year, we successfully introduced Skills for Life training, which has proven highly effective in providing practical and transferable knowledge. Plans are underway to expand this initiative further in response to its success.

Additionally, our specialised domestic appliance training supports participants in gaining practical expertise, boosting employability and workforce skills.

By offering a diverse range of training options, the CES Training Academy continues to empower individuals and organisations, equipping them with the tools to succeed in both work and life. . ve a big impact, we're looking forward to welcoming even more people to the table in the future.



# Training

**At Castle, we believe that investing in the skills and knowledge of our staff and volunteers is key to empowering individuals and lifting our community. Under the leadership of our Training Manager Bill and with the expertise of our Training Developer Steve, Castle has made tremendous strides in expanding and enhancing our training offerings over the past 12 months.**

The primary focus has been on obtaining an official CPD accreditation for our courses, in order to achieve this our training must meet official criteria and quality standards. We have successfully achieved this for two of our courses so far, Manual Handling and Banksman. This allowing our participants to gain a UK wide recognised qualification.

We currently have three additional courses nearing the final stages of accreditation – Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Re-gassing Refrigeration, and Driver

Competencies. Steve has played an instrumental role in skilfully developing the content for these programs. Once accredited, these courses will provide staff, volunteers, and community members with certifications that can further their professional opportunities.

A further essential infrastructure component needed is implementing our CES Training Academy. Formalising processes around registration, delivery, quality assurance, and certification for our accredited training will allow us to run professional development programs at scale while ensuring standards are upheld. Steve has provided invaluable skill set on best practices for the Academy based on his experience developing training for other organisations.

Another ongoing goal highlighted this year is developing a comprehensive Training Matrix that maps all of Castle’s offerings. With many demands on staff time, dedicating focused effort to this project has been difficult but remains a priority. Successfully completing the Matrix will allow us to easily track development opportunities and identify

potential gaps. A goal for the coming 12 months.



At the heart of Castle’s programs are the amazing volunteers and staff that participate and facilitate these courses. We were thrilled that skills gained through our training directly supported three volunteers in securing paid employment this year. Stories like this inspire us to continuously enhance and expand development opportunities to transform lives. While some courses support specific on-the-job needs, many programs—like Mental Health, First Aid—provide life skills to empower individuals in all aspects of their lives.

As we look ahead, Castle is eagerly anticipating delivering our first accredited CPD courses under the CES Training

Academy banner. We also plan to submit additional programs for official accreditation. Our goal is to eventually open courses to the broader community. Becoming a recognised training centre will allow Castle to make an even greater impact while also generating revenue to support our continued progress in this area.

Most of all, we want to thank everyone who has participated in Castle training and helped make it so impactful this past year. We look forward to continuing to invest in our staff, volunteers, and community in the years ahead!



# Skills for Life

**We launched the Skills for Life training programme to help students pick up practical, everyday skills they can actually use. The idea was simple: show people how to handle basic household maintenance and repairs so they can feel more confident and independent.**

The workshops were hands-on, practical, and focused on skills that come in handy around the house. Here's a quick look at what we covered:

**Changing a Plug:** Students got to grips with rewiring a plug safely, figuring out where the live, neutral, and earth wires go, and making sure everything was secured properly.

**Fixing Everyday Appliances:**

Vacuum cleaners: things like replacing belts and

unblocking clogged pipes.

Washing machines: cleaning out filters to keep them running smoothly.

Replacing worn-out brushes in washing machines—a task many found surprisingly doable.

Fixing fridge door seals to stop leaks and save on energy bills.

Changing appliance light bulbs, which is easy when you know how.

The sessions were very hands-on. Students worked directly on real appliances, so they could learn by doing, not just watching. The instructors were there to guide them and make sure everyone felt supported. It wasn't about being perfect; it was

about trying things out and building confidence.

What We Achieved By the end of the programme, students were:

Feeling more confident about tackling household repairs.

Clear on basic safety steps for working with appliances and electrics.

Equipped with skills that can save time and money by avoiding unnecessary repair bills.

Looking Ahead This programme has been a big success in giving people skills they can use straight away. To make it even better, we're now working on turning this into an accredited CPD (Continuing Professional Development) course. That way, more people can take part, and participants will have a recognised certification to show for it. It's an exciting step forward, and we can't wait to see how it grows.

"I never thought I'd be able to fix my vacuum cleaner myself. Now I feel like I can handle basic repairs at home."

"Learning how to rewire a plug was easier than I expected, and it's such a useful skill to have."

"The washing machine session was great. I always thought replacing brushes was something only a professional could do, but now I've done it myself!"



Working in Partnership

# HMP Castle Huntly

Release on Temporary Licence, or as it is usually shortened to ROTL, allows prisoners to leave the prison for short periods of time. One reason that a prisoner would be allowed ROTL would be for resettlement into the community including the opportunity to take up paid or voluntary work.

ROTL prisoners are carefully risk assessed and monitored and this allows Castle Furniture a greater degree of confidence. It also allows Castle Furniture to assess the prisoner's work and attitude before potentially offering them a more permanent position on release from prison.

Once a prisoner has been identified as suitable for ROTL and allocated a placement at Castle

Furniture, they initially meet with the Health and Wellbeing Nurse who carries out a High-Level Risk Assessment. The risk assessment is then reviewed at a Safeguarding Review Meeting where it is decided whether the individual poses any risk to Castle's diverse workforce or the community.

If all goes well, the prisoner is inducted and provided with the training required to adequately fulfil their role, continuous monitoring at Safeguarding meetings is held to ensure compliance of licence conditions and bi-monthly reports are submitted to the prison to monitor the prisoners' progress.



HMP Castle Huntly

# Jason

**Jason is serving the final months of his sentence. As part of his resettlement plan to aid his transition back into society, Jason has been participating in a meal preparation program within Castle. While Jason has always been able to cook, cooking on a budget is new to him.**

This program pairs prisoners with resettlement staff to jointly plan, shop for, and prepare meals for Castle employees. Jason was partnered with Sam, together they planned nutritious meals that could be prepared on a limited budget.

Over the last few months, Jason and Sam cooked meals including spaghetti Bolognese, chicken casseroles, and a Thai Red curry for the 15 to 20 staff and volunteers on site. For Jason, the program provided hands-on experience with essential life skills like budgeting, nutrition, and cooking that he had struggled with in the past.

According to Sam, “Jason has shown real dedication to improving his meal preparation abilities. Developing these skills will make the transition to living independently smoother. Jason has gained confidence in the kitchen, and the appreciation from staff has given him a sense of value and achievement.”

Programs like this are an important part of the rehabilitation process, giving prisoners the tools they need to successfully reintegrate into society. Jason’s growth demonstrates how compassion and giving people a chance to learn new skills can empower them to transform their lives.

“I never realised how much I could make with just a little money. Preparing food for others has taught me patience and teamwork. I feel like I have a purpose helping out, and for the first time, I feel prepared to take care of myself.”



# Community Payback

## Community Payback - Rebuilding Lives

Community Payback Orders (CPOs) offer individuals the opportunity to give back to society through unpaid work while gaining valuable skills and rebuilding their lives. At Castle, we provide placements that help participants grow, contribute meaningfully, and move forward positively.

