

CROSSREACH NEWS

In this Edition...



Viv Dickenson reflects on her time as CEO at CrossReach



Morlich House get behind Scotland at the World Cup



Graduations at Erskine Waterfront Campus



A Season of Celebration

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

Upcoming Events

Royal Troon Golf day - 20th October, 2026

We are proud to host a special charity golf day at the prestigious Royal Troon Golf Club, to raise vital funds for our services. Access to play at Royal Troon is highly exclusive, making any opportunity to experience the course particularly special and unique.

On the day:

- Team registration from 8:30am with tea / coffee / juice and a breakfast roll served from 9am in the Ailsa Lounge
- Shotgun start at 10:30am
- Access to the Club Bar for post golf drinks
- Drinks reception in the Ailsa Lounge with 1 free refreshment included in your ticket
- 3 course meal with tea / coffee in the clubhouse dining room
- Prize giving and auction post dinner

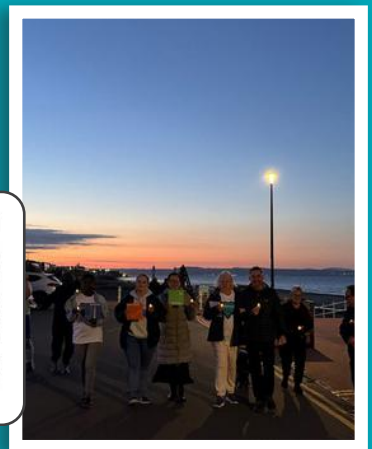


If you are a keen Golfer, know any Golf enthusiasts or perhaps know businesses that may be interested in 'schmoosing' their team or clients, you can be involved in this one off event! Scan the QR code for more information and to book your tickets.

CrossReach Sunday – 1st November, 2026

Every November, CrossReach Sunday is a special day for your Church to partner with CrossReach to bring Light In The Darkness to people in need across Scotland. It is a day for the whole Church to celebrate the life-changing work of CrossReach and the Church of Scotland. From helping those struggling with their mental health to supporting older people, children and families in need, CrossReach is a vital expression of Christ's love in action.

Register to take part this November and we will send you all the resources you need including Prayer points, Sermon guides and Fundraising ideas!



Christmas Carol Concerts

This year we are excited to announce we have not one, but two CrossReach Carol Concerts to look forward to!

- Thursday 3rd December – Kelvin West Parish Church, Glasgow
- Thursday 10th December – Mannofield Church, Aberdeen

We hope you can join us for a night of festive cheer, inspiring stories and music to help get you in the Christmas spirit. Get your tickets now to avoid missing out!



Glasgow



Aberdeen



Welcome

Across the summer we have had much to celebrate, and this edition is jam packed with good news. Our pupils marked the end of a busy term at Erskine Waterfront Campus, with some marking a particularly important milestone of completing their time in school and moving on to a positive next step. Amelia, who recently shared her story with us as part of our winter appeal, provides an update on how she is getting on, and it is a real joy to hear her say that she now 'believes in better', and believes in herself. Our ladies at Morlich House had a ball getting behind Scotland during the FIFA World Cup, sharing videos and top-tips and although the team didn't get as far as we all hoped, we certainly enjoyed the journey.



As the end of summer approaches, we move our attention to a changing season with some key dates for your diary, including CrossReach Sunday and not just one, but two Carol Concerts! We look forward to each of these occasions and will share more information about them, and about how you can get involved, over the next few months.

That changing season is very real for me as I prepare to retire at the end of September and pass on the baton, along with my congratulations and best wishes, to John Cooper who joins us on 4th September as Chief Executive Officer. I have enjoyed reflecting on my thirty years working within Social Care and have shared some of my experiences with you across the next few pages.

It has been an absolute privilege to serve with CrossReach, and to have supported our amazing workforce and the people who choose our services in many different ways. I pass on my thanks and appreciation to them, as I do to you, our loyal readers of CrossReach News, for the support and encouragement that you have given me over the years. Whether sharing stories, taking part in fundraising events or making CrossReach a part of your prayer life, your support matters and it will continue to make a difference for many years to come.

Viv Dickenson
CEO, CrossReach

Prayer Points

- Give thanks for Viv Dickenson's faithful leadership over many years, and pray for John Cooper as he begins as Chief Executive. May God grant them both wisdom, strength and every blessing as one chapter ends and another begins.
- Pray for everyone who comes to CrossReach carrying burdens that feel too heavy to bear. May they be met with kindness, compassion and hope.
- Pray for the staff and volunteers who walk alongside others each day. May God renew their strength and encourage them in their work.
- Pray for those who feel lonely, forgotten or overwhelmed. May they find support, friendship and the reassurance that they are not alone.
- Pray that through every act of care and compassion, CrossReach will continue to reflect the love of Jesus and bring hope to communities across Scotland.



