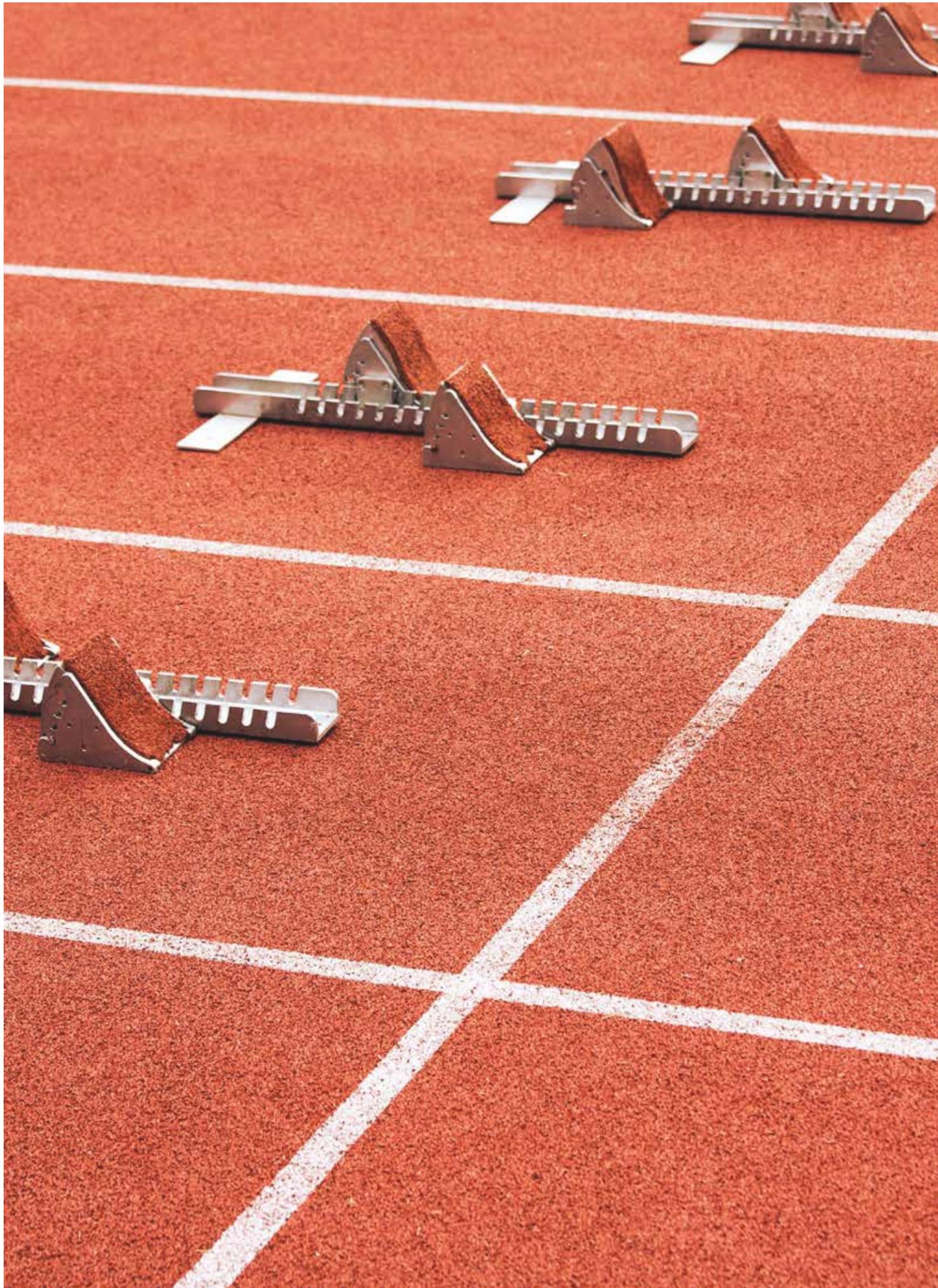




2023-24 **IMPACT
REPORT**



CHAIR REFLECTION

Since 2012 I have had the opportunity to contribute to Edinburgh Leisure as a Board Member, four years as Chair. During my tenure, the organisation has faced unprecedented challenges and uncertainties. The team at Edinburgh Leisure have been integral to safeguarding our operation and delivering the service you see today.

