

Stuart's incredible journey to freedom

When Stuart moved back to Oban, he couldn't have imagined experiencing such a "massive difference" in his life. Stuart, who now has his own tenancy and is in control of his finances, told us about his incredible "journey to freedom".

Stuart moved back to Oban in 2016. He had nothing. He was living in temporary accommodation, had no income, and was addicted to heroin. Stuart said: "I felt like I'd lost my soul to drugs."

That's when he reached out for help and was referred to Carr Gomm.

His support practitioners took time to listen and understand him; together they agreed a plan that included the goals that Stuart wanted to achieve in his life. Stuart understood that making changes would be difficult, but he was determined to make positive choices in order to create a lasting change.

Stuart's support practitioners supported him to apply for the right benefits, went with him to medical appointments, encouraged him to start going to the gym, and supported him in rebuilding bridges with his family. His support gave him the stability and self-confidence that he needed: "life had always been so chaotic, and now it's so 'simple'. My advice to others is to be content with where you are, rather than where you're not".

Susan, the manager of the service in Oban, said: "I am so proud of how Stuart has progressed in his life, he has



Susan and Stuart

shown such determination to turn his life around and it makes me so proud to see him finally have a place he can call home and embark on a much brighter future!"

Stuart is now drug-free and no longer receiving support from statutory addiction services, and is looking at

getting back into work or going to college. His regular support with Carr Gomm is about to end, since he has achieved everything that we set out to accomplish together, but he said "I know if I need to drop in I'll never be turned away. That's just Carr Gomm".

A note from our Chief Executive



Now into the second year of our three year plan, we are excited to be developing and implementing new approaches across the organisation to ensure we are providing the best

possible support we can. This year, we have a particular focus on developing healthy living approaches.

We are delighted to have launched our new Healthy Living and Wellbeing Project in partnership with Health by Science; a team of highly qualified physiotherapists and personal trainers. We are working closely together to increase our knowledge and awareness of how to live healthier lives by making small and sustainable changes. You can find out more about this exciting and innovative project on page 3 of this newspaper.

To complement this year's focus, we are holding a 'big conversation' across Scotland about healthy-living and wellbeing; listening to what the people we support, their family and friends, our staff, and many others have to say. We have gathered some fantastic feedback so far, which you can view on pages 4-5.

It is vital for us to gather and respond to the views of every individual involved with Carr Gomm; it is those ideas and opinions that help us to grow and continue to be one of Scotland's leading social care charities.

This newspaper gives a flavour of what the organisation is doing on a daily basis, but I ask you to imagine the stories repeated over and over with hundreds of people. That's what people who work with Carr Gomm achieve every day. Congratulations to everyone who makes a difference on a daily basis.

Lucy Wren

With best wishes, Lucy

This year we have been really motivated to promote healthy living and wellbeing. We have been receiving lots of your stories and wanted to share a few we have gathered so far this year.

