

Cornerstone News

All the most recent news from across Cornerstone

July 2021

In this issue:

Launching Cornerstone TV!

40 Miles for 40 Years

Be the best you can be!

Appreciating colleagues

**Scottish Learning Disability Week
and more!**



**Providing care
and support in
your community**



Message from our Chief Executive, Hazel Brown

With the rollout of the vaccination programme and a continued cautious approach, I like many others am hoping that we may be able to slowly emerge from the shadow of COVID-19 after what I think must be one of the toughest years any of us have ever experienced. At times it has felt overwhelming, particularly when it has seemed that things were improving only for that shadow to reappear and restrictions reinstated. But as we try to move towards a 'new normal' it feels like the right time to reflect on our experiences of the last 16 months and the thing that stands out to me the most is just how resilient Cornerstone has been. And when I say Cornerstone I mean all of our colleagues across the organisation; the people we support (who have been amazing!), their family and friends and the many people who have supported us.

Despite how tough things have been at times people have really stepped up; it has brought out the best in people and demonstrated how important our values truly are. It has been a real joy to hear where colleagues have gone above and beyond and I've particularly enjoyed seeing so many positive stories on social media of people being creative and having fun,



celebrating birthdays, baking cakes, enjoying dance parties. This has been so important to me as I've been unable to get out and about to visit people across the organisation and I've sincerely missed this.

So I think that when we look back and reflect on all that has happened I think we should all be extremely proud of how we've coped. Things won't ever be quite the same again, and we will continue to guard against complacency, but if we all use what we have learnt about ourselves, our resilience, our adaptability, our experience then this can be a positive thing, something we can grow from and be an even better version of what we were before.

As I've said before, I can't tell you how proud I am to be part of such a great organisation, one that truly puts the people we support at the heart of everything we do, that has done everything, and will continue to do everything, it can to keep them safe and happy during the most difficult of times.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. It is a real celebration of the great work that has taken place over the last 16 months and is true testament to the resilience, commitment and positive relationships enjoyed by our colleagues, the people we support and their families.

Thank you so much to all of you, you've been outstanding!

Hazel Brown,
Chief Executive

Launching Cornerstone TV!



We know the people we support here at Cornerstone have really missed getting out and about in their local communities, seeing friends and family, and taking part in the activities and interests that they love most. It has been particularly hard for those who have been most vulnerable to Coronavirus and have had to shield over the last year. Some people we support have had little to no interactions with anyone other than their support team or have had to isolate in their bedrooms for many months which has been a frustrating, and lonely experience for them, despite our best efforts.

Although restrictions are beginning to ease across Scotland, we know that these activities in the community will not return overnight, and that if new strains of COVID-19 emerge this might mean further temporary restrictions for people that we support in the future.

To combat social isolation and loneliness for people we support we'd like to inject a bit of fun back into everyone's lives by launching our very own TV channel: Cornerstone TV! Cornerstone TV will run a variety of pre-recorded and live programmes each week, at different times of the day, that the people we support can tune into. Suggested activities include; easy to understand versions of news, including updates about the easing of restrictions, sign-along Makaton singing, wellbeing hours with the opportunity to learn tai chi, yoga, baking lessons, dance classes, arts and crafts, and so much more!

Do you have digital skills, a talent for creative pursuits like music, arts or cooking, or ideas that you could share with us to make an exciting, short programme for Cornerstone TV? Please get in contact with one of our Cornerstone TV Co-ordinators Adele Mackie (adele.mackie@cornerstone.org.uk) or David Neill (david.neill@cornerstone.org.uk).

We are grateful to the Scottish Government's Recovering Communities Fund for £18,474 to purchase technology for those most isolated at Cornerstone to take part in these virtual activities.

We asked our 40 Miles for 40 Years of Care supporters to tell us what their birthday wish for Cornerstone is in 2021.



40 Miles for 40 Years

In February this year, we called on the local community to get behind our newest initiative to celebrate our 40th birthday.

During the last 40 years, Cornerstone has been a pioneer; changing the face of the care sector through adopting and promoting a person-centred approach whilst also championing the belief that everyone should be given the opportunity to play an active part in their own community.

Due to COVID-19, we were unable to celebrate our 40th anniversary as we would have hoped, so instead we came up with an exciting challenge where members of the local community were asked to join us in the last month of our 40th year to take part in our '40 Miles for 40 Years of Care' challenge.

Participants were challenged to run, walk, cycle or even spacehop 40 miles in their local area during February and raise £100 each for Cornerstone.

As a social care charity, Cornerstone has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Sadly, a number of services have had to close and increased pressure was felt by carers and family members across the country. Support from the local community was generated to help keep the people we support connected to the people, hobbies and interests that they care about during lockdown, and beyond.

Louise Baxter, founding trustee and wife of Cornerstone's late founder, Nick Baxter, joined in the call to the local community;

"Every year, since 1980, has been a milestone in Cornerstone's journey, taking the charity from nothing to supporting 3,000 people with disabilities across Scotland. Your challenge whether it's walking, cycling or running helps to ensure Cornerstone will be there for the next 40 years. Every single pound that you raise will be expressed in Cornerstone's work to promote human dignity, lust for life, enjoyment and a better quality of life for people with disabilities and their families."

