

# CROSSREACH NEWS



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Growing together at the Learning and Disabilities National forum



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## Love from CrossReach

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- Justice System
- Homelessness
- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health
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- Substance Use

**CROSSREACH**  
Care you can put your faith in  
[www.crossreach.org.uk](http://www.crossreach.org.uk)



# Take Care – A Poem for CrossReach

Later in this edition you will read about our Annual Award Ceremony which took place at Dunblane Hydro. The host for the event was Fiona Stewart who is a writer, performer and broadcaster based in Glasgow. She is the Creative Director of Foolproof Creative Arts and a regular contributor to BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio 4 and Premier Christian Radio. She shared with the room the following poem which she had written for the occasion.

Take care, so you can care —  
So you can love as you are loved  
And share from what you have.  
Take given care  
So - forgiven here,  
liberated,  
sent -  
You might there,  
Live full, not spent.

**Take care.**

Take care so here and there,  
You might know fullness,  
wholeness,  
purpose —  
Grow  
In body and mind and soul  
Strengthened,  
Heard,  
And held.

**Take care.**

Take care, so when you are  
Exhausted  
Done  
Afraid, outrun  
In such despair —  
That, it seems might ill-befit  
A woman or a man of prayer —  
You may entrust your soul  
To those who will not see you break,  
And if you do  
Will gently help remake you whole.

**Take care.**

Take care so you can care  
For those whose need  
Is great —  
Through lack  
Through want  
Through other's deeds —  
And in so doing still have more to give.

**Take care.**

Take care, so you can feed and heal  
At home, in care  
When threat is real  
In distant village, urban street.  
And if you live in victory  
Or crawl home tired with defeat  
Know that Someone cares  
For you  
Will catch you when you fall  
Provide retreat  
Help you rediscover call  
To go again  
Back up on your feet.

Take care so you can care again  
In quiet, unsung ways  
Positioned well to fight the fight —  
Filled with Godly awesome might —  
As balm to body  
Strength to mind  
And hope to soul  
You labour day by day.

Take care  
So you can go carefree  
So you can dare to share greatly.  
Take care  
For it is offered here  
And you are known and seen  
Today.

@fionacstewart, 2024







As we enter this new year – we are also celebrating a new beginning; setting out on a journey which is mapped out for you in our newly completed 5 year strategy – ‘Love from CrossReach.’

We have taken time to re-evaluate our core assumptions, challenge ourselves on established thinking, and most importantly we took time to try and silence the noise around us and listen. We listened carefully to those we support along with their families and advocates in order to understand what they needed from us for the future. The voices of our employees, our volunteers, our board of trustees and our Church communities were all heard, and their reflections have helped us to refine our thoughts, now captured within the strategy in different ways. We are also grateful to many industry colleagues who provided valuable input and perspective as we navigated our way through this process. I hope that you enjoy looking through it, that you can see yourself within it, and that you will be able to support us by walking into the future with us, playing your own part in the plan.

Throughout this edition you will also read about our time of celebration as we marked the achievements of staff and volunteers at our employee awards. We were joined for that by the Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who spent an enjoyable few days with us in November. Some of what we got up to is captured within these pages too.



Every day we are acutely aware of the army of supporters who walk alongside CrossReach. A full house at Glasgow Cathedral for our Carol Concert at the end of last year provided a tangible demonstration of your love and support and we would want to take time to thank all who attended, making the night so very special. As we walk into 2025 we hope that we can continue to rely on your support, facing the joys and inevitable challenges that will come our way, together.

Thank you for your support and love over the course of 2024. I hope you will find love in abundance shared in these pages and I wish you all the very best for the year ahead.

Viv Dickenson  
CEO, CrossReach



## Prayer Points

The Fundraising and Engagement team work alongside services to raise funds and co-ordinate events to support the work of CrossReach. They have provided the following prayer points to focus on at the beginning of the new year.

