

EDITION 1 2021

# CROSSREACH NEWS

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- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health
- Older People
- Substance Use

**CROSSREACH**

Care you can put your faith in

[www.crossreach.org.uk](http://www.crossreach.org.uk)

## Keeping in touch with families – Daisy Chain Early Years Project

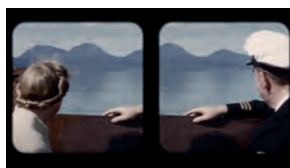
Chatting on the private Facebook group for parents who'd usually attend the play sessions enabled parents to share their experiences during lockdown and to post photos of their use of the play packs they received.

'Thank you for organising these activities during lockdown; it really helped me and my children to improve our relationship.' (Parent)



## All that pulls us together

The SSSC collected a series showcasing how the workforce in Scotland has often gone above and beyond to support cared for people, and they chose this CrossReach poem as 'a fitting end' to the project. They described the stories as being, 'a tribute to the commitment of people working in social care, social work and early years.'



To listen to the poem:



## Looking after your own needs

Putting your own needs first can feel counter-intuitive to those working in care. The Wellbeing Project Group works to ensure all our staff know that now more than ever, looking after their own mental and physical health first is essential, and will ensure the necessary resources are available and accessible for them to do so.



## Coffee @Morven

On 30th September 2020 our Morven Day Services hosted our first ever online interactive introduction to our services event. Featuring a tour of the service by Deputy Manager, Allan Marshall, interviews with people we support, an interactive craft session and an online Q&A session, the feedback has been encouraging. Look out for similar events in 2021.



## Prayer Points

Pray for everyone working in the services during these difficult days of COVID-19. As the virus continues to spread, pray that our service users and staff would be kept safe. Pray for the members of the senior management team, that God would grant them wisdom in the decisions that they make in these testing times.

Pray for the members of the new CrossReach Board, especially for those who are serving CrossReach for the first time. Pray that the new Board would have a clear vision of serving in Christ's name.

Pray that in all that we say and do in CrossReach, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be glorified.

**Rev. Ramsay Shields**  
Board member

## Our Mission Statement

In Christ's name we seek to support people to achieve the highest quality of life which they are capable of achieving at any given time.

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CrossReach, Charis House, 47 Milton Road East, Edinburgh, EH15 2SR.  
T: 0131 657 2000  
E: [bdd@crossreach.org.uk](mailto:bdd@crossreach.org.uk)



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Social Care Council

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# Goodbye; Hello; Thank you.



 In June 2020, and amidst it all, we said a virtual goodbye to the Social Care Council at their last meeting, and a virtual hello to CrossReach Board. While the change feels like a very positive one, we remain indebted to the many volunteers who have made up the Social Care Council and who have given so much in terms of their time and expertise to CrossReach to help make it the organisation that it is today.

When I first joined CrossReach, the governance body was called the Board of Social Responsibility and had 90 plus members. In the last days of the Social Care Council there were 25 members and we now have a Board of 12, which includes me as a non-voting member.

The main reason behind the change has been the recognition that we were sometimes duplicating effort in our governance reporting and could take a while to make decisions which needed governance approval. That created a bit of a tension in a social care sector which has become volatile and very fast moving. There were also matters raised on the Social Care Council agenda which were

removed from CrossReach's primary function; that of delivering good quality social care services to the people of Scotland. The Board were all recruited for particular skills, expertise and knowledge as well as their firm faith and are beginning to work together really well, despite never having met face to face.

Having a smaller Board with a greater focus on the future strategy of CrossReach which will work under delegated authorities from the Assembly Trustees, should help us in our endeavours to be a more self-sustaining organisation with a bright future.

The Board who are ably led by Convener Rev. Thomas Riddell include:

Mrs Sarah Wood (Vice Convener)  
Mr Jo Elliot (lead for the Finance Group)  
Mrs Amy Reid  
Mrs Christine Johnson  
Mr Douglas Hamilton  
Mr Iain Hunter  
Mr John Graham  
Mr Mike Cantlay  
Rev Ramsay Shields  
Mrs Susie Lind.

You can read more about them on the CrossReach website. ■



We may be battling a global pandemic, but the work of CrossReach continues to make a positive difference in people's lives and I am pleased to bring you some New Year cheer with this edition of CrossReach News.

