

# Cornerstone

# News

All the most recent news from across Cornerstone

Spring 2023



In this issue:  
**Star Awards round-up**  
**Scottish Parliament reception**  
**Burns Night fun**  
and much more!



**Providing care  
and support in  
your community**



# Welcome!

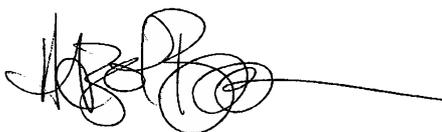
Welcome to our Spring newsletter. As I write this, I can see the trees budding and daffodils beginning to bloom so I think Spring really is on its way. This is a pretty meaty newsletter, but it only scratches the surface of everything that is going on across Cornerstone; our colleagues and the people we support have certainly been very busy!

I don't have space to mention everything that's happening but I do have some personal highlights. It was a real pleasure to be back in person at [our annual Star Awards](#) at the end of last year. What a great event and celebration of the difference Cornerstone is making to people's lives. And this year it was even broadcast live on our very own Youtube channel! We also said goodbye to two very long-served members of our Board, [Malcolm Laing](#), and [Helen Munro](#), as well as one of our inaugural employee Board Directors, [Sharon Irvine](#). Their support for Cornerstone over the years has been invaluable and I can't thank them enough for that.

We were also very lucky to have [Jackie Baillie MSP](#) host a reception for us at the [Scottish Parliament](#) where we talked about all we have learnt over the last few years and what our future plans are. At the event we also spent some time talking about the challenges in the social care sector, not least difficulties around Fair Pay which are having a direct impact across all of social care in being able to recruit and retain colleagues. We continue to work behind the scenes in lobbying for change so that everybody who works in social care is truly valued for the work that they do.

In this issue you'll find lots of tales of the fantastic fundraising that's been going on, [from lottery winners to Kiltwalking and scaling the Three Peaks](#). All to raise funds to help the people we support live the best life possible. There are also some really heart-warming stories, I was particularly moved by [Heather's story](#). Heather is supported by our Shared Lives service and in this newsletter she describes how the support she has received has changed her life for the better. Reading stories like Heather's makes me proud to be part of this fantastic organisation and reminds me that no matter what someone's role is in Cornerstone, ultimately we are all about making a positive difference to people's lives.

So please, as they say in the West of Scotland, [get tore in...and enjoy!](#)



Hazel Brown  
CEO, Cornerstone



## Cover Story!

Our front cover features Lindsey and Charlotte from our Crudenlea service in South Aberdeen and Shire who were supported to have a holiday abroad with Leah and Holly from their support team.

You can see more photos from their fantastic trip on [page 23](#).

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## Scottish Parliament event

We recently had the welcome opportunity to host an evening reception at the Scottish Parliament, kindly sponsored by Jackie Baillie, MSP.

During the course of the evening we took time to update guests from across the sector on our **2021–25 strategy, 'Future-proofing Cornerstone'** and shared learning from our previous 'Local Cornerstone' strategy. We also welcomed guest speaker, **Rachel Cackett, Chief Executive of the Coalition of Care and Support Providers (CCPS)** who spoke passionately about the challenges currently facing the Scottish social care sector. The session concluded with an engaging Q&A session, with the panel taking questions on a variety of topics including training, carer and staff engagement, learning and development, culture and pay.

During the course of the evening a short video about Local Cornerstone was shared. You can view that video [here](#).

An e-book was also created to capture learnings from Local Cornerstone. You can read it [here](#).

Our thanks to everyone who attended and participated in the event, the feedback was extremely positive:

"Well done all. An honest but very positive and inspiring meeting. It's been a challenge but the new Cornerstone team are well equipped to deal with everything. Thank you for all your hard work in ensuring the best care for our loved ones."

**Caroline McNicoll, family member.**

"It was an excellent event, being both informative and refreshing, it strongly reflected Cornerstones values and integrity."

**John Legg from advice.scot.**

"It was great to have the opportunity to be there, and inspiring to hear how much Cornerstone has learned from the last few years. Well done to everyone, but especially Hazel Brown for her leadership through all this."

**David Smith, Ledingham Chalmers.**

"It was an excellent event, well run and enjoyable to be present at. The speeches were excellent, providing the right amount of information to paint a clear picture of the story behind Local Cornerstone and where we are now. The lessons learned were a key focus and the transparency of all that brought Cornerstone to its current position was clearly understood."

**Helen Stuart, Board member.**

"Thank you so much for inviting me to the Parliamentary event last night. I echo so many of the positive comments made, relating to the refreshing honest, open and humble communication. It's clearly been a very challenging time for all Cornerstone colleagues these last five years but onwards and upwards with the Future-Proofing strategy!"

**Helen Tuohy, The People Portfolio.**



**From top: Questions and Answers with our panel of Hazel Brown, Chief Executive, Peter Bailey, Chair, Rachel Cackett, Chief Executive of CCPS, and Andrew McInnes, Branch Leader of the North Lanarkshire Community Support and the Scottish Borders branches; Hazel Brown presents our strategy 'Future-proofing Cornerstone'; Our host Jackie Bailey MSP; Guest Speaker and panelist Rachel Cackett; Our host and panel for the reception.**

You can read the current 2021–25 strategy, 'Future-proofing Cornerstone' [here](#).



# Star Awards

## 2022

Incorporating  
The Mary Williamson  
Personal Achievement Awards



Our annual **Star Awards** recently celebrated the significant achievements of the people we support and our colleagues across the country. The award ceremony was kindly sponsored by **CNR International**.

Over 80 colleagues were presented with either their ten, twenty or twenty-five year long service awards, representing a cumulative 1,135 years of loyal service to Cornerstone! Ten of our Modern Apprenticeship 'Class of 2022' graduates were also recognised for achieving their Modern Apprenticeship qualification and a number of very special Mary Williamson Awards were presented to the people we support.

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

- Personal health challenges or fitness goals
- Fundraising activities
- Training courses or employment opportunities
- New crafts, hobbies or activities
- Facing fears
- Building friendships



The winners, runners up and highly commended for the **Mary Williamson Awards 2022** were;

### North Aberdeen and Shire

Winner - **Laura Hamilton**

### South Aberdeen and Shire

Winner - **Tamara Batten**

Runner up - **Vanessa Finch**

### Ayrshire

Winner - **Mary Bleakley**

Runner up - **Robbie Mark**

### Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian

Winner - **Gemma Britten**

Runner up - **Heather McNicoll**

Highly Commended - **Elaine Thomson**

### Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire

Winner - **Ailsa Davison**

### Moray

Winner - **Adrian Tilbury**

Runner up - **John Williamson**

### North Lanarkshire Community Support

Winner - **Ethan Cunningham**

Runner up - **Deborah Hudson**

Highly Commended - **Paul Oakes**

### North Lanarkshire Supported Living

Winner - **Aynsleigh Lewis**

### Scottish Borders

Winner - **Lisa Nelson**

Runner up - **James Lyall**

### West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute

Winner - **Amy McGrandles**

Runner up - **Cameron Cree**



From top, left to right: Elaine and Gemma from our Blackwood Court Service; Hazel Brown, Peter Bailey, Louise Baxter founding trustee of Cornerstone and the wife of the late Nick Baxter, the founder of Cornerstone, Aberdeenshire Deputy Provost Ron McKail, and Mary Williamson award winner, Tamara from Aberdeen and Shire South; Mary Williamson award runner-up John who is supported in Moray; Mary Williamson runner-up Winner Vanessa, from our Abbotswell Drive service; Mary Williamson award winner Adrian, from Moray; Service Lead Gwen Nelson, Baxter Bear, and Tamara.



“

Hazel Brown, Chief Executive of Cornerstone commented:

“Huge congratulations go to all our award winners, runners up and those awarded highly commended. What a wonderful day! It was great to be able to gather everyone together again and celebrate the fantastic work that Cornerstone does across the country, providing vital care and support to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs and helping them to live their best possible lives!

Many thanks too to our sponsor CNR International for their very generous donation and to Barry Duncan, Managing Director & Vice President Finance for presenting our Fundraiser of the Year award.”

”



The Fundraiser of the Year award went to the brilliant Beth McPhee from Lanarkshire who, through her amazing baking skills, single-handedly managed to raise a significant amount of money for Cornerstone’s North Lanarkshire Community Support branch where her grandad, Neil was supported. She wanted to do something to say thank you to Cornerstone, so Beth started selling her cakes and sweet treats. She launched her ‘Fudge Factory’ when she was in her fifth year of high school—right in the middle of studying for her exams and attending school online during lockdown! Beth became a master of her craft, baking batches of fudge, cupcakes and afternoon tea boxes. She has also created special bakes for Halloween, and birthday parties, and her fundraising efforts were even noticed by the Daily Record who wrote an article about her in November 2021!

Two other awards were also presented:

Colleague of the Year went to Maxine Thomson from Cornerstone’s service at Crudenlea in Stonehaven.

Maxine’s nominator shared: “Maxine is a Support Practitioner in Crudenlea who always works tirelessly to give the people she supports an amazing life. During various lockdowns and restrictions throughout COVID Maxine always went above and beyond for the people we support—she was responsible for organising parties and activities. These included creating a ‘National days’ calendar to ensure there was a different themed activity every day to give the people we support a fun and educational experience. Maxine also hosts ‘decade’ parties where everyone dresses up and enjoys food, music and activities from the chosen decade. Maxine’s nature is caring and compassionate. She excels in finding the right way to help support individuals, offering a truly person-centred approach to their care.”

Team of the Year was awarded to the Ally Williamson Team at Baxter View in Dumbarton.

The Ally Williamson team were nominated for “continuously going above and beyond to support Ally. “They worked together to come up with solutions that best support Ally, trying new ideas every few weeks until they found what worked best for him. He is now a lot happier, talkative—expressing to staff how he is feeling—and is often heard laughing. Ally’s progress was greatly helped by the team’s positivity and determination—never giving up even when they came up with ideas that didn’t work. They all have a good and trusting relationship with Ally as modelled by the fantastic relationship the team have with each other.”



From top, left to right: Colleague of the Year, Maxine Thomson; Adrian Todd; Gwen Nelson, Aynsleigh from our Hallcraig service, and Maxine Thomson; Helen Cairney, Pamela Duell, Louise Dickson, and Stephen Cuthe; Scott Broadley, Support Practitioner Pamela Adams, Paul from our North Lanarkshire Community Support service, and Andrew McInnes.