- Give thanks for everyone who donated a gift last year to support the work of CrossReach. Pray that more will join them this year to support others in need.
- Give thanks for everyone taking part in fundraising events across the country. Pray for new opportunities this year for people to get involved to support CrossReach wherever they are.
- Pray for all the churches and congregations that support CrossReach through prayer, fundraising and volunteering. Pray that our new partnership with the Guild will lead to stronger relationships and deepening support.
- Pray that this support will continue and will grow to bring change and transformation for families seeking help.
- Pray for those who have chosen to become members of CrossReach and pledged their ongoing regular support. Pray that God will bless them for their love and generosity. Pray too, for more people to become part of the CrossReach family this year.





# Highlights of our new 5 year strategy

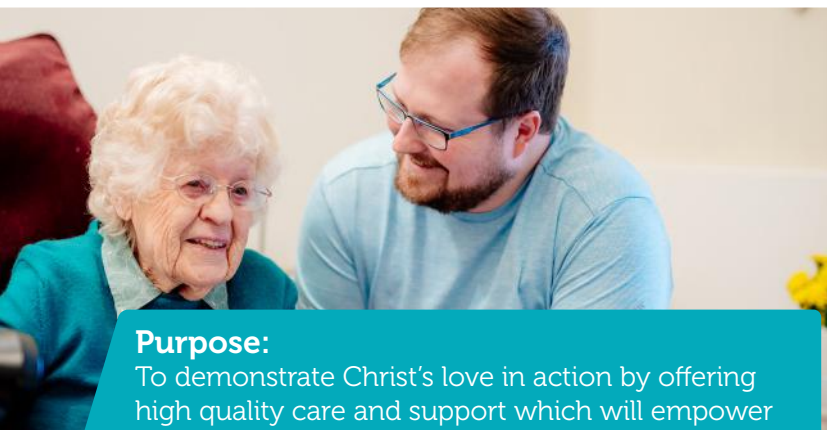
**We love because  
He first loved us**

1 John 4 v 9



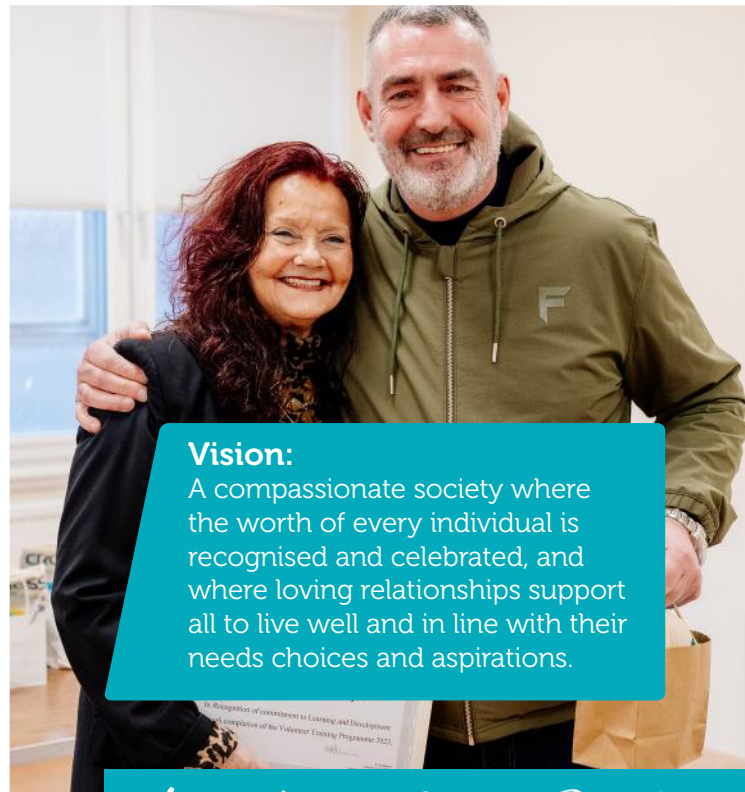
**Purpose:**

To demonstrate Christ's love in action by offering high quality care and support which will empower people, across Scotland, to live a full and fulfilling life.



**Vision:**

A compassionate society where the worth of every individual is recognised and celebrated, and where loving relationships support all to live well and in line with their needs choices and aspirations.



*Love from CrossReach*

## What matters to CrossReach

### The People we Support

People supported by CrossReach feel respected, listened to and have their rights upheld. They are fully involved in decisions affecting their lives and can shape their support by exercising maximum choice and control.