Over the past few months our teams have gone more than that extra mile to ensure that they could continue to support the people who rely on them. This has been humbling to witness as I know that it has often come at a personal cost. Many of you have kindly asked about our staff teams and their own welfare during this time, so as well as some great stories from the services, we know you will be interested in our feature about how we are supporting staff wellbeing.

If the past year has taught us anything, it has certainly taught us about the power of connection and you will see that thread running through many of the articles. As we enter 2021 I want to take an opportunity to personally thank you all for your own connection with CrossReach and for your ongoing support.

Best wishes from all of us for a happy and healthy 2021. ■





# It's okay to not be okay

To coincide with World Mental Health Day, the Scottish Tech Army (STA) podcast team asked Julie Reekie, Workplace Counselling Coordinator for CrossReach, to participate in a conversation with STA volunteers about the impact the pandemic is having on mental health.

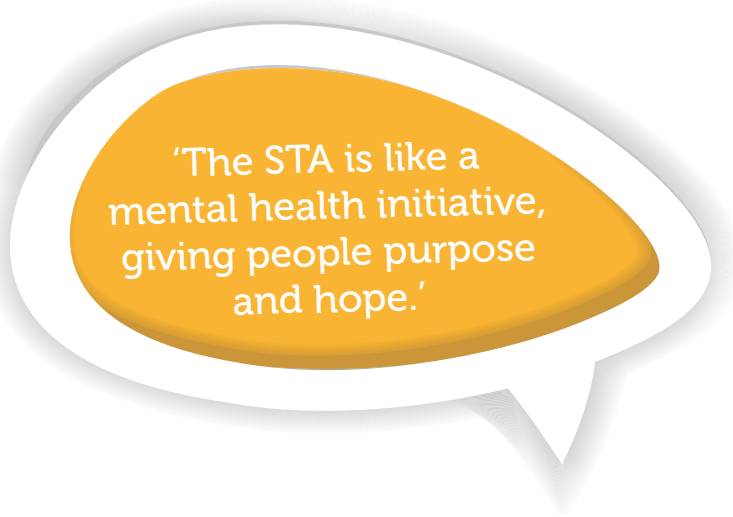
With no specific agenda, the conversation explored the range of feelings, thoughts and emotions experienced as a result of the changes the pandemic has brought to all our lives, what things we may already be doing to look after our mental health and what we could be doing to help combat the impact of living through the Coronavirus during the winter months.

**"It's okay to not be okay sometimes"**

Having conversations about mental health can help us all build self-awareness and create safe spaces to share ideas about ways to cope, as well as normalise the range of feelings that can occur during a period of major change. Mental health has been pushed to the forefront of society's attention and there is an opportunity to share ideas and become more innovative in our approach to mental well-being. ■



To hear the podcast: [www.scottishtecharmy.org/podcasts](http://www.scottishtecharmy.org/podcasts)



Julie and the team acknowledged that everyone's experience will be different and discussed the benefits of doing things we are passionate about; how volunteering can be protective to our mental health when facing the loss of a job, reviving our sense of meaning and purpose and how it can even lead to a new calling.

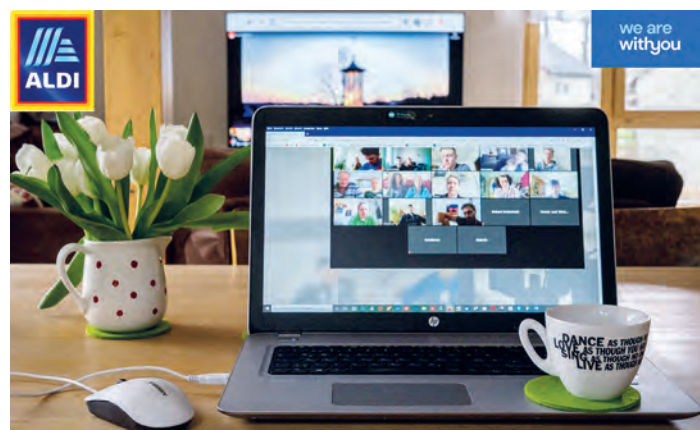
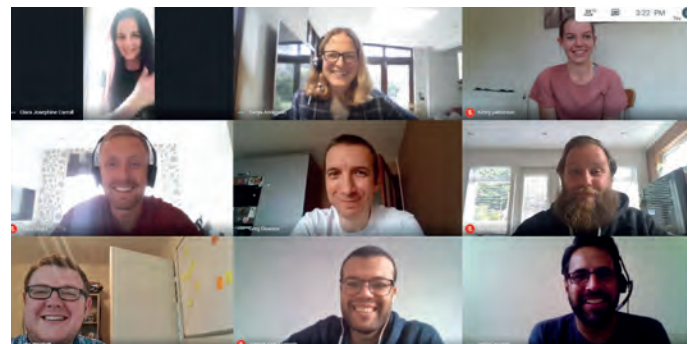