Sponsored by



**CNR International**

**Congratulations to all our award winners!**

## Welcome to the team

We are delighted to announce a number of recent appointments at Cornerstone. **Colin Phillips joins us as Director of Delivery and Tony Hadley joins us as Branch Leader of Moray.**

Colin has worked in the social care sector for over 16 years in a number of service management, quality assurance, project management and business development roles, and joined Cornerstone as Director of Delivery in 2023. Prior to this he worked in the private sector for over 20 years in a variety of engineering and management roles for multinational companies.

Colin explained, **“I have really enjoyed finding out more about the organisation and the wonderful work we do. Everyone has been so friendly and helpful and this has helped me to settle in quickly. I have been impressed by the people I have met so far and the things they do to enhance people’s lives.”**

Tony Hadley joins us from our SDS service in Inverurie where he worked as an advisor and Lead Practitioner. He has a long career history of working in Health and Social Care, having trained initially as a physiotherapist before moving to community learning disability and mental health services. He spent twenty years working within managerial and executive roles within Norfolk’s community based services. A change of lifestyle brought him to Scotland in 2017.

Tony shared, **“Having been away from service delivery now for five years, I am very much looking forward to working with the teams, people we support and families in the Moray services.”**

Many congratulations to you both, wishing you every success in your new roles.



From top: Colin Phillips, and Tony Hadley.

## Great ratings in Fife Services

Cornerstone’s Fife Housing Support service recently welcomed an announced visit from the Care Inspectorate. This was a very short notice announced inspection which took place over the 10th and 11th of January.

Cornerstone Fife provides a care at home and housing support service to support adults with a learning disability, a physical disability or with mental health needs to live in their homes and in the community.

The inspection evaluated two key aspects of the service;

- How well does the service support people’s wellbeing? **(Awarded a grade 4—Good)**
- How good is the service’s leadership? **(Awarded a grade 5—Very Good)**

The Care Inspectorate commented on how well the service supports people’s wellbeing, **“People received support that was kind and respectful from staff that knew them well. We saw people being relaxed around staff and happy to see them. We saw evidence of warm engagement between the people and staff, comments from staff such as, ‘we all want the best for people using the service’ reflected the values of the staff spoken to.”**

Additionally, the Care Inspectorate praised the leadership within the service. **“There were individualised improvement plans in place for the three houses. These plans reflected a service that was constantly evaluating people’s experiences and how they could support positive outcomes for**



From top, left to right: Drum Road service’s Emma and staff member, Elaine Aitken; Mikie from our Fod Street service; Glebe Road team members Steph Hepburn, Alan McNeil, Tasmin Clarke, Katie Beat, Louise Howitt, Kerry Nicoll, Lynn McCrae, and Emma Farley

**them. People, families, advocacy, and legal guardians were involved with reviews in a meaningful way and communication was cited as effective by all parties.”**

Well done to all our teams and colleagues involved in this inspection!

You can read the full report [here](#).

## Two “very good” gradings for New Deer!

Since our last newsletter Cornerstone’s New Deer service in North Aberdeen and Shire welcomed the results of an unannounced visit from the Care Inspectorate.

New Deer is a housing support and care at home service that supports people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs to live in their own homes.

The inspection evaluated two key aspects of the service;

- How well does the service support people’s wellbeing?
- How good is our leadership?

**Both aspects were awarded a grade 5—Very Good.**

In awarding the grade 5s the Care Inspectorate noted that; **“We observed staff interacting with people in a warm and friendly manner and it was clear that they knew the people they were supporting well. Staff spoke with such respect and enthusiasm. This meant that people felt safe and secure because they experienced consistent and caring relationships.”**

**“People’s choices and preferences shaped their support. Where people were unable to make decisions by themselves, the service was very effective in involving families/representatives. This resulted in people feeling valued, respected, and listened to.”**



**Laura and Support Practitioner Deborah Laird at the New Deer service.**

The Care Inspectorate also commented positively on the service’s leadership. **“The service benefitted from an onsite leadership team. This meant that they were very accessible to people, staff, families, and visiting professionals. People told us that this had supported any day-to-day issues that had arisen to be resolved quickly and effectively.”**

You can download the 2022 report [here](#).

**A huge well done to the New Deer team!**

## Board retireals

**We would like to give our sincere and grateful thanks to Malcolm Laing, Helen Munro, and Sharon Irvine who have recently retired from the Board.**

Malcolm joined the Cornerstone Board in 2001, becoming Vice-Chair in 2007 and Chair in 2017. He was also a member of Aberdeen Harbour Board from 2012–2017 and took up the role of Cornerstone Co-Chair, alongside Elaine Thomson, in July 2020. Malcolm is a retired corporate lawyer who was a partner with Ledingham Chalmers LLP, one of Scotland’s leading law firms.

Helen Munro joined the Cornerstone Board in 2011. She was awarded an MBE in 2002 and chaired Cornerstone’s quality committee for a number of years.

In her professional life Helen was director of community services with Stirling Council before retiring in 2005.

Sharon Irvine worked as the manager of Glasgow services at Cornerstone and had been with Cornerstone since 2005. She joined the board as a valued, inaugural employee Board Director in October 2017.

Cornerstone CEO, Hazel Brown added: **“It has been a real privilege to work alongside Malcolm, Helen and Sharon as part of our Cornerstone Board. Their knowledge and expertise has been incredibly valued and I am immensely grateful for their dedication and contribution to Cornerstone throughout their time with us. I wish each of our retiring board members all the best in their future endeavours.”**

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.



**From top: Malcolm Laing, Helen Munro, and Sharon Irvine.**

# Menopause Awareness Project



Menopause awareness training in the Cornerstone Glasgow office.

Last summer we were delighted to announce we had been successful in our grant application to the Workplace Equality Fund, allowing us to progress with a Menopause Awareness Project (MAP) in partnership with our project partners The People Portfolio.

This project is contributing towards one of our three strategic aims—to be the best social care employer in Scotland.

With over 78% of our workforce being female, and 45% being between the ages of 35–55, it is vitally important that we better understand the impact of perimenopause, menopause, and postmenopause and identify ways in which we, as an organisation, can better support those experiencing symptoms.

To date the project has successfully delivered:

**A menopause survey**—colleagues were invited to complete our in-house survey, helping us to learn about their lived experience and what support they are looking for.

**Online resources**—a bank of materials was launched last month on a range of menopause topics including; science and symptoms, nutrition, movement, sleep and stress and self-regulation. The information comes in a variety of formats from reading materials to podcasts, suiting every learning style.

**Menopause lending library**—a variety of books on a range of menopause topics are now available at a number of Cornerstone hubs and offices.

**Line Manager Menopause Awareness Training**—all managers are currently attending this mandatory workshop, helping prepare them to support their colleagues and be able to signpost to resources and other avenues for support.

**Menopause Support Policy**—the entire project is underpinned by our new policy, which sets out the guidelines for managers and colleagues to provide the right support to help manage menopausal symptoms at work.

There's lots more exciting work in the project plan for the next year including **the rollout of an optional, protected-space virtual workshop where women can learn more about the science of the menopause, discuss how to manage symptoms and be guided on what support there is available through Cornerstone.** Men-only sessions will also be arranged, **offering a safe space for men to ask questions on the topic and to learn more about the science and symptoms.** Additionally, these men-only sessions will cover the impact of menopausal symptoms and how they might best be able to offer support to their colleagues, family and friends who are going through symptoms.

## Supported by:



## Working in partnership



Cornerstone is thrilled to announce a strategic partnership with leading energy company CNOOC International for 2023. Together, Cornerstone and CNOOC International aim to make improvements to the homes and green spaces of people with learning disabilities, autism, and complex care needs across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

The last few years have 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!) The positive impact gardening can have on wellbeing is widely reported and the positive outcomes associated are many. Gardening is proven to increase creativity, increase confidence, and improve relaxation. One aspect that is often overlooked is the impact gardening can have 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.

CNOOC's UK business operates three major oil and gas platforms in the North Sea. The company, based at Kingswells, has been supporting Cornerstone since 2017 through a mix of funding and volunteering which has led to improvements to our services across the Granite City. This support has led to the creation of sensory rooms, sensory gardens, and renovations to Cornerstone's care and support services.

Chris Morritt from CNOOC's UK Community Investment Committee said: "We are delighted to continue our long association with Cornerstone and proud that together we are helping some of those in our local community who need that little extra bit of support."

Cornerstone's Grants, Trusts and Foundations Writer, James McQueen, said, "Cornerstone has benefitted from the support of CNOOC International for years and this relationship has led to some brilliant pieces of community work in and around Aberdeen. Their workforce always goes above and beyond when it comes to volunteering. This latest project, worth £29,000, aims to go even further by targeting more homes to benefit more people."

## Communicating successfully

Speech and Language Therapist Louise Carson has completed her secondment with Cornerstone from NHS Lanarkshire. She had been working with Cornerstone for a year to develop an accessible, supported communication strategy.

The goal of Louise's secondment was;

- To create a suite of resources to develop knowledge on communication
- To raise general public awareness of differences in communication
- To develop knowledge of accessible documentation and produce accessible information
- To develop the use of Boardmaker
- To enhance meaningful communication and engagement with the people we support
- To offer individual support on request



In addition to these goals during her time at Cornerstone Louise has developed e-learning modules on autism, learning disabilities and supporting communication; applied for and received funding for a Makaton tutor to provide Makaton training to colleagues; and created a Teams channel that facilitates easy and effective ways to share resources. The channel had helped to signpost websites, videos and links to other third sector support, assisting colleagues in finding new ways to help the people we support.

To mark the end of her secondment, Louise shared some thoughts about her time at Cornerstone;

**"The year-long secondment has been full of new learning opportunities. Not only was I able to share my existing knowledge, skills and experience with Cornerstone but the secondment has helped me develop as a speech and language therapist, a professional, a colleague and a person. A lot has been achieved in a year and this was only possible due to the support of NHS management, the Cornerstone Leadership team and all Cornerstone team members who made me feel welcome and supported throughout the secondment."**



Jayne Findlay, Director of Business Development shared,

**"When we applied for grant funding to further one of our strategic aims—to become an expert provider of services to people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs—I was keen to apportion some of that fund into bringing in a Speech and Language Therapist. Never could I have imagined the impact that one person would have across so many areas of our organisation."**

**As Louise is both a strategic thinker and a very knowledgeable and capable practitioner, she has created resources and training beneficial to our service delivery, Marketing and Communications and Quality Improvement teams, so we will continue to benefit from this secondment long into the future."**

From top: Louise Carson; Rosa from our Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian branch and Amy from our Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire branch were just some of the people we support who were involved in developing resources with Louise.