Rev Dawn Westwood,
CrossReach Board Member



Viv Dickenson Reflects on thirty years in social care

30 Years ago, I took up a one-year part-time temporary contract in the perinatal counselling service of the then, 'Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility' – later to become known as CrossReach. I could not have known it would mark the beginning of a long and meaningful career with one of Scotland's largest voluntary sector Social Care Providers, an organisation I would one day lead, and have done so, with great pride, for the past nine years.

As I step down from my role, I find myself reflecting on three decades of an organisation which has supported hundreds of thousands of people across Scotland to live life to the fullest possible and which has been at the cutting edge of social care, pushing boundaries, introducing pioneering services and campaigning for change.

There have been ups and downs. Services have adapted in response to major reviews and a changing understanding of safeguarding, independent living and what it means to deliver good care and support. We have also adjusted to the scrutiny of the Care Inspectorate and the requirements of a workforce registered with the SSSC – public bodies that did not exist when I began my own career in social care, but which are now central to how services are delivered. These changes have been necessary and have driven standards up, but, sometimes, I wonder if they also stifle creativity and the ability to take measured risk to allow real person-centred support to take place. It's a hard balance. Upholding standards is hugely important but should enable, not stifle, great outcomes.



Some of our CrossReach services have closed over 30 years while new ones have opened. The entire funding and commissioning system has become ever more difficult to navigate. Change has been inevitable and, at times relentless, but the one constant has been the values to which CrossReach works and the dedication of the workforce. I am constantly amazed at what they achieve in the face of all thrown at them every day.

CrossReach has long advocated for better support across social care, from psychological help for new parents and support for those visiting a family member in prison, to therapeutic spaces for children affected by drug or alcohol use and community support for people living with dementia. More recently, we have campaigned with CCPS Scotland for Fair Work in Social Care, calling for the workforce to be properly recognised and remunerated. While real change is still needed, I remain hopeful that the message has been heard and that the Scottish Government will act.



Some of my personal highlights include founding Bluebell, a perinatal support service for parents who are struggling with anxiety or depression after the birth of a child, and playing a part in opening the first of the Prison Visitors Centres at HMP Perth. Both are still going strong. Changing the way in which we looked after children in residential care was particularly challenging but the care and education service we now run is recognised for its excellence and helps us to keep The Promise.

I've also enjoyed watching the development of support for people with a learning disability, some of whom knew life in large scale institutions and now enjoy the freedom of choice which most of us take for granted. Our recovery volunteer scheme, in its 14th year, puts peer support at the centre of recovery, and the creation of Heart for Art, a service which provides community-based art classes for people living with dementia and their carers has been transformative to so many.

Overseeing all of that has certainly had its moments – but most of them very positive I'm happy to say.



I've also seen the Church of Scotland's former 'eventide homes' develop into residential services that not only care for and protect some of our most frail citizens, but also help them enjoy life, learn new skills and stay connected to the people and places that matter most. These services were among the hardest hit during Covid-19, and we must never forget the lessons learned then, especially the need to uphold the rights and dignity of our oldest citizens.

The Covid-19 pandemic was probably one of the most challenging times for me as CEO to lead an organisation, but the workforce and our supported people were absolutely incredible in the way in which they simply kept going while the world changed about them.

However, we came through it – adapting and changing in a way which only the voluntary sector can, and the support offered by CrossReach, as part of the Church of Scotland continues to transform the lives of hundreds of people, every day. We are now more digitally enabled, and I spend as much of my working life in virtual meetings as I do visiting services and meeting people face to face. It has also facilitated people in our services to be better connected and that can only be good.

Despite real progress, health and social care still faces serious challenges. Funding and recruitment pressures mean demand far exceeds what CrossReach, and the wider sector, can provide, leaving too many people waiting too long for support. Those affected by poverty, or living where services are harder to access, often feel this most deeply. There is still much to do.



While it's hard to know when the time is right to hand over the baton in a role that has meant so much to me, now does seem to be that time. CrossReach is going from strength to strength and is in a much more stable and sustainable position, ready to serve the Church of Scotland and the people of Scotland, well. We're almost two years into a strategy that's focused on growth and development which is now embedded and ready for the next stage.

As I step down, CrossReach will continue working for a Scotland where everyone can live well, with dignity, choice and support. But that future depends on secure social care funding and a government willing to address the current crisis.

