



Cornerstone Annual Review

1/4/2020 – 31/3/2021



Providing care
and support in
your community

Providing care and support in your community.

Board of Directors: Peter Bailey (Chair),
Malcolm Laing, Tony Dinozzi, Alastair Forbes, Geoff Huggins,
Sharon Irvine, Helen Munro, Stephen Lynch, Helen Stuart.

Patrons: Dame Anne Begg and Karen Darke MBE.

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Welcome

I think it is safe to say that 2020/2021 has been the most challenging year that Cornerstone has faced in its entire history.

We endured the pandemic with colleagues, the people we support and their families having to live and work with ever-changing restrictions. At times this seemed relentless. There were several times when we thought it was coming to an end but more restrictions were around the corner. Despite these challenges, our colleagues across the organisation continued to provide the highest quality care to the people we support, demonstrating tremendous resilience and creativity. We adapted and changed to ensure we could continue to provide support by doing things differently, all the while helping individuals to live full and valued lives. One look at our social media channels showed so many happy and positive stories such as; moves to new homes, fun activities and fundraising challenges. I could go on and on but you'll see for yourself just a snapshot of those moments in this annual review.

Whilst these updates have been great to see, lockdown has taken its toll on our colleagues; people are tired, they've worked so hard at making sure the people we support are safe and happy whilst also living with the pandemic in their own lives. As an organisation we are very mindful of this and have a real focus on the wellbeing of our colleagues, through our Health and Wellbeing Champions and through promoting all the additional support available throughout Cornerstone, such as our AXA Be Supported employee assistance programme.

"We adapted and changed to ensure we could continue to provide support by doing things differently, all the while helping individuals to live full and valued lives."



Following a full review of our previous strategy, 'Local Cornerstone' we developed a new strategy, 'Future-proofing Cornerstone' which took the best bits of Local Cornerstone - the bits that worked - and refocussed on what we do best. Namely, being an expert provider of services to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs. The review also resulted in us proposing a new operating model and moving away from unaffordable contracts and services where we were unable to provide the quality we pride ourselves on.

Despite the challenges we've faced, many of which are sector wide, there have also been many positive achievements during this tumultuous year. We opened a new state of the art hub in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire that provides space for training, conferences, meetings and social activities for the people we support. We were proud to support those who had been shielding to reunite with their loved ones across the country, a very emotional time for many. We successfully adopted the use of MS Teams across the organisation which was incredibly helpful in ensuring that services were still delivered. Colleagues could still come together when they needed to, training continued and people could work flexibly from home and in the community as restrictions required.

Living through the pandemic has also exposed the fault lines in how social care is commissioned and delivered in Scotland. Years of underfunding and competitive tendering have taken their toll, leaving very little slack in the system. Indeed, the only reason the sector has survived is because of the workforce themselves, their dedication to the people we support, their commitment to providing the best care possible and the strong personal values they bring to their roles. We will continue to lobby and campaign for all social care workers to be recognised as the skilled professionals that they are. They deserve better.

Looking ahead, our focus will be on recovery and resilience. Recovery for all of us who have lived through these difficult times and the resilience, in particular of our colleagues who have expended so much personal energy in 'keeping the show on the road'. I am intensely proud of what they have achieved and how they rose to the challenges of the year. They are amazing colleagues who deserve all of our thanks.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hazel Brown'.

Hazel Brown
Chief Executive



"Looking ahead, our focus will be on recovery and resilience."



