

Cornerstone News

Festive edition – Let's celebrate!!

Winter 2024



Celebrating the
STAR Awards!

★
Cornerstone

Providing care
and support in
your community



Welcome to our Special Edition Winter Newsletter!

Like an overstuffed stocking on Christmas morning it's packed with good news stories which are sure to put you in a positive mood just in time for the festive season. There's an update on our recent, fantastic win at the Top Employer Awards, news from our fundraising team and many of the festive ways you can give to Cornerstone this Christmas, as well as a nod to some New Year career opportunities.

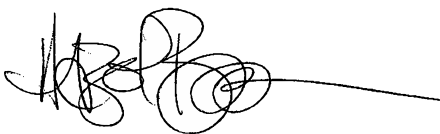
Suffice to say it's been a busy year here at Cornerstone and a great way to round it up was at our annual Star Awards, held again this year at the Apex Hotel in Dundee. And what a day it was, the whole event reminds me of what a difference good social care can make to people's lives as well as the amazing achievements of the people we support, their ability to overcome some of the most challenging of obstacles. It truly represents all that is special about our colleagues and the people we support, their commitment, their positivity and their determination. At the awards we celebrated colleagues who've been with us for 10, 15, 20, 25 and even 30 years which is just amazing. We also heard some fantastic stories about the people we support including a special Outstanding Achievement Award for Paul Brown who is supported by our North Lanarkshire services. I guarantee that you will be moved by his story and many of the others you will read.

The whole event was wrapped up by Scott Goodfellow entertaining us with his live rendition of 'Tiny Bubble's, Scott is a natural entertainer and if I had my way he should be this year's Christmas No.1 for sure!

So just a reminder as we head into the Christmas season that many of our colleagues will be working throughout, ensuring the people we support have the special time they deserve, so thank you to all of them and to everyone that supports Cornerstone throughout the year.

Merry Christmas to you all!

Best wishes



Hazel Brown
CEO, Cornerstone

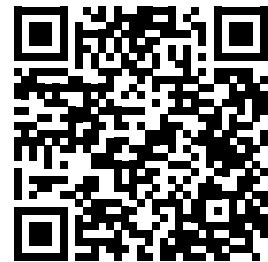


Cover story!

Our front cover features Paul Brown from our North Lanarkshire Supported Living Branch, Paul was the winner of Cornerstone's Mary Williamson Awards this year, in recognition of the amazing fitness journey he has been on!

You can read more about Paul's story on [page 10](#).

To help us support more people like Paul why not make a festive donation to Cornerstone by scanning this QR code below.



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BEST TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

CORNERSTONE



Winner at The Herald's Top Employer Awards!

We were delighted recently to be announced as winners of the 'Best Training and Skills Development Initiative' category at The Herald's Top Employer Awards!

The award was presented in recognition of our new Professional Practitioner Programme which aims to give new Support Practitioners at Cornerstone the best possible start to their career in social care.

The judges commented:

"Cornerstone were chosen for their bold values and remarkable growth, becoming one of Scotland's largest third-sector care providers. Their robust three-stage training program has effectively addressed recruitment and retention challenges, reducing turnover. Supported by staff and business alike, the initiative impressed with strong testimonials and a clear impact on employee development."

Huge congratulations to all those who were involved in the development of the programme! The award is true testament to the ambition, determination and hard work of our teams and aptly recognises the innovative approach taken, as well as the importance we place on supporting our new colleagues.



Recruitment

New year, new career!

Join the team of Cornerstone Stars in 2025. Could the care sector be the rewarding career you are looking for? Time for a change? [#NewYearNewCareer](#)

Hear from Cornerstone colleagues about what it's like to work for one of Scotland's leading social care charities by [clicking here](#) to watch this video.

Read more about our current vacancies here: www.jobtrain.co.uk/Cornerstone/

It's your time to shine!

Fundraising

Meet Darren Campbell-Pike, our new Fundraising Lead

Hi, I am really excited to have recently joined Cornerstone, as Fundraising Lead, and to help with all the fantastic work that the charity does. I've been in fundraising for about 15 years but volunteered with a range of good causes for longer than that, some very similar to Cornerstone.

My past and background, as well as my experiences at various charities, have strongly instilled in me the idea of equality of opportunity and giving everyone the chance to lead happy and fulfilling lives. Doing that requires skill and passion, which the teams at Cornerstone clearly already have in abundance, AND of course money, which hopefully my team and I can help with.

Beyond fundraising I'm a big football fan, gig goer, book buyer (more than I will ever have time to actually read) and Dog Dad. I am looking forward to meeting our supporters, colleagues and the people we support across the country over coming months, and helping them to live the best life possible!





Events & Challenges Calendar

Looking for a new goal?

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

Run, walk, cycle, skydive or do your own thing. What challenge will you take on? **Take a look at Star Award Winner Paul's story on page 10 for some inspiration.**

We have highlighted just a handful of events you can get involved in this year whilst fundraising for Cornerstone at the same time!

You can browse all of our events and challenges on our website, [click here to find more](#).



