Firsthand Lothian

Please contact us on 0131 523 1322 or email us at info@firsthand-lothian.org.uk

Firsthand Lothian is a registered Scottish Charity No. SC020655 and Company Limited by guarantee in Scotland No.140769 www.firsthand-lothian.org.uk www.facebook.com/firsthandlothian

Registered Office Strathmore, Hopetoun Gate 8b McDonald Road Edinburgh EH7 4LU

34th ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

Firsthand Lothian exists to support children and young people with disabilities and families, parents and carers to improve their health and wellbeing, confidence and resilience. We work with families in their local community providing 1:1 support, guidance, information and opportunities for parents and carers to connect. Working directly / within local communities across Edinburgh, we carefully match trained workers and volunteers with families and children focussing on the specific goals and changes that both the individual child and the family identify as important to achieve, which will be sustainable and deliver longer term benefits. More than **37** children and young people **19** families and **48** parent/carers have benefited.

Services over 2025-26

- **Children with a Disability -** 1 to 1 weekly sessions in the local community to families with a child or young person with a disability, who is struggling in mainstream education.
- **Family Support -** Emotional and practical support to children and families affected by social isolation, poverty, ill health, domestic abuse & homelessness.
- **Time 4 Mum -** Befriending for mums who can identify, explore & develop their own interests.
- **Parent and Carers Group** - Online peer support for parent carers who can share knowledge & experiences while connecting with others in similar situations.
- **Health & Wellbeing -** Sessions on practical, artistic and therapeutic activities for parents and carers to come together socially to manage stress, anxiety and take time away from caring.

Highlights

2025-26 was a transitional year as after 13 years in post Beverly Reid retired at the end of August 2025. The Management Committee decided to split the role and recruited an experienced fundraiser Maruska Greenwood on a freelance basis and Julie Carter as part time CEO. Julie started on the 1st of September 2025 and has worked in the charity sector for over 20 years, as a senior leader for the last 14 with experience in people and project management.

This year also marked 20 years of service for Evie Threlfall our Family Support Coordinator and 14 years service for our Book Keeper David Clement. We thank Evie and David for their commitment to Firsthand Lothian and the expertise and experience they provide to the team.

13 participants completed 'Learn to Include' a 3 hour online inclusivity training programme developed by The Yard and Roo Philips, former CEO of Tailor Ed and provided useful feedback during a reflective session. This online course will be offered to staff and volunteers as part of their ongoing training which involves a two part induction and full Baby and Child First Aid.

Volunteering

Volunteers are integral to the delivery of all aspects of our work with children, young people, families , families and parent carers. Over the last year volunteers contributed over 582 hours of their time, enthusiasm, skills and knowledge.

"Volunteering with Firsthand Lothian has been incredibly rewarding. Spending a few hours each week with a young person, trying new activities together and seeing their confidence grow shows how much consistent support can make such a huge difference."

Marsena Family Support Volunteer

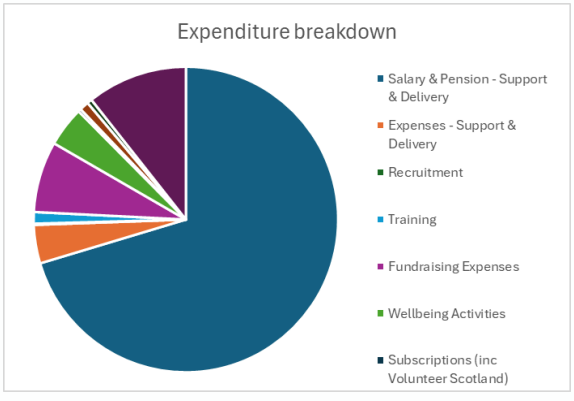


Income & Expenditure 2025-26

Like many other charities we do not receive any statutory funding and applying for and securing grants from Trusts and Foundations is key to us being able to deliver support to meet the needs of children, young people, parents/carers who do not receive statutory support.

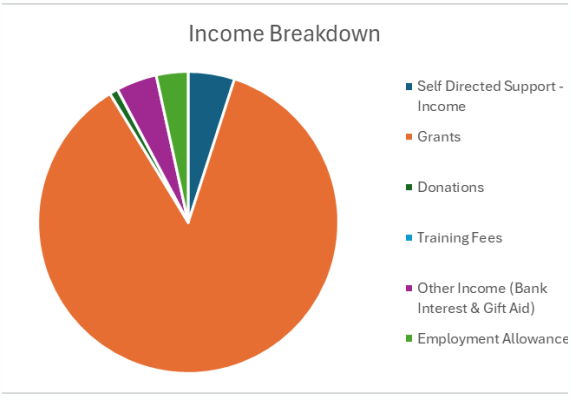
Breakdown of Expenditure 2025-26

Total £166,816.00



Breakdown of Income 2025-26

Total £199,128.00



Thank you

Thank you to all of our sessional workers - their commitment to families and children is so valuable and makes such a difference. The staff team which includes Family Support Coordinator Evie, Parent Carers Lead Worker Jan, Admin Support Romana, Financial Management and Fundraising David Clement, Lead Family Support Worker Helen, Social Media Admin Amy and our freelance fundraising consultant Maruska Greenwood.

All of our volunteers who give up their time on a regular basis to help children and families when they need it the most. Also volunteers who bring their skills and expertise to the Management Committee. We simply could not run our services without their support.

Also Thank you to all the Funders who have enabled us to be able to deliver services to more families and children with specific needs who would not otherwise have access to support.

Firsthand Lothian Management Committee 2025-26

Sue Robertson-Chair	Sian Aitken - Vice Chair	Shona Campbell - Treasurer
Anne Hamilton	Debbie MacAulay	Maiken Thomsen