Positive Change is needed in social care. It can still be achieved – but the time to act is now.

Viv Dickenson, departing CEO of CrossReach





Adult Care Services

Fundraising

A former Beechwood House resident smashed her fundraising goal by raising £2,000 for CrossReach at a charity boxing match.

Tracy, who had spent many years struggling with alcohol before seeking help from CrossReach in 2023, is now fully sober and runs her own mental health social media page. Keen to raise funds for charities that helped her, Tracy took to the boxing ring to raise vital funds.



The most important part of this whole experience is knowing that the money raised will go towards supporting people who may be struggling with mental health, addiction, or difficult life circumstances, just as I have.

Reception at Windsor Castle

Susan Middleton has been a nightshift carer at The Bungalow, a purpose-built care home in Stonehaven for adults with learning disabilities, for more than 18 years. She was the recipient of our employee of the year award for adult care in 2025 and was invited for a visit to Windsor Castle to meet members of the Royal Family.

The reception, which highlighted the work of millions of paid and unpaid carers, was hosted by their Majesties The King and The Queen, accompanied by The Duchess of Edinburgh and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. The Prime Minister and Lady Starmer also attended. Speaking about the event Susan told us:

“

It was a huge honour to go and represent CrossReach, I couldn't believe it. I was absolutely blown away when I heard about the invite. I love what I do and I never saw it as something I needed to be recognised for.”



Susan got the chance to meet with King Charles who she said asked her about her role and thanked her for her work. She also met with The Queen, Duchess of Edinburgh and Prime Minister Keir Starmer. But she said the highlight of the evening was meeting with The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester whom she said spoke with her in great detail about her role.

Eskmills Open Day

Our Open Day at Eskmills in Edinburgh on 24 June was one of those days where everything just came together perfectly. Sunshine, a brilliant turnout and a fantastic atmosphere made it an event to remember. With a World Cup inspired theme, the gardens were soon filled with Scotland flags, dancing and plenty of laughter as those who use our services, families, friends and staff came together to enjoy the day. More than anything, the day was about bringing people together. It was wonderful to see so many familiar and new faces connecting, celebrating and making special memories in such a welcoming atmosphere.





Recovery Journey

People in recovery often talk about their journey and the places and people which have helped them along the way. This summer we marked the first anniversary of the opening of Nevis House. Located in Inverness it offers a service to people across Scotland. The team there have been reminiscing on how far they have come since opening the abstinence based residential recovery service. Challenges were faced as a new team came together for the first time, a new building was opened, and the ambition to deliver a service over a wide geographical area became all too real. None of that was easy but the team remained focussed on the destination, bringing hope and helping to prevent unnecessary deaths in a nation where the death toll from substance use is still far too high.



One former resident captured something of their experience of Nevis House in this poem, which they have generously shared with us. We hope that whatever journey you are on, you find encouragement in these words:

“ The tools you gathered in the storm are yours to keep and hold,
as you rewrite your narrative in the chapters bright and bold.
There will be shifting seasons, and days of doubt and strain,
but you have found the courage to outlast the heaviest rain.
So, breathe the air of freedom, let the healing now begin,
You are safely home and anchored, with the light you found within.

