

Cornerstone News

All the most recent news from across Cornerstone

Spring 2022



In this issue:

Easter fun

Fair Work Autism project

Scottish Learning Disability Week

CLASP awarded over £22k

and much more!



**Providing care
and support in
your community**



Message from our Chief Executive

I think, like many of us, I'm more grateful than usual that Spring has arrived; the lighter nights, the blossom on the trees and some warmth in the air. Along with most of the COVID restrictions now lifting (although our workforce, quite sensibly, still have to follow some) we're finally coming out of our two year hibernation and it feels good. And if that's not enough to lift your spirits then taking a dive into our Spring newsletter should definitely do the trick! It's packed with good news stories and it's great to see that there is so much going on at Cornerstone.

I don't have space here to mention everything but some highlights must include being awarded £23k for our CLASP service which means we can continue to provide much needed support to children with disabilities and their families in Dunoon. I visited this project at the end of last year to congratulate them on receiving a Grade 6 from the Care Inspectorate and they certainly deserved it! In other news, and in a real sign that the pandemic is coming to an end, the Beach Ballroom discos are finally back on in Aberdeen, so lots of people we support will be getting their dancing shoes on. For colleagues across the organisation we have been successfully rolling out our new operating model which will bring back a level of consistency and clarity to roles. You can read more about this on page 9.

There are other exciting developments relating to our strategy. We're delighted to welcome Louise Carson, our new Speech and Language Therapist, to Cornerstone and we are also mid recruitment for a Positive Behaviour Support Lead. Both of these roles are important components in helping us meet our strategic aim of being an expert provider of services to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.

There are still challenges across the sector, not least the recruitment issues that we're all facing. We're working to do everything we can to address this but as ever I continue to be blown away by the commitment and professionalism of all our colleagues, even when times are really tough.

So please, enjoy your read and take your hats off to all the amazing people we support and our colleagues who are working together to make good things happen across Cornerstone.



Hazel Brown,
Chief Executive



Five star support



Our North Lanarkshire Supported Living service recently welcomed the results of an unannounced visit from the Care Inspectorate which took place on the 17th of March. The inspection focused on five key aspects of the service;

"how well does the service support people's wellbeing?"

"how good is the service's leadership?"

"how good is the staff team?"

"how well is care and support planned?"

"how good has the services care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic been?"

All aspects were awarded a grade five – very good.

North Lanarkshire's Supported Living provides housing support and care at home to adult tenants with learning disabilities, autism, or acquired brain injuries, living in their own homes. The service aims to enable the people they support to develop their skills, promote confidence, and ultimately achieve the goals that are important to them.

Robyn Birrell, branch leader, expressed her pride in the report. *"Achieving five grade fives was extraordinary and I am privileged to say that I work with such hardworking and dedicated colleagues who have kept the people we support safe and continued to achieve some remarkable outcomes. I was delighted that these achievements were recognised during our inspection despite the challenges of the pandemic and I am looking forward to continuing to support the branch to ensure the people we support live their best lives and colleagues feel supported, valued and enjoy being a part of our branch."*

In awarding the five grade fives the Care Inspectorate noted; *"Through observations it was clear warm, trusting relationships had been built between people using the service and staff who supported them. People told us they were happy with their staff, got on well with them, and if they were unhappy they would speak to someone."*

Additionally the Care Inspectorate praised the dedicated care and support plans for all the people supported in the service. *"People were encouraged to be as independent as possible by recording what decisions they could make for themselves."*

Well done to the North Lanarkshire Supported Living team for an incredible job! Keep up the amazing work!



Ann and Currie with support worker Colette (centre.)

Scottish Learning Disability Week



Scottish Learning Disability Week, hosted by the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD), ran from the 2nd – 8th May. This year, there was a particular focus on the human rights of people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

It is an important time for human rights in Scotland; last year saw the Scottish Government commit to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) as part of a Human Rights Bill for Scotland. This means that disabled people's human rights will be enshrined by Scottish law for the first time. This means that we are living in an exciting time in Scotland, as we understand how human rights apply to the everyday lives of the people we support and explore what we need to do to make those human rights 'real' and make sense of them in everyday lives.

Scottish Learning Disability Week gave us a chance for us to focus attention on the lives of people with learning disabilities in Scotland. It was a chance to raise awareness of issues and inequalities, as well as achievements and talents. The week matters because there are over 100,000 people in Scotland who have learning disabilities, and raising awareness provides a real chance to change attitudes, making Scotland a better, fairer and more equal place for everyone.

As always, SCLD ran themed events every day throughout Scottish Learning Disability Week. Cornerstone took part in these events, ensuring that the people we support with learning disabilities had a voice.

Keep an eye on our website and social channels for further updates.

Fair Work Autism project

Building a Fair Work Framework for employers of Scotland's autistic workforce

Introduction

Cornerstone has launched a new project, 'Fair Work Autism', funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Inspiring Scotland. The project aims to better understand the experiences of autistic people in Scottish workplaces, mapping such experiences against Scotland's [Fair Work Framework](#), to produce a blueprint for better employment of Scotland's autistic workforce. Key findings will be used to develop resources that will increase the understanding of autism amongst employers based in Scotland.

Why is this important?

Approximately 1 in 100 people in Scotland are autistic, although evidence suggests that this number may be far higher. Evaluation of the [Scottish Strategy for Autism](#) acknowledges that autistic people continue to be disadvantaged in various aspects of their life, for instance getting into and staying in work ([ONS](#) figures report only 22% of autistic adults are in any kind of employment)

Ensuring fair and equitable work for all staff is an utmost priority to us as a [Disability Confident](#) organisation. This project has presented Cornerstone with an excellent opportunity to assess current practice in supporting autistic staff against the Fair Work Framework. The resulting data will also help us to progress internal inclusion and diversity work.

Research methods

We are conducting research in partnership with Heriot-Watt University. The initial research comprises of two online surveys. The first survey is open to any adult currently employed in Scotland who identifies as autistic (including those who are self-diagnosed) and a second survey has been directed to employers based in Scotland with experience managing autistic people. The surveys have been approved by the University's [Research Ethics Committee](#) and all responses will be anonymised.

Further information

Any questions or concerns can be directed to Emma Wood (Emma.Wood@cornerstone.org.uk).

For advice or support on any of the matters raised here, you can visit the following links:

[Different Minds One Scotland](#)

[Autism Understanding Scotland](#)

[Scottish Autism](#)

[Chartered Institute of Personal Development](#)

[Trades Union Congress](#)

[Employment Autism](#)

autism

Different minds. One Scotland.



UK | DUBAI | MALAYSIA

Great things happen!

When leaders combine a coaching and mentoring approach to team support and development, great things happen! That's why, between January and March this year, 87 of our leaders within Cornerstone embarked upon Coaching and Mentoring training.

The six-session course designed by Learning Labs, and jointly funded by the Flexible Workforce Development Fund and Scottish Enterprise, was facilitated by our external partners Scott Leiper, Angela Fowler, and colleagues Fiona Fleming (Training Team Manager), Elaine Cochrane and Yvonne Kelly (Culture Leads).

The approach promotes reflective practice and assists our frontline support colleagues to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, as well as what tools and resources would best support their professional development. Using a coaching and mentoring approach also enables leaders to become skilled in facilitating feedback that invites open and honest conversation and encourages solution-focused thinking, leading to positive outcomes for our colleagues and the people we support.

Here's some of the feedback we've received following the first 12 cohorts:

"Interactive and fun learning – the most relevant management training I have received during my many years with Cornerstone"

"Really enjoyed the protected time away from the day-to-day job and feel I have learned lots"

"I finally understand the difference between coaching and mentoring"

"Great tools to keep and use with our teams"

"Doing this course brought out the creative side in me again"

"It was great to share experiences and learn from others"

"I felt able to speak up during these sessions which I normally find difficult"

Colleagues also put their newly learned skills into practice by giving constructive feedback about aspects of the course we could improve upon. These included:

"Maybe shorter sessions would work because we'd have more time to reflect on our learning and try it out"

"Spend more time on mentoring skills"

"Maybe do listening exercise first and then the coaching activity"

Embedding a coaching and mentoring approach is an essential step towards achieving our strategic objective of further developing career pathways and investing in our people. Following on from our initial success, we will continue to roll this training out to all leaders across the organisation.

Kenny's 42 for 42

Kenny, one of the people we support from our West Dunbartonshire branch, took on our 42 for 42 fundraising challenge and walked 42 miles in February with the support of team member, Lorraine. Kenny and Lorraine raised more than £300!

Lorraine has been encouraging Kenny throughout, supporting him on walks twice a week and keeping them interesting by visiting various local parks. Lorraine even gifted Kenny a set of binoculars which he loves.

On his walks Kenny has visited parks like the Botanic Gardens and Kelvingrove. In addition to birds and squirrels, Kenny has spotted some celebrities out in the wild too.

He saw Kevin Bridges out for a jog and on another outing he met Sanjeev Koli who played Navid in one of Kenny's favourite shows, 'Still Game'. Even cooler, Sanjeev actually recognised Kenny from their last meeting before COVID, when some of the Still Game actors appeared at a club Kenny enjoys going to. He was really excited to meet them and Navid (Sanjeev Koli), Isa (Jane McCarry) and Tam (Mark Cox) were excited to meet him then too.

Kenny was over the moon when nearly two years later Sanjeev recognised him in Kelvingrove and praised him for doing the fundraiser.

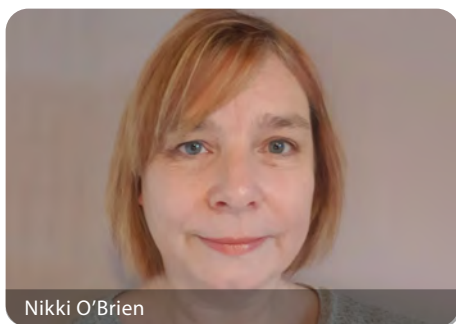
Margaret, Kenny's mum, explained the impact that conversation had on Kenny. *"He was so chuffed when [Sanjeev] told him he was proud of him. Kenny was gushing when he got home!"*

Overall, the walking challenge fundraiser has boosted Kenny's confidence. Margaret, Kenny's mum commented. *"It's given him more of a purpose to his support days out and about. It's been great to see him so excited, plus it's keeping him fit after so many months of being stuck at home."*

"The challenge has relieved some of the anxieties we both felt at going out and about again after lockdown. We are building up confidence to start leading a more normal life again."

