

# Cornerstone News

All the most recent news from across Cornerstone

Winter 2021



In this issue:  
**National Care Service**  
**New website**  
**Fundraising news**  
**Branch focus news**  
and much more!



**Providing care  
and support in  
your community**



# Message from our Chief Executive, Hazel Brown

I can't believe that Christmas is upon us once again and that 2021 is already drawing to a close! It's been quite a year for all of us, as we adapt to living in the 'new normal'. Here at Cornerstone that means that the vast majority of the support we provide is now back to normal, adhering to guidance. However many of our non-operational colleagues still find themselves working virtually, from home. As we look to 2022, we will continue to explore ways in which we can safely get together and stay connected. The health and wellbeing of our colleagues and the people we support is paramount as we look to deliver safe, high-quality, person-centred care that is always in line with the latest government guidance.

We were delighted earlier this year to launch our new strategy 'Future-proofing Cornerstone'. The strategy has three key aims:

1. **To be an expert provider of services to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.**
2. **To be the best employer in social care in Scotland.**
3. **To achieve stability and sustainability which supports future developments.**

It has been developed following a full review of our previous strategy including discussions with colleagues across the organisation, people we support and their families. We listened very carefully to what people had to say and have focussed on what we are best at and how we can get even better in providing the best care and support that really makes a positive difference to people's lives. The new strategy also reflects upon the recommendations of the Scottish Government's Independent Review of Adult Social Care which was published earlier this year.

During the pandemic the social care sector has been very much in the news and it feels like the tide is finally turning in recognising the important role we play in providing pivotal and essential care and support to those in need throughout our communities. That includes those providing the care, finally receiving the recognition they deserve, as being skilled professionals in essential roles. There are still challenges ahead; there remain issues around funding for the sector and how services are commissioned which is not always necessarily centred on peoples' needs. However, the review and the follow-up consultation around a proposed National Care Service seem to be the start of some much-needed change. There's more about the consultation in this newsletter (right).

I do hope you enjoy our winter 2021 issue, it has certainly been a busy year for everybody in Cornerstone.

From all of us, we wish you an equally festive and fun-filled Christmas.



**Hazel Brown,**  
Chief Executive



## National Care Service

**In February 2021, the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland (also known as The Feeley Review) was published. This report made several recommendations about improving adult social care including the creation of a National Care Service. It was proposed that a National Care Service would help to achieve consistency for people using social care services, drive improvement, set national standards, consider terms and conditions, and oversee local commissioning of services. The Scottish Government responded to the report by outlining what they plan to do to improve the way social care is delivered in Scotland and sought to consult with everyone impacted by the proposed changes.**

Cornerstone participated in the recent consultation, seeking the views of colleagues and encouraging the people we support to also take part. Our organisational response was submitted at the beginning of November. In this, we urged the Scottish Government to adopt a truly person-centred, human-rights based approach where the people receiving care and support are also those who inform how the National Care Service is designed and delivered. We also supported proposals for the National Care Service to set standards of learning and development for social care workers. We advocated for them to be involved in the delivery of training whilst recognising the need for appropriate funding allocation to allow for the delivery of bespoke, specialist person-centred training by expert care providers where required.

In addition, we took the opportunity to stress the importance of immediate action and the need to focus on some key priorities that would help to alleviate some of the intense pressures currently being felt across the sector including recruitment, funding and challenges in service provision.

All the nationwide feedback is currently being analysed by the Scottish Government and the conclusions will be used to shape and develop new legislation (a bill) which will be introduced in the Scottish Parliament in summer 2022.

The legislation is likely to be extensive and complex and is likely to take at least a year to be scrutinised by the Parliament. After that the National Care Service would need to be set up and legislation put into effect. The Scottish Government has pledged that they intend the National Care Service to be fully functioning by the end of the Parliamentary term.

You can find out more about the progress of the National Care Service consultation and proposals [here](#).



## Celebrating 25 years of service

We were delighted to finally get to celebrate with four of our amazing colleagues who have each recently achieved 25 years' service with Cornerstone, at a beautiful afternoon tea at The Marcliffe Hotel in Aberdeen.

Heather Walcott, Team Member at Wardend Place in Moray; Caroline Gibson, Project Lead for Aberdeenshire South Branch; Fiona MacLean, Assessor and Verifier with Cornerstone's Training Academy and Rona Jamieson, Support Worker at Quebec Place in Moray; and were all presented with their 25 years' service certificate, a bouquet of flowers, and a £250 voucher to mark their significant career milestones.

Malcolm Laing, Co-chair of our Board commented, *"It was a pleasure and privilege to join Heather, Rona, Caroline and Fiona for afternoon tea at The Marcliffe to celebrate their 25 years at Cornerstone and to acknowledge the contribution each of them has made to the success of Cornerstone during that time. We are so fortunate to have such loyal and dedicated colleagues as part of the Cornerstone team."*

Jayne Findlay, Director of Business Development added, *"I was delighted to celebrate with our long service colleagues recently and to recognise that between them, they have provided over a century of caring with Cornerstone! It's an astounding achievement and on behalf of all Cornerstone colleagues, I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations and thanks to Heather, Rona, Caroline and Fiona"*.

Congratulations ladies, we are very proud of you!

## Customer survey

Thank you to everyone who has completed our customer survey. We appreciate your time and value your views, and all feedback received helps Cornerstone see what we are doing well and where we need to improve. Our short survey is aimed at a wide range of people from family members, carers, professionals, and of course the people we support.

We had 150 responses last year, with results showing an increase in satisfaction from previous years, despite the limitations of the pandemic. As you can see from the green sections in the charts (right) the majority (over 80%) are happy with Cornerstone and found Cornerstone staff caring and professional. Nearly 90% consider we make a positive difference and would recommend Cornerstone.

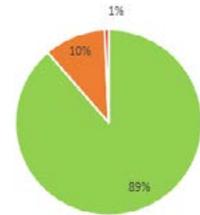
However, we don't always get it right, and your comments help us identify areas we can do better. Themes for last year include; improving communication with relatives, reducing the amount of staff changes with rotas, and involving families more. Our branches and services take all these on board and find ways to improve. We also received some lovely comments too:

*"I have a family member who has recently moved into a shared house... she has settled in really well and has really been made very welcome by everyone."*

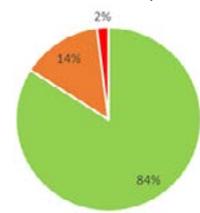
Our Customer Survey has been revamped for 2021-22. Colleagues from our branches will shortly be promoting the survey. Please keep an eye on your inbox for a link to complete the survey or for a paper copy arriving through your door. Or you can go directly to our website anytime [www.cornerstone.org.uk/forms/customer-satisfaction-survey](http://www.cornerstone.org.uk/forms/customer-satisfaction-survey)

We would love to hear and learn from you!

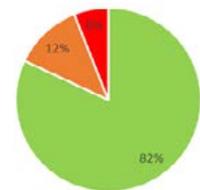
Are Cornerstone staff caring?



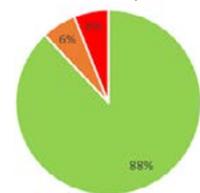
Are Cornerstone staff professional?



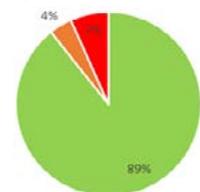
Are you happy with Cornerstone?



Do Cornerstone make a positive difference?



Would you recommend Cornerstone?