At a glance



The people supported in services across Scotland



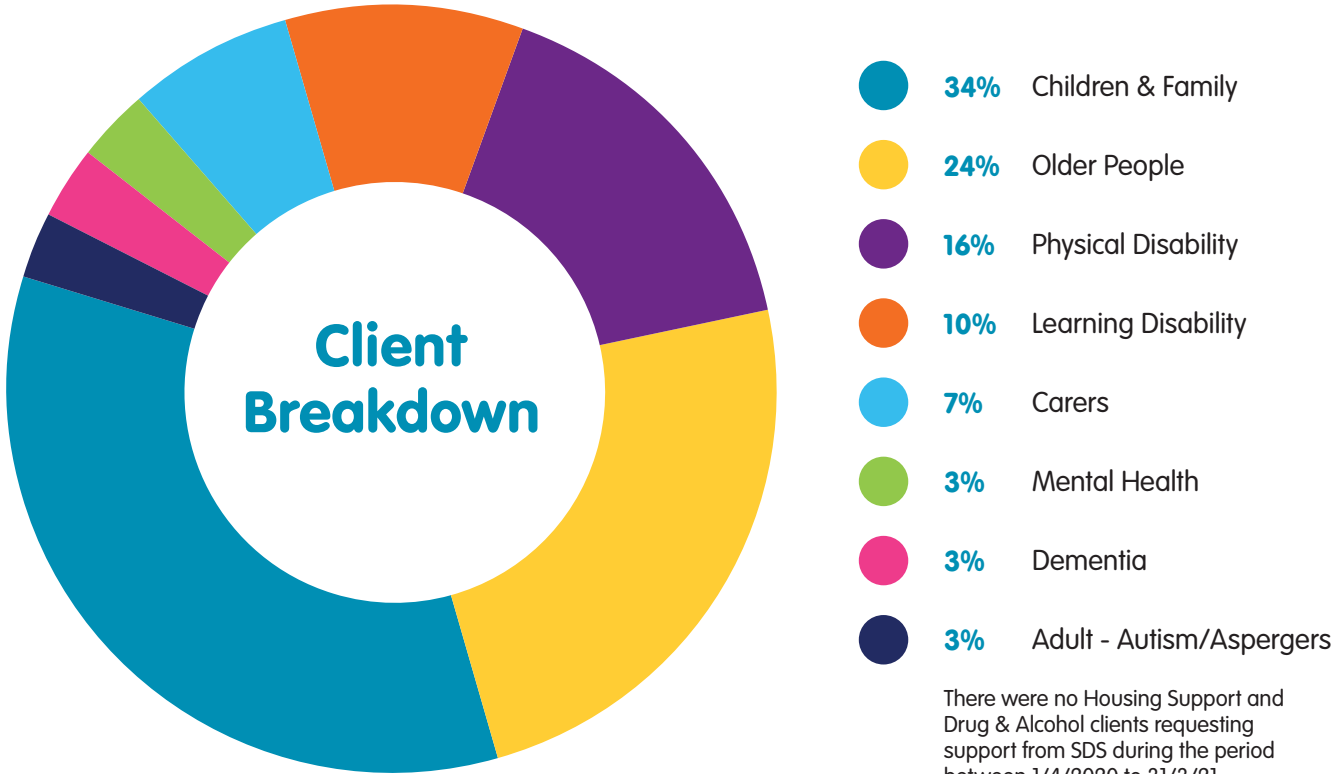


Cornerstone SDS

(self-directed support)

Cornerstone SDS is an impartial advice and information service based in the Aberdeenshire area. The team offer support by helping people with support needs to understand SDS (Self-Directed Support) and the care available to them. Through providing guidance, the SDS team help people make the most of their care package and funding, by finding solutions that best meets their needs. For more information please visit www.CornerstoneSDS.org.uk.

During the period between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 we supported 651 employers through the SDS contract. We supported 64 through the Individual Service Fund (IFS) contract.



There were no Housing Support and Drug & Alcohol clients requesting support from SDS during the period between 1/4/2020 to 31/3/21

A message from the branches

When the pandemic struck in 2020 it had a significant impact across all of the branches within Cornerstone. Many would describe it as the most challenging year the people we support, their families and colleagues have had in their lives to date. Each of our branches worked under varying restrictions during 2020/2021 and had to risk assess all aspects of the care being delivered to the people we support. We worked closely with our local Health and Social Care Partnerships, public health teams and other partner organisations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the people we support, family members and colleagues.

“I have had great experience as a Social Worker working with our Project Leader - she is caring, considerate and manages her staff team well. All the support workers I have come into contact with are similar, and you can tell they are committed to their service users.”

Despite these challenges and pressures across the services, we continued to provide the highest quality of care. When the pandemic was at its peak, we were proud to report low transmission rates within our services, keeping people as safe as possible from infection. We adapted the ways in which we carried out tasks whilst ensuring the health and wellbeing of the people we support was at the heart of all that we did.

We showcased the creativity of our support staff who transformed rooms into cinemas and spas; supported individuals to use technology to keep in contact with loved ones; supported them to wear unfamiliar masks and get the new COVID vaccine. In some cases we pivoted to provide home support rather than day services and arranged check-in calls for people who were not receiving their usual support.