**What we will do:**

We will invest in a culture which supports people to make meaningful relationships, communicate well and take part in a range of activities which build confidence and empowers them. We will invest in ways of working with people to have their voices heard and acted on within every part of the organisation.



### Our Workforce

Employees feel that they are properly valued for their professionalism, skills and expertise and can develop in their career. They are involved in decision making and are able to influence their working conditions and improvements to services.

**What we will do:**

We will promote Fair Work practices. We will ensure that salaries terms and conditions, training and succession planning are the best they can be so that all services are delivered by employees of CrossReach. We will empower employees to use their authority to make decisions appropriate to their role.





## Strong and Sustainable Services

Our services are of high quality, financially secure and are based on established need. They are well resourced, environmentally sustainable and able to innovate, change and grow as appropriate in order to best serve those supported by them now and to meet future need.

### What we will do:

We will underpin our services by putting plans in place to manage our resources efficiently and effectively. We will invest in IT, our buildings, our environmental practices and our business support processes so that they are fit for purpose.

We will develop a financial strategy which supports timely decision making allowing us to diversify income and drive innovation and growth.

We will review our Governance arrangements to ensure that these are the best possible to allow services, and those supported by them and working in them to succeed.



## Our Partnerships

Those in our wider networks, including our funders and supporters feel that they are important to us, that their support and advice matters and that we are committed to collaboration and making things work.

### What we will do:

We will take time to work with our partners to understand where we can add value to one another and how we can work better together when faced with challenges and opportunities. We will invest in the way in which we communicate both within CrossReach and externally so people are well informed about what we do, and how they can get in touch with us and work alongside us.

## Advocating and Influencing

There is a wealth of expertise within CrossReach which has been built up from the experiences of the people we support, our workforce and our partners. This should be shared with people with an interest in the issues which affect us and tasked with making decisions in a local or national context.

### What we will do:

We will ensure that we use the opportunities given to us to amplify the voices of those who use our services, their families and carers, and our wider networks to influence policy decisions both within the organisation, our wider networks locally, nationally and internationally. We will work with partners to lend our support to campaigns where we believe we have something to offer.



[Visit the CrossReach website to read full strategy](#)





# Moderators Time

We were delighted to have the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson visit some of our services that are situated in the Highlands.

## Beechwood House

Staff and residents from Beechwood House provided an insightful and memorable visit for Dr Paterson as he spent time discussing the work done to support those attending the service. Dr Paterson heard first hand from some residents about the journey that they had been on.

One Beechwood resident told him he had been in Beechwood House for two weeks after quitting alcohol and drugs and already felt "brand new".

Another resident who has since trained as a volunteer supporter said she was now "clean and serene" thanks to the support she had received at Beechwood House.



## Highlands and Islands Recovery Centre

The Moderator was shown around the new Highlands and Islands Residential Recovery Centre next to the existing facility which has now welcomed its first residents.

Funded by a £2.4 million award via the Scottish Government's Rapid Residential Rehabilitation Recovery Program, this will extend Beechwood's addiction recovery support across the North of Scotland from Moray to the Western Isles, as well as Orkney and Shetland, CrossReach is now actively recruiting to fill the staff vacancies in the new unit.

After touring the facility, Dr Paterson said: **“I am more than impressed, I am enthused. They do a fantastic job here.”**

## CrossReach Counselling Inverness

Dr Paterson then stopped by CrossReach Counselling Inverness.

Amidst a very busy few days the Moderator was reminded of the importance of 'Being Still' with a lovely devotion led by Alison Shanks, administrator within the counselling team.

Whilst on his visit, Dr Paterson engaged in a productive discussion with staff at the service about the work they do and the challenges that are being faced.

Counselling managers Feri Collins and Claire Rochester gave a presentation on the service. They highlighted that anxiety and stress were the most common reasons that people were looking to receive support for.





## Cale House

Completing his trip up north, Dr Paterson paid a visit to Cale House where he was given a tour of the facility and spoke with staff and people who use the service.

Dr Paterson also met with some representatives from our Dochas Service in Stornoway where he engaged in positive conversations about the service and what they offer.

Plenty of time was spent chatting and reflecting on the challenges being faced, the work being done and most importantly the many powerful stories of hope, of change and of lives being transformed.



