

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022



brag enterprises

Enterprising People, Sustaining Communities

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*“Only a life lived  
for others is a life  
worthwhile.”  
—Albert Einstein*



**David Piper  
CHAIR**

It's certainly been two years like no other for BRAG. This report covers an unprecedented period in global, national and organisational history - as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted upon every single aspect of our lives. As with every person and organisation we had to evolve quickly in 2020-21 and again in 2021-22 to ensure through various degrees of lockdowns we were able to continue to meet and serve the needs of the people we support. While face to face interactions were at times difficult, we can very proudly state we ensured all our services remained open and accessible. Following government guidance, social distancing measures and using appropriate PPE enabled continued support and engagement wherever appropriate and possible. Being able to rapidly adapt our service offering was a big positive and we tailored and led our approach in a variety of different ways. Expansion of our outreach teams, providing service users with phones and data to encourage virtual and telephone sessions, food parcels and moving to actual cooked food deliveries, activity packs, together with socially distanced activities, combined to actively support and engage with our service users. Our hybrid working models with additional virtual delivery ensured we were able to provide extra resources to reach out to our service users and especially, engage with the most vulnerable through the pandemic and the recovery. We've ensured we have continued to learn, adapt and evaluate our overall approach and the support we provided with regular service user and staff surveys have helped us to stay on the right track. The last two quarters of 2021-22 were the toughest we have had to endure and I would like to pay credit to the staff and our volunteers for their tenacity and hard work during that time.

**Brian Robertson-Fern  
MANAGING DIRECTOR**

As we move forward into a post-pandemic period the pressures on our organisation look to be growing intensely due to the high rates of inflation and the increase in the cost of living that will affect everyone in our organisation as well as our clients around Fife. I take great pride in the way our staff have coped through the two years of the Covid pandemic and I hope that by working more closely and developing a united team spirit we can move forward with the work that we do to alleviate poverty and social issues throughout the Fife region. I am particularly proud of the work BRAG are doing on the NOLB project and the benefits in terms of improving mental health amongst our clients will be felt for many years to come. It is normal for a chairman to highlight certain positive aspects of an organisation in the annual report but I can honestly say that I am very impressed with the staff and board members of BRAG enterprises and I hope that we can continue to grow and expand the range of services that we provide. There is no doubt that the country is entering a period of uncertainty and living standards are under threat, this is the time that organisations such as ours can provide support and help to those in need in our region. The Levenmouth project and the Pantry at Crosshill are two outstanding developments and I look forward to seeing them grow as we move forward; these success stories are all down to the hard work and dedication of our staff members and they are to be commended for the skill and tenacity they have shown to get these projects up and running. Many challenges lie ahead of our group over the next two years but I am confident that our staff and management will rise to the occasion and continue the good work in support of Fife communities and our clients who participate in our wide range of schemes and projects.

## 2021 - 22 IMPACT



# EMPLOYABILITY

BRAG have long built its reputation on providing opportunities based on individuals securing a job that helped them and their families prosper and grow, and this year was really no different despite the ongoing pandemic. During the 2021-2022 year, we delivered our support online, via phone conversations and where possible, in person. We held CV drop-in workshops, online mentoring, and support sessions.

We delivered ongoing support and advice providing travel tickets and travel training where needed, we supported those with low mood and anxiety, and completed interview preparation for candidates who were then work ready and hand holding for those that were not.

We continued to provide advice and guidance to those with an offending background, completing letters of disclosure and support with job searching, ensuring that the field of employment chosen by them was appropriate to the background and that achievable goals were encouraged.

### Case Study – Adult Employability

Client J was referred from JCP to the NOLB Spring Forward adult project, he was long term unemployed aged 53 from the Kirkcaldy area, his last employment was 2017 working in security. He had no CV, very little digital skills and understanding of the importance of digital skills and was low in confidence regarding this. Over the course of 5 months we created a CV, worked with client J improving digital skills and confidence, helped him refresh interview skills and assisted with vacancy applications. His CV was then passed to our Job Broker who forwarded the CV to several vacancies including Amberstone Security who our broker had a chat with to explain his long term unemployment but willingness to work which then resulted in him starting full time employment with Amberstone Security as a security guard.