Throughout this time our staff teams picked up many additional shifts to ensure there was adequate cover in services as well as trying to balance their home lives – a feat that cannot be underestimated, especially considering the emotional and psychological impact of working through a pandemic.

Over the past year, it has been great to reflect on many of the outcomes the branches have achieved despite the additional pressures they faced. We remobilised our services, opened two new supported accommodation models in Ayrshire and Buckie, reviewed our offices to make best use of resources and supported individuals to start back at college and work placements. Within Shared Lives we successfully completed the first year of our new Scottish Borders project with seven individuals transitioning over from foster care and two new full-time arrangements starting in the wider Shared Lives service.

Looking ahead, our focus will be on increasing the confidence of the people we support and our staff teams to access the community again, as restrictions begin to ease. We will also roll out a new operating model as part of our new organisational Strategic Plan, ‘Future-proofing Cornerstone’ which recognises our staff teams as experts in their field and commends social care as a career to others.

Despite tight restrictions, some of our branches still managed to creatively, but safely, mark Cornerstone’s 40th anniversary. For example, in North Lanarkshire virtual afternoon teas were arranged, which saw managers making doorstep deliveries to every person we support (along with their PPE deliveries). These treat boxes included sandwiches, scones, tea and some activities for people we support to do at home with support staff. Everyone was then invited into their very first Teams call together and people were able to catch up with friends they hadn’t seen in a while. The call ended with everyone singing Happy Birthday to Cornerstone.

In addition, 6 different people completed a Wee Wander Kiltwalk in their local area and managed to raise £461.65 for their branch. The money raised is now being used to bring some of the people we support together and enjoy celebrations as we move out of the pandemic.



Maintaining a quality service

As of 31st March 2021, Cornerstone had 60 registrations with the Care Inspectorate. The regular schedule of Care Inspectorate inspections was paused during the pandemic, with no inspections to report for the year 2020-21.

Our services across the country worked extremely hard to maintain service quality and follow the ever-changing COVID guidance closely, helping to keep the people we support, their families and our colleagues safe throughout the year. Our teams adapted to many new ways of working, keeping the needs of people we support at the heart of everything they did during lockdown. Video-calling, window or doorstep visits and creative outdoor activities all became commonplace during the course of this year!

150 Cornerstone customer surveys were completed during 2020-21 - a 16% increase on last year's response. The responses were collected from a mixture of people we support, professionals, family members and others closely involved with care. Responses were taken from across all ten branches.

The data shows encouraging responses to all five questions. Overall this year's responses are showing an upwards trend and increasing customer satisfaction.

"I'm more than happy with the support we get—Cornerstone carers treat you with respect and compassion—couldn't ask for anything more."

Are Cornerstone staff members caring?



Results show a slight increase, up from 88% last year. Encouragingly, 10% also 'mostly believe' Cornerstone staff are caring and only 1% don't. This is a shift from 9% and 3% on last year's figures respectively.

Are Cornerstone staff members professional?



84% of respondents think staff members are professional compared to 78% last year. The percentage of individuals who don't think staff members are professional dropped by half, from 4% last year to 2% this year.

Are you happy with Cornerstone?



The percentage of respondents happy with Cornerstone increased by 5% compared to last year's 77%. The percentage of those 'not happy' with Cornerstone has dropped to 6% which is an encouraging trend.

Would you recommend Cornerstone?



The percentage of individuals who would recommend Cornerstone rose by 7%, with the percentage of individuals who wouldn't recommend Cornerstone dropping from 10% last year to 7% this year.

Does Cornerstone make a positive difference?



Encouragingly the percentage of individuals that think Cornerstone make a positive difference has increased by 6% compared to last year.

Respondents were also asked: In what ways could Cornerstone improve?

Responses have been shared with Branch Leaders for review and to identify any actions.

They include:

- ✓ Avoiding last minute changes to rotas and producing easier to read versions.
- ✓ More training and development opportunities.
- ✓ More involvement of family members during recruitment process.
- ✓ Improved invoicing arrangements.

Our team

1122 part-time colleagues
468 full-time colleagues
343 relief colleagues

Part-time and relief colleagues combined, made up 75% of the workforce*.

*As at 31 March 2021



17.54%

Employee Turnover
(under target of 22.5%).

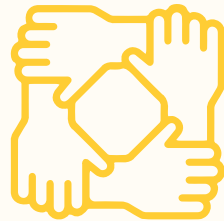


10.34 days

Average days lost due to sickness
(target was 10 days).