	Skydive	9th February	Strathallan Airfield
	Supernova Kelpies 5k	14th March	Falkirk
	Abseil the Falkirk Wheel	15th & 16th March	Falkirk
	Kilomathon	6th April	Edinburgh
	Glasgow Kiltwalk	26th & 27th April	Glasgow
	Edinburgh Marathon Festival	24th & 25th May	Edinburgh
	Aberdeen Kiltwalk	1st June	Aberdeen
	Glasgow Men's & Women's 10k	15th June	Glasgow
	Scottish Half Marathon & 10k	17th August	Edinburgh
	Dundee Kiltwalk	17th August	Dundee
	Zipside the Clyde	22nd & 23rd August	Glasgow
	Edinburgh Kiltwalk	14th September	Edinburgh
	Loch Ness Marathon	28th September	Loch Ness
	AJ Bell Great Scottish Run	5th October	Glasgow
	Halloween Care for Cake	October	Anywhere
	Supernova Forth Road Bridge 5k	1st November	South Queensferry
	Dog Jog Virtual Challenge	Anytime	Anywhere
	Cornerstone Disco	Monthly	Beach Ballroom, Aberdeen

2025



Something else?

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

By joining in our fundraising efforts you will make a huge difference to the lives of local young people and adults living with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.

To register for a place and get support with fundraising please contact us on **01224 256 000** or at getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk



Regift Appeal

If you would be interested in hosting a re-gift donation station for duplicate or unwanted Christmas gifts this year, please get in touch.

Re-gifting is a great way to turn unwanted gifts into exciting prizes for Cornerstone raffles and tombolas and also helps to reduce waste.

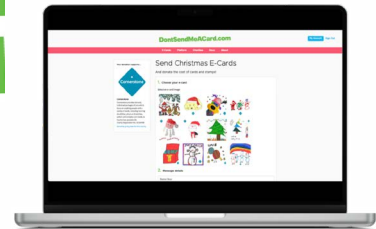
All you need to do is display a poster and box in your workplace or organisation to collect gifts.

Contact getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk to find out more.

Don't send me a card

Looking for an alternative to traditional Christmas cards? Did you know we have an incredible selection of ecards created by people we support on DontSendMeACard? Access the full collection available to purchase on dontsendmeacard.com – with all proceeds coming straight back to Cornerstone!

DontSend MeACard



easyfundraising

You spend, and brands donate to **Cornerstone**

TESCO

JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS

ASOS Sainsbury's

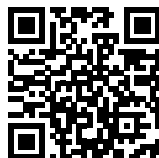
JUST EAT

amazon

ASDA

7000+ brands

Scan here
to get signed up



Help fundraise for Cornerstone while you shop this Christmas, all without any cost to you! Easyfundraising turns everyday shopping online into free donations.

When you use easyfundraising to shop with any of the 3,600 retailers, the retailer makes a small donation to your cause to say 'thank you'.

Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Morrisons are all signed up so when doing your weekly shop, why not go through easyfundraising; or Apple if purchasing iPads and other tech items; or Booking.com when booking accommodation; Amazon, Argos and Dunelm if purchasing homewares; or Go Compare and Money Super Market when renewing insurance. There are so many retailers to choose from!!

Please join the supporters who are already signed up and are raising money for Cornerstone Community Care!

You can access our Easyfundraising page [here](#).

Celebrating the



Star Awards 2024



We held our 2024 STAR Awards recently at the Apex Hotel in Dundee to celebrate the significant achievements of our colleagues and the amazing people we support across the country. With the theme 'Cornerstone at the Movies' many of our guests really went to town with their fancy dress and props!

This year 85 colleagues from across the country were eligible for either their ten, twenty, twenty-five or thirty years long service, representing a cumulative 1,235 years of dedication and commitment to Cornerstone. Our thanks to the Lord Provost of Dundee, Bill Campbell for supporting the presentation of certificates. Awards were also made for Colleague of the Year (North, South, and Business Support), Learner of the Year, Team of the Year and Fundraiser of the Year.

At the end of the event, guests were treated to a very special performance of 'Tiny Bubbles' from Scott Goodfellow, one of the many talented people we support in the Scottish Borders. Scott also features in our new Cornerstone film which was premiered at this year's Star Awards. You can watch the film on Youtube [by clicking here.](#)

The Mary Williamson Awards 2024



The Mary Williamson Awards were founded in memory of the late Mary Williamson, who was supported by Cornerstone for over 23 years and left a generous legacy to the charity. **Mary enjoyed dressing up, holidays and parties and was much loved by everyone at Stevenson Court. The awards pay tribute to her zest for life and are designed to recognise the personal goals and achievements of the people Cornerstone support.**

These goals include;

- An act of kindness to others
- Facing a fear
- A new craft, hobby, or activity
- A training course or employment opportunity
- A fundraising event
- A personal health challenge or fitness goal
- or any other special achievement

A number of very special Mary Williamson Awards were presented to the people Cornerstone supports at the Star Awards. A total of 31 fantastic nominations were received, with each winner receiving £250, a medal and a certificate. Runners-up received £100, a medal and a certificate. Several highly commended awards were also made.

The winners, runners up and highly commended for the Mary Williamson Awards 2024 were;

Shared Lives



Winner – Alison Douglas

Alison has been supported within Cornerstone's Shared Lives service since 2017 and has built up a lovely relationship of trust and friendship with her Shared Lives carer. She was recently diagnosed with type 1 diabetes which came as a huge shock, and as you would expect, was very upsetting.