Latest update: Client J is still in employment with Amberstone Security and is enjoying the work. Client J had to adapt to changing working hours and his increased confidence has allowed him to speak up and negotiate with the employer about what hours they can realistically do. The employer has also kept us up to date on the ongoing situation throughout.

Working with our Fife ETC partners we continued to deliver our Spring Forward adult services (25+) across Fife on behalf of Opportunities Fife which was funded by both Challenge Fund and ESIF Funding. Our targets for this provision was spread across the Fife ETC Partnership with BRAG retaining 340 registrations whilst anticipating this would then convert into 155 jobs for clients. We delivered a pre recruitment retail course with a local employer which had guaranteed interviews and jobs at the end of the course. Many of those who gained employment via our provision, are still currently employed, and are thoroughly enjoying their roles.

The biggest new change for us was our success in securing new No One Left Behind (NOLB) Bright Futures provision for the 19-24 age group across the whole of Fife. BRAG was successful in securing this work which is the Scottish Government's new approach to tackling employment issues across the nation. BRAG's Bright Futures employability provision is for 19-24 year olds across Fife, supporting young people affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's), access a variety of engaging provision, supporting them on their journey towards sustainable employment. Keyworkers now provide end to end support including job brokerage. Our provision is accessible to all, available at a time that suits the young person needs and focusses on their goals/aspirations, ensuring the young person is at the centre of all the decisions. Over the last year we have supported 376 young people with multiple barriers, they personally achieved 232 personal outcomes and 61 young people have moved into sustainable employment with supportive employers. It's often been a real challenge to engage with this age group, however, in order to encourage engagement and participation from young people the Bright Futures Outdoor Activity Programme encompassing activities at Lochore Meadows and The Ecology Centre has resulted in very positive outcomes. The programme is used as an opportunity to build confidence, learn new skills and increase resilience, building on confidence gained to support them to progress on their journey. We have had some fantastic, good news stories of young people achieving way beyond what they could have imagined. The Team have worked tirelessly, showing commitment and dedication to the young people that they support, always providing the best possible service.

***“I feel I learned a lot from this course, staff were brilliant and talked to you and made you feel comfortable”***

### **Case Study – Employability Support**

'Client C was referred from a Skill Development Scotland keyworker, she had presented keen to return to employment however was expressing poor wellbeing and low mood issues. She was aged 56 as was from the Carnock area of Fife. The SDS worker phoned re advice for referral and was passed to our Wellbeing Employability Keyworker. C was referred to BRAG and a registration assessment was completed. C had stated her physical conditions which caused her chronic fatigue as well as low mood and depression. C lived with her partner who worked and claimed JSA. C attended four BRAG wellbeing groupwork sessions which included Mental Health awareness, managing triggers and signs ill health when in work. She was also advised of Services in Fife such as Access Therapies. She challenged herself and made situational changes at home – Eating Better, practiced relaxation and increased exercise, she also attended her GP and was prescribed medication for her mood. Her GP also referred her to Beating The Blues online Mental Health course to also challenge herself to further improve her understanding of her wellbeing. The keyworker discussed her skills and she was keen to do full time work but felt she need to assess herself again within 4 weeks. This was discussed later and a referral to the BRAG Job Broker who also engaged with C re - employment goals and they liaised with employers regarding her skills etc. After 4 weeks of making changes at home, being positive she started applying for suitable roles, discussed interview skills and she felt more confident about applying for vacancies. She applied and successfully gained employment in a small family run manufacturing company full time. Her worker discussed her keep well in work plan and how to maintain wellbeing whilst in work. She also felt that the combination of changes at home and her medication from GP helped her mood which in her words has improved a lot. In-work support is ongoing to support transition into employment whilst managing her own physical and Mental Health wellbeing to support sustaining herself in work.

