

Future-proofing Cornerstone Strategic Plan 2021–2025



Providing care
and support in
your community



Message from our Chief Executive, Hazel Brown

Over the last 40 years Cornerstone has built a solid base and reputation as a leading social care charity, providing high quality care and support to those who need it. An original pioneer of support in the community to people with learning disabilities during the hospital closure programmes of the 1980s, our reputation has spread across Scotland, as have our services.

We regularly demonstrate quality through our Care Inspectorate grades and have built a particular reputation for providing excellent care and outcomes for individuals with more complex needs and behaviours, in services such as New Deer in Aberdeenshire, Castlecraigs in North Ayrshire and Baxter View in West Dunbartonshire, amongst others.

Our new 2021-25 strategy looks to build upon our success and expertise and sets a refined vision for the organisation, supported by three main strategic aims.

Vision

To be the first choice for expert care and support for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs in Scotland.

Strategic 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.**



Strategic context

Guided by the previous Local Cornerstone (2017-2020) strategy, Cornerstone underwent a period of radical change which had both positive and negative impacts. However, the core purpose of that strategy 'to deliver high quality care and support that enables everyone to live a valued life - the life they choose', remains relevant today. Indeed it matches many of the recommendations of the recently published 'Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland' by Derek Feeley (Feb 2021).

Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland 2021

Within the Independent Review, Feeley talks about 'shifting the paradigm', highlighting both old ways of thinking, and new ways of thinking that we fully support.

"We need to start by challenging some of the prevailing narrative about social care support. Strong and effective social care support is foundational to the flourishing of everyone in Scotland. It is a good investment in our economy and in our citizens. In order to maximise the potential of social care support we have to change our perspective of what is social care support. We need to shift the paradigm of social care support to one underpinned by a human rights based approach."

'Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland' by Derek Feeley (Feb 2021)

Old thinking

Social care support is a burden on society
Managing need
Available in a crisis
Competition and markets
Transactions
A place for services
Variable

New thinking

Social care support is an investment
Enabling rights and capabilities
Preventative and anticipatory
Collaboration
Relationships
A vehicle for supporting independent living
Consistent and fair



Local Cornerstone

The key drivers for the previous 'Local Cornerstone' strategy were to ensure Cornerstone was in a position to deliver on our purpose and vision; to continue to deliver high quality services; to transform the perception of social care so that the profession is respected and valued; and to ensure long term financial viability.

This was successful to a degree but the most recent Local Cornerstone reviews (undertaken both internally and by Strathclyde University) demonstrate that overall we did not achieve what the strategy set out to address. In particular, our aim to ensure the financial viability of the

organisation was compromised by our ability to influence traditional commissioning practices across Scotland, an issue which is also highlighted and addressed within the Feeley Review.

Both reviews have allowed us to learn from the Local Cornerstone experience of the last few years and our new strategy aims not only to use this learning positively, but also to resolve the current fractured nature of the organisation, which has resulted from the previous strategy only being partly implemented.



Values

Caring

We feel and exhibit concern and empathy for others. We often go above and beyond. We encourage and actively seek ways to help people fulfil their potential and live the best life possible.

Person-centred

We offer a truly personalised service. We work closely with the people we support, and their families, to determine priorities and to set goals. We are flexible in our care provision and will discuss what we can do to make the biggest difference to the lives of the people we support.

Professional

We offer a high standard of service that meets all regulatory requirements, delivered by qualified, skilled and trained staff. We audit and review our quality and performance regularly.

Pioneering

We strive to be innovative in our solution-focussed thinking and to continue to lead the way in the care sector. We adopt an operating model that provides a clear framework of responsibilities, resources and support for our teams but which does not rely on restrictive, traditional, command and control methods. We aim to transform social care through a culture of trust, mentoring and empowerment; creating safe conditions for our teams to exercise a degree of autonomy when it comes to delivering high quality care and doing what is absolutely best for the people we support.