The '40 Miles for 40 Years of Care' fundraising challenge finished at the end of February and we were overwhelmed by the support! 79 of our amazing supporters raised over £11,186 and collectively walked, ran, cycled or boogied more than 1,940 miles. Come rain, snow, ice and some sunshine, Team Cornerstone has really gone the extra mile.

Their support means that Cornerstone can continue to keep the people we support connected to the hobbies, interests and people they love most during lockdown! Thank you.

If you would like to make a donation to Cornerstone please visit
www.cornerstone.org.uk/donate

The response to our recent 'Be the best you can be' Modern Apprenticeship campaign was very encouraging, with more colleagues than ever signing up to work towards a sector-recognised qualification in health and social care. Open to young people aged 18-29 years, the scheme also gained attention from prospective employees, interested in developing their career with Cornerstone.



Sheila Gordon, Cornerstone's Training Academy Lead explains, "A Modern Apprenticeship is an excellent route for young people to pursue and develop a career in health and social care. It allows colleagues to invest in their own continuous learning and development, whilst keeping up to date with the latest skills, techniques and regulations. Importantly it also allows young people to convert their on-the-job, practical experience into a formal, recognised and required qualification".

Since the scheme was launched in 2011, we have trained a total of 169 Modern Apprenticeships, with a further 16 colleagues currently working towards their qualification.

Sheila adds, "Modern Apprenticeships are a key investment Cornerstone chooses to make in our workforce; an investment that is also recognised by our Investors in Young People award. We provide full support through our employed team of trained assessors, giving our Modern Apprenticeships full access to facilitated study sessions, up-to-date guidance and regular reviews and check-ins".

Abbie Wood, 20, is a support worker with one of Cornerstone's community support teams. She started her Modern Apprenticeship in August 2020 and says, "Doing the Modern Apprenticeship has helped me in many ways. It's helped me regain skills that I forgot I had, and it's boosted my confidence massively. I feel confident and am constantly developing new skills. Also, the help and support from my assessor has helped me believe in myself again!"



"The most rewarding thing about doing my Modern Apprenticeship is getting to speak about the amazing people I support, and how I have been able to help them throughout my time working with them. It has also given me better knowledge and skills to ensure I am delivering the best practice and care. I'm actually surprised by how much I enjoy doing my Modern Apprenticeship; I don't feel like it's a burden and I love the range of subjects there are to discuss in your assessments and I enjoyed doing lots of research and learning new things about health and social care.

"I would 100% recommend doing a Modern Apprenticeship to anyone. I would say to them to give it their all, learn as much as you can, and just simply enjoy it. It's the best thing I have done so far!"

Anyone who would like to note interest in future Modern Apprenticeship opportunities should contact recruitment@cornerstone.org.uk in the first instance.



Four and seven, forty seven!

Lockdown didn't stop the fun for Sarah from our Packman service in Buckie, who recently celebrated her 47th birthday! To mark the occasion, her support team, along with Sarah's family and friends, worked together to make a personalised 'happy birthday' video before Sarah made good use of her new phone to join her Cornerstone team and family for a socially distanced game of bingo - a firm favourite of Sarah's!

Ashleigh's serious reading

Ashleigh moved into Herries Road, Glasgow in September 2018. Prior to her move, Ashleigh had been learning to read, but due to budget cuts, the funding for this was stopped.

On arriving at Herries, Ashleigh's goal was always to learn to read, so her support team contacted multiple organisations and libraries to find a suitable class. They finally found one during lockdown and Ashleigh now enjoys her weekly one-to-one Zoom reading classes, free of charge, provided by the Woman's Library in Bridgeton, Glasgow.

Ashleigh is often heard to say, "Guess what my word of the week is!?", which has become a new game for her team. Because Ashleigh takes her reading very seriously, she lets her support team know she doesn't like to be disturbed during her class, so we haven't been able to take any pictures of her in action! Keep up the good work Ashleigh!

Appreciating colleagues

We took some time earlier in the year to mark National Employee Appreciation Day with colleagues. Our special thanks went to Angus McNicoll for joining the Zoom session and sharing his experience and reflections on the care Cornerstone's Keswick team in Dundee have provided for his daughter Heather.

