

Cornerstone News

All the most recent news from across Cornerstone

Autumn 2022



**Providing care
and support in
your community**

In this issue:
Care Inspectorate results
Celebrate Aberdeen parade
Menopause Awareness Project
New Cornerstone films
and much more!





Welcome!

I am delighted to be sharing with you our latest newsletter and it certainly is a bumper edition this autumn.

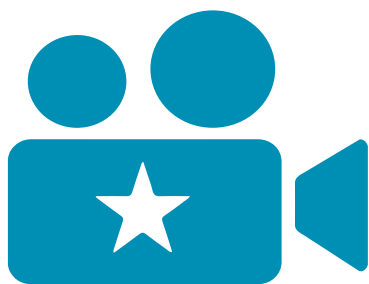
It goes to show that life is finally returning to normal, even if it looks a bit different than it did before. With so much going on it's a tough task to pick out the highlights. There are some brilliant stories from across our branches of **exciting holidays away, family reunions, trips to see Elvis and people we support taking up new and interesting hobbies**. These are the real stories of the people we support and our colleagues and they vividly bring to life what Cornerstone does every day across Scotland.

It's been a tough two years and we know this has taken its toll on everybody. It is important to us, that our colleagues support their wellbeing, so you'll see lots of activities from **coffee mornings and pizza nights to cold water swimming and Parkruns**. Participating in these activities allows us to help and support each other. You'll also be able to read all about our **Menopause Awareness Project**. With over 78% of our workforce being female this is a really important project and we're very lucky to have received funding from the Workplace Equality Fund to support this.

Most importantly what this newsletter shows is people coming together again. Colleagues and the people we support are finally able to spend real time together doing the things that they enjoy, something we've all missed so much during the pandemic. As ever I remain proud to be part of the team that makes this all happen. Enjoy!

Hazel Brown
CEO, Cornerstone





Check out our lovely new films and photography!

It was a busy summer for the [Marketing and Communications](#) team as the filming of three new corporate films took place.

Each film features clips from colleagues and the people we support sharing their experience of Cornerstone care. The films produced were; an ["All about Cornerstone"](#) film explaining what Cornerstone is and the work we do; a ["fundraising"](#) film and a ["recruitment"](#) film. The fundraising film aims to emphasise the importance of fundraising for our charity and how a little can go a long way in supporting the people we support to live the best life possible. The recruitment film focuses on the voices of Cornerstone colleagues as they explain the rewards and benefits of working in care. [The aim of the three films is to spotlight Cornerstone as an expert provider of services to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.](#)

The films are now available to watch at the following links;

▶ [Cornerstone](#)

▶ [Fundraising](#)

▶ [Recruitment](#)

[A massive thank you goes out to our colleagues and the people we support who feature in the films.](#) A special mention to the [Commsbank team](#) and [Kevin at Border Digital](#) for planning, filming and editing the footage.



Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II

It was with great sorrow that we learnt of the death of Her Majesty, the Queen on the 8th September 2022. We paid tribute to a life dedicated to the service of her country recognising how supportive, compassionate and kind she always was towards people with learning disabilities and complex care needs.

Back in June some of the people we support took time to celebrate her remarkable reign, as part of nationwide Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Thanks to a grant of £1,450 from the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund, the event was one of the Scottish Borders branch's first since COVID restrictions started to lift. It gave the people we support the welcome opportunity to relax, reconnect and socialise with friends.

The Cornerstone community garden provided a beautiful setting for the special occasion. Staff and the people we support had worked hard to prepare it after the garden had become overgrown during COVID. Various businesses around the Borders kindly donated plants, vegetables and topsoil to regenerate the area into a welcoming spot for everyone to use.

All the hard work certainly paid off with staff, the people they support, and local community members travelling from all over the Scottish Borders to attend. They were treated to a party in a beautifully redone garden with a delicious barbeque provided by Sparkies Catering.

The Graham School of Highland Dancing from Galashiels performed several dances for guests alongside Mr and Mrs David Turnbull who accompanied them on the bagpipes.

Everyone was then treated to an extra surprise with the arrival of Baxter Bear, Cornerstone's official mascot, who spent the afternoon mingling with guests!

Andrew McInnes, Branch Leader in the Scottish Borders, commented, "It was a great pleasure to welcome so many people to our Jubilee celebrations. It was great to be able to come together as a branch team to enjoy our Connects Garden. The event was an opportunity for new and old friends to meet up after such a long time of restrictions. The sun stayed out for us all day too which was an added bonus. I would like to thank the teams for all their hard work in preparing for the event and all the local businesses for donating such lovely raffle prizes."

We are grateful to have been able to mark such a significant and historic occasion in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and have very fond memories from the event. We continue to offer our sincerest condolences to the Royal Family.



Supported by:



From top, left to right: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, The Graham School of Highland Dancing in full flow, David and Amy Turnbull piping, and Matthew with Baxter the Bear.

Some local businesses helped enhance the event through their kind donations of raffle prizes or garden plants. These include:

Border Aggregates	Greggs	Ancrum and Born in Scotland
Lowood Garden Centre	Creative borders	Bowden Country House
Bookers	Jedburgh Golf Club	Live Borders
Pets at home	Geek Retreat	Jewsons
Boots	Music Station	
M & S	Gregg Cooks Van Hire	
Sandy Thoms Massage	Candii Rock Hair Design	

Menopause Awareness Project



Cornerstone is one of thirteen successful applicants to the Scottish Government's Workplace Equality Fund, driving forward Scotland's Fair Work Framework. Working with The People Portfolio **the significant grant will allow Cornerstone to progress with a Menopause Awareness Project to increase support for colleagues experiencing menopausal symptoms.**



Hazel Brown,
Chief Executive of
Cornerstone, said:

“

We were absolutely delighted to learn recently that our grant application to the Workplace Equality Fund for a Menopause Awareness Project had been successful.

With over 78 per cent of Cornerstone's workforce being female, a third of whom are between the ages of 45–55, it is vitally important that we better understand the impact of perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause and identify ways in which we can better support those colleagues experiencing symptoms.

We will look to raise awareness, remove barriers, increase support and training, and ensure that we have the appropriate, menopause-friendly, workplace and recruitment measures in place to encourage more women to join Cornerstone or indeed to allow them to be able to remain at, or return to, work.

The grant, which is worth £118,400 over two years, will allow us to now move forward with this innovative piece of work in partnership with The People Portfolio.

We will also be working towards achieving Menopause Friendly Accreditation and pledge to share the important findings and recommendations of the project in due course.

”

Over a two-year period, **the project will set out to research and address the barriers to employment within the social care sector that women experiencing symptoms of perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause can face.** The project will also explore and implement ways to better support and retain colleagues who experience menopausal symptoms. By increasing understanding of all colleagues, leaders and recruitment teams, this project aims to help address unconscious bias and improve the employment experience of women—whether currently employed or looking to return to employment.



Morna Ronnie,
Founder of The
People Portfolio,
added:

“

We are delighted to have the opportunity to partner with Cornerstone on their Menopause Awareness Project. We are looking forward to making a difference at both an individual and organisational level, on this very important topic.

”

The Workplace Equality Fund is being administered by Advice Direct Scotland, and recipients receive grants to address long-standing barriers in the labour market. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon first launched the fund in 2018 and **it is designed to ensure that everyone—irrespective of disability, gender, age or race—can fulfil their potential** and improve Scotland's economic performance as a result.

The Scottish Government's Fair Work Framework **sets out what fair work means in Scotland**, offering all individuals an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect. It is being used to fund projects that are focused on one or more priority groups such as women, minority ethnic workers, disabled workers and workers aged over 50.

Looking after our mental health

The 9th–15th of May marked Mental Health Awareness Week across the UK.

This year's theme was 'loneliness'—a key driver for poor mental health, affecting millions of people in the UK every year. The past few years have been an especially difficult time with research highlighting the impact the global pandemic has had on mental health.

Loneliness has been a major factor in contributing to higher levels of distress resulting from people's sense of isolation and reduced ability to connect with others. Polling conducted by the Mental Health Foundation also found that loneliness was one of the leading issues that the public felt needed to be addressed.

Therefore, as restrictions began to ease in Scotland, our health and wellbeing champions thought it would be a great opportunity for us all to dedicate time 'reconnecting with colleagues.' Throughout the week, due to relaxing COVID restrictions, we were able to go into offices and safely meet in larger groups.

Read about some of the ways we got involved below!

In the Scottish Borders Ian, Andrew and Kim joined forces to complete a 5km Parkrun together. Exercise can really help to improve your mental health. Doing something as simple as going for a walk outside can give you an enormous sense of wellbeing, improve your mood, sleep cycle and relieve stress.

Ian, Andrew and Kim felt great after completing their run and all said they would like to do it more often.

Our Community Support team in the Scottish Borders also engaged in some cold-water therapy. Derek and Kim braved the water at Lindean to have a twenty minute cold-water swim in the beautiful loch.

