

Magazine Winter 2023/24





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A Note from the **Chief Executive**

It has been really interesting and great fun to think about ourselves as part of a much bigger world at our recent Forums.

Our world can mean so many different things to us. It can be our home, which includes our family or other supports, it can be our community and neighbours, or it can be thinking about how we can share our experiences and learn from others, who may live much further away in other parts of the world.

It has been interesting to look for the common themes between us all, regardless of where we live, and they have included recognising how important other people are in enabling us to have a life we enjoy living.

This seems to be universal. Feeling loved and cared for means we feel safe and secure. Being listened to and being valued for who we are is essential to our growth and self-worth.



We are lucky in Carr Gomm as our philosophy and values really help us to put into practice what seems to be really important to us all.

We are happy and able to share our experience of what works in our relationships and sometimes what doesn't. Hopefully, this can help others, regardless of where they are in the world, to have a similar experience to us.

Thank you for helping us think about Carr Gomm in the world. When we work together, we can make a difference in making it a better world.

Lucy Wren

Lucy Wren.

Carr Gomm Forums My Place In The World

People were encouraged to think and chat about their place in the world at our 2023 Forums. This is a topic we are exploring as an organisation through our International Collaborations Project.

Forth Valley Forum

Forth Valley's Forum had an exceptional turnout and a party atmosphere, with everyone on their feet singing along to Elvis and Backstreet Boys. People gave their feedback to Carr Gomm about their support through crafting on the theme of 'My place in the world'.









Glasgow Forum

The grand venue for the Glasgow Forum was the backdrop for a fantastic day of sharing stories, arts and crafts, and learning more about building connections with people near and far. Local community groups visited to share about activities for people to get involved in and people heard about our work on International Collaborations and Digital Inclusion. The event finished with two incredible performances by people supported in Glasgow.

Oban Forum

At the Oban Housing Support Forum, stories of courage and resilience were shared by people accessing our drop-in service.

Sharing feedback was easy and fun with the 'Head, Heart, Bag and Bin' activity. We celebrated each person finding their place in the world, understanding that for many, the most meaningful space is somewhere they can be themselves.

"I was homeless for quite a long time...Carr Gomm doesn't just help you, they go that extra mile".

"I need help with not just moving house, but understanding the electricity bill...Being able to come here and speak to Deborah and speak to Susan and the other girls in the office has actually really helped me shine."





Dundee Forum

We shared about the places that mean the most to us at the Dundee Forum, especially in our local communities across the city. We also explored the idea of empathy, asking each other: What is it like to walk a mile in our shoes? To top the day off, a storyteller from the Dundee Central Library came along to share funny local folk tales and traditions.



Edinburgh and Lothians Forum

Over 100 people came along to the Edinburgh and Lothians Forum event to reflect on 'Empathy' and 'My Place in the World' through different arts and crafts projects.

They joined in with our Storyteller's song, 'A Mile in My Shoes' and they got to take home a special Carr Gomm Empathy Cupcake and Soup Bag at the end of the day!

"I think Carr Gomm is the greatest company ever as without them I couldn't get through my day."



Listening to Your Feedback

Carr Gomm scores highly again in the latest bi-annual questionnaire results.

Respondents let us know what they liked:

- "My support practitioner is very kind, caring and understanding me very well and very good listeners. Honest and respectful."
- "I like going out, I like getting different staff. I like doing different activities."

Some respondents suggested improvements for their service, including "sending out mail in large print" and "more group activities."

Carr Gomm will take on this feedback and use it to improve services for all the people we support.



90% said they would recommend Carr Gomm to others



92% said their service is working for them



All services included in the questionnaire were ranked at least 5/6

Managers Training

In October, 12 existing Carr Gomm managers participated in our new Managers Training programme in Stirling. The training explored what it means to be a manager, including striving to have a greater impact. Managers shared the impact the programme has had on them.

Andrew Taylor

"For me, it is important to feel that Carr Gomm wants to spend time and money investing in the development of their managers, regardless of how long they have been managers. This is evidenced by the fact that both our Deputy and Chief Executive have facilitated parts of the course."