"Many thanks to all involved in the fundraiser, it's been so inspiring and I hope others have gotten as much out of it as my son, his support worker and myself have."





Nikki O'Brien



Pauline Forbes



Nicola Alexander

Branching out

We are delighted to announce a number of recent appointments at Cornerstone. Nicola O'Brien has now taken up the new post of Depute Director of Delivery. Previous Branch Leader of our Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian Branch, Nikki will now have responsibility for supporting the Branch Leaders, ensuring that quality standards are met, including external regulatory requirements, operating within agreed budgets and supporting the Director of Delivery with the organisational strategy and aims. Succeeding Nikki is Pauline Forbes, who has been acting as interim Leader for the Dundee, Perth Fife and West Lothian Branch over the last few months. Pauline was previously a Project Manager in Dundee.

Nicola Alexander has also been recently appointed as a Branch Leader with responsibility for South Aberdeen and Shire. Nicola was previously a deputy Branch Leader in North Aberdeen and Shire.

Many congratulations to you all and wishing you every success in your new roles.



Picture courtesy of Ian Martin Photography

A castle for the community

Cornerstone's Dundee Branch has recently moved into one of Scotland's most historic buildings 'Dudhope Castle' - an A-listed building in the centre of Dundee, that dates back to the 13th century! The building has been leased to 'The Circle' by Dundee City Council and our Dundee Branch have moved into the impressive premises, along side a number of other tenants including Barnardo's, Uppertunity and local organisations.

Previously, the building had been used by Dundee City Council as offices, up until March 2020. Since then, The Circle and the Council have been working with local architectural, heritage and community groups to ensure the historic building becomes a valuable and accessible community resource, as well as a visitor and tourist attraction.

Kirsty Thomson, The Circle's Founder and CEO, said she hopes Dudhope Castle will become a valuable community resource that will help attract investment into the city, whilst simultaneously time preserving and respecting its role in the history of Dundee.

"This important, historic building which many consider to be "Dundee's Castle", will be used to benefit the people of Dundee. It will be filled with organisations and individuals offering support to people across the city, including those with additional needs and learning disabilities, people experiencing mental health challenges and those dealing with funeral poverty. We also aim to build on our current work, creating employment and volunteering experiences."

The Circle is an award-winning 'More Than Profit' organisation that supports businesses to make a difference to communities. A More Than Profit business aims to make a profit, which will in turn fund positive social change. They provide affordable working spaces for charities and community groups where meetings, events and various gatherings to take place.

"We are very excited to have moved in to our new premises within such a lovely grand building and to be part of a community hub supporting people across Dundee. We have a wonderful relationship with The Circle and we look forward to many happy years in our new home"

- Nikki O'Brien

Cornerstone's new address in Dundee is:

Dudhope Castle

Barrack Road

Dundee

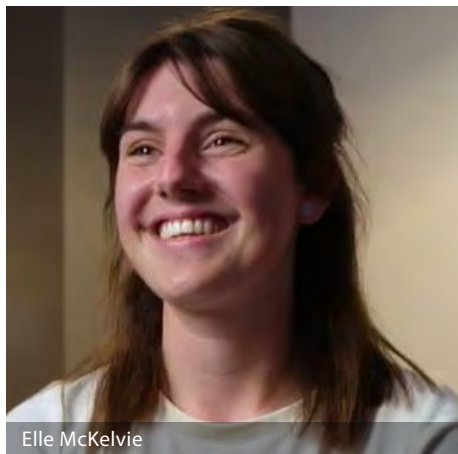
DD3 6HF

Tel: 01382 220238

Email: DPFLEnquiries@cornerstone.org.uk



Modern Apprenticeship Week 2022



Elle McKelvie

The response to our Modern Apprenticeship campaign in March was very encouraging, with even more colleagues signing up to work towards a sector-recognised qualification in health and social care. Six current Modern Apprentices (all pictured) kindly shared their stories, both in the press and on our website to help raise awareness and encourage others to consider signing up.

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

Since the scheme was launched in 2011, Cornerstone has trained a total of 186 Modern Apprenticeships, with a further 27 colleagues currently working towards their qualification.

Sheila adds, *"Apprenticeships work for everyone! They are a key investment we choose to make in our workforce by providing full support through our employed team of trained assessors, as well as regular access to facilitated study sessions, continuous guidance and assistance. We also pride ourselves in paying our Modern Apprenticeships the Scottish Living Wage."*



Heather Butchart

Heather Butchart is one of the modern apprentices who shared her story for the campaign. Heather is a support worker in our Aberdeen South branch who is part of a team that currently supports seven people. She started her Modern Apprenticeship at the end of November and hopes to be finished by the middle of this year.

The skills Heather has been learning on the Modern Apprenticeship have given her more confidence in her role as support worker. *"I've developed better writing skills and better communication skills, helping me to get my point across. These things have really helped my confidence."*



Mason Steel

For Heather, the best part of the Modern Apprenticeship is the learning. *"I'm gaining more understanding of laws and legislations. Being able to apply this knowledge to those I support helps me make their lives better."*

"The Modern Apprenticeship has allowed me to expand on everything. It's given me time to learn and understand things instead of just reading about them. It's helped build my confidence knowing what to do and how to support people, and it's been nice to do something educational again."

Heather would recommend the Modern Apprenticeship to anyone considering applying. *"It's so beneficial to our careers and to the people we support."*

Anyone interested in finding out more about Cornerstone's current Modern Apprenticeship opportunities across Scotland, and becoming part of their graduating class of 2023, should visit Cornerstone's recruitment portal www.jobtrain.co.uk/Cornerstone or contact recruitment@cornerstone.org.uk to note interest.



Connor MacNeil



Sarah Roberston with Aynsleigh who she supports



Thanos Leftheriotis



Employee Appreciation Day

Recently we took time to reflect on all the hard work and achievements happening across the country, as part of Employee Appreciation Day. It was a heart-warming session and special thanks goes out to Sandra McIvor for joining the session and sharing her Cornerstone experience with us. Sandra's sister, Anne, is supported at Bessie Dunlop Court after a change in needs earlier last year meant Anne required 24/7 care. You can read more about Sandra and Anne's story in our [Ayrshire section](#).

The session provided our colleagues with a chance to sit back and hear just how appreciated and valued their work is. There were some incredible examples of how they 'go the extra mile' every single day for the people we support.

Peter Bailey, our newly appointed Chair of the Board, also congratulated our long service colleagues of 10, 20 and 25 years.

Follow us on our socials

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



Support worker Erin with Peter, one of the five people she supports.

Support worker to lead practitioner

Erin Torrie initially joined Cornerstone's Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian branch in March 2018 as a support worker in a Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) Service.

After four years working as a support worker, Erin made the decision to apply to the role of lead practitioner, wanting to further develop her skills and responsibilities.

Erin outlined the differences between the two roles. *"A support worker directly interacts with service users daily, enabling them to live their best life. In addition, a lead practitioner also acts as a positive role model to colleagues, supporting the team to ensure they continue to provide high quality care to the best of their ability."*

"I work with support staff to develop and enhance care plans; support staff to acknowledge and appreciate their strengths and weaknesses (which is not a bad thing!), and provide them with the tools to put these skills into everyday working."

At present, Erin is shadowing the current Lead Practitioner and receiving support from Service Leads. She believes that her experience of being a support worker for the last four years has given her the skills to make her an excellent lead practitioner. *"Having worked across different services, I've taken ideas that have worked well and that I can adapt, to implement in my team!"*

Erin would encourage anyone considering a career in social care, or looking to progress in their role, to apply. *"If you have a passion for helping people and a caring nature then this is a job for you! Having never worked in social care, I didn't know if I would like it, however, it is the best thing I've ever done and I would never look back, even on the very few bad days!"*

And for any support workers considering applying for a lead practitioner role, Erin would give this advice; *"Be confident in yourself! Read the Lead Practitioner role profile so you know what is expected. When I was considering applying, someone said to me, You'll never know unless you try it" and I am really glad I did.*

If you would be interested in finding out more about developing a career in social care please email recruitment@cornerstone.org.uk or visit www.jobtrain.co.uk/Cornerstone.

Help us celebrate our work



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

New operating model

Following the launch of our Future-proofing Cornerstone Strategic Plan (2021-25) we have now commenced roll-out of our new operating model and role profiles.

The new operating model has been designed to address the current disparity and diversity of roles across the organisation, simplify structures and provide a clear framework of responsibilities and support around each team and their roles.