### James' Story

James joined Castle's and quickly became skilled in restoring furniture for reuse. "When I started, I didn't think anyone would trust me because of my past," James said. "But here, I've gained confidence and skills that I can use in the future."

### Karen's Journey

Karen came to Castle through CPO after struggling with substance misuse. Working in the furniture workshop gave her structure and support. "The staff never judged me," Karen said. "Now, I volunteer regularly and feel proud of the progress I've made."

### Lasting Impact

Castle's supportive environment helps individuals feel valued and capable. As Training Manager Bill says, "It's amazing to see people grow and realise their potential." Through CPO placements, Castle Furniture is transforming lives while strengthening the community.



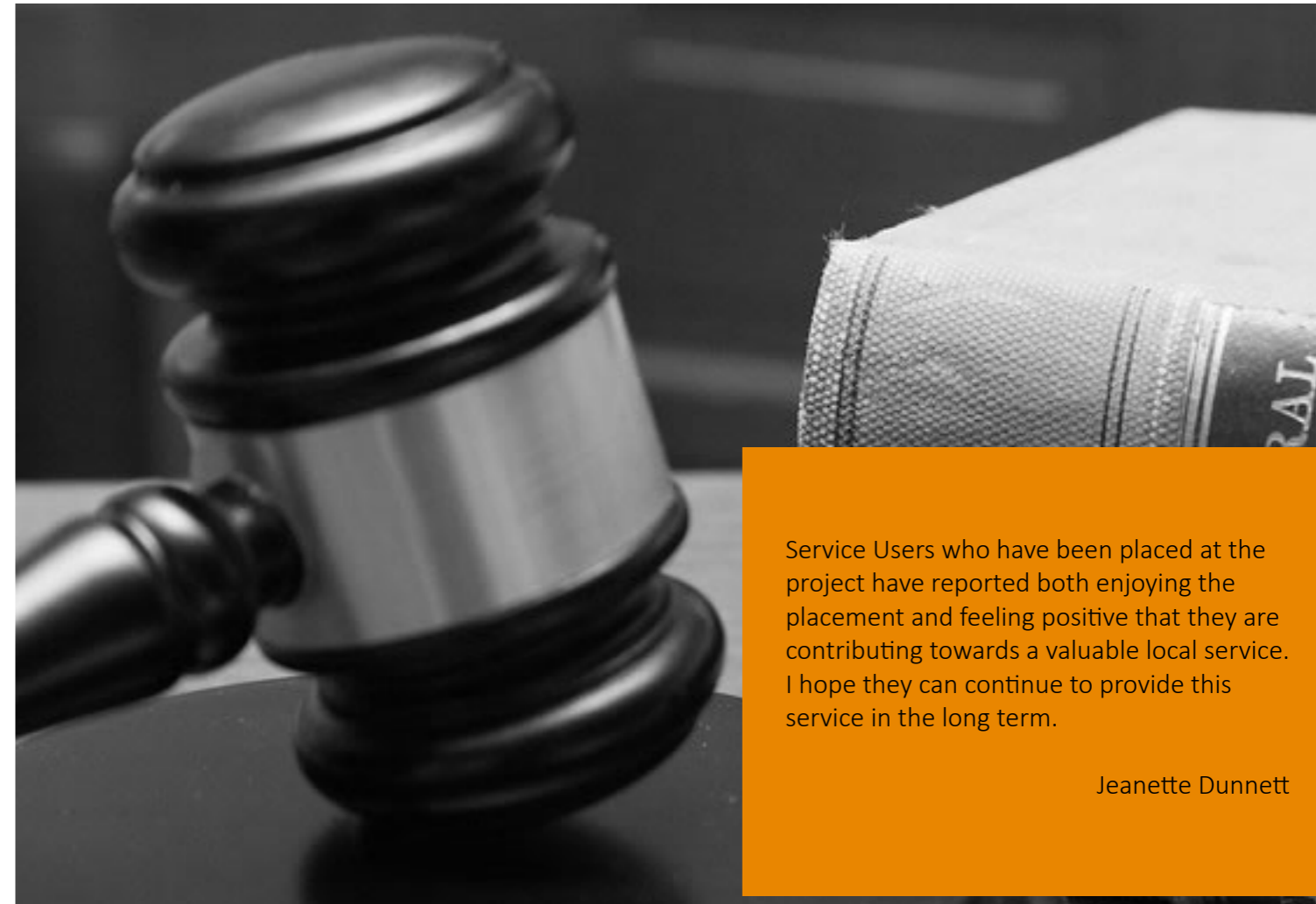
Working in Partnership

# Criminal Justice/ Community Payback

Castle Furniture continues to provide valuable individual placements for our Service Users who have a requirement of unpaid work imposed by the court.

I have found the staff to be flexible and non-judgemental regarding the offences our Service Users have committed. Where there has been mental health issues, Castle Furniture will provide support as necessary.

The project has also provided voluntary placements for our Service Users who do not have this as a requirement of a court order.



Service Users who have been placed at the project have reported both enjoying the placement and feeling positive that they are contributing towards a valuable local service. I hope they can continue to provide this service in the long term.

Jeanette Dunnett



## Furniture Project

# Castle in Numbers

### Volunteer Hours

7989

worth  
£91,394.16  
using living wage of £11.44

### Households using Castle

6888

### Items Collected

5434

### Tonnes diverted from Landfill

168

### Average Items

Per Collection 2.68  
Per Delivery 1.49

### Membership

Castle's membership count is currently

2010

### Referrals

No of individuals/families utilising our referral schemes

887

### Discounts

Non referral orders receiving discounted goods

747

### Commercial Activity

% of income self-generated

74

## Volunteering

# Adam

Adam joined Castle Furniture as a volunteer one month ago, initially expecting a busy environment with a lot of manual handling work, having been a customer previously.

His experiences have aligned with these expectations, and he has found the teamwork and team bonding particularly fulfilling, enhancing his CV and customer service skills through his mostly positive experience on the vans. A memorable moment for Adam was his first job on the vans when he fell while handling a fridge, learning a valuable lesson about safety. He feels his role has significantly contributed to the charity's mission by making the warehouse and van operations more

efficient and reducing the stress on existing employees, seeing himself as a valued member of the team.

Volunteering has positively impacted Adam's mental health by providing a good routine, helping him organise his life, and giving him a sense of purpose and pride, although his stress levels and overall mood have remained the same. The most helpful resources provided by the charity include the volunteer discount, which allowed him to get a new TV unit, and the team-building activities and humour shared among the team. Adam believes that additional resources, such as banksman training, would enhance his volunteer experience by boosting his confidence in assisting with the vans. Looking to the future, Adam hopes to gain useful experience for employment, become a trusted and reliable team member, and eventually take on more responsibilities like driving the vans.



# Jaydn

**As part of our commitment to engaging young people in meaningful experiences, we were delighted to have Jaydn Baxter, a 15-year-old student, join us for his school work experience.**

Jaydn's time with us not only provided him with practical skills but also offered him a firsthand look at the positive impact of community service.

Jaydn spent a significant part of his work experience at The Hub, under the guidance of Pauline. Here, he was involved in crucial tasks like packing orders containing food, bedding, kitchen appliances, drinks, nappies,

wipes, and other essential items for families in need. His responsibilities also included unpacking and organising deliveries, ensuring that everything was readily available for distribution.