Yes ● Mostly ● No ●

## Quality care

**Cornerstone's care and support services are registered with our regulator, the Care Inspectorate. We currently have 65 registrations covering our services from Moray to the Borders. Due to different ways of working during the pandemic, the regular schedule of inspections has been significantly impacted. However, inspectors have been in regular contact with our services providing ongoing advice and support, and we look forward to learning from future inspections.**

Once restrictions started to ease our Chief Executive, Hazel Brown and Chair of the Quality Improvement Committee,

Helen Munro enjoyed visits to two of our services that were awarded sector-leading grade 6 (Excellent) in their last inspections, shortly before the pandemic - CLASP in Dunoon and Baxter View in Dumbarton.

Cornerstone's Quality Improvement Team continue to support our services to deliver the best care and support possible, with training on Quality being introduced for new colleagues as part of their induction, refreshing our quality assurance processes, and further developing our electronic personal planning process, Access Care Planning.

All this will help us continue to deliver high quality services ensuring the people we support are always at the heart of everything we do.

# Our culture

As part of our new strategy, 'Future-proofing Cornerstone', colleagues Yvonne Kelly and Elaine Cochrane (below) have taken up new roles as Culture Leads, working closely with leaders in the organisation, supporting them to enhance their leadership skills and embrace a coaching approach, whilst also promoting a culture of empowerment and high performance.

Between them, Yvonne and Elaine have over 25 years of experience gained within the care sector from across various functions, such as people management and leading teams and projects to benefit the people we support.

Through offering 1:1 coaching as a resource and support they have helped colleagues overcome perceived challenges and develop clear pathways towards their goals, as well as offering group and team coaching and mentoring. Plans are underway to further invest and embed the coaching approach following the rollout of our new strategy, including creating a Leadership Development Programme. The programme will encompass critical aspects of the coaching approach; promoting self-direction, enhancing self-awareness, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, taking ownership and accountability of actions, and encouraging reflection and learning.

By investing in our leaders, we invest in our teams and in our future as the best employer in social care in Scotland and expert provider of care and support to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.



## Follow us on our socials

You can also keep up to date with all the latest Cornerstone news, events and stories from the people we support by following us on social media. Like our Facebook page, connect with us on LinkedIn and follow us on Twitter and Instagram!



## Click it out! We have a new website

**We were delighted to launch a brand-new website earlier this year, providing the people we support, families, supporters, partners and key stakeholders with a much-enhanced online experience.**

Full to bursting with new functionality, the site gives our web visitors the opportunity to find out much more about the exceptional care and support provided by our ten local branches across the country. You'll get to hear from the people we support as they share their Cornerstone experience; learn much more about the types of services we offer and find out how your support and the care we provide makes such a difference. Finding the branch most local to you, helpful maps and relevant contact details just became a whole lot easier too!

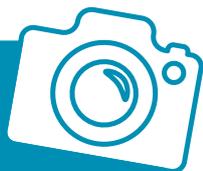
With a tailored online enquiry form and a comprehensive FAQs section it has never been easier to get the answers you need and to get in touch. You can also provide valued feedback by completing our customer satisfaction survey; letting us know about your Cornerstone experience and your thoughts on the care we provide.

Fundraisers and supporters are in for a real treat with a much smoother, online donor journey. There's the ability to set up your own fundraiser page, make a one-off donation or set up a regular donation on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis. An easy, at-a-glance events section tells you all you need to know about our exciting upcoming events calendar and how you can get involved. Appeals and campaigns will run regularly from the site and there's a whole host of fundraising ideas and resources available to download for those who want to do their own thing! We are also glad to now be able to offer support on how to leave a legacy gift in your will or how to make a donation in memory of a loved one.

As you would expect, the new site is the place to visit to keep up to date with our latest news and blogs, strategic plans, newsletters, annual reviews and Care Inspectorate reports. Prospective employees will also find helpful links to our careers portal and hear first-hand from colleagues about what it's like to work for Cornerstone, our rewards and benefits, qualifications, training opportunities, accreditations and awards.

So have a virtual wander and let us know what you think of our new look site! Get in touch at [website@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:website@cornerstone.org.uk). We can't wait to hear from you!

## Help us celebrate our work



Our Marketing and Communications team are keen to explore the possibility of developing a network of volunteer champions who can help us spotlight Cornerstone's important work, share the stories of the people we support, and celebrate impact and achievements. If you have any photography, filming, editing or writing skills to offer and a few hours to spare we'd love to hear from you! Just get in touch with [marketing.comms@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:marketing.comms@cornerstone.org.uk) to find out more.

# A warm welcome

**We were delighted to welcome Lynn Wallace to Cornerstone in August when she joined the Senior Leadership Team as our Director of Finance.**

Lynn has spent much of her career working in the charitable and not for profit sectors in organisations ranging from rare cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and art collecting institutions, where her remit has spanned both straight finance and corporate services.

She particularly enjoys working in organisations that strive for constant development or are transitioning, where, as part of a team, she can use her experience and skills to deliver for the needs of the people we support. In short – Lynn wants to work in an organisation that makes an impact!

Reflecting on her first few months Lynn said, *"It really has been a whirlwind start; there is so much being done and to be done. I like to be busy and be challenged and Cornerstone is definitely delivering on both of these! But I am loving my new job, everyone has been so friendly and supportive and it is a privilege to work in this amazing organisation."*

Outwith work, Lynn enjoys spending time with her husband, Mike and their menagerie of animals, currently Molly the labrador and three Burmese cats called Tolly, Ben and Callie!



## Supporting staff engagement

**Following a review of staff engagement and as part of our strategic aim 'to be the best employer in social care in Scotland', we are establishing a new Fair Work Partnership Forum.**

The forum will be guided by the nationally-recognised Fair Work Convention's Framework and its five key dimensions: **effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment** and **respect**.

Working in collaboration with UNISON, the forum will look to improve the working lives of Cornerstone employees through applying fair work principles that are designed to drive success for everyone. It is integral to Cornerstone's new operating model and in line with the recommendations of the 2021 Feeley Review.

By adopting the Fair Work Framework, Fair Work Action Plans will be created to help improve employee engagement, representation and collective voice. Through these plans members could be involved in a whole range of initiatives – anything from wellbeing initiatives and improving terms and conditions, to staff surveys and organisational culture. Members are provided with a clear and specific role profile, dedicated training and personal development opportunities as well as protected time of four hours each month to fulfil their forum responsibilities.

More information on the Fair Work Convention and Fair Work Framework can be found [here](#). You can also read the Fair Work Convention's report Fair Work in Scotland's Social Care Sector 2019. It is hoped that the inaugural meeting of the Fair Work Partnership Forum will take place in February 2022. For any further information please contact [fairwork@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:fairwork@cornerstone.org.uk).

## Join our team and take the first step to your amazing new career...

- No qualifications or experience required
- Fully funded training and SVQ qualifications
- All our support role vacancies pay more than the Scottish Living Wage
- Loads of career development opportunities
- Make a real difference, every day!
- Contribute to your local community
- Health Care Worker retail and lifestyle discounts
- Buy and sell your annual leave
- Financial support to enable you to learn to drive
- £100 employee referral when you recommend a successful candidate



[www.jobtrain.co.uk/Cornerstone](http://www.jobtrain.co.uk/Cornerstone)

# Cornerstone appoints three new Board members

We are delighted to announce the appointment of three new members to the Cornerstone Board; Robert Kay, Richard Webster and Angus Murray. The Cornerstone Board ensures that the organisation's strategy and policies are adhered to in line with its charitable purpose and in the best interests of stakeholders including, most importantly, the people we support.

