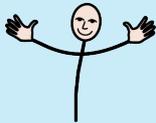


Welcome to The Blether!

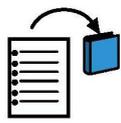


welcome

In this edition of The Blether, we will be updating you all on what's been happening around Thera (Scotland).

We hope you enjoy it!

An update from Suzanne Abbate, Managing Director



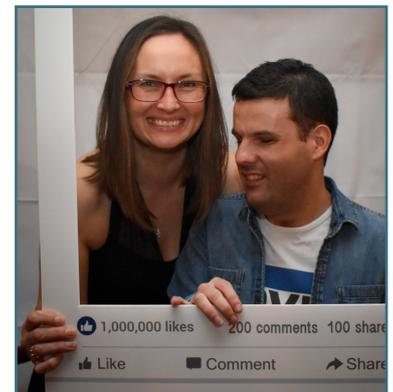
contents

Welcome to our first Blether of 2020 and for quite some time! This edition will be looking at how the COVID19 pandemic has affected us and our plans for the year ahead. I also want to take this time to look back on my first 6 months at Thera.



news

Here we are in May 2020! Spring is in the air but sadly we are a country in lockdown.



First COVID19 affected our travel and holidays, then our schools. Now we can't leave our homes, visit our families or even support our loved ones who are in hospital or unwell.



safe

The teams across Thera (Scotland) have been working really hard since March to make sure the people we support are safe and well.

With weekly new guidance from the Government, new challenges in terms of staff wellbeing, getting equipment and thinking of new ways to support people to access their money and shopping for essential supplies.



thank you

The staff have been amazing, as have our communities; thank you! I know together we will get through this even stronger than before.



job

I was delighted to accept the job as Thera (Scotland)'s Managing Director in September 2019. I was made to feel very welcome and would like to thank everyone for that.



improve

As a newly forming senior leadership team, we have been working together to achieve progress and continue to improve lives.

Suzanne Abbate

Managing Director

A word from Diane, Operational Manager in Midlothian



amazing

Midlothian and Falkirk are a strong, stable team of amazing, compassionate people. We are all really happy to welcome and support our new team members.



inspection

At our last Care Inspectorate inspection, we received the following ratings for 'housing support' and 'care at home support':

- Quality of care and support 5 - Very Good
- Quality of staffing 5 - Very Good

“Thera are keen to support people to be active in their own local communities.”

“I attend my review meetings and I get to speak and give my view. I can speak up if I am not happy about anything”.

“I can see the positive difference in the people we support.”

“Thera will come to the house for reviews which are regular and I've been invited along to help out at interviews. It's really good to be involved”.

A word from Diane, Operational Manager in Midlothian



delighted

We are delighted to receive scores of 5 for a second year running. These scores reflect all the hard work and dedication in the supported living and community support areas in Midlothian, Edinburgh and Falkirk.

Here are some comments from people we support and staff:



comments

The inspector said: "We saw feedback received by Thera (Scotland) from a social worker which stated 'I am delighted at how D has settled into their new home. A massive thanks to the team for supporting D with the move and beyond'."



care inspectorate

The inspector spoke to some of our staff and said that they had good relationships with the people supported and their families.

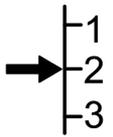
The staff were knowledgeable and responsive to supported people's needs, challenges and risks in order to manage their lives.



staff

The staff told the inspector they enjoyed working for Thera (Scotland) and felt supported in their role.

In September 2019 we had an inspection by the Care Inspectorate. The Inspector was really pleased with the hard work from the team.



ratings

We were delighted with the improvement in the scores we were awarded under the new framework:

- **How well do we support people's wellbeing?**
4 - Good
- **How good is our leadership?**
4 - Good
- **How good is our staffing?**
3 - Adequate
- **How good is our setting?**
3 - Adequate
- **How well is our care and support planned?**
4 - Good



thank you

Well done and thank you to all of the team!