We successfully furloughed colleagues who were unable to work due to COVID-19 restrictions.



£26,529.78

Staff Hardship Fund
total grants made.



Our partnership working with UNISON continues to go from strength to strength, with the forthcoming launch of a Fair Work Partnership Forum.

The pandemic shone a light on health and social care and, in alignment with our own values, we knew that we needed to take the best possible care of our staff who were delivering vital care to keep the people we support safe.

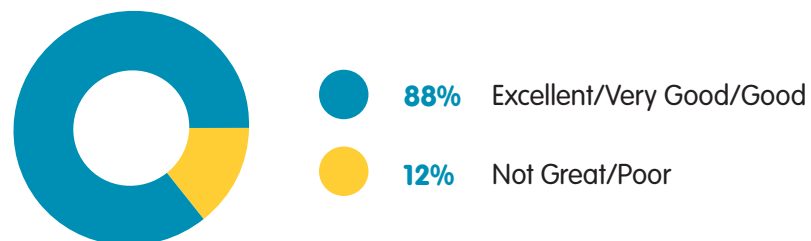
To support our colleagues we launched a short-term Staff Hardship Fund for those most affected by COVID-19. The Fund supported a number of colleagues who experienced financial distress due to the pandemic and made grants of £26,529.78 in total.

“The Cornerstone team care for the people they support very professionally and I’m wholly satisfied with the service.”

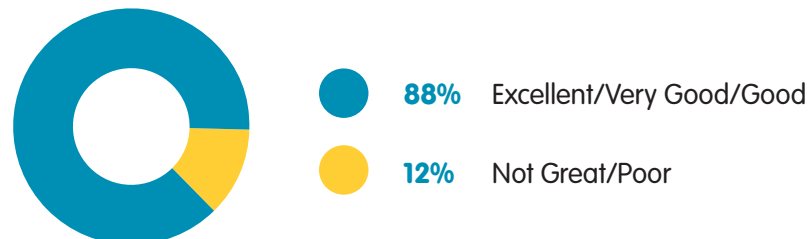
Our team

Instead of our usual staff engagement survey, we conducted a COVID Survey in June 2020.

What has the support from Cornerstone for your health, safety, and well-being been like?



How would you describe the quality of organisational communication during the pandemic?



The key recommendations from this survey include:

Consider more home working to support employee wellbeing, reduce carbon footprint (look at the need to set up effective workspaces outside of traditional offices).

Review flexible working and home working policies.

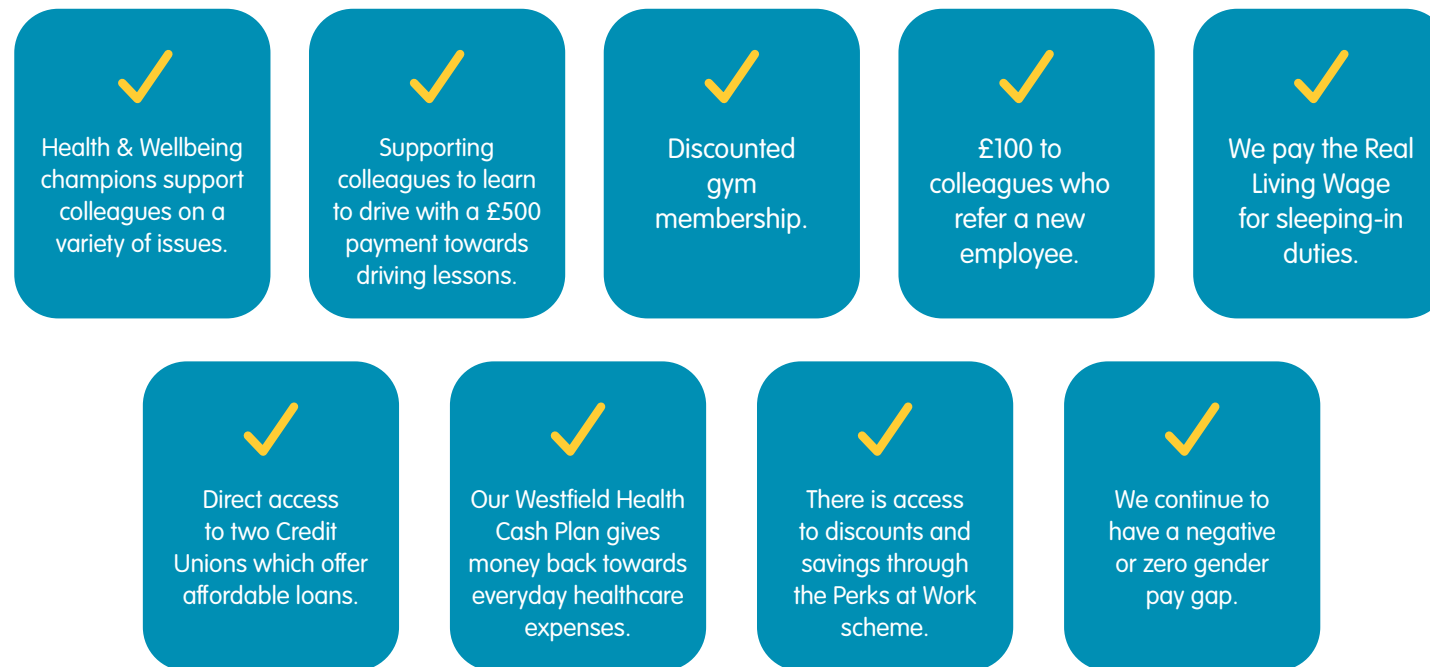
Use technology to support less unnecessary travel for meetings etc.