Current co-chair Malcolm Laing commented, "I am delighted to welcome Rob, Richard and Angus to the Cornerstone Board. They each bring skills and experience which will be very useful to Cornerstone and we are very fortunate to have them as part of the team."



Malcolm Laing

Cornerstone CEO, Hazel Brown added, "The addition of three new members to the Cornerstone Board is a very positive and exciting development. Angus brings many years' experience of working in both IT and digital delivery; his work leading on IT transformations is particularly valuable. Richard brings a wealth of experience in senior finance and operational roles which are a particularly welcome addition, as is his own experience of having a family member with significant learning disabilities. Robert's first hand experience of caring for someone with complex learning disabilities combined with his expertise in change management and welfare reform make him a huge asset to the Cornerstone Board.

"As we start the roll-out of our new strategy, Future-proofing Cornerstone, it is as important as ever to ensure good governance and a steady approach. Our new board members join us at both an exciting and challenging time for Cornerstone and we really welcome the fresh perspectives and experience each of our new Board members will bring to the table."



## Robert Kay

Rob studied at Sheffield University and was an NHS National Management Trainee at Manchester Business School. He worked for 25 years in strategic change management and service development in the NHS, Social Work, and Voluntary Sector across the UK, living in Scotland since 1991. Since 2006 he has divided his time mainly between supporting his son, who has complex learning disabilities, and part-time employment as a social research interviewer.

Rob is a Fellow of the Centre for Welfare Reform. He served as a Trustee and/or Chair of three UK and Scottish charities in the fields of Arts and Disability and Carers advocacy, and was a co-founder and business director of a multicultural music and dance festival in his home town of Kilsyth. He is a recent General Secretary of the Electric Boat Association.

Rob said, "I am thrilled to be joining Cornerstone at such a pivotal time, and will endeavour to ensure that the needs, choices, and aspirations of the people who use our services, and their families, continue to be at the forefront of our vision and purpose."



## Angus Murray

Angus brings over 20 years of experience of IT and digital delivery. His recent work supporting the digital strategies for TAQA and SSE offers some valuable experience for Cornerstone's future strategy. His experience of leading large IT programmes should offer insights and learnings for Cornerstone's IT and digital direction.

Angus came to Aberdeen 30 years ago to study Engineering at the University of Aberdeen. Following a PhD, Angus joined the Oil industry, initially working for AMEC, and then a range of roles around new technology and IT. His last role was heading up IT for TAQA Europe based in Aberdeen, before moving to SSE at Chief Information Officer for three of SSEs seven divisions, Renewables, Thermal and EPMI. Over his career Angus has led many IT transformations including large Finance, HR and procurement system deployments, acquisitions and mergers, and the IT required for large capital asset projects.

Angus said, "It's really humbling and inspiring to see the work Cornerstone does, and I hope I can bring my IT and digital experience to support this important charity's strategy."



## Richard Webster

Richie is a big four trained Chartered Accountant, having spent seven years working with Deloitte in the UK and Australia. A London Business School Alumni, Richie joined C&C Group plc where he has held a number of senior finance and operational positions and is currently Finance Director of C&C GB.

Richie said, "I am delighted to be joining Cornerstone and offering my support to help our organisation in continuing to deliver valuable services to those we support and their families."



**Providing care and support in your community**

# Christmas WITH Cornerstone

## Christmas with Cornerstone

Of course there are loads of ways to make Christmas special, but what better way to kick start the festive season than by making a lasting impact to the lives of the people we support by taking part in our 'Christmas with Cornerstone' fundraising campaign?!

This year, Cornerstone is offering a whole host of activities and fundraising opportunities for you to get involved in; whether it be warming up your vocals and getting together with a group of friends for our CARE-a-oke fundraiser or playing our Christmas Raffle to be in with the chance of winning an incredible £500 just in time for Christmas. There's a Christmas Tree you can light up with a donation, Amazon Wish Lists to shop from and Santa Dashes to join in so whatever you do, celebrate Christmas with Cornerstone and you'll be helping us to continue to provide exceptional care and support to people in your local community and across Scotland.



## Virtual Christmas Tree

One magical way you can give a gift to Cornerstone this Christmas is through our virtual Christmas tree. For a small donation you can light up our tree, helping to ensure a bright year ahead for the people we support. You might want to buy a light for a friend instead of sending Christmas cards this year, or even use it to commemorate the life of a loved one. Whatever you choose, you can leave a personal message alongside your donation for others to read.

To light up our tree, please visit [www.cornerstone.org.uk/christmas-appeal](http://www.cornerstone.org.uk/christmas-appeal)

Light up  
our tree!



## Christmas Raffle

This Christmas we're also offering you the chance to win big and make Christmas 2021 one to remember.

For just £2, you could be in with the chance of winning £500 just in time for Christmas, amongst a host of other fabulous prizes on offer! It couldn't be easier to take part, and what's more you'll be making sure we can continue our vital work in 2022, enabling the people we support at Cornerstone to live their best life possible.

Buy your tickets here - [bit.ly/Cornerstone-Raffle](http://bit.ly/Cornerstone-Raffle)





## CARE-aoke

It couldn't be easier to take part in our Christmas CARE-aoke this year. Simply pick your favourite Christmas song, film your Christmas CARE-aoke video, set up a Facebook fundraiser to share your video with your friends and family, then simply ask loved ones to consider donating, sharing your video or even giving it a go themselves. We can't wait to see your Christmas CARE-aoke performances!

## All we want for Christmas is Rosa

**Rosa, who is supported by the team at Forrest Walk in West Lothian, loves to entertain with her amazing vocals! Not only does she help put a smile on the faces of the others that we support at Forrest Walk with her talent, but she has also built up a nice little following on social media doing so. Rosa's support team often capture snippets of her singing and share them on the local Facebook page.**

Rosa's most recent performance was part of Cornerstone's Christmas CARE-aoke, where she nails Mariah Carey's 'All I Want for Christmas Is You' (especially that high note we are all guilty of over-ambitiously trying to reach). What a voice, Rosa!

You can watch Rosa's CARE-aoke video by following this link - [bit.ly/CARE-aoke-Rosa](https://bit.ly/CARE-aoke-Rosa)

## Superheroes assemble!

**Here at Cornerstone we celebrate being unique. Promoting diversity and inclusivity is key to everything we do and has inspired our new 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 now inviting 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/besuperbeyou](http://www.cornerstone.org.uk/besuperbeyou) or contact [getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk)





## Care for Cake

Do you fancy being the next Paul Hollywood? Do you simply love baking? Or maybe you just like eating cake! Then our brand new Care for Cake pack is for you. 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 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](http://www.cornerstone.org.uk/care-for-cake) or contact us at [getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk).



## Beth's Fudge Factory

**Beth McPhee, who is 16 years old, has created a baking enterprise to raise funds for her local branch of Cornerstone in North Lanarkshire. We currently help to care for her grandfather, Neil Aitken, after he was diagnosed with vascular dementia.**

Beth explained the inspiration for creating Beth's Fudge Factory to sell her sweet treats, "I wanted to do this for my grandad and other people who are in a similar situation. I was baking at my gran's house so that's where I started. My gran said she is so proud of me."

Her baking exploits were shared on social media by friends and family and so far Beth has baked up an incredibly generous donation of **£500**. The teenager had a real drive to help the charity that supports her grandfather and the other people we support within the branch.