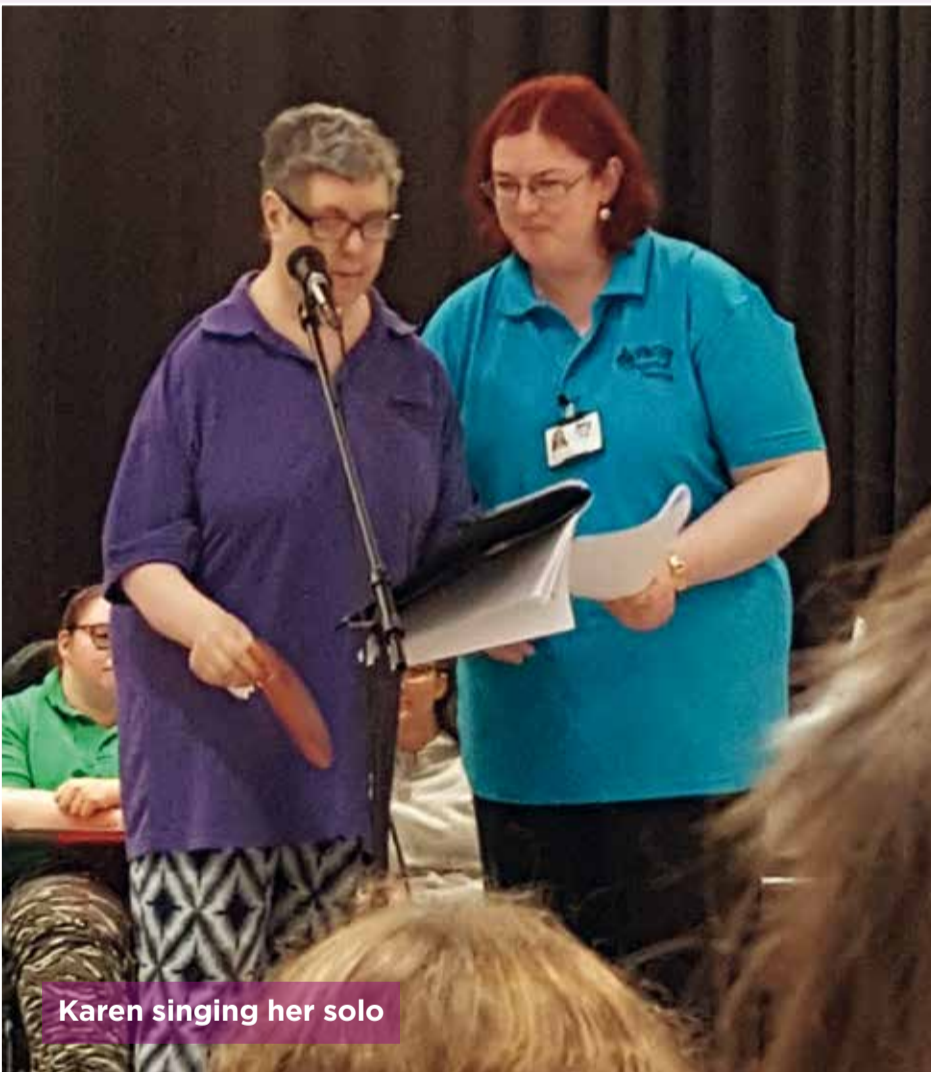
Fighting fit

Over the last year, Sam has been considering different ways to improve his overall wellbeing, as a result of quite intense surgery to remove part of his bowel. The doctors explained to Sam the importance of eating well and staying active once he had left hospital and Sam was eager to follow through with this advice.

After considering various options, Sam felt that the best way to improve his fitness was to join a gym and follow a programme. Sam's support team assisted him to find a personal trainer, who worked with Sam to develop a nutrition and fitness programme that was specifically designed to meet his needs.

Sam has followed the programme and has found the gym sessions to be really effective in improving both his physical health and his mental health. Moreover, Sam's feelings of anxiety and tension have reduced since changing his lifestyle. We are delighted for Sam and are excited to hear about his on-going fitness journey.

Singing to a healthier wellbeing



Karen singing her solo

Karen is a singer. Her singing has led to many different positive impacts. Over the last few years, Karen has always kept her love of singing to herself, but with the encouragement of her support practitioners, she joined a local singing group called Positive Notes. Karen always looks forward to attending her choir, and gets her team to sing and learn new songs with her prior to each rehearsal.

Earlier in the year, Positive Notes held their annual show in which they asked Karen to sing a solo. This was a fantastic opportunity for Karen to show off her talents and she loved every minute of it.

Karen has made many new friends at the choir, and her team have witnessed her confidence and wellbeing improve significantly.

Feeling at home

Earlier in 2019, Tracy decided to make significant lifestyle changes to feel healthier.

Tracy lives with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). MS is a lifelong condition that can affect the brain and spinal cord, causing a wide range of symptoms, including problems with vision, arm or leg movement, sensation or balance.