Since then however, Alison has made huge strides in being able to manage her condition independently, using a free style libra on her arm which is connected to her phone to record blood sugar readings. Her confidence and self-esteem has grown significantly, and her attitude to life has changed. She is now the driving force behind all the amazing goals that she wants to achieve and has achieved. She recently went on a fantastic cruise holiday with her Shared Lives carer, enjoying all the amazing experiences. She also has a range of hobbies, looks after her little dog called Sam and has taken on new activities and outings as well as engaging in volunteer work.

Her nominator commented: **"Alison has flourished into an amazing young woman who has not let her Type 1 Diabetes diagnosis control her life and how she wants to live it."**

Aberdeen North and Shire

Winner – Gavin Doak

In October last year Gavin, who has learning difficulties and Down's Syndrome, moved into our Arnha service having previously lived in the family home. This was the first time he would be moving to live independently. He has developed a newfound confidence, learning to live with new people as well as building strong relationships with his staff teams.

Members of support staff as well as his family have commented on how much he has grown and achieved since his move. His nominator told us **"He is a real cheeky chappy always up to mischief and loves nothing more than to have a giggle with staff."**



Aberdeen South and Shire

Winner – Tamara Batten

Tamara who is supported at our Inchbrae service is known for her confident, bubbly and outgoing personality. She recently reached out to Catriona from the Fundraising team with the fantastic idea about how Cornerstone could improve our recruitment drive. She suggested that people we support could make a video showing the service and describing what they get up to, what their needs are and what makes them happy, so that potential new colleagues get an insight into their lives. Tamara is always keen to help to promote Cornerstone and actively gets involved in multiple fundraising events. She was a huge help to the Fundraising team at Christmas last year drawing the winning tickets for the Christmas raffle. She is also always happy to get involved in photography and videos to help the Marketing and Communications team.

Her nominator told us **“Tamara is always thinking of ways to help with recruitment, help fundraising by taking part in events and will do all of these things with a huge smile on her face. She is thinking of her care, and the care of the other people in her service.”**



Runner up – Lindsey Telfer

Lindsey was part of the fantastic Crudenlea team who took part in the 'Wee Wander' at Aberdeen Kiltwalk this year. The whole team were excited to take off on the walk, especially chatty Lindsey who was all smiles! It was a hot and sunny day when Lindsey tackled the mission of travelling 3.9 miles through woods, on paths, pavements and finally, on grass. As Lindsey is a wheelchair user, parts of the terrain must have been tricky to navigate but she kept pushing and didn't give up! Lindsey was focused on completing the Kiltwalk by

herself, without asking for help from her support team. Her determination and stamina were fantastic, and she dug deep to roll over the finish line herself.

Lindsey's nominator told us: **“I was part of the team cheering all our walkers over the finish line and it was amazing to see Lindsey, turning the wheels of her own wheelchair as she crossed the finish line.”**

Ayrshire

Winner – Aly Boy

Aly Boy came to Cornerstone initially as part of our Community Support Service in Ayrshire and then moved into his own home in 2021 at Bessie Dunlop Court. He has grown as a person since his move and is an ambassador for the people we support. He is a key member of 'The Cornerstormers Group' always bringing great ideas and giving honest feedback. As part of the group, he advocated to hold a local, Branch Star Awards and to include personal awards. Everyone had a key role in planning the awards ceremony and were overjoyed to all receive special recognition. His gentle manner and kind nature makes everyone feel welcome and included. Aly has learnt how to express himself over the last few years due to his own hard work and the support from others around him including his loving family and support team who are all extremely proud of him.

His nominator said: **“Aly's personality is contagious, and he lights up any room that he goes into. He brightens up my day when I am at Bessie Dunlop Court and is always game for a laugh. I am so proud of his achievements to date and watching him grow has been a privilege.”**

Runner up – Catherine Hendrie

Catherine moved into Castlecraigs in August 2023 after living in a community where she faced challenges. Her new home was a fresh start for her which was both exciting and daunting, but she fully embraced it. After a period of settling into her new environment she began to accept support from others and has built strong relationships with the staff team as well as other people we support within the service. Catherine is now a huge part of the Castlecraigs community

and loves to spend her time doing jigsaws. She has a heart of gold and would do anything for her new neighbours who she has built lasting friendships with. Catherine's nominator said: **“When Catherine first moved into Castlecraigs she was reluctant to accept support from staff and now she is planning a holiday away to Dublin with them!”**



Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian

Winner – Rosa Allen

Rosa Allen is supported by our Forrest Walk team in West Lothian. Last year Rosa saw someone on TV receive CPR that saved their life. She approached staff telling them she would love to have this skill and made it a new goal to achieve. The staff team helped Rosa research companies that could accommodate her as a wheelchair user. They came across a company called Alba Care who adapted their course to teach Rosa how to instruct someone to do CPR from her wheelchair and with reduced mobility. Rosa was supported by staff to book into her course where she was taught CPR, how to put someone into the recovery position and how to dress a wound and treat cuts. As well as all of this she learned about allergies and how to deal with anaphylaxis and what to do if someone is having a heart or asthma attack. She thoroughly enjoyed the day and was absolutely thrilled to pass with flying colours. Not only that but she was also gifted her very own first aid kit.