The new role profiles proposed within the new operating model are:

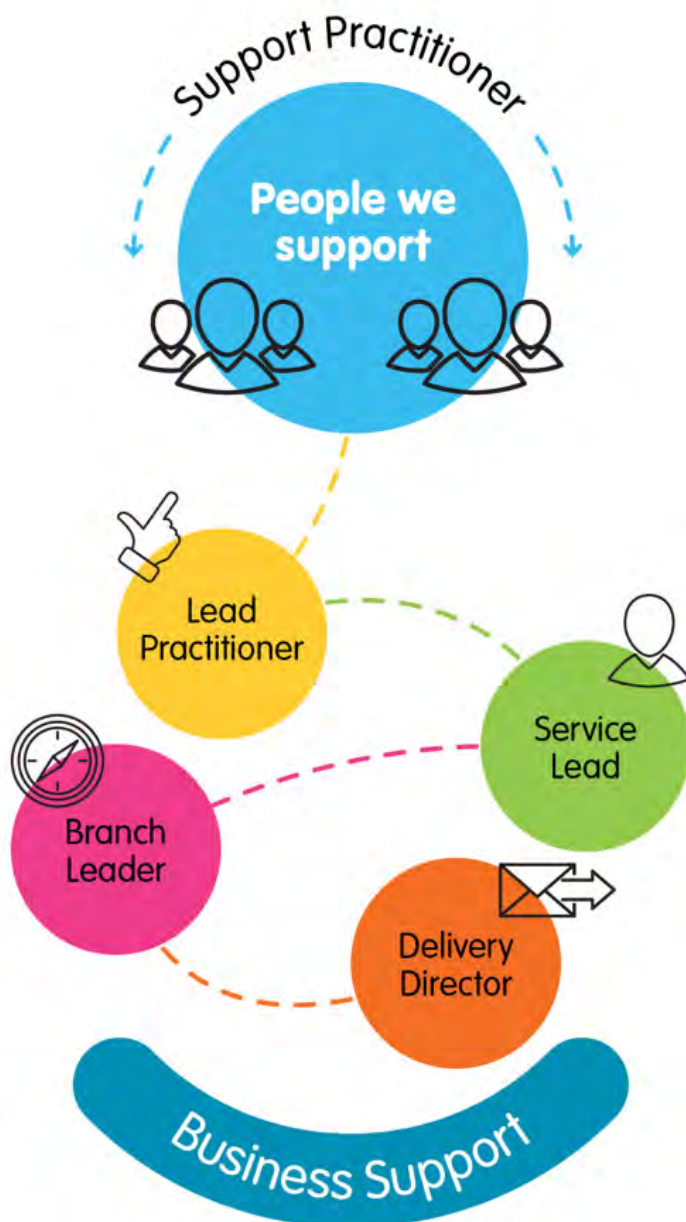
- **Support Practitioner** (the new title for the role previously known as Support Assistant/Support Worker/Team Member).
- **Lead Practitioner** (the new title for the role previously known as Team Leader/Mentor).
- **Service Lead** (the new title for the role previously known as Service Manager and Project Lead posts).

A series of discussions and meetings have taken place over the last few months, reaching over 1,300 staff including our UNISON representatives, and we are now in a stable position where all new job titles and role profiles have been adopted.

This is an exciting and positive time for Cornerstone. Our new operating model is fundamental and integral to achieving our three 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 support future developments

Any queries about the new operating model can be directed to Branch Leaders or hrenquiries@cornerstone.org.uk



Louise Carson

Supporting accessible communication

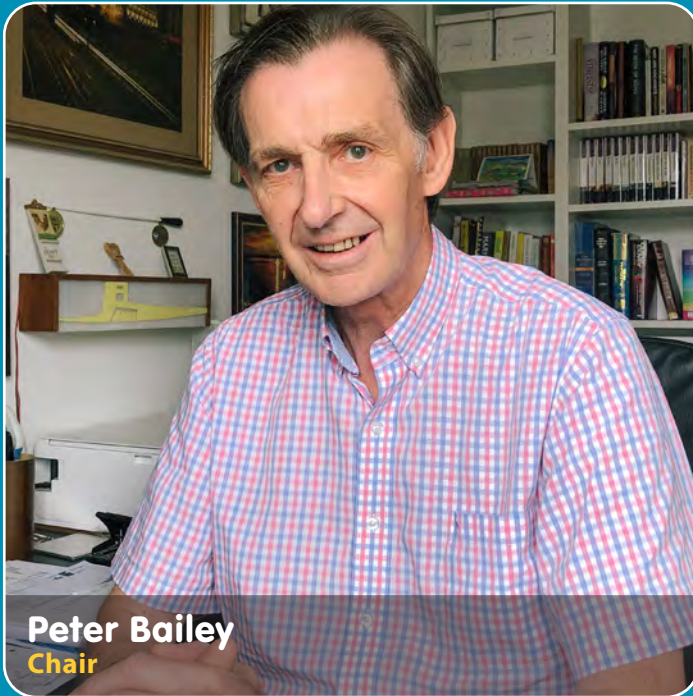
Speech and Language Therapist, Louise Carson has recently joined Cornerstone on secondment from NHS Lanarkshire and will be working with us over the next year. During that time, she will be looking to develop an accessible, Supported Communication Strategy. This will outline how Cornerstone can support the identified communication needs of the people we care for and will include supporting individuals to be further involved in their own decision making. Louise's work will also feed into enhancing training opportunities for staff and further developing our Positive Behaviour Support approach. Louise will be working hard to make sure our information is accessible for all, as well as developing Personal Plans.

One of Louise's first achievements is to launch a new series of Makaton videos on our social channels. You can watch the first one [here](#) and keep an eye on our Facebook and Instagram pages to learn more!

If you would like to get in touch, you can contact Louise via email at louise.carson@cornerstone.org.uk

Changes to the board

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Peter Bailey as our new Chair and Helen Stuart as Vice-chair to our Board. We also give our sincere and grateful thanks to Malcolm Laing and Elaine Thomson as they step down as co-chairs.



Peter Bailey
Chair

The Cornerstone Board ensures that the organisation's strategy and policies are adhered to in line with its charitable purpose and in the best interests of stakeholders including, most importantly, the people that they support.

Peter Bailey, Chair said: *"I am delighted and humbled to have been appointed as the Chair of the Cornerstone Board. Since becoming involved with the organisation I have been encouraged by the range and quality of services to the people we support and particularly the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff. These are challenging times but full of opportunities and I am looking forward to working with other Board Members and the Senior Leadership Team to build on, and strengthen, the work of Cornerstone for the future. In the position of Vice-chair, Helen will be a great asset to the Board and our wider work. I take this opportunity to thank Malcolm Laing and Elaine Thomson for their service as Co-chairs. Their significant knowledge and experience of Cornerstone has provided sound leadership over a time of transition and challenge - not only for the organisation, but across the sector. I wish Elaine a well-earned 'retirement' and am pleased that Malcolm will continue to give support as a Board Member."*

Peter had a long and successful HR career in social work and social care, both within the local authority and voluntary sectors. Prior to retirement he was the CEO of CrossReach, a third sector social care organisation providing services across Scotland, a post he held for eight years. Since then he has served as a Trustee with Volunteering Matters and held an appointment as an Independent Prison Monitor with HMIPS.

Helen has over 25 years' experience in HR and Leadership, Helen has worked in various sectors including Oil and Gas, Retail, Education, Health and the Third Sector. Most of her working life has been spent in the UK, and she also spent five



Helen Stuart
Vice-chair

years working internationally in the US and Europe. Helen has also set up and run three successful businesses, including one that was sold and continues to operate today.

Outgoing Co-chair, Malcolm Laing, commented: *"I am very pleased that Peter and Helen have been appointed as Chair and Vice-chair respectively. I am confident that they will steer Cornerstone through the many challenges that lie ahead, not just for Cornerstone but for the care sector in general, and that Cornerstone will fulfil its aim of being an expert provider of care to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs. I intend to remain on the Board for the time being and look forward to working with Peter and Helen"*

"It has been a real privilege for me to have served as Chair along with Elaine Thomson. Cornerstone is a tremendous charity providing quality services to so many people in need. I am immensely proud of the dedication and professionalism of the Cornerstone workforce and am grateful for the support which I have received particularly from Elaine, my fellow directors and the Senior Leadership Team. I know that Elaine has not only stepped down as Co-chair but has also retired from the Board after serving as a director for 18 years. During that time (including two terms as Chair) Elaine has made a huge and valuable contribution to Cornerstone and we thank her sincerely for all that she has given."

Cornerstone CEO, Hazel Brown added: *"The recent changes and additions to the Cornerstone Board are a very positive and exciting development. As we start to roll-out our new strategy 'Future-proofing Cornerstone', it is as important as ever to ensure good governance and a steady approach. Under Peter's leadership, and with Helen's support and guidance, we welcome the fresh perspectives and experience that all of our recent Board appointees will bring to the table."*

Fundraising

Cornerstone WEEKLY LOTTERY

Play our weekly lottery and help people with learning disabilities across Scotland live their best possible lives. For just £1 a week, you could win our jackpot prize of £25,000! And with every play, you are helping someone who we support at Cornerstone.

How it works

If you live in Britain and are over 18 you can [enter online](#) today. You'll be sent a six-digit lottery number which is selected at random. This will be unique to you for as long as you play. And you can have more than one chance and number if you wish.

Our draws take place every Friday and the result will be published on the [winners](#) page.

For every £1 raised from our lottery, 50p goes directly to helping Cornerstone to care for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs.

Participation is subject to [terms and conditions](#).

1st prize
£25,000
If you match 6 digits

2nd prize
£1,000
If you match 5 digits

3rd prize
£25
If you match 4 digits

4th prize
5 entries into the next draw
If you match 3 digits

Your Fundraising, Our Care

Care with Cornerstone by taking part in an event or challenge this year!

Each and every year our amazing supporters challenge themselves in many different ways to raise money and awareness for Cornerstone. Events and challenges are a brilliant way to fundraise for Cornerstone. 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 an event to attend or take part in and we'll support you with the rest.

Run, walk, cycle, skydive or do your own thing! What challenge will you take on? We have highlighted just a handful of events you can get involved in this year! Or you can browse all of our [events and challenges](#) on our website.

Looking for
goals for 2022?



	Three Peaks Challenge	20th May	National
	Edinburgh Marathon Festival	28th May	Midlothian
	Aberdeen Kiltwalk	29th May	Aberdeen
	Ben Nevis Trek	17th June	Lochaber
	Mens 10K Glasgow	19th June	Glasgow
	Ben Nevis Midnight Trek	20th August	Lochaber
	Dundee Kitwalk	21st August	Dundee
	Edinburgh Kiltwalk	18th September	Edinburgh
	Skydive	Anytime	Strathallan
	Mens 10K Edinburgh	23rd October	Virtual Event

The Kiltwalk is back, and it's bigger and better than ever

Every year people take to the streets in tartan to raise money for a charity of their choosing. With four Kiltwalk events still due to take place this year, there is no better time to get signed up. An incredibly successful kick off event in Glasgow on 24th April marked the start of another fantastic Kiltwalk season, with events in Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh, as well a return of the well-received 'Virtual Kiltwalk' to follow.