*“I would recommend this course to others, it was fun and productive”*

Young people have also been offered access to 1:1 Financial support, delivered by one of our Activity Partners CARF. This has proved to be a very popular element of the provision. The work tasters and work placements provided by our Activity Partner Greener Kirkcaldy continue to be very popular for those young people keen to learn new skills and try different potential career options. The new NOLB model is very much the direction of travel for employability within Scotland and we were pleased to be at the forefront of this new initiative being one of the first areas in Scotland. At the start of the new financial year, we had targets based on our own bid and the funding offered and these were very much the targets the teams worked towards until November. With NOLB being a new programme, we were hampered by a lack of real guidance along with delays in getting the new team in place whilst also being told that we would be subject to additional performance needs not to mention a retender exercise at the year end. At the same point, we identified a likely shortfall in the new Youth registrations and the Management Team made the decision to revisit the numbers and give an increased target to all Employability Keyworkers with the adult



keyworkers also receiving new youth targets. With hindsight, this had a detrimental impact on the teams and created way more pressure than we wanted or needed, however it was necessary to achieve the performance required from the funders and to show the funder what we could achieve. Our collective Fife ETC achievements against our targets were 367 registrations out of 452 (81%) and 179 jobs out of a target of 206 (87%). This was reflective of the performance across the whole of the Opportunities Fife Partnership and helped us secure further new provision for 2022-23 as the year then closed.

## **Fife Employment Training Consortium (Fife-ETC)**

The year of 2021-2022 has been very turbulent for all the partners. We had the ending of the ESIF funding alongside the new funding for NOLB coming into play. The confirmation of the exact funding for NOLB was not with us until mid-April with a start date of 01/04/21. This made the year relatively difficult from the beginning taking into account the multiple staff that were required to be hired.

BRAG had the highest number of vacancies with all new recruits starting the last week in May. For the first time BRAG undertook a full week's training course on BRAG/ NOLB Project and partners. This worked well and it is something that was identified as being useful for rolling out to all the consortium partners for the start of 2022/2023 to ensure everyone has a good oversight of the project's knowledge.

The ending of ESIF project was relatively straightforward and gave us a chance to identify which clients were able to achieve outcomes within the funding year and which were perhaps more suitable to be introduced to NOLB. We secured some funding for ending the work with those that could be progressed into an outcome in first quarter of 2022/2023 funding. This was shared amongst partners with some held back to pay for additional things from partners for new year.

By the end of October 2021, we entered a new partnership with Fife International Forum in a test of change project to work with 10-15 Migrants who were aged 19-24 years old. BRAG supplied compliance support and job brokerage whilst the bulk of work was from FIF. It was mutually enjoyable project however it is fair to say that FIF struggled to engage with the right groups of people, and it was an eye opener to them.

# SQUARE START FAMILIES

We had a change in set up for this project that had previously been delivered in the Levenmouth area. New funding meant that we moved the provision to cover North Fife, Dunfermline, and Southwest Fife Villages. Our target for 2021-2022 was 45 families made up of at least 140 individuals. Between April 2021 and March 31st 2022 Square Start supported: 46 Families - 51 Adults and 113 Children. We delivered a full calendar of activities including cooking on a budget, keep fit classes, financial inclusion, fuel budgeting, arts and crafts, decorating/upskilling and employment opportunities. We organised a Summer Fun Day, Halloween Party and Burns day Ceilidh including Poetry recital. Due to Covid restrictions we delivered Xmas Hampers to each family to help with Christmas Dinner. We also involved the parents with the LEADER programme, which looks at how individuals source food, get support to gain referrals to food provision and how to limit waste. We held weekly family nights supporting families who are struggling with isolation and food insecurity. A blend of online and in person delivery allowed every family to participate. Weekly Bookbug sessions online helped parents who had issues engaging/reading with their children due to poor literacy and numeracy skills.