A word from Scott, Operational Manager in Highland



improvements

In Highland we are pleased to see that our inspection scores have improved. We have built new teams who are working really well together, getting to know the people we support and improving lives every day. Thank you to everyone in the Highlands!



progress

The Care Inspectorate carried out a focused inspection at the beginning of December. The focus was on evidencing progress in relation to the recommendations and requirements.



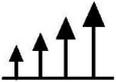
requirements

After the inspection, they fed back that all requirements were either partially met or fully met. The Inspectors added that they had not anticipated so much improvement within the last six months.



hard work

They could see all the hard work and progress which had been made and felt that, although not a graded inspection, the difference in provision deserved to be rewarded in some way.



increase

The only way they could reflect this was to raise our grades and decided to increase our grades from 2s, to the next level of 3s.

Well done and thank you to all of the team!

New to the team



changes

The teams across Thera (Scotland) have been through a lot of changes in the last few years. We have been working very hard to bring on board new people who share Thera's vision and values.



support

Our board of directors have been a fantastic support by coming to meetings, offering advice and helping to plan for the year ahead. We have also been joined by two new non-executive directors, Denis Rowley and John Stevenson.



welcome

We have also recently recruited a new Service Quality Director, Jordan Allan, who started with us in May. Welcome to the team Jordan, we know you will be a great addition to our team in making sure the quality of the support people receive is the best it can be.

Below are just a few of the new people who have joined the team in the last year.

Emma Willis-Butler, Executive Assistant



passion

Prior to joining Thera (Scotland), Emma had worked in financial services for 13 years. However, she has a passion for helping people and wanted a job that achieved this.



change

Emma took a big leap and became a carer in the community in order to gain experience. She joined Thera (Scotland) as an Executive Assistant to the Service Quality Director in the summer of 2019.



As well as working for Thera (Scotland), Emma still works as a carer in the community at the weekends. Emma is married, has two little boys and a lovely dog called Soffie.



New to the team

Scott Harkness, Operational Manager in the Highlands



Scott is the Operational Manager for Thera (Scotland) in Inverness and Highlands. He has worked in social care for over 16 years in the private, public and 3rd sector often in development roles.



Scott has also been heavily involved with developing self directed support (SDS) throughout Highland from an organisational perspective in collaboration with local authorities as a director of operations before co-owning and developing a local care organisation.

Scott is a volunteer in his spare time with Sight Action and been working with this local charity for 18 months. Scott has three children and two dogs, his oldest daughter is 21 and is currently studying at Aberdeen University.

Sharon Crabtree, Community Support Leader



Sharon was delighted to be asked to join Thera in March because Thera's vision and values is distinctly unique and different from other care companies in the Social Care sector. It is a breath of fresh air and she believes that Thera can truly make a positive difference to the people we support. Sharon is looking forward to the exciting times ahead and to finally meet the team in person.



New to the team

Patrick Mills, Community Support Leader in the Highlands



Patrick joined Thera (Scotland) in August 2019 as a Community Support Leader within the Highland Team. Patrick said this was a return to the work he loved to do, after a short break away from the care sector. He previously worked within education, children's residential services and with young people transitioning into adult services - in particular those affected by social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, autism and learning disability.



Patrick hit the ground running and adapted his experience and knowledge quickly to fit into the team at Birch Court. He says his manager Scott and his team were a great support. He is enjoying his role and loves working for Thera (Scotland). There have been challenges along the way, not least, the current Coronavirus pandemic and the effect that it's having on staff and the people we support. But this has only meant that the rewards are sweeter when we achieve our outcomes.



Patrick adds: "I would like to thank each member of my team for the dedication, effort and commitment they have shown during this difficult time. I have seen some true stars come to the fore, which has meant we have been able to continue to provide high levels of support at this challenging time. Thank you."