Although a confident lady, Rosa had reservations when it came to things of a medical nature. She showed bravery in taking on this venture and since then has helped by offering new staff members medical tips and advice. She has already put her skills to good use by administering first aid to staff in the service by cleaning and dressing small cuts and burns.

Rosa's nominator said **"Rosa is an inspiration to the whole team. When she passed her First Aid course she told me that 'even though she has a disability, she doesn't let it define her'."**



Peter Brown from our Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian Branch was also awarded a very well-deserved Highly Commended.



Runner up – Steven Thompson

Steven Thompson is supported by our Rankine Street service and was nominated for a number of reasons. Steven arrived in Rankine Street in December last year after previously living with his mother. At this point he had limited life skills, poor sleeping patterns and only trusted his family to cut his hair. After only six weeks Steven had achieved a lot and as the weeks went on, Steven wanted to try going to a barber's shop. With the support from Rankine Street colleagues, Steven picked out pictures of styles he liked and sat to have his hair cut. This was a massive achievement for him. Steven can now do so much more for himself including carrying out many household tasks, planning meals and making shopping lists. He attends the Wellgate day centre and likes to go down to the pub on a Monday where he can socialise and has made great friends. With the support from Cornerstone's Rankine Street team, Steven has excelled already with lots more to achieve ahead.

His nominator said **"Steven has achieved a lot in a short period of time. His family can now see what Steven can achieve with the support from Cornerstone and are settled knowing that their son has mastered important life skills."**

Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire

Winner – Ashleigh Clark

Bubbly Ashleigh Clark has a learning difficulty and cerebral palsy and is supported by our team at Herries Road. When the opportunity arose to volunteer at the Cornerstone Glasgow office, she applied right away as it had been a dream of hers for a long time to get a job. She worked hard preparing for her interview, with support staff propping up questions at the side of her bed for her to practice her answers at night. On the day she smashed her interview and was offered the job. Since then, she has been busy with Branch Co-ordinator Holly, preparing a rota for her. She has been at the office to greet YPI students, telling them all about herself and Cornerstone, helping at meetings with the Board and assisting in various other meetings at the office. As she is a very sociable person and a hard worker, this has been the perfect volunteering role for her and has given her a great sense of pride.

Ashleigh's nominator said: **"Her mum messaged the team to say, 'It's been a dream of hers for years to get a job and you have made it happen!'"**



Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire (continued)

Runner up – Derek Collins

Derek (pictured on page 8 with Ashleigh) is supported by Cornerstone in Kirkintilloch. He works at Silverbirch Garden Centre where he is provided with training opportunities through work-focused activities. His role involves him taking part in several activities from processing different types of compost and loading wheelbarrows, to helping the delivery team and the polytunnel team. Due to his good physical fitness, he happily takes on the heavier jobs in the factory such as moving bags over to the sealing machine and carrying bags for customers to their cars. His confidence in carrying out new tasks has grown significantly, and he ensures he does everything to a high standard. He enjoys chatting to customers and having a laugh with his work team. His fantastic communication skills mean that he easily follows instructions, and his engaging personality makes him a key team member.

Derek's nominator commented: **"Derek can show me different flowers he has grown with his colleagues. He is chuffed to be showing off his work, as Cornerstone staff don't always get to see what he gets up to whilst he is away at work."**



Glenn Thompson (above) from our Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire Branch was also awarded a very well-deserved Highly Commended.



Moray

Winner – Abigail Overing



Abigail who is supported by our team at Parkholme has a diagnosis of Rett Syndrome as well as other complications. She is supported using a wheelchair, having lost the ability to walk unaided. Earlier this year she started to receive Botox treatment to her hip, leg and elbow. Since then, Abigail, the Community Learning Disability physio and Parkholme staff have been working exceptionally hard to help Abigail to regain abilities she had lost.

Abigail's hard work has meant that she has begun learning to walk again with the support of a standing sling. Her progress has been incredible and emotional for everyone on the journey with her. The next stage will be to use the support of a standing frame and further Botox treatments. The work Abigail has put in this far cannot be underestimated, it is an amazing example of what determination, drive and dedication to succeed can achieve.

Abigail's nominee said: **"Abigail has worked extensively with physio Ally and the rehabilitation team to regain her movement. The determination she has is remarkable. We are all so very proud of Abigail's achievements."**

Runner up – Sarah Watt

Sarah is supported by our team at Packman in Moray. In December last year, Sarah was rushed to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary by her support team where she received a kidney transplant. Although understandably nervous, she was incredibly brave before her surgery and afterwards, through her recovery. Her life has been transformed since having the surgery, with staff commenting on her driven nature and determination.

She is now able to do things she always wanted to do but couldn't due to her lack of energy and ability. Everyone within the Moray branch is in awe of how far Sarah has come and her attitude of not letting anything get in her way.

Her nominator said **"Sarah is an absolute inspiration to us all!"**



North Lanarkshire Community Support

Winner – Martin Devine

Martin has achieved so much since moving and receiving support to live in his own house which is located close to his family home. His independence has grown leaps and bounds since living in his own space. He is supported to carry out his own housework, take trips round to visit his family and regularly attends a drama group which he enjoys very much. Martin took an exciting trip down to

Blackpool last year that was such a success that he decided he wanted to go back and do it all again this year.