Above: Some of our families' crafts  
Below: Cooking on a budget session



Above: Claire running an online bookbug session



Our Partners Youth 1st and FEAT helped enhance our full family support vision and create a more well-rounded programme. FEAT delivered in person and virtual Mental Health Resilience Courses which ran in sessions over 7 weeks. This covered anxiety, stress, conflict and gave them strategies that helped them day to day. Youth 1st delivered weekly sessions during family night with the children which included team building, well-being, how to keep yourself safe as well as the children working towards Hi 5 awards and Dynamic Youth awards - SQA accredited qualifications. Moving into this new area of Fife, we cultivated new links with key organisations to deliver a rounded service to our Families. We achieved this by forging strong relationships with businesses/local authority services/3rd sector partners and local community groups in the area which kindly supplied us with produce, treats, services, venues, and referrals. Support Services, now see us as the preferred next step service for families registered with either service, that are coming to an end of that intervention but still require ongoing support.

BRAG invested in staff training to ensure that we could safely deliver family support, this training included: Adult Protection, Child Protection, Food and Hygiene, First Aid, Bookbug Leader Training, Mindfulness Training and Level 3 Youth Work. LEADER – In partnership with Fife Council and several food providers within our communities, our parents participated in 3 workshops being held in The Liberty Centre and Oakley Community Centre to cover their Love Food, Hate Waste campaign. These consisted of Food Mapping Sessions, Cooking demonstrations and food waste education. After these sessions they went on to help create our Between the Bridges Recipe Book. This amazing project has helped our parents to cook with confidence, try new foods and help them to get more meals from the food they buy. Within this project in partnership with The Liberty Church, we submitted a funding bid to create a community teaching kitchen within the church, that could not only benefit our groups, but many other groups who use the church to run sessions. This was successful and The Liberty Centre were awarded £4000 and have now completed The Liberty Legacy Community Kitchen where we can deliver our own directed cooking on a budget sessions.



*Pic: Square start's Claire and Sarah with between the bridges recipe book*



## Families' Achievements

- 1 Job entry**
- 2 college entries**
- 11 Hi5 awards**
- 2 Dynamic Youth Awards**
- 11 Food Hygiene Certificates**

### Case Study

Client S is 21 years old single parent has two children K who is 4 and SK who is 2. Client S's mother and father are both heroin addicts, sadly their mother took her own life last year. Client S was understandably struggling with their emotions, grief and mental health because of various traumas pertaining to their relationship with the parents and current loss. Client also disclosed to having a borderline personality disorder. Client S signed up to Square Start to make friends, end their isolation, and find support with regards their parenting skills. Client S has been attending our Family Group on a Thursday and has benefitted from interacting with other parents, creating family rules, chore charts and discussing boundaries. The children have benefited greatly from the group, they look forward to are taking steps to achieve their HI5 awards with Youth1st. Client S has now enrolled in college and is currently studying Social Care, they are thoroughly enjoying this and are looking forward to taking their study in this field further. They are also upskilling and are completing the Elementary Food and Hygiene Certificate through West Fife CLD. This is increasing their knowledge, confidence, and belief in themselves. Client S is also keen to enroll in other up and coming courses that we are offering. Update - Client S has now completed her college course and successful passed all her assessments. We have supported Client S to complete her college application and funding application for the next college semester. Client S has now recognised that through perseverance and planning that she can achieve qualifications that will make her have more self-confidence and allow her to grow and prepare herself to work in the future.



The Pantry@BRAG went from strength to strength. We had 270 members supporting an average of 80 members on a weekly basis. The Pantry continues to be a hub within the local community providing a dignified response to food poverty and providing support to families and individuals transitioning from the free food they may have received during the pandemic or where they have been long term users of the foodbank and were suffering from food poverty. The Pantry also supports families to budget, prepare healthy and simple meals, whilst still being able to access affordable, local, healthy food for themselves and their families.