Four reasons why you should sign up to the Kiltwalk:

- 1) We receive 150% of the money you raise thanks to Sir Tom Hunter! Yes, 150%.
- 2) The people we support will benefit in life changing ways.
- 3) Choice of events across Scotland and a virtual option.
- 4) It's simple to register and you have control over your distance.

What are you waiting for? Sign up today at **The Kiltwalk**, choose Cornerstone and let's get started.

Events to take place on the following dates:

Aberdeen - 29 May

Dundee - 21 August

Edinburgh - 18 September

Virtual Kiltwalk - 7-9 October



Get started with your very own fundraising toolkit

Looking to do a bit of fundraising for your favourite charity, Cornerstone? We have an amazing **fundraising pack** full of top tips and ideas to support your fundraising journey.



Are you planning your summer garden tea parties yet? Or maybe you just like eating cake! Our Care for Cake pack might just be the one for you. Full of tasty recipes, top tips, promotional posters and cool, cut out decorations (including bunting and cake toppers), the pack is a step-by-step guide to make sure your Care for Cake event is a tasty success.

We put the people we support at the centre of everything we do, so we were absolutely delighted when Graeme (pictured top left) helped us develop this fundraising pack. Graeme shared his scone recipe with us and was excited to see it featured in our Care for Cake pack alongside some information about him and the support Cornerstone provides.

Let us all bake and raise some funds for Cornerstone! Download your pack today by visiting <http://www.cornerstone.org.uk/care-for-cake> or contact us at getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk.



Superheroes assemble!

To all those super-organised teachers already thinking about lesson plans for the 2022/23 school year, why not take a look at our curriculum-specific Be Super Be you pack? Whether it's dressing up, a colouring in or our curriculum-specific activities – there's something for everyone.

Here at Cornerstone we celebrate being unique. Promoting diversity and inclusivity is key to everything we do and is the inspiration behind our fundraising pack 'Be Super, Be You!'

The engaging and informative pack is perfect for primary school aged children and includes lesson plans on diversity, inclusion and kindness all promoted in a fun-filled, colourful, superhero theme! Baxter Bear, our friendly Cornerstone mascot guides you through the pack; supporting teachers to have conversations about being unique, being yourself and being inclusive. Developed in partnership with teachers, the lesson plans and fun resources are aligned with the Curriculum for Excellence – making this a key teaching resource as well as a super fundraising opportunity.

We are now inviting primary schools to take part in a range of fun, fundraising activities. Are you a teacher or do you know a teacher, student or school that you think would be interested in this fundraising pack?

All you need to start your mission is to download your pack from our website www.cornerstone.org.uk/besuperbeyou or contact getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk.

Shared Lives



The Shared Lives team meet on zoom.

Shared Lives is all about one household sharing their lives, families, home, interests, experience and skills with other people who need some help and support.

Cornerstone's Shared Lives service was first established in 2001 and has been growing ever since; currently working across eight local authority areas.

In 2019 a new project in the Scottish Borders was commissioned and a new team was recruited. The team started on the 2nd March 2020, just prior to lockdown and have worked incredibly hard over the last two years with the guidance and expertise of the wider team to recruit, assess and build a Shared Lives community in the area.

To date, the Scottish Borders service has eight full-time arrangements, three short break carers in the process of being matched to existing and new supported people, as well as four approved family-based support carers.

Marissa Speed, Family Placement Lead, in the Scottish Borders, explained. *"As we enter Year Three of the project we have several individuals identified as potential carers, each in different stages of the application and assessment process. Some applicants are currently foster carers and will transition over with the supported individual already in their care; allowing those supported to continue to live with the carer in the family home."*

The team are excited with the progress to date, outcomes achieved and the potential development opportunities presented in the Borders to grow this model of care."

For an example of the amazing work done by Shared Lives carers and the incredible Shared Lives team you can read about Donna and Dave's story below.

Shared rewards

Donna and Dave are a married couple from Hawick who have newly started their role as Shared Lives carers. Before becoming Shared Lives carers Donna worked in the knitwear factory, Scott & Charters, where Dave still works full time.

They both greatly enjoy their new role, as Donna explained in a recent interview, *"I love my life right now. I've never been as happy in what I'm doing. Everyone is commenting on how different and happier I look."*

There were several elements to the Shared Lives application, which Donna and Dave completed in 2020, including building family trees and compiling career histories. This process normally takes around six months but for Donna and Dave it took a little longer because of COVID and only being able to attend meetings virtually.

"But the matching process ended up giving us the perfect match." Dave noted, explaining the wait was worth it when they were approved in April 2021 and finally matched to a young adult, R, in October. *"They've matched her that well you could almost say she is like our daughter."*

Donna added, *"She's just fitted in. I can't explain but it's like she's been here forever."*

Opening up their home to a young adult who they support has been incredibly rewarding to Donna and Dave as they have been able to make a difference to R's life, through their encouragement and guidance.



Donna shared, *"when the young person we support was chatting to her friends and referred to our home as her home, I was so excited and couldn't stop smiling the whole day."*

Dave who was initially unsure about being a carer voiced how much he has enjoyed having R in the house. *"What surprised me was how much she's fitted in. How the matching process has got it so right. It just feels like she's always been here. The matching process has been absolutely brilliant."*

To anyone considering becoming a Shared Lives Carer Donna would highly recommend it. *"Do it! If you have the heart to care for somebody and it's what you really want to do then do it!. Yeah it's challenging at times but if that's what your heart wants, then do it. It's more rewarding than challenging."*

Dave also shared his love for the role, *"it's one of the best things that we've done."*

To find out more about becoming a Shared Lives carer like Donna and Dave you can contact the team at sharedlivesborders@cornerstone.org.uk or by calling Family Placement Co-ordinator, Mark at **07970 740618**

Cornerstone SDS expands

Two recent awards sees our Self-directed Support advisory service, Cornerstone SDS, expand into Moray and set up a dedicated Personal Assistant support service.



Cornerstone SDS



Tony Hadley, acting Service Lead

Our Self-directed Support (SDS) advisory service, Cornerstone SDS, has recently announced it will be expanding its services into Moray.

Based in Inverurie, Cornerstone SDS is an impartial advisory service providing information and lifechanging support to hundreds of individuals living in the North East of Scotland who are benefiting from self-directed support. Now, working with Moray Council as part of a one-year pilot scheme, Cornerstone SDS will be setting up a dedicated SDS advisory service in Moray.

As part of the pilot, Cornerstone SDS has appointed a new SDS Advisor to support prospective clients across the region by highlighting their SDS options and helping them to make informed decisions about their own care and support.

Michelle Flemming, SDS and Carers Officer at Health & Social Care Moray, said: *"We're excited to be working alongside Cornerstone SDS. Through the new national SDS standards, individuals should have access to independent support and advocacy, and I hope that our partnership with Cornerstone SDS will enable individuals to make informed choices, as well as give them the confidence to design support packages in personalised ways through the SDS options that best suit them."*

The pilot follows a busy year for Cornerstone SDS, with the service initially contracted to operate in Aberdeenshire before being awarded funding from Support in the Right Direction (SiRD) to expand into Aberdeen City, organise peer support groups across the North East, and appoint a resident Storyteller to showcase how SDS is benefitting individuals and families throughout the entire North East.

Supporting Personal Assistants

In addition to expanding its advisory service, Cornerstone SDS has recently appointed a Personal Assistant (PA) Support Worker to be based in its Inverurie office.

The role was created as part of another one-year pilot scheme to address a lack of engagement and support in the North East for PAs employed through the SDS structure. As a single point of contact for SDS-employed PAs in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, the PA Support Worker will provide confidential advice, support and, where necessary, signposting to other organisations.

The PA Support Worker will also work within local community clusters to establish and support the development of peer support groups with a view to promoting the wider PA Network Scotland and identifying common themes which may be of interest at a national level.

Tony Hadley, Acting Service Lead for Cornerstone SDS, says: *"As a service, our primary duty is to support our clients who have opted to go down the SDS route. However, we also recognise that our clients' PAs have support needs of their own, and that their wellbeing and job satisfaction ultimately has a significant bearing on how well the needs of our clients are being met. Given the current recruitment challenges being faced by the care sector as a whole, supporting PAs has never been more important, and so we're really excited to deliver this pilot project."*

Want to know more? Contact the SDS team at sds@cornerstone.org.uk or phone **01467 530520**.

Aberdeen and Shire



Come stay at Jubilee House!

Jubilee House is a holiday home rental situated by the harbour of Stonehaven. It is fully equipped with facilities for disabled users and comes at a reduced rate to the people we support.

In 2021 Teresa, one of the people we support from Aberdeen North decided to challenge herself with the goal of going on a short stay holiday. Teresa suffers from severe anxiety and as going on holiday disrupts her routine it can cause her distress.

Julia, a Team Member at Cornerstone who helps to support Teresa, was inspired when she saw an advertisement from Jubilee House in the Cornerstone bulletin.

"Teresa was very anxious leading up to our trip but with lots of praise, encouragement and reassurance from staff, she was able to cope with her anxieties."

Teresa had agreed to stay two nights in the house, accompanied by key workers Julia and Caroline who were at first concerned she may only be able to stay for the day. Sleeping in a strange bed and being so far away from her usual surroundings was what Teresa was most anxious about so it surprised everyone when Teresa enjoyed the trip so much she ended up staying for three nights instead of two.

Her holiday involved a road trip to Banchory, a scenic town in Aberdeenshire, and visits to many cafés – *"Teresa loves a milkshake and a piece!"* These café visits and socialising with the locals in Stonehaven were the best parts for Teresa.

Teresa explained. *"I really enjoyed Jubilee House. Julie & Caroline made sure I had fun and enjoyed myself. The thing I enjoyed most was Greggs' sausage rolls when I was relaxing at nights watching my soaps and visiting Villa Cafe for my afternoon tea."*

Teresa ended up enjoying Jubilee House so much she had another break away there in April with her team while her house was being decorated.