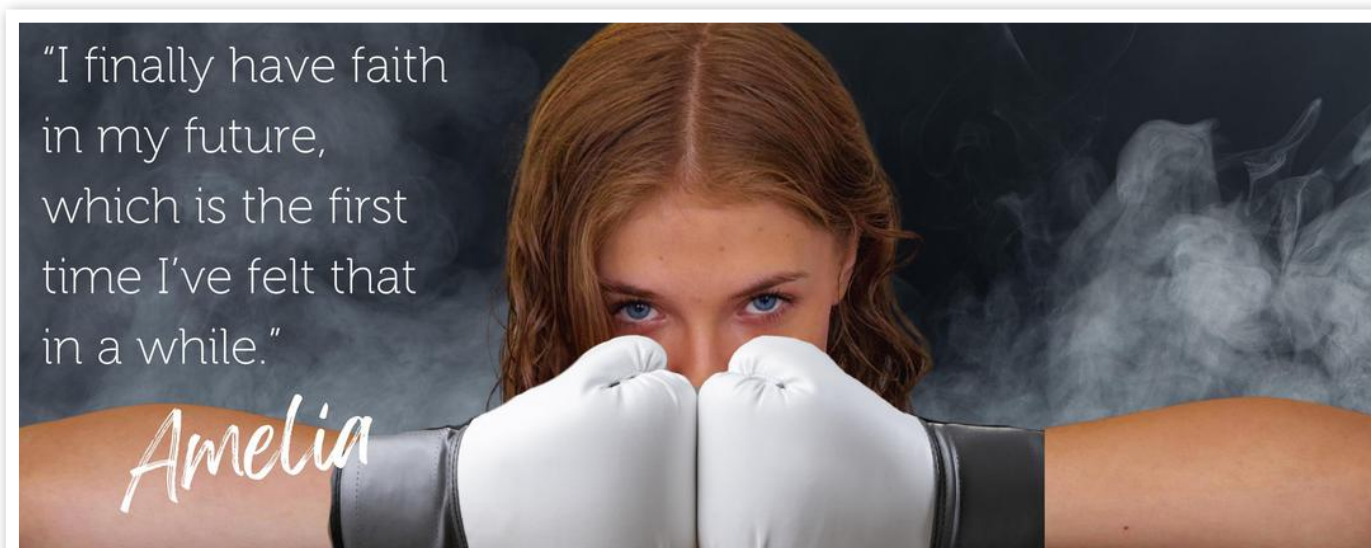


You may remember our last Winter Appeal, we shared Amelias story..

“ 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 one 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 so 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.”

Amelia told her story and designed her campaign, wanting to use boxing gloves to signify her fighting spirit. With your incredible donations and support, she helped raised over £50,000 for CrossReach. Recently Amelia was in touch with an update.



“ Hi everyone, thank you for all the support I got across the Winter Campaign, it was wonderful to see. As mentioned in the campaign, I was on my way to studying marketing. I can now say I received an unconditional offer at my dream university, which I'll start later this year. I'm so excited to be able to grow my career further into the marketing space.

I have now worked with brands like Coca Cola, being invited to a watch party in England to create content and promote a watch party. It was so nice to be recognised by Coca-Cola and be trusted to create content in partnership with them! It was a nice day spent with one of my close friends. I have also been given the opportunity to be able to promote Pantene's products through social media content. Super exciting!

CrossReach has given me the foundation to believe in better and most importantly, believe in myself. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be able to create the campaign in the first place as it's given me a platform to share my story and hopefully give some deeper understanding of how CrossReach can positively impact someone's life. I hope if you're reading this, you'll start to believe that there are always brighter days ahead.

Congratulations Amelia!

Did you know? You can set up a regular gift – the equivalent of one coffee a month supports our services and offers hope.





Erskine Waterfront Prizegiving

Parents, teachers and support staff gathered at the school for the end-of-term event to see pupils recognised for their efforts. The school provides specialised teaching and support to around 30 young people aged between 7 and 18, most of whom struggle with mainstream schooling.

Thom, 17, who was presented with the Clyde Cup in recognition of making the most of his time at the school, has secured a place at college to study acting from August.



The school really does change lives for the better and I was shocked and delighted to win the Clyde Cup."

The awards ceremony included videos charting the many activities students take part in including more than 20 sports, Forest Schools and animal care.

Kyle Fleming, Head of Education at the campus, said:

"The priority is providing children with the best possible experience. Being a small school, you need to be big on your outcomes and big on your partnerships, so when a talented child comes along, we can take them there. Our awards ceremony is a day when we all come together, and I was just thrilled to see so many parents here and us coming together as a community."

Lord High Commissioner Visit

It was our pleasure to welcome Lady Elish Angiolini, the Lord High Commissioner and the King's representative to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to our Daisy Chain Early Years Project in Glasgow this summer.

Families who regularly attend the service joined us to welcome the party.

We had a valuable discussion about the importance of building trust and communication in our communities, and about creating supportive environments where children can thrive and families can grow stronger together.





Annual Quality Circles

Laughter, conversation and shared memories filled the rooms of our care homes across Scotland as residents, families and colleagues came together for our annual Quality Circles. With homemade cakes and baked treats enjoyed throughout the sessions, these gatherings created a relaxed and welcoming space for stories to be shared, ideas to be exchanged and honest conversations about what we are doing well and where we could do things differently.

Quality Circles are about more than simply collecting feedback. They provide an opportunity to listen to the people who know our services best and gain a deeper understanding of what matters most to them. From celebrating the things residents enjoy to identifying areas where we can do even better, the conversations held during these sessions provided valuable insight.

These reflections will help us continue to shape our services around the needs, experiences and preferences of the people we support in our older people services.



Stars of Social Care Awards

This summer we were delighted to learn that Jen Macdonald, manager at our Oversteps care home in Dornoch, made the finals of the Stars of Social Care Awards. Jen told us she was proud to be nominated in the Inspirational Care Home Manager category.