Tracy had a tough time when she was diagnosed with MS. She had to leave her job as a manager, and Tracy found herself becoming increasingly isolated. Tracy's health dipped as a result, and she fell into poor eating habits as a way of managing her emotions. It became a vicious cycle and Tracy felt that she'd become someone that she didn't know.

Tracy's team have been supporting her for about nine years now. In that time,

they've achieved many positive changes together, including moving into a wheelchair-friendly flat with far better accessibility.

When Tracy shared her goal to lead a healthier lifestyle and lose some weight, her team supported her to plan menus to make healthier food choices, along with joining a gym. Already, the positive choices that Tracy has made are having a huge impact on her physical and mental health and wellbeing. Tracy is now feeling more confident, finding it easier to talk to people again, and looking forward to her future plans.

Sarah, the manager of Tracy's service in Glasgow, told us: *"Tracy feels more independent and is able to go out without support from us now; we're delighted to see that her social life is better than ever before"*.



Tracy settled in her new home

Migration Minister's visit to Lochend



Ben Macpherson meets our staff

Ben Macpherson, Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development dropped by our Lochend

service recently to discuss the implications that Brexit would have on recruitment within the social care sector.

He met with a number of staff from our Edinburgh teams, who come from countries all across Europe, to hear their thoughts on what Brexit may mean for them and their futures.

Kat, service manager at Lochend, originally from Bulgaria, said: *"it was a pleasure to meet and engage in conversation with Mr Macpherson. Carr Gomm currently employs a lot of EU staff who play a paramount role in delivering person-centred services to the people we support and it is important that we are aware of the future developments."*

Like us, Mr Macpherson believes in a diverse workforce and made the stark warning that shortages of skilled workers in sectors such as social care will only get worse as a result of leaving the European Union.

Lucy Wren, Carr Gomm's Chief Executive, said: *"Brexit is an issue that we are closely monitoring. We want to continually provide professional person-centred support to each and every individual we work with, which requires a strong and reliable workforce."*

"We will be keeping up to date with developments and planning accordingly into the future."

Healthy Living and Wellbeing Project

A first of its kind, our Healthy Living and Wellbeing project seeks to upskill staff to deliver expert healthy-living related support and to bridge the gap between social care and specialist NHS services.

Our goal is to raise awareness, knowledge and skills in devising and applying healthy living approaches in order to encourage an all-round healthier quality of life; not only in the lives of the people we support, but also of our workforce.

To help us achieve this goal, we have partnered with Healthy by Science; Scotland's first personal training/physiotherapy social enterprise. Health by Science believe that by taking a person-



Our managers with Jamie from Health by Science (right)

centred approach and mixing it with the best scientific evidence, that they can improve long-term health and minimise the risk of preventable illness through sustainable behaviour change.

Over the coming months, our Edinburgh, Midlothian and Borders managers, practitioners and people we support will be embarking on a

12-week training programme with Health by Science. Thereafter, we'll be capturing our learning in a suite of training resources for use throughout Scotland; with the aim of increasing our knowledge and awareness of how to live healthier lives.

If you would like to know more about this project, you can contact Daniel at danielcurrie@carrgomm.org

Supporting and improving wellbeing

To provide the best possible person-centred support, it is important that we do all we can to care for our workers in every part of the organisation. Each year, we strive to do something more to improve the experience of working with Carr Gomm; and we have a few exciting developments to share.

We are delighted to have been recognised by Carer Scotland as a Carer Positive organisation. This award, presented to us by Clare Haughey, the Minister for Mental Health, during an event at the Scottish Parliament in June, demonstrates that we have a working environment where carers are valued and supported.

Earlier this year, we signed up to Lifeworks. As well as offering a range of retail and entertainment discounts, Lifeworks offers free and confidential information, support and counselling to all employees and their families around issues that may negatively impact upon their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

We have also agreed a partnership with Capital Credit

Union, a community-based financial organisation able to support people to save, borrow and buy a house.