Our vision for the future



Senior Leadership Team

As organisational leaders it is important that the team sets the tone in terms of how we work, to the rest of the organisation. The team have agreed four defining leadership themes:

Authentic

We agreed that we would be authentic in our actions and decision making. That is, the best interests of Cornerstone, and therefore the people we support, will be at the forefront of our decision making and therefore be worthy of the trust and reliance our roles place on us.

Accountable

We also agreed that we will be accountable, that is that we take full responsibility for our actions and decisions and that we are able and prepared to justify them to the people we support, their families and carers, our colleagues and our board.

Effective

We also need to be effective. That is that the actions which we take produce positive results ultimately for the people we support but also for Cornerstone, our colleagues and the organisation.

Inspiring

Finally, we want to be inspiring in how we work. To display courage in what we do which in turn motivates others. To encourage others, especially our colleagues and the people we support, to be the very best they can be.



Hazel Brown

Chief Executive Officer



Lynn Wallace

Director of Finance



Marie Hernandez

Director of Performance
and Culture



Jayne Findlay

Director of Business
Development



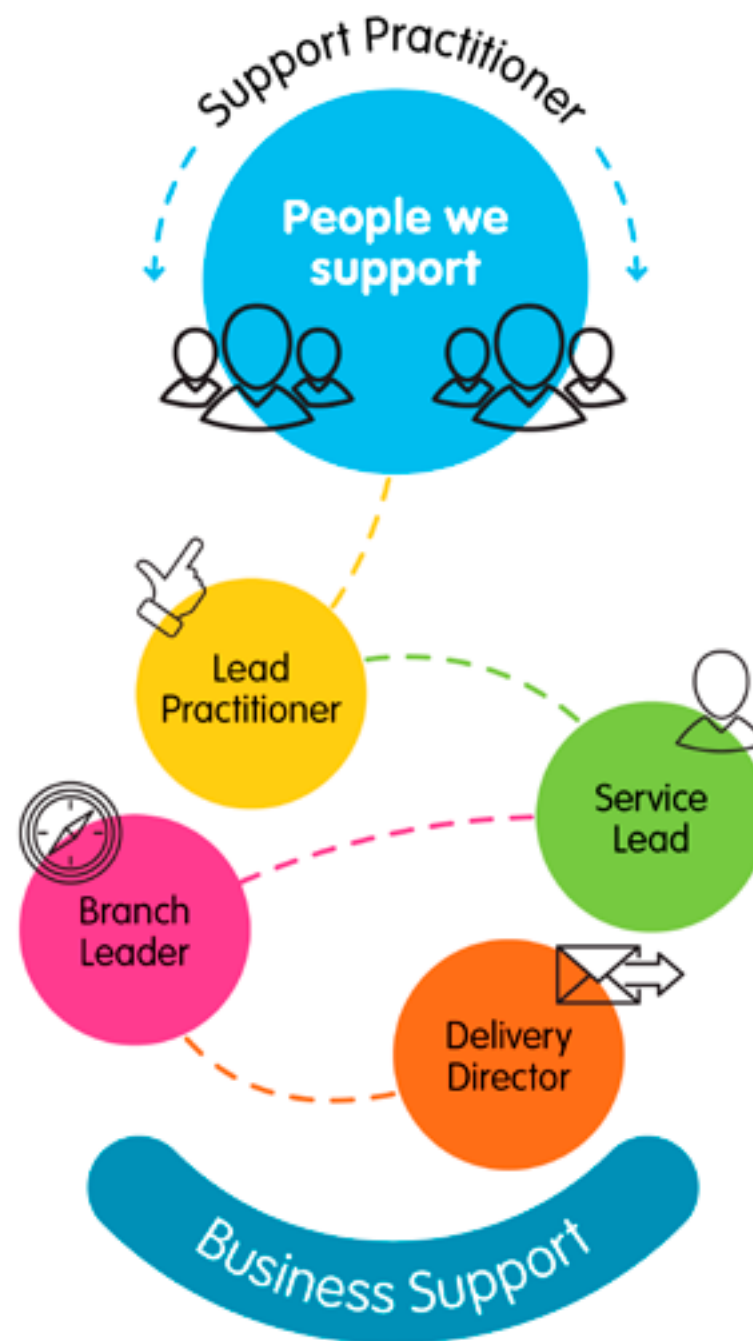
Sara Murphy

Director of Delivery

Proposed Operating Model

The following posts are proposed within the new operating model. They will be subject to review by a short-life focus group to confirm titles and allocation of tasks, in line with a skills matrix that will support best practice and continued professional development.