Martin's nominator said: **"Martin is a very likeable man. He gets on well with everyone he meets and deserves this recognition."**

Runner up – Alistair Kidd

Our second finalist Alastair Kidd recently moved into his very own flat after staying at home for 62 years. He was understandably apprehensive to stay himself and at first found it hard to settle. Since then, he has come on leaps and bounds in learning how to live independently. He has overcome so much to get to where he is in his life and is now very content and happy in his flat.

His nominator said: **"He deserves this award he has achieved and overcome so much and as a team we are very proud of him."**



North Lanarkshire Supported Living

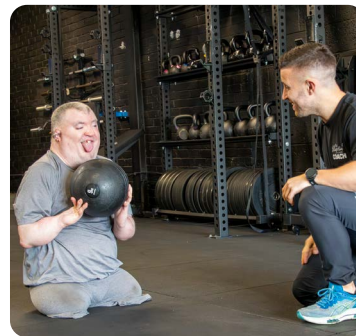
Winner – Paul Brown

Paul has a very rare condition called Robert's Syndrome, with restricted movement in both of his arms, and with both of his legs being amputated as a young adult. Paul also has visual and hearing impairments and asthma. COVID had a significant impact on Paul's health, weight, mobility and mental health; he stopped attending activities that he previously enjoyed such as swimming and rebound therapy. However, with the recent help of his fantastic support team he has been able to transform his life!

In Spring last year Paul was presented with the idea of joining a gym by one of his support staff. He watched videos of the gym and liked the idea of having big muscles and getting stronger. Setting a fitness challenge, the team encouraged and accompanied Paul to a gym where they had managed to negotiate discounted 1:1 personal training sessions to fit Paul's budget. Working closely with his brilliant PT and by making adaptations, Paul's strength has now tripled from being able to lift 4kg to lifting 12kg dumbbells and being able to drag a 50kg sled in under 45 seconds across 20 metres! He can now get in and out of his wheelchair independently again; has not had any more asthmatic episodes or chest infections and now actively looks for healthy options for his meals at the supermarket. With the support of Cornerstone and Daniel at Blueprint Fitness, Paul has flourished physically and mentally and now has a hugely positive outlook day to day. He has become a social butterfly again, always looking to talk to others and sharing in their life experiences.

Paul's Mum, Maggie told us: **"Going to the gym has had a hugely beneficial impact on both Paul's physical and mental wellbeing. His focus and determination to do the best he possibly can are evident every time he goes**

Overall Outstanding Achievement Award



for a workout. He has developed a greater desire to improve his health and diet and the enjoyment he experiences at the gym is a real driving force. Due to the creativity of his personal trainer Daniel, who has developed a bespoke fitness programme for Paul, he is able to access a mainstream, community facility which, until recently, seemed completely unachievable. As a result of this team approach from the staff both at Cornerstone and Blueprint Fitness, Paul's life has been improved for the better."

Paul's Personal Trainer, Daniel told us: **"It's been a pleasure getting to know and train Paul over the past year, not only does he brighten up the gym with his vibrant personality but has overcome every challenge I have set him to date. I look forward to the path and work we have ahead."**

North Lanarkshire Supported Living (continued)

Runner up – George Brannan

George Brannan has had a very busy and exciting time over the last year. After stepping down from a voluntary role he held for the last six years with Barnardo's, George was ready for a new challenge. He started his journalism journey by accepting the new role of "Roving Reporter" for Cornerstone's North Lanarkshire newsletter "That's a Wrap". George's outgoing personality and sociable nature has made him the perfect fit for this role. After receiving money from fundraising, he purchased a Dictaphone and a digital camera as the necessary tools of the trade, learning new skills in using the technology to present his work. He now interviews people we support as well as Cornerstone colleagues to get a snapshot of their lives. With support from his team, the article is presented and published in the newsletter under the column name "The Brannan Banter". In April this year George completed the Wee Wander Glasgow Kiltwalk and raised an incredible £240 for Cornerstone. Although George is not a fan of walking, he took on the challenge to give something back to Cornerstone who he holds dear to his heart. He is always at the forefront of Cornerstone events and is eager to help from running tombola stalls, helping with raffles and even taking on the role of bingo caller on several occasions!

His nominator said **"George is a popular person and is often described as the life and soul of the party."**



Lesley Mitchell from our North Lanarkshire Supported Living Branch was also awarded a very well-deserved Highly Commended.



Scottish Borders



Winner – Isobel MacKay

When Isobel first started receiving support from Cornerstone, she was living in a flat which was in poor condition making it hard for her to maintain her health and wellbeing. During a review, Isobel expressed her desire for a fresh start in a new home. In February 2023, with the help of her support team and housing provider, Isobel moved to a new flat. She took great pride in choosing a colour scheme that matched her vibrant personality and added some colour to her housing complex with an array of flowers in the shared gardens. Since moving, Isobel has kept her new home clean and tidy, which has positively impacted her health and wellbeing, and she now enjoys having friends over for visits. Isobel is a pillar of the community, always willing to help others with a smile. She volunteers at a local charity shop and her church, often assisting with youth groups and soup kitchens. Despite being a pensioner, she has no intention of slowing down anytime soon!