Liz, our operations manager for HR, said:

"These developments demonstrate just how committed we are to supporting and improving the wellbeing of our teams across Scotland. We are so grateful for their hard work and want to sustain positive wellbeing in every way we can; which in turn will allow us to continue to deliver high quality support to people across Scotland."



Andrew receiving our Carer Positive Award

It's good to listen... to the pe

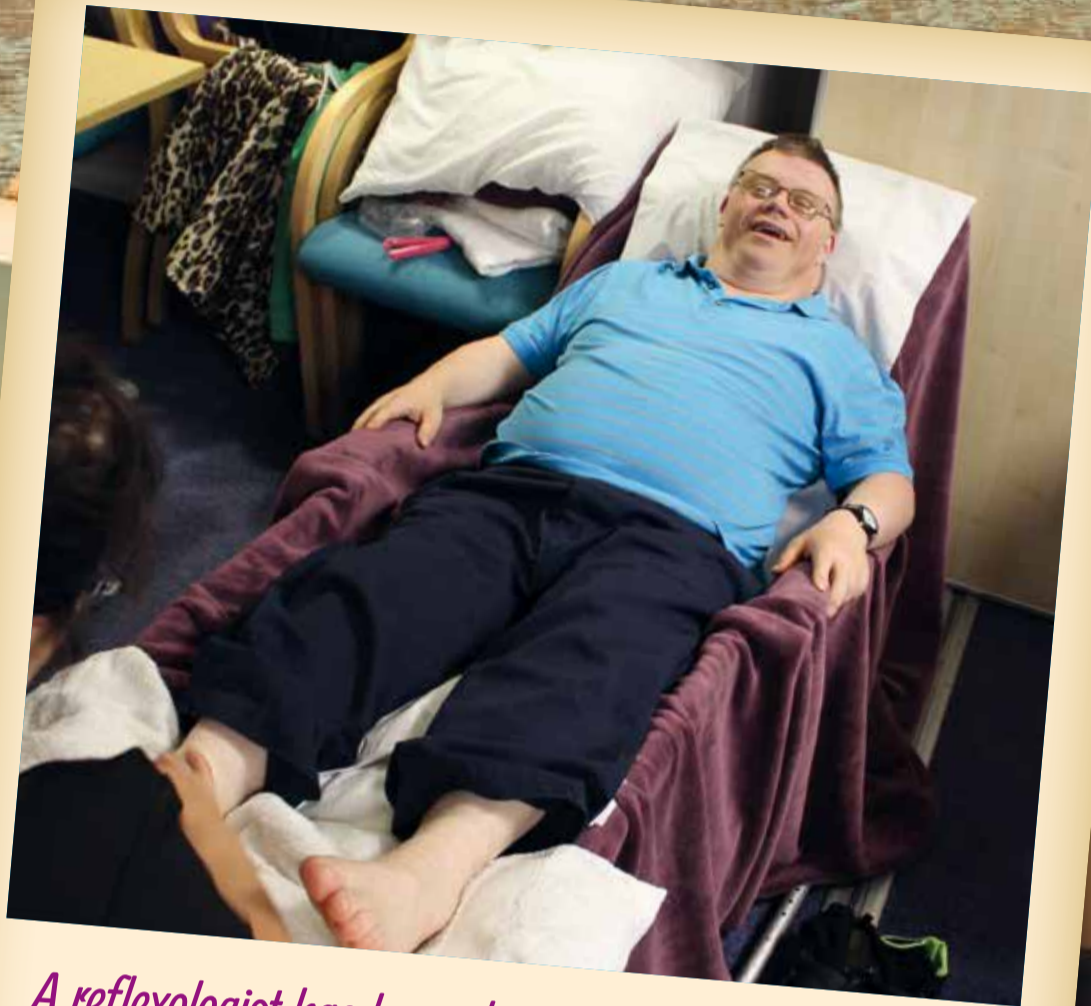
Anyone remember the BT adverts starring Bob Hoskins; "It's good to talk"?