They had a cuppa to warm themselves up afterwards then jumped into the kayak for a relaxing paddle around the loch.

Kim partakes in cold water swimming regularly, finding it a real stress reliever. Immersing the body in cold water is proven to boost dopamine levels and increase the release of endorphins.

In Moray to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Week, some of our colleagues, people we support, their families and pets enjoyed a walk around Cooper Park before stopping for a picnic and cake!

In the Glasgow office, Eleanor and Chris organized a pizza party catch-up with colleagues, most of whom had only just started coming back to the office after lockdown. It was a lovely, relaxed way to reconnect and meet face-to-face after meeting predominantly online.



From top, left to right: Family and dog walk in Cooper Park in Moray, cold water therapy in Borders, pizza and pop night in the Borders, West Dunbartonshire coffee morning, Ian, Andrew and Kim after a run, and Eleanor and Chris in Glasgow.

Similarly, **West Dunbartonshire** held a coffee morning that was open to all colleagues. Anyone who popped into the office on the day took some time away from their desks and came together for some tea and cake and chatted for a while.

Pauline, one of our Mental Health Champions also did some cold-water therapy every morning and evening for the week. Some colleagues went with her to brave the cold and joined Pauline in the freezing waters of Loch Lomond.

Overall, it was a great week that really helped us all to focus on the importance of good mental health. By arranging some social opportunities, we helped our colleagues to reconnect and feel less isolated, as well as have some healthy, open conversations about mental health.

Debbie, one of our Health and Wellbeing Champions, commented; **"It was great to see so many examples of colleagues getting together to mark the week. It has been especially brilliant to hear from many colleagues who took part that said the campaign has inspired them to repeat the activity again throughout the year."**

Celebrating Learning Disability Week 2022

Cornerstone was delighted to take part in Scottish Learning Disability Week, hosted by the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD), running from the 2nd–8th May 2022.

Scottish Learning Disability Week gave us the opportunity to focus attention on the lives of people with learning disabilities in Scotland. It was a chance to raise awareness of issues and inequalities, as well as achievements and talents! The week matters because there are over 100,000 people in Scotland who have learning disabilities, and raising awareness provides a real chance to change attitudes, making Scotland a better, fairer and more equal place for everyone.

This year there was a particular focus on the human rights of people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

It is an important time for human rights in Scotland; **last year saw the Scottish Government commit to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as part of a Human Rights Bill for Scotland. This means that disabled people's human rights will be enshrined by Scottish law for the first time.** We are living in an exciting time in Scotland, as we understand how human rights apply to the everyday lives of the people we support and explore what we need to do to make those human rights 'real' and make sense of them in our everyday lives.

As always, SCLD ran themed events every day throughout Scottish Learning Disability Week. **[Here's how we got involved:](#)**

Monday – What are human rights?

We started the week aiming to help raise awareness of the importance of recognising and realising the human rights of people with learning disabilities.

Tuesday – My right to employment and education

We showcased the story of Sarah, a person we support from our Moray branch who was successful in her application to become a Junior Admin Assistant in the Moray office. **[You can read about Sarah's story here.](#)**

We also highlighted the story of AJ, a person who we support from North Lanarkshire's Community Support branch, who despite the pressures of the pandemic and online learning has made incredible progress in his college course. **[Read more about AJ's Story here.](#)**

Wednesday – Making rights real

We celebrated our colleagues who continually go above and beyond to help others understand and respect the rights of the people we support. **[Read more about Anna Ewart, one of our Scottish Borders colleagues, on our Facebook page.](#)**

Thursday – My rights to housing and communities

We shared the story of three people we support who celebrated their 20th year of staying in Cornerstone's Fairfield Road service. **[You can read more about the celebration here.](#)**

Friday – My rights to health and wellbeing

We highlighted the efforts of Support Worker Lisa Johnstone who is devoted to making exercising fun and less intimidating for everyone, including the people she supports. **[You can read more about Lisa's story and her journey to run the Edinburgh half-marathon here.](#)**

Saturday – My right to party

We **[shared photos](#)** from North Lanarkshire's Easter event. It was their first event that was open to the public since COVID, and everyone had a fantastic time.

And we also showcased Cornerstone's recently restarted monthly disco in Aberdeen and the importance of social events for the people we support. **[Read more about the Disco here!](#)**

Sunday – My right to rest

We shared the story of Kirsten's first-ever holiday and the importance of rest and relaxation for the people we support. **[You can read more about Kirsten's story here.](#)**



From top: Sarah, AJ, Anna Ewart, Anthony, Douglas and Rena celebrating 20 years at Fairfield Road, Lisa Johnstone, Jean with Baxter Bear at the Easter Event, and Kirsten.

Summer tour

The people we support have been meeting up with members of our **Leadership Team** recently, telling them about their experience of Cornerstone care, what they get up to with their support team and the difference that support makes. Most recently, the Leadership Team visited our **West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute branch**.

Jesamine Griffin, Branch Leader said “Our branch were delighted to recently welcome some of the Leadership Team to our West Dunbartonshire office in Renton. During their visit, Hazel Brown, Chief Executive, Helen Munro and Peter Bailey from the Board participated in seated expressive dance with Donna and some of the people we support from Ailsa, Waterfront and Baxter View. In addition, every service provided a picture board to represent all of the people supported in the West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Branch. A great day was had by all!”

During their summer tour of branches, members of the Leadership Team have also visited the **Scottish Borders, Dundee and North Lanarkshire Community Support**, with other branch trips planned for the autumn.

Hazel Brown, Chief Executive explains “Visiting the people we support and their support teams has to be one of the favourite parts of my job. To get to see and hear first-hand about the work that is happening across our branches is absolutely invaluable and brings home what a positive impact our support teams are having in communities across the country. It is also an excellent opportunity for many of the newer members of the Leadership Team to get to know Cornerstone and hear the views, feedback and experiences of the people we support and their families.”

We were delighted to welcome three brilliant new additions to our leadership teams recently—**Lesley de Jager, Fiona Barrie-Higgins and Adrian Todd**. Our colleagues have taken up the positions of **Director of People and Culture, Deputy Director of Delivery and Head of ICT and Digital Transformation**, respectively.



From top: Leadership Team visit members of the team in North Lanarkshire, Lesley de Jager visits Dundee, Hazel Brown meets Ethan in North Lanarkshire, Fiona Barrie-Higgins meets people we support in the Scottish Borders, and seated expressive dance in Renton.

Lesley has spent over 20 years leading HR strategy, operations and transformational change in the corporate sector and civil service before joining Cornerstone in May. A Chartered Fellow of the CIPD, she also holds a Masters in Employment Law and Practice.



“ I have been so impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of the colleagues I have met so far—they are rising to meet the challenges of the social care sector with thoughtfulness and resilience. ”

Adrian has been an IT professional for over 35 years, working in senior positions on development projects and operations. Drawn towards an opportunity to contribute to the social care sector, Adrian has lived experience caring for his disabled sister and elderly mother.



“ I have felt happy and at home at Cornerstone very quickly. Our staff and the people we support are wonderful. I'm so proud to be able to use my knowledge of IT as a force for good here. ”

Fiona has worked in the health and social care sector for 25 years across the third, private and public sectors in a wide variety of roles including support worker, team leader, branch lead and regional manager. With a wealth of experience in learning disabilities and complex care, Fiona is relishing the challenge of implementing Cornerstone's strategic plan.



“ It has been a roller coaster of a start! I recognise there is a lot going on, with much more still to do. I enjoy being challenged within my working role and strive on organisations that are looking to implement strategic planning. My passion is in operational design and development which I'm looking forward to bringing to Cornerstone. I've really enjoyed getting to know everyone who contributes to helping the people we support achieve the best lives possible. I'm excited for Cornerstone's next chapter. ”

Communication commitments

Our Speech and Language Specialist, **Louise Carson**, has been busy since the last newsletter, she tells us more below.

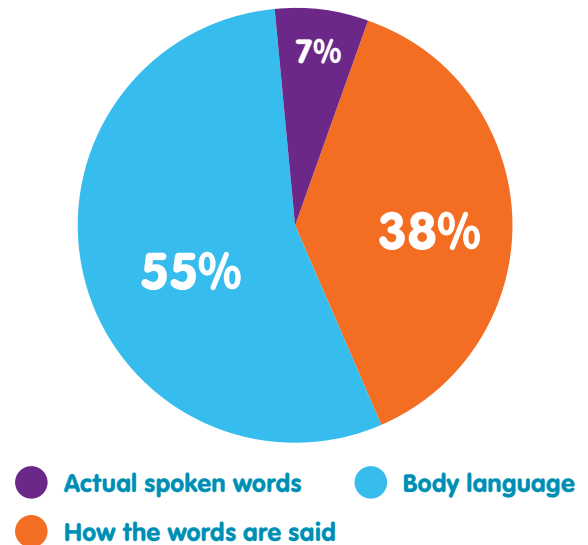
"We've made great progress in developing our training opportunities for our teams by enhancing training on autism and communication.