## Learning and Disabilities Forum

After his trip to Inverness, Dr Paterson made a final stop at our CrossReach Learning Disability Services' National Forum held in Hamilton.

The theme of this year's event was "growing together" with the aim of building even better services for those who use them.

He also took a moment to praise the performance of the Makaton Choir, adding: **“What a surprise to hear the Makaton Choir. They were at the General Assembly, and they were an absolute hit. To be back with them and to see them perform, that's made my day.”**



It was really a ray of sunshine to see the joy, the fun and the happiness of a session led by the adults who use the service. The singing, the interaction, the activities - it's absolutely wonderful."

Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson





# Employee Awards

As 2024 drew to a close, we marked the occasion with the CrossReach Employee Awards, our annual event to recognise, honour and celebrate the dedication and achievements of our staff.

The ceremony's theme was inspired by a verse from 1 Corinthians 12:4-6: **"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."**

In her opening speech, 'CEO Viv Dickenson referred to the tagline for the day: **"A garden's beauty isn't found in just one flower,"** a sentiment that reflects both the unity within the organisation

and the unique and diverse contributions of each individual, all of which come together to create the garden's collective beauty.

The afternoon was hosted by Fiona Stewart, while Rt Rev Dr Shaw Patterson Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland presented awards to each of the winners and finalists across the seven categories. Alongside the recognition of commitment, we also celebrated those who earned new qualifications and paused for a moment of reflection in memory of the colleagues we sadly lost over the past year.

A massive congratulations to all the nominees, finalists, and winners—whose names and nomination submissions you'll find listed below.

## Employee of the Year – Adult Care Services

### Winner: Lesley Orr

Lesley's nomination is a testament to her boundless dedication and heart. Always a welcoming face, she consistently goes above and beyond, from organising unforgettable events like the annual open day with 90 attendees, to inspiring service users to get involved in the National Forum. Having spent time gaining qualifications in SVQ3 and SVQ4, her commitment to learning and growth is truly inspiring to those around her.



## Employee of the Year – Children and Families

### Winner: Elizabeth Pye

Elizabeth is nothing short of incredible - an outstanding, dedicated, and vital member of our team. As an administrator, she consistently goes above and beyond, ensuring everything runs smoothly at Erskine Waterfront Campus. Her hard work and commitment make her an invaluable asset, and the school feel truly lucky to have her.

## Employee of the Year – Older People Services

### Winner: Linda Barna

Linda impressed the Older People Services senior management team with her unwavering commitment and skill. Her positive, can-do attitude shines through every day, and she works seamlessly with her finance colleagues, who always speak highly of her accuracy and ability to meet deadlines. Linda consistently goes above and beyond, offering support to services across the country and expertly handling complex finance systems remotely. She is always approachable, and her dedication makes her an irreplaceable part of the team.





## Employee of the Year – Corporate Services

### Winner: Dawid Konarski

Dawid's willingness to learn, dive into every task, and support everyone across CrossReach is truly remarkable and earned him this nomination. He's always there when needed, with a positive attitude and a smile which makes a real difference to those he works and interacts with.



## New Recruit of the Year

### Winner: Magdalena Rudden

Magdalena's commitment has been exceptional since the very day she applied for her role as a care worker at the Elms, even travelling from Ireland to Edinburgh for the interview before she had even moved. This level of dedication has remained consistent throughout her time in the role. She has since become a Dementia Ambassador and taken on the role of Care Docs Champion, where she supports the wider staff team by sharing her knowledge and skills. The Elms is incredibly proud of her achievements and looks forward to seeing what she accomplishes next.

## Volunteer of the Year

### Winner: Neil Anderson

Neil has built an incredible connection with a young person at Erskine Waterfront Campus, going above and beyond to nurture it. The time he spends with Andrew is the highlight of Andrew's week, and their bond is a true reflection of the importance of relationships at the school. Over the past couple of years, Neil has shown love, patience, understanding, and kindness in every interaction. Andrew greets Neil with a smile, and it's clear how much this relationship means to him.