Her nominator said: **"Isobel has fully bought in to her new lifestyle. She is the kindest person I know – always willing to help others and she always has a smile for everyone."**

Runner up – Matthew Watson

Earlier this year Matthew and his niece Olivia decided to fundraise for Cornerstone's Scottish Borders Day Service. Matthew wanted to help provide more supplies for activities for himself and everyone who attends the day service to enjoy together. To do this they paired up and took part in the Penicuik, Hawick, Selkirk, Melrose, West Linton, Peebles and Musselburgh Common Riding Junior ride outs. Matthew enjoys horse riding; this was a huge achievement to help

build his independence and social skills as well as keep fit and take part in something he is passionate about.

His nominator said **"It was an incredible memory-making experience for both Matthew and his niece Olivia who have a very close bond. By taking part they achieved something very special together."**

West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute

Winner – Helen Chalmers

Helen lives in our Waterfront service and has a learning disability. During lockdown she started walking and followed a healthy eating plan. She completed the 40 miles for 40 years walking challenge but had to take a rest eventually when her cellulitis flared up. She gave aqua aerobics a try then decided to go for a swim as when she was younger, she was part of a disability swimming club where she won a number of medals. Her passion for swimming was sparked again and it brought back a lot of positive memories for her. Helen likes a challenge to motivate herself and hold herself accountable. She signed up for the New Year swim and even managed to convince two support workers to take the plunge with her! After this she set

herself a personal challenge – to swim 1,000 lengths, with the reward of going out on a seaplane if she managed it. Helen and Service Lead Carly discussed how she would track her progress and she quickly became stronger and faster in the water. After getting a Fitbit for her birthday she was able to track her swims. Helen achieved her goal of 1,000 lengths and booked on the Loch Lomond seaplane with two of her housemates and two of the team to celebrate her success.

Helen's nominator simply said: **"Helen is an inspiration!"**

Runner up – Emily Kincaid

Emily had struggled with situations in her previous community and decided to move to our Waterfront service for a fresh start. She is always willing to listen to people's problems and staff have been impressed with her ability to cope with new situations. They have told stories of Emily shopping on Amazon and coming across a seat that would fit inside a noodle swimming aid. She recognised this would be great for another supported person and immediately emailed it to the Service Lead! Since her move, the team have got to know her better and her kind, gentle and supportive personality.

Emily's nominator said: **"It has been a pleasure for us to support Emily and we look forward to spending more time with her as she travels along this new journey."**



The Mary Williamson Awards are only made possible because of a very generous legacy left to Cornerstone in 2020.

If you would be interested in finding out more about how you can leave a gift to Cornerstone in your Will, please get in touch with our fundraising team or email getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk – they will be happy to help advise you on next steps and to answer any questions you may have.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Colleague Awards ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Six other prestigious Star Awards were also presented to colleagues:

- **Colleague of the Year – Operations North** – Jodie Kemlo, Support Practitioner from our Rankine Street service in Dundee
- **Colleague of the Year – Operations South** – Helen Millan, Support Practitioner from our Tweedbank service in the Scottish Borders
- **Colleague of the Year – Business Support** – Denise Elder, Recruitment Advisor
 - **Learner of the Year** – Lauren Millar, Regulation and Standards Officer
 - **Team of the Year** – Team Packman in Moray
- **Fundraiser of the Year** – Aimee McCabe, Lead Practitioner from our Forrest Walk service in West Lothian

Colleague of the Year – Operations North

Jodie Kemlo joined the team at Rankine Street in 2023 for her first role in care. She is always helping cover shifts to ensure the people we support can get on holiday, go to activities and have an active lifestyle. One of the people we support found out that his mother's grave was in Dundee and he had never had the opportunity to visit her. When Jodie found this out, she went out of her way in her own time to locate the gravestone, ensure that it was suitable for access and that it was clean and in good condition before taking the gentleman to visit his mother's grave for the first time!

Jodie also helped another gentleman within Rankine Street source a job. Together they visited several local charity shops, and he was successful in finding a volunteering role. When a new person joined Rankine Street last year with limited life skills, Jodie provided him with excellent support. Since then, he now successfully sleeps throughout the night and takes part in activities independently.



Her nominator said **“Jodie displays our values every day – in and out of work – and is an asset to Cornerstone. She goes above and beyond for the people we support as well as her colleagues. To the people we support, Jodie improves their lives spectacularly.”**

Huge congratulations to Jodie as well as worthy runners up **Gemma Milne** and **Erin Torrie**, and **Sian Pulfrey** who received a Highly Commended certificate.

Colleague of the Year – Operations South



Helen Millan joined Cornerstone's Tweedbank service in the Scottish Borders in 2021 taking on her first role in social care. She quickly developed a strong relationship with everyone she supports and her colleagues. Despite finding herself dealing with incidents of challenging behaviour, she is always calm and caring.

Her nominator said:

“Many of the people we support see Helen as a guiding spirit who has an uncanny ability to move things forward in a positive way. She recognises that the people we support have the right to make choices that we might not always agree with, but will gently guide them to understand what a better alternative might be, without imposing. She has been pioneering in developing ways of communicating with people we support that help create good outcomes for them as individuals. She has great listening skills, is very observant and understands how individuals present in different circumstances. She is always professional and helps to guide others in the team. Helen has an ability to lift people's mood and bring light on the dark days.”