Craig Purves

"The manager's training has been great to be part of. It has given me confidence and an opportunity to meet and learn from other amazing managers.

Being able to discuss and share experiences to then expand on and implement into my services to ensure great quality."

George Sparrow

"The sessions have been fantastic. I've connected with other managers in the organisation which I would never have connected with and have drawn on their experiences to develop my confidence and perspective on the service manager's role. I would recommend this to other managers!"

Sam Smith

"The management training has been really helpful in my role as a service manager. Not only did I get the opportunity to meet managers from different localities, but I also got a chance to hear how their services differed from mine. So far, my favourite session was on "Where the money comes from". We got the opportunity to draw up a mock costing for a tender; I really enjoyed this exercise. It really showed how difficult this process is, especially if you don't have all the necessary information you need about that tender."

Open Minds

Back in Spring 2023, work began on developing Open Minds; Carr Gomm's new, safe online space for people we support to connect with others, look after their wellbeing, and try new things. Through a series of co-design sessions, people we support and staff told us what kinds of activities and resources they would like to access via Open Minds, and how they would like to feel when they use the platform.

Based on everyone's brilliant ideas, we created personas that represent the needs, wants, and interests of different people we support and staff who may use Open Minds.

This winter, we have been working alongside Support Practitioners, Service Managers, and our tech partner – Ember Technology – to begin designing Open Minds in line with these personas.

Ember Technology are now working hard on designing video storyboards to show how Open Minds will function to support people to reach their outcomes, dreams, and goals.

In the New Year, we will be sharing these storyboards across Carr Gomm via a creative campaign where you can help shape how Open Minds will work, look, and feel!

Shannon, Carr Gomm's Digital Inclusion Development Manager, will also be submitting funding applications to begin the construction of the platform.

Award Winners at our AGM



We looked back on the successes of the previous year at our AGM and celebrated our amazing staff in our Time to Shine Awards. After receiving an amazing 43 nominations, the winners are...

Involvement Award:Muirhouse Service, Edinburgh

After Covid, the Muirhouse team redoubled their focus on Involvement. They supported people to reconnect with family members in person as well as online. The team also created a Support in the Community resource with information on places across Edinburgh and Lothians that are enjoyed by people they support. Staff use this resource with people to create fun and meaningful weekly activities.

"I'm grateful for this award. It means a lot to us here. It's a celebration of excellence in work, wonderful and exemplary leadership."

Chindo, Support Practitioner.





Innovation of the Year: Keep Warm Box project, led by Denise Murdoch in Argyll and Bute

The Keep Warm Boxes pre-empted potential emergencies caused by planned power outages and soaring electricity prices across the winter of 22/23. The boxes contain items to keep a person warm and safe. The idea came through Futures and was supported by fundraised money. Over 200 people were given a box and the project featured on the STV evening news.

"This is Carr Gomm. This is who we are. We don't need an award to tell us we've done great or to be recognised in that way. This is what we do day in, day out without expecting anything in return."

Stephanie Graham, Acting Service Manager, Helensburgh Responder Team.

Partnership of the Year: The Borders Service

The Borders Team built on their close partnership with the Borders Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to manage the move to their new location this year. This enabled a safe and sustainable transition for the people supported who were moving homes. The team have continued to build on close working relationships with the Community Rehabilitation Team. Together they create a supportive community for people to begin their recovery pathway.

"To know that the Board recognise that we're doing a good job and do actually care about us, we're not just workers to them – it's quite nice to have that feeling."

Cara Cunningham, Support Practitioner.





Team of the Year: The Tranent service, East Lothian

The Tranent service provides Mental Health Recovery and Rehabilitation, consistently demonstrating resilience, teamwork and all of Carr Gomm's values. Working with the East Lothian HSCP, they have supported people to move from the dark places they have been in to living in safe and stable environments where they can begin the journey of managing the symptoms of their illnesses.

"It felt really good to be acknowledged, to have our work acknowledged because we've been through a difficult time, and we've been brilliant towards people supported but also towards each other."

Joanna Wijas, Support Practitioner.