Image used taken from Pixabay by Armin Schreijag

## Being community

By collaboratively working with We Are Here for You (formerly Addaction) and Aldi, our Tayside Support Services in Dundee was able to continue offering its outreach support to the recovery community.

Three tablet devices were given by We Are Here For You allowing those who previously did not have access to online support to attend virtual recovery meetings. Aldi supplied donations enabling the service to buy mobile phones and SIM cards, one of which has been placed in a local hostel where residents can use it privately to call for emotional support and encouragement. ■



# The sky's the limit



My story starts with coming to the end of my tether with a drug habit. Living on the streets for 14 years I found myself in the hospital, almost half dead, when I met a lovely organisation called Cyrenians. Later, following a full recovery, the Cyrenians worked with me closely and on becoming discharged tried their hardest to get me housed in a supported hostel.

Eventually, with an Arc Angel looking down on me, I finally received note that I have a place in Cunningham House.

**“This is the fresh start I need” I said, “let’s make a go of this, it’s now or never.”**

The first moment I stepped in Cunningham I realised “They are here for you and not just here to keep an eye on you”, giving me more hope in myself, still saying I can do this.

Later, I got chatty with the staff, one in particular, who later became my key worker. This couldn’t of worked out better.

She, and all the staff at Cunningham, have helped me to the point where I really believe in myself. I set my goals high because this opportunity does not come round too often.

The support I have had is very special to me and will hold for the rest of my life, with some of the staff making me aware of the AA organisation; changed my life so much.

With the way I have moved forward with my life, in this small amount of time at Cunningham, thanks has to be given to the staff for all their support.

I now have goals in my life and support from friends and family which I could not have before. Now I can now reach out for help freely, speaking about my problems and not hiding away using drugs as a way of forgetting the past.

The only way is up from here. With further help from Cunningham and my family the sky’s the limit. ■

# Lockdown learning:

## Jack’s book – raising funds for local charities.

Jack (a pupil from Erskine Waterfront Campus) wrote a book following a dog called Dugless. Dugless takes readers on an adventure to find the lost city of Ballikinrain. Priced at £1, copies were sold in support of local charities.



## Creatively building relationships

Some of our young people and staff enjoyed taking part in the Lego 30 day challenge. Here are some creative examples of their masterpieces!



Did you know, the Scottish Government has launched the [www.promis.scot](http://www.promis.scot) website, providing a host of free health and wellbeing resources for social care workers?



# 29 years of commitment and service



Saying 'cheerio' to Helen Somerville, Service Manager, Queen's Bay Lodge

On an evening in 1991, The Elms care home welcomed its newest member of staff onto its team. Her name was Helen and her role was as a Night Care Worker. At that time, it's unlikely she would have known that 29 years later, she would be taking her retirement having been the Service Manager of another CrossReach care home, Queen's Bay Lodge since 2007.

Helen spent most of her CrossReach career in our Older People Services, briefly leaving that directorate to work as a Team Leader in our Threshold Edinburgh service (Adult Care Services).

Whilst her retirement celebrations were somewhat curtailed due to the pandemic restrictions, Brenda Fraser, Head of Service Older People Services west, was keen to record her appreciation of all that Helen had brought to our Older People Services:

"Helen enhanced the lives of those she supported and she developed the service and staff, enabling them to carry out the work of such a high quality and well respected service. Helen managed the budget well and has a great, dry, sense of humour and good banter. She has been quietly effective with many management skills and abilities. Her colleagues have many fond memories of her and she is held in the highest regard."

As Helen signed out from CrossReach for the last time, she sent the following short message to her colleagues,

"So Long and farewell! Many thanks for all your good wishes on my retirement it has been a pleasure knowing and working with you all. With very best wishes, Helen."