New to the team

Ashley Mackay, Senior Support Worker in the Highlands



good

Ashley has been with Thera for around seven months and in that time, has had lots of really good experiences. He has enjoyed meeting and supporting the people, everyone is unique and full of character. They are always busy, going out for the day, shopping or just doing things around the house like baking or making dinner. Each day is different and exciting.



learn

Ashley hadn't worked in the care sector before, so feels he has learned a lot in a short time and has been recently promoted. He is looking forward to the challenges that will come with his new role.



support

Ashley adds: "I'm glad I joined Thera (Scotland). It has helped me learn quickly because the support or advice is always available".

Anna Archibald, Team Coordinator in Falkirk



change

Anna says "Joining Thera (Scotland), it was difficult for me to consider leaving my previous role as a coordinator in the care sector but after a few people I knew gave me a few stories and a position came up locally, I took the plunge!



support

Already I know I have made the right decision, the people we support are amazing and I couldn't ask for a better team, the support is second to none."



interests

Anna likes spa days, trying to keep healthy, reading true stories, Queen, musicals, walking her Springer spaniel Rudi, spending time with her family and having a good giggle.



Picture is Anna and Helen having a pamper day!

Celebrating 10 years of Thera (Scotland)!



celebrate

In February 2020 we had a party to celebrate ten years of Thera (Scotland)! The event included music, dancing, food and staff awards.

A special thank you to everyone who helped make the night a great success. Look out for a short video of the night coming soon!



The winners of the staff awards on the night were:

- **Unsung Hero** – Sarah Wood, Support Worker from Midlothian
- **Team of the Year** – Whitehill Road, in Midlothian
- **Young employee of the Year** – Chloe Currie, Support Worker from Midlothian
- **Innovation and Improvement** – Margaret McKie, Community Support Leader from Midlothian
- **Going that Extra Mile** - Sarah Mackintosh, Support Worker from the Highlands

We hope you enjoyed the night and will join us next year for a party in Inverness.



winners



next year

Celebrating 10 years of Thera (Scotland)



thank you

We also said thank you to lots of staff for their long service to Thera (Scotland).

It was great to have winners on the night, but as I am sure you will agree, every single member of our team are heroes every day and we want to say a huge thank you!



Good News Stories

Our Dr Who fan!



attend

George attended the Dr Who convention last year and met Peter Davidson. George hadn't been before because he wasn't sure about the costumes and the fact that it's busy.

However, he loved it so much he wanted to go again -and this year he met with Colin Baker.



costume

This year he decided to dress up as a Dr after seeing everyone dress up last year. He spent time collecting his costume for the convention, he enjoyed looking in shops and searching online.



confidence

He loved the day, jumping about with his sonic screwdriver and seeing everyone dressed up. He bought some new posters and collectables which he has on display. He got a brilliant picture at the photo booth where they added some space effects, he wasn't sure about doing this last year but had much more confidence in his outfit to do it this year.

Forever home



home

In the past year we have supported three people to choose their "Forever Homes". We can happily say they are all now settled and enjoying living their best lives in their own tenancies.



wishes

We worked alongside our Forward Housing team, who followed the three people's wishes to ensure they had a say in where they wished to live, along with input from their families and other agencies involved in their care needs.



independence

This took a while with lots of planning, but we managed to find their dream homes. Each of the properties have been fully adapted to ensure all the tenants' individual needs are met to promote their independence.



positive

This has been such a positive experience and has made a huge difference to each of them and they all are so proud to have their own homes.

What have we been up to



trips

Scott has been enjoying getting out and about! He's had a couple of day trips to Aberdeen and to MacDuff's sea life centre.



activities

He tried new activities including: squirting staff with a water pistol, helping prepare lunch and messy play with squirty cream. He didn't really like the messy play but that may be because he wasn't feeling great that day, so we will try it again.



visit

He has had visits from his mum and aunty at Christmas time to exchange gifts. Scott had bought two photo mugs for them.



pantomime

Eileen enjoyed the Christmas period, with visits to the pantomime at Eden Court and meals with family.



celebrate

She also attended a tea party to celebrate 100 years of Learning Disability Nursing and met with a lot of old friends and staff who she knew from her time at New Craigs Hospital.



happy

The festive period has previously been a time when Eileen's mood has dipped but she has coped very well this year staying in good spirits throughout. She also enjoyed her Christmas Day dinner at Brewers Fayre with staff and a visit from one of the staff who brought her dog in for Eileen to see and spend time with.



christmas

Laura really enjoyed Christmas this year, she went to the Snow Goose for Christmas dinner.