Look at ways to continue to enhance the role of support workers and further promote their status as key workers.

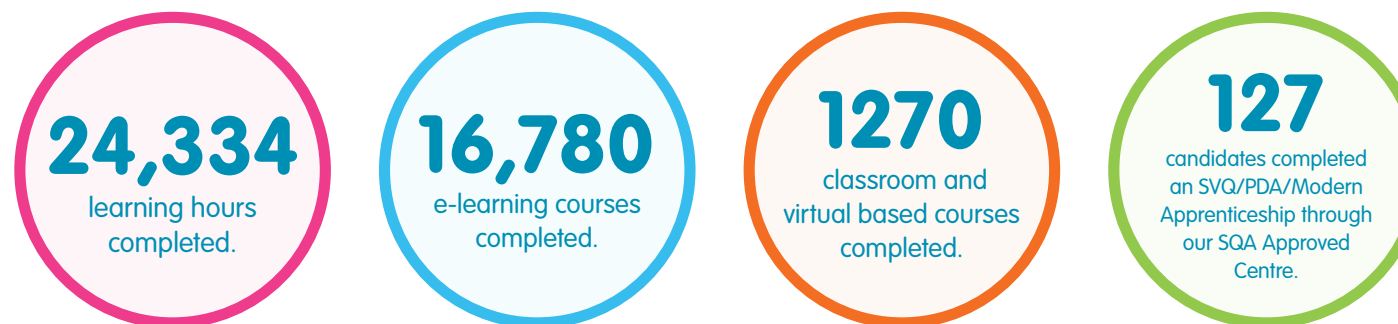
"I am so grateful for all the support from the branch/org during this time. To be part of an organisation that has all pulled together despite all the challenges. Everyone has worked so hard and been committed to each other."

"No one has had to deal with anything like this before, so everyone is learning as we go and what Cornerstone has managed to do has been brilliant, keeping colleagues safe and up to date."

Cornerstone continues to endeavour to be a good and fair employer and the wellbeing of our colleagues is an absolute priority. Just some of our colleague benefits during 2020-21 include:



We continue to invest heavily in learning and developments opportunities for our colleagues.



Fundraising



Thanks to our wonderful supporters and donors during 2020-21, an amazing £557,642 was raised to support Cornerstone's services, with £208,398 disbursed to our local services and projects across Scotland. A further £39,079.74 was disbursed through our Quality of Life Programme which continues to thrive. During 2020/21 the programme funded all sorts of activities, equipment, holidays and housing improvements for the people we support, helping them to live their best possible lives.

We are immensely proud of our team, and our dedicated donors, for all that they managed to achieve in a year that changed everything, including of course, fundraising. Cornerstone, not unlike other charities, had to postpone and cancel special events like our 40th Birthday celebrations and gala event as well as cope with the cancellation of other, normally well attended mass participation events such as the Kiltwalk. As part of our plans to safeguard Cornerstone during the pandemic, the difficult decision to furlough a number of fundraising team members was taken, allowing the organisation to temporarily reduce costs where possible. While our total fundraising income fell substantially from the previous year, our costs were also lowered thanks in part due to our successful furlough claims.