## Team of the Year

### Winner: Kirkhaven

The Kirkhaven team works with individuals experiencing homelessness in Glasgow, many of whom face complex and varied challenges. While many see challenges, the team sees potential in every individual. Where others might view difficult behaviour, the team sees a person in need of help. In a demanding environment, they bring a sense of hope and encouragement. The team manages to balance challenging situations with engaging activities and person-centred support, building trusting relationships that genuinely make a meaningful impact.

## Long Service Award

### June Marr for 40 years in service

June's journey began in two care homes before she chose to dedicate her career to the residents of Morlich House in Edinburgh. Known for her delicious soups and personal touch, she's made a lasting impact to those who work and live at Morlich House. June goes above and beyond to understand each resident's needs and preferences, tailoring meals to them which brings residents real joy and well-balanced nutrition. She is special, unique and has brought smiles to the faces of many.

“People make the difference, but to make the difference for such a long period of time is to be admired and celebrated... Thank you for your commitment to CrossReach, to Morlich House and the countless lives that you have touched.”

Jennifer Gibson, Head of Service for Older People Services East





# Winter Appeal

You may have seen our winter appeal, featuring Harry's story this Christmas. It's not an easy read with Harry facing substance use and terrifying violence in his own home.

At times children and young people can find it difficult to manage their feelings and actions. To us, all behaviours are communication and we have seen with our own eyes that children are resilient. We know that with the right support, they can heal, grow and succeed.

Our Relational and Attachment informed practice model offers an innovative approach of community houses, clustered around a central education hub. This allows us to provide the structure, support and care that children overcoming past trauma.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone of you, who has supported our appeal and how our residential houses and school gave him hope.

Here are some photos of how our teams make Christmas feel like it should – a time of celebration, joy and love.

If you want to be a part of a child's new future, just like Harry, you can still make a donation by visiting [www.crossreach.org.uk/harrys-story](http://www.crossreach.org.uk/harrys-story) or by using the enclosed donation form.



Harry's Story

# Thank you





# Carol Concert

On Thursday 5th December, we hosted our 2nd Christmas Carol concert at the beautiful Glasgow Cathedral. We heard fantastic performances from Merchant Voices, Strathclyde University Chamber Choir and our very own Makaton choir; as well as inspiring stories from Thom, Ryan, Ciaran, and David, about how CrossReach has impact them.

Nearly 400 incredible supporters made the night a huge success so we would like to thank all of you for sharing such a special evening with us. Here are some of the highlights.



## Tree of Hope

Many supporters sent a message of hope to children like Harry, which were hung on the Tree of Hope before Christmas:



The night can seem very dark: but God gives light and much more in the morning"



Jesus loves you and will help you – enjoy a Happy Christmas with people who love and care for you."



You are not forgotten... CrossReach will do all they can to make life better for you"



Due to my violent father I was in a Church of Scotland children's home for 9 months... It was a bewildering experience for an 8 year old... However I was safe... the experience made me a better person"



Remember that despite your painful experiences MOST people are caring and loving"



The Lord is on your side"





This poem has been written by staff and residents at the Kirkhaven Service, following their award for 'Team of the Year' at the CrossReach Annual Award Ceremony.

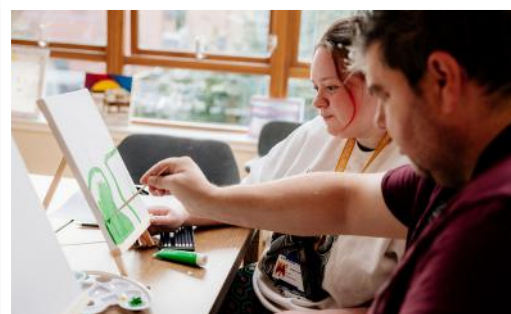
Today is such a special day  
Each learns that now and then  
So with this award we've collected  
We thank you again and again

The team have worked together  
Till the end of the working day  
A beacon of light, right through the night  
In a special kind of way

Encouraging each spirit  
Lifting up each soul  
Patching them up  
And making them whole

With every challenge  
We rise as one  
Overcoming difficulties  
Till the task is done

So thank you and thank you, all of the team  
The Kirkhaven Service one and all  
We collect this together with a round of applause  
And take a wee moment, just for a pause.



Please continue to support the  
work of CrossReach in prayer.  
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