Most Inspirational Individual: Kevin Reilly, Broomage Crescent Service, Forth Valley

'Kevin has built strong, relationships with the people we support. A family member said Kevin played a part in their son experiencing their best year since he moved into the service. He lives out the Carr Gomm values, encouraging colleagues to be the best they can be and coming alongside newer staff members.

"I think back to when I first started this job, and I was mentored by really good people and all I'm doing now is paying forward what they taught me."

Kevin Reilly, Support Practitioner.



Interview with the artist:

Ruth's Incredible Art Exhibit!

The wonderfully talented Ruth hosted an exhibition of her artwork at the Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre earlier this year.

Ruth creates her art alongside Sarah McHardy from Volunteer Edinburgh, who is an essential part of her incredible artwork.









Ruth sat down with Support Practitioner, Jordan, to discuss her art and inspirations.

Why do you do your art?

Ruth: "Because it makes me happy, and it makes other people happy, too."

What inspires you?

Ruth: "I feel like I've got a gift and a good eye."

Why do you use David Bowie so much in your work?

Ruth: "David Bowie is so beautiful, and I love his suits. I love his hairstyle too. I used to dress up as Bowie when I was younger."

What's your favourite piece and why?

Ruth: "My James Bond Car. I like it because it has my daughter's initials."

How did you feel at your exhibition?

Ruth: "I felt good because I had my Royal Highness beside me, my daughter."

Any final words?

Ruth: "I want to thank everybody else for attending my exhibition. I would like to continue to show my artwork and inspire others too."

Be in the next magazine

Do you want to be featured in the next issue of the Carr Gomm Magazine? We are on the lookout for stories from across the Carr Gomm Community. Share your story by emailing **stories@carrgomm.org** or by speaking to your Support Practitioner.

Celebrating 107 Years

The incredible Mr John Dougall reached a remarkable milestone - his 107th birthday!

Raised in Govan, he pursued his engineering career across the UK and later settled by the sea in Dunoon with his family. Together with his wife Mrs Anne Dougall, they opened a specialist toy shop. However, their entrepreneurial spirit didn't stop there.

They also pioneered the area's first vegetarian and smoke free restaurant, followed by a thriving health food shop. Mr Dougall's heart beats to the rhythm of music and his faith shines to those he meets. His keyboard sessions often include renditions of "Amazing Grace".

With his warm wisdom and charm Mr Dougall reminds us to cherish life's everyday moments and that age truly is just a number!







Thank you for the music

Meet Linda, a devoted ABBA fan who brings a flavour of Sweden to Cassiltoun, Glasgow!

Linda's love for ABBA is like a contagious beat, spreading joy and making everyone feel included in the fun. Linda regularly takes to the stage at Carr Gomm events. When she puts on the blonde wig and transforms into Agnetha, it's a special moment. In Linda's words "I feel fantastic, I feel really good, I feel a part of it".

tinyurl.com/LindaABBA



Thank you Linda for bringing the magic of ABBA to life. Scan the QR code or type in the URL to experience Linda's full "Dancing Queen" performance.



Shaping the **National Care Service**

In the last magazine, we shared our aim to be involved in shaping the National Care Service (NCS). We have lots to fill you in on!

Carr Gomm's asks for the NCS

If voted through by the Scottish Parliament, the NCS hopes to ensure all people can access good quality social care support.

This is why we've been working hard so that the voices and aspirations of the people we support are at the heart of any changes to social care in Scotland.

We want the NCS to:

Recognise the positive impact of excellent person-centred support provided by Carr Gomm.

Support equal recognition and reward for all social care workers, regardless of employer.

Pause all competitive tendering; explore collaborative and ethical commissioning approaches; and ensure SDS is a real option for all eligible citizens.



MSPs recognise Carr Gomm's impact across Scotland



Last year, 7 MSPs from different political parties visited services in their constituency, where they heard about how we support people who experience different challenges in their lives.

We shared with them how Carr Gomm and the people we support are not broken, as people are enabled to live their best possible lives with our support. But we also highlighted how we need better resourcing, both now and as part of a National Care Service, to ensure that everyone else can experience the same person-centred support.