Additionally, we have been closely examining some of our information and policies to make these more accessible to everyone. We have been making good use of our Boardmaker membership to do this. Guidance and videos have been developed to help teams use Boardmaker to make supports using symbols.

Teams are now using the recently developed "My Communications Profile" to gather information on communication style and the needs of the people we support. We think about our environments to make sure they are communication friendly too.

On social media, we are sharing communication postcards to spread the message that all communication counts. We will explore the different ways that people communicate and how we can support people who have communication difficulties and differences. We will share some interesting facts along the way... Did you know that communication is 55% body language? Our facial expressions, posture, use of space and the way we gesture or move our eyes play a huge part in the way we convey a message."

The '7-38-55' rule of communication



And finally, more good news! We have secured funding to allow us to progress with Makaton training. Makaton is a language program that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate. We plan to embed Makaton into the organisation by upskilling our teams and ensuring that we share our knowledge and skills. We look forward to giving you regular updates on our Makaton journey!

Celebrating 25 years of service

At the end of June we held an event to celebrate the staff who had recently achieved 25 years of service with us. The event took place in the Willow Tea Rooms in Glasgow where long-service staff were presented with a bouquet of flowers and a certificate commemorating their 25 years of service.

Chief Executive, Hazel Brown commented, "I was delighted to spend an afternoon with three of our most long served colleagues who between them have worked for Cornerstone for 75 years. Peter Bailey, our Chair, and I enjoyed an afternoon tea with them all in the lovely Willow Tea Rooms in Glasgow. It was lovely to hear Lorraine, Hilary and Dawn's stories of their time with Cornerstone."

The staff receiving recognition for their 25 years of service were; **Hilary Bennison**, Quality Lead; **Dawn Bruce**, Longside Service in Aberdeen North; **Irene Dempsey**, Lead of various Glasgow Services; **Janette Gibbons**, New Cordale Road in West Dunbartonshire; **Lorraine Cunningham**, Lead of various services in Airdrie Central.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Irene and Janette were unable to make the event but we will also be marking their long service in due course, alongside their bouquet of flowers and certificate.



From left: Hilary Bennison, Dawn Bruce, Lorraine Cunningham, Peter Bailey, and Hazel Brown.

Chair of the Board, Peter Bailey added, "It was a real privilege to join staff to celebrate their twenty-five years of service. It proved to be a great time of reminiscing and a great opportunity to recognise outstanding service. It takes a great deal of commitment and loyalty to serve the organisation for so many years and I was pleased to acknowledge this on behalf of the Board. Above all we celebrate the positive impact our long serving colleagues have had on the lives of so many people we support over the years."

Malcolm's family reunion



Malcolm with friends and family.



Malcolm, who is supported in our [Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire](#) branch, used to go on holiday every year. Support Practitioner, Ros would sometimes take him to Ayr and Largs (or “doon the watter” as he called it) where he used to visit with his parents, when he was young. But recently, after developing dementia, he had become more anxious and told his Support Workers, Ros and Carole Ann, that he wanted “no more” holidays.

While support worker Ros knew that Malcolm wouldn't be able to take another big holiday, she tentatively suggested going on a long weekend to St Andrews to see his sister. She felt it would be a refreshing change of scenery for him and a great way to recharge and relax.

Malcolm was actually delighted with the idea. A trip to St Andrews would give him all the benefits of a holiday with the added bonus of seeing his family and minimal anxiety.

Ros spent time researching accessible accommodation to find somewhere that Malcolm could stay and have all his needs met. She then contacted his sister and the rest of his family, to arrange the gathering. **The idea quickly turned into the prospect of a family reunion!**

Naturally, Malcolm was excited, so excited he didn't want anyone to talk about it until it was time to go because he didn't think he'd be able to sleep!

Then the day arrived. Malcolm was supported by Ros and Carole Ann to attend the gathering. Ros hired a wheelchair accessible van and drove Malcolm from Glasgow up to the lodge in beautiful St Andrews.

“I loved taking him away,” Ros said as she explained what the experience was like. **“It was an excuse for everyone to see each other. They had a right family get together. His two sisters, his brother-in-law, his two nieces and his nephew all came to enjoy the day. It really was a fabulous time for the family who had not been all together for many years. Malcolm was over the moon, so much so that we are going to arrange another trip soon.”**

Malcolm, who enjoys “a good blether” and one on one time, was able to have time with each one of his family members, whom he hadn't seen in a while. They all took turns sitting and talking to Malcolm. Throughout the weekend they went on lovely walks, had afternoon tea and classic St Andrews' fish suppers.

Ros explained; **“He laughed the whole time, and never went to bed until ten—much later than usual!”**

Malcolm described how he felt about the weekend, **“I liked going on holiday. I liked the place where we stayed and I am going again soon.”**

When asked if Malcolm enjoyed the trip he jokingly replied - **“I enjoyed it too much!”**

Armed Forces Covenant

We were delighted to recently demonstrate our support for the Armed Forces Community by signing an Armed Forces Covenant and earning a [Defence Employer Recognition Scheme \(ERS\) Bronze award](#).

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve or who have served, and their families, which says we will do all we can to ensure they are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. The Armed Forces Covenant relies on the people, communities, and businesses of the UK to actively support it in order to make a difference. As part of the award, Cornerstone will actively advertise job opportunities to the armed forces community.

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support Defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community.

[You can find out more about the Armed Forces Covenant here.](#)

Local Star Awards

We recently celebrated both our colleagues and the people we support with our [North Lanarkshire Star Awards](#). The winners were all nominated by their fellow colleagues with our selection panel choosing the eventual winners.

Categories ranged from Most Creative Team and Positive Colleague to Biggest Achievement and Creative Talent award for the people we support.

[A huge congratulations to all the winners!](#)



All of the fantastic winners at the North Lanarkshire Star Awards.



Training Academy

Qualifications Team

2022 has been a busy and positive time for our Training Academy's Qualifications team. **This year they have supported over 100 colleagues to achieve their qualifications in Social Care, Management and Business and Administration.** Our team of dedicated SVQ Assessors: Caroline Allison, Katherine Clayfield, Emma Fechman, Susan Mair and Fiona Maclean work tirelessly to support colleagues to gain the necessary qualifications for their post. Some recent feedback from candidates includes:

“Emma was so helpful, if there was something I did not understand Emma would help explain it and give me guidance.”

“Fiona was amazing getting me through my SVQ—we had a few challenges but I couldn't have asked for a better person to support me!”

“It was great to work with my assessor, Caroline who is very knowledgeable. Without her I wouldn't have had the confidence to continue.”

“Katherine was very supportive and always there to help me along. Her help and patience got me through it.”

“I couldn't have done it without the help and support of Susan. Susan was very patient and understanding throughout.”

In 2021 Cornerstone were approved to deliver the Care Services Leadership and Management (CSLM) SVQ at SCQF 10. This work-based qualification is designed to equip managers with a range of knowledge and skills to support best leadership and management practice in the care sector.

Service Lead Megan Leven was the first of Cornerstone's candidates to complete the qualification with her SVQ Assessor Fiona.

Megan said:

“I really enjoyed doing my CSLM, I learned pieces of legislation for my role that have helped me manage the service to a high standard. I gained more knowledge which applied to the Care Inspectorate, health and safety and using SSSC codes in my everyday practice.”

Fiona, Megan's assessor also enjoyed delivering her first CSLM qualification. Fiona said:

“I enjoy encouraging service leads to do research for reports; theories; management models etc. This helps to boost their confidence by broadening their own knowledge about current best practice and issues in the care sector.”

The Training Academy is also now approved by SQA to deliver the Professional Development Award (PDA) in Health and Social Care Supervision at SCQF 7. So far eight Lead Practitioner colleagues have completed the PDA. Lead Practitioner Stewart Hutchinson said:

“I found the PDA aspect very user friendly. The PDA was one essay, three study sessions, a bit of work on my own, and a final piece of work.”

Assessor Fiona Maclean explained:

“Delivering the PDA has highlighted the importance of effective 1:1s and annual appraisals to support colleagues with their performance and professional development. This is central to ensuring we provide safe, person-centred care for the people we support.”

Training opportunities

The Training Academy has remained committed to supporting all new and existing colleagues with mandatory training. A small team of trainers deliver training across all of our ten branches and to date have provided 2,500 training places. The focus of training has been on key courses like Induction, Epilepsy, First Aid and Moving and Assisting, however the Academy also offers a comprehensive suite of other e-learning courses. To date, this year our colleagues have completed 13,500 courses.

All of this training would not be possible without the support of two Training Academy Coordinators and an E-Learning Facilitator, who make the magic happen behind the scenes with scheduling the training sessions, creating and updating e-learning modules and supporting colleagues through the Training Academy help-desk.

