

For 15 years Bethany Christian Trust has provided emergency overnight care shelters during the winter for people in Edinburgh who have no-where else to sleep.

The winter of 2009 - 2010 was the coldest for decades, with long periods of freezing temperatures and heavy snow falls even in the cities.

The care shelters in Edinburgh were open for 154 nights between the start of November and early April. 935 people used the shelters. The shelters provided 5,634 bed spaces and a further 1,157 meals to people who stayed for food and then moved on.

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What services would people like to have?

“The current shelter all year.”

“A place where we can meet and keep warm. Watch TV, listen to music, meet friends.”

“Services to help people with their drug problems and their homelessness.”

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“We don't have to stay on street at night where it's dangerous.”

“Shelter, food; I think that's all I want.”

“We get support and friendship from each other.”

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The winter Care Shelters are filling a significant gap in the range of services that are available for homeless people in Edinburgh.

Many of the people using the winter shelters have no other place to go once the shelters end.

“I will be back on the streets.”

“I don't know, I'll have to deal with it when it comes.”

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Things the volunteers want to say

“Feel it is a small help and shows people are not alone. It is a privilege to help.”

“Reminds you of the needs of homeless people around Edinburgh.”

“What gives me pleasure is seeing folk safe for the night and well fed.”

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