We were especially delighted to welcome the First Minister Humza Yousaf, and Michael Matheson, the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care to our services.

Involvement Group

Our Involvement Group had an insightful meeting with Rachel McGruer, Deputy Director of Adult Social Care; Local Improvement and Transformation in the Scottish Government.

They asked Rachel how people who receive social care support and support providers can be more involved in shaping the NCS. This included involvement in thinking of kinder ways to work out eligibility for support than councils do now.

They also wanted to hear how social care staff can be better valued in Scotland and how communities can be places where all people live and thrive.

It's hoped that the Scottish Government will continue to seek and listen to the Involvement Group's expertise.

Value Social Campaign

We've been sharing videos, photos and blogs featuring people Carr Gomm supports and staff, getting the message out that our person-centred support should be recognised for its transformational impact on our lives and in our communities.

Remember to follow our social media channels and share with your friends and contacts.

If you would like to share about the difference social care makes in your life or in the lives of people you know, please get in touch with Carr Gomm by emailing stories@carrgomm.org

Fundraising Update

We raised over 85% of our £25,000 fundraising target by the end of 2023!

Thank you to our Carr Gomm community and supporters who have walked, ran, jumped, baked, sung, danced, hiked, quizzed, raced and even tested their luck in Prize Draws, lotteries and raffles!

Our #BigCarrGommChallenge ends in March 2024. Can you help us in our final push to raise the last 15%? Stay tuned for opportunities to challenge yourself in 2024. You could compete in a running event or get together for a fun-filled day with colleagues, friends or family at a Kiltwalk.

Are you feeling lucky? There will be more chances to win tickets, experiences and goodies in our Prize Draws, as well as our weekly Carr Gomm lottery, where you could win the grand prize of £25,000!

Where your Money Goes

One of the ways we distribute fundraised money is through Futures, our staff-led digital suggestion box. Staff submit their ideas to Futures and receive fundraised money to set up and run community projects in their local area.

The Midlothian Music Group, 'Something to Believe In', received Futures Funding in 2023. People come together every Tuesday at the Carr Gomm Loanhead office to sing, dance and create music.

The group was the brainwave of Support Practitioner, Ross, who believed that bringing out people's love for music could help them grow in confidence, make new friends, learn new skills and, of course, have fun!

"It gets me out my house cos I'm not very good at getting out usually... I'm getting to do things I would never do, they even got me singing!"

"I love getting out and everyone hearing me sing, everyone applauding me, congratulating me."



Canal Challenge Lookback



The Carr Gomm community came together in September to walk, wheel and cycle 99km along the canals from Glasgow to Edinburgh. Together, our fundraising superstars raised an incredible £5,000 for the #BigCarrGommChallenge.

Day 1: Govan to Kirkintilloch

The Canal Challenge kicked off in Govan with a lively chat about social care and community projects. Despite the relentless rain, we trudged on, and just as we reached Kirkintilloch, the sun peeked out to congratulate us.



We spent a sunny morning strolling along the canal before staff members and their furry friends joined us for a much-needed morale boost. Forth Valley surprised us at the Falkirk Wheel with posters, banners and smiles to cheer us over the finish line of Day 2.





Day 3: Falkirk to Linlithgow

We were joined by our ABRDN friends and made great progress before stopping for a well-deserved treat at the famous Milk Barn. We were joined by our cycling cohort, who completed the whole route in one day!

Day 4: Linlithgow to Ratho

By Day 4, we were getting tired. But some new faces joined us for the final push. We kept each other going with good conversation and laughter, while enjoying the beautiful weather and scenery. We arrived at the EICC with sore feet and a renewed determination to complete the challenge.





Day 5: Ratho to Craigmillar

We pushed through blisters and achy joints and arrived at SPACE for a big celebration with staff and friends. Lucy Wren joined us via Zoom to congratulate us on our fundraising. The day was topped off by Linda, who travelled from Glasgow to give us an incredible performance of ABBA's Dancing Queen.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in the Canal Challenge and to everyone who supported the team with your encouragement and donations!





www.carrgomm.org