# Burns Night!

The people we support across the country marked Burns night in style celebrating the life and poetry of Robert Burns.

In Dundee, Perth, Fife and West Lothian the people we support and our colleagues at Fairfield Road were serenaded by Derek the piper.

Beth and Gillian helped prepare their Burns supper with support from their support team and tucked into a delicious meal.

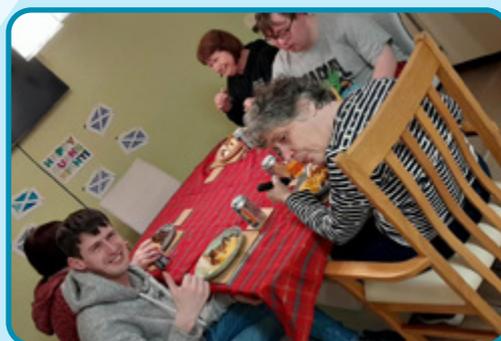
In North Aberdeen and Shire, Craigewan threw a fabulous Burns Supper for the people we support. The tables were decorated in blue and white tartan, saltires and balloons adorned the walls, a "tim'rous beastie" was hidden amongst some tablet, and on every place setting was a picture of the man himself.

School Park held a similarly exciting gathering in a hall that had all been decorated with Scottish colours. They also invited a piper to come perform.

The people we support in South Aberdeen and Shire had a wonderful treat when Support Practitioner Lewis brought out his bagpipes and ended the night with some Scottish music.

In our North Lanarkshire branches Paul took a trip to visit Robert Burns' cottage in Alloway and Donna and her support staff took time to appreciate the best of Scotland's delicacies —shortbread and Irn Bru.

In Moray everyone enjoyed getting involved in some Burns themed arts and crafts, dining on haggis, neeps and tatties and listening to some Scottish music.



From top, left to right: Gillian and Beth from our Fairfield service; School Park celebrations were held in a local hall; Our Craigewan service celebrating with a fantastic Burns Supper.

## Prince's Trust

In February the Training Academy was proud to announce the successful completion of the **"Get into Social Care"** programme in partnership with the Prince's Trust.

The candidates in the programme were trained over two weeks and then assigned to a two week service placement. During the two weeks of training, all candidates participated enthusiastically in discussions and were eager to begin their induction into the services and meet the people we support.

After the candidates spent time in the services they received incredibly positive feedback from our teams and the people we support and three of the programme participants have chosen to apply for a permanent job at Cornerstone.

To mark the end of the programme, the Prince's Trust held a celebration for the applicants in Aberdeen on the 23rd of February.

The Training Academy would like to thank everyone involved in making this possible; **the Prince's Trust team for liaising and supporting the young people; the people we support who welcomed the young people into their own homes; our colleagues for making them feel welcome to the organisation; everyone working in the background to make sure everything ran smoothly; and, of course, the candidates themselves for putting in the effort and commitment.**



Service Lead Aidan Severino, Prince's Trust candidates, Oghenefjiro Isitekhale, Ross Sutherland, Imogen Mauchline and Shannon Kane, Trainer Michalis Filippou and Training Academy Coordinator Jamie Tuckwood.

Ross Sutherland, the Prince's Trust Youth Development Lead, said, **"I want to say a massive thank you to all the managers and teams for the support you've given the young people on placement. It's been fabulous coming out to see you and I know that all candidates have had a productive and beneficial time, but also, a hugely enjoyable time on their placements. So I wanted to say thank you, in my role as Case Worker associated with the programme."**

Wishing all the successful candidates good luck and a bright career ahead!

## Recognising the importance of values and transferable skills



Cornerstone is delighted to be part of the **SCQF Inclusive Recruiter Programme**.

Qualifications in Scotland have changed significantly over the past several years. The SCQF is Scotland's National Qualifications Framework which provides a way of recognising, describing and comparing the difficulty and notional time taken to achieve a whole range of qualifications and learning programmes. In addition to mainstream qualifications the SCQF also contains vocational and skills-based qualifications, and learning programmes developed and delivered in the workplace or community.

The Inclusive Recruiter Programme helps employers understand the comparable worth of different qualifications and encourages the use of SCQF Levels in the recruitment process to offer clarity around skills and experience.

Becoming an SCQF Inclusive Recruiter will allow us to;

- **Develop a clearer and more inclusive recruitment process**
- **Properly benchmark and map the skills of employees/ applicants to any job role**
- **Promote equality of all qualifications across the organisation**

We recruit on values and transferable skills and by using the SCQF levels in our recruitment processes, instead of specific qualifications, we hope to attract a wider pool of candidates who may never have considered a career in the Health and Social Care sector before.



Modern Apprenticeship Week ran from the 6th to the 12th of March 2023.

Cornerstone's Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme gives those looking to pursue or develop a career in health and social care the opportunity to gain a sector-recognised qualification whilst working in a paid role as a Support Practitioner.

To commemorate the week some of our 2023 Modern Apprenticeship graduates shared their stories.

### Rhona Waters

Rhona Waters is a Support Practitioner in North Lanarkshire's Community Support branch.

She decided to do the Modern Apprenticeship to get a qualification that would help further her career in social care. Rhona found that the learning in the Modern Apprenticeship gave her some additional skills that would improve her current practice. **"I really wanted to learn more about the policies and legislation that are important in social care. It was rewarding to learn skills that would transfer into my working practice and allow me to help the people I support to the absolute best of my ability."**

Rhona has continued using the skills learned on the Modern Apprenticeship in her everyday practice and encourages anyone considering the Modern Apprenticeship to apply. **"The Modern Apprenticeship is a great opportunity for anyone who would like to progress within the sector."**

### Jennifer Brunton

Jennifer is a Support Practitioner in North Aberdeen and Shire.

She was initially unsure about enrolling in the Modern Apprenticeship programme, not realising apprenticeships are for everyone. **"I had always assumed apprenticeships were for young adults, not someone in their early forties like me."**

Despite her initial reservations Jennifer is glad she put herself forward for the programme. **"I now have the skills and confidence to be able to complete a number of different tasks which will help me both now and in the future."**



From left to right: Support Practitioners Rhona Waters and Jennifer Brunton.

During the course of the programme Modern Apprenticeship candidates study a range of skills in preparation for their SVQ. **"It has been a good few years since I left school, so I was apprehensive about being upskilled in numeracy and information, and communication technology, as maths and spreadsheets were never my strong point. But my assessor talked me through it, and gave me plenty of encouragement in order for me to complete the module."**

After completing her Modern Apprenticeship Jennifer has improved her skills and her confidence. Now Jennifer is considering a distance learning course in mental health. **"I feel this is going to benefit myself, the people we support and my colleagues as I am going to be able to better understand and support their needs with the skills I now have."**

### Lauren Quinn

Lauren is a Support Practitioner in Ayrshire.

She decided to do her Modern Apprenticeship to learn valuable knowledge, and earn a qualification that would allow her to progress further in her career one day.

During her Modern Apprenticeship Lauren improved upon her existing skills and was able to learn new skills too. **"I learned some areas I could improve on and ways to deal with situations differently. Now I can communicate better with the people we support."**

**"Doing the Modern Apprenticeship has made me want to learn more and grow more. I would love to one day be able to manage a service and help more people in the future."**

For Lauren the most rewarding part of her Modern Apprenticeship came during the assessments where the people she supports and their families were asked questions about her practice. **"Hearing what the people I support and their families thought of me felt great."**

**"I also feel like I am a more understanding and better Support Practitioner because of this Modern Apprenticeship and for that I am very grateful."**

## Colin comes onboard

Colin Milligan is a Support Practitioner who recently joined Cornerstone's newest service in Dundee—Langlands.

This is Colin's first time working in care, and he described his experience of the recruitment process.

**"Changing career paths is really nerve wracking, so I was quite anxious when I went to my interview. But it was so relaxed and friendly and I was put at ease really quickly. It felt more like an informal "getting to know me" chat, so I could really put my nerves to one side and just show what I could offer."**

Colin was delighted to be offered the role and was impressed with the clear and regular communication during the hiring process. **"My manager Louise has supported me all the way, from being offered the position to starting my role in January. I always feel like I can reach out if I need help which is so reassuring."**

After one month working as a Support Practitioner Colin has learned a lot. **"My first month has been really informative, fun and challenging in the best way. I've had the chance to do some**



**training and induction and really get to know the job on placement in different services. I've developed really great relationships already and it's nice to go home with a positive and rewarding feeling at the end of the day. I'm really looking forward to what my Cornerstone future looks like."**

*Interested in a career in social care? [Click here](#) to find out more! We can't wait to hear from you.*

## Inspiring future generations

The Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) recently took part in the first Social Care Careers Week in schools across Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Government and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The aim of the event was to put together a week of national, school-based events to raise young people's awareness of the sector and encourage interest in social care careers.

As part of the week, Cornerstone was invited to develop a **short online session** featuring some of our Lead Practitioners sharing their experiences. This video went out live to schools across the country and proved to be a great opportunity to propose social care as a positive career option—a career where you can really make a difference.

**Housing Support Lead Practitioners, Erin and Graeme featured in the session**, eager to share their stories with the young people.

Graeme shared what a typical day might look like supporting a gentleman in his service. **"We promote the person I support to be independent, we maybe prompt him or remind him of something, but he'll do his own ironing and make his own meals with a bit of support. Today he has probably gone out for lunch and a game of pool. Then at night he likes to chill, he loves dominoes and would play all night if he could!"**

Building a strong, positive relationship with the people we support is vital in the role. Erin shared; **"It was about building trust with the ladies I**



**Lead Practitioners Graeme and Erin share their experiences.**

**supported and their families who I'm in regular contact with. It was important the families knew me to know they could trust me with their daughters. I have got a second family now because of how well we've built that relationship."**

For Graeme and Erin the best part of their jobs is working with the people we support. Graeme shared; **"My favourite part is knowing the person I'm supporting is happy. Because if I wasn't there, he might not be able to be as active as he wants to be. Seeing him happy because he's had a great day out makes me happy."**

As a person-centred employer, Cornerstone aims to recruit people who align with our organisational values. Erin explained; **"At Cornerstone we look at a person's values over qualifications. If you have the right mindset to work in a caring role, we would love to discuss recruitment opportunities"**

*Want to find out more about a career in social care? [Click here!](#)*



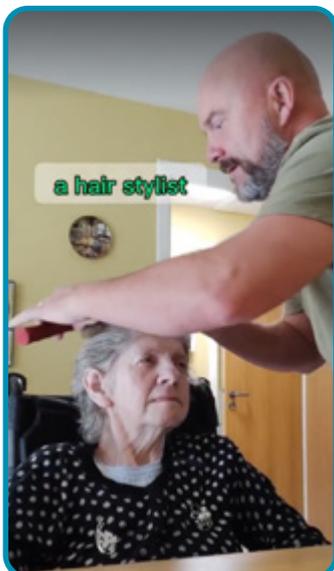
## I never thought I'd be...