If you are interested in booking your own trip to Jubilee House bookings can be made via Cottages.com. [Book now!](#)

The people we support can receive a 15% discount during certain periods of the year! To check availability and prices call **01569 760107** or email jubileehouse@cornerstone.org.uk



West Park's great ratings!

Aberdeen South's West Park service recently welcomed the results of an unannounced visit from the Care Inspectorate.

West Park is one of Cornerstone's first services to be inspected since the Care Inspectorate resumed their regular inspections earlier this year. There were no routine inspections last year because of the pandemic and it was great to be able to welcome the Care Inspectorate back for a review of the service.

The inspection evaluated two key aspects of the service:

"how well does the service support people's wellbeing?"

Awarded a grade 5 – Very Good.

"how good is the service's care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?"

Awarded a grade 4 – Good.

Caroline Gibson, Project Leader, West Park, expressed her pride in the report, *"We are delighted with the grades we received following our recent inspection which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the team over what has been an incredibly difficult couple of years."*

"To achieve a 5 and a 4 under current circumstances is to be highly commended. It is very encouraging that West Park has been recognised as maintaining such high standards despite the additional demands placed on services."

West Park is a care home that provides support to adults with a learning disability and associated conditions. The service aims to encourage the supported people to be as independent as possible and to encourage active participation through informed choice.

In awarding a grade 5 for the support that goes towards the residents' wellbeing the Care Inspectorate noted, *"people experienced warmth, kindness and compassion in how they were supported and cared for."*

Additionally, the Care Inspectorate's grade 4 award for the service's care during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the efforts of the staff to maintain a safe environment for its staff and residents.

As part of the inspection, the Care Inspectorate heard from staff and the people supported by the service who wanted to share their experience.

One of the residents explained: *"I like it. I'm always out and about,"* and other residents indicated they were happy using sign or other nonverbal communication.



Disco is back!

For over twenty years Cornerstone's monthly disco has been the best place to go for a dance and a chat. When the pandemic hit and the disco stopped in accordance with restrictions, its absence was sorely felt.

Fortunately, thanks to a grant of nearly £7,000 from the Aberdeen Health Improvement Fund, the disco has now returned and started up again in March this year.

The disco is held in Aberdeen's Beach Ballroom, a beautiful Category B listed Art-Deco building on the sea front of Aberdeen. The ballroom is home to one of Scotland's finest dance floors that floats on steel springs designed to give dancers a literal spring in their step.

But it is not just the beautiful scenery and music that brings people to the event every month. It's an excellent event to meet new friends or catch up with old ones. This cherished event has been a regular activity for many across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The dance floor is packed from the first song and it's a real social highlight to many.

Branch Leader, Nicola Alexander, expressed what it's like to have the funds to start the disco again. 'After the challenges of the past two years, we are delighted to bring back the Cornerstone Disco. There's nothing quite like it and we can't wait to welcome everyone back!'

The next disco is planned for – 18th May. For enquiries please contact: sheila.robertson@cornerstone.org.uk. See you all on the dancefloor!



Some of our fantastic 42 for 42 fundraisers!

Stonehaven does 42 for 42!

In our Aberdeen and Shire South branch, team members Adele and Susan took on Cornerstone's 42 for 42 fundraising challenge in February, along with the people they support.

"There's been about ten of us," Adele explained. "We have about four regulars who walk to and from home to the hub and then we go from the hub around the town and things."

Each of the people who have taken part in the daily walks averaged a mile and a half to two miles per day with an impressive variety of ways in which those miles were clocked - some walking, some on wheelchairs and others cycling. One of the people Adele supports has even been logging miles while caddying for her mum and Adele's golf games!

"We also have therapy pets in the service which is also a big motivator" Adele explains. "The people we support will walk or cycle to the hub and then when it's time for Rudi's 'break' everyone who wants to come will come with us for a dog walk along the boardwalk."

The team are very lucky that their hub sits at such a scenic part of Stonehaven. They are close enough to the sea that beach combing has made up part of their 42 miles. *"We've been going to the beach and picking up sea glass and driftwood and bits and pieces like that."*

Sometimes, the walking group even has the privilege of learning a bit about the town's history. Team member, Susan is incredibly knowledgeable about Stonehaven and has her own Walking Group called "Fawlty Towers," that specialises in sharing Stonehaven's history.

In addition to the nearby beach, the people Adele and Susan support have also been motivated by celebratory ice-creams and a trip to the bowling club for a game of pool!

Great job!

Ayrshire

Anne's Bessie Dunlop experience

Anne is a loving sister, auntie and daughter who is currently supported in our Ayrshire branch. She used to be cared for by her dad and siblings but moved to Bessie Dunlop Court in April 2021 due to increased support needs.

Anne's sister, Sandra explained, *"Anne is a well-loved member of our family but when Dad took unwell Anne started to abscond. We were needing to get help from social work. She needed 24/7 care. It was a really difficult decision but we had to put Anne first."*

The social work team were able to reassure Sandra and her family of the options available for Anne and suggested going to Cornerstone's recently opened Bessie Dunlop Court.

"The staff haven't just made Anne feel at home but they have welcomed us; from the youngest babies in our family to my dad at 96. They've also allayed any fears we had about Anne going to stay in 24/7 care."

Sandra believes that one reason Anne was able to settle in so quickly was due to the early communication between Anne

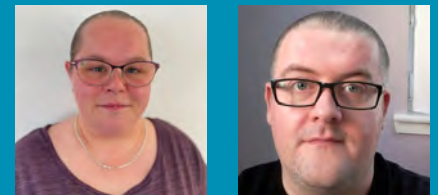
and her team. For the nine months prior to moving into Bessie Dunlop Court Anne stayed with Sandra and they would attend zoom meetings with different members of staff.

"It meant that when Anne moved in she already knew these people, as did we. Anything at all that we had to ask was answered, we were given reassurance and confidence in everything that was happening."

Knowing the people before she moved in was a huge comfort to Anne who is a social butterfly! Since moving into Bessie Dunlop Court Anne has become an integral part of the community, providing laughs and memories for staff and neighbours alike.

David Harkins, a mentor at Bessie Dunlop Court described the relationship between staff, Anne and her family. *"As well as Anne, her family have become very friendly faces here. Everyone looks forward to seeing where Anne's enthusiasm and support can take her. The sky will continue to be her limit."*

You can watch our chat with Sandra [here](#).



Two new Lead Practitioners

We are delighted to welcome two new Lead Practitioners to the Ayrshire Branch - Cheryl Ann McCormack and James Keegans. Good luck in your new roles!



New beginnings café

We are sorry we have to share news of the closure of our New Beginnings Café in Irvine, Ayrshire.

The cafe was initially established in 2018 by a "New Beginnings" group of individuals supported through our Shared Lives service. The group had a vision to bring people together and reduce social isolation. Through hard work, dedication and planning came the creation of the New Beginnings Café which provided people with learning disabilities an employability experience of working across a variety of roles within a busy café environment.

Unfortunately the café is now officially closing due to the closure of the building where the cafe space was rented. However, The New Beginnings Group will continue to meet on a weekly basis, supported by the Cornerstone Ayrshire team when they will scope out their individual aspirations and consider their next steps.

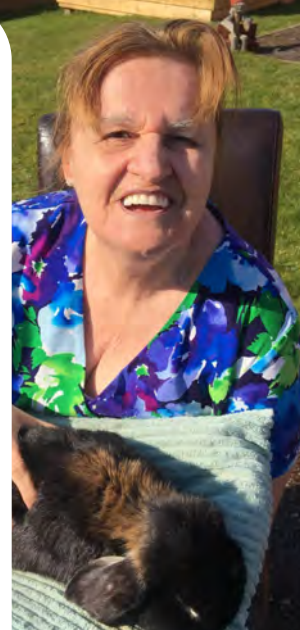
In the meantime we would like to recognise the considerable achievements of the volunteer team that helped to run the café with support from Diane, Gail, Michael and Alan, and to commend them all on their success. The café won the 'Social Impact' award presented by the Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities in 2020 prior to it shutting due to the pandemic and was recognised as a huge success leading to new friendships, improved confidence, and a sense of purpose and opportunity for adults with learning disabilities in the community.

Diane Conway, Team Member and Café Supervisor commented: *"It has been a privilege to work with the cafe team to support them achieve their dream of opening a cafe. Although it is heart-breaking that we have had to close I have every belief that the team will all go on to do amazing things"*

Heather, a café volunteer and member of the New Beginnings Group added *"From day one, building up tables to then having our first year celebrations, the hard work we put in was undeniable. We are all deeply upset by the closure of the café but hope that every cloud has a silver lining and as we've always said 'team work makes the dream work!'"*

Congratulations to everyone involved in the setting up and running of the café, including; Marissa Speed, Gail McNaught, Diane Conway, Alan McLelland, Heather Thomson, Kirsty Webb, Kerryann Meehan, Joanna Masters, Iram Laird, Caroline Murray, Michael Buckley and Lynn Travers.

Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian



20 years staying at Fairfield

Three of the people we support celebrated 20 years of staying at our Fairfield Road service in Dundee this March.

The sun came out specially for Rena, Anthony and Douglas's big day. The Fairfield team organised a DJ, a bouncy castle, arts and crafts, and a petting zoo with animals from all over the world – including a little wallaby. Friends, family and people from other services all came out to attend the best party of the year.

Fairfield staff, Sandra and Lisa, even organised a delicious buffet and everyone was able to enjoy the 20th anniversary cake.

Albert, one of the people we support who attended the event let us know what he thought about the celebration:

"It was a great day, I had lots of fun and enjoyed seeing my friends from other services. The animals were really good and I enjoyed the DJ and I was up dancing and singing along to different songs."