In addition to his work in The Hub, Jaydn had the opportunity to work alongside Bill, our Resource and Training Manager, who is also an experienced electrician. This collaboration offered Jaydn a unique perspective on the technical aspects of our operations. Bill took Jaydn out to assist with cooker installations, providing him with valuable hands-on experience in electrical work.

Jaydn's enthusiasm and dedication were evident throughout his work experience. His

eagerness to learn and contribute positively to our team made a significant impact. It was not uncommon for Jaydn, after a day packed with learning and activity, to fall asleep in the car on the way home to Dundee – a testament to his hard work and the fulfilling nature of his days with us.

Reflecting on his time at Castle, Jaydn shared, "I really enjoyed my work experience here. Working with Pauline in The Hub and assisting Bill with installations has given me a great insight into how much effort goes into supporting our community. It's been an amazing experience, and I've learned so much."

Jaydn's work experience at Castle is a shining example of how young individuals can gain invaluable life skills and a deeper understanding of community service, setting a foundation for their future endeavours.



Volunteering

# Jake

**Jake found out about Castle Furniture through a job Fayre in Glenrothes. He had been actively job searching since his previous workplace shut down due to a fire destroying the property.**

Jake works doing manual handling on the vans, demonstrating brilliant customer service within client's homes and developing his skills with white goods installations along the way.

Since beginning his role with us at Castle Furniture Jake shared he has felt a huge alleviation of the mental stresses he was previously going through, working as part of the team has cleared his mind and 'significantly improved' his mental health. Part of this is due to the sense of achievements he feels by helping his local community, giving him a sense of pride he didn't have previously. As a carer for his mother, community

is extremely important to Jake, as he himself appreciates the need for charities like ourselves, and the work we do.

As well as this, he has found that the role has on occasion pushed him out of his usual comfort zone, which has boosted his self-confidence as he realises he is capable of much more than he initially believed he was, which is inspiring to witness.

Jake urges anyone looking for work not to give up, to continue searching, to go out their comfort zone and try something new, as it could be the best decision they ever make.

"Jake has been involved with Fife Young Carers for several years now and been a young carer for even longer. His caring role has often impacted his life and his ability to things many would consider normal.

Having other responsibilities made finding work difficult for Jake and working in a workplace understanding of these responsibilities is also important to Jake. His life can fluctuate quickly which makes Jakes life unpredictable.

Finding and maintaining work therefore has been difficult for Jake. Jake has previously had a few part time jobs but nothing consistent and had been out of work for several months. Castle furniture has provided Jake with a positive environment to apply himself and develop in a work environment."

Ross Cafferkey, Fife Young Carers



Volunteering

# Kathleen

**I would describe myself first, as a dedicated wife and mother. I first heard about Castle Furniture through Fife Voluntary Action.**

Previously I had been an administrator within a housing company which I enjoyed thoroughly but unfortunately my placement ended. I didn't want to leave my CV with a large gap due to unemployment which is what initially drew me to the voluntary sector, with the knowledge that I could also improve some core skills and keep my administrative skills fresh.

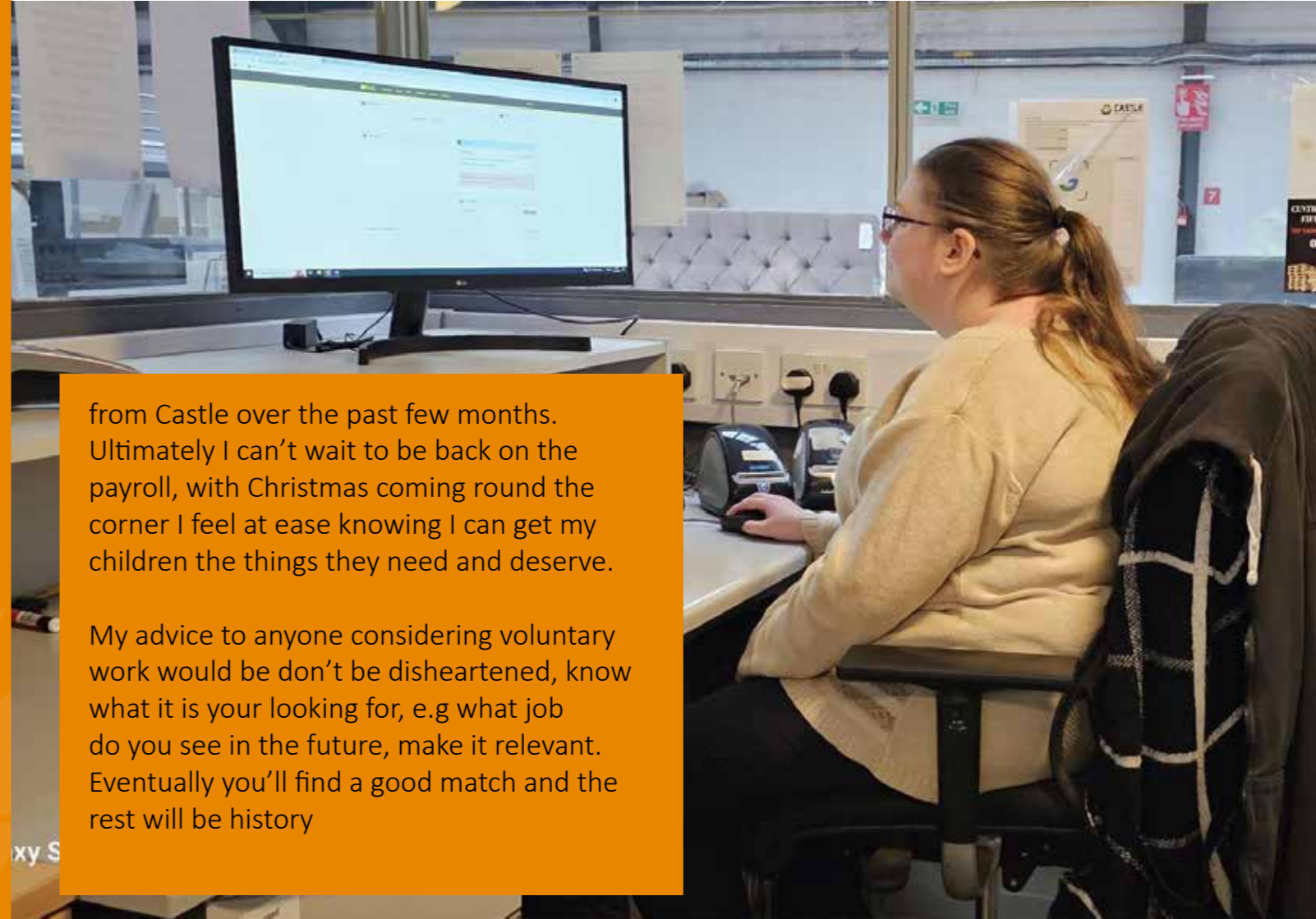
Through my time at Castle Furniture I did a little bit of everything in the office, filling, researching courses for our commercial manager and serving customers.

With regards to support back into the workplace Castle has always made me feel as though there's someone there to help, help maintain my skill levels and keep my CV updated to be more appealing to employers.