Beth's mum, Lesley explained the impact Cornerstone has, "Cornerstone has made a massive difference to my dad. All of the staff that come from the charity are brilliant; it's nice to be able to say thank you."

Beth runs an organised kitchen, often employing her parents, and her sister, Lily to assist her. There is a lot to do when making orders but Beth has managed to become a master of her craft, baking batches of fudge, cupcakes and afternoon tea boxes. She has also created bakes for occasions to order, like Halloween.

And Beth wants to continue baking. "Everyone has said that they liked [the bakes] and a lot of people have ordered again. I've raised over £500 and I'm looking to raise as much as I can."

Lesley added, "It only just started as a wee social enterprise, but she has learned lots of skills for life. Both her dad and I are really proud of her."

Donations like the £500 from Beth's brilliant baking means that Cornerstone can continue providing support to members of our community. Thank you, Beth!

If you are interested in raising money by baking like Beth, check out our Care for Cake fundraising packs by visiting [www.cornerstone.org.uk/care-for-cake](http://www.cornerstone.org.uk/care-for-cake)





## Glad to Care Week

**Back in July, we celebrated Glad to Care Week and the resilience of our amazing support workers, following what had been an unprecedented and challenging period for the social care sector. The aim was to show appreciation for the extraordinary contributions our colleagues make to the lives of the people we support and to offer insight into the care we provide.**

Each day of the week provided the people we support with opportunities to engage in exciting activities through daily themes. 'Monday Motivation' saw Anne and Sandy in Ayrshire, supported by Lorene, get involved in a Zoom dance session - they loved it! Team Packman in Moray took part in 'Wisdom Wednesday' by sharing their words of wisdom with our followers on social media, and on Friday, we went live with our Glad to Care auction.

Our Glad to Care auction contained some fantastic prizes, including a super luxurious night away at Stobo Castle Spa, complete with a Range Rover hire! In total, we managed to raise **£2,320**, which will help improve the quality of the lives of the people we support. Keep an eye out for Glad to Care 2022.

## Improving understanding of autism in the workplace

**Research from our friends at the National Autistic Society shows that just 22% of autistic adults are in any kind of employment but at Cornerstone we recognise that autistic employees have many strengths and skills to share with employers.**

To combat the employment barriers faced, Cornerstone's fundraising team are delighted to have secured **£50,000** towards a project to improve understanding of autism amongst non-autistic people within a workplace setting. The project that is funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Inspiring Scotland will have two main phases:

**Phase One:** Cornerstone will undertake pioneering research in partnership with Heriot-Watt University, and other pilot partners (to be announced) from a range of different industries about the experiences of autistic people in getting and sustaining employment, and achieving good outcomes within the workplace. The research will also find out more about non-autistic managers' and leaders' knowledge, confidence and experience of supporting direct line reports who are autistic.

**Phase Two:** Cornerstone will support the autistic-led forums (created in each organisation as part of the research phase) to co-produce supportive training resources that will enable us to support more employers across Scotland to understand and improve the experience of autistic employees.

If you know anyone who would be interested in getting involved, please contact [natasha.mackinnon@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:natasha.mackinnon@cornerstone.org.uk)

## A different kind of drive

**Cornerstone was chosen as the Charity of the Year for John Clark Motor Group alongside Aberdeen-based VSA in 2020. Due to the pandemic, the partnership was extended, and with restrictions easing it meant we were delighted to be able to be the beneficiaries of the 2021 John Clark Motor Group Golf Day - their biggest fundraiser!**

To reinvigorate John Clark Motor Group's loyal supporters – Chris Clark, Managing Director of John Clark Motor Group challenged participants to an Endurance Golf Day at the prestigious Gleneagles course. Supporters signed up quickly to this 'all you could play' challenge and battled it out to see what team could play from 7.30am to 9.30pm!

Keith from John Clark Motor Group said, *"Not being able to have our Annual Charity Golf Day in 2020, we were determined, despite the COVID restrictions still in place, to make up for it in 2021! With thanks to Gleneagles for providing the incredible setting for our Endurance Charity Golf Day. A challenging but fun 14 hours of golf was had by all, resulting in an incredible amount of money being raised for our two amazing charity partners. It's great that days like this can help make a difference to the work that they both do in Scotland!"*

Julia Smith and Catriona Hogg from our fundraising team were delighted to welcome all 18 teams at the 12th tee to cheer them on and thank them in person for their amazing support – each team fundraised online in addition to their entry fees. The day raised more than **£14,000** for Cornerstone which will make a huge difference in the lives of people we support with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs.

A big thank you to all to John Clark Motor Group, Keith Mitchell, Vicki Barry and all the teams that took part.





## In loving memory of Linda Smedley

**Tony, Stephen, Brian and their family completed a Ben Nevis hike in memory of their mum and much-loved wife, Linda Smedley. The Cornerstone team in North Lanarkshire supported Linda and her family after she was diagnosed with early-onset dementia aged just 50.**

The family, along with their loved ones, made the challenging trek up Ben Nevis on the 17th July. To date, they have raised an incredible sum of almost **£15,000** to support Cornerstone's work.

Linda's son, Brian told us, "After an 11-year battle with early-onset dementia our wonderful mum, Linda, passed away aged 61, in her own home. By her side throughout was our dad, Tony, who devoted himself to her every need. Sadly, our mum's journey to her final breath was fraught with challenge as we tried to fight a system that fails to provide the right kind of support for young adults with dementia.

"However, one service that helped our family massively throughout our mum's illness was Cornerstone in North Lanarkshire. Cornerstone's Support Workers were able to provide person-centred, practical and emotional support for my mum and our family. As a family, we wanted

to do something to give back to the service that had supported us so much during what was a difficult, often uncertain and upsetting time for us all.

"Over the last few months, we've been walking, running and cycling to prepare for our main fundraising event - our Ben Nevis climb. In the run up, family and friends have been incredibly supportive with our fundraising, and we've now raised almost £15,000 to support Cornerstone.

"Our group of 23 participants, all managed to reach the summit and overcome some difficult weather conditions on the day. We have been overwhelmed with the support and donations from so many different people. We are sincerely grateful for every penny contributed by our loved ones.

"Our fundraising for Cornerstone doesn't stop there. Our local boxing gym MTK are having a charity boxing event at the GM Club in Holytown and they are doing various auctions and raffles for prizes. After hearing our story, they have picked Cornerstone as one of their chosen charities on the night. We're really hoping this will allow us to push our fundraising target that bit more.

"For many people who knew our mum, they will know that she had so much more life left to give and we know that our fundraising achievements, done in her memory, will have a lasting impact allowing Cornerstone in North Lanarkshire to support people living with early onset dementia and their families in similar situations."



## Leaving a legacy

**At the end of 2020, Cornerstone received a truly incredible legacy gift of over £227,000 from Alexanderina, the mother of the late Mary Williamson, who was supported at Stevenson Court, in Aberdeen. Mary had Down's Syndrome and was supported by Cornerstone for over 23 years.**

Mary was very much loved by everyone at Stevenson Court, who have all taken to sharing some fond memories of her recently. 'Mary Doll', as our Service Manager, Malkie liked to call her, will be remembered fondly for dressing up, and her love of parties and holidays. He recalled how much Mary enjoyed a trip to Lovat Lodge in Nairn on Burns Night, watching the haggis being brought in and dancing the night away with her friends and support workers.