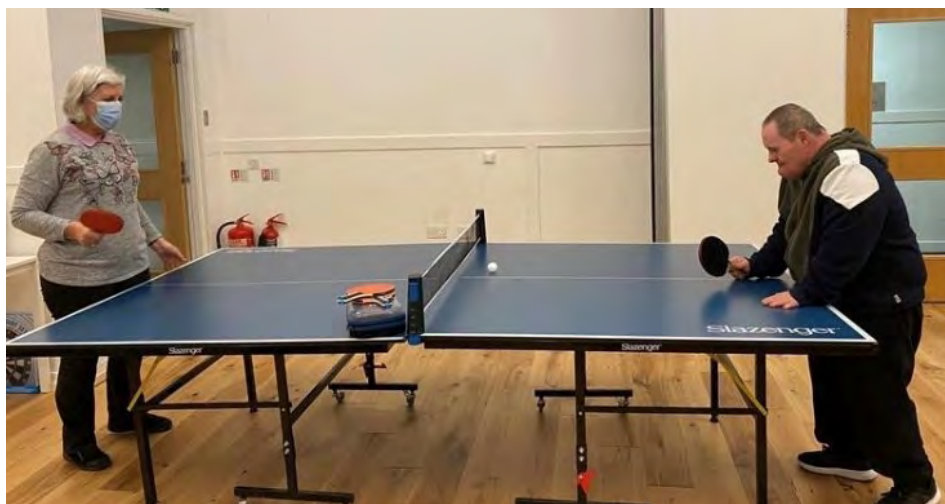
Team member Callie noted what it was like to host the event. "It was great to see the people we support having fun and seeing other individuals from other services coming along to help celebrate."

Another team member Toby, added, *"It was really lovely to see friends and family come together to celebrate Rena, Anthony and Douglas 20 years at Fairfield as it is such a big achievement."*

Well done Fairfield for organising such an incredible celebration, and congratulations to Rena, Anthony and Douglas for an amazing 20 years with us!



Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire



Glasgow day activities

Day activities in Glasgow have recommenced after having stopped due to COVID restrictions.

Currently day support is open two days a week where the people we support can socialise, play games and learn new skills.

Sharon Irvine, Service Manager, shared her enthusiasm for the service resuming.

"We are happy we have been able to do this safely and make sure everyone can see their friends again. We are currently developing the activity days and have sent a questionnaire to the people who use the club to make sure we improve and develop the activities to the wishes of the people we support."

Some of the people Glasgow supports that use the service also wanted to share what day support means to them.

Craig explained, *"I just feel good and look forward to seeing my pals."*

Deborah added *"I like the bingo as I won prizes. I also like seeing my friends and dancing and singing on the karaoke to Let It Go!"*



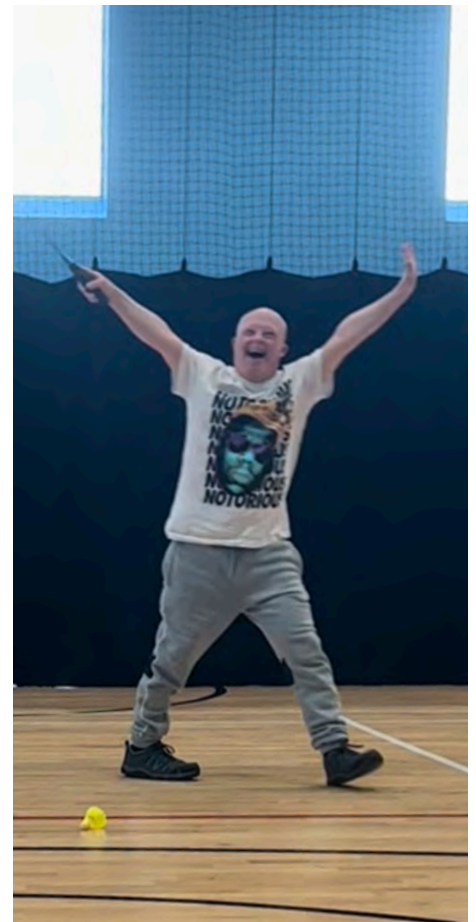
Badminton challenge

Andrew, one of the people we support at our Quebec Service in Moray recently challenged Ashley Aitken, the Housing Support Service Manager to a badminton competition. Ashley tells us more:

"It all started when I was visiting Quebec for a routine service visit and Andrew came back from a trip with his mum. During a conversation about things that Andrew enjoyed, it came out that he used to play badminton with his mum when he was younger and was quite good. We spoke about how I was the school champion as a child and that's when Andrew's competitiveness came out! He said he'd like to play badminton against me, and that he would definitely beat me. I said there was no chance because I wouldn't let him win! And he was laughing! The challenge was definitely on!"

"A couple weeks later, Andrew came into the office and spoke to a couple of managers telling them he was going to beat me at badminton and even talked through his tactics with them! As soon as I came out my meeting we went and booked the court at the local sports centre. The following week, myself and Andrew played three games. Andrew won the first game, I won the second and then the decider ended with me hitting the net, and Andrew won! 2-1.

"The loser (me!) had to buy the cokes afterwards! Andrew really enjoyed it, and let's just say he hasn't let me forget his victory! Riding high, he is now looking for a local badminton club to join."



Junior admin starts in the Elgin office

Just before Lockdown in 2020, Sarah, a person we support from our Moray branch, visited her local office and expressed how much she would love to work there. Sarah's team discussed this with the branch leader who agreed that this would be an excellent goal for Sarah to help build her social skills as well as work-related skills such as typing.

The branch leader set up an interview with Sarah and later that day she had a call telling her she had been successful. Claire, lead practitioner, who was on Sarah's support team until August last year, explained Sarah's reaction. *"She was 'absolutely over the moon' and she could not wait to call everyone that evening to let them know the good news."*

Unfortunately, lockdown began shortly afterwards and Sarah, like most of us the past few years, had to work from home.

Claire noted what the experience was like for Sarah. *"She was so patient during lockdown, she always asked when she would be able to work in the office but continued doing all her jobs at home with enthusiasm."*

Then, at the end of February this year, two years after she was given the job, Sarah was finally able to work in the office. Claire was one of the people who told Sarah the good news. *"She was so happy – in fact, ecstatic – that she was dancing around the office."*

Delighted, Sarah went to buy herself some new office outfits for her start date in March. You can see her reaction [here!](#)

Claire explained a typical day for Sarah in the office, *"She helps the office administrator with any jobs, she does stationary stock checks, waters the plants, laminates and shreds, but her favourite job is before she leaves for the day when she asks everyone if they would like a cuppa."*

"The office team have given feedback that she is an absolute joy to have in the office and a great help."

Sarah is paid monthly and is currently saving up her money so she can go on a nice holiday.

We wish Sarah the best of luck as she continues doing an excellent job!



North Lanarkshire Supported Living and Community Support

North Lanarkshire's gardening group

There are some amazing things being planted in North Lanarkshire Supported Living branch. Support worker John is a keen gardener in his spare time and decided to bring his love for his hobby to the people we support. He helps run the Summerlee Gardening Group once a week which is a real highlight to all the people supported in North Lanarkshire.

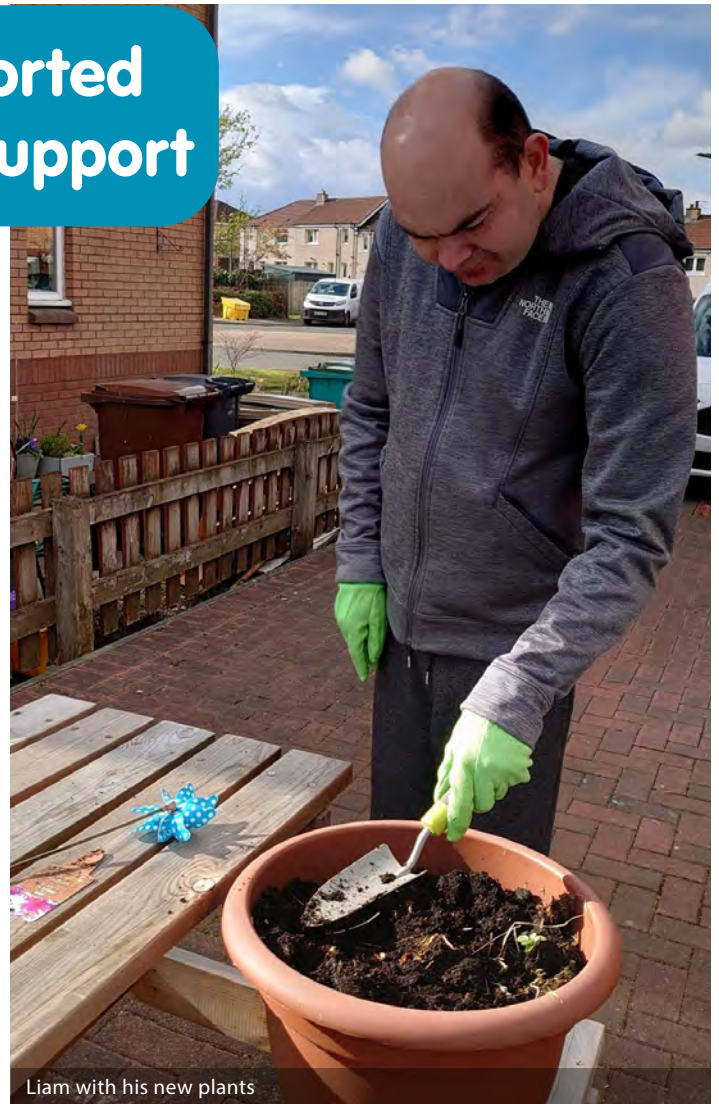
John told us a little of what a typical day at the gardening club might entail. *"We do a bit of gardening in the morning and they help me with making hanging baskets, planting seeds into trays in our greenhouses and then planting the small seedlings into pots."*

But plants aren't the only things that have been growing in the club; it's a great place for friendships to bloom too. John explains the positive impact the social aspect has on the people we support. *"The people we support love meeting up every Wednesday to help in the garden and meet up with their friends. The best part of the day is seeing them interacting with each other."*

"In the afternoon we play some games at the gardens and they all go home very happy to tell their family what they've done to help out at the garden group."