Thank you Helen. We pray you have a long and blessed retirement. ■

## Recognising the invaluable contribution of our volunteer counsellors

Since CrossReach Counselling began over 35 years ago, volunteer counsellors have dedicated their time to meet with clients through all our Counselling Services – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Moray and Inverness and in our community hubs in various locations. We last recorded a total of just over 250 volunteer counsellors (January 2020).

The change of circumstance in March 2020 meant that all nine of our Counselling Services had to close their office doors and find a way of moving to an online/remote platform, previously not undertaken by any of our services.

Over 100 volunteer counsellors signed up to work remotely via telephone or video link. This was no small task as new processes and training programmes had to be developed.

Counsellors had to be professionally trained to meet the criteria of our ethical body to work securely and safely with clients remotely. In addition they had to learn how to access apps on their mobile phones, use CrossReach email accounts and secure note taking and record keeping facility and how to use the video consultation room for clients on the NHS "Near Me" platform.

We cannot thank our volunteers enough for their huge commitment and dedication to this work. The achievement of change in a relatively short period of time has been remarkable. As one of the volunteer counsellors said during their training: "There's something very special about CrossReach, and I'm proud to be part of it." ■





# Protecting the wellbeing of our workforce



**Project 2020:** This was set up to look at Trauma Informed Practice which is a relational health & wellbeing approach and is fundamental to developing and nurturing our resilience to cope with life's challenges.

Our organisational approach including our ethos, was found to be consistent with a relational model. Explicitly promoting ourselves as a relational, trauma informed organisation will increase awareness of this and facilitate a continued improvement of the experience and/or outcomes of people who use our services. This

On 23rd March 2020 the UK population was told to stay at home, with certain businesses being instructed to close. This caused disruption to everyday life for a majority of people. Plans were put on hold, the young were home-schooled and the vulnerable shielded. It would be true to say a significant number of individuals throughout the length and breadth of the country found this very difficult.

At CrossReach, many of our services could not close and the essential care and support provided to some of the most vulnerable in society was recognised as being key work.

The vital care and support continued, but under very different circumstances. We supported, consoled and educated adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems, experiencing homelessness and with substance use problems on how COVID-19 might impact them.

When our Education Campus had to close, we supported children in residential care to understand the enormous changes they were experiencing. Learning continued within our community houses and specialist care continued for our children with physical challenges and learning disabilities.

Sadly, as in normal times, we provided end of life care within our Older People Services.

We repeatedly saw our key-workers rise to the challenges of these extremely difficult situations. As a nation we were humbled to see just what our health and social care workers were made of and for us at CrossReach, this was especially true of our employees.

That being said, no one has a bottomless pot of resilience and the physical and psychological toll of the pandemic, at home and at work, had to be addressed to promote and protect the long term wellbeing of our workforce. To do this CrossReach's Project 2020 (set up prior to the pandemic) and our Wellbeing Project Group were put in place.

also presents an opportunity to attract more people to the CrossReach workforce and to support our existing employees. Trauma can happen to anyone and being equipped to recognise and respond to signs of trauma will help us to enable employees and the people we support achieve better personal outcomes.

**Wellbeing Project Group:** The group was set up with management representatives from each operational area, our staff representative group (ACNG) and from Central Services teams with the following key aims:

- To ensure that, through the staff area of our website, CrossReach employees have easy access to free wellbeing resources such as counselling through Westfield Health and links to the many social care worker resources available from the Scottish Government.
- To establish, train and support 'Wellbeing Champions' within services, who can signpost staff to the resources available.

At CrossReach we recognise that providing care and support in Christ's name means that we need to look after our workforce as well as those people who choose us to support them. Investing in our employees' wellbeing to support them to build resilience is just as important as delivering services of excellence to those who make CrossReach their care provider of choice. ■





# Even Coronavirus could not stop the celebrations!

Celebrating the people we support is an ongoing part of every-day life within our Care Homes and despite the challenges faced in 2020, the staff teams were determined that this would continue. Whilst candles may not have been blown out and large groups of visitors could not be accommodated, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries was non-negotiable!

Special cakes were purchased (some donated by local bakers), digital technology set up to connect with loved ones who couldn't enter the homes and when the weather was favourable, and guidelines permitted, visits in the garden arranged

Such was the effort made that a local newspaper, The Northern Times, featured an article at the efforts made by the team at Whinnieknowe Care Home in Nairn to ensure a family could celebrate their mother's 90th birthday safely.

