

CROSSREACH NEWS



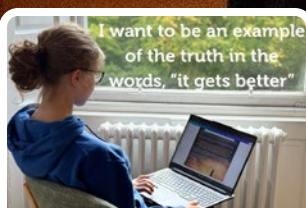
In this Edition...



Employee Awards



Moderator's Visits



Amelia's Story

I am included

OUR SERVICE AREAS

- Children and Families
- Counselling and Support
- Justice System
- Homelessness
- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health
- Older People
- Substance Use

CROSSREACH
Care you can put your faith in
www.crossreach.org.uk

Happy New Year

In this edition of CrossReach News we are thinking about the theme 'I am included' – A simple statement but one which unlocks the potential of individuals in driving person centred support and ensuring that their voices are heard. It requires action from all parties involved, both in asking the right questions and in listening to, and acting upon, the answers that are given. As we embark on a new year we are resolved to listen with purpose, to those we support, our employees and you, our supporters, so that we can, together, build for a better future.

You will read about our Learning Disabilities National Forum, here supported people from our services gathered in Edinburgh for a day of discussion on the theme of inclusion. They took time to share ideas as well as take part in a range of fun activities. We were delighted to be joined by Rt Rev Rosie Frew, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at the event after spending time the week before with us, visiting a number of services in Glasgow, Alloa and Aberdeenshire. I hope you will enjoy reading about her experience and watching our short film series 'Love from CrossReach' in which she reflects on her learning over that time.



Our annual employee awards ceremony took place in October, where those who work and volunteer with CrossReach were included in a time of celebration as we recognised some amazing achievements over the past year. It is always a privilege to share the afternoon with our finalists and hear about what drives them to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

As we look ahead to what promises to be another busy year, we have an opportunity to be included in national conversations about social care in the run up to the Scottish Parliament election. We will help guide both those who hold positions of power and those who will be voting, on what matters most to the people we represent. We will be developing the conversation over the next few months and there will be a number of ways in which you can join us to have your voice heard. Please look out for further information and contribute where you can.

Thank you to all of you who continue to support the work of CrossReach, please be assured that what you do matters, and your contribution is invaluable. I hope as the year progresses you feel included within the work that goes on each day and can experience the positive impact of your support in our services across Scotland.

Viv Dickenson, CEO, CrossReach

→ Prayer Points

- Give thanks for the dedication of Crossreach staff working in our residential care services, who look after, support and encourage people of all ages 24 hours a day.
- Pray for the artists and the organisers in Heart for Art, which gives such valuable opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment and helps participants discover new talents.
- Pray for our counsellors, who bring patience, insight and love to their demanding discussions with those struggling to cope and seeking advice and comfort.
- Pray for all those involved in our new Highlands and Islands Residential Recovery Service, which will give us greater ability to help those with addictions.
- Pray for the senior managers leading Crossreach at a time when they have both to deal with immediate financial pressures and look for opportunities to provide better or different services in the future.



John Graham, Board Member



The Friends of Cameron House raise fantastic amount

They say it takes a village, and at Cameron House, it takes a group of extraordinary friends. The Friends of Cameron House have supported the service for many years, including volunteers with family cared for at the home.

With around 15 active members, the Friends organise events and fundraise toward projects in the home. Their most recent afternoon tea raised over £1,700, an incredible total.

For residents and staff the Friends are more than volunteers, their dedication carries everyone at Cameron House forward.



Recovery Walk shines beacon of hope



Recovery services across the country took part in the annual Recovery Walk in September. This year's event took place in Stirling and is an important event which remembers those who have lost their lives to addiction and celebrates those who have recovered or are on their recovery journey. CrossReach service users and staff wore t-shirts, held banners high and joined in with the crowd on the special day.

This year also marked CrossReach Abstinence Recovery Service's (CARS) 40th anniversary, with service users and staff gathering for a celebration at the service in December.

CrossReach supports Scotland Demands Better march

In October, we joined the Church of Scotland and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh for the Scotland Demands Better march, the civil society movement calling on our politicians to prioritise tackling poverty as we approach the May 2026 Scottish Parliament election.