To honour Mary's memory, and the wonderful gift that her family gave to Cornerstone we decided to create an annual Personal Achievement Award for the people we support in Mary's name; The Mary Williamson Personal Achievement Award. Mary loved helping others to love life. Through Mary and her mother's incredible gift we will be able to ensure that Mary's legacy is realised through our work, helping the people we support to lead their best possible life for many years to come. You can read more about the inaugural awards on page 12.

**Since this incredible gift, Cornerstone has been fortunate to receive another generous gift left in the will of the late Hilda Grant McDonald for £59,295. Hilda lived at Abbotswell Drive beside our Cornerstone service. Her legacy is a true testament to the high quality of care and support we deliver and will be used to provide further support in Aberdeenshire.**

# The Mary Williamson Awards

**The Mary Williamson Awards, created by the funds of a generous legacy donation from the late Mary Williamson, recognises the personal goals of the people we support. Mary Williamson was supported by Cornerstone for over 23 years. She loved dressing up, holidays and parties and was much loved by everyone at Stevenson Court.**

In her honour, support workers across Cornerstone were invited to nominate someone who has worked hard to achieve a personal goal this year.

There were 12 winners across our ten branches. All of whom won a £250 prize to spend on something they would enjoy. Our worthy runners up also received £100 each.

**Nina MacDonald** from our Ayrshire branch was nominated for overcoming her anxieties about going on holiday. Particularly her fears around water. After a week of being on holiday in Centre Parcs she was finally able to face her fears and get into the hot tub. She is going to spend her £250 on another trip to Centre Parcs where she hopes to be in the hot tub every day.

**Kayla Harrison** from our Borders branch was employed as a carer, moved into a new flat and began studying towards a National 5 qualification in Child Health and Social Care. Gaining employment was a huge achievement and a major stepping stone to one day achieving her dream of going to study nursing at university. Kayla is going to spend her money on bookcases and a new chest of drawers.

**AJ Gilmour** from our North Lanarkshire branch worked hard on passing his first year of college. AJ achieved this during COVID, adapting to courses being online and completing coursework between hospital appointments. He is going to spend his award on upgrading his PC and buying gig tickets to his favourite metal band.

We have two winners from Aberdeen and Shire North. **Kirstin Morgan** and **Teresa Blackhall** who both overcame their anxieties to go on holiday. Kirstin is autistic which means sometimes trying new things can be stressful or challenging. With the support of our team Kirstin went on her first ever holiday where she could see the sights and enjoy going out in the evening. Kirstin plans to spend her prize money on some sensory equipment for her summer house garden.

Teresa overcame her anxiety and was able to go on holiday with support to Cornerstone's Jubilee House. She stayed for three whole days and had an incredible time. She loved the experience so much she wants to spend her prize money on another trip to Jubilee House.

**Allister Kennedy** from our Glasgow branch recently secured employment after months of job searching. Gaining a job has increased his confidence. His tenacity and determination will mean a better quality of life for him and his young family. He is going to spend £250 on his family and on items that make him safe when he is outside.

**Jamie Boyle** from our North Lanarkshire Housing Support branch has achieved lots of personal goals this year. He has tried new foods and even adopted a better bedtime routine which means he is cosy throughout the night. He has managed to eat with stainless steel cutlery and developed a more varied diet. He can now say a few words too. Despite changing provider, Jamie has continued to bring joy to everyone he meets. Jamie is going to spend the £250 on a holiday to Helensburgh next year where he can eat like a king, and buy some new holiday clothes.

**Danny** from our West Dunbarton branch overcame moving to a new service, his parents moving abroad and the pandemic. He has worked hard to make new friends on his new course. Danny is going to spend his £250 on a new smartphone to contact his friends and make video calls.

**Max Bosworth** from our Dundee, Perth and West Lothian branch recently underwent major surgery to fit a central line for feeding,

which greatly affected his mobility. Through determination he overcame his surgery, learned to live with the central line and started learning how to walk again. He then did a walking challenge with family and friends who together walked over 800 miles, raising over £1,800 for Cornerstone and another charity! He intends to spend his prize money on Lego and model cars.

**Sarah Watt** from our Moray branch worked hard towards her health goals and with a lot of drive and determination lost a significant amount of weight. She is looking forward to spending her money on a holiday to Aberdeen.

We have two winners from Aberdeen and Shire South. **Lindsey Telfer** and **Alison Sharp**. Lindsey challenged herself in the summer to walk 11,000 metres with her frame - more than the height of Mount Everest! She raised £2,000 so that her housemates had something to look forward to after the hard year we've all had in lockdown. Lindsey is going to spend her money on a fun day out for her and her housemates. She really went the extra mile for her friends.

Alison has kept up with her healthy eating plan and lost 6st and 2lbs, giving her more mobility and less pain in her legs. She has gained confidence and can now walk longer distances without becoming breathless. With her prize money Alison hopes to be able to take her sister to the Strictly Come Dancing show, buy some new clothes and decorate her room.

And congratulations also to all our fantastic runners up, including: **Ashleigh Clark**, **Kenny Thomson**, **Amir Munir**, **Lee Millan** and **Rosa Allen** who all received £100 for their hard work.



# Join our team

**A career with Cornerstone is more than just a job and there are currently lots of amazing opportunities across the country to join our team.**

We employ over 2,000 people, all of whom are fully committed to making sure the people we support are able to live the best life possible.

We recruit based on values and transferrable skills, and by joining our team, you will have

the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of adults, children and young people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs. You'll receive all the right tools and training you need to help you be the very best you can be, including the opportunity to complete a fully funded SVQ qualification.

We pride ourselves in being a modern, vibrant organisation, offering real opportunities for development, within an empowering structure. We strive to change the way the health and social care sector is viewed and

want our colleagues to be truly valued as social care professionals for the highly-skilled, life-changing work that they do every day. We offer some really attractive perks and benefits too, as you'll see below!

We aim to be the best employer in social care in Scotland. We thrive on teamwork and are passionate about the care and support we provide in your local community. So, if you're looking for a rewarding career where you know you can make a difference, then look no further. We'd love for you to come and join us!

## A spotlight on some of our most popular benefits



£500 towards driving lessons



24/7 access to employee assistance programme



Non-contributory group life insurance



Workplace pension



Long service awards



Great shopping discounts



Significant gym membership discounts



Double pay for festive bank holidays



£100 refer a colleague scheme



Free occupational health

Working in the Health & Social Care sector also gives you the opportunity to sign up for a Blue Light Card, the UK's largest Emergency Service discount scheme.

## Ayrshire



### Heather Shared Lives

*"Hi, my name is Heather. I've lived with Andrea, my Shared Lives carer, for over four years now in Ayrshire. At first I was nervous because I was moving into a busier family home than what I was used to, but they've been so loving and caring. Living with a family has changed my life for the better in so many ways. The Shared Lives service is really important because the team match you with a family who cares, trusts and gives you support, which allows you to follow your dreams no matter how big or small. Shared Lives really changes lives for the better!"*



After reading about Heather's story, would you like to become a Shared Lives carer? If you can provide a spare room, would like to work from home and want to make a difference then click [here](#) for more information, including contact details to talk to a member of our Shared Lives team.