I don't believe I would have been successful in obtaining my new role as a Tenancy management assistant without the help

from Castle over the past few months. Ultimately I can't wait to be back on the payroll, with Christmas coming round the corner I feel at ease knowing I can get my children the things they need and deserve.

My advice to anyone considering voluntary work would be don't be disheartened, know what it is your looking for, e.g what job do you see in the future, make it relevant. Eventually you'll find a good match and the rest will be history



# Davie

**Davie started at castle furniture project 10 years ago after being referred by a partner organisation. He had only intended to stay with us for 3 months, however, at the age of 72, he is still with us volunteering three days a week.**

Before joining castle furniture Davie had many previous roles including heavy engineering, reception work. When Davie started, he was already approaching his retirement, and just wanted something to do to keep him busy for a short while, however, he has chosen to stay on as one of our most treasured and loyal volunteers. Davie started as a driver's mate on the vans, then one day by circumstance he pushed forward to be a driver and has done so ever since.

When asked why he has chosen to stay with us for so long, he voiced it is mainly the close sense

of community, feeling valued in a corporation and productive in his free time.

3 years ago, Davie sadly lost his wife and life partner, he sought refuge at his workplace and was supported emotionally through his grief, keeping himself busy with a sense of purpose.

Castle furniture in every sense is more than just a workplace, we are a family, support system, motivator and a shoulder to cry on.

Davie has given so much of his time, wisdom and knowledge to us at Castle Furniture over the past 10 years and beyond, we cannot thank him and all our volunteers enough for helping our organisation run so smoothly, as we couldn't do it without them.



# Domestic Appliances Team

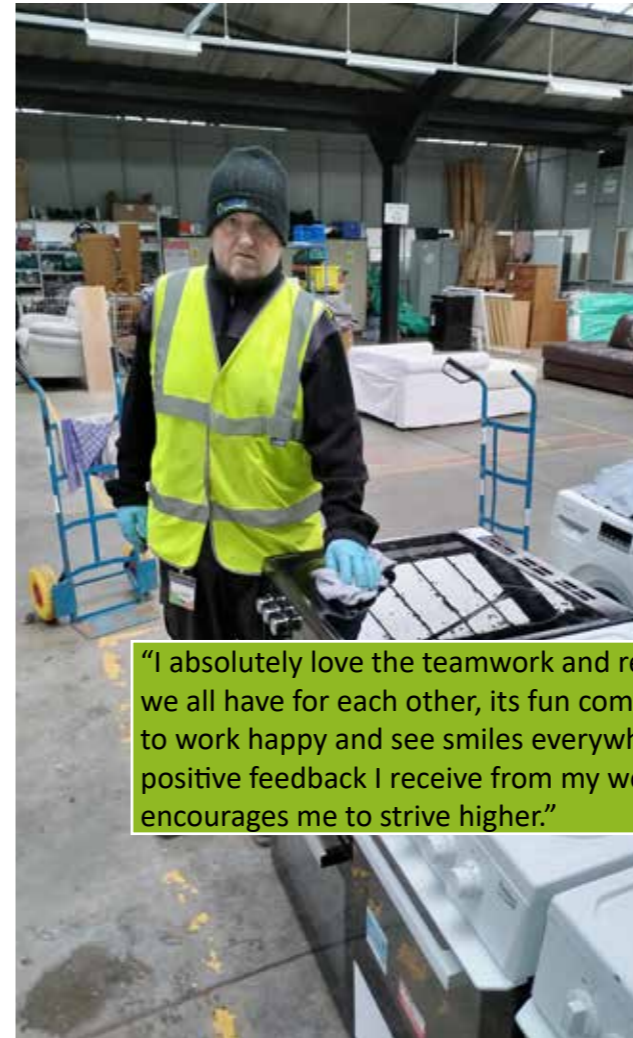
The seamless operation of domestic appliances is pivotal to daily life. Our engineering departments mission is to meticulously refurbish preloved appliances.

Within our team, two engineers and a diligent cleaner restore functionality and ensure the aesthetic rejuvenation of each appliance.

Our collaboration with DHL and Currys signifies a strategic alliance aimed at sustainability and community engagement. Together, we collect preloved appliances, putting them through a transformative process that extends their lifecycle. These refurbished appliances not only find a second life in our shop fronts, but also play a vital role in supporting various community projects.

Beyond the retail aspect, the reused appliances become catalysts for change; Funding and fuelling projects that benefit those in need within our community. This unique approach exemplifies our commitment to environmental responsibility and underscores our dedication of enhancing homes, while making a meaningful impact on the lives of others, including working alongside supported clients within the department.

Highlights included excellent level of supported client work, the ongoing training of two new engineers contributing to workforce development, and a noteworthy increase in the refurbishment of appliances, signifying the positive impact of our sustainability efforts on the community.



“I absolutely love the teamwork and respect we all have for each other, its fun coming to work happy and see smiles everywhere, positive feedback I receive from my workmates encourages me to strive higher.”



“I take pride in refurbishing machines and being part of a department that has a significant contribution when it comes to helping others”

Domestic Appliance Team

# Currys

**Through the Producer Compliance Scheme, Castle Furniture collects White Goods (Refrigeration, Washing Machines, Cookers, Tumble Dryers and Dishwashers) from the Currys Distribution Centre.**

The appliances we collect are those collected from households under the Take Back scheme, meaning that when a customer buys a new machine Currys will collect their old machine, under SEPA these machines are called waste and enter the waste stream.

Castle will then take this waste back to our workshop and the Domestic Appliances department will then work on these appliances, repair and refurbish if economically viable, the machines that are successful are taken out of the waste stream and put for resale.

This partnership benefits both the community and environment, refurbishing white goods allowing access to these white goods at much reduced prices over brand new items and every appliance removed from the waste stream reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and the emissions created by recycling these items.

This partnership has also allowed us to work closely with the local council to supply white goods via the Circular Communities Scotland Consortium.

The impact of this partnership is quite apparent with the following figures for 2024, and as you can see it has both a community and environmental impact.





# Leon

**Leon's story at Castle Furniture is one of profound professional development. Diagnosed with ADHD, Leon excelled in roles that paired with his hyper-focus, especially in the field of domestic appliances.**

Initially as a volunteer, Leon handled our webstore on WIX. He diligently took care in his work, stopping only to enthusiastically pitch our appliances to would-be customers. His interest in domestic appliances then had him put down the WIX tablet and gravitate closer to the workshop where he remains to this day. His eagerness led him to a hands-on role in our workshop, where under engineer Frankie's mentorship, he deepened his expertise in repairing and maintaining appliances.

Leon's personal health journey is equally inspiring. Having battled a takeaway addiction, he has undergone a transformation like night and day, losing 15 stone in less than a year. His commitment to mastering fitness and nutrition has not only restored his health but has also given him a new lease on life. Leon is passionate about sharing his journey, proving that significant change is possible without surgery or medication. Turning over a new leaf, Leon is determined never again to submit to his old vices.

This twinned path of professional and personal growth shows his strength and determination for which the team applaud him!

Leon commented 'Castle has been a great motivator for me getting out of the house and taking back my health.' (he said something else funnier about the weight loss but his toilet humour isn't so PG haha).