At the start of the year we launched a recruitment campaign on our social media channels, aimed at dispelling myths and spotlighting all the fun and sometimes unexpected (!) activities our Support Practitioners enjoy when working with the people we support.

Using the strapline, "Before I worked in social care, I never thought I'd be..." the 30 second campaign videos showed Cornerstone colleagues and the people we support across the country involved in a range of activities together. This included colleagues being 'biking buddies', 'nail technicians', 'party planners' and 'darts coaches', to name but a few!

The videos were live on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok over a six week period and were very well received. We hope you enjoyed them if you saw them pop up on your social feeds! This was also the very first time we had posted on TikTok, so if you are a fan, look out for our videos, give us a like and make sure you follow [tiktok.com/@cornerstonescot](https://www.tiktok.com/@cornerstonescot).

Huge thanks to all the people we support and colleagues who got involved with this fun campaign.



A selection of stills from the fantastic campaign videos created by Support Practitioners Charlyn Dick, Eric Ramaz, and Sophie Wallace.

# Fundraising

## All the festive fun!

It already seems like so long ago, **but we'd just like to give a massive thanks to our supporters for getting involved and donating to our winter and Christmas initiatives in 2022.**

Things kicked off early with the **2022 World Cup Sweepstake** as we welcomed the first ever winter tournament—**hats off if you picked Argentina from the draw!**

We then launched our **Christmas Wish Appeal**, where Lee, one of the people we support in Dundee, shared his Christmas wish story when Santa surprised him last year with a dream holiday! A true Harry Potter superfan and ardent West Ham United supporter, Lee's Christmas wish saw him fly down to London to visit the Harry Potter Studios and tour West Ham's London Stadium, where he even managed to kick back on David Moyes' seat!

**All of the money raised from the Christmas Wish Appeal will go towards making more Christmas wishes come true this year.**

There were also some **very lucky Christmas raffle winners**, with one walking away with a cash prize of £500!

And a number of people we support were over the moon when they had the opportunity to design their very own **Christmas eCards**, which were then available to buy online for our supporters to send to their friends, families and colleagues.

It certainly was a fun, festive, fundraising season!



From top, left to right: Lee from our Fairfield service all ready for Christmas; Lee in action for our Sweepstake photography; Lee visiting Harry Potter studios; Christmas ecard artwork by Aynsleigh from our Hallcraig service, Lorraine from our Craigewan service, and Jackie from our Berrybank service.

## Taking fundraising to new heights

**Marc Eddie is running the Edinburgh marathon and the Three Peaks Challenge to raise money for Cornerstone.**

His brother, Shaun was supported by Cornerstone in Peterhead for 10 years until he sadly passed away in 2021. In his memory, Marc is raising money for Craigewan—the service that cared for Shaun.

Marc told us a little bit about Shaun. **“Ever since Shaun was little, he just loved animals. His Cornerstone support team would sometimes take him to help out at a local farm which he loved. He also enjoyed walking along the harbour at Peterhead to see the seals. Being out and about was one of his favourite things; he would speak to everybody and had the most incredible memory—he never forgot a face. If he spoke to someone once, that was it, they were a friend for life.”**

**“Cornerstone were so good for Shaun, and the difference they made from day one, until the day we lost him was transformative. When he was younger my mum had to do a lot for him but when he was with Cornerstone he became so independent. Obviously he had carers helping him but he was doing so much for himself. And so, if I was going to raise money for any charity, Cornerstone seemed like a very good choice.”**

Although Marc has been running for a couple of years, this is his first time fundraising. He's never done anything like this before but has already risen to the challenge with sponsor forms and football scratch cards at the ready! He's also created a **Just Giving page** which his family helps to share on social media.

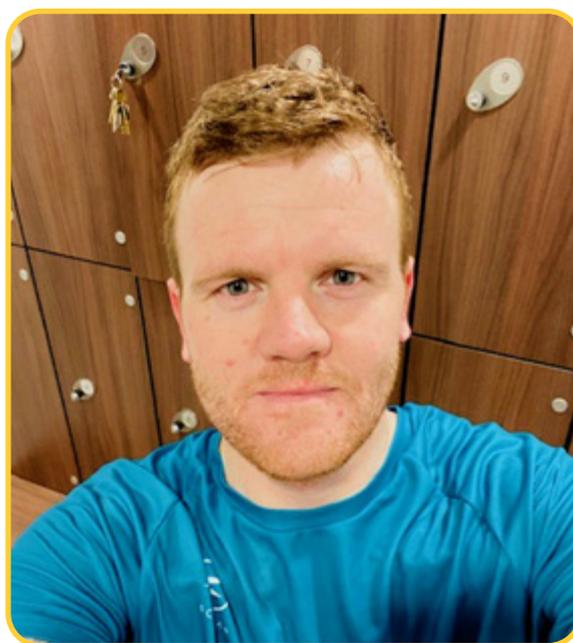
Previously Marc has completed a few half-marathons but the Edinburgh marathon will be his first full marathon. Going by his half-marathon time, Marc aims to run the full marathon in three and a half hours or three hours twenty if he can really push himself.

**“It's something new, I've not got close to that distance before so I'm looking forward to race day. Running a marathon is an achievement in itself!”**

But why stop with a marathon? Marc is also aiming to take his fundraising to all new heights by challenging himself to do the Three Peaks Challenge! This challenge will send Marc up the tallest mountain in Scotland, Wales and England; Ben Nevis, Snowdon and Scafell Pike, for a total 23 miles of walking and 10,052ft of vertical ascent, all within 24 hours.

**“I like hill walking anyway and I saw you could do the challenge to raise money for your chosen charity at the same time. So I thought it would be a good thing to do.”**

To train for the challenge, Marc has been going on hikes, most recently a 19km walk around Bennachie. He's excited to try out new training peaks too.



From top: Shaun Eddie who was supported by Cornerstone in Peterhead; Marc Eddie in training for his fundraising challenge.

**“I'm trying to get around as much as I can, hopefully I'll climb all the Munros. So I can train while I see bits of the country at the same time.”**

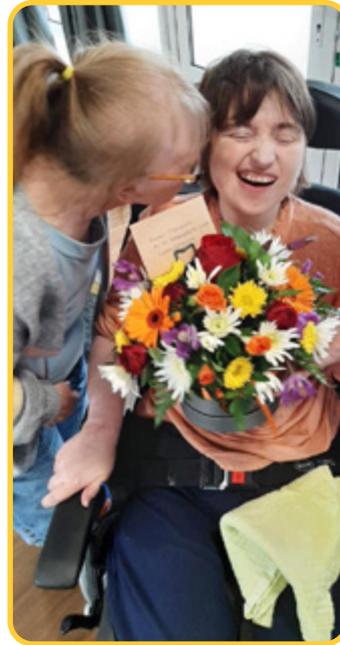
He plans to divide time between marathon training and hikes, aiming to climb Ben Nevis a few times in the spring in preparation.

If you would like to help Marc raise money for Cornerstone and help us to continue providing care for people just like Shaun, please donate **by clicking here**.

# Dedicate your Birthday!

Celebrate your birthday in a special way this year by setting up a Facebook Fundraiser in aid of Cornerstone! All of the money you raise will come directly to Cornerstone, enabling us to continue our vital work and helping us to be there for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs in Scotland.

It couldn't be easier to set up your birthday fundraiser. Simply complete this form, log into Facebook and your fundraiser will be active—we have filled everything else in for you!



## easyfundraising

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

TESCO

JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS

ASOS

Sainsbury's

JUST EAT

amazon

ASDA

7000+ brands

Scan here to get signed up



Do you shop online? If so, make sure you go through the easyfundraising website first! That way your online purchases will also automatically raise a donation to Cornerstone, at no extra cost to yourself.

Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them.

All you need to do is visit the easyfundraising website by [clicking here](#), sign up, choose 'Cornerstone Community Care' as your cause, and then remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online! It's easy and completely FREE! All of these little donations really mount up.

Make sure you download the easyfundraising app too! Happy shopping!



Scott who is supported by North Lanarkshire Supported Living completing last year's Edinburgh Kiltwalk.

**Kiltwalk Dates**

~~Glasgow~~ **Sold out**  
**30th April**

Aberdeen  
**4th June**

Dundee  
**20th August**

Edinburgh  
**17th September**

We've been overwhelmed with the response to Kiltwalk this year but there's still time to sign up! **Not only have the Kiltwalk slashed their registration prices—the Mighty Stride and the Big Stroll now only £20—but we can now claim 25% gift aid over and above what you have raised.**

What's in it for you...

- **A fab day out, fantastic atmosphere and the chance to raise money for a great cause!**
- **Your very own Cornerstone branded t-shirt**
- **An e-fundraising pack with lots of tips on how to raise money.**
- **A dedicated fundraising contact to support you through your challenge journey**

So, what are you waiting for? Sign up today and raise much needed funds for the people we support.

Secure your place today at **the Kiltwalk** or if you would like more information contact **getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk**



## Be Super Be You

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 continuing to invite primary schools to take part in a range of fun, fundraising activities. **Are you a teacher or do you know a teacher, student or school that you think would be interested in this fundraising pack?** Whether it's dressing up, a colouring in or our curriculum-specific activities—there's something for everyone. All you need to start your mission is to download your pack from our website **www.cornerstone.org.uk/be-super-be-you** or contact **getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk**.

## Care for Cake

As we welcome spring and the days start to get warmer, you might find yourself tempted to do some light baking, and get the cream and jam out of the fridge. **Our Care for Cake pack** could be right up your street. Full of tasty recipes, top tips, promotional posters and cool cut-out decorations (including bunting and cake toppers), the step-by-step guide in this pack will 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 (to the right of this article, top left photo)** helped us develop this fundraising pack. Graeme shared his scone recipe with us and was excited to see it featured in our Care for Cake pack alongside some information about him and the support Cornerstone provides.