# Ayrshire

## A festive message

*"I would just like to take this opportunity to reflect back on my first year within Cornerstone Ayrshire Branch as the new Branch Leader. Its been a whirlwind of a year since taking up post and there have been many challenges along the way. However, these have most certainly been outweighed by the successes to date. Within our branch we have recommenced and built up our community supports, opened a new supported accommodation model at Bessie Dunlop Court and supported individuals within housing support to be back out enjoying all of their groups and activities since restrictions eased.*

*"We have taken on and trained new staff who have never worked in a social care setting before who have told us that they wished they had done this sooner as well as promoted staff within our teams to Mentors and Project Leads.*

*"I want to say a heartfelt thanks to all of our staff who continue to have such a strong value base and be passionate in everything they do with the people we support. I hope you all have a fantastic Christmas and best wishes for 2022!"*



Carly Nesvat



## Walking on sunshine

**In August our New Beginnings Group within our Shared Lives service in Ayrshire challenged themselves to take part in a sponsored walk from Irvine to Barassie beach. The weather was perfect and they were able to appreciate various forms of sealife along the way!**

Alan and Kerryann were part of the intrepid group. They both live with their Shared Lives families and got engaged to each other in June this year! Congratulations guys! Michael, Kaz and Heather not only walked there but all the way back too, clocking up over 10miles each. Michael then took it a step further when he then met up with his brother and walked all the way home to Dreghorn afterwards!

In total they managed to raised a fantastic **£500**. Well done to Iram, Joanna, Kaz, Michael, Heather, Kerryann, Alan, Gail and Diane. What a brilliant achievement - we're so very proud of you all!



## Nursing placement

**We were pleased to welcome Lucy Stewart as our first student learning disability nursing placement. Lucy is getting an incredible perspective of how we provide the best care possible for the people we support.**

This is Lucy's second year studying nursing and after a whole year of online learning without placements, Lucy was eager to get real life experience working with the people we support.

*"We started going into Uni again in September, it was good to actually get in and get more knowledge going into placement. You get tired looking at a screen all day."*

Lucy has completed three weeks of her six-week placement so far, but has been taught so much in that time.

*"I have learned a lot. I've been taught a lot about the different ways people communicate and get supported, the general day to day life and how it's different from working on wards."*

Lucy's first placement was on a ward which offers a very different nursing environment. In hospitals patients are away from their loved ones and the comfort of their own home. Cornerstone operates on a person-centred care approach, delivering care in their own homes.

*"Getting to know [the people we support] has been really good and some of them have warmed up to me very quickly."*

It's a very valuable experience for nurses-in-training to assist in care provisions outside of a hospital as not only do they get to witness nursing life in a whole new environment, but they get to see the incredible work carers and support staff do.

*"It's given me a really good taste of working with learning disabilities and seeing how complex it can be."*

Since starting at Cornerstone, Lucy has been able to take part in a wide range of different services dedicated to helping the people we support. It's been a fantastic experience which will help her not only in her studies but throughout the rest of her life.

We wish Lucy the best of luck for the rest of her placement!

# Aberdeen

## Callum's soaring high!

**This October, Callum had an amazing glider experience with Walking on Air, a charity that aims to make gliding accessible to people with mobility issues.**

It was Callum's support worker, Roy, who had the idea to sign Callum up for the experience. Roy has been a glider instructor for 20 years and flies competitively so was able to arrange the outing.

It was an early start in the morning as Callum, his parents and Roy all headed to Portmoak to prepare for take-off. After a quick pit-stop at McDonald's for breakfast, they arrived at the airfield. The people at Walking on Air were incredible and able to get Callum all positioned and ready for his flight in no time. Callum was naturally very excited.

The gliders are dual controlled so Callum was able to sit in the front while an instructor took the back seat. This gave him the perfect view of surroundings. And what an amazing view it was!

While in the air Callum looked over the hills of Portmoak and the ridge near Bishop Hill. From the skies he was able to see the beautiful still waters of Loch Leven and the ruins of the historic Lochleven Castle. The place where Mary Queen of Scots was held prisoner.

Lynda, Callum's mum explained just how much Callum enjoyed the trip, *"Callum was ecstatic, an experience he'll never forget. The look of sheer delight on his face when he came in to land is a moment we'll never forget."*

Roy, who flew the tow plane to get Callum and his instructor up, told us about Callum's experience, *"It was hugely satisfying and I know Callum had a really good time. I could see it on his face. He was up, he was happy."*



***"Callum was ecstatic, an experience he'll never forget. The look of sheer delight on his face when he came in to land is a moment we'll never forget."***

# Aberdeen

## We're a lighthouse family

Some of the people we support across Aberdeen North and Aberdeenshire kept active this autumn by following the spectacular 'Light the North' lighthouse trail. Sheena, Wayne and Rosheen from our Berrybank service in Maud loved getting out and about and seeing the fantastic pieces of art on display across the North East. The trail ran from August to October and included 50 individually designed lighthouse sculptures.

Although the Berrybank team didn't quite get around to visiting all the sculptures on the trail, they did attend the lighthouse exhibition in Aberdeen, where they managed to see all the lighthouses together, including the miniatures. Well done, team!



# Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian

## Autumn Fête

Our Dundee community support team held an Autumn Fête on 2nd October. There was a barbecue, bouncy castle, beat the goalie, and tombola as well as stalls for books and cakes. A great time was had by all, and they almost managed to avoid the rain that only showed up at the end! The team raised an amazing **£403** for the service. Many thanks to all the volunteers and visitors who turned up on the day.



## Hot tub sublime machine

**The team at Blackwood Court in Dundee had a busy summer preparing their garden for the installation of a hot tub which was purchased using money from our Quality of Life fund.**

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, both ladies at Blackwood Court regularly used hydro pools but these have been closed since March 2020. The hydro pools aid stretching and gives both ladies, who are wheelchair users, a feeling of weightlessness and a change in posture.

One family member said, *"We are so grateful that our daughter and her friend have had the opportunity to get something like this, as we know just how much it will benefit them. We can't wait to get a shot too!"*

A Blackwood Court team member added, *"This really does highlight that there is no stopping the people we support from living their best life possible and we must always think of creative ways to adapt to suit their needs."*



## There's no strings on Team Dundee

**In September, a puppet named STORM who stands at 10 metres tall, walked around the streets of Dundee. Some of the people we support had the opportunity to see her in action!**

STORM, nicknamed the Sea Goddess, was made from recycled materials. She was created by Symon Macintyre and Kim Bergsagel for Vision Mechanics. They intended for her to tour Scotland during 2020 to promote COP26 and draw attention to the climate crisis. However, her trips were postponed due to the pandemic.

Scotland's largest puppet, STORM, requires eight people to help her walk. With skirts made of fishing nets and hair caught up with seaweed, it's clear this is a puppet on a mission. She has emerged from the deep to encourage us all to celebrate our seas and protect our coastlines.

In an event hosted by Sustainable Dundee, STORM began her visit in Slessor Gardens at lunchtime. The gardens were abuzz, full of stalls, information stands, a mobile bike track, Segway sessions and upcycling and rewinding stalls.

The people we support had an amazing time going to see her and taking part in all the activities, *"Gracie had a fantastic day out in town with Katy from her support team. Helen and Richard were also off to the Green Festival Hub with Audrey from their support team. They loved seeing STORM and Tay whale!"*

*"Great to see the people we support out in force to enjoy a great local event! Elaine ventured down to see the spectacular STORM with Hayley from her support team and Chelsea and Charlotte with Tammy from their support team."*

A brilliant time was had by all and an incredible performance from Urban Moves Dance Company bid STORM farewell before she left to continue her tour of Scotland.