# John

**Castle Furniture was recently approached by a support worker who had a client in urgent need. A single Dad living with depression and anxiety who has recently been diagnosed with cancer of the mouth. After undergoing surgery for his cancer John's mood has been severely impacted, he feels isolated and that he has no one to support him through this journey.**

John's daughter Hope, remains at home to care for John, she has done hours of research and has visited the hospital with John so she could learn the correct nutritional needs for her Dad to heal and fuel his body. This was however,

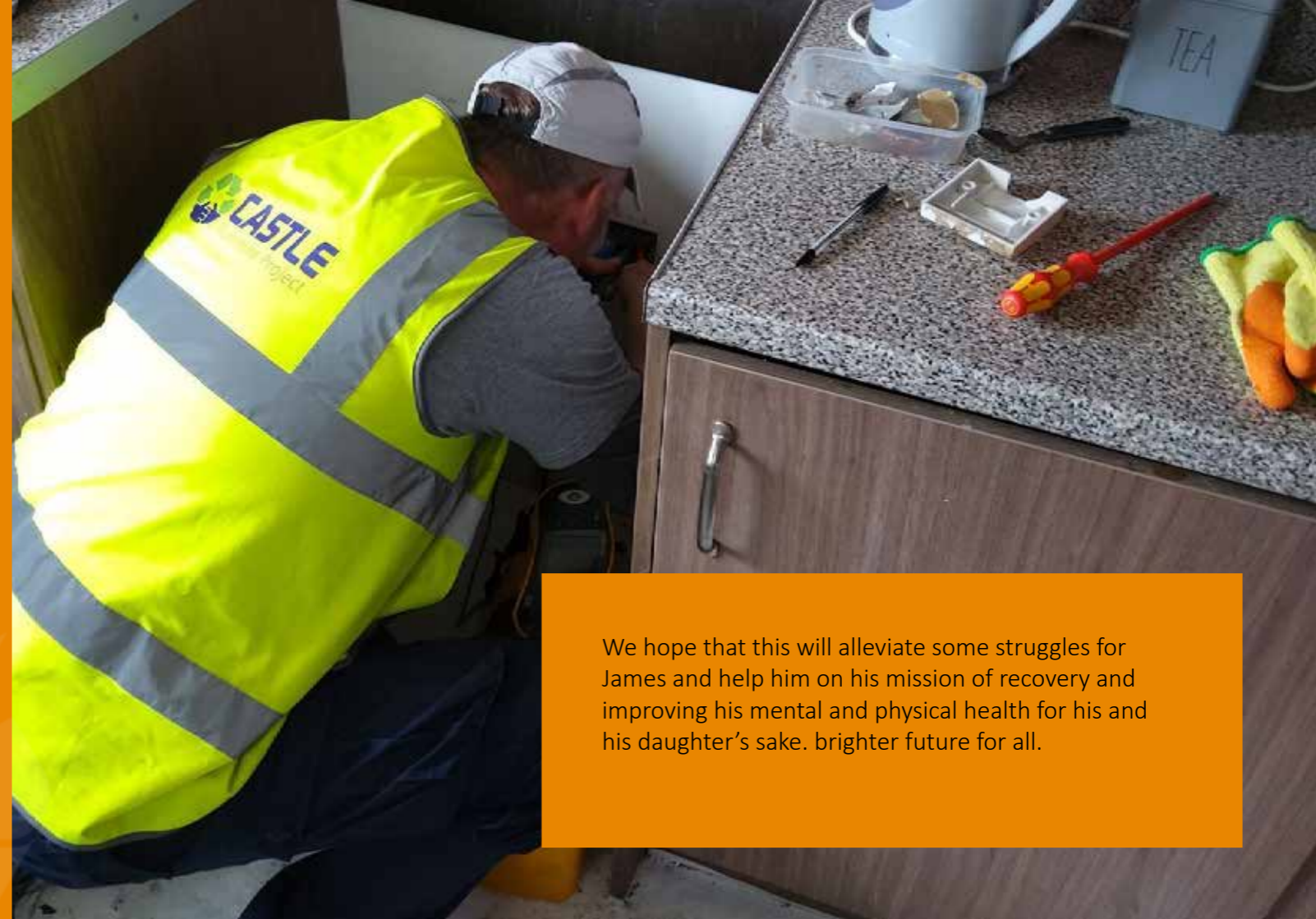
until their cooker broke.

Due to financial hardship affecting the family after John was no longer able to work, he no longer has the finances available to replace his broken white goods.

James eating healthy home cooked meals is vital for his recovery and battle, it was an urgent matter that his cooker be replaced as quickly as possible.

Due to the severity of the situation and the urgency Castle funded a cooker and a washing machine.

Not only has this removed a huge amount of financial pressure from the family, but it allows James to recover with wholesome meals instead of relying on nutritionally lacking ready meals.



We hope that this will alleviate some struggles for James and help him on his mission of recovery and improving his mental and physical health for his and his daughter's sake. brighter future for all.

Domestic Appliance Team

# Leanne

**As a mother of a young daughter and the primary caregiver for her stepdaughter several days each week, Leanne was contending with the financial burden of frequently purchasing fresh food due to her malfunctioning fridge freezer**

Castle Furniture Project has made a substantial positive impact on Leanne's life by providing her with a functional fridge freezer, addressing a critical need in her household.

This situation not only escalated her grocery expenses but also compounded the stress of her already demanding circumstances. Furthermore, with

her partner currently incarcerated, Leanne shoulders the additional emotional and financial burden of providing support, further straining her limited budget. Her challenges were exacerbated by a recent reduction in her Universal Credit payments, caused by an administrative error made by her employer when reporting her parttime wages.

The provision of a new fridge freezer by the Castle Furniture Project has been transformative for Leanne. It has enabled her to store food properly, thereby reducing the frequency of grocery shopping and lowering her food expenses. This improvement has allowed her to better manage her finances, ensuring she can adequately provide for her daughter and stepdaughter. Moreover, the alleviation of financial pressure has mitigated some of the stress associated with her partner's imprisonment and the instability of her income.

In summary, the assistance from the Castle Furniture Project has significantly enhanced Leanne's quality of life, offering her greater stability and peace of mind, and enabling her to focus more effectively on the well-being of her family.



Domestic Appliance Team

# Murray

**Murray has recently faced significant upheaval following the departure of his ex-partner, who removed the majority of white goods and furniture from their home. This situation has left Murray without essential cooking and cleaning facilities.**

While Murray had a microwave and air fryer, their limited capacity greatly reduced his ability to store and cook a variety of foods, confining him mostly to non-perishables. The absence of a washing machine and tumble dryer complicated his laundry routine, making it difficult to keep his and his child's clothes clean, which affected both their comfort and Murray's self-esteem.

Losing two chests of drawers and a dining table with chairs stripped away basic conveniences like adequate clothing storage and a proper place to share meals, which are especially important when nurturing family bonds. The lack of an electric cooker further limited his ability to prepare nutritious meals, crucial for a healthy lifestyle.

Thankfully, the support from Castle Furniture Project brought essential changes to their home, restoring a sense of stability and comfort. By providing these crucial items, the project not only improved Murray's living conditions but also allowed him to concentrate on his new job and look after his child's welfare. This assistance played a pivotal role in helping them rebuild their lives and face the future with renewed optimism and security.