At Cornerstone everything we do is aimed at improving the quality of care for the people we support. Since the Academy moved from purchasing training externally to delivering it internally, there has been a marked improvement in the level of feedback received.

Training is built around the needs of the participants. By enquiring about their particular service, our trainers can deliver sessions that are person-centred and tailored to the service and the needs of the people they support. For example, after attending Moving and Assisting training, our colleagues have been empowered to update existing risk assessments and challenge health care professionals.

“Learnt a lot of things that I thought I already knew, but in reality I never. This will help me feel more confident in my role.”

“Trainer was excellent and explained everything to an excellent standard. He had all the materials to show us exactly what to do.”

“At the beginning of the course I didn't have much confidence but as the course went on I grew in confidence. Our trainer was very helpful and she talked us through everything with clear explanations.”

To support the organisational strategic aim of becoming an expert provider, the Academy with the support of our fundraising colleagues have been successful in an application to the Flexible Workforce Development Fund. This award will enable the delivery of both Makaton and Positive Behaviour Support training later in 2022.

Makaton training is vital when it comes to gathering the views of the people we support and delivering the best care to those who don't use language to communicate. Positive Behaviour Support training will provide our workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to support people of all ages with a learning disability. Positive Behaviour Support helps Health and Social Care Professionals to understand the reason for behaviours that challenge, better meet people's needs and enhance their quality of life.

As part of developing Cornerstone's Leadership Development programme colleagues were invited to a pilot of a coaching and mentoring programme. In total there were 12 cohorts run virtually with colleagues attending from all branches. Feedback received was that participants felt that it was a great opportunity to meet and discuss real issues with colleagues out with their own branch.

Recruitment

People planning

HR Lead, **Louise Dickson**, in collaboration with Culture Lead, **Elaine Cochrane**, recently held strategy planning days for both the Recruitment and the HR Teams in Glasgow and Dundee respectively. Recruitment is a huge challenge across the social care sector right now and it's important we have strategies in place to attract the right people with the right skills to the right jobs. A 'solution focussed' thinking approach was used to expand the ideas around key priorities for both teams and has helped inform future objectives that are aligned to Cornerstone's overall strategy.

Our new People and Culture Director, **Lesley de Jager**, joined the group day in Dundee to share the Executive Leadership Team's vision:

“It's a difficult time in a challenging sector, but our HR and Recruitment teams have the skills, talent and vision to help Cornerstone move towards sustainability and becoming the best employer in social care in Scotland.”



From top: The Recruitment team and the HR team.

Changing roles – Zoe's story

Zoe Clarke recently joined the recruitment team as a Recruitment Administrator after five years of working as a Support Practitioner for Cornerstone

Zoe commented on what drew her to the post:

“It's something I've always been interested in. It's a different way of helping people. Helping get people in and comfortable with their new role.”

Her previous experience working as a Support Practitioner means Zoe can provide a lot of insight into the role for new candidates:

“With new candidates coming through I can tell them that I've done their job before and there are going to be times that are difficult but it's so rewarding. You do need to be the right person to do it—be in it for the right reasons and not just because you might think it's an easy job to do.

You always want to make sure the people you support are living their best lives. Taking someone to the shops may seem minor to you but that person's been able to go out and see people and do something they love with someone they feel comfortable with—that's a huge thing for them.

I could never properly leave care but I'm enjoying bringing other people into that aspect of it. Meeting the candidates and thinking—you'll be brilliant and our team will be lucky to have you.”

Zoe explained her favourite part of being a Recruitment Administrator is getting to meet all the candidates and follow them on their journey through the process:

“I always let them know that if there's anything at all that you've got my number, my email address, there's no silly questions. I'm there to help.

Anytime I let our line managers know that someone is ready to join the team I get a little “yes” feeling! I know I'm bringing in another person who is going to be able to make a massive difference to the people we support.”

Zoe is also enjoying her new role because of how welcoming her team has been:

“I've only been in the job about a month but it feels like I've always been a part of the recruitment team. They've always been great and are so supportive.

Starting a new job can be quite scary but I'm enjoying it and am so glad I went for this role. I can progress from here too—I can move forward and branch out.”



Zoe Clarke at Dudhope Castle, Dundee.

Fun **draising**

Cornerstone

WEEKLY LOTTERY

Play our weekly lottery
and help people with learning disabilities
across Scotland live their best possible lives.

**For just £1 a week, you could win our jackpot prize of
£25,000!** And with every play, you are helping someone who
we support at Cornerstone.

How it Works

If you live in Britain and are over 18 you can **enter online today**.

You'll be sent a six-digit lottery number which is selected at random. This
will be unique to you for as long as you play. And you can have more than
one chance and number if you wish.

Our draws take place every Friday and the result will be published on
the winners page.

**For every £1 raised from our lottery, 50p goes
directly to helping Cornerstone to care for people
with learning disabilities, autism and complex care
needs.**

For more info visit:

www.cornerstone.org.uk/weekly-lottery

Participation is subject to **terms**.

1st prize

£25,000

If you match 6 digits

2nd prize

£1,000

If you match 5 digits

3rd prize

£25

If you match 4 digits

4th prize

**5 entries into
the next draw**




If you match 3 digits

Looking for new goals?

Whether your goal is to keep fit, reach a personal best in the name of Cornerstone, conquer your fears or simply have a great day out with friends, family or colleagues—pick a challenge and we'll support you with the rest.

Run, walk, cycle, skydive or do your own thing. What challenge will you take on? We have highlighted just a handful of events you can get involved in this year! You can browse all of our events and challenges on our website, [click here to find more.](#)

2022

	Three Peaks Challenge	14th October	National
	Mens 10K Edinburgh	23rd October	Virtual Event
	Dog Jog Virtual Challenge	Choose your own date	Virtual Event

2023

	Supernova	17th March	Kelpies
	Glasgow Kiltwalk	TBC	Glasgow
	Edinburgh Marathon Festival	27th–28th May	Midlothian
	Aberdeen Kiltwalk	TBC	Aberdeen
	Mens 10K Glasgow	18th June	Glasgow
	Ben Nevis Trek	7th July	Lochaber
	Ben Nevis Midnight Trek	19th–20th August	Lochaber

Something else? Let us know! We'd love to hear your ideas so get in touch and we'll help you shape your bespoke challenge!

By joining in our fundraising efforts you will make a huge difference to the lives of local children, young people and adults living with learning disabilities and long term health conditions. To register for a place and get support with fundraising please contact us on **01224 256 000** or at **getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk**.

Book club

Over lockdown, Susan Masser started up the popular Cornerstone book club which continues to be very successful in raising money for Cornerstone.

Susan explained how she came up with the idea. **"I was talking to Debbie Masson, who's one of our Health and Wellbeing Champions about fundraising activities that we could do regularly. With coffee mornings sometimes people are busy that morning or still working from home and can't go. But with the book club you could donate £2, read your book but you don't have to come to the meeting—and you are still fundraising in the background. I've always wanted to be part of a book club as well and I thought—I'll just start my own."**

The book club meets up once a month and is open to all. After each meeting Susan will go through books on Amazon and recommended books on Facebook to pick five potential books to read for next month. **"I'll try to stick to a theme as well, for instance, Scottish authors. The potential books are posted on the Facebook group and people vote on which book they want to read."**

"I always pick books that are quite cheap and easily accessible on Amazon. Some of them have been free on Kindle as well."

The book club is only £2 a month which works brilliantly for a fundraiser. These small but consistent donations all add up. **"The more people that join the better, and these donations are just in the background. £24 a year per person. I mean, you know that times 10 people, 20 people, 30 people is a lot of money."**

In addition to it being an excellent way to fundraise, Susan has found the book club is a brilliant way to find new books. **"When I'm looking up books to put in for the vote I'll see lots of stuff that I quite fancy reading and put it in my wishlist on Amazon. Then I'll buy it myself. Five books went forward for this month—although we are only reading one for the book club I will probably read all five at some point because they all look really good."**



Susan Masser

"Some of the books that we've read I thought 'oh I would never have read this in a million years.' But then I read it and it's flipping brilliant. You know, absolutely brilliant."

The book club also provides a lot of opportunities for socialisation, as Susan commented. **"There's books that other people have recommended outwith the book club that I'll read too and that's meant that I could go and have a conversation with the person who recommended it."**

So far two of Susan's favourite book club books have been *The Familiars* and *Away with the Penguins*.

The book club currently has 40–50 people in the group, but they are always looking for more. If you feel you might be interested in joining a book club whilst raising money for Cornerstone email Susan Masser at susan.masser@cornerstone.org.uk.

Fundraisers like the book club really do make a difference! Fancy doing something small scale—that could make a big impact? We'd love to hear your ideas please contact us on getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk.

Glen Wyvis

Oh what a night! Guests of GlenWyvis Distillery gathered at Bogbain Farm in Inverness on Friday 17th June for **'A Midsummer Night's Dram'**. The event featured unique tasting opportunities of the distillery's inaugural release Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky and soon to be launched 2018 vintage Batch 2—to raise money for Cornerstone. Chief Executive, Hazel Brown and Chair of Cornerstone, Peter Bailey both attended the event and spoke passionately about the amazing care Cornerstone provides.