"You can tell how much the guys get out of it as I am being asked by them in Jan and Feb when is the garden group starting back."

Liam (photographed with the new plants he has bought) is one of the participants of the weekly gardening group. He enjoys the gardening sessions, spending time planting, chatting to his friends and having a bite to eat.



Liam with his new plants



Liam with support worker, Karen



Alistair watering the plants



Aiden doing a bit of planting



Wendy enjoying the Easter party



Aynsleigh with Cornerstone's Baxter Bear

Easter fun!

Our North Lanarkshire service always do an amazing job celebrating holidays and this Easter was no different!

During the lead up to Easter the people we support found creative ways to celebrate the springtime. Ann had an amazing afternoon getting into the Easter spirit with some arts and crafts, and Jean did a brilliant bit of gardening by planting some sunflower seeds!

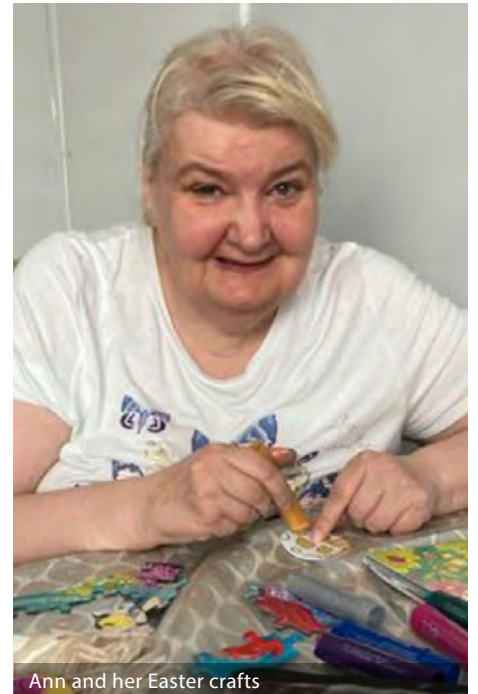
Staff and volunteers at the Airdrie hub also hosted an Easter-event that was open for all. The staff worked hard to get the place decorated and put up a marquee where people could get their face painted or sit outside and have a chat. The inside of the Airdrie hub was home to some incredible stalls selling homemade crafts.

There were also some games including a tombola which George, a person we support, helped run. Attendees of the event were treated with hot dogs, and all the cakes you could ever dream of. The only cost was a small donation to Cornerstone to help the North Lanarkshire branches continue supporting the people in their services.

Cornerstone's Baxter Bear even showed up to take some photos and greet everyone as they came inside.

This was the Airdrie hub's first time opening its doors to the community since COVID. and they were delighted to welcome a few members of the public to the event.

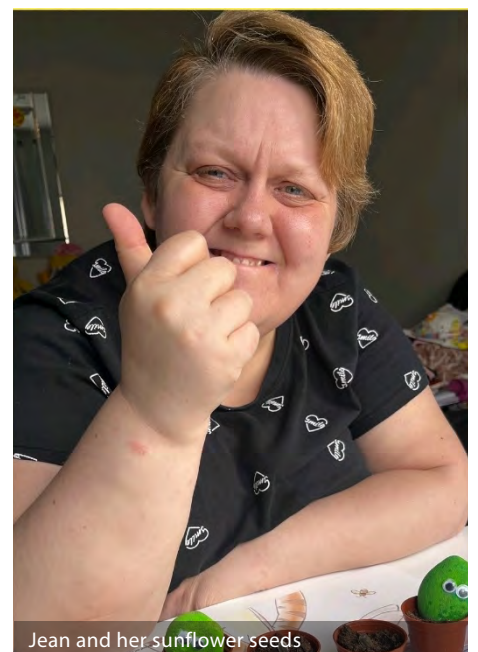
Robyn Birrell, branch leader for North Lanarkshire's supported living branch expressed what it felt like to host the event. *"This Easter event brought some stress but most importantly joy to all of the local leaders including myself; as a team we have been dreaming about our first community event since moving into our new hub 18 months ago and so to have that dream come to fruition and observe our colleagues, the people we support, families and members of our community come together and enjoy themselves was truly amazing. It is never easy to co-ordinate such an event on top of a day job so proud of the leaders for all their efforts and thankful to everyone who volunteered and made the day a success."*



Ann and her Easter crafts



Some yummy Easter treats



Jean and her sunflower seeds

More Easter fun!



Team leader, Nicola and George running the Tombola



Dale with Baxter Bear



One of the many community stalls at the event



College during a pandemic

AJ from our North Lanarkshire Community Support branch is currently studying a Skills for Life course at college and has had to work exceptionally hard to deal with the challenges of online learning.

2020/21 was AJ's first year of college and it was done almost entirely online. This was a real disappointment to AJ as he didn't get the opportunity to socialise with his classmates and like many students during the pandemic he struggled to adapt to this new style of learning.

The effect of restrictions meant that AJ's 'virtual attendance' record was very low and he was struggling with motivation and the online college experience.

His goal for the 2021/22 year was to improve his attendance and start handing in assignments on time. Despite the challenges of multiple medical appointments and motivation issues, AJ was able to better adapt to a mix of online and face to face learning and his 'attendance' went up to over 75%.

These achievements have given him the drive to hopefully undertake a specialist computing course at college next year as computers are his passion.

Chris, AJ's support worker explained the impact a recent return to more face-to-face learning has had on AJ. "He is much happier in his second year, during class he is known as the comedian of the group! AJ struggled to come out of his shell when classes were online but in person he is flourishing which is great to witness."

Since moving to in-person learning, AJ has been able to socialise with other classmates during breaks and play games like Cards Against Humanity together. AJ has also been able to join a computer club and plays online games competitively against other colleges. He also spends time playing War Thunder with one of his classmates and good friends.



Stephen's holiday and home renovation

Recently Stephen had an incredible holiday away in Craig Tara. It had been five years since Stephen's last holiday so this was an extra special experience for him.

He wanted to go to a Haven holiday park and his support team decided on Craig Tara after discussing Stephen's mobility needs with the team there. Craig Tara was brilliant, he was able to eat out and have takeaway every night which he loved, being a massive food lover. The scenery around the area was amazing and Stephen really enjoyed taking in the view on the drives they took around the caravan park. It even snowed one night!

His team also supported him on a trip to his favourite shops. One of his support workers, Lauren, who accompanied him on the trip explained, *"we enjoyed going around shops in Ayr, particularly HMV which is heaven to Stephen as he loves his DVDs. He treated himself to some new music t-shirts and his new favourite is an Iron Maiden one which he was posing with."*

But the fun wasn't over yet. When Stephen came back home his house was decorated with new carpets, blinds, doors and paint all of which he had picked out himself. The decorators worked hard while Stephen was away to make sure he came back to a house that felt brand new.

Lauren told us what Stephen thought about his holiday. *"Stephen says he can't wait to go again but he definitely wants to try the bingo next time!"*

We hope Stephen can get another trip away soon!

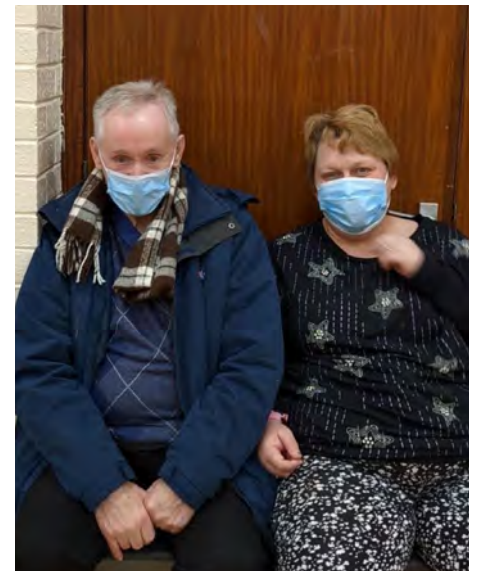


Jamie's newly carpeted house

Jamie's home is much cosier after successfully having carpets fitted before which he previously couldn't have due to health conditions which are now well managed and risk assessed, making his house much more homely!

Currie's keeping busy again now that restrictions have eased

Currie enjoying being kept busy again and making the most of life now restrictions are easing! A new friendship also blossomed with JJ, they enjoyed going to the indoor bowls together. Currie is really looking forward to socialising more and more with his pals!



Scottish Borders

Community garden



In March, our team in the Borders began the arduous task of clearing the debris from the community garden. Fortunately, the weather stayed clear for our volunteers to get down to work. They have had tremendous support from local businesses who have generously donated plenty of plants and vegetables which have now been planted in our various raised beds. It has made a huge difference to the garden and preparations are now well underway for future events.

Thanks go to

- Lowood Garden Centre Melrose- for all the plants for the rockery garden
- Buccleuch Garden Centre Melrose - perennials for our planting borders
- Philiphaugh Garden Centre in Melrose – perennials, fruit and vegetable and annuals
- Border Aggregates & Landscaping for two tonnes of top soil

Work will continue through the next few months so if you would like to lend a hand or are starting to thin out your plants in your own garden and would like to donate any please contact Kim.wallis@cornerstone.org.uk or susan.atherton@cornerstone.org.