Domestic Appliance Team

# Kilmaron School

Supporting Kilmaron School- A New Washing Machine Donation

When Kilmaron School in Cupar faced the challenge of needing a replacement washing machine, Castle stepped in to provide practical support. The school, which caters to children with additional support needs, relies heavily on essential appliances to maintain daily operations and create a clean and comfortable environment for its pupils.

Recognising the importance of this need, Castle donated a replacement, the washing machine was delivered and installed by Carlos and Pav from Castle's team, ensuring it was up and running without delay.

Isla Lumsden, the school's head teacher, expressed her gratitude:

"Castle's generosity has made such a difference to our school. The new washing machine has been a crucial addition to our facilities, and the professionalism of Carlos and Pav in delivering and installing it was outstanding. We can't thank Castle enough for their support."

By providing this essential appliance, Castle demonstrated its commitment to supporting local organisations that play a vital role in the community. This donation not only addressed an urgent need but also helped Kilmaron School continue its vital work in creating a nurturing and supportive environment for its students.

Castle remains dedicated to partnering with schools, charities, and organisations across Fife to ensure they have the resources they need to thrive.



# Brian

Brian, an elderly gentleman, found himself unable to be discharged from hospital due to an inadequate bed at home. His bed, over 30 years old, was no longer suitable for his needs. Recognising the urgency of the situation, the Occupational Therapy department approached Castle Furniture Project for assistance.

The primary challenge was ensuring Brian could return to his home safely and comfortably. The age and condition posed significant health risks, complicating his post-hospital recovery and care. Responding quickly to the call from the Occupational Therapy department, Castle identified and delivered a suitable bed along with all new bedding. This intervention was crucial in facilitating Brian's discharge, allowing him to recover in the familiarity and comfort of his own home. He was able to leave the hospital and continue his recovery at home, significantly improving his quality of life and alleviating the stress associated with prolonged hospital stays.

The prompt response by Castle not only addressed an immediate health need but also highlighted the impact of community resources in supporting the elderly and vulnerable. This case study underscores the critical role that timely support and community resources play in the healthcare continuum, especially for the elderly, and exemplifies the importance of collaborations between healthcare providers and community organisations like Castle Furniture.

## QUOTE from Brian

“Being back in my own home means everything to me. The new bed and fresh bedding have made such a difference. I sleep better, and I feel better. It really means a lot to be back in my own house. The delivery drivers even made the bed up for me, which was great. I'm really grateful to everyone at Castle Furniture Project for their kindness. They've truly helped me when I needed it the most.”



# Alan

**Alan moved to the UK from Kurdistan at the beginning of 2023. He quickly found a transferable trade as a barber and began working. With little to no understanding of the English language Alan did his best to find appropriate housing, gain clients and earn enough to survive, but unfortunately he has not been able to get beyond survival all of last year.**

An extremely modest and humble man, Alan never raised any issues with other members of staff or complained about his incredibly difficult living situation at home. Alan had no furniture, no bed, no sofa, nowhere to store his items. He had been sleeping on the floor with a blanket using clothing as a pillow.

Alan felt blessed to simply have a roof over his head, his living conditions in his previous country were far worse than this which made Alan feel ashamed about complaining or seeking help for his current housing

situation.

It wasn't until one of his clients, whom soon became a close friend came to know about how Alan had been living. His client was aware of the services Castle provides and quickly got in touch explaining the situation and sending photos of where Alan had been sleeping.

Castle immediately intervened, providing Alan with a bed to sleep on, Duvet pillows and covers for his bedding, as well as an emergency pack which contains essential living items such as cooking equipment, plates cutlery, and toiletries. Such items that we take for granted in the UK, this man viewed as a luxury, working tirelessly to pay his rent and eat Alan deserved nothing more than to be able to come home from a long days work and simply be comfortable, the bare minimum. Language barriers can pose a huge

issue for people in the UK seeking help, not knowing where to turn or who to ask.

Alan is beyond happy with his items, phoning his client to tell us at Castle that he is finally able to sleep through the night, and finally after almost a whole year his home is beginning to actually feel like a home.



Furniture Project

# Andrew

**The recent flood in Cupar, has wrought devastation of an unimaginable scale on the local community. Homes were submerged, lives uprooted, and the sense of security that once pervaded the town has been washed away.**

Amid this chaos, individuals like Andrew found themselves facing the stark reality of displacement, forced to seek refuge in empty flats stripped of the comforts and familiarities of home. Andrew like so many others reached out to our Cupar local staff member Ann for some much needed urgent help.

Recognising the dire circumstances faced by Andrew and many others, Castle Furniture stepped forward to provide a new sofa for Andrew's new, albeit barren, home. While Andrew faces an incredibly stressful future, we hope to alleviate some of that stress and financial burden by awarding Andrew with a new Sofa and armchair for his flat. Allowing him at the very least, to have guests round and somewhere for him to sit during the day when he is off work. Insurance companies have proven difficult if not completely absent during this process, and Andrew was relieved to have an organisation he could rely on for help.

We hope by providing Andrew with these items, not only are we offering physical comfort, but also a semblance of normalcy and the strength to rebuild in the aftermath of such a catastrophic event.





Furniture Project

# Claire

**Claire, a single parent of three children aged 11, 7, and 5, was forced to leave their family home due to extremely poor conditions, rendering it uninhabitable.**

The two youngest children have additional needs, which further compounded the challenges Claire faced. The family has been living in one bedroom with a single large bed, significantly impacting their emotional and mental well-being.

Through Castle Furniture Project, Claire received a light brown fabric 3-seater sofa, a light brown 2-seater sofa, a washing machine, an electric cooker, a Kenwood fridge-freezer, and a complete Helping our Community double divan bed. This has

been transformative for Claire and her children. The new sofas have created a comfortable living space, enhancing their daily comfort and providing a sense of normalcy and stability.

The washing machine and cooker have facilitated essential household tasks, significantly improving their living conditions and daily routines. The fridge-freezer allows for proper food storage, reducing grocery expenses and ensuring the family has access to fresh and healthy meals. The double bed has provided Claire with a proper sleeping arrangement, contributing to better rest and overall well-being.

These improvements have allowed Claire to better manage her household and focus on her children's needs, especially those with additional requirements. The alleviation of financial and emotional stress has created a safer and more secure environment, where the family can thrive. In summary, the support from the Castle Furniture Project has significantly enhanced Claire's quality of life, offering her greater stability and peace of mind, and enabling her to provide a nurturing and supportive home for her children.



Furniture Project

# Alex

## Bill's Sofa Adventures – Helping Alex Settle into a New Home

At Castle Furniture, every act of support comes with a personal touch, and sometimes a bit of humour too! One recent example involved Bill, our enthusiastic manager, lending a helping hand to

Alex, a customer who had just moved into a new house.

Alex was facing the challenge of furnishing an entire home but couldn't afford to do it all at once. That's where Castle stepped in, donating a sofa to help Alex create comfortable living space, Bill was determined to make sure Alex found the perfect sofa.

Bill and Alex took a particularly "hands-on" approach to testing out the options. The resulting photo says it all: both of them lying back on separate sofas, grinning ear to ear, as if they were auditioning for a recliner commercial.

"Bill wouldn't let me leave until we'd tested every sofa for comfort," Alex joked. "We probably spent more time laughing than deciding, but I ended up with the perfect one!"