Angus said, "It's been a difficult year, but I have to say that the carers at Keswick have pulled out all the stops possible to protect Heather. They went way beyond what I would have expected. Because of shielding, Heather ended up having to be shielded in her bedroom 24 hours a day for most of the last year. A small group of carers worked a system where they worked 12 hour shifts on their own in Heather's room to look after her, and



Angus

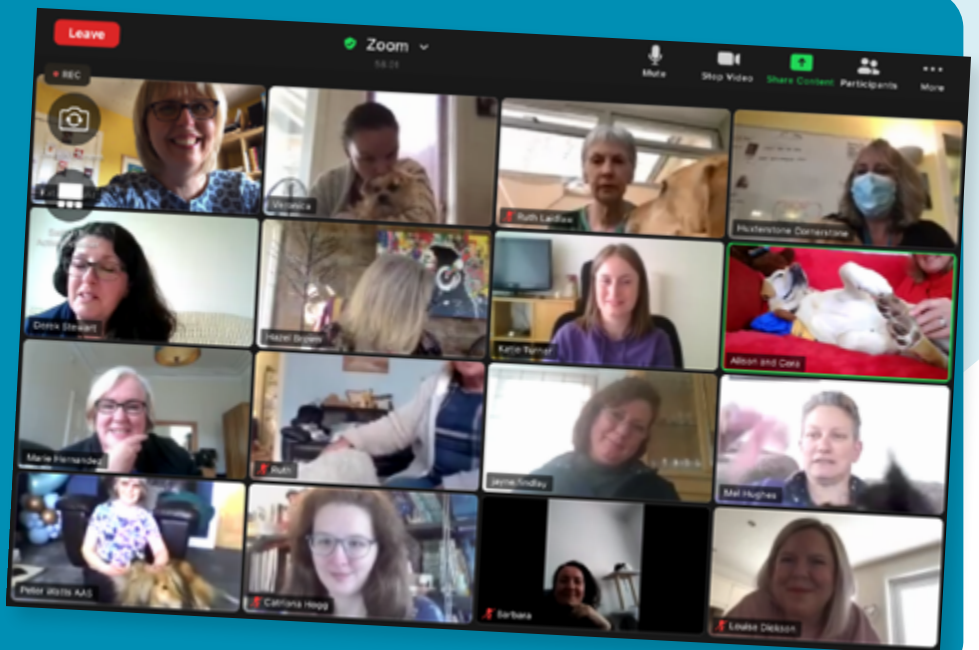
during that time they provided as much stimulation as possible. They were extremely creative in doing so! She actually had her own spa there, she had her own cinema, her own entertainment - they read books to her, they sang to her, they were mad, it was brilliant! She had manicures a lot, and they kept in communication with us, showing us videos of what she was doing, on her own Facebook page - and through the Cornerstone Facebook page, they were really, really good. I cannot fault what the carers have done for Heather.

"Thanks to the carers who've looked after Heather and looked after the person Heather shares a house with, Heather is still alive today, she's still doing extremely well. She actually seemed to enjoy her period of isolation in a room with carers, and we've actually learned through that experience too. There is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that light is shining bright thanks to the carers at Keswick, and I can't thank them enough".

The power of our pets

We were delighted to host a Zoom session with Canine Concern Scotland Trust recently and hear more about the work of Therapets. It was great to hear about the therapeutic benefits that these special pets can bring to the people we support, and how our services across Scotland could work together with the Trust in arranging visits. It was nice to see so many furry friends in attendance too!

Find out more at:
www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk



Cornerstone SDS

One of our Cornerstone Self-Directed Support (SDS) Advisors, Sue, has kindly shared her perspective of what it was like to support families and individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As an SDS Advisor, I provide guidance and information to people accessing social care in Aberdeenshire. I've worked with the Cornerstone SDS team for six years, and it's a fantastic job. While I'm classed as a key worker, my role mostly takes place 'behind the scenes' from home. I help people to understand their options and offer support to direct payment employers through their care package.

"During the pandemic, the scope of my role has changed

drastically, and I've supported direct payment employers through some very anxious and uncertain times. It's been a particularly challenging year for those who have had to make changes to their routine and care. Direct payment employers have required support with the retention of their carers and ensuring that care provided at home is safe and compliant with the ever-changing guidance. Additionally, our team has taken on the role of managing the distribution of personal protective equipment to employers and their personal assistants.

"Although the past 12-months has been stressful at times, I count myself lucky; I'm still working in a job that I enjoy, and I have had the chance to support families when it has been needed the most. The team at Cornerstone SDS has pulled together to continue delivering a first-class service. We have supported each other through some dark days, and I am sure we will come out the other side stronger than ever before."

Scottish Learning Disability Week



Scottish Learning Disability Week, hosted by the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD), ran 10th-16th May and shone the spotlight on the importance of relationships in the lives of people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

There are over 125,000 people in Scotland who have learning disabilities, so it's important to raise awareness of the issues and inequalities they face, and challenge ourselves to making Scotland a better, fairer, and more equal place for everyone. We know that getting out and socialising can sometimes be more difficult for people with learning disabilities. This can lead to fewer opportunities to meet people and form relationships – something we all should have an equal opportunity to do.

Each day of the awareness week hosted a different theme, and the branches shared related stories of the people we support online.

Monday was all about friendship – friends are important to all of us; they are with us through the good times and the tough times in our lives. For some people with learning disabilities it can be hard to meet new people without being supported to do so.

Janice and Lorna have become great friends at our Parkholme service in Moray. Recently they have been working together to look after caterpillars in their butterfly-making kit, excitedly watching them develop into butterflies!