We joined 5,000 people at the march, calling for better jobs, better investment in life's essentials such as housing, transport, healthcare and education, and better social security.

Addressing the rally following the March, Rt Rev Rosie Frew reminded the audience that 'the role of the Church is listening, learning, serving and caring – we are present in communities facing deep hardship and deprivation, as well as places that are affluent. We are present in city centres and remote islands. In all places this is what we are hearing. This is what people are needing, are wanting - better investment for life's essentials.





Staff and volunteers celebrated at Employee Awards

Earlier this year we celebrated the achievements of our employees and volunteers at our Annual Award Ceremony. The awards highlight those who have gone the extra mile for CrossReach over the last year and we wish a warm congratulations to all those who were nominated, our finalists and our winners.

New Recruit of the Year

Winner: Norrie Agnew - Threshold Glasgow

Norrie joined Threshold Glasgow in May as a relief handyman and has made a remarkable contribution to the service. Norrie's kind heart has helped him obtain donations of kitchen units and woodwork tools and he is a driving force of Threshold Glasgow's new woodwork project.



Volunteer of the Year

Winner: Leanne Wilson - Tayside Support Services

Leanne exemplifies the CrossReach values of compassion, dignity and faith in action. Since joining Tayside Support Services' Dundee project she has volunteered consistently bringing warmth, kindness and support to everyone she meets.

Team of the Year

Winner: Threshold Glasgow

Threshold Glasgow has shown incredible dedication, creativity and innovation this year, developing initiatives like the Pathway to Independence booklet, helping people to build daily living, cooking and travel skills, boosting confidence and independence.



Employee of the Year - Children & Families

Winner: James Walker - Erskine Waterfront Campus

James has built outstanding relationships with children and young people, always offering a calm presence when they are distressed. He understands the role food plays in behaviour, and uses his skills to make every meal welcoming, thoughtful and tailored to individual needs.

Employee of the Year - Adult Care Services

Winner: Susan Middleton - The Bungalow

Susan works night shifts at The Bungalow. But for years has gone above and beyond to make the service's garden a bright and welcoming space. Each summer she fills it with flowers she's grown in her own greenhouse, even adding a fountain, bird feeders and a hedgehog station.



Employee of the Year - Corporate Services

Winner: Craig Govan - Facilities Management

Craig has overseen the new Gaberston development with dedication and care. He responds quickly to changes, giving residents reassurance and confidence throughout the process. Craig ensures that residents are involved in every decision from small details like blinds to bigger choices like colour scheme.

Employee of the Year - Older People Serves

Winner: Margaret Robertson - South Beach House

Margaret always goes above and beyond her role. When times have been tough, she's put her many talents to use, whether it's fixing and painting, supporting residents with crafts, or cooking with care. She embodies kindness, compassion and a deep understanding of Christian values.



Working Together Award

Winner: Eleanor Trivett - Gaberston

Eleanor has shown remarkable leadership, transforming Gaberston from a care home into a supported living service. She's guided 14 people with complex mental health needs through this major change, ensuring that they're involved in decisions and feel invested in their new homes.



Moderator visits CrossReach

Earlier this year Rt Rosie Frew, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland visited some of our services. It was our privilege to spend time with her and her husband as she was able to get to explore and understand the work of CrossReach.

GO2 and the Mallard

“ I saw the love of God being lived out in caring and commitment by wonderful members of staff. The Mallard and GO2 are adjacent and both support children and young adults with disabilities. The Mallard provides respite care, giving carers a much-needed short break. GO2 provides 1 to 1 support within the community, encouraging young people to meet their maximum potential. I was shown round by Ryan who is being supported to work in a charity shop.

In the garden at The Mallard we planted a tree in memory of two of their young people who died recently, Michael and Aaron. We took time to remember their families and the staff in prayer. We also remembered the husband of one of the senior children’s workers, Anne, who died in August.