I'm really honoured to be nominated, I couldn't believe it at first. We are a really good team here and it just feels good to see Oversteps recognised."



World Cup Sweepstake

This summer our services took part in a World Cup sweepstake with each service drawing a side competing in the tournament and giving them their support.

Morlich House, a care home for older ladies in Edinburgh, were lucky enough to draw the best team in the tournament... Scotland.

They gave them a fantastic backing with some hilarious videos on social media which you can find over on the Morlich House Facebook page.

Well done everyone!





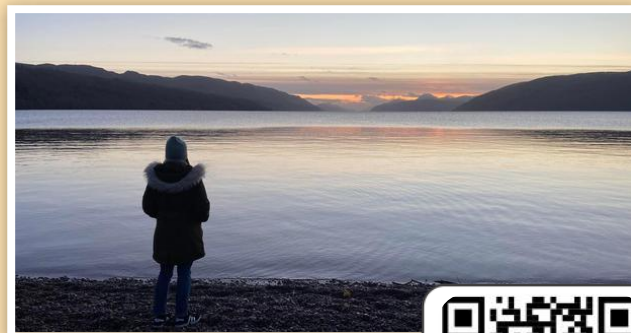
Become a Member of CrossReach

As a reader of CrossReach News we know you care deeply about the wide variety of services we provide people who are facing the most challenging circumstances in Scotland today. Becoming a member of CrossReach means you will join a very special group of people who are changing, enhancing and saving lives all over Scotland.

By choosing to give a regular gift you will be a blessing of hope to many across the country like Amelia, featured on page 8. And just this summer we've made it even easier to become a member. Scan the QR code below or give us a call and we'll do the rest!

Once you become a member you will receive:

- Updates on how your donations are being put to use and the impact you are having
- Exclusive badges at milestones throughout your time with us
- Special invitations to our events
- Discount and priority access to merchandise including Christmas cards, calendars and so much more, including the brand new CrossReach tartan



But of greater value than any of these should be the knowledge that your care and compassion is helping another person, month by month, year by year, to lift people up from the darkest of situations towards light and hope.



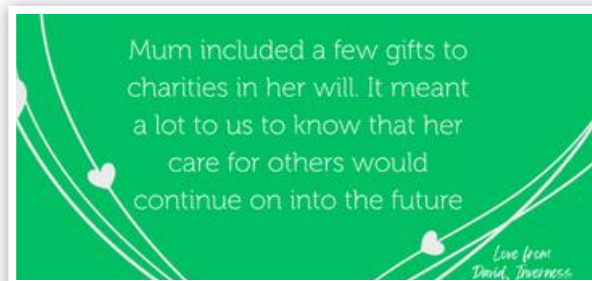
The Power of a Gift in your Will

By leaving a gift in your Will you can make the most incredible difference in the lives of people all over Scotland, for generations to come.

It's not something we talk about day to day and many of us would prefer to avoid it but every adult should have a Will. It's the only way to ensure that your wishes are carried out when you are no longer around.

Leaving a gift to CrossReach in your Will allows your love and compassion to live on. It is a powerful statement about your values and the difference you want to see in the world for the people and causes that are most important to you. After you have taken care of your loved ones, a gift in your Will, whether big or small, will help a family in need. Just 1% of your estate, or whatever you feel is appropriate can help provide practical support, comfort and hope to individuals and families across Scotland for years to come.

Writing or updating your Will doesn't have to be difficult or too expensive. Your solicitor can help you decide what's best for you.



Your Gift in Wills Journey

If you're considering leaving a gift to CrossReach in your Will, we'd be delighted to help answer any questions you may have.

If you have already remembered CrossReach in your Will, we'd love to hear your story and learn what inspired your decision.

Simply scan the QR code to get in touch with our team. Wherever you are on your Gifts in Wills journey, we're here to support you every step of the way.



→ A new source of energy for CrossReach services

A more sustainable future is built through the changes we make today. As part of our Net Zero Strategy, we have set out our aim to source 100% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2030 or earlier.

To support this commitment, and through funding from the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES), solar panels were installed at Beechwood House, Cameron House, Cumnor Hall, St Margaret's House. The project which saw completion earlier this year was delivered and managed by Gensource.

The solar panels will help generate renewable energy, reduce carbon emissions and lower energy costs across our services. This project is one of the ways CrossReach is working towards its Net Zero ambitions and playing its part in Scotland's efforts to tackle climate change.



→ 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



The Church of Scotland
Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No: SC011353



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