## Glasgow & East Dunbartonshire



### Behind the Eyes of Ashleigh

In September, Ashleigh shared her first-ever daily vlog, 'Behind the Eyes of Ashleigh' with family and friends, as well as with our supporters across Cornerstone's social media platforms. With a clear passion for videography, Ashleigh was assisted by Alice from her support team to create a short, inspiring video documenting her shopping trip in Glasgow. Ashleigh was lucky enough to get her hands on tickets to see McFly at the Hydro, which provided the perfect excuse to pick up a snazzy new outfit.

The premiere was received incredibly well across social media, with comments of support and encouragement for Ashleigh pouring in. Ashleigh had always wanted to start a YouTube channel, and after seeing the positive impact of her 'day in the life' style vlog on Facebook, she decided it was the right time to kick her channel off. She now has three videos and cannot wait to produce more going into 2022.

Ashleigh was recently nominated for the Mary Williamson Award and came runner up in the Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire branch. Her support team put Ashleigh forward for the award for the sheer amount of passion she has for creating videos and felt that with some extra resources, she could make her long list of creative ideas happen. Creating videos also gives Ashleigh a way to continue connecting with her friends and family even when COVID limitations are in place, and it certainly keeps her busy.

The award will help Ashleigh get filming accessories like tripods, microphones and lights, and some fancy props to feature in her videos. As part of Ashleigh's award, Cornerstone's marketing and communications team will also be offering support with any graphics (banners and logos), editing, and promotion.

Of course, Ashleigh couldn't do this all on her own. Her support team have been incredible in stepping in and supporting her with any filming, editing, and simply allowing Ashleigh to fulfil her passion. If you'd like to watch any of Ashleigh's videos, you can do so [here](#).



### Goodbye Tricia!

On Friday 24th September, we said goodbye to our lovely Receptionist, Tricia Coll, who has been with our Glasgow hub for almost 17 years! Tricia also previously worked in our services with the people we support, so she's a lady of many talents! Tricia has worked tirelessly, always helping others and she has a heart of gold; she is going to be greatly missed. Good luck Tricia on your next chapter and please don't be a stranger!

## Glenorchy Christmas lunch

The people we support and the support team at Glenorchy in East Dunbartonshire recently enjoyed a lovely Christmas lunch at the Glazert Hotel in Lennoxtown.

Sarah, Michelle, Richard, Karen and Francis had a brilliant time, laughing, chatting and getting themselves in the festive spirit with their support team. It was fantastic for Team Glenorchy to get out and celebrate this year after restrictions in 2020 meant Christmas lunch was cancelled. The food was delicious and enjoyed by all.



# Moray

## Highland Way in Buckie

**We are delighted to announce the opening of our new service Highland Way in Buckie. Highland Way is the first service of its kind for Cornerstone in Moray as it comprises a number of individual properties. It also represents an important and integral part of the Health and Social Care Partnership's housing plan for adults with a learning disability across the region.**

The full development consists of three bungalows and three flats as well as a communal flat which acts as both a staff base and social space for the people supported to come together and meet each other and enjoy various activities. The homes also include state of the art telecare technology, supporting tenants to further develop their independence.

Branch Leader, Elaine Duffy, commented, *"We are delighted to be working in partnership with Moray Health and Social Care Partnership and feel really privileged to support the individuals who are moving into Highland Way - it's a really exciting time! The development has allowed six individuals to transition to their own tenancies (many for the first time) and develop an increased level of independence. Through working closely with the new tenants, as well as their families and carers, our skilled support*

*team are using a person-centred approach to help them settle in quickly, set personal goals, and thrive in their new homes."*

As part of a recruitment drive for Highland Way, Moray team member, Morna Hay, is encouraged people to consider a social care career with Cornerstone and to think about applying to join the Buckie team. She said, *"The great thing about this job is no two days are ever the same. You'll become part of a team who supports six individuals with various support needs to live in their own homes. Their homes are all situated on the same street, so there will be no travel needed while on shift. Even if you don't have experience don't worry, Cornerstone recruits on values and transferrable skills and will give you all the training you'll need!"*

*"I absolutely love my job and there's always support for staff available any time day or night if you need it. I'd highly recommend anyone thinking about making the move to social care, it's the best thing I ever did."*

One of the first tenants to move in has said, *"Living in Highland Way is great. The house has plenty of space and is bright and comfortable. It's exciting living in my own house and with help I can do loads of things and get out and about in Buckie to shops and the pub. I can still get the bus to work, too. It's just a shame I have to do the washing up!"*

The family of another tenant, Callum, commented, *"Callum is so excited to be moving back to his home town in Buckie and being close to all his family. He's so excited about having a bungalow with no stairs and meeting his new support workers. We can't wait and Callum's also feeling happy and can't wait."*



# West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute



## Allot' of good news for Methlan Park

**Some years ago, on behalf of Cornerstone, one of the people we support, Eddie McNeil, who lives at the Methlan Park Service in West Dunbartonshire, and Hugh Irwin, Eddie's support worker, registered for a plot within an allotment in West Dunbartonshire. Recently they received the fantastic news that they had been allocated a plot!**

Eddie was delighted to be invited along to cut the ribbon at the gate of the allotment to officially open it to the people we support and staff in West Dunbartonshire. Our colleagues and people we support are all excited and looking forward to getting stuck into making the plot their own!



## Inside all of us is adventure

**Cornerstone's CLASP service, and neighbouring Jigsaw service, both offer active and social activities to children, and provide respite to families across Argyll & Bute. Each year nearly 60 children with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs take part in the regular youth clubs, sports clubs, respite days, parties, and other sessions to meet new people, make friends and discover new hobbies and interests.**

Each session is fully staffed by their dedicated care and support team which provides parents and carers some well-deserved time to themselves, safe in the knowledge that their child is well cared for and enjoying themselves.

Over the past few years, the teams at CLASP and Jigsaw have been trialling more adventurous activities to take children out of their comfort zone and show them a side of life they might never have experienced before. Activities like climbing walls, bouldering, horse riding, archery, and sailing have been big hits with the children. Adventures like these have improved confidence, reduced isolation, encouraged friendships and shown the children and young people that they're capable of anything. It's created a team spirit among the children and inspired them to try new adventures.

Team Leader, Frances Wilshin said, *"Without this funding, we could never provide activities like these for the children. Seeing the delight on their faces when they first try something like rock climbing or canoeing is so heart-warming. Some of the kids have even started taking on adventures like these on their own. The sense of achievement they feel fills them with pride, confidence, and memories which they can carry into the future."*

Thanks to over **£23,000** in funding from BBC Children in Need, CLASP and Jigsaw will build on this great work and continue to provide, and seek new, adventures over the next three years for all the children they support. We're excited to see where this work leads and can't wait to see what the children achieve next. Branch Leader, Jesamine Griffin, said, *"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with BBC Children in Need. It's funders like this that enable us to offer children something different and we look forward to seeing the smiles on the children's faces after such a challenging year."*

Thanks Pudsey!



## 'Scairdrie' Halloween

After a year of virtual events during lockdown, our Airdrie Hub had a spooktacular Halloween party in October for some of the people we support. The North Lanarkshire office was brilliantly decorated in orange, purple and black with skeletons, bats and pumpkins as far as the eye could see. There were games, music and a lot of fun and laughter.

As you can imagine, there was a massive interest and to allow everyone to attend, the team split the parties in two and ran them back-to-back. It was brilliant to provide such a fun party and see everyone dressed up and enjoying themselves to the fullest, especially after so many months of being in lockdown.

A lot of love and enjoyment went into the costume choices for the evening, and it was incredible to see such a range of outfits, from clowns to Mario. There was even a prize for the best costume. Aiden was the costume winner of the 12-2pm party who was dressed as a very green leprechaun.