CrossReach Abstinence Recovery Service

“ CrossReach Abstinence Recovery Service (Rainbow House) accommodates and supports 18 people who are seeking to maintain an abstinence based lifestyle, many with a range of complex issues.

After meeting with staff and being shown round the facility we had lunch with a number of volunteers, all former service users who are now living a drug and alcohol-free life. We heard of the discipline and determination that goes into living such a life, and the celebrations that accompany milestones. More than once we heard, ‘this place has saved my life’, and ‘this place has given me my life and my family back’.

Tom Allan Centre

“ My final stop on day 1 was the Tom Allan Centre which houses a general adult counselling service along with the Bluebell Perinatal Service and Creche which supports parents expecting a baby or with a child under 3.

Each year the two services support around 700 individuals and families offering over 6000 counselling sessions. Work that is life changing and life saving. There is no charge but clients are asked to donate what they can.



Find out more about these visits in our Short Film Series ‘Love from CrossReach’



Gaberston

“ Another amazing day with CrossReach. This morning I visited Gaberston House in Alloa, one of CrossReach’s mental health support services. This is a new build on the site of an older home. 16 purpose built apartments for independent living along with a community hub. We met with 4 of the folk who are due to move in shortly. They were enjoying dominoes and a craft activity in the hub.

There was such excitement about having their own home, their own front door, along with a lovely, shared garden. There was also a great appreciation of the staff who make this independence possible. Love was the word of the morning. Love for the place, the staff and the community.



The Bungalow

“ In the afternoon we visited The Bungalow in Stonehaven, home to 5 adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities, cared for by a devoted staff. It is a home. It’s loving and personal and a place where they can experience life in all its fullness.

We saw holiday photos from last summer when a canoe trip was just one of the adventures! It was a privilege to spend time there.



Bellfield

“ Today with CrossReach we were focusing on services providing care for older people. This morning I led worship in Bellfield Care Home in Banchory. We focused on favourite songs and hymns from childhood. We sang ‘Jesus loves me’ and ‘What a friend we have in Jesus’. After tea and cakes I was presented with a beautiful picture titled Mindful Journey painted by Alister Fraser from the Heart for Art project in Hyndland Broomhill Church. It will be a lovely reminder of this week.



Clashfarquhar

“ Lunch was at Clashfarquhar House in Stonehaven. 20 small flats and one room for respite care with wonderful views over the water.

As we spoke with Tracey, the Manager, met staff and residents, saw round all the facilities, once again we were struck by love, care, commitment and the feeling of family.





Inclusion key at National Forum

Live music, drums and a silent disco were all enjoyed at our annual Learning Disabilities Forum held in Edinburgh earlier this month. Organised by a small team of volunteers, the event provides a platform for feedback from all those using CrossReach Adult Learning and Disability services. The afternoon kicked off with some words from Rt Rev Rosie Frew, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who told us about the parable of the lost sheep. She explained the importance of including everyone, how nobody should be left out and that God cares for all of His children.



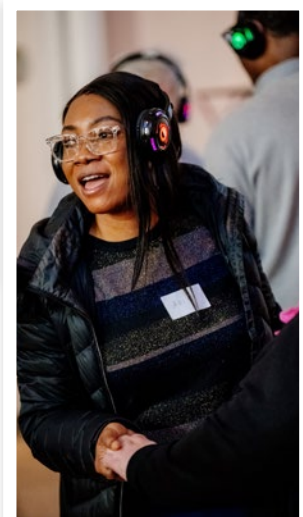
Her words were followed by a welcome from Viv Dickenson, CrossReach CEO, who spoke about the importance of events like the National Forum. She explained how including the voices of all our service users is important in helping structure our future plans. She thanked service users for including her in the conversation, for coming together to make their voices heard and for sharing. The crowd was later invited to take part in a game, with question cards on various topics attendees had to find other people in the crowd to help answer fun questions such as "what is something you like doing?" One service user said how much they enjoyed dancing and spoke about their many dancing achievements.