As custodians of the City of Edinburgh Council's sport and leisure estate, Edinburgh Leisure looks after an incredible range of venues throughout the city. This is not without its challenges, and this year we have faced extreme pressure on our budget due to economic impacts nationally and globally.

Despite these challenges, we have moved into 2024-2025 on a good footing and acknowledge more work is required for future sustainability.

The work achieved in 2023-2024 has seen a continued growth in customer visits, now exceeding 5.6million annually. The number of people supported by our charitable programmes has grown from 10,000 to over 12,500. We have welcomed audiences to our venues with events such as the 2023 Scottish Open Snooker Tournament and the return of Edinburgh Leisure's Swimming Galas for the first time since before the pandemic.

None of this happens without the combined efforts of our employees, partners, volunteers and supporters, all of whom help Edinburgh Leisure inspire the city to be active.

On behalf of the Board, my sincere thanks to everyone for their part. I urge you to continue to support us so more people can lead healthy, active lives.



Scott Haldane, August 2024



CEO INTRODUCTION

As a charity, and Edinburgh's largest sport and leisure provider, we deliver an essential service for our communities. We are committed to removing barriers and improving the physical and mental wellbeing of the city.

For people experiencing barriers to leading active lives, we provide services at reduced or no cost – increasing access and transforming lives. We work with partners to reduce the social and economic costs of ill health and inactivity in Edinburgh.

The work we do would not be possible without strong partnerships with our key strategic funder, the City of Edinburgh Council, the NHS, and many Voluntary Sector organisations.

We have worked with our partners to align with national and regional ambitions in relation to sport, physical activity, health and inclusion. As the economic strain across the health sector continues and demand for our services rises, relationships with our partners are critical to realising the substantial benefits physical activity can achieve.

Our Impact Report highlights our achievements against our key strategic objectives.

As demand grows, we can't ignore the environmental impact of Edinburgh Leisure's operations on our neighbours, city and planet. Reaching our Net Zero goal will require a mighty effort across the organisation, and we're pleased to also showcase our work towards our goal.

We will be developing our 5-year strategic plan in 2024-25, ensuring we listen to our customers and are aligned with our partners' strategies to meet the needs of the city.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all our customers, employees, volunteers and partners for your continued support and for helping to keep Edinburgh Leisure thriving and inspiring. It's only together we will make Edinburgh a healthier and more active place to live, work and visit.



Jen Holland, August 2024

WE ARE EDINBURGH LEISURE



Edinburgh Leisure was established as an independent charity on 1 April 1998 to manage the City of Edinburgh Council's sports venues. As a charity, we have our own Board of Directors, all of whom are volunteers, with responsibility for the governance of the charity.

Income is generated through provision of services and from external funding. This includes statutory funders, trusts and foundations, businesses, individual donations and fundraising events.

Over the last 25 years we have continued to work closely with the City of Edinburgh Council who remain our biggest funder, contributing 26.5% of our funding in 2023-2024. Together we are working towards a shared vision for the health and wellbeing of the city.

We continually invest in our facilities to improve services for everyone and remove barriers for those affected by health conditions, disabilities, inequalities and poverty.

Across the city our sites include: 1 world-class climbing arena (Europe's largest), 6 golf courses, 12 swimming pools, including 5 Victorian baths, 17 state-of-the-art gyms, 3 soft plays, 32 tennis courts, 110 sports pitches and 23 High Schools.



Customer satisfaction 90%.



Supporting over 12,500 people living with health conditions, disabilities and inequalities.



In May 2023 major refurbishment of this historic building was completed.



Including gym and aqua classes, circuits in the gym and wellness offerings.



Demonstrating our core values of being welcoming, caring, passionate and proud.



Our facilities include Leisure and Sports Centres, High Schools, sports pitches and golf courses.



From eighteen-year-olds to people over eighty, volunteers play a key role in our wellbeing programmes.