- **Support Practitioner** - this is the proposed new title for the role previously known as Support Worker/Team Member.
- **Lead Practitioner** - this is the proposed new title for the role previously known as Team Leader/Mentor.
- The **Service Lead** post is a combination of previous Service Manager and Project Lead posts.
- The **Branch Leader** title remains the same however there are proposed changes to the role profile.



Strategic
Aim

1

**To be an expert provider
of services to people with
learning disabilities, autism
and complex care needs.**

We know there is a need for this expertise, as clearly highlighted in the Scottish Government's 'Coming Home' report published 2018. We know that there are many individuals with complex care needs who are either placed out of area or are currently delayed in hospital and treatment units which prevents them from living full and independent lives within their own communities.

Through a clear business development strategy, complemented by a robust colleague development programme that uses our own in-house expertise and is based on the principles of Positive Behaviour Support, we intend to position ourselves as the 'go to' provider for those with more complex needs. Be that providing direct care and support in specialist services or providing learning and development for other organisations.

In addition, to be able to position ourselves as a credible, expert provider we will need to develop a library of knowledge backed up by research and development. This will include exploring partnerships with specialist organisations and academic institutions as well as involving ourselves in influencing public policy. Whilst strengthening our expertise, we will also continue to support and provide a wide range of services tailored to the people we support with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.



Strategic Aim 1

To be an expert provider of services to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.

Positive Behaviour Support

As recognised by the Scottish Government, and as a best practice approach, we will adopt Positive Behaviour Support as the model which underpins all our care delivery. We will develop a PBS strategy to roll this out across the organisation.



Focussed learning and development

Using our Positive Behaviour Support strategy, we will ensure that all our colleagues are on a continuous learning journey from the moment they join Cornerstone. This will include a comprehensive, standardised induction followed by access to specialist training to allow our colleagues to become experts in their field.



Charter for Involvement

We will ensure that the Charter for Involvement is fully embedded across the organisation and that the people we support are placed at the heart of what we do; both in how they choose to live their lives on a daily basis and also by having a collective voice which allows them to influence our future and hold the organisation to account.



Complex care services

We will undertake a market analysis to determine current opportunities within the field of complex care service provision. This will include exploring the potential of providing clinical services, becoming a Registered Social Landlord in order to be able to access funds for capital developments and researching potential partnerships with Housing Associations. We will implement a specialist lead role in Positive Behaviour Support that will sit within our Business Development Team.



Policy development and academic research

To develop our reputation as an expert provider we will explore partnerships with specialist organisations and academic institutions to develop accredited training and involve ourselves in leading edge research. We will supplement our Business Development Team with a Research and Development post which will allow us to feed into cross-party groups, influence public policy and more effectively advocate on behalf of the people we support at a national level.



Business Development Strategy

Following the market analysis, we will develop a Business Development Strategy that will provide a clear framework for decision making regarding future development opportunities. This will include an internal review of current services to identify those that are not a fit with current and future aims and if and how we may withdraw from them. It will also include a Capital Development Plan.



Janice and Lorna's experience

Janice and Lorna live in Parkholme, one of our services in Moray. Janice moved in about three weeks prior to lockdown, in March 2020, having lived in Wardend, another Cornerstone house for over 25 years. Lorna moved in during lockdown, six months later. Both ladies live with Down's Syndrome and early onset dementia and are used to having very busy and active lives. Lockdown could have had a significant impact on their physical and mental health, with their routines being curtailed and familiar activities limited, but with the support of their amazing team they have coped admirably.