The resident, Mrs Mackay, was treated to some birthday pampering, her favourite tea of scampi and chips and best of all, a socially distant celebration with her family in the garden. Commenting on the day, Sandy Wregg (son) said,

"We didn't think we would be able to see mum, except for a Skype given the Covid-19 restrictions. The staff,

however, pulled out all the stops to mark the occasion and, following the latest social distancing guidelines, arranged a rota to allow not one but three separate birthdays to be celebrated over the course of the day. It was so good to be able to see mum albeit from a safe distance with appropriate masks supplied by staff, and also to catch up with the staff themselves who have become an extended family since mum moved there."

We think Mrs Mackay's beautiful smile says it all! ■



(Image from Northern Times article)

## And behind the scenes...



CrossReach's Finance and Resources teams cover a wide range of activities, not readily associated with promoting wellbeing; yet IT, Estates, and Finance itself, have played a significant part in supporting the people who use our Services, and our staff, in 2020.

Our IT team are at the forefront of keeping people who use our services connected with their loved ones through the use of technology. The provision of tablets/iPads has enabled virtual visits when actual in-person visits have not been possible.

The IT team enabled and continues to support our support staff to work from home, in accordance with Government guidelines. In addition to the provision of hardware they have rolled out access to the Microsoft

Teams App which allows staff teams and individuals to keep in touch with each other, reducing feelings of isolation. Virtual 'elevenses' in 2020 have replaced the 'water cooler' chats of earlier times.

Our Estates team, has held and continues to hold a critical position in the organisational response to COVID-19 including: guidance on the constantly shifting national advice on best practice, accessing supplies from far and near to ensure our locations requiring PPE have the vital equipment needed, and working with contractors to arrange essential service visits. These measures help ensure staff, and the people using our services, are as safe as possible in the face of an unprecedented threat to their wellbeing.

The core Finance team works flexibly, ensuring staff are paid accurately, suppliers paid promptly and income continues to be received when due.

Perhaps these tasks might be considered unglamorous, but all of them are necessary, particularly in challenging times, to ensure that we promote wellbeing whilst continuing to provide care and support, in Christ's name. ■





# Hot-tub bubbles

Four months into lockdown and in the light of the pandemic restrictions, the staff and service users at The Bungalow discussed the best way to optimise service users' activities. The continued wellbeing and health of those we care for was our focus.

Within the mix of options available, hydrotherapy was raised as a strong contender as it has always been on our radar. The benefits for people with complex health needs are incredible: promotion of relaxation, stress and pain relief and reduction of muscular tension – all of which are very relevant to the people living in The Bungalow. Natural stiffening is a common trait for individuals with Profound and Multiple Disabilities. An onsite Hot Tub was the most favourable solution to keep our service users from using off-site facilities.

A generous donation to The Bungalow's Service Users' Activity Fund by Rod and Amanda Thomson (brother-in-law and sister of a former service user) made the purchase possible, and it was well worth the wait. The excitement was uncontrollable as we watched the Hot Tub being navigated it into position and filled with water.

The sheer delight on our service users faces was priceless, as they began to use the resource and to relax into the buoyancy provided by the water.

We are humbled and thankful for such a wonderful blessing and look forward to hours of enjoyment as the gentle bubbles and powerful jets work wonders on tired muscles and stiffened joints allowing Abi, Ashleigh, Tyler, Scott and Nathaniel to escape, feel weightless and float. ■



## Guild Support

We are now in the final year of our partnership with The Guild to highlight how CrossReach services all play a role in tackling loneliness and isolation in our communities under our Join Up The Dots theme. In addition to sharing news about how CrossReach can help, The Guild has fundraised and donated to our work. Sincerest thanks for this amazing support.

Normally our staff would be visiting Guild gatherings with updates on CrossReach's work. However, in the current circumstances, we created a video update for Guild members. If you would like to see the video, please go to:





# Moderator's Time

## – by different means

As we put dates in the diary in late 2019 and early 2020, who would have thought that Moderator's Time 2020 would have been so different? At a time when we usually fling wide the doors to a selection of our services and introduce the Moderator to members of the CrossReach family: people who have chosen CrossReach to support them, people who have chosen to volunteer for CrossReach and people who have chosen to work with CrossReach, with many of them giving insights to their personal journeys and what CrossReach means to them, this year it was completely out of the question.