We couldn't agree more, though we also know that it's good to listen: to listen to the people we support, their friends and families, our staff, our Board members, and our commissioners. They all help to shape the future of Carr Gomm.

This year, we are having a 'big conversation' across Scotland to give people the opportunity to talk about, and for us to listen to, a very important topic: what you feel is important in maintaining positive health and wellbeing.

This is a valuable topic for us over the coming year in connection with the launch of our Healthy Living and Wellbeing project. By hosting this Scotland-wide discussion, we can capture a wide range of views and suggestions on what we can do as an organisation to best support people to lead healthier lives.

We have already received some fantastic input on our big topic, which we have laid out over these pages. And remember, the conversation has only just begun, so be sure to get in touch with your support practitioner or manager to find out how you can get involved.



A reflexologist has been sharing her knowledge on the importance of listening to our bodies from head to toe, since everything is connected.



You have been making delicious fruit skewers and putting your smoothie-making skills to the test to try out new ways of healthier snacking.

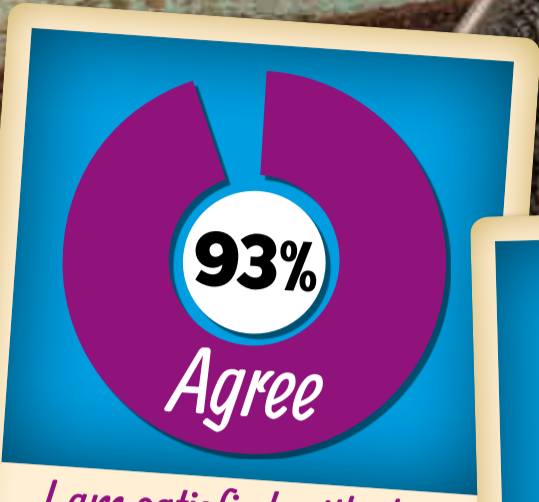


Local Police have been holding conversations about how to protect ourselves in the home and over the phone when we are on our own.

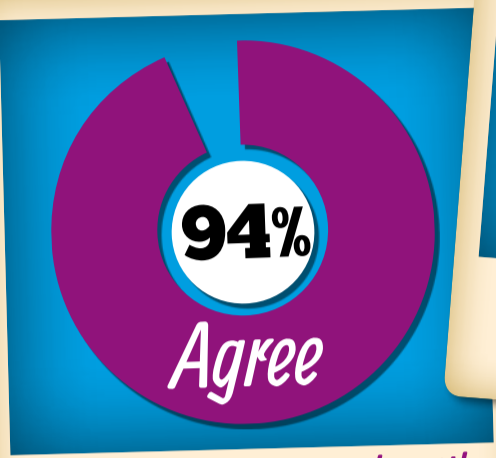
People who make Carr Gomm



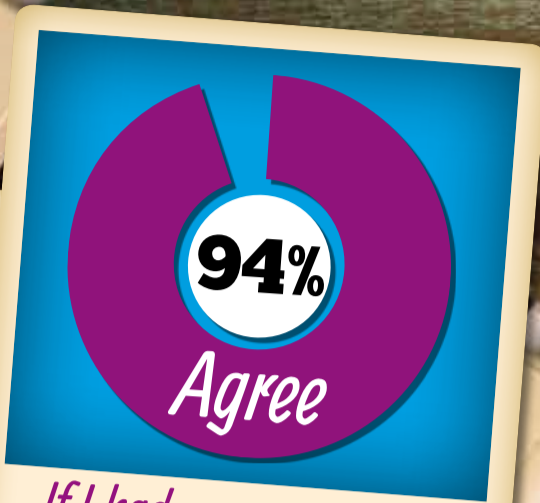
My support is making a positive difference in my life



I am satisfied with the service I receive



The people who work with me understand my needs



If I had a concern, staff would listen to me

We are delighted to share some key results from our latest questionnaire. We received 336 completed questionnaires and would like to thank all of you who shared your views with us. We are excited to hear that we have been effectively supporting you to improve and maintain your wellbeing.