Customers at Leith Victoria Swim Centre, Glenogle Swim Centre and Gracemount Leisure Centre now benefit from new and improved facilities.

DELIVERING FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

We deliver opportunities for people of all ages to get active and stay active and are proud to have achieved a 90% customer satisfaction rate this year.

Our employees are regularly praised for their exceptional customer service and delivery. The Royal Commonwealth Pool and Edinburgh International Climbing Arena were both awarded 4-star Visitor Attraction status by Visit Scotland and Meadows Tennis Courts won Tennis Scotland's Park of the Year.



Continued investment in our venues allows us to deliver a great customer experience.

Following a major refurbishment, Warrender Swim Centre reopened in May 2023 having been closed since December 2020. This historic building has been an important fixture in the community since 1887 and as one of Scotland's oldest swimming pools, it now welcomes 1,600 members, 300 coaching customers, and many more casual customers every month.

Gym refurbishments took place at Leith Victoria Swim Centre, Gracemount Leisure Centre and Glenogle Swim Centre, and now 16,000 customers access the latest gym equipment each month. We further added to our fitness offering by introducing new Les Mills Shapes and Les Mills Strength Development classes.



“My daughter has been attending the gymnastics class here for about a year. She absolutely loves it and I am very pleased with her progress. The instructors are all great. They have good energy and create a warm and nurturing atmosphere in the class.”

Coaching customer.



“

I have been an active swimmer since I was a child, attending swimming lessons with my mum in the 1950's. I spent many happy school holidays walking to different pools and swimming. Later, swimming with my baby, now in her thirties, and nieces. Swimming before work and now swimming as a retiree. Thank you for keeping the pools open and improving them.

Edinburgh Leisure customer Kate regularly swims at Warrender Swim Centre.

”

TREKKING TO EVEREST

In March 2024, Derek Reid, a customer at the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena (EICA) completed a long-held goal of trekking to Everest Base Camp and seeing the world's highest mountain with his own eyes.

To achieve his ambitious goal, Derek had joined Edinburgh Leisure in January 2023 and committed to a fitness plan to support his training. However, the same month a routine medical check-up revealed unexpected health problems: high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and a Type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

What might have set him back in his goal made Derek more determined. As part of addressing these health issues, Derek made lifestyle changes and continued to attend gym sessions where he was supported by Edinburgh Leisure's fitness team to undertake an appropriate programme which focussed on cardiovascular exercises and strength training. To simulate the trek's conditions, he wore walking boots, and a backpack loaded with 6kg of water bottles, attracting curious looks from fellow gym-goers.

Regular check-ins with his doctor revealed remarkable progress. By October 2023 Derek had shed 3 stones, normalised blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and reversed his Type 2 diabetes diagnosis. His dedication and hard work paid off, culminating in a triumphant trek to Everest Base Camp.

Derek described the trek as life-changing and thanked the Edinburgh Leisure fitness team at EICA for helping him achieve his goal.

“The guys gave me loads of encouragement, and I felt the encouragement was personal. They offered lots of back up and I would now count on the team as friends.”



556 SPORTS CLUBS USED
OUR FACILITIES

REPRESENTING 35 DIFFERENT SPORTS

OUR CITY

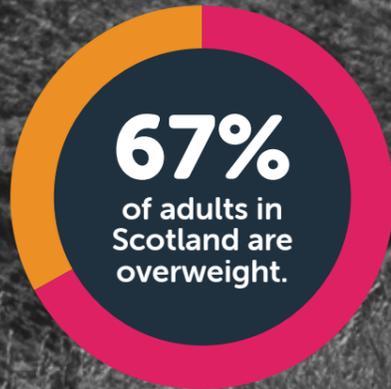
Our mission is to keep people active and well. As a charity delivering sport and leisure services city-wide, we are uniquely placed to play a significant role in helping everyone in our city benefit from physical activity and improve the health and wellbeing of Edinburgh.

Edinburgh is one of the wealthiest cities in the country but has some of the greatest levels of inequality. People in the most deprived communities of Edinburgh experience significantly poorer health than those in more affluent areas, represented by a fourteen year gap in life expectancy between the most affluent and deprived communities in the city¹.