During the time when restrictions had been relaxed a little, the Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair recorded his 'It's a Fair Question' with Viv Dickenson and we had been hopeful we could welcome him into our services in November. However with the subsequent tightening of the guidelines and regulations, this could not be.

Whilst disappointed that we had to find a plan B, we were encouraged by the evident enthusiasm Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair expressed about our work at the beginning of the week:



'A small group of us had the privilege of spending time with the Rt. Rev Dr Fair who conveyed a genuine interest in the health and wellbeing of our staff, sharing with us his keen commitment and interest in mental health. The current circumstances did not allow us the opportunity to give this kind and gracious man our normal hospitality and we hope we will be able to rectify that just as soon as conditions allow.'

The teams at Morven Day Services (support for adults with mental health problems) and Heart for Art were equally encouraged and enthused by Rt Rev Dr Fair's genuine interest and support of their work,

"I am so proud to be part of a church with CrossReach in the mix that actually is concerned with folk in their every-day lives. I want to say thank you today ... for all that CrossReach is about by way of addressing mental health struggles across our nation."

– Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair on Morven Day Services

"I was stunned this morning – lost for words, and that is something that doesn't happen often to me. The beauty of what I was seeing in terms of the art, and even more so in terms of the Love of Christ being expressed through this project for those who need it most."

– Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair on Heart for Art.

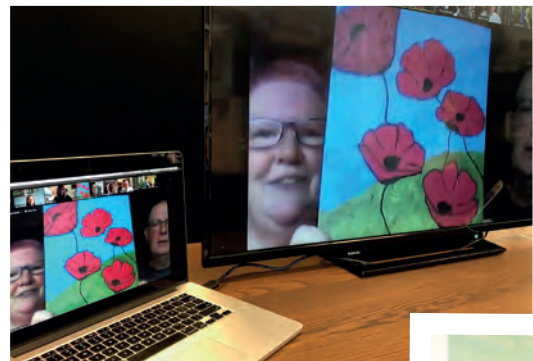
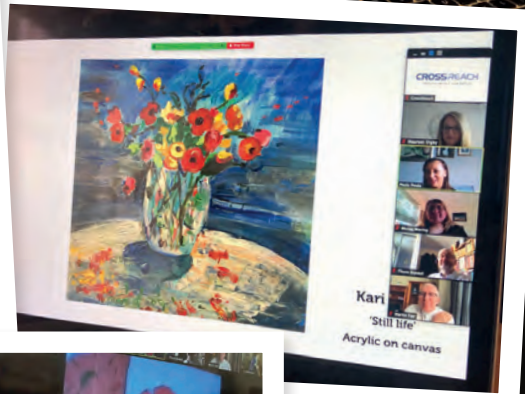
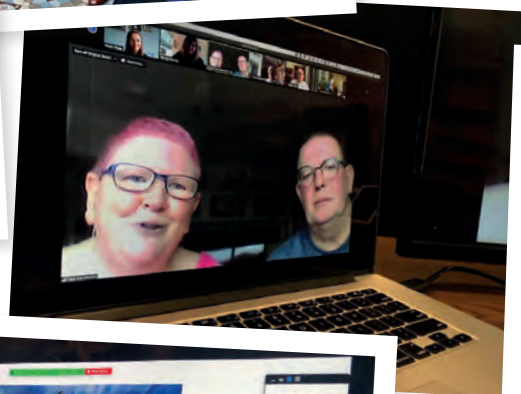
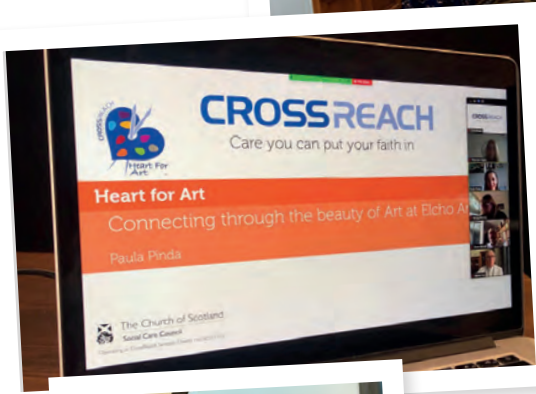
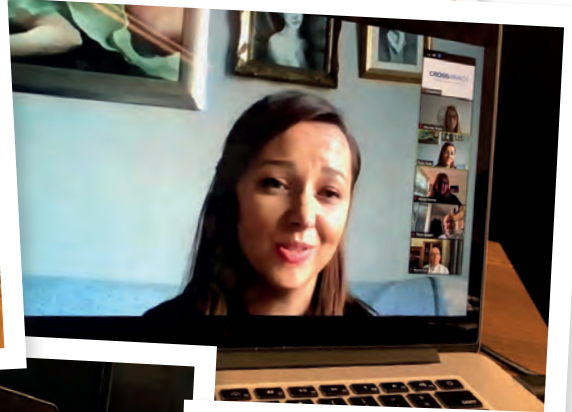
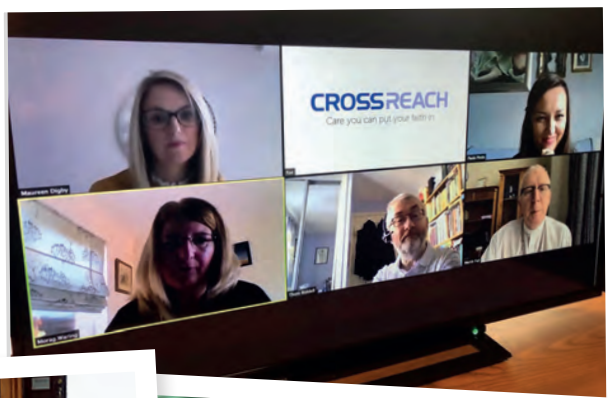
We were grateful for the time we spent together and we hope and pray in 2021, before his term of office ends, we will have the privilege of spending more time with him in a less restricted way. ■