Tuesday focused on sex, an important part of any intimate relationship with a partner, however, when it comes to the lives of people with learning disabilities sex can often feel like 'the last taboo'. During Scottish Learning Disability Week we highlighted the importance of sex education and talking about sex, relationships, and consent with adults with learning disabilities.

Wednesday looked at challenges in relationships. It isn't always easy for the people we support to deal with challenges in everyday relationships, no matter how big or small those challenges may be. Sometimes a little support can go a long way. It can help to maintain meaningful relationships when those we support are finding it hard to navigate the different challenges they may have with family, friends, professional or romantic relationships.

Our North Lanarkshire branch invited the people they support to join a call to talk about different scenarios in examples created by #LDWeekScot2021 for the Situationship Game (like the ones below!).

S You and your friend have decided to have a day out together...
You both want to do different things. You have a discussion and work out a way to do some of the things you want to do and some of the things they want to do.

S You and your friend are planning a day out together...
You both want to do different things. You have an argument and decide to cancel the day out.



Family relationships was **Thursday's** theme, and there was no better time to spotlight the work of our Shared Lives services. Similar to fostering, Shared Lives helps people aged 16 and over with disabilities to live with an approved carer. Shared Lives carers share their home, family, and community life with the person they are supporting, whilst providing them with the care they need in an inclusive and homely environment.

Iram has support needs and lives with one of our Shared Lives carers, Christine, who wanted to offer someone a loving, caring home. She says, "Iram is a very much-loved member of our family and really enjoys living with us".

Iram adds, "I like being part of a family I have tried living on my own and really didn't like it. Having a family is much better."

Scottish Learning Disability Week



Sarah and Ian

Romance was the theme of the day for **Friday**, and the SCLD's national 'How's Life?' survey of people with learning disabilities in Scotland revealed that there is a big gap between their experiences and those of the general population when it comes to having a romantic partner. Of those who responded to their survey, just five percent reported that they lived with a partner and just three percent said that they were married.

Lots of people with learning disabilities want to date and be in a relationship – but they need support to do so. They can face barriers to developing romantic relationships for various reasons.

"Being in a romantic relationship is just lovely!", says Sarah, one of the people we have supported in Moray over the past six years. Sarah has been with her partner Ian for the last three years, and they met in 2011 when he came in to the charity shop Sarah worked in. As Sarah says *"He picked up a book, but he got me as well as the extra bargain!"*

The happy couple enjoy going out for meals at Brewers Fayre on special occasions such as birthdays, and visiting each other's families.

Saturday: Socialising is an important way to get out there and to meet people, something that has been challenging of late! People with a learning disability have the right to a social life too, and it can help them to feel happier, included and valued. Our services across Scotland ensure that the people we support lead active, busy social lives with lots of different regular activities! As restrictions ease, check out what the people we support have been getting up to recently.

Chelsea and Charlotte from our Victoria service enjoyed a pub lunch with their support worker Brooke, while Gemma and Elaine braved the rain on adapted bikes with their support team. Ben, Scott and Jason, supported by our Perth Community Support service, played football and managed to score goals in the penalty shootout against their support team to win the 'Cornerstone Cup'!



Ben, Scott and Jason



Heather

Sunday was all about self-care! In order to have safe and healthy relationships with other people, we must first love ourselves. Self-care is a great way of looking after our mental, physical and emotional health, and Heather from our Dundee branch has been doing just that with the help of her support team! She enjoyed a relaxing evening with hair, face, and foot masks and reflexology all the while listening to relaxing reiki music and watching the sensory lights. The sensory room provides a calm space and is a great tool to give the people we support a way to work through their thoughts and emotions, in a low stress, fun environment.

Katie's story

Cornerstone Team Leader, Susan Reilly, has paid tribute to Katie, who was supported for over 21 years by Susan and her team at our Clydebank services.

Katie was born in 1962 and moved into the care of Cornerstone at our Ailsa Drive service when she was 36, where she began to flourish. She lived with three other supported women there, two of who came from the same place and moved into the service on the same day. Although very quiet to begin with, her personality began to shine through.

Although unable to communicate verbally, Katie always found ways of showing her feelings as well as her needs and wants through expressions and actions, and always with an infectious smile on her face! Constantly smiling and giggling, it was easy for those around her to see how happy she was. Despite her disability, Katie was very much a people person, and she loved nothing more than going out every day with her support team to visit the local shops and enjoy pub lunches where she could interact with people around her and people watch.

She also had no interest in footwear, and it was not uncommon for passers-by to hand over her discarded shoes and socks found in the street! Katie loved to go on holiday with her support team, and she enjoyed many exciting trips to places like Blackpool, Gran Canaria, and Majorca, and in particular Disneyland Paris!