Despite the challenges there was still much to celebrate.

Cornerstone was lucky to continue to receive support in a number of areas including an incredibly special gift of £222,826 from Alexanderina Williamson, the mother of Mary

Williamson who we supported for 23 years at our Stevenson Court service in Aberdeen. We were honoured, and in such a difficult year for many, to receive such a special gift that will allow us to progress with our new Cornerstone strategy - to be the expert provider for more people like Mary.

Our corporate partners were extremely generous and delivered high levels of funding for various key projects to support during the first and second lockdowns. These included £10,000 from Craig Group International, £7,000 from Wood Group, £1,500 from Space Solutions and many, many others. Our corporate partners also gifted us their sponsorship and table costs for events that were cancelled, as well as pledged to support us again in the following financial year. In 2020-21 we raised more than £25,000 from our corporate partners. Cornerstone also benefited from substantial in-kind donations of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from corporate supporters across Scotland.

To celebrate our 40th birthday, almost a year late – but certainly in style, we launched a new inclusive virtual challenge called '40 miles for 40 years of Care'. We asked our supporters to walk, run or cycle 40 miles during the month of February 2021. Team Cornerstone raised more than £14,000 from 80 incredible walkers, runners and cyclists.

Within the year we secured £267,840 from grants, trusts and foundations who continued to support Cornerstone well. Thanks to the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Fund we were able to modernise our remote learning technology to aid our training delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic. BBC Children in Need continued to support our children's service, CLASP, by providing funds which enabled the team to move their activities outdoors. Shared Care Scotland's Better Breaks and RS MacDonald Charitable Trust also continued to fund vital aspects of our CLASP Service. Cornerstone TV, a new project which aims to provide equipment like tablets to the people we support, received funding from The Scottish Government's Adapt and Thrive programme.

Quality of Life funding

Spa Treats

The Team at Blackwood Court, Dundee had a busy summer preparing the garden for the installation of a hot tub which was purchased from Quality of Life. Before the COVID-19 pandemic both ladies at Blackwood Court regularly used hydro pools but these had been closed since March 2020. The hydro pools aid stretching and gives both ladies, who are wheelchairs users, a feeling of weightlessness and a change in posture.

One family member said, "We are ever so grateful for our daughter and her friend to get the opportunity of having something like this, as we know just how much it will benefit them. We can't wait to get a shot too! LOL!" A Blackwood Court Team Member added, "This really does show that there is no stopping people from living a valued life and we must continually think of ways to adapt to suit the needs of the people we support."



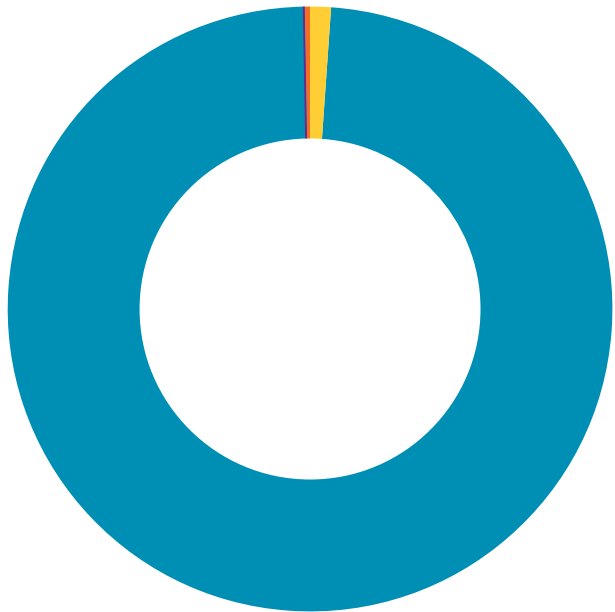
Welcome home

In December 2020 our colleagues in Ayrshire were delighted to take ownership of a new service, Bessie Dunlop Court. With the first tenant moving in mid-January 2021 the team at Bessie Dunlop Court applied for funding to put together welcome packs which included items such as chocolates, jigsaws, cards and some materials for arts and crafts. This extra little touch ensured the people we support felt welcomed in their new home and helped ease the boredom due to the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place at the time.