***“Word of mouth has spread now about the pantry and so many people need this support in the community, it’s a great place to go and you’re made to feel welcome” - Pantry member***

Due to ongoing renovations in our original Pantry space, over the last year, the Pantry has operated in a smaller space, therefore, members had been picking up a prepacked food bag, containing everything that was available previously from ambient, fridge/freezer, bakery and fresh fruit and veg. During this period our delivery service has been at capacity and has continued to be utilised by some of our most vulnerable and elderly members. In late 2021, the Pantry@BRAG secured £104,587 over 3 years from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop a Food Education programme and to provide access to a social area where the community could meet after visiting the Pantry reducing social isolation, providing opportunities for activities and supporting individuals to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

***“The Pantry doesn’t feel like you’re getting a free handout, it feels like you’re giving something back by paying the small amount for my Pantry bag” - Pantry Member***



### Key achievements this year;



This innovative Levenmouth project took a major step forward in 2021 when we were successful in securing funds to set up the Together Levenmouth High Street Hub. This exciting new initiative was helped by support from Fife Council and the Scottish Governments Town Centres Fund where we were able to purchase 45 High Street Leven. This long redundant space had formerly been both WH Smith and Habbit retail spaces where we have now created a stunning community visitor centre with 2 escape rooms, 2 crazy golf courses, a cafe for visitors, a party room for party bookings, a gift shop and community exhibition and pop up business space. The Hub was opened formally for us on 2nd April 2022 by well known Levenmouth Artist and Sculptor David Mach who said: "They used to call this place The Riviera of Scotland, I think we should call it that again." The team also continued to create events such as Leven Artisan Market which they held on the second Saturday of every month in the town's South Street/Viewforth car park as well as other events like our Halloween Drive in Movie – Scarefest.



David Mach opening the Hub



A family enjoy the UV room

The new Levenmouth Community Lottery also launched in July 2021 with over twenty local retailers signed up to support this and a new website was launched for Together Levenmouth complimenting and highlighting the range of activities we were rolling out. The lottery now raises funds for the local community chest allowing grant funding to be distributed to community groups and organisations which they can apply for. The live draws take place at a chosen supporting retailer's shop or community location every Friday at 3PM and has proved to be popular. The Hub is also hosting senior clubs, aimed at care home residents who have become socially isolated as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic.



First Jackpot Winner Alan Brand



***"They used to call this place The Riviera of Scotland, I think we should call it that again." - David Mach***

The NEA Team have had another very busy year, working with a total of 844 clients which exceeds the year before, as Scottish Government eased Covid restrictions more and more people were seeking self-employment as an option therefore numbers were extremely high. Of the 844 clients that started the NEA Programme, 71% had their business plan approved, with 60% starting to trade and 49% reaching the key 6 month sustained trading date. Commenced trading and sustained trading are at the highest they have been in a long time which is a huge achievement for clients considering they were still navigating Government restrictions and periods of lockdown. In December 2021 the NEA Programme came to an end and from the end of January 2022 no new clients were permitted to start NEA. This has caused a large displacement of people who now have no access to a self-employment programme. Since the start of 2022 the Team have been focusing on the tail of the contract, two staff members have now moved across to our NOLB Employability provision. The remaining two staff members are now fully focusing on Business Plan completion, Trading starts, 26 weeks and 52 weeks tracking.

**BRAG has continued to be a large contributor to the overall figures that make up the Scottish Contract - CPA11 and contribute to the Quality Assurance of the contract with our last Audit score at 100%.**

*There have been many good news stories over the past year, individuals have overcome adversity as the country continued to deal with unprecedented times and below are a few ex-amples that highlight that determination and commitment can make dreams come true!*

## Case study - Julie Brooks Fitness

Julie Brooks Fitness from Bathgate started the NEA programme in June 2021, she has qualifications in Health & Fitness and was keen to use those skills to set up fitness classes aimed at children in her local area, after some support finalising her business plan Julie launched 'Brooks Fitness' on the 26th of August 2021. The initial months of her business were not easy and Julie had to take some time out due to ill health, but with the support and encouragement of the NEA team was able to relaunch her business and has had regular contact with staff to help her with her advertising strategy and she now has a number of regular customers attending her classes.