This event was the brilliant idea of **Andy Fisher, Vice Chairman of GlenWyvis** who had heard about Cornerstone and wanted to partner up with the charity to create a unique community event and make a difference.

This was Cornerstone's first large scale fundraising event since lockdown—so the fundraising team were raring to go! In partnership with the Dingwall Distillery, GlenWyvis, this amazing event had been initially postponed due to COVID and had been a few years in the making. The fundraising team were delighted that it was so successful—**they managed to raise an incredible £8,827!**



A big shout out also must be given to the Volunteer Team from the Moray branch: **Ashley Aitken, Elaine Duffy and Fran Harrison**. They were all super stars!

Do you have a great idea and think that you could help Cornerstone? We'd love to hear about it! Contact us on getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk.



Be Super Be You

Here at Cornerstone we celebrate being unique. Promoting diversity and inclusivity is key to everything we do and is the inspiration behind our fundraising pack '**Be Super, Be You!**'

The engaging and informative pack is perfect for primary school aged children and includes lesson plans on diversity, inclusion and kindness all promoted in a fun-filled, colourful, superhero theme! Baxter Bear, our friendly Cornerstone mascot guides you through the pack; supporting teachers to have conversations about being unique, being yourself and being inclusive. Developed in partnership with teachers, the lesson plans and fun resources are aligned with the Curriculum for Excellence—making this a key teaching resource as well as a super fundraising opportunity.

We are continuing to invite primary schools to take part in a range of fun, fundraising activities. **Are you a teacher or do you know a teacher, student or school that you think would be interested in this fundraising pack?** Whether it's dressing up, a colouring in or our curriculum-specific activities—there's something for everyone. All you need to start your mission is to download your pack from our website www.cornerstone.org.uk/be-super-be-you or contact getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk.

Care for Cake

As we creep into autumn and the nights start to get colder, you might find yourself turning the oven back on to bake some warming loafs, cakes and bakes! **Our Care for Cake** pack might just be up your street. Full of tasty recipes, top tips, promotional posters and cool, cut out decorations (including bunting and cake toppers), the pack is a step-by-step guide to make sure your Care for Cake event is a tasty success.

We put the people we support at the centre of everything we do, so we were absolutely delighted when **Graeme (top left photo)** helped us develop this fundraising pack. Graeme shared his scone recipe with us and was excited to see it featured in our Care for Cake pack alongside some information about him and the support Cornerstone provides.

Let us all bake and raise some funds for Cornerstone! Download your pack today by visiting www.cornerstone.org.uk/care-for-cake or contact us at getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk.



Get muddy for Cornerstone!



As part of our ongoing partnership with [John Clark Motor Group](#) and [VSA](#), we were delighted to attend the [Banchory Beast Race](#). We cheered on our teams as they tackled this muddy multi-obstacle race and applauded as they crossed the finish line! The sky was blue, the sun was out and everything and everyone was very muddy! Well done to all involved and [we were delighted that Team Cornerstone raised an impressive £2,161!](#)



Jed Ultra Marathon

[Susan Sharp](#) is a parent of one of the people we support, and she is running the Jed Ultra Marathon [to raise money for Cornerstone's Scottish Borders branch](#).

The Jed Ultra Marathon is a 38 mile race around Jedburgh going through a variety of different terrains including quiet country lanes, wobbly bridges, "spooky" forests and riverbanks. 80% of the race is on trail, the other 20% is on tarmac, with a 'relaxing' uphill sprint to finish.

Susan is currently in training for the marathon—[having recently run a full 18 miles around the Eildon Hills of Melrose](#) which is where the trail run will take place.

[Good luck Susan!](#)



Fundraise for free

Did you know you can fundraise for Cornerstone at no cost to yourself!? Just make sure you use one of the shopping sites shown on the left! So when you purchase your Amazon shopping through Amazon Smile, or your Friday night take-away from Give as you Live a small donation goes to Cornerstone. By purchasing services through these sites you can help Cornerstone make a difference for free.

They are so simple to use and by just making a tiny change to your online shopping habits, you can make a huge difference to Cornerstone! Save them as bookmarks in your browser and use them when you shop. [Find out more information and how to sign up here.](#)



Aberdeen North and Shire

Adventure in London

Jonathan has always wanted to go to London, so his amazing support team got to work to make his dream a reality!

Jonathan, who is supported at our **Craigewan service**, boarded the London-bound train with **Ruby** from his support team and had the best trip ever!

From a dizzying heights experience on The Official London Eye to boat trips on the Thames, an underwater sea-life experience, a trip to Downing Street and meeting the royals at Madame Tussauds, **he certainly had a trip to remember!**



Jonathan on the London Eye!

Modern Apprenticeship

Alison Strachan is a Support Practitioner from our **Aberdeen North and Shire branch** who is currently part of a team supporting five people in a care home setting.

Previously Alison had worked in hospitality but had always wanted to work in social care, having previous experience helping to support a family member with dementia.

She had been working in social care with Cornerstone for five years before she started her Modern Apprenticeship late last year.

Although prior experience is not required for the Modern Apprenticeship, Alison found the Modern Apprenticeship helped build on the knowledge she already had.

Alison explained, **"The subjects that crop up are really practically relevant to work, things like risk assessment, administering medicine and moving and handling. Some of it is common sense but I've also been learning the legislation behind it, why we do certain things, and the right ways to go about different situations."**

Due to working full time and a busy schedule, being able to go at her own pace is something that was hugely important to Alison. **"Currently I'm a little behind but the Modern Apprenticeship is flexible and my assessor, Katherine, is confident I will catch up after I complete the next batch of assessments."**

"You're not only earning something at the end of the Modern Apprenticeship, you are gaining more knowledge and skills that help you improve at your job."



From left to right:
Alison Strachan,
Alison with Fiona Mary,
one of the people she
supports.

Alison is supported through the Modern Apprenticeship by her assessor, Katherine, which is a support she finds incredibly helpful. **"If I have any problems I know Katherine is there to help out. It's great having that back up."**

In addition to an assessor, Alison is also supported through 'study days' which is a day dedicated to Modern Apprenticeship coursework. Before COVID, this took place in a classroom, but is currently online. **"The study days really get you in the zone. You can work at home, get your assessments done and have a chat with your assessor. It really helps me focus."**

Alison would encourage anyone to do the Modern Apprenticeship. **"It really helps expand your knowledge and gives you a more in depth insight into care."**

Aberdeen South and Shire

Celebrate Aberdeen

Team Cornerstone were delighted to literally fly their flag for Cornerstone in the Celebrate Aberdeen parade on the 27th August. It was the first parade since 2019 due to COVID restrictions and everyone was delighted to see it return.

Since 2011, Celebrate Aberdeen has brought the Aberdeen community together, while shining a spotlight on some of the amazing people who deserve to have their efforts recognised. We are delighted to walk with other amazing local charities and 'make some noise for Cornerstone.'

This year, Cornerstone's new Aberdeen South Administrator, Nicola Mian recruited over 70 members of the team.

Nicola says "What an amazing day! It was delightful to see people we support enjoy the day. It's testimony to the amazing work we do here at Cornerstone."



Left to right, from top: Ruby, Emma, Lily and Chris carrying the Cornerstone banner, Natalie & Willie from Abbotswell, a person we support from Craigewan Court, Matthew from Back Hilton with Support Practitioner Sue, Cornerstone colleagues Dawn and Julie with their families, Rosheen from Berrybank, Tamara from Inchbrae, and Sheena from Berrybank.



Have a big heart

Alison Ellis joined Cornerstone in September 2020. She currently works as a Relief Worker supporting 11 people in Crudenlea.

Before coming to social care Alison was a full-time mum to her now three-year-old son. When her son started going to a childminder, Alison decided to make a career change. **"It was time for me to get back to work but I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I scrolled the internet trying to find something and found the ad for the job with Cornerstone. It made me smile reading it and I just knew this was the career path I wanted to go down."**

Alison thoroughly enjoys her job, and says **"My favourite part of my role is by far getting to see the people we support happy from some of the simplest things in life. Getting to experience new things with them and helping them to be independent."**

There are a lot of misconceptions about working in care, for Alison the biggest misconception is that it's easy work. **"Working in care you have to be prepared to work hard and most importantly you have to have a big heart and truly care about the people you support to be in this type of job."**

Working in social care, it's rare that two days are the same but Alison told us a little bit about what a typical day might be like. **"It's always busy in Crudenlea—we have no problem getting our daily steps in! There is always a bit of fun and a dash of stress but I would not change it for the world!"**

Alison and her team are currently on the lookout for new colleagues to join them. If you'd love a job where you can make a difference and would like to be considered, we'd love to hear from you. [Click on our vacancy link here.](#)

Ayrshire

Michele Dunn new service lead

The Ayrshire Team have recently appointed a new Service Lead! **Michele Dunn** will be taking over the supported accommodation models at Bessie Dunlop Court and Castlecraigs Court. **The Ayrshire team would like to say a very warm welcome to Michele!**



Consultation group



Sandra, Bobby, Robbie and Carly at the first consultation group meeting

In August the Ayrshire Branch recently launched a consultation group for the people we support. **The group has a representative from each of the Ayrshire services; Housing Support, Community Support, Shared Lives, Castlecraigs Court and Bessie Dunlop Court.**

The group has agreed to meet every two months and rotate the chair within the group. The purpose of the group is for the people we support to feedback on the support they are receiving from Cornerstone. And Branch Leader Carly Nesvat also reviews any documents that the Ayrshire branch are devising such as communication tools/surveys. Additionally the group will plan events within the branch to bring everyone together and form friendships.