Laura's mum visited and they went out for lunch to R&B's. Laura helped her mum to put away Christmas gifts. She bought a new fridge/freezer and cooker, washer and drier.



enjoyed

Laura had fun when she stayed up for the bells and enjoy a few bottles of J2Os. She enjoyed listening to music and dancing.



Our amazing staff during COVID-19

George, Support Worker in Falkirk



garden

George is one of our Support Workers from Falkirk who stayed to work on Jimmy's garden after his shift had finished. Jimmy loves his garden and spends hours on his swing, but some bad storms caused damage to the garden.



sensory

It was suggested at a team meeting that we develop the garden to make it more colourful and sensory. George stayed back in his own time putting it back together for Jimmy to enjoy during the social distancing period.

George had spent hours on Jimmy's garden last year. It was beautiful with lots of brightly coloured lanterns and windchimes. The fence was painted in one colour and his swing area in another so it stood out for Jimmy to see.



Our amazing staff during COVID-19

Team work!



staff

Some staff have been organising shopping deliveries, collecting money and coming up with creative ideas for activities at home that people can do at home.



keep in touch

There have been video calls to families which have really helped people to stay in contact with their loved ones. There was a virtual video tea party organised which sounds like it was great fun!

Our teams have been learning to stay connected using technology and have learned a lot about Microsoft Teams in the process.

Brenda



exercise

Brenda has been exercising every day. During her daily exercise time, she visited a very rural smallholding at the top of Mayfield. She loved talking to the donkeys and horses. Although the weather wasn't very kind as it was very windy and cold, the visit brought a smile to her face and took her mind off the Coronavirus.



Our amazing staff during COVID-19

Easter Treats



Throughout this huge change in daily living, Doreen has coped extremely well with all the restrictions and staffing changes. As a special treat the Team Co-ordinator Carole made an afternoon tea basket for Doreen full of homemade goodies plus an Easter Egg in a decorated a basket, as she had asked staff if they thought she might get something for Easter.



Doreen was extremely grateful and said that she didn't think someone would be so kind to her. Carole was delighted to have brought so much happiness to someone with just a small gesture.



The team set up Facetime for Doreen to speak to Brenda. Both of them were so happy that they had the opportunity to speak to each other.



Brenda also received the afternoon tea basket and facetimed her aunt in a virtual Easter afternoon tea. Brenda would have been spending time with her aunt at Easter and they would have gone out for a lunch or afternoon tea, so instead we brought it to her.

Tips on staying well

What's Up? – App



anxiety

Richard and Joseph from Gig Buddies told us about a great app called 'What's Up?'. The app contains helpful information about coping with anxiety, stress, and more. This could be really useful for many people at this time. You can download it for free from the app store!



information

Thera also have lots of really useful information on staying well and busy. You can find it online by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.thera.co.uk/contact/coronavirus/>

Community Kindness



community

One of our Community Support Leaders, Carole, shared that Bonnyrigg Afterschool Club had donated a large amount of craft activities. These were shared amongst the teams to keep everyone busy.

Thanks Carole and the Bonnyrigg After-school club!



safe

We have had donations of much needed hand sanitiser from several local distillers for our staff teams which has really helped keep people safe.