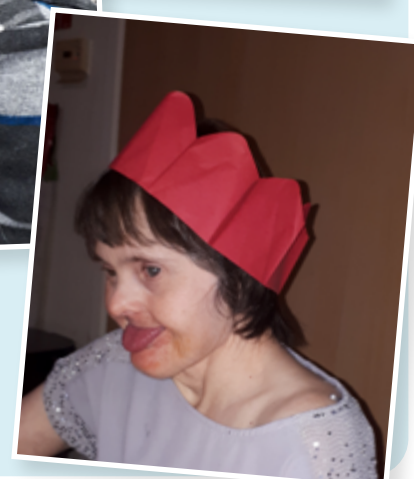
She loved a variety of music from country and western, to pop music, or rock 'n' roll, and was in her element when she could visit the theatre to enjoy a musical or pantomime where there was lots of singing. When coronavirus restrictions meant the theatres were closed, Katie was unfazed and enjoyed her music fix through musical Disney films and Dirty Dancing.

Katie sadly suffered from poor health during 2020. After a short stay in hospital, Katie was able to come home however 4 days later tested positive for COVID-19 in February 2021. Service Team Leader Susan Reilly and Fay Buchan both chose to isolate with Katie to ensure that she was given the utmost care and attention whilst she fought the virus. Other staff members Jennifer McIntyre and Sandra Killen also decided to work alternate sleepovers in the service to support the other three ladies to minimise risk of spreading the virus in the service. Sadly, Katie's health deteriorated, and she died on 16th February 2021.

Katie was supported to the end by Susan and Fay. Despite having no biological family, our support teams demonstrated the true values of Cornerstone by ensuring Katie felt loved and supported throughout her life, and particularly at the end. Susan explained, *"I was able to support Katie to the very end and I've always felt grateful for that. I've always had a passion for providing proper care to the people we support, and I'm so glad we were able to provide that for Katie who was a part of the Cornerstone family."*



Katie





Springhill Gardens celebrates 20 years

Cornerstone's Springhill Gardens service in Dundee celebrated its 20th anniversary on 28th May 2021 by throwing a party for the people they support and the staff. Special guests include Helen Mason and Richard Sweeney who have both been supported by the service since it opened in 2001, alongside Lynne McHugh, the support worker on shift the day the service opened its doors!

Springhill Gardens was the first Cornerstone housing support service to open in Dundee in 2001. Lynne McHugh, who is now a mentor at Cornerstone, explains, "During my 20 years with Cornerstone it has been a pleasure to work with the amazing people we support and seeing them all grow in knowledge, skills and confidence."

Helen and Richard were involved in helping to set up for the anniversary celebrations, choosing to buy balloons in Cornerstone colours blue and silver. Both enjoy very active lives and the service supports them to maintain their independence. Richard enjoys walking and playing dominoes with his support team and housemates, and regularly beats the staff at pool! He is also supported at the local allotment where he helps to maintain the garden.

Richard's mother, Edith Sweeney, commented on how the service has supported her and Richard through the years, "Richard originally came to Springhill Gardens from Strathmartine



Hospital, and it was the best thing I could have done for my son. Never had any worries and the staff have always done a marvellous job."

Helen enjoys going for meals and shopping with her family and is supported by Cornerstone to play Boccia where she has won various medals. She also enjoys being self-sufficient and helps her support team with cleaning and cooking.

Helen's brother Ian and sister-in-law Debbie were delighted to be able to attend the Springhill Gardens' celebrations too. They said, "We can't believe it's been 20 years since Helen moved into her home at Springhill, supported by Cornerstone. Helen has overcome so many hurdles, achieved so much and has grown in so many ways. Helen was so quiet and withdrawn previously but since arriving at Springhill her confidence has grown so much over the years and Helen has become much more independent. It's all thanks to Cornerstone staff and the work they have put in. Staff have always had Helen's best interests at heart and have supported her through some very difficult times, which we appreciate so much."



Bessie Dunlop Court

Cornerstone opens new housing support service in Ayrshire

Cornerstone was delighted to announce the opening of a new housing support service, 'Bessie Dunlop Court' in Dalry, in which the Ayrshire branch now provides tailored support and individualised packages of care to fifteen individuals with additional support needs.

Branch Leader, Carly Nesvat, commented on the new service, *"We are privileged to support the individuals who have moved into Bessie Dunlop Court. It's a really exciting time! The new service allows the people we support to transition to their own tenancies and develop an increased level of independence. Through working closely with our new tenants, as well as their families and carers, our skilled support workers will use a person-centred approach to help them set tailored goals, settle in quickly and thrive in their new homes."*

The new service at Bessie Dunlop Court is part of a £7.66million project to provide a total of 49 new, modern and energy efficient council homes at the site of former Watt Court, Dalry in North Ayrshire. The full development comprises a Sheltered Housing complex, amenity bungalows, as well as the Cornerstone-run supported accommodation.

Watch the tour of Bessie Dunlop Court here.



Heather

Heather has autism and is supported by our Perth Community Support service. Her dad Gordon kindly shared what our support has meant to Heather and her family.



"Thank you to Cornerstone for helping us through the difficult times we've had during lockdown. Heather was in an extremely difficult state just a few months into the lockdown period, with a lack of sleep and agitated behaviour that was very challenging and upsetting for us."

"The support with Cornerstone added some much-needed contact with the outside world and added some structure to her day while we were both working. They have been very flexible in dealing with Heather's varying moods of the day, never pushing against her will while still trying to keep her engaged with different activities."