The first meeting of the group went well—Bobby was keen to volunteer to chair the next meeting and tell everyone that tea and biscuits will be available!

The group discussed the impact Cornerstone has made on the lives of the people we support. Bobby shared, **'I knew my staff before I moved to my new home which was such a surprise!'**

Robbie was also keen to tell us, **'I went to Craig Tara for my first holiday on my own without my family.'**

We look forward to seeing how the group develops and the impact they have in the coming months!

In memory of Ruth

Colleagues from the Ladeside service in Ayrshire recently lost a much-loved individual within the Ayrshire Branch, Ruth Whiteman.

Branch Leader, Carly Nesvat shared; **“Ruth was a social butterfly who loved being around others listening to any news or gossip that was going on. She loved music and concerts and had requested a ‘rave’ after her funeral which summed up her personality. Her support team have booked tickets to see George Ezra as a tribute to her. Ruth’s team recently took her on holiday with her friend Nina as she wanted to experience being in a hot tub and her team were able to make this a reality.”**

“I would like to say a huge thank you to the team who supported Ruth during a period of ill health and were with her when she passed away. The staff team went above and beyond in supporting Ruth over the years and made a significant impact on her life and we want to take this moment to say a huge thank you for all of your care and dedication.”



Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian

Two “very good” gradings

Cornerstone’s Forrest Walk care home service in Uphall, West Lothian has recently welcomed the results of an unannounced visit from the Care Inspectorate, which took place on the 10th and 11th of March 2022.

Forrest Walk in Uphall is a home that provides care and support to adults with physical and/or sensory disabilities. It also provides two short break/respite places in the same building.

The inspection evaluated two key aspects of the service; **“how well does the service support people’s wellbeing?”** and **“how good is the service’s leadership?”** Both aspects were awarded **a grade 5—very good.**

In awarding the two grade fives the Care Inspectorate noted, **“Care was delivered in a personalised way. Staff were knowledgeable about people’s needs and preferences. Support was provided in a warm and caring manner. Staff engaged with people at every opportunity and people showed pleasure from these interactions.”**

Additionally the Care Inspectorate praised the leadership of the service and highlighted its strengths in supporting positive outcomes for the people they support. **“Family members and visiting professionals said they knew the management team well and most felt confident speaking to them about people’s care needs.”**

As part of the inspection, the Care Inspectorate heard from staff and the people supported by the service who wanted to share their experience.

The people supported in Forrest Walk commented, **“the staff are really nice,”** and **“they are fantastic!”**

The Care Inspectorate provided an overall summary of the inspection, **“People looked happy and healthy. Staff were warm and caring and the care was personalised.”**

Marrianna Nelson, Service Leader, expressed her pride in the report and outlined some next steps for future inspections.



“The past few years have been difficult for everyone due to the impact of COVID restrictions. Our focus was on making sure the people we support were looked after by trying to maintain the high standards we had before COVID. When we got the two grade 5s back I was absolutely delighted. The grades really solidified the fact that we did our absolute best.

“During the pandemic it was difficult as we were restricted because of COVID and not being able to get people out. We had been trying to do meaningful activities indoors whilst still adhering to restrictions and this was reflected in the report. This year we want to try and plan more outdoor activities and get the people we support integrated back into the community again.

“I think once we get more activities organised as things start to open up, we’ll be able to aim for grade sixes in the next report!”

You can read the full report [here](#).

Sean joins the bowling club

Sean is a person we support from Dundee who regularly attends outdoor bowling sessions at Balgay Bowling Club. This year Sean, with the help of Support Practitioner, Bruce set some goals for himself. His goals were; to play more bowls, improve his bowling skills, meet new people and build friendships.

While attending the club in May, Bruce was approached by Darren, one of Sean's coaches and told about a new bowling club.

The new bowling club was being run by Darren and was taking place in Balerno. This was an excellent opportunity for Sean and his support team to join and play a few times a week.

Bruce spoke to Sean about the opportunity and Sean was happy to try bowling at Balerno where he signed up for a year's membership. Joining Balerno meant Sean would have more time to play bowls throughout the outdoor season.

Darren gave Sean and Bruce an induction of the club, showing them all the facilities and making sure they knew the opening times.

Sean now plays once a week with staff members or fellow players at the club. Sean already knew one of the players at Balerno as they also play at Balgay which meant Sean felt more at ease coming to the club.



Bruce, Sean's Support Practitioner commented, **"By joining the Balerno Bowling Club not only has Sean improved his outdoor bowling skills but he has more interaction with fellow players that Sean hasn't met before. Sean has already mentioned to staff he would like to renew his membership next year as he is enjoying himself that much!"**

Sponsored walk

Back in August, **the Community Support team in Dundee** held a sponsored walk and picnic at Dudhope Castle.

The group hosted a cake sale and set up a tombola which proved to be irresistible for those looking for a prize. **They managed to raise a fantastic £154 which will go towards activities and the disco fund for the people we support.**



Catherine and Chelsea getting ready for the sponsored walk and picnic in Dundee.

Andrew celebrates his 38th birthday in the Canaries



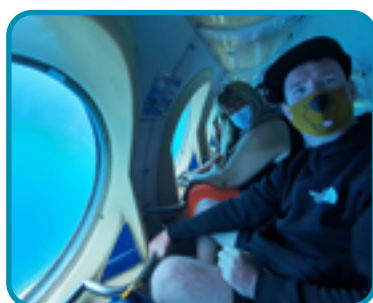
Andrew celebrated his latest birthday in the gorgeous Lanzarote sunshine as he jetted off to **Costa Tegui**, staying in a classic Canarias villa with a communal pool.

On the day of his birthday, the group including **Derek and Linda from his support team** took in some deep underwater exploration on a submarine, suitably followed by a Chinese meal for tea.

The next day came the water park—**Andrew braved the freezing cold water to go down the highest slide in the park.**

The group also spent some quality time abroad shopping around the town centre and took in the stunning views around the coastline. Andrew enjoyed singing at the karaoke and even spent time learning some Spanish words.

Incredible!



Blackwood Court

Elaine has been supported in Dundee's Blackwood Court service for twelve years, staying with one other resident Gemma. Previously, Elaine had been cared for at home by her parents, Christine and Alex.

Whilst moving Elaine from home to a 24/7 caring facility was a difficult decision, Christine and Alex feel it's made a really positive difference to Elaine's life. Christine described her feelings during the process. **"It was a hugely difficult thing to allow somebody else to take over the care of our daughter, but we are so happy with what's going on at Cornerstone and the support is amazing, you just have to go into the house to see that."**

Since Elaine moved to Blackwood Court Christine and Alex have found more time to spend with Elaine doing fun activities. Alex said, **"we don't have to deal with the day-to-day things. We can plan more activities together because we've got more time. We can give more time to her."**

Although Elaine no longer lives with Christine and Alex, they look forward to Sundays with Elaine when she comes to their house for lunch. They often have Elaine's brother and sister, Mark and Kirsty, and other family members join them.

Additionally, Alex and Christine are in contact with Elaine daily through conversations on the phone or photo and video messages sent through Elaine's support staff. Christine explains, **"they'll always pass on anything that's going on for Elaine, regardless of what it is. That's hugely important to us. We have a whole family group chat that every so often we'll ping these posts to so they can all see what Elaine gets up to as well."**



Elaine relaxing in Blackwood Court.

Often support staff (with Elaine, Christine and Alex's consent) also share pictures of the amazing things Elaine gets up to on the Cornerstone Dundee, Perth and West Lothian Facebook page.

Alex and Christine explained the wide range of activities the staff would find for Elaine and Gemma to do before COVID. Support staff would take them shopping, on day trips to Glencoe, swimming and even more daring activities like abseiling. Elaine was even supported to ride in a pony cart along Broughty Ferry Beach with Pony Access, a service that specialises in providing horse rides to wheelchair users.