Huge congratulations to Helen as well as worthy runners up **Vilmantas Noreika** and **Alistair Simpson**.

Colleague of the Year – Business Support

Denise Elder led the full recruitment function when the team were experiencing a high turnover of staff. She continued to provide an excellent service to the organisation whilst working on her own during this busy period. She is dedicated, hardworking and proactive in looking at ways we can make improvements to best serve the Branches in their recruitment drives. Denise used her initiative and took responsibility for implementing a manual process for over 100 new colleagues when usual systems were down. She worked with the Training Academy to ensure everyone received their mandatory training and that they were equipped to work within the services.

She also has created a Welcome Survey to be issued to all new colleagues at the end of their probationary period; supports Branches to host Open Recruitment events; and devised a training programme for all line managers on the recruitment process, along with creating e-learning for guidance on JobTrain. In addition, she created a toolkit for line managers to support them with the interview process, which includes example questions and compliance checks that should be completed for each candidate.



Denise's nominator said: **"Denise is a professional colleague and knows her role and the organisation inside and out. Denise goes over and above in everything she does to support all colleagues, ensuring we recruit the right colleagues to provide appropriate care to the people we support, to help them lead a valued life."**

Huge congratulations to Denise as well as worthy runners up **Cat Allan** and **Lauren Millar**.

Learner of the Year

From the day that **Lauren Millar** joined Cornerstone in May 2023, she showed exceptional commitment to learning. She embraced the training opportunities open to her through our own in-house resources, including our training courses, manuals and policies, and learning from peers. She actively seeks out external sources of learning such as online resources and external seminars. Every new task that she takes on she sees as a learning opportunity. Although in her role she does not directly work with people we support, she recognises that she will interact with people we support from time to time and is very keen to understand learning disabilities, so has completed eLearning courses in Autism, Trauma-informed care, and SCLD Human Rights to gain a foundation knowledge in this area.

Her nominator said **"Lauren's commitment to learning new skills and taking on new knowledge has added huge value to several teams and functions including IT, quality, data protection, and finance, and has given assurance to the Executive Leadership Team that important processes and tasks are being well managed. Overall, Lauren really exemplifies Cornerstone's values"**.

Lauren's SVQ assessor commented: **"I wish every team could have a Lauren! She's been a pleasure to work alongside and I'm grateful to have been able to play a small role in her learning journey."**

Huge congratulations to Lauren as well as worthy runners up **Mel Aitken** and **Colin Davidson**.



Team of the Year

Team Packman supported Sarah after she received lifesaving treatment of dialysis for almost a year, taking on board additional training to support her through a distressing time. They worked together under immense pressure to support Sarah. They adapted to changes needed to rotas and organised shifts well ahead of time so that Sarah could always make her appointments. When the team received a call to take Sarah to Edinburgh for a transplant with four hours notice, they organised everything at a rapid pace. Following her transplant, for nearly two weeks, the team spent days each sleeping in the hospital on chairs and makeshift beds to ensure Sarah was supported throughout. They never missed an appointment and made sacrifices of their own time to be there for her. From speaking with numerous medical professionals, undertaking additional training and dealing with many setbacks, they remained professional whilst facing unknown territory.



Their nominator said: **"The caring and kind hearts of the whole team is evident as they worked towards the same goal – to support Sarah. The team really are the epitome of Cornerstone's values."**

Huge congratulations to Team Packman as well as worthy runners up **House 5 at New Deer** in our Aberdeen North Branch and **Team Keswick** in the Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian Branch.

Fundraiser of the Year

Aimee McCabe has been the driving force behind many of the fundraising events at Forrest Walk in West Lothian and her passion for the people Cornerstone support can be seen from her results! She has been instrumental in organising events such as their Halloween Party, Leg Wax fundraiser, Eurovision Song Contest Sweepstake, Euro 2024 Sweepstake and pulling together a team for the Edinburgh Kiltwalk. She always tries to ensure that the people Cornerstone support are actively involved in all the events she plans.

Her nominator said **"From raising money to replace a broken speaker for the service, to purchasing a giant garden bean bag so everyone was able to enjoy the garden space, everything Aimee does is with the people she supports' needs at the forefront. Aimee enjoys fundraising and wants to help the people she supports to live their best lives. They are her inspiration."**



Huge congratulations to Aimee as well as worthy runners up **Betty Falconer and James McGregor** from our Shared Lives service in the Scottish Borders and Support Practitioner **Angela Livingstone** from our Fairfield service in Dundee.



A presentation was also made to members of the Menopause Awareness Project who had been recently recognised with a Highly Commended at the prestigious UK final of the 2024 Menopause Friendly Employer Awards in London. This was a huge achievement especially given the awards are UK-wide and there was some stiff competition from the likes of BAE Systems, Leicestershire County Council, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Specsavers and Thames Valley Police!