Bill, known for his sense of humour and enthusiasm, added, "We take our sofa testing very seriously here at Castle Furniture. You can't let a customer take home a sofa that isn't nap-approved!"

The sofa Alex chose wasn't just a piece of furniture—it was a fresh start, turning a bare house into a home. By

helping Alex settle in, Castle Furniture provided more than just practical support; they shared a moment of connection that embodies what the organisation is all about.

Whether it's delivering comfort or sharing a laugh, Castle Furniture is committed to supporting the community in every way. And as Bill will tell you, sometimes the best customer service starts with a good lie down on a sofa!



# Emily

**Emily has been living with a physical disability that limits her ability to leave the house unaided and prevents her from working. As a result, she has faced ongoing financial difficulties.**

One of the significant challenges she has endured is living without a cooker for several years. Once a passionate cook, Emily has been unable to replace the broken appliance due to her limited income. This case study explores how a befriending scheme visit led to the provision of a new cooker through localised funding.

Emily's physical disability not only restricts her mobility but also severely limits her opportunities to earn an income. Due to her financial situation, her broken cooker had been left unrepaired for years, leaving her

without the ability to prepare meals at home. This created a significant barrier to her independence, as she relied on others for food or had to make do without proper meals.

During a visit for a befriending contract signing, staff member Aniela and Volunteer Romana met with Emily at her home. During their conversation, Emily shared her struggle of being without a working cooker and how much it impacted her daily life. She explained that, prior to her disability, cooking had been something she deeply enjoyed, and being unable to cook had been a difficult loss for her.

After learning about Emily's situation, Aniela quickly returned to the office to seek out funding opportunities. With the help of localised funding, Emily was provided with a new cooker, and arrangements were made to dispose of the old, broken appliance.

This practical support did more than just provide Emily with a new appliance; it restored a part

of her life that had been missing for years. The ability to cook her own meals gave Emily back a level of independence that she had lost.

The provision of a new cooker has had a positive impact on Emily's life. Cooking, once a favourite hobby, has now returned to her routine, helping her regain a sense of purpose and fulfilment. Being able to prepare her own meals has given Emily more control over her diet and daily life, promoting both physical and emotional wellbeing.

The new cooker has also allowed Emily to regain some of the independence she lost due to her disability. No longer reliant on outside help for food preparation, Emily can now take pride in her self-sufficiency, reducing feelings of helplessness and dependency.



## Furniture Project

# Sarah

Sarah has recently become a single parent who has 10 children of which 8 are still staying in the family home and are under the age of 16.

Sarah does not work and relies on benefits to support the family.

Social work became involved to help the family with home conditions and to make the house into a home and a more comfortable and nurturing environment for the children to thrive in.

The donation of new beds is critical as there are a few of the children sharing single beds. They would be able to get a good night's sleep if everyone had their own space to sleep in. At the moment they have nowhere to store clothes in any of the bedrooms so the donation of some bedroom furniture would help the children keep their

rooms tidy and clean.

The new sofa for all the family to use will mean they will now be able to all sit together as a family to watch tv and will make it a more comfortable room to spend time in.

The family are struggling to wash clothes as their washing machine has recently broken and as you can imagine there are lots of clothes with 8 children so a washing machine will make a huge difference to them.

The family's quality of life will greatly improve with the donation of these items and will help them have a much nicer Christmas together.



# Cupar Nursery

Castle Furniture recently provided all the furniture needed to refurbish Cupar Nursery's family room, a vital space for connecting with families and offering support to those facing challenges.

Cupar Nursery, a long-standing part of the local community, identified the family room as a priority for improvement. Designed to provide a welcoming environment for families, the room had become outdated, but limited funding made refurbishment difficult.

Recognising the need, Castle Furniture stepped in to help. The organisation donated all the necessary furniture, including a two-seater and a three-seater sofa, as well as other items to transform the room into a warm, inviting, and functional space. This support allowed the nursery to focus its budget on essential

services and activities for the children.

The refreshed family room has had a meaningful impact. Staff have already noticed a change in how families use the space. "The new furniture has made a huge difference," said one nursery staff member. "Parents feel more comfortable here, and it's created a much more positive environment for us to engage with them."

Parents and caregivers have echoed these sentiments. One parent shared, "It's such a relief to have a space like this where I can sit down, talk with staff, and feel supported. It's made a real difference to me and my child."

The improved family room now provides a safe, comfortable space where families can relax,



connect with staff, and access the help they need. By creating this welcoming environment, the nursery has strengthened its ability to build trust, foster a sense of community, and support families who may be experiencing difficulties.

Castle Furniture's contribution has also allowed the nursery to allocate resources more effectively, directing funding towards activities and

programmes that directly benefit the children.

"This partnership with Castle Furniture has been invaluable," said the nursery manager. "Their support means we can focus on what we do best—helping children and their families thrive."

When you support Castle Furniture, you're supporting the entire community.

## “ Customer Feedback ”

“We just adopted two foster kids who had been through so much. Getting 20% off their new beds and dressers let us make their rooms special.” - Kate and Mark D.

“Moving my elderly mom to an assisted living facility on my tight budget seemed impossible until this discount from Castle.” - Nancy B.

“After the flood destroyed our furniture, replacing it seemed impossible. But with Castle’s 20% discount, we were able to buy lovely new pieces as we rebuilt.” - Daniel H.

“After a nasty accident, I needed new furniture that worked with my disabilities. Castle’s discount helped enormously in getting the right pieces.” - Ryan S.

“We don’t drive, so having Castle deliver our beautiful dining set right to our dining room for an affordable fee made all the difference in creating our dream home. Hats off to Pav and Lisa for managing to get it down our tight corridor without a mark” - Hannah and Sam T.

“Having Castle pick up our old couch for free and deliver our new one was so convenient, the prices were really reasonable and so was the delivery. It saved my husband and me with our bad backs the hassle of moving furniture.” - Barbara S.

“After leaving my abusive ex, I had nothing. Castle generously did a free house clearance and delivered essential donated items like a bed and couch to help me start over. The delivery crew were so kind and compassionate throughout, I can’t thank you enough” - Ashley R.

“As a single dad without a van, Castle’s low-cost delivery service was a total lifesaver when buying my son’s new bed.” - Ryan P.

“Recovering from surgery, I couldn’t lift anything. I was so grateful for the Castle drivers, they accepted most of the furniture I wanted to donate and the items they couldn’t accept they carried these outside for me and I arranged a council pick up.” - Debbie C.

“My girls share a room, so buying them twin beds was costly. 20% off made it possible even on my single income.” - Amanda S.

“As a parent of twins, buying two of everything is so expensive! Castle’s 20% off made outfitting the nursery possible.” - Jennifer M.

“The free collection service helped us declutter and donate with ease as we downsized into a retirement home. I’m happy that my old belongings with find a new lease on life with new owners” - Pat and Betty L.

“Buying furniture can be overwhelming. But Castle made it easy with the 20% discount so I could find just what I needed for my first place.” - James P.

“With 4 kids and pets, our house was hugely cluttered. Castle did an affordable house clearance, removing all our old furniture quickly and efficiently.” - Jen and Tom W.

“After a messy divorce, setting up my new apartment alone was daunting. Castle’s discount took some stress out of this difficult transition.” - Rebecca L.