"I am happy at Parkholme. I love it when we put music on and I can sing along!" - Lorna

Colinne Higgins, Project Lead, explains, "Our staff have been very creative at keeping the guys busy during lockdown, keeping them mentally stimulated as well as physically fit. When Lorna joined us in September she had to isolate in her room for 14 days. This was a huge ask, but staff pulled out all the stops, supporting her in her room from 8am – 9pm every day and created an activity timetable to keep her occupied and provide structure to her day."

"I like Parkholme and the staff, and having my own post box outside my room!" - Janice

Both Janice and Lorna are very caring individuals, who are always looking out for others in the house! They share similar interests but they definitely bond through their love of dancing and singing. They are now firm friends, and each has a wicked sense of humour. Life is never dull with Janice and Lorna around – they make the staff team at Parkholme laugh on a daily basis!



Strategic
Aim

2

**To be the best employer
in social care in Scotland.**

We want those who are considering working in social care to want to join Cornerstone because it is a modern, vibrant organisation which offers real opportunities for development within an empowering non-traditional culture and structure. We want to give all our colleagues the right tools and training to enable them to be the very best they can be, including full use of technology.

Recruitment across the social care sector has been challenging for many years, with social care being viewed as low skilled and low paid. And yet over the years, the skills and experience that our workforce needs to do their jobs have become more complex and challenging, with a level of professionalism required that is not matched by remuneration. Whilst the introduction of the Real Living Wage is welcome, this presents challenges in itself with differentials between roles being eroded. In addition, although the Real Living Wage ensures our frontline colleagues are valued for their work, we have not received extra funding to allow us to recognise other operational and business support colleagues who have not had corresponding salary increases over the past few years. It's a crowded market in terms of recruitment and we are limited in what we can offer with terms and conditions due to funding pressures.

It is a priority for us to return to what we are best at and indeed why Cornerstone began. We want to do this within the context of the Feeley Review recommendations, ensuring that our colleagues are given the time, space and resources that allow them to support individuals to achieve their very best outcomes. We need them to do this without any distractions and with the full support of the rest of the organisation.



Strategic Aim 2 To be the best employer in social care in Scotland.

Valuing and rewarding colleagues

We will develop a plan to ensure all frontline colleagues across the organisation are migrated onto the same pay scale. We will not treat the Real Living Wage as a cap but instead will endeavour to pay our colleagues a competitive salary which recognises them as social care professionals. We will develop innovative ways of rewarding our colleagues which go beyond hourly rates of pay.



Digitally engaged workforce

We will fully exploit the advantages of our technology project to ensure that all our colleagues can make full use of the benefits, ensuring better communication, engagement, consistency, sharing of best practice and relevant data collection. We will also review and restructure how we can work more effectively in the light of lessons learned as a result of the pandemic.



Career pathways and leadership development

For those that want it, we will develop and implement programmes which provide development in both leadership and practitioner skills, with clear pathways that allow for the achievement of ambitions, areas of specialism and succession planning.



Organisation-wide comprehensive induction

We will implement an organisation-wide induction programme that ensures all colleagues fully understand the needs of the people we support, our values and guiding principles, the landscape in which we operate, their role as a social care professional and Cornerstone's vision.



New operating model *

Following on from the review of Local Cornerstone we will develop and implement a new operating model that no longer focuses on the principles of self-managed teams, but instead provides a clear framework of responsibilities, resources and support around each team and their roles. This will allow teams to focus on the delivery of high quality care and for others to support and focus on important issues such as quality, governance, audit and appraisal. Teams will no longer be self-managing but will operate within an empowering structure which still allows for a degree of autonomy around the care of the people we support. All other operational support roles will be reviewed and clearly defined. We will take a considered approach to migrating all colleagues into the new model. [*see page 8](#)



Empowering and mentoring culture

Our leadership approach will focus on building communities of empowerment and on mentoring others to allow creativity and innovation to emerge, in alignment with our strategic aims and co-ordinated via a project management methodology. These approaches will be solution focused; facilitated and owned across all roles and teams in a proactive and constructive way. They will look to harness what is already in place, recognise what is already working well and identify the support required to take planned, incremental steps towards development and improvement.