"Heather now knows and trusts the Cornerstone team, and they continue to help her cope with the slow transition back to normality. I'm hoping the relationships Heather has built with the team will hold her in good stead for when we can get back to a good weekly routine at her normal day service provision, and Heather can enjoy some Cornerstone respite care to get a break from her parents!"



Lewis

#NeverMoreNeeded

Cornerstone was delighted to be chosen to take part in the recent **#NeverMoreNeeded** campaign launched by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). The campaign highlights the important lifeline offered by Cornerstone and other charities in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic. A special well done to our support worker Lewis Swanson who works at our Crudenlea service in Stonehaven for taking part in the film and a feature on the SCVO website!

Lewis shared his experience of working with the people we support through the pandemic, *"I work at Cornerstone's Crudenlea care home, where we have some people that are very able and need minimal support – things like reminding them to brush their teeth or helping them prepare breakfast – and others are a lot more care intensive so we'll have to help them out of bed and physically get them showered for example."*

"The pandemic has certainly made things more challenging. Some folks at the house really enjoyed it as they had that structure to the day, others missed being able to get one-to-one time with staff when others would normally go out to activity centres."

"We were allowed to take the people we support out, but we weren't allowed to take them inside places. So, we had to go to pubs and restaurants that had outside seating and of course, this all in November/December so it was freezing, but the fact that we could all get out helped."

"It can be very challenging, but at the same time it's very, very rewarding. The guys are really great to work with."

You can watch SCVO's **#NeverMoreNeeded** film here.



Currie's active lockdown

Before the pandemic, Currie had a sociable and active week. He loved going to different clubs, out for shopping, and meeting his twin brother for lunch.

With the ongoing restrictions, Currie has been resilient to the changes and has kept busy at home, although he can't wait for all the usual shops and cafes to open again!

Currie has enjoyed trying his hand at home baking, arts and crafts, playing bingo, and celebrating Cornerstone's 40th birthday with friends in North Lanarkshire. In better weather he has spent time looking after and enjoying his garden. Currie's support team have continued to support him to stay active by going for local walks, so he is fit and ready to get out and about again when restrictions ease.

Well done to Currie and everyone else who has adapted so well to the changes and challenges of the past year!



Shared Lives looks for more families in the Borders

Our new Shared Lives service in the Scottish Borders is looking for more families, couples or individuals to join a growing network that is making a huge difference to the lives of individuals with learning disabilities, mental health issues or other care needs.

Andrew Will, Project Leader for Shared Lives Borders explains, *"We have recently approved our first six amazing families, all of whom will be a real asset to the Shared Lives service, and we are now looking to recruit more. Becoming a Shared Lives carer can be such an enriching experience and we are actively looking for a range of people from diverse backgrounds and with a wide variety of life experiences."*

Andrew adds, *"For many people the last year has been challenging, disruptive and unsettling, with many re-evaluating their life priorities and considering a possible change of direction. We would encourage anyone looking for a truly rewarding life-change to seriously consider Shared Lives."*

Shared Lives is similar to fostering, helping people aged 16 and over with a wide range of disabilities, conditions and other support needs to live in their local community, by matching them with an approved carer. Carers share their home, family and community life with the person they are supporting, whilst providing them with the care they require in an inclusive and homely



Ian and Betty Falconer

environment. Every placement is unique, with the support provided being tailored to meet the individual needs of each person. This includes people with learning disabilities or mental health issues, older adults and also young people being supported through transitional services. Placements can be offered on a full-time, short break or interim basis.

One of the first couples to join the Shared Lives Borders service are Betty and Ian Falconer, from Newtown St Boswells. Betty explains, *"The whole experience of joining the Shared Lives service has been very rewarding and we were delighted to be approved as carers, providing a young man with a supportive and loving family home. The support and training offered by Cornerstone has been great and has given us a really good insight into our caring role. We covered lots of different aspects including the legal process, health and safety and adult support and protection, and also explored some of the challenges we might come across. There has always been someone there to help us. I would encourage anyone who can consider offering a vulnerable adult the opportunity*

to become part of your extended family in a caring, supportive and stable home, to get in touch!"

Rob McCulloch-Graham, Chief Officer, Scottish Borders Health & Social Care Partnership, said, *"We are delighted with the progress being made by Cornerstone with the Shared Lives Scheme. Shared Lives is an additional form of support that we can now provide to adults with a learning disability to enable them to live within the community as equal and valued members of society, with the first carers being part of a group of 25 delivering such support over the next two to three years. We look forward to continued excellent partnership working with Cornerstone and seeing the undoubted opportunities our new and subsequent carers will provide adults with a learning disability in the Borders."*

If you know anyone interested in becoming a Shared Lives carer please contact the team by emailing: sharedlivesborders@cornerstone.org.uk or calling 01896 808 750

Amazing art!

Gerard has a passion for all things creative – from collecting rock albums to making abstract art, and his latest project is certainly eye catching!