Susan McGregor, operations development officer for adult care, added:

“ The forum committee and supporting staff did a tremendous job in organising the day as well as lunches and the set-up of workshops. There were huge smiles on everyone’s faces and everyone had such a great time. The committee and staff worked collaboratively to bring about a forum that was not only inclusive, but informative and most of all fun!”

After lunch, service users were invited to write down their feedback which will be analysed by the senior team at CrossReach to help them continue to better the services provided. We spoke with a few of the service users on the day who told us what they enjoyed about the event.

“ I like talking to people and taking part. ”



“ I enjoy dancing at the disco. ”

“ I like that everyone was included and got to take part. ”



Pupils presentations earns £3k for CrossReach

A tremendous effort was put in by S3 pupils at Hutchesons' Grammar School in Glasgow as their YPI Scotland presentation won £3,000 for CrossReach.

Pupils Sanvi, Emma, Lucy, and Olivia gave a powerful presentation on the work done by CrossReach and why the grant would be of benefit to the charity.

We will use the grant to support children and young people with disabilities by reducing waiting lists and expanding respite and day services.



CrossReach Sunday

On November 16th, supporters, staff, churches and people who use our services came together to celebrate CrossReach Sunday.

For those taking part in the Light the Path walk, the day began before sunrise. Setting off from locations across the country, walkers carried candlelight through the darkness, symbolising how CrossReach brings light and hope into the difficult situations faced by those who rely on our services.

Throughout the day, staff and service users shared their experiences at church talks, while activities within services ranged from candle lighting ceremonies to fundraising events, with many offering support through prayer.

This year, alongside all the individuals who took part, we were joined by 44 churches, offering prayer, donations and a platform to share our mission within their congregations. Thank you to all who took part, and we can't wait to celebrate again with you next year on November 1st.

CrossReach earn share of HSF grant

We were delighted to be one of 27 charities to have received a share of £137,000 of grant funding from The Hospital Saturday Fund (HSF).

HSF is a registered charity whose aims are to provide assistance for registered health charities, hospices, medical organisations and individuals with a medical condition or disability.

The grants were presented at a special charity reception held at The University of Edinburgh.





Amelia Shares Her Story

Our recent Winter appeal featured the incredible 17 year old, Amelia who came to Sunflower Garden; a service for children and young people in Edinburgh affected by drug and alcohol use in their families. Her journey to take control of her life is remarkable.

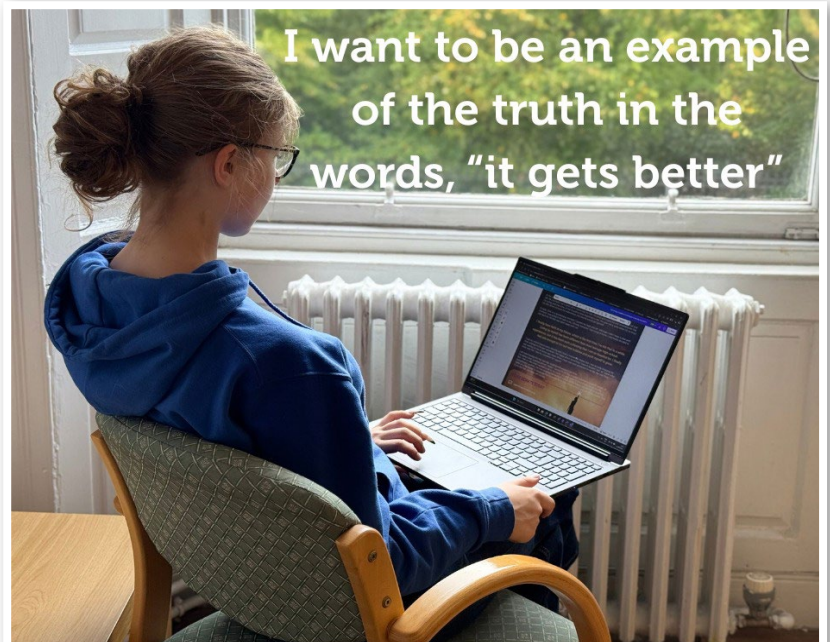
“ I have decided to share my story because I want to be an example of the truth in the words, **“it gets better”**. I was trapped in this bubble created by my parents past trauma, and I thought I would never be able to escape.