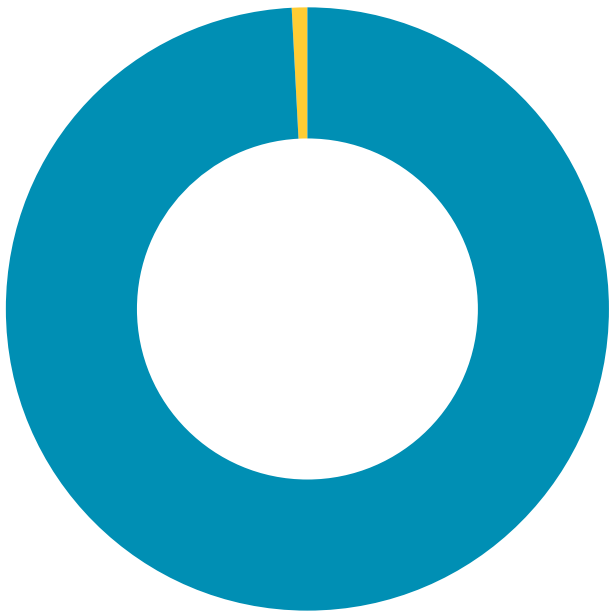
Financial stats and statement for the period

Total Income
£43,549,520



- Charitable activities £43,007,981
- Donation and legacies £540,173
- Investments £1,304
- Other trading activities £62

Total Expenditure
£43,562,700



- Charitable activities £43,247,082
- Cost of raising voluntary income £315,618

Thank you

This annual review tells the story of a period of unprecedented challenge for Cornerstone and the whole social care sector. To maintain as many services to the people we support over the period of the COVID 19 pandemic is a quite remarkable story.

It's a story of commitment. It tells of the amazing commitment of our staff who rose to every challenge presented to them because they put the people we support at the heart of everything they did. It's that unselfish commitment that that we as a Board are proud of.

It's a story of resilience. The people we support and their families showed great resilience in responding to new ways of service provision and adapting to a new normal. As a Board we appreciate this goodwill which in turn enabled all our staff and volunteers to demonstrate resilience in circumstances that required real creativity.

It's an inspiring story. Cornerstone is known for its inspirational initiatives and innovative ways of supporting people across Scotland. In the midst of the pandemic, it would have been understandable if these had not been in evidence. On the contrary these pages tell a story of inspirational approaches to helping people to live full and valued lives. This in turn has inspired us as a Board.

It's a story of success. In face of all the limitations and difficulties of the pandemic it is especially pleasing to see the high levels of satisfaction from the people we support and from staff. The Board is encouraged that in some cases there have been improvements in these levels and also that the lessons learned from the surveys are to be addressed in order to achieve further improvements

It's an energy filled story. The challenges for staff over these days were unparalleled. This drew on all their physical and mental resources. The overall impact on staff was one of endless tiredness, adapting to new ways of working and coping with the debilitating effect of wearing Personal Protective Equipment over long days. For leadership and management, it called for flexibility and ingenuity. All of this required boundless energy which the Board did not take for granted.

It's a story of service. Throughout the challenges everyone demonstrated a level of service which went well beyond the normal expectations. This was also evident at Board level. Aside from the pandemic this was a challenging time for the Board who found themselves depleted due to a number of resignations. It is to the credit of those remaining board members that they 'stepped up' to ensure continued governance and direction. This was particularly evident in the willingness of Malcolm Laing and Elaine Thomson to take on the roles of joint chair through which they provided sound and confident leadership.

Commitment, Resilience, Inspiring, Success, Energy, and Service. This is the story of how Cornerstone managed the **CRISES of the pandemic – It's a story well worth telling.**



Peter Bailey
Chair

Thank you! We wouldn't be able to do any of it without the help of...

The White Top Foundation

Inspiring Scotland

Shared Care Scotland

BBC Children in Need

The Corra Foundation

ASDA Foundation

W A Cargill Foundation

The Screwfix Foundation

BBC Children in Need

The National Lottery

BBC Children in Need

RES Group

Ina Scott Sutherland Charitable Foundation

John Gordon Charitable Trust

The National Lottery

St Katherine's Fund

Connecting Scotland

Scottish Government

Kevin Duthie

Aramark

James Hutton Institute

Craig International

Barclays

Petrofac

Ledingham Chalmers

CNR

Space Solutions

John Clark Motor Group

CNOOC

RS Macdonald Charitable Trust

The Smedley Family

Wood



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