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



# Looking for new goals?

2023

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

**Run, walk, cycle, skydive or do your own thing. What challenge will you take on? We have highlighted just a handful of events you can get involved in this year whilst fundraising for Cornerstone at the same time! You can browse all of our events and challenges on our website, [click here to find more.](#)**

	Glasgow Kiltwalk	30th April	Glasgow
	Edinburgh Marathon Festival	27th–28th May	Midlothian
	Aberdeen Kiltwalk	4th June	Aberdeen
	Mens 10K Glasgow	18th June	Glasgow
	Ben Nevis Trek	7th July	Lochaber
	Ben Nevis Midnight Trek	19th–20th August	Lochaber
	Dundee Kitwalk	20th August	Dundee
	Edinburgh Kiltwalk	17th September	Edinburgh
	Skydive	Choose your own date	Strathallan
	Three Peaks Challenge	26–28th October	National
	Mens 10K Edinburgh	22rd October	Virtual Event
	Dog Jog Virtual Challenge	Choose your own date	Virtual Event

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

By joining in our fundraising efforts you will make a huge difference to the lives of local children, young people and adults living with learning disabilities, autism and complex care needs. To register for a place and get support with fundraising please contact us on **01224 256 000** or at [getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk).

## We have a winner!!!

We are absolutely delighted to announce that one of our colleagues **has won an amazing £1000 through the Cornerstone Lottery!**

Julia Smith, Cornerstone's Public Fundraising Manager said, "We are so pleased that someone from our support teams has 'Won Big' with the Cornerstone

Lottery. Our Lottery provides a low-cost way to give to our amazing charity but also the chance to win a cash prize. Congratulations!!"

For just £1 a week, you could win our jackpot prize of £25,000! And with every play, you are helping someone to be cared for by Cornerstone.

[Click here](#) to sign up today.

# Fun **draising**

# 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.**

For more info visit:

[www.cornerstone.org.uk/weekly-lottery](http://www.cornerstone.org.uk/weekly-lottery)

Participation is subject to **terms**.

1st prize

**£25,000**

If you match 6 digits

2nd prize

**£1,000**

If you match 5 digits

4th prize

**5 entries into  
the next draw**

If you match 3 digits

3rd prize

**£25**

If you match 4 digits

## Heather's Story

Our Shared Lives carers provide support in their own homes to adults with a learning disability or additional support needs. This support can be provided on a full time, short break or day support basis depending on our Shared Lives carers' availability and preferences, as well as the identified needs of the individual being supported.

Heather who is supported by Shared Lives, has shared her story explaining the difference it has made to her life.

“

Hello, my name is Heather Thomson. I have been staying with my Shared Lives family for over five years. I stay with my Shared Lives carer Andrea and her five children who are all younger than me. They all keep me on my toes but I wouldn't change it for the world.

Before coming into Shared Lives, I was a little nervous going into a family because for most of my life I have been in care. Moving to different families was difficult because I never had the chance of a real family connection and felt as if I was just a foster child and not a part of the family.

At age 16–19 my life was going to change forever, I was being prepared to move into my own house as I was now classed as an adult. Having been in care from a young age and being moved around a lot I never had a role model to be able to teach the basics of how to look after myself or how to cope with my own house.

I felt as if I had no choice and went along with any decision being made. As the housing forms were being filled in, my anxiety grew as I knew this was something I wasn't ready for.

Now, five years later I can happily say that, through Shared Lives, I have found my forever family; Andrea has been the mother figure in my life that I have needed, she has taught me skills for life but most importantly how to be independent and confident.

Since being with the family it's the little things I love the most from sitting as a family at dinner or helping the children with their homework. Together we have been on amazing family holidays like Spain and I had my wish come true when we went to Disneyland in Florida.

”



From top: Heather; Heather with her shared lives carer Andrea.

If you think you may be able to support someone in this unique and rewarding role, please get in touch.

To find out more visit our website by [clicking here](#).

Or contact the team by email on [sharedlives@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:sharedlives@cornerstone.org.uk)

## Shared Lives visits

The Shared Lives team have been out and about facilitating, **in-person carers forums in Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and the Scottish Borders**. These opportunities allow the carers to catch up and support each other in a relaxed and sociable setting which they all enjoy. The events are always well attended by our carers, supported people and extended family members.

The Borders forum took place late last year and everyone had lots of fun participating in a cake decorating challenge!

Hazel, who is a Shared Lives carer shared; **“The forums allow carers to share experiences and the opportunity to support each other. With interesting subject matters and training also incorporated.”**



## SDS



## Cornerstone SDS

We have recently created a new role in our Self-directed Support (SDS) team.

Through our work with the Personal Assistants' (PA) programme board, which is run by the Adult Social Care workforce and Fair Work division of the Scottish Government, **our new team member will take up the brand-new role of PA Advisor**. The PA will be appointed as part of a 12-month pilot scheme being run between Cornerstone SDS and the Scottish Government specifically set up to address the challenges of engaging and supporting Personal Assistants employed through SDS.

As a single point of contact for SDS PAs across Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City our new PA Advisor will:

- **Provide confidential support and advice for SDS PAs.**
- **Signpost PAs to other organisations for specialist support and advice.**
- **Set up local support networks where PAs can share ideas, explore local resources and make the most of training opportunities.**
- **Proactively encourage other PAs to consider careers in SDS**
- **Survey PAs to gain an understanding of specific support needs, common goals and challenges.**

You can find out more about the Personal Assistants' (PA) Programme Board **by clicking here**.

# Aberdeen North and Shire



## Westlife on tour!

Jonathan, Lesley, Phillip and Lorraine recently enjoyed a trip to see Westlife with Ruby, Claire and Linda B from their support team.



## Mark's work placement

Mark has been working really hard at his new placement at Peterhead fruitmart. From bagging potatoes to weighing and peeling fruit and vegetables, he's doing an outstanding job.



## Visit to Delgatie Castle

Rosheen, Sheena and Wayne recently went for a wander up to Delgatie Castle with Keavy, Lauren and Christine from their support team.



# Valentine's Day

Craigewan recently held a Valentine's Day bake sale where all the people we support made tasty tray bakes and cupcakes to sell to their family and friends.



The long-standing, ever-popular Cornerstone Discos are back in full swing for 2023 at the spectacular Beach Ballroom in Aberdeen. This inclusive disco is a brilliant event that gets people involved in an activity they love in a supportive environment.

Julia Smith, Public Fundraising Manager said, "This is an amazing monthly outing where people with support needs and their support teams can have a great night. The music is absolutely fantastic and a great night is had by all."

Future disco dates (7pm–9.30pm) are below and entry is £5.00. All welcome!

- 10th May
- 7th June
- 5th July
- 2nd August
- 30th August
- 27th September
- 1st November
- 14th December – Christmas Dinner Dance

If you have any further questions regarding the discos, please contact [getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@cornerstone.org.uk)



From top, left to right: The Beach Ballroom; Julia and Cat from our fantastic Fundraising Team at the Disco; Julia with Mr Forbes.

# Aberdeen South and Shire

## Christmas Dinner Dance

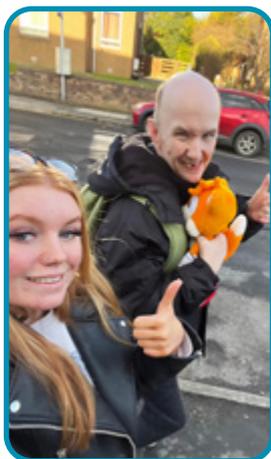
After a long break due to COVID, we were delighted that the **Cornerstone dinner dance in December 2022 was a roaring success!** This event is the highlight of the social calendar for many of the people we support, with great food, dancing and of course—lots of Christmas jumpers and tinsel!

**This event is kindly sponsored by CNR International** and attended by members of the board and our Senior Leadership team.

We were so sorry to hear of the passing of **Sheila Robertson** recently, who had been the main organiser of the Christmas Dinner Dance for many years. We were pleased to have been able to present some flowers to Sheila at the most recent dance, in recognition of her retirement and appreciation of all her hard work, dedication, and commitment. Sheila will be missed by many and our sincere condolences go to her friends and family at this sad time.



From left to right: Jayne Findlay with Sheila Robertson; some Dinner Dance guests.



## Mark and Tails

As the days have been getting slightly warmer, **Mark and Tails have been out and about getting their step count up, in and around Stonehaven.** From heading out for a bite of lunch, to doing the weekly shop and even getting some sightseeing in, Mark goes nowhere without his best friend Tails.

The amber furred Sonic character, Miles “Tails” Power has been in Mark’s life for years, and they are totally inseparable. They wake up together on a typical morning and enjoy their porridge together before Mark gets to work on his recordings, with Tails, his apprentice, observing from the desk.

Sonic describes Tails as **“gentle, sweet, kind and loyal”**—who wouldn’t want a friend like that?

You can hear from Mark, and what he and Tails get up to on a typical day in our **All About Cornerstone** video.

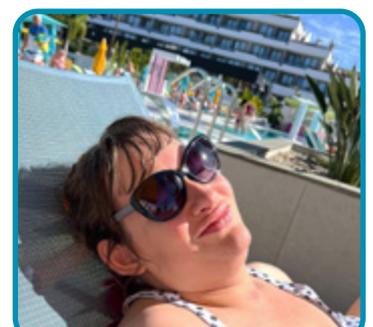
From left to right: Mark with Tails; Mark out and about with Tails, and Team Member Isla MacKinnon.

## Holiday album

Lindsey and Charlotte were supported to have a holiday abroad with Leah and Holly from their support team. They travelled to the beautiful beaches of Tenerife for a lovely break away in the sun. **Bliss!**



From left to right, top to bottom: Holly, Leah, Charlotte, and Lindsey enjoying the weather; Charlotte, Leah, and Lindsey in the pool; Charlotte sunbathing; Lindsey sunbathing too!



## Woodland Wakeup sessions

For the past six weeks our Ayrshire teams have been working in partnership with Woodland Wakeup, a social enterprise that aims to 'rewild' and reconnect communities with the natural world.

Following in the footsteps of Cornerstone's Shared Lives service who also recently completed their Woodland Wakeup programme, our Ayrshire teams have been delving deep into nature. From crafting with leaves and flowers to making bird feeders and learning about mindfulness, the people we support have been having an incredible, serene time taking in the nature around them.



## And he's off!

James has been building up his confidence to going on his bike.

With a little **cycling lesson** from Blair and some encouragement from Sandra he was off!