Elaine also goes to concerts with staff and recently she has gone to a 90's concert, as she is a huge music lover. **"Staff try to give Elaine so many opportunities and we and Elaine really appreciate that."**

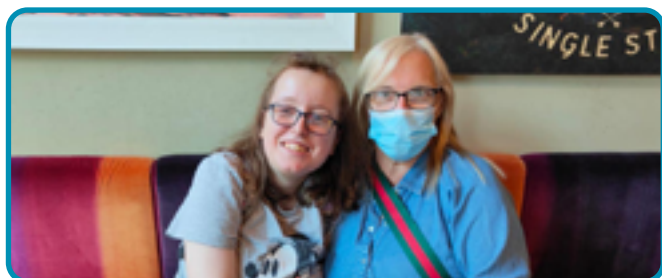
"As I say we can't thank the team enough, you know, because they do go out their way in caring for Elaine and making sure she's got such a full life."

Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire

Dreamboats and Petticoats

The Glasgow Day Activities group recently had a day out for the people we support who go to the day support group. A great time was had by all!

Service Manager, Sharon Irvine explained. **"Firstly they went for a lunch together at Walkabout and then off to the Kings Theatre to see Dreamboats and Petticoats where they all had fun singing and dancing together. A big thank you to the managers and staff who made this possible and ensured everyone had a fun day!"**



From top left clockwise: Matthew and Frankie, Ashleigh, John with colleagues Carole-Ann Lapping and Emily Hood, and Debbie and Support Practitioner Tracey.



Amy's accessible technology

Amy is registered blind and uses different types of technology to assist her during the day.

She has two Alexas—one in her bedroom and another in the living room. These allow her to communicate with staff when they are in the office—Amy just has to ask Alexa to phone Cornerstone and she'll be able to get in contact with a member of staff.

"My iPad links up to my Alexa too," Amy explained. "Staff will put the rotas in my iPad calendar and Alexa will tell me who is on when."

This feature is particularly helpful as it provides Amy with a calendar that can be easily accessed and updated. Before being supported by Cornerstone Amy had used a braille to braille out rotas, which was time-consuming as Amy detailed;

"Because so many shifts were changing it was difficult to braille it all the time. Every time something changed I had to use a new sheet of paper."

Using the calendar function, on her iPad and Alexa, allows Amy to quickly and easily keep track of her schedule and various appointments and activities. Amy regularly attends physio and hydrotherapy as well as maintaining a busy social life. She enjoys concerts and bowling and has recently started attending bingo with Support Practitioner, Susan.



Amy with her emergency wristband, iPad, and Alexa.

Assistive technology also ensures Amy can contact help in an emergency. Whenever Amy is alone she puts on a wristband that she can press if she has a fall and is out of reach of an Alexa. The wristband is linked to a support centre and if Amy pressed the band, the support centre would alert Cornerstone staff via the service phone.

Technology is not just used for scheduling and emergencies, however, but to assist Amy in her leisure time. Amy uses the Alexa to hear the news, check the weather and listen to audiobooks and she uses the iPad to Face Time with her brother in Australia and her parents when they go to Portugal.

Additionally, Amy uses adaptive technology on her laptop. The program JAWS reads out each letter as she types, which gives her access to the internet.

Moray

If they're dancing then I'm dancing!

Charlie Kelman is a Support Practitioner who recently became a permanent member of the **Birchview team in Elgin** after completing a placement with them on his college course.

"I studied my NC6 in Health and Social care, then I did my HNC in social services and part of the course was to complete a placement for my SVQ. I got a choice between two care homes and picked Birchview."

The first year of Charlie's course mostly focused on the theories of care which required lots of coursework. When he started his placement in Birchview he really valued being able to put that theory into practice, getting to understand what people need and how best to support them.

"There are so many different aspects to providing care to someone and you don't fully realise that until you are actually in the role."

Charlie enjoyed the placement so much he applied firstly as a relief worker which allowed him to continue his college course while working at Birchview. Then he became a permanent member of the team last year.

Birchview is a respite care service. They support a variety of people who are often permanently living at home, being supported by family members. The service provides temporary care for the people we support, whilst allowing unpaid carers a bit of respite.

"The care people receive is very important—but sometimes the people we support need a break or a change and unpaid carers need a break too. Sometimes the parents of the people we support aren't able to take them out so we can arrange to take them on trips or even just spend time with them out of the house."



Charlie with Bruce, one of the people he supports

Charlie's favourite part about his role is spending time with the people he supports. **"If they are up dancing then I'm up dancing with them, and I'm always singing with them. The best part of my job is knowing they are happy and that I know I've done my job."**

The team environment within Birchview adds to Charlie's enjoyment. **"There is something special about the Birchview team, everyone is so supportive and helpful. Someone is always there to help."**

Charlie would encourage anyone considering a role in care to apply. While care is often seen as a predominantly female role, Charlie highlights the importance of having support practitioners of all genders. **"For a lot of the guys we support, having me and other male support practitioners in the service is nice for them. They value that male presence the same way the women we support value a female presence. The team work really well together, playing to our collective strengths and offering the people we support plenty of variety and choice."**

Paul's new home

After moving from a care home in Deanston, **Paul** is now settling well into his own home.

Paul requires 24-hour care and before transitioning into his current home he had been in a care home with other residents and spent most of the time in his bedroom. Since moving to his own home, where he is supported by his support team, Paul is able to have a lot more freedom.

Support Practitioner, Pamela explained, **"There has been a whole big difference in Paul since he came out of the care home and moved in (to his current home). In the care home he was in his room all day so having his own space means he gets the run of the whole house. He can be in the living room watching TV, listening to music, chatting to staff. He has a lot more freedom now and can ask for what he wants such as snacks, drinks and music and staff are able to support him based on his choices."**

Since moving to his own home Paul has also been developing independent skills. He has been helping to take his laundry to the washing machine, assisting his support team to hang washing on the washing line, finding his shoes and putting them on with the support of a staff member to tie his laces. He is also able to open his car door, sit and fasten his seatbelt by himself.

While Paul loves car rides with staff and watching the world go by out the window, he gets anxious when he leaves the space of the car. Thanks to the support of his staff Paul can now come out of the car and do short walks. Pamela explained the significance of this step.



"For someone who rarely went out for a walk, this transition of being able to walk for 5–10 minutes is massive."

Paul is happy and healthy in his new home. He enjoys car rides, playing with a ball in the house, and he loves to watch TV, especially The Singing Kettle and listening to any music.



Frank's growing garden

Frank's support service has just recently been set up in Cumbernauld and he has settled really well with his regular support team. Frank is a keen gardener having once had a gardening job, so he has been delighted to get out and about to work in his garden this summer, with the enthusiastic assistance of his staff team. He has been working on his rockery and the plan is to have lots of colourful flowers in bloom. Great job Frank!



Kenny paints Barcelona

Kenny's sister lives in Barcelona and Kenny has sadly not been able to visit her over the last few years due to COVID. Kenny decided to paint Barcelona at his art class and what an amazing job he has done! Kenny is hopeful he can get over to the sunshine soon!



Martin's own flat

Martin moved into his own flat in Airdrie on the 1st June 2022. He has settled in well and gets along with his support team and the local residents. He enjoys attending a drama group every Thursday at Summerlee Heritage Centre and enjoys interacting with his friends and the All Star staff. He likes watching YouTube and is an avid fan of anything sports related, especially WWE, he also likes Tom & Jerry, Garfield and Family Guy's cartoons.



Blackpool Adventures!

Michael recently went on a trip to Blackpool supported by Cornerstone. While he was there he enjoyed going to the Pleasure Beach and he even bumped into a couple of famous faces in Madame Tussauds.

Thomas went to Blackpool in June, he had a great time in the 80's and 90's themed gaming arcade, and won enough tickets to fill a suitcase home! He also visited the trams and most importantly met Scott Brown and the Fleetwood Town coaching team.



Collecting donations

Michelle and Mairead were collecting donations from Tesco in Bellshill that we were then able to use as raffle prizes at the North Lanarkshire Summer Ball! Great job ladies!



Craig's 26th birthday and Helensburgh trip

Craig has had a fun-filled couple of months!

Recently he celebrated his 26th birthday while on holiday! He spent time with his family at their caravan and managed to go on the Jacobite train which is one of his absolute favourite activities! Craig told his staff team all about his holiday and can't wait to do it again!

Craig loves trains so he was over the moon when in July he got the train to Helensburgh and back. He enjoyed his lunch by the seafront and had his favourite biscuit in one of the cafés.

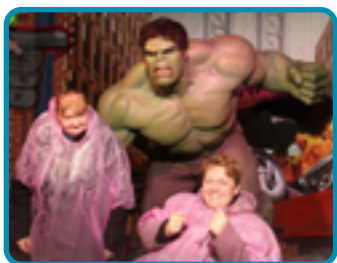


Wendy's cinema trip to see Elvis

Wendy had seen the Elvis movie advertised on the television, and as his No.1 fan said she would like to see the movie. She really enjoyed the film and the music. However, she did not know the actor who played Elvis and said **"there can only be one Elvis!"**

Wendy also likes to dine out and to go to new places with new menus where she can enjoy deciding what she would like to eat. After the movie, Wendy decided to have a lovely dinner at Frankie & Benny's restaurant!