Ever since I was born, my parents were alcoholics which meant I was raised in a house that was built on uncertainty, violence and lies. When I was younger, I thought every pre-teens life was like this. Protecting your parent from another one, making sure no physical harm is done to the other.

Things started escalating which meant I was referred to the Sunflower Garden at CrossReach. At first I was sceptical to accept help because I was so focussed on pretending like nothing affected me. When I let my emotions out, they would be so strong to where I tried hard to shove them back into an imaginary box with a lock on it. With counselling, I felt strong enough to use the key that I tried so hard to bury, I finally unlocked the box and felt safe enough to let out my emotions.

I finally have faith in my future, which is the first time I've felt that in a while. Living by myself has been different than most teenage high-school experiences, but it has been such a blessing that I am so thankful for. I finally feel safe enough to try out new hobbies and push myself to grow.

I had my school leavers party recently and I took a moment to realise that I was actually enjoying my time, whereas in the past whenever I felt happy about something I knew it wouldn't last, as I knew what was waiting for me at home was chaos. When chaos was most prominent in my life, the one thing I knew was that I had my counsellor for support. I am now moving into my own flat, studying and working part time.



Last year through counselling, CrossReach gave over 2000 people the support and tools needed to give them hope for the future. Each one with their own trauma, challenges and story just like Amelia.

We rely on donations to fund our counselling services so your support this winter can be the beacon people like Amelia need to process trauma and start a new path.

Please give today to help others like Amelia find their “faith in my future”.

www.crossreach.org.uk/amelias-story

Donate Now



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A Night of joy, love, and light

We shared an incredible evening at CrossReach's annual Christmas carol concert in Edinburgh! The atmosphere was filled with warmth, music, and community spirit as we celebrated the season together.

Our hearts were lifted by the beautiful performances from Castle Chorus, The Rolling Hills Chorus, and our Makaton Choir who filled the church with harmony and joy.

We were deeply moved by the stories shared by Darren, representing our Children and Families service, and Julie, from our Adult Services. They spoke about how CrossReach has transformed lives through children's homes, counselling, and homelessness support.

We also heard from Peter and Christine, who are part of our dementia specialist care home at The Elms. Peter shared their story of love and hope.

Guests also enjoyed our Heart for Art Dementia Art exhibition, showcasing creativity and connection.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and made the evening so special. If you couldn't attend but would like to support CrossReach's life-changing work, please consider donating at:

donate.justgiving.com/charity/crossreachchurch/donation-amount



→ CrossReach App

We have been working hard to update our CrossReach app so you can receive up to date news, devotions and prayers in the palm of your hand! Simply visit the app story for apple and android phones and download our app today.

Google Play Store



Apple App Store



You can also:

- Follow us on social media. Throughout the week we post news, photos, stories and updates from all our services across Scotland. You will find us on Facebook, X, Youtube, Instagram, LinkedIn and Bluesky.
- Read our latest news articles from our website. These stories are updated regularly and are a bit longer than our regular social media posts.
- You can stay up to date with exciting news and opportunities by signing up to our mailing list. Its also a chance to have your say on what we send and how we send it in future – your feedback means so much to us.

How do we keep in touch with you?

We would love to hear from you about the best way for us to keep you informed and updated about the work of CrossReach.

As we think ahead we are reviewing the print production of our magazine, and considering what other opportunities may be better to ensure that we are able to keep all our friends and supporters updated in a way that suits them best.

We would welcome any feedback and thoughts that you have. Would you like to hear from us more, less or perhaps about different things. What do you like to read about – and what is of less interest.

If you have any views we would really like to hear them. Drop us an email at info@crossreach.org.uk – give us a call on **0131 657 2000** or write to us at: **CrossReach News Team, CrossReach, Charis House, 47 Milton Road East, Edinburgh. EH15 2SR**