Music has been proven to relieve stress and help both our minds and bodies to relax; and you've been having great fun doing just this.



You have been having some fantastic open discussions on the topic of healthy living and wellbeing within Carr Gomm. Keep your ideas coming...

NOTICEBOARD

Send us your stories

Do you have a great story that we can shout about? We're always looking for content for our star story and noticeboard pages.

If there's anything you'd like to share, from a heart-warming story to a recent outing or even a recipe, poem or fun fact about yourself then we'd love to hear from you!

@ Send us an email

marketing@carrgomm.org

☎ Pick up the phone

0131 659 4734

✉ Write us a letter

Marketing Team, Carr Gomm, SPACE, 11 Harewood Road, Edinburgh EH16 4NT

We can even come to you. Just get in touch and we'll arrange a time to meet.

Thank you.

[@CG_CarrGomm](https://twitter.com/CG_CarrGomm)

www.facebook.com/CarrGomm



Coffee, Cake and a Blether!

Staff at the Carr Gomm charity shop in Inverness held a social event for the 91 families supported by Carr Gomm in the area. The coffee morning, hosted at a local restaurant and funded by fundraised income, offered home-baked goodies, live music, a variety of craft stalls, and even the chance to win a prize in the Tombola. Ania, our shop manager, said: "It was fantastic. Happy faces all around. Everyone said they would like another one, so now I am planning a Christmas one!"

Storytelling Competition

Competition time! Do you or someone you know have a story they would like to share about Carr Gomm? Then send it our way and you could be in with a chance of winning up to £50 worth of vouchers and your work featured in our next newspaper! Whether you tell it via a written story, poem, art piece, photograph, or even a video, we would love to hear from you.

Interested? Head over to our website carrgomm.org/story-competition to find out more on how to get involved.

carr gomm
Supporting People & Communities

Poem

by Lotty

At last, just as I feel comfortable in the skin that has been mine for thirty years and the thought of conquering my insecurities had brought me peace and the sweet taste of release.

Through conversation, the creeping black thin figure of self-doubt has attempted to obtain entry into my mind – wonderful and in times of loneliness has been my only friend.

Because of this familiar but unwelcome intruder, the slumbering volcano of rage and grief inside me is starting to awaken slowly; but unlike latter years I have managed to cool it.

I am determined to raise my sword once more, and once again fight this lonely dark figure that walks while wearing a dark hooded cloak that obscures his or her face so the potential victim cannot identify it, but I vow to unmask them and conquer once and for all this time. I will not fall.



Glasgow's BBQ is a hit

The team in Glasgow organised a BBQ and walk to kick off their programme of summer events. With almost 40 people attending, a mixture of people supported and staff, the day out at Mugdock park was a huge success. After stoking up on fresh fruit and water, the group set off on a 4-mile walk which featured a beautiful loch and two castles to enjoy along the way. Afterwards, they were greeted with a delicious BBQ and even a slice of cake for one of the worker's 60th birthday! Everyone involved had a great day, with several people sharing how glad they were that they attended, despite feeling nervous in the run-up. We think this comment sums it up perfectly: "Great wee day oot!"



An exciting move for Allan

Say Hello to Allan. With support from Carr Gomm, Allan recently moved out of his parents' house and into his own home, which he shares with four other house mates. Allan, who said he feels more independent since the move, is now more involved within the wider community, enjoying participating in weekly activities such as bowling, the cinema and having a regular nosey around the shops! What a fantastic new chapter in life for Allan.



Carr Gomm Brooches the subject of fundraising!