Project partners The People Portfolio presented the London award and Hazel Brown Chief Executive said **"This award is a significant achievement and true testament to the hard work and dedication of our colleagues and their efforts to bring about long-term, sustainable change. As well as recognition of our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive menopause friendly culture. My sincere thanks go to grant funders The Workplace Equality Fund and our amazing project partners The People Portfolio for all they did in helping us to achieve such an accolade"**.

Long service recognition

Congratulations to the following long service colleagues who were also recognised.

30 years

Elizabeth Grant from our Aberdeen South branch and **Jill McLennan** from our Moray branch.

One of Elizabeth's colleagues said: **"Liz has worked for Cornerstone, based at Crudenlea in Stonehaven, in various roles for over 30 years. During this time she has demonstrated exemplary hard work and commitment to both the people we support and the service. Liz has seen many changes but has always put the people we support first and has been a really valued line manager and colleague to many people."**

One of Jill's colleagues shared **"Jill started with Cornerstone as a trainee manager in an Aberdeen City service in 1993 before officially starting her employment with the organisation in June 1994. Jill worked as either a Service Lead or Team Leader in Cornerstone's Aberdeen City service until her move to the Moray branch in 2017 as a team leader. In 2021 Jill split her role between team leader and support**



practitioner across services in Elgin and Buckie. Throughout her 30 year service Jill has always put the people we support at the forefront of everything she does and is a respected member of the branch."

Huge congratulations to both Elizabeth and Jill and sincere thanks for your dedication, loyalty and commitment to Cornerstone and the people you have supported during that time.

Unfortunately Jill was unable to attend the ceremony. Elizabeth Grant is pictured above.



25 years

Five Cornerstone colleagues achieved 25 years service this year. **That's 125 cumulative years!** They were:

Colinne Higgins Lorraine Thomson
Mary McIlwaine Erica Thornton
Darrin McPherson

Colinne and Erica were able to attend the ceremony.

Congratulations to all of our 25 year long service recipients!

20 years

27 colleagues achieved 20 years long service this year – **that's 540 years in total!**

Donald Allan	Linda Gilfillan	ShirleyAnne Owens
Kelly Blair	George Harris	Margaret Quinn
Margaret Boslem	Caroline MacDonald	Paul Reaney
Roseleen Campbell	Audrey McCabe	Marie Rourke
Kirstie Cole	Brenda McCambley	Audrey Steel
Mary Cudden	Mary McCune	Magdaline Taylor
John Davidson	Isabella McLardy	Thomas Taylor
Dianne Doran	Lorraine McLaren	Joan Wilcox
Alastair Forbes	Linda Morgan	
Margaret Fraser		



Dianne Doran, Paul Reaney, Lynn Taylor, Audrey Steel and Alastair Forbes were able to attend. **Congratulations to all of our 20 year long service award recipients!**

Long service recognition (continued)

10 years

51 colleagues achieved ten years of service with Cornerstone this year! **That's 510 years in total.** They were:

Cheryl-Ann McCormack

Robert Hunter

Pauline McSwegan

Tracey Turnbull

Joanne Devlin

Carol Grant

Alan McKenzie

Helen McCrae

Victoria Campbell

Joanna Reid

Dawn Wilkie

Maxine McIntosh

Amanda Keith

Sandra Cordiner

Vicky McKinven

Ellie Kerr

Linda Johnstone

Sara Gordon

Kelly Dawson

Mhairi McIntyre

Wendy Ellis

Ione Conway

Elaine Cochrane

Christopher Wade

Lilian Price

Catherine Addison

Michelle Strang

Amy Morrison

Caroline Durnan

Cassie Kane

Amy Slater

Paul Harley

Patricia Shanks

Yvonne Lawson

Kerry Nicoll

Dorothy Armour

Paul Tominey

Caroline Donald

Isabel Copeland

David Lynch

Lorna McLaren

Stephen McCall

Malcolm Wilkinson

Sophie Howard



Gerard Carroll

Tanya Lund

James Wood

Martin Connolly

Ewan Drummond

Adelle Smith

Catherine Grace

Cassie Kane, Lorna McLaren, Mhairi McIntyre, Robert Hunter, Sandra Cordiner and Tracey Turnbull were all in attendance.

Congratulations to all 10 year long service award recipients!



Hazel Brown, Chief Executive of Cornerstone (pictured left with Peter Bailey, Chair) commented:

"Huge congratulations go to all our award winners, runners up, those awarded highly commended and our long service colleagues. What a wonderful day, with a very apt, 'Cornerstone at the Movies' fancy dress theme! It was great to be able to gather everyone together and celebrate the great work that Cornerstone does across the country, providing vital care and support to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs and helping them to live their best possible lives! I would like to thank **Toby Rider, Decommissioning Superintendent of CNR International** for their continued support. Without them this ceremony wouldn't be possible. And also to **Malcolm Reid from Complete IT** who kindly provided the sweetie goody bags and notebooks, and of course to the **Lord Provost of Dundee, Bill Campbell** for his assistance with presenting our Long Service Awards too. You are all stars!"



If your business or organisation would be interested in exploring other sponsorship or charity partnership opportunities with one of Scotland's leading social care charities, we'd love to hear from you! We've got lots of ideas! Just drop us a line at getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk and we'd happily set up a time to chat.





0300 131 3333

enquiries@cornerstone.org.uk

www.cornerstone.org.uk



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