Over the past year, his team at Barfillan have helped Gerard create a wonderful underwater scene with lots of different sea creatures in his lounge. The team are incredibly proud of Gerard and the great strides he has been making.



Miles for Max

Max recently achieved an exceptional walking challenge called 'Miles for Max' in June to raise money for charity and express his gratitude to his care team in Perth. They smashed their target of £1,000 by nearly double and travelled more than 500 miles collectively, a huge achievement!

Despite his mobility issues and support needs, and with the help of his family and friends he challenged himself and his team to walk 400 miles collectively, to raise money for Cornerstone and PINNT. The challenge that Max set for himself was nothing short of extraordinary and came after a long illness which meant he had to relearn how to walk.

With lots of encouragement from his family and care team Max has now come full circle and has now gained almost full mobility and can now walk with a tri-walker.

Max is an inspiration to Cornerstone. Team member, Donna, said, *"It was a rollercoaster! Max survived where no human being would. He also taught us through his patience, resignation, and acceptance. His faith and acceptance of it all was a very humbling experience. He's a true hero whose life and example should be followed by all of us"*.



Max



My daughter, Ally

Ally is supported by Perth Community Support, and her mother Alison explains how Cornerstone's support became a lifeline during lockdown.

"My daughter Ally lives alone, has Downs Syndrome, and suffers from raised anxiety and stress partly due to a series of close family bereavements within a short period of time. Previously, she received ten hours of support from Cornerstone weekly, one hour per day at mealtimes, and three hours for meals, shopping, and housework. As she had a full social life, this was adequate at that time."

"During lockdown, and as the restrictions became stricter, Ally's activities were reduced until they ceased altogether. Ally became very down and much more anxious. She missed her friends and started lying in bed in the morning, sometimes till lunchtime. As a family, we tried to keep her busy, but it was a losing battle as we all work and she needed to see other people. I was at my wit's end as I could see Ally was regressing."

"The worry was also making me depressed so I got in touch with Ally's social worker to see if her support could be increased. I requested another 1.5 hours, five days per week so Ally would have

three hours support per day, every day. After funding was agreed, I phoned Claire Robertson (Team Leader at Perth CS) right away and I was so grateful that she could put extra support in place immediately. Cornerstone was very accommodating and flexible and was able to offer Ally extra support, five mornings per week, so Ally would be motivated to get up."

"The difference in my daughter is incredible. She goes for walks with her support team on good days and cooks, bakes, or does craftwork if the weather is cold and damp. Ally's anxiety has been very much lessened, and she is a whole lot happier. She has a smile on her face now and is much more upbeat. All the staff have been amazing with her and their enthusiasm has rubbed off. She very much looks forward to seeing them all and is much more motivated."

"Staff have always been very conducive to Ally's needs before, as well as during lockdown. They have been very careful not to heighten Ally's anxiety in any way as she can become worried very easily. They respond appropriately to any concerns I have about Ally and advise me immediately of any concerns they may have."

"I can honestly say that the extra support Ally has had during lockdown has had a significant positive impact on her and myself. It has been a lifeline."

Scott



Scott's lockdown wanders

Scott has kept himself very busy during the second lockdown with adventures out in Cumbernauld. He's wandered in the Glencryan Woods and walked all along the Antonine Wall, up to the top of Croy Hill, along Broadwood Reserve and around Fannyside Loch. Scott has also been staying connected to his religion by watching Abronhill Parish Churches live streamed services. Scott is a keen chef and has been participating in MyGyz online cooking class, where his favourites have been the new year steak pie, burgers and pizzas!



Christine's lockdown birthday



Christine has recently celebrated her birthday in lockdown for the second time. Happy Birthday Christine! Her team made sure she was still able to celebrate in style but still plan to make up for Christine's and many other's lockdown birthdays in the months to come (hopefully!). Christine has also enjoyed different activities at home such as baking, arts and crafts, and keeping fit by going for local walks when the weather allows.

Warm welcome for Jamie!

We want to wish a huge, warm welcome to Jamie, who joined North Lanarkshire Supported Living in February. It was a bit of a change for Jamie but he has settled in with his new team with ease and is coping well with ongoing restrictions. Well done to Jamie and his team!



Learn to drive with Cornerstone

Cornerstone was delighted to hear that support worker David recently passed his driving test on the first time through the Cornerstone driving lesson initiative! The scheme allows employees to receive funding for driving lessons and gives people like David, who works at our East Dunbartonshire services, the ability to drive the people we support when required. Well done David!



Tommy

Lockdown reflections

Routine, precious routine! Something we spend months planning - trialling, implementing, evaluating and adapting to find the perfect equilibrium of what is both manageable and realistic for the people we support. But what happens when you can't follow the routine? What happens when all of your efforts and plans are turned upside down?