"Tho by different means, this week I'm going to be spending time with @CrossReach – and not least, thanking those who have continued to offer the very best care services across Scotland despite the enormous challenges" – Twitter

The focus of the week was wellbeing: The wellbeing of our employees and the wellbeing of the people we support.

Following his meeting with Mari Rennie, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Mari commented,





# Donor Impact 2020 Onwards

In 2020 CrossReach launched an urgent appeal for funding to enable us to continue providing enhanced care services to some of the most vulnerable individuals across Scotland during this unprecedented healthcare emergency. The response was amazing and humbling as our appeal drew in over £275,000 to keep our services open and our staff and clients connected and protected.



With winter, demand for our services increases – the need for care, counselling, special education, and practical measures to support the most vulnerable in our community are all exacerbated by COVID-19. That is why we have asked for continued support in our Winter Appeal.

Last year, 55 of our services were visited by the Care Inspectorate and scored 100% for quality of care and support.

*This ability to go above and beyond in the quality and diversity of our services is only possible through the support we receive from funders, donors and the community.*

## How A Legacy Can Help

Every gift in a Will is received with huge gratitude by CrossReach. Every legacy has the potential to start something new for our service users: a new phase of life; a new initiative; a new beginning. If you would like to start something new with your last gift, please call us on 0131 454 4374 to find out more. Once you have made arrangements for your loved ones, support CrossReach to be there for those who need us most.

## Make A Donation Or Find Out More

TITLE ..... NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

POSTCODE ..... EMAIL ..... TELEPHONE .....

Please complete the correct options below:

Please contact me as I want to find out more about leaving a legacy to CrossReach [ ]

I wish to make a gift of £..... to CrossReach and enclose a cheque [ ]

I wish to make a regular donation to CrossReach of £..... monthly [ ] or annually [ ]

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year at no extra cost to you.

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to CrossReach. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Any questions about donating, please call 0131 454 4374 or go to our website where you can donate online at <https://www.justgiving.com/crossreachchurch/donate>

We take the security of your personal information extremely seriously and have in place appropriate physical, technical and organisational measures to protect the personal information we have under our control, in both electronic and paper form, from improper access, use, alteration, destruction and loss. We will keep your information for the purposes for which it was given and will not keep it any longer than is required to fulfil these purposes, unless required to do so to fulfil statutory obligations. Full information at [www.crossreach.org.uk/privacy-policies](http://www.crossreach.org.uk/privacy-policies)

*giftaid it*  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!