He explained what it felt like to win, *"It felt good winning the best Halloween costume and it was a good day catching up with everyone. Looking forward to the next one."*

Stephen was the winner of the 2-4pm party, dressed as a spooky Beetlejuice. *"It felt fantastic and he was chuffed to bits to get a prize for his costume!"*

It's clear that a fang-tastic time was had by all!



## North Lanarkshire - Community Support



## Duke of Edinburgh

**Cornerstone has a direct licence with the Duke of Edinburgh award which allows the people we support, aged 16-25, to have the chance of achieving bronze, silver and gold awards.**

The Duke of Edinburgh award allows young people to develop new skills, set personal challenges and develop confidence and this year we were delighted to welcome colleagues Zach and Chris to the Cornerstone team, to help the people we support achieve their award. There are three parts to the award; volunteering, physical and skill. All three must be completed to achieve an award.

For the bronze award this year, our young people were given the extra challenge of having to complete the award in lockdown. They of course managed this brilliantly. The physical part of the award was adapted from a more social event to be weekly hour-long walks during lockdown which they worked hard to complete.

The skills sections allowed the young people to showcase their wide range of talents. There were submissions of everything from knitting to baking and they all were able to prove expertise and a broad understanding of their chosen skill.

The expedition was the final section of the award and one of the most enjoyable parts. In September they travelled to Wiston Lodge, a beautiful old Victorian hunting lodge in the countryside. Our Duke of Edinburgh participants enjoyed a day of camping and the outdoors, alongside other young people we support through the Scottish Youth Link fund.

As a group they all learned about the nature around them and were shown how to build a campfire using twigs and thistles. Then they had the opportunity to make and cook their very own pizza. And no campfire would be complete without roasting some marshmallows on a stick.

It was a really incredible day that gave the young people we support the opportunity to learn and explore nature and the countryside.

A massive well done to everyone who completed their Duke of Edinburgh Award this year. And a huge thank you to Scottish Youth Link for making this possible.



# North Lanarkshire and Scottish Borders joint initiative



## £9,000 from Scottish Youth Link

**Scottish Youth Link values young people's contribution to society and strives to support young people to achieve their full potential. This year the Scottish Youth Link provided Cornerstone's North Lanarkshire Community Support branch with £5,000 and our Borders branch with £4,000. From spa days to visits to the science centre, the funds from Scottish Youth Link allowed us to provide many of the 10-24 year olds we support with a range of opportunities that they have missed out on during lockdown and otherwise would have difficulty accessing.**

As part of the funding we were able to take Scott and Ben on a fun weekend staying in a caravan in Craig Tara. They enjoyed going to Heads of Ayr farm park where they got to meet and learn about lots of different animals. Ben's favourite part was clapping and feeding the horses, and Scott's favourite animals of

the day were the monkeys. The assortment of animals allowed Scott to practise his photography, taking lots of photos of all the cool things around the park.

The boys were also able to experience their first ever ferry trip. They sailed to the Isle of Arran and were eating lunch on the island when they spotted dolphins in the water. On the island the boys got to skip stones and see the ruins of Lochranza Castle. Ben loved walking out to the water on his way back to the ferry.

Claire, Scott's care manager was able to provide some feedback, *"Scott really enjoyed it and his parents appreciated the break. His mum said she felt relaxed as she was confident that Scott would be well looked after. Liam and Erin's hard work is very much appreciated and has made a huge difference."*

What an adventure!



# Scottish Borders

## Wheellie generous

Just Cycle have recently kindly donated a bicycle to our Borders branch which is going to provide incredible opportunities for the people we support. The Roam Tricycle design allows able-bodied riders to take on passengers so the people we support can experience what it is like to ride a bike in a safe but fun way.

Gary, a support worker explained the benefits of having the adapted bike, *"The enjoyment and wellbeing that comes from a nice bicycle ride on a nice sunny day and all that fresh air is immensely powerful for body and mind."*



Just Cycle put a lot of work into making the bike safe, comfortable and all-terrain ready for the people we support. Workshop Manager, Grant Martin described part of the process of making the bike more accessible. *"For comfort we replaced the saddle for a more padded comfortable option and fitted slightly wider tyres, along with new inner tubes to make the ride smoother over rougher ground and lessen the chances of puncturing."*

The donation from Just Cycle will provide many opportunities for fun and enjoyable outings, for both the people we support and staff. The people we support can experience idyllic bike rides through paths they might otherwise have been unable to experience. The bike will also provide another form of transport, enabling trips to local towns and beauty spots for picnics and other outings. This will give the people we support a fun day out, and a chance to relax while taking in the beautiful countryside around them.

The bike may also be used to assist the young people we support in the physical section of their Duke of Edinburgh award.



## Cooking up a treat

**Our day support service in the Borders is finally back, albeit with some restrictions in place! Since reopening we have been working in partnership with families and the local Health and Social Care Partnership to provide a fun, social and skill-building space for the people we support. We are gradually increasing the activities we are able to provide and welcoming new people to the service.**

Service Manager, Tracey Turnbull explains how valuable the service is, *"Our activities support independence, self-worth and social inclusion to name a few. They also add to the experiences of the people we support and enhance their quality of life by providing a wider range of interests and conversation."*

The service teaches life skills, promotes health and wellbeing, provides respite for families, and encourages positive risk taking. Highly skilled colleagues provide physiotherapy programmes, which is an important part of health and wellbeing. These are set to meet the assessed needs of the individuals and aim to help them maintain the best physical health possible. Gym, swimming and boccia activities have started recently which are also invaluable outings.

One of the most notable things about the day support service, which is funded by Scottish Borders Council, is the sense of community; the building of friendships and confidence as the people we support learn new skills together. The cooking group is a great example, giving the people we support the opportunity to learn and make different recipes. Due to COVID these sessions have been limited, but plenty of tasty treats like tray bakes, pizzas, scones and cakes have still been created! Most recently, Charlotte and Matty had a brilliant afternoon in the kitchen making some delicious chocolate truffles. There are still restrictions in place to make sure everyone can get the most out of the activities whilst still being safe, but we look forward to increasing our capacity when restrictions deem it safe to do so.



## James loves Riverdance

**On the 6th of October James had the exciting opportunity to see Riverdance in Edinburgh alongside support staff member, Derek. Irish music means a lot to James. His favourite band is The Dubliners and he listens to Irish traditional music every night, playing along on his bodhrán, flute or guitar.**

Unfortunately, due to lockdown it had been almost two years since James was able to go out and see his favourite music being performed live. In 2020 he had booked a ticket for the Riverdance's 25th anniversary show but it was postponed due to COVID.

James explained how it felt to see the show after a two year wait. *"The show was cancelled in 2020 - so great to finally see it at last."*

He took the train to Edinburgh, had a burger and chips at Waverly then walked on to the Playhouse Theatre. The Edinburgh Playhouse Theatre is the UK's largest seated theatre so the atmosphere was incredible.

The show did not disappoint. There was a great range of music, from fast jigs to slow music on the pipes. The dancing was incredible, traditional Irish dancing was the focus but there were also dances with a Flamenco and Russian influence. Each dance told a story, from Irish mythology like the great hero Cú Chulainn to getting to the heart of Irish diaspora.

James said, *"the show was very entertaining"*. His favourite dance was 'Reel Around the Sun' which celebrated nature and he loved seeing his favourite instrument (the bodhrán) being played on stage.

He loves his Irish music and the show was an epic welcome return to live music after a year in lockdown.



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