Birthdays



birthday

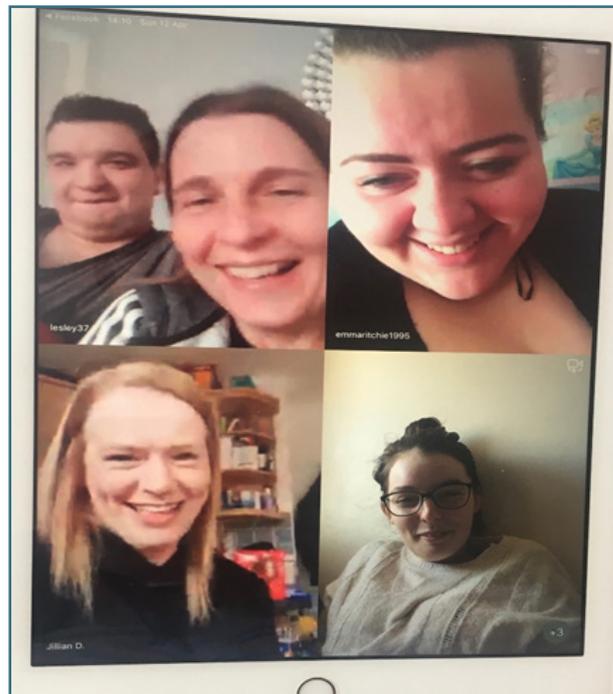
James had a birthday during the COVID-19 lockdown and staff organised a video call through “Teams” for his birthday. He loved it and his mum texted later saying how much it cheered him up.



keep in touch

The rendition of Happy Birthday left a lot to be desired as we were all on a slightly different time delay, but James found it a giggle. James, his mum and the team spent some time “blethering” for a while after the song.

We have arranged that once or twice a week, the team will take it in turns to video call to keep people in touch with each other.



birthday

Some of the people we support have been celebrating birthdays. We hope you all had a great time.

- **Carol** and **Eileen** who had birthdays in January
- **Oliver**, **Scott** and **Terry** who had birthdays in February
- **Craig**, **Laura** and **Mhairi** who had birthdays in March
- **Donna**, **James** and **James** who had birthdays in April

Happy Birthday to everyone!

Gig Buddies



online

Our friends at Gig Buddies have been keeping busy providing lots of fun things to do online through Facebook, Zoom and group chats.

They have had quizzes, competitions, live music and singing, meeting new people, Rock Star selfies and lots, lots more.



information

To join in and stay up to date with everything Gig Buddies, remember to 'like' the Facebook page by searching 'Gig Buddies Scotland'. They post regular updates and share lots of information.



Gig Buddies - Scotland

Non-profit organisation

Edinburgh, United Kingdom

✓ Liked ▼



They also have a private messenger group for members and volunteers. You can be added to this by joining the private Facebook group.



Gig Buddies Scotland Members Group

Group

89 members

Joined

The year ahead - our plan!

Achieving quality



quality



plan

The year ahead will focus on achieving excellent quality in all that we do. We will continue to make sure the people we support can live excellent lives and that our staff will have excellent knowledge and skills.

When life gets back to the way it used to be, we will be working towards our plan. To do this we need everyone to work together.

Company Membership



We would like more people to sign up to be a company member, including people we support, their families and staff who work for us.

To become a company member please request an application form from Emma Willis-Butler, Executive Assistant to Service Quality Director.

Mobile: **0771 896 1919**

Email: **Emma.Willis-Butler@thera.co.uk**



contact

Thank you!

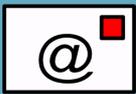


enjoyed

We hope you have enjoyed reading about what has been keeping us all busy recently.

We would love to share our next edition of The Blether with you.

If you would like to receive The Blether by email, please email **Liz.Rankin@thera.co.uk** to be added to our mailing list.



email

Stay safe and keep smiling!

How to contact us

If you would like to find out more about Thera (Scotland) or have a story you would like to tell, please get in touch:

- Email **tsoffice@thera.co.uk**
- Visit **www.therascotland.co.uk**
- Or call **0300 303 1286**



contact