**Well done James!**



## Welcome to Gail

We have recently welcomed Gail Cairney as our new Lead Practitioner within the community support service.

Gail shared, "I feel I am settling in really well within my new role and my knowledge and understanding is constantly developing. Although I have a lot still to learn I have been given a warm welcome into the management team and the support provided has been excellent."



## The Corner Stormers consultation group

In Ayrshire the people we support help run a consultation group, recently named 'The Corner Stormers.' The group has a representative from each of the Ayrshire services and it gives the people we support the opportunity to provide feedback on the support they are receiving from Cornerstone, review documents or policies and plan events for the branch. **Currently, the consultation group are in talks to plan an awards ceremony for the people we support so watch this space!**

## Employee Forum

Ayrshire's Employee Forum meets once a month and provides a space for colleagues to come together and discuss matters important to them. **The forum is made up of a representative from each of the services in Ayrshire; Shared Lives, Housing Support, Community Support,**

**Bessie Dunlop Court and Castlecraigs Court.** The aim of the forum is to bring colleagues together to raise awareness of what's going on in the different Cornerstone services, discuss good news stories and provide updates from across the wider organisation over a cuppa.

## In memory

Friends, colleagues and the people we support from Ayrshire recently lost three much-loved individuals within the Ayrshire Branch.

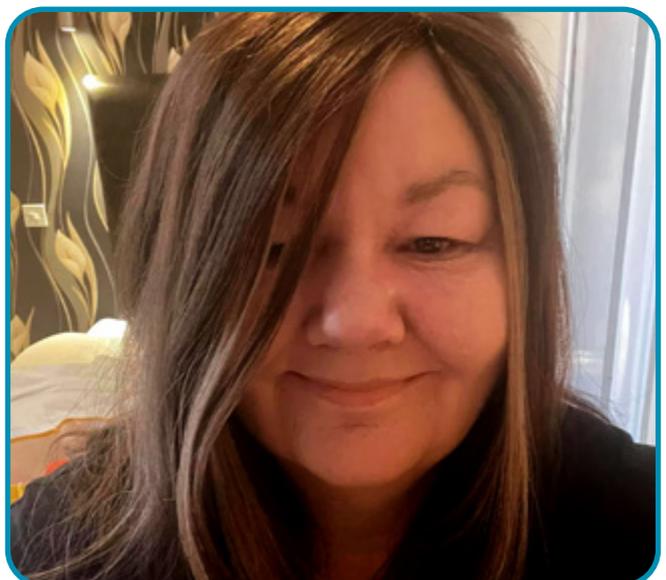
**Lynda Hughes** moved to Bessie Dunlop Court when the service opened in March 2021 with her beloved dog 'Pal'. Lynda often commented that living in the service was the safest she had ever felt in her life. Lynda was such a popular individual in Bessie Dunlop Court and was always so appreciative towards staff. Last year, Lynda's dog passed away and she got a new puppy, Skye who was a bundle of energy and very much kept everyone on their toes. Following an operation, Lynda became very unwell and suddenly passed away on 30th of December 2022. Thank you to all staff at Bessie Dunlop Court who supported Lynda since her transition to Bessie Dunlop Court.



**Andrew "Andy" Christie** moved to Castlecraigs Court in 2014, the first supported accommodation model in North Ayrshire. Andy was a gentleman and a very much loved neighbour. He thoroughly enjoyed having a shandy and socialising with peers—especially with music on. Andy also loved attending his local church and was a very popular individual within his community. Andy sadly passed away in the local hospice on the 2nd of January 2023 following a cancer diagnosis. Thank you to all of the staff at Castlecraigs Court who supported Andy over the years and especially when he was unwell as we know this provided great comfort to him.



**Anne Clarke** was a Support Practitioner who started with Cornerstone when Bessie Dunlop Court opened in 2021. Anne was very much a respected colleague in the team and had such a strong value base which was reflected in the way she cared for the people we support. Anne always had a listening ear to support others whenever needed and had a great sense of humour, bringing lots of laughs to the team. Anne sadly passed away on 24th of December following a battle with cancer.



Carly Nevsat, Branch Leader for Ayrshire said, **"Our thoughts and condolences go out to the family, friends and colleagues of Lynda, Andrew and Anne. We miss them all dearly and talk of them often. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Support Practitioners, Lead Practitioners and Service Lead who continued to run the service while they grieved. I would also like to thank the wider Cornerstone community for the kindness and support they have offered Ayrshire colleagues at this very sad time"**

From top: Lynda Hughes, Andy Christie, and Anne Clarke.

## Make my day!

Albert found himself to be a bit of a local celebrity recently after a video we shared on social media reached over 20,000 people! **A massive Clint Eastwood fan, Albert was surprised by his support team at Fairfield and Simon at SYKE Graffiti with a larger-than-life mural on his bedroom wall.**

Albert has lived at Fairfield since 2011 and has all of Clint Eastwood's DVDs and books. He has pictures and canvases of the actor all over his flat and also dresses up as Clint Eastwood for Hallowe'en every year! His favourite film is *A Fistful of Dollars* and the character 'The man with no name.'

One of the team who helped to organise the heart-warming surprise was Laura Maliff, Support Practitioner.

**"Albert loves Clint Eastwood and when I was helping him to organise having his flat decorated, he asked if we could get some Clint Eastwood wallpaper. After much hunting we could not find a wallpaper supplier, but the painter suggested getting a mural done! I thought it was a great idea so contacted a member of staff who knew a local wall artist at Syke Graffiti Art. They came out to do a secret visit and confirmed they would be able to do a painting for Albert. So we went ahead, and kept it a surprise, which he absolutely loved! Albert's support team are delighted with the end result too—it is so nice to see him so happy."**



Left to right: the fantastic Clint Eastwood mural by Simon at SKYE Graffiti; Albert dressed up as Clint Eastwood's 'The man with no name'.

Upon seeing the painting, Albert was jumping for joy! He said, "I don't ken about it! I can't believe it! Have you seen this!?"

It seems like Clint and Albert's Cornerstone support team really did make his day!

[Click here](#) to see the video capturing Albert's reaction.



## A new Fire Warden

Lee has worked hard to reach his goal of becoming fire warden for Fairfield. He will now be checking fire drills, keeping his house and housemates fire-safe, and making sure his support team are signing in and out every day! Well done Lee!



## A tiled work of art

Richard has created an amazing mosaic of himself and his housemates, Helen and Seonaid.

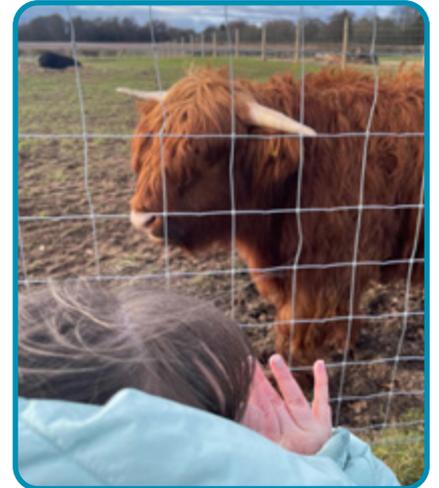
The mosaic is a recreation of one of his favourite photos taken as part of his 50th birthday celebrations a few years ago. The photo features Richard, Helen and Seonaid standing in front of the party limo booked for Richard's big day.

**What a talent Richard!**



## Trip to Deer Park

Elaine recently enjoyed an afternoon at The Scottish Deer Centre with Libby and Jillian from her support team.



## Daniel's exclusive football tour

Daniel recently enjoyed a day trip to Arbroath with Bruce from his support team.

While they were there, staff at Arbroath FC kindly let them into Gayfield Stadium for a tour of the grounds.



## Rosa's choir reprise

Rosa has been desperate to get back to her beloved Sing in the City choir since COVID lockdown began in early 2020.

She has kept up her singing practise by singing along to her collection of CD's, her Alexa and her service's famous Karaoke Saturdays!

In February 2023, Support Practitioner Ewan supported Rosa back to choir and he shared; **"it felt like I was with a celebrity as everyone was delighted to see Rosa again."**

The smile on Rosa's face says it all!

Thanks Sing in The City for making Rosa feel so very welcome at one of her favourite places.



# Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire

## Christmas party

Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire celebrated Christmas in style with a gathering at the Glasgow hub. The people we support were able to get together and enjoy the festive spirit! **There was music, karaoke, games and a “movie room” where people could take a break from the party and watch a fun Christmas film.**



Left to right: Stewart and Amar; Ashleigh; Eric, Branch Leader Robert McKay and Service Lead Chris McLean.



## Leaders' visit

Late last year the people we support met with members of our Leadership Team to share their experience of Cornerstone care. They discussed what they get up to with their support teams and the difference that Cornerstone's support makes to them.

Fiona Barrie-Higgins, the Depute Delivery Director shared,

**“It was lovely to welcome so many of the people we support, colleagues and members of the board to the Glasgow office on our open day. A great time was had by all with the afternoon being filled with food, stories, fun and laughter. Being able to witness the friendships shared between colleagues and the people we support was a huge privilege. Equally, being fairly new to Cornerstone, it was lovely to chat with colleagues who provide our excellent delivery of care every day. Being able to hold an event like this after all the COVID restrictions was fantastic, and so good for people's wellbeing. Hopefully the first of many more!”**

## Birthday filming fun

In 2021 Ashleigh started a **YouTube channel** and has been uploading content since. With the help of her support team she is able to film, edit and create content for her channel.

**Most recently Ashleigh vlogged her 33rd birthday party in February.** If you missed the best party in Glasgow you can catch up **here**. The film captures a very happy Ashleigh opening presents given to her by friend Kirsten, having a dance with her boyfriend, blowing out her candles and singing some karaoke!



## Bikeability

Bikeability is an organisation that helps children and adults with disabilities and complex care needs to engage in quality cycling activities. They provide fun, safe and stimulating cycling across the UK.

Bikeability offers classes in Moray where Fiona, Al, Lynda and Kyle have been enjoying some recent sessions.

From left to right: Al and Fiona, Lynda, and Kyle going for a ride.



## Kyle's photography

Kyle is a keen photographer and recently was supported to go to Lochindorb and Randolph's Leap near Forres.

He was able to capture some stunning photos of the freshwater loch and the forestry surrounding River Findhorn.

Kyle had a great time photographing his surroundings, enjoyed a lovely walk and of course went for a well-deserved lunch afterwards.