Fumiko, from Oban, has been dedicating her free time to making beautiful brooches to sell in the Carr Gomm shop in Inverness. This will help to raise extra funds for the events that the shop organises for people in the local community. Thank you Fumiko; it is people like you who make Carr Gomm!

Designed by Fumiko Miller
M. de In Oban, Scotland
So it in aid of Carr Gomm
Charity No. SC033491

Nice to meet you... Jacqui Gunn

In this addition, we meet Jacqui Gunn. Jacqui has been supported by Carr Gomm for the last four years and, following a difficult period in her life, has since thrown herself into everything Carr Gomm related; be it fundraising, involvement groups or attending events. Jacqui has consistently shown her commitment and appreciation to us for supporting her through a challenging time.

This year, Jacqui attended the SCVO Charity Awards ceremony to celebrate our Team Carr Gomm campaign being shortlisted as a finalist in the "Cracking Campaign" category. An

active Team Carr Gomm participant, Jacqui initiated and supported our Charity of the Year partnership with Sainsbury's Howe Street in Edinburgh which raised nearly £2,000.

Before the event she ordered a beautiful dress to attend what was to be a fantastic night. Jacqui spoke of how nervous she was before the awards, but this soon changed once she arrived, sharing: "I had an absolutely brilliant time and it allowed me to meet new people".

Jacqui explained that this was a great achievement for her as she would not have been able to do this in the past due to her anxiety. Jacqui, we are thrilled that you had a great time and want to thank you for all of your hard work!



BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

A core part of our work is to fundraise in order to fill the gaps in society that people fall into; to provide support where no one else is. Specifically, this work focuses on tackling the crippling issues of loneliness and isolation. With Britain being the loneliness capital of Europe, we are passionate about

addressing this issue through creative ideas and innovative approaches.

Carr Gomm Futures is one of the ways we are achieving this. Futures is a way for any of our staff to apply for funding – generated from our fundraised income and donations – for their idea or project that addresses

social isolation and loneliness in their local community. The ideas are varied, but all focus on one thing; creating social and memorable opportunities and adventures for the people we support.

Here are just some of the ways we have been using fundraised money to build a better future.

Club Fun - trip to Burntisland

Club Fun is a project led by a group of people supported in Forth Valley. Our local staff have been using fundraised money to fund Club Fun and provide the tools and support to organise social activities.

Earlier this year, they went on an exciting trip to Burntisland. The journey – on buses that support staff had decorated with bunting and balloons – was filled with singing and laughing by all. Whilst there, some people enjoyed the beach whilst others headed into town to check out the local sights. Angela, our service manager in Stirling, said: “there was smiles and happiness all-round!”



Carr Gomm Lottery

Did you know we have a lottery? And the idea came through Carr Gomm Futures?

For just £1 a week you can be entered into the Carr Gomm lottery, with the chance of winning £25,000 every Friday. All profits go into our pot of money to turn employee's ideas and suggestions into a reality.

Sign up now or find out more on how to play by visiting our website www.carrgomm.org/play-our-lottery

A local kitchen garden

Another of our Dundee teams have been dreaming big. They applied for funding to transform their tiny backyard into a vegetable garden, which is encouraging people to learn more about nutrition, plan healthy meals, learn to cook more and get involved in growing their own food. So far, they have been sowing potatoes, carrots and flowers in pots.



A local ornamental garden

One of our teams in Dundee applied for funds to purchase materials for a gazebo, some compost and seeds. With this, they have created a beautiful communal garden, where people can come together, mingle,

chat, enjoy the fresh air, assist with the garden maintenance, and even get to know the neighbours.



Midlothian Drop-In

Our Midlothian team have been busy renovating their empty office basement into a “Drop in” service for people supported. They have been using funding from Futures to transform a once neglected space into a vibrant relaxed environment, with comfy couches and a designated chill zone. From here, they plan to run a range of activities such as coffee mornings, computer classes, dominoes, or arts and crafts; all with the aim of tackling social isolation.