Before the pandemic, around 1 in 5 people in Edinburgh were living in poverty, with over half living in working households. For people already struggling to make ends meet, the past four years have exacerbated the inequalities they faced.

Poverty and poor health are inextricably linked, with people on low incomes more likely to live with multiple long-term health conditions, experience poor mental health, and have a lower life expectancy. We know that many people living in poverty and affected by inequalities face barriers to living an active and healthy life.

Edinburgh Leisure delivers a range of projects supporting people facing the greatest barriers to be active, enabling them to take control of their health and wellbeing.



BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Improves our physical health and helps us to maintain a healthy weight.



Improves our mental health and wellbeing.



Improves our strength, balance, and reduces our risk of falls.



Reduces social isolation and loneliness.



Improves attainment and helps us to learn new skills.



Boosts our confidence and improves our self esteem.



If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat.

UK Chief Medical Officers' Report, September 2019.



OUR ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Supporting the city's health and wellbeing

We believe supporting and enabling people to be active is crucial for improving the health and wellbeing of local people and communities. Described as a *miracle drug*², regular physical activity benefits everyone, at any age and stage in life.

WHAT WE DO

Our Active Communities programme uses the power of physical activity and sport to support people of all ages to improve and protect their health and wellbeing. This includes people experiencing poverty and inequalities and those living with disabilities and health conditions.

We deliver physical activity projects and activities in local communities that focus on:

-  Prevention & Early Intervention
-  Tackling Inequalities
-  Tackling Inactivity
-  Keeping Active & Well

THE NEED

In 2023-24 we saw a 14% increase in referrals to Active Communities projects on the previous year (a 41% increase on pre-pandemic levels) demonstrating the growing need and demand for our services.

Next year we need to raise almost £1m in external funding to enable us to continue to deliver the level of support we currently provide and grow our programme to support increasing demand.



“ I love the community and camaraderie in classes, getting to know people and learning new things. Everyone who attends gets such a physical and social benefit from it. I wish I'd started volunteering sooner. It's the best thing I've ever done.

Edinburgh Leisure volunteer. ”

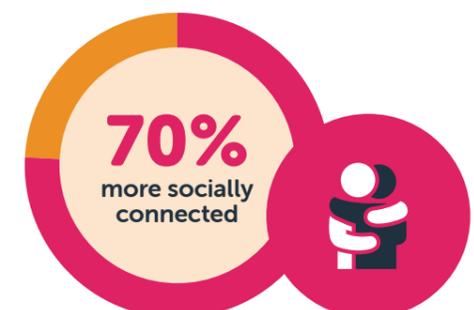
WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2023-24

-  Over 12,500 people were supported to be active and well.
-  160 health and wellbeing classes delivered each week.
-  140 volunteers helping people to be more active and socially connected.

Of people taking part in our Active Communities programme:



“ Being active has helped me to control my emotions and cope with dark thoughts.
Bella, aged 14 ”



²UK Chief Medical Officers' Report, September 2019

Prevention and Early Intervention

Helping people stay healthy for longer is at the heart of what we do. We support those most at risk to improve their quality of life through physical activity. This includes people affected by loneliness or at risk of falling, people with health conditions, and people experiencing poverty and inequalities.

- **Falls prevention:** 92% reduced their risk of falls through our Steady Steps project
- **Mental health:** we supported 163 high school pupils experiencing anxiety, depression and stress to improve their mental health
- **Life skills:** 234 pre-school children experiencing poverty had fun being active and learning to swim
- **Ageing well:** 430 older adults supported every month, to stay active and socially connected



GET FIT FOR SURGERY

Charles, age 71, is one of three participants this year who have delayed planned surgery because of progress made through this prehabilitation project. He expected his participation to improve his recovery period following an eventual knee replacement. However, the skills, resources, and support he received allowed him to put off the operation altogether. He now has a more positive perspective on life, and the confidence to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

“What a well-constructed course, well delivered and so, so useful in my decision regarding whether this is the right time for surgery for me.”

Tackling Poverty and Inequalities



CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE

536 children and young people supported to access a range of activities including sports coaching and motivational support.



YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING

43 young people successfully completed a sports-based employability course to develop confidence, gain qualifications and get ready for the job market, 4 of whom are now working at Edinburgh Leisure.



MUMS LIVING ON A LOW INCOME

142 mums and their children supported to be more active and socially connected to improve their family's health and wellbeing.



RELOCATED PEOPLE

1,245 refugees supported to be active and connect with their local community.



COMMUNITY ACCESS

We worked with over 300 local partners and statutory organisations to provide discounted access to our facilities for 2,561 people.



After being diagnosed with Alzheimer's I stopped socialising, lost my friends and was becoming a recluse. I am now more confident, more mobile and my wellbeing has improved greatly. It has helped me deal with my Alzheimer's and turned my life around.

Irene attends our Movement for Memories project for people living with dementia.



I've enjoyed meeting new people and have become a lot more sociable and confident. It's a great way to spend my Friday afternoons... Before, I used to just go home and sit in my room playing with my phone.

Adam, aged 14, is supported through our provision for care experienced young people.



RELOCATED PEOPLE ACCESS PROGRAMME

Edinburgh Leisure's Relocated People Access Programme, in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council, has proven to be a lifeline for Ukrainian Maryna Ivanova, a refugee who arrived in Edinburgh with her two year old twins in April 2022. Two years on from the family's arrival in Scotland she told us,

“I cannot emphasise enough how significant this opportunity has been for us. We immediately utilised the facilities, heading to the gym and swimming pools. I believe that doing this played a pivotal role in preventing me from succumbing to depression. The routine of morning exercises brought me back to a more balanced perception of reality and fuelled my determination to overcome adversity.”

Prior to the war the family were daily attendees at a sports complex in Kharkiv. Being able to use Edinburgh Leisure facilities provided a familiarity which Maryna acknowledges enabled her to push herself to attend English language courses and secure employment in a local school.

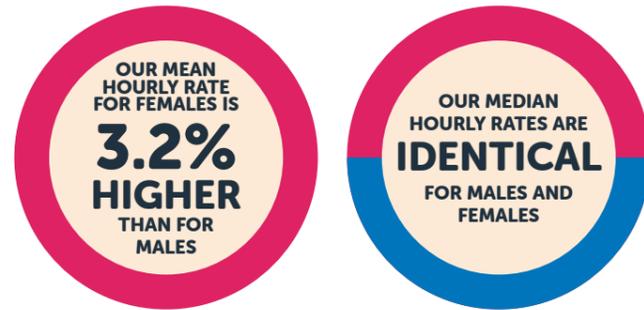
“We managed to get back on our feet, secured housing, and currently, my children participate in various activities with Edinburgh Leisure (gymnastics, trampolining, swimming, and diving), and we are grateful that we can afford to pay for these activities now. However, it all started with the initial impulse from the Relocated People Access Programme.”



OUR TEAM

Edinburgh Leisure has over 1,000 employees. We place high importance on the development of a diverse workforce and inclusive culture to contribute to the organisation's long-term success.

We have no gender pay gap, and we will continue to work to maintain this position. As of April 2024:



We recently gained 'One Star' accreditation from Best Companies, a significant achievement which recognises 'very good' levels of workplace engagement and reflects our commitment to employee experience, including training, fairness, culture and engagement initiatives.

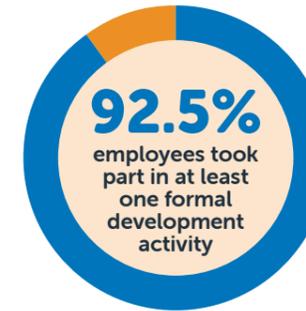
Employee engagement and satisfaction is further demonstrated by long service. Throughout the year 256 employees celebrated 10 years or more employment with Edinburgh Leisure, including two employees who reached 45 years' service.



CELEBRATING LONG SERVICE

Vicki Mercer joined Edinburgh Leisure in 1998 as a Receptionist at Meadowbank Sports Centre and now works as a Leisure Attendant. She celebrated 25 years at Edinburgh Leisure in 2023-24, as the organisation turned 25. When she joined, Vicki was pregnant with her son, and over the years, Vicki has felt very fortunate to have blended her role with Edinburgh Leisure with family life.