# North Lanarkshire Community Support and Supported Living

## Love is in the Air(drie) hub

In February the North Lanarkshire Hub was filled with love as they hosted a Valentine's Day party for the people we support.

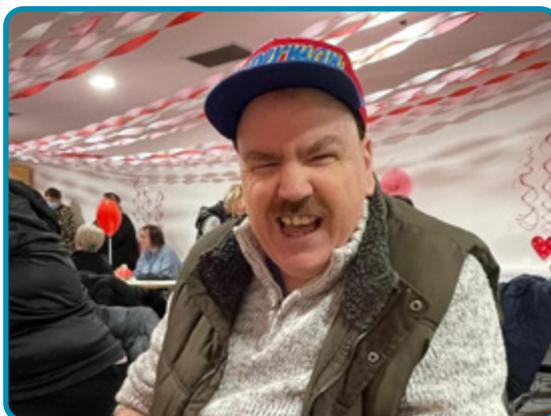
Love was evidently in the air as the space was beautifully decorated in pink hearts, balloons and streamers.

There was a wonderful turnout and it was clear everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves as the party lasted all afternoon!

A huge thank you also goes to Lesley and Alan for helping plan and host the party, we couldn't have done it without them!



From left to right, top to bottom: Alan and Hannah, Lesley, and Stephen.



From left to right: Scott and Hannah; Martin and Santa; George and Support Practitioner Danielle Kane; Liam and Technology Enabled Care Responder Libby Birrell.

## Festive fun

Both North Lanarkshire branches held a Christmas Party at the Tudor Hotel. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed a festive themed three-course lunch, followed by some dancing to a DJ playing the best of Christmas tunes.

## Cinema trip

Some of our Support Practitioners organised a cinema day out for the people we support, kindly hosted by Showcase Cinemas.

Colleagues and the people we support were treated to a viewing of Matilda the Musical on the big screen which was immensely enjoyed by everyone.



## Peter's new house

Peter has been supported by Cornerstone since 2019 and was originally living on the ninth floor of a high-rise flat. After lockdown, when restrictions eased and people were starting to get out and about a bit more, the lift in Peter's building unfortunately broke and he was unable to leave his flat to try and resume some of the things he used to love doing—like going to the pub twice a week.

Despite numerous calls from his team, the lift continued to be out of service for months. This was obviously a huge problem for Peter and not being able to go outside negatively impacted his mental health. As soon as he voiced that he wanted a new home his support team, and social worker helped him complete an application form.

**Just two months later, in September 2022, to Peter's delight, he received a letter saying he had a new house.**

As Peter couldn't view the property, a member of his support team visited it on his behalf, taking lots of videos to show Peter who thought it was the perfect house for him.

The support team wanted to get Peter into the house as quickly as possible so everyone pitched in, building Ikea furniture and putting carpets down. Members of his support team would also go to the house during the day to let workmen in, all so everything was perfect for when Peter arrived.

After a quick two-week turnaround the day of the move arrived, and as the lift was still out of commission, the team had to carry Peter's things down the stairs. Prior to moving day the team also underwent training to be able to use a specialist piece of equipment that would help Peter leave the building for the last time.

**Since moving to his new home Peter has been able to do and see so much. He's tried swimming for the first time in years, visited the cinema, gone back to his favourite pub, and has been really enjoying himself.**



From top: Peter and his friends; Peter's new home.

Peter's goal for a number of years has been to go on holiday abroad and in May he's being supported to go to Turkey which he is absolutely ecstatic about.

Now living in a much more accessible area Peter is able to explore his hometown and attend nearby events. While out one day Peter even met an old school friend who he hadn't seen in years. His friend came to visit his new house and they played a few games of chess together. Then, next time the friend visited he brought another old school friend and they all had a great time reuniting.

The new house has had a hugely positive change on Peter and given him lots of new opportunities. Peter shared, **"This new house is the best, magic. I can see my car parked outside, wave to staff on the way past, look out the window, and get out and about when I want to."**

**Huge thanks to Service Lead Amy and Peter's support team, Alison, Iona, Pamela, Linda, Angela, Stacey and Claire for making all of this possible.**



## Thomas scores a new team!

A few months ago Thomas moved to a different powerchair football team and he has gone from being a bit fed up on the sidelines to receiving some really constructive coaching.

His player manager recently sent him a personal message to let him know how well he is doing. **Thomas is absolutely thriving at training and really enjoys playing with his new team.**



## Frank's growing garden

**Frank has been really enjoying working in his garden with staff during the last few months.**

Frank used to work as a landscape gardener and working in his garden helps him immensely with his condition, as he starts to remember how to tend the garden. There is a clear difference in his mood when he is able to be active outside.



## Elizabeth's Fool On performance

**Elizabeth has recently started a new Drama group called "Fool On."** This is a massive step for Elizabeth and she was even encouraged to go up and sing. Elizabeth loved the class and now looks forward to every Monday to meet up with her new friends.



## Happy retirement Agnes!

We recently said goodbye to Agnes, one of our longest-serving employees in North Lanarkshire.

We held a retirement tea in our Airdrie Office where colleagues were able to relax and reminisce together. **Agnes will be sorely missed by everyone and we wish her all the best after 19 and a half glorious years working with Cornerstone!**

# North Lanarkshire Supported Living

## Double birthday celebrations

February has been full of birthdays and celebrations this year!

**Stephen celebrated his 60th** with a party at a social club attended by family, friends and his support staff.

**Paul had a lovely lunch to celebrate his 30th birthday.** Paul, his brother Liam and their mum had a delicious meal at the Angels Hotel.

**Happy birthday Stephen and Paul!**



**From top: Scott with the quach awarded to the Nature Ninjas; the Nature Ninjas celebrate!**

## Scott's Beautiful Scotland

Beautiful Scotland supports groups across the country as they seek to improve and enhance their local environment. **Scott, who is supported by North Lanarkshire Supported Living, is a member of "Cumbernauld's Blooming Wild Nature Ninjas", a group whose goal is to upkeep and protect the beautiful Cumbernauld environment.**

The Ninjas have helped remove invasive species, mow meadows, plant trees and mulch mats, pick up litter and make their environment shine.

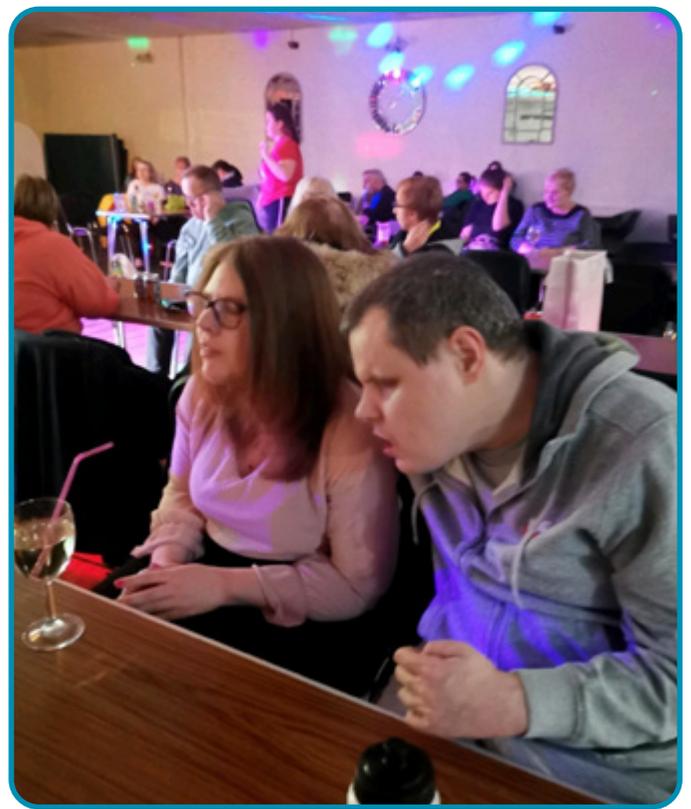
**This year, Scott and the Nature Ninjas were recognised for their efforts when they entered the Beautiful Scotland award.** The award is judged according to the three pillars of horticultural achievement, environmental responsibility and community participation. Excitingly, Cumbernauld's Blooming Wild and Nature Ninjas won both the Small City Silver Gilt Medal and the Best Beautiful Scotland Small City in 2022. They received their medals and were awarded the quach during an award ceremony in February.

**Well done Scott and the Nature Ninjas!**



## Alan's drama group

Alan has been having an amazing time rehearsing and performing with his drama group, **The Shining Stars**. Here he is before his performance at the King's Theatre in Glasgow.



## Budding friends

Claire and James have had a budding friendship over the last few months. **They attend many of the same groups, such as the Greater Easterhouse Supporting Hands (GESH) disco—and always have a blast!**



## George's spring walks

George has been thoroughly enjoying getting out and about walking more again to stay active. **He's even managed to get some brilliant clear, blue skies!**



## Back in the saddle

Donna is a huge animal lover and used to ride horses when she was younger. **It's been great to see her "back in the saddle" as she's recently rediscovered her love of horse riding.**

# Scottish Borders

## Darren's accessibility advocacy

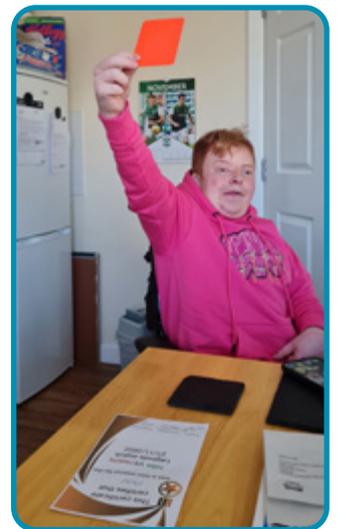
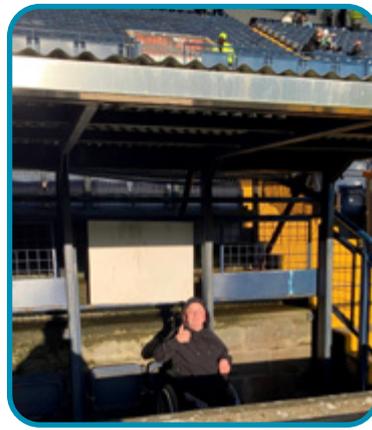
Darren is a season ticket holder for Hibernian Football Club. He has been supported by Cornerstone since he moved into his brand new flat specially adapted for his needs. Being a massive Hibs fan, Darren is delighted that he can now travel to most Home matches and even some Away matches with either his father or his support staff, including Andrew and Steven who are also big Hibs fans!