## Case study - Daniel McFarlane

Daniel McFarlane from Livingston joined the NEA programme in August 2021, Daniel has over 30 years experience in welding and metalwork but as a single parent he hoped that self-employment would give him the flexibility to work around his family, despite some setbacks when his family were unwell with covid-19, Daniel worked hard on his business plan and he officially launched McFarlane Fabrication and Welding on 21st February 2022.

## Case study - Mohamad Jenih

Mohamad Jenih from Falkirk is a refugee from Syria where he had worked as a tailor, now settled in Scotland he was determined to use his skills to start his own business and provide for his young family. He started on the NEA programme in July 2021 and worked closely with his business advisor to complete his business plan. Mohamad faced several delays with funding applications and with securing suitable premises but his determination and passion for his business never wavered and he officially opened J & K Tailoring & Alterations on 11th January 2022. He's kept in touch with his business advisor since then making use of additional support with his marketing and with HMRC registration and his business is going from strength to strength.



Our enterprise centres have continued to provide affordable business space for small local businesses in each area as well as providing good quality accommodation to our staff and volunteers. Crosshill benefited from a major refurbishment of the old café area where we now have a joint Foodbank/ pantry space. The building has also benefited from ongoing repairs and improvements helped by us achieving 100% occupancy.

BRAG Enterprises were thrilled to be awarded £90,000 over 3 years by Centrica's Energy for Tomorrow fund. BRAG receives the only Fife award and is one of only four Scottish awards made. Other recipients included; Eigg Trading Limited who will receive £100k over two years to help redevelop the Isle of Eigg's gateway community hub, Community Energy Scotland will receive £87.1k over two years to help find the best eco-solutions for rural households in Orkney and Energy Sparks will receive £100k over two years to develop its energy analysis tool for schools across Scotland. The total Scottish awards total £377k and were announced at the Energy of tomorrow round table event hosted by Centrica in Glasgow as part of COP26 on November 10th 2021. BRAG were joined at the event by Neale Hanvey MP. BRAG will use the funding across their three sites in Crosshill, Lower Methil and Leven to further reduce their carbon footprint. The organisation will also provide energy efficiency advice to members of The Pantry@brag where local families and individuals who are most at risk of fuel poverty can receive advice and support.

Centrica's Energy for Tomorrow initiative champions innovation, providing funding and support to communities and entrepreneurs with initiatives that can deliver affordable, accessible and sustainable energy solutions for all. Awarding grants of up to £100,000 to empower communities and start-ups who are creating initiatives that can accelerate the energy transition and deliver social impact.



*Brag's Brian Robertson-Fern, Chris O'Shea, Group Chief Executive at Centrica and Neale Hanvey MP  
photo credit centrica*



**We received 16,409 unique website visits**  
**We reached 506,025 facebook accounts**  
**We reached 34,095 twitter accounts**  
**We reached 5,973 Instagram accounts**  
**Creating a total digital reach of 562,502!**

We have made a significant increase in our digital footprint this year. With the launch of the new Together Levenmouth High Street Hub we have added Instagram into our social media marketing mix. Moving forward we will add TikTok for our bright futures employability offering in order to reach the target market of ages 19 – 24. We will also add TikTok for the High Street Hub along with Google My business to showcase everything that this exciting new visitor attraction has to offer. Our digital reach has more than doubled in the last year. Our total digital reach of 2020-21 was 278,364.

## FINANCIALS

### 2020-21

Income	£	1,190,170
Expenditure	£	1,148,749
Surplus		£ 41,421
<b>Balance sheet value</b>		<b>£ 1,610,195</b>

### 2021-22

Income		£2,148,962
Expenditure		£1,552,978
Surplus		£595,984 (€533,177 restricted)
<b>Balance Sheet Value</b>		<b>£2,206,179</b>



Brag Enterprises is a Fife based charity supporting people, who in the main, are residing in disadvantaged areas of Fife to gain the training and employability skills to enable them to move into sustainable employment.

We also work closely with communities to improve their economic resilience.

Brag Enterprises Ltd is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland (SC068995) and registered as a Scottish Charity (SC003517)

**[www.brag.co.uk](http://www.brag.co.uk)**