“Edinburgh Leisure has played a big part in my family, whether it was coaching classes, birthday parties and the many memorable and fun outings at Meadowbank Sports Centre Fireworks Displays. Edinburgh Leisure has certainly grown over the years just like my children.”



GET INTO LIFEGUARDING

We launched and delivered two 'Get into Lifeguarding' pre-employability programmes in partnership with The Princes Trust Scotland

Lorenzo D'Silva completed the Get Into Lifeguarding programme in July 2023 and now works full time at the Royal Commonwealth Pool. This pre-employability programme for 18-30 year olds provided him with valuable experience of work, mentorship from an Edinburgh Leisure employee, a National Pool Lifeguarding Qualification (NPLQ) and skills in team building and interview techniques.

Lorenzo told us,

“The programme gave me the opportunity to gain valuable skills in team building and interview techniques during the process which really helped when I was offered a job interview with Edinburgh Leisure. If you've not been in the mindset of getting a job it helps you understand how to present yourself.”



YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

Health and wellbeing consultations offered to all employees with encouragement and support to set a wellbeing goal.



STAFF REPRESENTATIVES GROUP

Created space for open discussion and input from different teams across the organisation.



STAFF ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Delivered '25 Years of Edinburgh Leisure' celebrations with fun events for all employees.



MENOPAUSE MATTERS

Introduction of a new Menopause Policy and a regular Menopause Café support group for employees.



“I have used all the learning from the programme to become more aware of my own drivers and to help develop my team.”

Bryony Ross, Active Communities Development Officer



OUR ENVIRONMENT

We are working towards a city which is active and healthy, and provides a clean, green, and sustainable environment for everyone.

Operationally, running a high number of venues and sites across the city is resource-intensive with a significant environmental impact. However, gains continued to be made at many venues, as outdated equipment was replaced with newer, more efficient versions such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP) units and solar panels were used to increase energy savings.

In 2023-24 Drumbrae Leisure Centre's pool air handling unit was upgraded, and work began to install solar panels to five more sites. We now have 11 solar-producing sites.

We partnered with the 'Edinburgh Million Tree City Project' to plant 4,200 young trees at Silverknowes Golf Course. This was supported by volunteers from The Conservation Volunteers charity in addition to Edinburgh Leisure staff.

An organisation-wide effort

Achieving a net zero target requires a team effort. A Green Plan, launched this year, focussed on sustainability and behaviour change around four key themes: waste, energy, active travel, green spaces. This has been supported by employees across the organisation - Green Champions - who helped raise awareness and implement initiatives across venues and teams.

Activities undertaken in support of our Green Plan included waste management training, venue litter picks, upcycling of gymnastics equipment, energy reduction projects, recycling, and taking part in initiatives such as Paths for All Scotland's Walk at Work award.



VENUE SOLAR PANELS PROVIDED
30,000kWh
 MORE ELECTRICITY THAN USED BY JACK KANE CENTRE, TUMBLES SOFT PLAY AND WARRENDER SWIM CENTRE COMBINED.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

In 2024-25 we will be undertaking a systematic review of the organisation to enhance our business practices and plan for the future. This will include how we:

Work collaboratively to meet the needs of our city, particularly in relation to poverty and inequality

Implement the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Edinburgh 2024-2034

Deliver an enhanced customer experience

Meet our Net Zero ambitions

Be part of our mission to help everyone in Edinburgh improve their health and wellbeing.

Join Us

Donate

Volunteer

Partner

Speak to us about how we can tackle the challenges of poverty, inequality and inactivity in our city together.

supportus@edinburghleisure.co.uk



Registered Scottish Charity No: SC027450



Edinburgh Leisure

I'm really impressed with the instructors, programmes, equipment and facilities. All the staff are helpful and friendly, and my sessions are definitely improving my health, reducing my anxiety, and building my confidence. Thank you everyone at Edinburgh Leisure.

Leith Victoria Customer