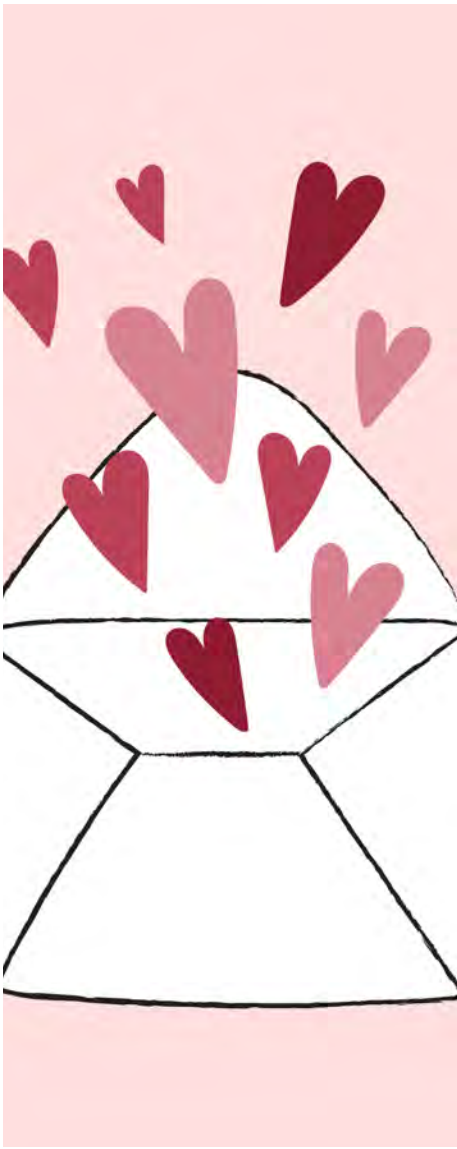


Scott as Woody, pictured here with his co-star Sarah Moffat as Shrek

Treading the Boards

Earlier in the year one of the people we support, Scott, took to the stage playing the role of Woody from Toy Story. Scott was joined by a whole host of other characters including Aladdin, Elsa, Cruella De Ville and Shrek in a one-off, exclusive performance of Cinderella, written by Graham Ford and brought to the stage by the team at Interest Link. All performed in a classic pantomime format - 'oh no it wasn't!'

Volunteers gave up their time to support the cast and crew. Scott worked hard to learn his lines and thanks to his support team at Cornerstone he gave a stellar performance. He was both endearing and confident. He also treated everyone to two songs and played the guitar. He engaged with the audience, his enthusiasm was infectious and soon he had the whole auditorium singing 'Tiny bubbles' and 'You've got a friend in me'. A huge round of applause Scott, well done!



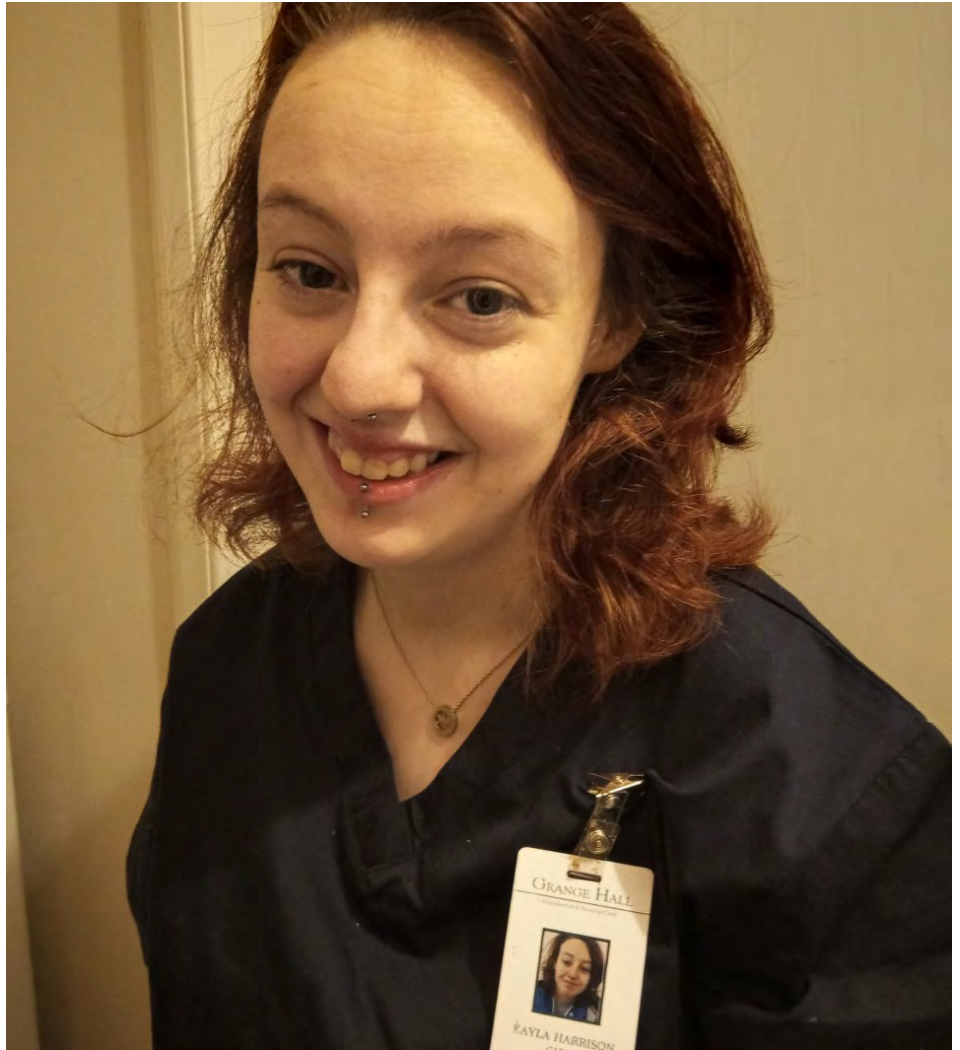
Sharing is caring

One of the people we support, Heather Burton uses a regular taxi service in Kelso. Some months back, the taxi driver - Eleanor, was telling Heather that her mother had sadly passed away. Heather being Heather, took this to heart and asked her Cornerstone support worker to help make a sympathy card for her. Together they spent some time deciding on the words which Heather wished to say in her card and they were written out for Heather to copy and then give to Eleanor.

A while later, the same support worker needed a taxi in Kelso with another individual we support and during the journey established it was the same driver, Eleanor. Eleanor explained that she was so taken with the kind thought and the lovely words Heather had written that she has now stored it in her memory box.

A short and simple story, which shows how seemingly small acts of kindness can mean so much and make a difference - not only to the individuals we support but also to the people in their community.

Future nurse in the making



Kayla is nineteen and currently supported by our Scottish Borders branch. Living with dyspraxia she has had to overcome many struggles and obstacles to achieve her goals. But through determination and hard work Kayla has managed to make some excellent progress on her goal of one day going to study nursing at University. Cornerstone has been helping to support Kayla in her dream and Kayla's support worker, Julia has helped her apply for jobs, and made sure she knew her rights.

Kayla began searching for a job in early 2021 which was incredibly difficult during the pandemic. There weren't many jobs available, and Kayla found it hard to find jobs that didn't require work experience. Additionally, the interviews she was selected for were conducted over Zoom which she found strange and awkward. Meeting people online for the first time instead of face to face was a real challenge.

Fortunately, through perseverance Kayla finally found employment as a carer, supporting clients in their own homes. Kayla enjoyed that role but has since started a new job with better hours and she is currently working night shifts in a care home.

Kayla has also moved into a new flat and has begun studying towards a National 5 qualification in Child Health and Social Care at college. She enjoys having the opportunity to learn new things and her favourite part so far is studying behavioural learning theories. She finds it really fascinating and in December 2021 passed her first assessment with flying colours. Kayla says that doing so amazingly well in her first assessment was her proudest achievement of 2021!

Her accomplishments have filled her with confidence in achieving her dream of becoming a learning disability nurse.

Kayla's interest in nursing stems from being unable to get the help she needed in school. It took quite a long time before she received her diagnosis of dyspraxia and Kayla would like to help others and ensure they do not struggle like she did.

We wish Kayla the best of luck as she continues her studies and pursues her dream!

West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute



How does your garden grow?

A kind donation of £2,000 from the W.A. Cargill Charitable Trust has been invaluable to the development of an Allotment Project in West Dunbartonshire which aims to introduce the people we support to growing their own produce and taking care of their own green space.

Lockdown has demonstrated the importance of having access to outdoor spaces and the positive difference these green spaces can make to personal wellbeing. Gardens have never been so appreciated (if you're lucky enough to have one).

A simple, idyllic gardening session is proven to increase creativity, increase confidence, and improve relaxation. It can also have a positive impact on your physical health especially if you have a mobility issue. The exercise that regular gardening provides helps people to become more active in their day-to-day life.

The generous donation from the W.A Cargill Trust has allowed us to buy gardening tools, storage, and raised beds so the people we support can get started in time for Spring.

Team Leader, Fay Buchan, explained, *"We're delighted to receive this donation as it has really helped this project get off to a great start. It was a lovely surprise!"*

CLASP awarded nearly £23,000 from the Scottish Government's Short Breaks Fund

Cornerstone's Children and Family Support Service, CLASP, was recently awarded nearly £23,000 from Shared Care Scotland's Short Breaks Fund which is resourced by the Scottish Government. This funding will be used to provide regular activities for children and young people in and around Dunoon.

CLASP will put this funding to good use by providing a Youth Club, where children and young people can meet up to play games and make friends on a regular basis. This funding will also give children and young people the opportunity to take part in sports such as football, hockey, and basketball through our Zone Club. Run in partnership with Active Schools, Zone Club promotes inclusion, physical activity, and teamwork.

CLASP also operates a quarterly Parent Forum which offers support and advice to the parents/carers of the children and young people we support. This year, we look forward to adding a couple of day trips to the busy schedule of activities. Watch this space!

Branch Leader, Jesamine Griffin, expressed her delight at receiving the grant, *"It is our pleasure to provide these activities in partnership with Shared Care Scotland's Short Breaks Fund. We are so proud of what our CLASP Team has managed to achieve over the past few years and the positive impact they have had on the children and young people they support."*

We look forward to hearing all the amazing things CLASP and the young people they support get up to with the funds!

Short breaks fund



Hugs all round for the Jigsaw Fama-llama

Our Children and Young people's service, Jigsaw, have been busy putting their recent BBC Children in Need grant to good use with a trip to Fruin Farm in Helensburgh. The kids got to learn about and interact with a herd of llamas – who were dishing out free hugs!

Team Leader, Elizabeth Hepburn said, *"Thanks to BBC Children in Need, we are always looking for unique and engaging activities for the children we support at Jigsaw. Petting llamas is just another day at the office."*



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