North Lanarkshire Supported Living



An illuminating trip to Blackpool

In September two of our Cornerstone colleagues, Amanda and Gemma organised a wonderful trip to Blackpool with ten of the people they support. They went to visit all the main attractions Blackpool had to offer. **They watched the famous illuminations lighting up the night sky, saw dancers in the Tower Ballroom and visited Madame Tussauds infamous waxworks** where they captured photos of the people they support posing with their favourite celebrities.

Some of the people we support also braved the glass floor on top of the tower and had a trip to hear scary stories in the Blackpool dungeons.

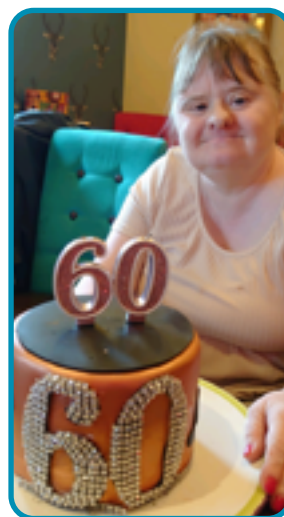
Support Practitioner Amanda commented, **"I've never laughed as much in my life—a fantastic holiday with superb company"**

Everyone had so much fun that they are already planning next year's trip!



Sunshine on the beach!

This summer Christine spent some time soaking up the sun on the beach when **she visited Ayr with Support Practitioner, Trisha**. Christine often visits the beach when the weather is good, it's one of her favourite days out and she loves paddling in the water.



Happy 60th birthday Christine!

Christine celebrated her 60th birthday this year with a great party attended by friends, family and Cornerstone colleagues. On the day of her actual birthday, **she went for lunch with Stephen and Liam and Cornerstone staff**—and made sure to take her birthday cake with her!



Scott's triumphant Kiltwalk

Recently Scott was supported by his staff team to participate in the **Edinburgh Kiltwalk** to raise money for Cornerstone.

Scott completed the Glasgow Kiltwalk last year and was excited when the opportunity came around again as he loves to keep active. He walked the 'wee wander'—a 4.1 mile walk around Edinburgh and was very proud to receive a medal when he crossed the finish line.

His Kiltwalk efforts raised £20 for Cornerstone which will go towards helping the people we support. In addition, the Hunter Foundation boosts money raised by adding 50%, bringing Scott's final total to £30!

Well done Scott!

World Book Day



Aynsleigh celebrated World Book Lovers Day by showing off a couple of her favourite books, *Dragon Loves Penguin* and *Betsy Buglove Saves the Bees!*

Jamie's upcoming caravan trip



Jamie and his support team have made amazing progress over the last couple of months, reintroducing different activities and socialising with his peers after a long period of getting back into routines after lockdown and changing restrictions. He now has access to visit a caravan park where he will enjoy a short break this year which is something he has never had the opportunity to do in the past.

With the right support to build his confidence, Jamie looks sure to be heading in the right direction and ensuring the trip is a great success.

Scottish Borders

Ian adds a string to his bow

Before the pandemic **Ian** used to go to the local horse farm and to the radio station once a week but these hobbies stopped because of COVID restrictions. Ian also used to have a part-time job but with COVID was made redundant.

Losing these activities was challenging for Ian but recently he has added a new string to his bow of exciting hobbies—archery.

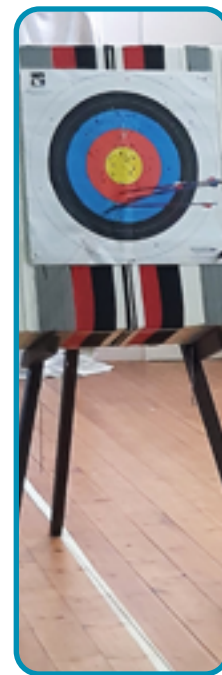
Ian's neighbour has set up an archery club to teach others how to shoot a bow and arrow. So far Ian has been supported to go to the club three times now and is loving it.

Support Practitioner Carole commented. **"He is thoroughly enjoying it. Ian's got good upper body strength and he's not missed a target yet! He's doing really well, I'm really impressed. I stand back and let him do as much as possible by himself—he gets a lot from it."**

In addition to firing arrows, he is also learning about the health and safety of archery. Ian sits behind the line to shoot and learns all about different aspects of the bow and how to string it correctly. He has learnt that he is "left eyed" which means even though he is right handed he shoots the bow best with his left arm.

Ian has been making such good progress with archery he is now able to shoot the target at a similar range to people who have been doing archery for a while. Carole explained, **"when he first started archery the target was ten feet away and now it's at the other end of the room!"**

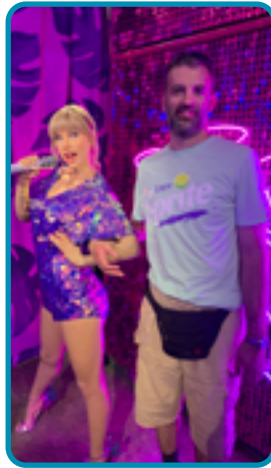
Aside from it being a lot of fun and a great way of exercising his muscles, the social aspect of archery is another great benefit for Ian. **"He is engaging with others in the community and getting to know and interact with people he wouldn't normally get to interact with. They are all pretty friendly and always help each other out."**



Ian explained what he enjoys the most about going to archery. **"I think the whole thing. Meeting new people and learning a new skill."**

Well done Ian!

Galashiels trip to London



Malcolm and James took a trip to London to see the sights **with Support Practitioners Connor and Richard**. They stayed in a hotel with amazing breakfasts, took the hop on, hop off bus and boat to see various sights and hear about the history of London.

Some highlights of the trip include; the Sea Life Centre, the British Museum and Madam Tussauds. Much enjoyment was had by all!

Common riding



From top left clockwise: Selkirk Standard Bearers, The Attendants and Mattie, Charlotte and Faye, Common Riding's 'Braw Lad and Lassie, John and Abbie, with Mattie and Charlotte, and Michael.

During the festive period of the traditional Scottish Borders Common Riding, the Borders day support building played host to a visit from Common Riding's VIPs the 'Braw Lad and Lassie', **John Turnbull and Abbie Hood**. Everyone had been hard at work creating banners, flags and badges to show John and Abbie.

Then a second special treat was arranged with a visit from the **Selkirk Standard Bearer, Adam Nichol and his attendants** —**Conall Fairbairn, Thomas Bell, Fraser Easson and Thomas Stanners**. We would like to thank them for taking the time out of their busy schedule to visit us.

Fire safety and awareness day

We were very pleased to host **Amber Watch from The Scottish Borders Fire and Rescue** who gave us a demonstration of their skills at the Cornerstone Day & Vocational Centre. The fire fighters let everyone have a good look at the engine, rescued their dummy from the roof and spoke to us about fire safety. We would like to thank Amber Watch for taking the time to give the demonstration.



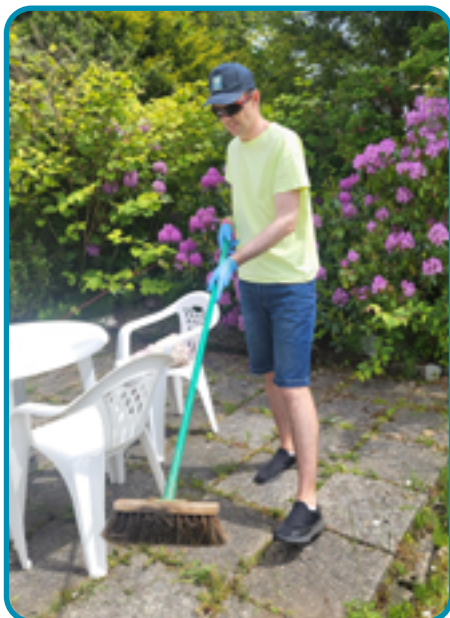
West Dunbartonshire, and Argyll & Bute

Jigsaw jaunts

The children and young people supported by Jigsaw have had a wonderful summer! They visited [Dynamic Earth and the Science Centre](#), enjoyed cooking, shopping, pizza and movie nights, science projects, puppet-making, glass painting and re-decorating the hall window! They visited [Garelochhead fire station](#), took part in a Water Babies sensory dance class, did lots of gardening and participated in our very own Commonwealth games as well as some bowling and horse riding! [Come Dine with Jigsaw](#) was great fun, and everyone loved the visit from gorgeous [Therapet Tallie](#)! Phew. What an exciting summer!



From top left clockwise: Sean at the park, Garlochhead fire station visit, Therapet Tallie getting to know the gang, dinosaurs in Helensburgh, Amber eyeing up some blueberry trifle, Ava making a smoothie, Matty helping out with the gardening, and fun at the Science Centre.





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