Heather's experience

Heather has Autism and is supported by our Community Support team in Perth. Heather's dad Gordon shares what the support Heather receives means to her and her family.

"Heather was in an extremely difficult state just a few months into the lockdown period, with lack of sleep and agitated behaviour that was very challenging and upsetting for us all. Cornerstone's support added some much-needed contact with the outside world and added some structure to her day, while we were both working. The team have been very flexible in dealing with Heather's varying moods of the day, never pushing against her will, while still trying to keep her engaged with different activities.

"I'd like to thank Cornerstone for all the support the team have provided through the difficult times we've experienced during lockdown." - Gordon

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



Strategic
Aim

3

**To achieve stability
and sustainability
which supports future
developments.**

We need a solid financial base and strategy to allow us to build reserves and have a healthy cash flow if we are to be able to offer competitive terms and conditions, equalise pay across the organisation and have sufficient fluidity to pursue our business development strategy. Furthermore, if we are to position ourselves as an expert provider of services, particularly in the field of complex care needs, we need to have sufficient resources to achieve this.

These resources will allow for the development of colleagues and specialist services which will include capital developments either on our own or in partnership with others. Through equalising pay we address the current disparities across the organisation; disparities that have resulted due to the partial implementation of the previous 'Local Cornerstone' strategy and the introduction of the Real Living Wage.

Fundraising will also have an important part to play in contributing to future financial sustainability and stability, allowing us to enhance service provision and support future developments.



Strategic Aim 3

To achieve stability and sustainability which supports future developments.

Recovery plan

We will prioritise ensuring that Cornerstone stabilises itself financially during the financial year 2021-22. We will do this by implementing a robust recovery plan which will include a review of the current finance function, implementing contract management standards and agreeing new financial decision-making processes.



Capital Development Plan

In the past Cornerstone has taken an opportunistic approach to increasing our asset base. As a result of the new Business Development Strategy we will also put in place a ten year Capital Development Plan which addresses the aspiration to become a sector leading specialist in providing complex care services. This will focus on developing residential provision based on the funding model used to finance Baxter View. It will include exploring the possibility of becoming a Registered Social Landlord which will open up alternative funding streams, and partnership working with Housing Associations. Whilst our preference will always be to build our own housing developments, we will mitigate against a degree of financial risk and accelerate timescales through working in partnership for some projects.



Equalisation of pay

We will migrate all operational colleagues onto one agreed payscale to ensure parity across the workforce. We will achieve this through the implementation of the new operating model, robust discussions with our funders to ensure full cost recovery and withdrawal from contracts which are not financially sustainable.



Internal service review

As previously highlighted the Director of Business Development will undertake, in conjunction with the Directors of Delivery, a review of current service delivery. The review will focus on quality of delivery, financial sustainability and long term fit, in line with the new Business Development Strategy. This may lead to us withdrawing from certain types of service delivery which no longer fall in line with our longer term aims in terms of focus and sustainability.



Financial strategy

We will ensure that we have sufficient cash flow to meet our outgoings comfortably. We will build our reserves so that we can: invest in our workforce and meet our strategic aim of being an expert provider; be attractive to potential funders to support our capital development plan; and to be sufficiently fluid so that we can remunerate our colleagues as social care professionals, whilst migrating all colleagues onto one agreed payscale.



Fundraising

Through fundraising we plan to grow our unrestricted income, allowing us to offer support to future growth as well as the ongoing financial sustainability of the organisation. Through this income we will continue to run our Quality of Life Fund helping the people we support to live the best life possible, and to launch, and sustain the Innovation Board.

Through Grants, Trusts and Foundations we will ensure Cornerstone is well placed as an expert provider aiming to enhance current service provision and fund core provision where possible or appropriate.

By the end of 2024-25 we aim to be generating enough unrestricted voluntary income to attribute a proportion of this to our bottom line costs ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organisation.