Such is his love for Hibs, Darren has set up his own YouTube and Instagram accounts where he uploads his pre and post match analysis of the games he watches.

In addition to football talk, [Darren reviews the disabled facilities in the stadiums he visits during Away games.](#)

Accessibility is obviously extremely important in allowing everyone who goes to a stadium to have a safe and comfortable time. In reviewing the facilities Darren hopes he can praise stadiums for what's working and point to what isn't, so it can be improved.

**Watch this space because Darren is hoping to make his accessibility reviews of stadiums an ongoing feature of his channel. Great job Darren!**



## Friday Lunch Club

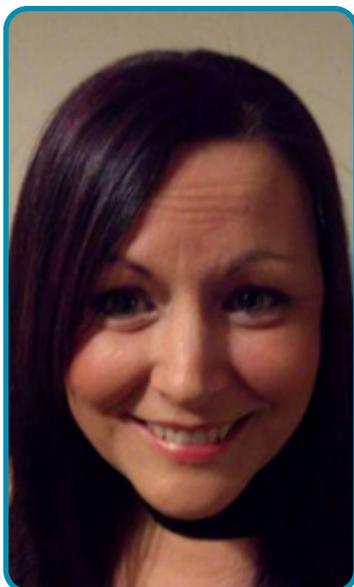
Cornerstone has recently been awarded a grant of £8,989.10 to deliver our new Friday Lunch Club project in our Scottish Borders branch. The funding from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund will go towards the running of the monthly club from April 2023–March 2024, and provides people with the opportunity to build friendships and have a space where they can come together and chat over lunch.

Supported by



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Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund



From left to right: Gemma McCutcheon, Shonagh Somerville and Mark Patterson.

## A growing team

Scottish Borders Community Support in Kelso have recently had some new members of staff join the team. Shonagh Somerville, Gemma McCutcheon and Mark Patterson have all now begun their new roles as Support Practitioners.

Service Lead, Anna Ewart expressed; **"We are very lucky to have such dedicated, reliable colleagues who bring lots of positivity to the service. They have shown time and time again that they can respond well in all situations, including very challenging ones. The team has grown in strength massively."**



## Down on the farm

Emily has been doing an incredible job at her work placement at Birkhill House for the past six months.

Birkhill House is an animal-assisted, activity and crafting centre near Earlston in the Scottish Borders. Their mission is to improve mental health in the Scottish Borders through caring, creativity and collaboration.

Set on nine acres of beautiful land the house has a rich farming and equine history. Currently the property is a busy small-holding whose residents include Huacaya Alpacas, Castlemilk Moorit sheep, pygmy and Golden Gurnsey goats, Ragdoll cats, hens, ducks, peafowl and many more.

**Emily volunteers with Birkhill House's famous Alpacas who have roamed the farmland since 2018.**

Emily goes once a week and has various tasks that she needs to do throughout the day. She sets up the fire, feeds the alpacas and then mucks them out.

While volunteering Emily also has the opportunity to take part in various arts and crafts activities. She really loves her role and misses it if there's times when she can't go!

## Setting up home

Isobel has been settling into a lovely new home recently with the support of her dedicated Cornerstone team. Previously she had been living in an unsafe environment where it was difficult for her basic needs to be met. Cooking, bathing, washing dishes and storing her belongings safely was incredibly difficult for her.

**After some discussions Isobel agreed that it was time for her to find a new home.** Ideally, she wanted a ground floor flat with a walk-in shower and a garden full of flowers. Isobel gets up to lots of activities so it was important for her to also be near the church she helps out at, the charity shop she volunteers in, her weekly Karaoke and her bingo hall. Access to her bank and a local Tesco was also vital.

Cornerstone managed to find Isobel a home with all of this and more. Isobel enjoyed spending time picking out the best colour scheme and carpets which are all now in place.

**Her staff team have worked hard to help her get all set up and in February she finally moved in.**

The new home allows Isobel to be more sociable and invite friends to sit comfortably and share a cuppa together.

Isobel's smile and confidence proves what a great move this has been for her. She is so delighted to be in her new home that she has been singing in the shower! Isobel loves listening to music and now has the room to dance around, living in an environment that makes her happy and healthy.

Service Lead, Andrew Will added, **"Isobel is the loveliest, kindest woman I know. When out with her you can't walk 50 yards without someone saying hello and asking how she is. Every time she meets someone she is telling them how happy she is to have her new home."**



# West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute

## A brilliant book launch!

Renton native, Tom McBride recently published his novel—*Renton: Fly...or You Cry*, a twenty-year labour of love and tribute to his home village of Renton. Tom was determined to give something back to the community that shaped him and wanted to donate all proceeds from the book to local charities, including Cornerstone.

Tom explained; “having been brought up with nothing myself, and now being in the position to give something back, I wanted to give something to the local area.”

The book details what it was like growing up in Renton in the 1950s. Tom wanted to depict the true nature of the Renton he grew up in, refusing to shy away from darker themes and describing the best parts of Renton alongside the bad. As Tom described;

“This book has everything; from exploring true love, football, and friendship, to sectarianism, court appearances, gangland culture and other hard-hitting topics. It’s ultimately a book about survival in very difficult times.”

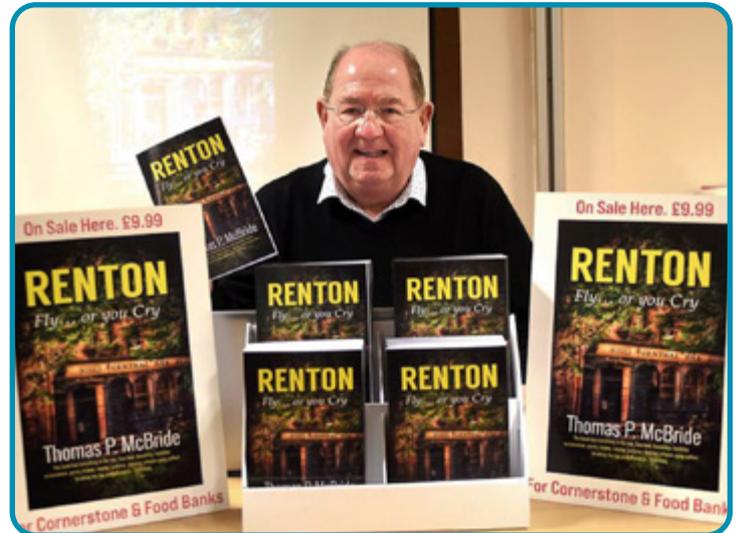
“There is a strong Rentonian culture; people are proud of where they come from. There’s a sense of belonging there, and that’s certainly something I’ve always felt.”

*Renton: Fly...or You Cry* was officially launched at Cornerstone’s Carman Centre in Renton. At the event, Tom briefly talked about the inspiration behind the book and signed copies for everyone who wanted to purchase one. The book quickly sold out and because of continued demand, Tom’s book has already raised £500 for Cornerstone. The other half of Tom’s profits have been donated to local foodbanks.

*Fly...Or You Cry* is now available to purchase from;

- Dumbarton Library
- Loch Lomond Gift House, Balloch

But hurry, copies will only be available for the next few weeks!



From top: Tom McBride with his new book; the official book launch at the Carman Centre in Renton.



## Our new fire warden!

Maryann has been the Fire Warden for the Carman Centre for some time now and loves her job.

She comes every Wednesday and tests one of the various fire points throughout the centre and helps carry out the quarterly fire drill.

Maryann has said she loves coming to her job. She likes having chats with other staff within the centre when she comes in. She loves getting out of her flat for a while as this gives her something to do.

Maryann is hoping that she can get another job at the Carman Centre soon!

# All the fun of the fair!

Just before Christmas, **Team Jigsaw headed off to the Irn Bru Carnival**. Harry, Jacob, Eva, Hannah and James from Jigsaw's Saturday clubs were filled with excitement and festive cheer as they made their way to Glasgow. Accompanying them was their support team, Fiona, Kirstie, Amelia, Jen and Marion.

The idea for the trip came from Lead Practitioner, Fiona. "I had discovered that the Irn Bru Carnival were awarding free tickets to charity groups like ours so I applied a few months prior to the event."

They travelled from Helensburgh to the Scottish Exhibition Centre in a pre-booked minibus and waited in line for the Autism friendly session which offered a more relaxed environment, with the music turned off, or down very low, and rides running slower than usual.

The queues were long but the wait was worth it as they walked in and saw a gigantic hall full of brightly lit up rides and stalls.



Once inside, everyone had a bite to eat then split into smaller groups. As Fiona explained, "some of the children are more 'daredevil' than the rest so it just made sense!"

There was something for everyone to enjoy, from the "daredevils" set on trying out the wild rides, to those that prefer the tamer rides, games, food and drinks.

"Seeing one of the people we support going on a ride, trying something new, was such a highlight."

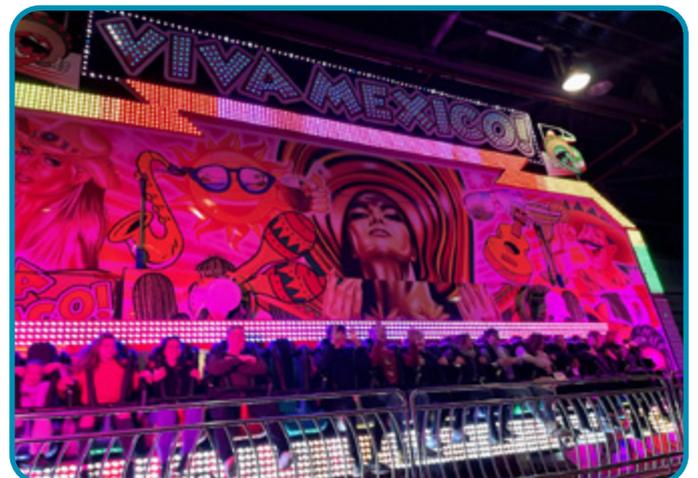
After splitting up, the group all met back up to have a go at the dodgems together. This was Fiona's favourite part of the trip. "The children all going on the dodgems at the end was brilliant, it sums up what the clubs are all about—making friends and having new experiences."

This was the first time Jigsaw attended the Carnival but it certainly won't be their last.

Some of the young people we support who attended the trip shared their thoughts;

James: "I had so much fun and I saw my friends. Can we go back next year? They should have more Irn Bru for sale!"

Jacob: "I liked driving and I had marshmallows!"





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