“My son has autism and needs special furniture to help him thrive. This discount let me get him everything he needs.” - Christina P.

“As a single mom, I have to stick to a tight budget. Getting 20% off my son’s new bed was a lifesaver and let me give him the nice room he deserves.” - Jessica T.

Working in Partnership

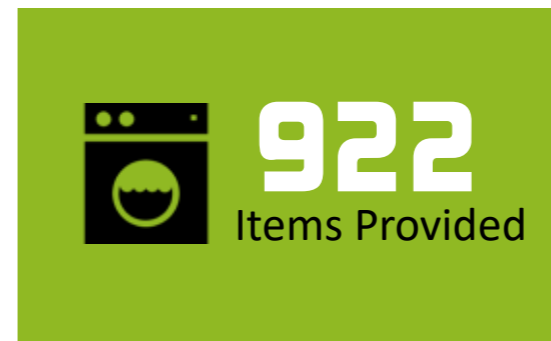
# Social Welfare

Castle is proud to be part of the multi award winning sector project, delivering reuse furniture and appliances to Fife Council via the Social Welfare Fund.

The Circular Communities Scotland Consortium (formerly CRNS) brings together reuse organisations and has changed the way people in need are given access to furniture.

In Fife, Castle work with Fife Council to provide furniture and appliances to those in crisis.

This approach, not only makes the money available to the Council go much further, helping many more families, it also provides choice to those who will benefit from the items.



Working in Partnership

# Stratheden Hospital

The Mental Health Service at Stratheden has a long history of joint working with the project and I have always found your service willing to accept referrals and not be discriminatory about our patients and even if you have concerns over the patient's histories, this isn't a barrier to them coming to volunteer with you.

Even under very trying circumstances over the last few years this has remained unchanged and is very welcome by all the team here in Radernie in particular, as we often face barriers in trying to have our patient group access placements/ vocational opportunities. This in turn can have an effect on the individuals movement through the Forensic services

as without the opportunities they get stuck as they are unable to demonstrate an ability to reconnect with the wider community and not re-offend.

That's what Castle are giving the two guys with you at the moment, the opportunity to do both and show them they can contribute positively to society again. In addition, by taking up a placement with your project, this show other community-based service providers that the guys are capable of being worked with outside of a hospital setting.

**Stuart Bennett**  
Forensic Occupational Therapist  
Stratheden Hospital





## New Ventures

### A New Venture - Commercial Partnership with Euronics

We are thrilled to announce a new partnership with Euronics, spearheaded by Bill Sproulle, which marks an exciting chapter for our organisation. This collaboration focuses on providing access to new white goods, strengthening our commitment to supporting the local community.

The new Euronics store, located in the Kingdom Centre, has already become a vital resource. Through this partnership, we can now assist individuals and families in accessing essential household appliances with our local poverty action groups. Whether it's a washing machine, a refrigerator, or a cooker, this initiative ensures



people can purchase high-quality products locally while receiving excellent service.

Bill Sproulle has been instrumental in driving this effort, working closely with Euronics to establish this collaboration. His dedication ensures that this partnership creates opportunities for our community and strengthens local businesses.

As a new venture for us, this partnership represents a step forward in expanding the range of support and services that we offer. We look forward to seeing how this collaboration evolves and the positive impact it will continue to have.





## Accounts

Statement of Financial Activities (including Income & Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

	Unrestrict- ed Funds	2024 Restricted Funds	Total Funds	2023 Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME &amp; ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>				
Donations and legacies	1,797	93,300	92,097	49,428
Charitable activities	65,463	54,876	120,339	99,225
Other trading activities	772,599	-	772,599	689,611
Investment income	1,538	-	1,538	335
<b>Total</b>	<b>841,397</b>	<b>145,176</b>	<b>986,573</b>	<b>838,599</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
<i>Expenditure on raising funds:</i>				
Fundraising trading	908,023	222	908,245	732,500
Expenditure on charitable activities	84,056	100,564	184,398	135,078
<b>Total</b>	<b>992,079</b>	<b>100,564</b>	<b>1,092,643</b>	<b>867,578</b>
<b>Net Income and net movement in funds</b>	<b>(150,682)</b>	<b>44,612</b>	<b>(106,070)</b>	<b>(28,979)</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>				
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>239,278</b>	<b>15,746</b>	<b>255,024</b>	<b>284,003</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>88,596</b>	<b>60,358</b>	<b>148,954</b>	<b>255,024</b>



## Accounts

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible fixed assets	39,053	43,756
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Stocks	20,392	34,318
Debtors	93,724	98,495
Cash at bank and in hand	67,858	141,040
<b>CREDITORS</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	64,533	40,735
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>117,441</b>	<b>233,128</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>156,494</b>	<b>276,884</b>
<b>CREDITORS</b>		
Amounts falling due after more than one year	7,540	21,860
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>148,954</b>	<b>255,024</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>		
Restricted Funds	60,358	15,746
Unrestricted Funds	88,596	239,278
Total Charity Funds	148,954	255,024

Thank you and best wishes.

# Caroline Rochford

The Charity would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Caroline Rochford, our external HR consultant, who has supported us with unparalleled dedication for more than a decade. Caroline's expertise and guidance have been invaluable in shaping our team and ensuring our operations have run smoothly over the years.

Caroline has been a steadfast supporter of the Charity's mission, always offering thoughtful advice, encouragement, and an unwavering commitment to helping us grow and succeed.

As Caroline steps into retirement, we wish her all the very best for this exciting new chapter. Her kindness, wisdom, and professionalism have left a lasting legacy.

The photograph captured here of Silv Ingram (CEO), Caroline Rochford (Consultant), and Elizabeth Calderwood (Chair) was taken at Caroline's retirement party at the iconic St Andrews Old Course. It reflects not only a moment of celebration but also the deep respect and appreciation we have for Caroline's years of service.

Thank you, Caroline, for everything you have done for the Charity. We wish you health and happiness in your retirement.



# Thank You

Castle relies heavily on the goodwill of the community, whose generous donations of furniture and household items are the foundation of our work. These contributions not only give these items a second life but also provide recipients with comfort, security, and pride in their homes. Without the community's ongoing support, we could not do what we do—thank you!

We would also like to thank the Board members, the staff team, and all our volunteers, a humongous thank you for your dedication and hard work!

Our gratitude extends to the Job Centre, FVA, SPS, Fife Employability Team, and the Community Service Team for providing work placements to the charity. A special thanks to those who undertook these placements; the project could not deliver this level of service without you.

Thanks are also extended to Fife Council, whose financial support enables Castle to provide vital services to the community. Their

continual support is invaluable. We would like to say a heartfelt goodbye to Lucy Slater and express our gratitude for her dedication, while warmly welcoming Katie Caine as our new link officer.

We also want to highlight and thank the Poverty Action Groups in Fife for their collaboration and shared commitment to tackling local hardship. Together, we have supported many vulnerable individuals and families in our community.

An enormous thank you to the staff at Patterson Boyd & Co and Henderson & Black for their support, as well as Norcox Solutions and Resolute I.T., who maintain our software and IT systems.

To everyone who has contributed to Castle's mission, whether through donations, time, or resources, we could not achieve this without your generosity and support. Thank you for making a difference!

# Thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report

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