Measuring Success

Accountability and ownership should be encouraged, with a focus on our approach and behaviours becoming more consistent and robust, resulting in greater efficiency and effectiveness. This will involve utilising our business systems more effectively to produce easy-to-read information and to understand trends. We will instil a project management methodology to ensure we are collaborative, co-ordinated and time rich in our decisions around what to do and when. Enhanced quality improvement processes will be expanded to include not only service delivery but all Cornerstone functions to ensure they are as efficient and effective as possible.

Promoting Innovation

We will create an 'Innovation Board' to support both branch and local developments. At a minimum, it will consist of representatives from finance, quality, fundraising and operational colleagues. Its purpose will be to guide and support new innovations which may not reflect strategic priorities, through providing experience and resources.

Sharing Best Practice

We will establish colleague-led initiatives which engage colleagues in seeking and spreading both best and emerging practice throughout our organisation. Having a focus on practice, with a commitment to sharing what's been learned, will facilitate a culture of quality improvement and organisational learning. We will use an empowering and mentoring methodology to help people develop their capacity to do something they couldn't do before. Future-proofing Cornerstone is about being prepared and fit for the future. An important aspect of that is about the digital capacity and engagement of our workforce and the benefit that brings to the lives of the people we support.

Business Partnership

A Business Partner approach is about working together and being more closely connected across the organisation to achieve shared goals. Focussing on collaboration will enrich our internal relationships and help build organisational and individual capabilities. Developing meaningful relationships with key people and teams across the organisation will enable us to deliver a portfolio of evidence-based projects that meet the vision and the aims set out in this strategy.



Max's experience

Max, who has complex care needs, has been supported by Cornerstone since 2008. His support team provide 24/7 care and have remained by his side in recent times when he became gravely ill, facing two major and complicated surgeries due to ulcerative colitis.

Spending a long nine months of recovery in hospital, Max's team and family refused to leave him on his own and made the decision to stay with him to together provide a 24/7 rota of care. As a result of his operations and hospital stay, Max suffered with additional mobility issues, needing a wheelchair and having to relearn how to walk. With lots of encouragement from his family and care team Max has come full circle and now gained almost full mobility, and is able to walk with a tri-walker. Not only that, he has set himself an exceptional walking challenge to raise money for charity and by way of expressing his gratitude to his care team!

"We appreciate how skillfully and professionally the team have adapted to some of the most complex and trying times." - Melitta

His long and arduous journey has been an emotional rollercoaster for Max and everyone involved. Max's mum, Melitta, comments, "We have always been impressed with the carers' level of care, their attention to training and their dedication to helping Max increase his skills and confidence in his independence. Their desire to remain with him and encourage him on his long recovery journey has been inspirational! We have grown to have every confidence in them so that when any issues do arise, they are addressed and worked out. Their enthusiasm, variety of personalities and skills are of huge benefit to Max - he is a lucky young man to have their support!"



Implementation

We will adopt a project management approach to the implementation of the strategy. This will ensure a governance structure, clearly identified roles and responsibilities and timescales including stage gates and workstreams for each identified project. This will ensure a pragmatic and systematic approach that ensures the Cornerstone Board are kept fully apprised of progress.

Summary

Cornerstone has a long and well-deserved reputation for providing high quality care and support to people with a range of different needs. Over the years that 'brand' has become diluted through business growth into areas where we are not necessarily the provider of expertise. This strategy aims to refocus the organisation on what we are the best at. From the everyday support to people with learning disabilities and autism (of which we provide many thousands of hours a day across Scotland), to the more specialist provision for those with more complex care needs where we have extensive, demonstrable experience and success.

We will achieve this through investing in the learning and development of our colleagues, providing a work culture that is engaging and empowering and a structure that moves away from the traditional command and control hierarchy to one which ensures that those delivering and receiving care and support, are at the forefront of all decision making. We will be committed to working towards ensuring that our colleagues are remunerated in a way that reflects their roles as social care professionals. We recognise that whilst this aspiration is reflected in the Feeley Review, the reality may be that we may need to move away from areas of work where funding does not make this possible. If we truly value social care, both for those that receive it and for those that work in it, then we need to demonstrate this through the decisions we make.

We want not just to survive but also thrive.





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