2020 started without a hitch at Old School Place, North Aberdeenshire - the yearly holiday was booked; we had our weeks planned - walks daily, Snoozelen twice weekly, coffee mornings, Fiddle Club, Enable Club on Thursdays, Shopping Friday, maybe a spot of lunch out, a walk round the garden centre, always prioritising 'what would Tommy enjoy most?'. You see Tommy loves people, just being around others seems to be such a gift for him, watching everybody and nobody at the same time. He doesn't always want to join in but he loves to be there, to be a part of the action. We had worked hard to figure out a routine that allowed him both continuity and flexibility. ASDA is always open on a Friday, the perfect day for shopping. Enable Club is always running on a Thursday night, let's go, get a juice and have some fun! But what happens when they aren't? Where do you go when the party is over? We take for granted all of these little things, the continuity, the predictability and dependability of all our favourite services, forgetting how important these things are, until we don't have them.

The last sixteen months have gifted us with a few reminders though. They have reminded us that we are grateful; grateful for our health and the health of the ones we love,



grateful for the services that we hold so dear, and grateful for everyone doing their part to keep others safe, no matter how small. We have been reminded that we can adapt, change and overcome almost anything! We can adapt our routines; we can change the way we meet for Enable Club, live streams are in fact useful! We can swap that lunch out for a coastal drive and a picnic overlooking the sea. We can have just as much fun with arts and crafts, baking, jigsaws or colouring at home, and watching staff draw a 'dog' that looks like a horse. A mood light, ambient music and a comfy seat can't quite compare to the heated waterbed of Robertson Road, but it will do. We will make do.

Throughout the pandemic we have been reminded that we care. We care about each other, we care about others, we miss the company, we miss the conversations without masks and a two-metre distance, and we miss contact without barriers, but when the time comes for things to go back to normality, and it will eventually, we will be grateful to adapt, change and overcome once again; having the time of our lives doing so!

Easter fun!

The people we support at Bessie Dunlop Court enjoyed their first Easter in their new homes.



Borders community garden

During Scottish Learning Disability Week some of the people we support from Borders Connects Day Support met up with friends in our community garden, where they were supported to plant 'flowers for friends'. As you can imagine, with it having been such a long time since everyone had seen each other, there was a lot of catching up to do!

We also used the opportunity to celebrate (albeit some what belatedly!) Cornerstone's 40th birthday. Emma was put in charge of the birthday bunting, Baxter Bear made a new friend and the inflatable noise makers were a great hit, resulting in some 'sword play' and lots and lots of noise!





Star Awards - looking back at 2020

Our North Lanarkshire branches celebrated their annual Star Awards, looking back at accomplishments and recognising the outstanding work of colleagues throughout 2020.

There were five categories that colleagues were able to nominate fellow colleagues for:

- **Most Creative Colleague/Team of the Year**
- **Colleague/Team That Has Gone Above and Beyond**
- **Most Positive and Supportive Colleague of the Year**
- **Best Newcomer of the Year**
- **Lifetime Achievement Award**

There was also the People's Choice Award which was shared with the people we support and their families so that they could nominate a particular person or team who they felt had supported and cared for them well throughout 2020.

After all of the nominations were submitted, the esteemed judging panel spent some time reading through each nomination and selected one winner for each award from both branches. The judging panel consisted of colleagues from both North Lanarkshire Supported Living and Community Support branches; Projects Leaders, Veronica Gillooly and Dianne Gregor, and local engagement forum representatives, John McClurg and Janice McKay. They had a very difficult job as there were many deserving nominations!

In line with Scottish Government restrictions, each winner was invited into the Hallcraig hub to accept their awards, where they get their picture taken and it was shared with everyone across the branches, in celebration of their achievements.

Branch Leaders, Robyn Birrell and Andrew McInnes, said, "It was wonderful to look back and read all of the positive stories of individual colleagues and teams being creative, going that extra mile and delivering first class care and support to the people in North Lanarkshire, even during what has been a challenging time for everyone."

"We would like to congratulate all of the nominees and winners and we look forward to the future and being able to celebrate all the achievements across the branches in true Cornerstone North Lanarkshire style. We look forward to seeing what comes next!"



40 for 40 years campaign success

North Lanarkshire Community Support recently completed their own 40 for 40 years campaign, in which colleagues, people we support, and other local supporters all got together to raise funds and donate to the chosen charities in their area. They would like to thank everyone for all their support, including their colleagues, people we support, Tesco, SSPCA and the homelessness support team in Glasgow.

North Lanarkshire Community Support donated:

- 62 bags of food for Airdrie foodbank
- Bags of food items for the SSPCA in Bothwell
- Lots of children's clothing for back to school
- 22 bags of items for the Glasgow homelessness charity
- Their local supporters kindly joined in, including Tesco, Airdrie who donated 40 Easter eggs and raised over £150 from donations
- Cornerstone colleagues Eliza and Karen raised £1642!
- The people we support got involved and raised an amazing £175!

Well done everyone!



Michael



Green fingers

Our Fod Street team in Dunfermline, led by Support Worker, Kevin Muckley, has supported Michael Norton to independently grow his own fresh fruit, vegetables, and herbs to support his healthy diet. We bet his meals taste extra delicious knowing that he has grown them himself!

Michael also made identification labels out of an old plastic milk bottle to identify his seeds and was even able to write the first letter of each label himself.



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