



Equal Futures

Equal Futures Newsletter - Edition Four September 2021



Update from Jayne

Our Business Plan for 2021-22

Summer seems to have zipped by but what a glorious season it has been! So lovely to see people out and about again, enjoying the outdoors or resuming hobbies and interests once more.

Lockdown has been a long and difficult time and we are acutely aware of what the people we support have had to endure over the last year or so. Many of you are understandably anxious about socialising again and we will work with you to take things at the pace you are comfortable with.

I'm delighted that we have a full team again, with Donna and Kelly joining us earlier in summer to provide Project Co-ordinator support for Glasgow and Ayrshire. They've settled in exceptionally well and are already bringing valuable skills and experience to the individuals and families we support.

At the end of the first quarter we reviewed our annual plan and have successfully completed most of what we set out to achieve, such as ensuring our compliance with GDPR in respect of your data. We only have a couple of people still left to re-consent and staff will continue to bring all the files up to date by the end of September.

One of our biggest challenges for the next quarter will be identifying suitable trustees to join our Board. Our Chairperson, Christine Johnson stepped down in July while and Annette Monaghan resigned in May. We thank them for all their hard work, time and commitment over the years. Simon Conway will serve as interim Chair until such time as a new Chairperson can be inducted and trained.

We've commenced our scoping work in Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire and Scottish Borders following receipt of a small grant from the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. We hope we can reach people with a learning disability or autism who may be feeling socially isolated and need a circle of support or befriending to help them live their best life.

I look forward to updating you on this work in a future edition. I hope you enjoy reading our newsletter. We'd love to receive your contributions to the next one in November, so please get in touch if you have a story you'd like to share or a recipe you think others will enjoy.

Best wishes, Jayne

Meet the team



Donna McCallum

Project Co-ordinator - Greater Glasgow

My name's Donna and I am the new Project Coordinator for Greater Glasgow.

I am pleased to be joining Equal Futures at such an exciting time and being involved in the development of the new Equal Futures team.

I have experience in a variety of care settings, including working with young people in a residential care and more recently as a team manager for adults with learning disabilities, mental health, and autism.

In my free time I love going holidays abroad and staycations in the UK.



Kelly Malyan

Project Co-ordinator - Ayrshire

Hi everyone, my name is Kelly and I am the new Project Co-ordinator for Ayrshire.

I have experience of working with many different groups within the community, specifically with young people and people with a learning disability.

My passions are mental health, LGBTQ issues and improving equality within society.

I have a cocker spaniel called Maizy and a horse called Ryley and looking after my two fur babies takes up a lot of my personal time.

I also enjoy walking, swimming and gardening.

I am extremely excited to get to know everyone withing the Equal Futures family.



Jane McAllister

Project Coordinator – Edinburgh and Lothian's

Hi there! I am Jane McAllister, and I am the Project Co-ordinator for the Edinburgh and Lothian's area.

I am thrilled to be involved with Equal Futures and I am totally behind the unique model of support that Equal Futures offer to individuals and their families when it comes to planning for the future.

I have had a varied career starting off in Hospitality Management which I loved as I am at my happiest making others happy. After having children, I entered the field of social care specifically working with adults with autism and learning disabilities, an equally rewarding career.

Throw in several years of running my own business, I have now settled in what I believe is my dream job. Having my own children with ASD gives me such a drive to make a real difference with Equal Futures.



Shona Fleming
PA to the Managing Director

Hi everyone I am Shona and my role is Personal Assistant to our Managing Director, Jayne.

I specialise in the organisation's administration and always find there is no challenge too big.

I have a passion for cooking and when I am not working or in the kitchen I can usually be found at the side of a football field cheering on my 2 boys who I hope will be future stars one day.

I also have a Golden Retriever called Harper and love to walk her across the Ayrshire countryside.



Jayne Laidlaw
Equal Futures Managing Director

I've been working in the Voluntary sector for over 30 years and hold qualifications in Community Development, Counselling & Psychotherapy, and Strategic Leadership amongst others.

I spent many years managing the NSPCC Childline Service and was accountable for leading transformational change projects before moving on to become a Public Appointee on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

I joined Equal Futures in November 2020 and have been bowled over by the amazing work going on across Thera Trust to support people with a learning disability or autism.

In my free time I can be found hiking in the hills or wild swimming, kayaking and paddle boarding in our stunning Scottish lochs.

Equal Futures public events calendar

Our Edinburgh and Lothian's Co-ordinator will be looking to expand our pool of Edinburgh area volunteers. To facilitate matching some fabulous befrienders for some of our Edinburgh community members. With this in mind we will be in attendance at:

Volunteer Edinburgh - Volunteer Recruitment Fair 2021

When: Wednesday 22 September 2021, from 11:00am until 7:00pm.

Where: St Paul's and St George's Church, 46 York Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3HU

Queen Margaret University - Annual Recruitment and Volunteering Career Fair

When: Thursday 30 September 2021, from 11:00am until 2:00pm

Where: Queen Margaret University, University Square, EH21 6UU

Meet Gus

Hi to one and all. My name is Gus and I'm about to embark on being a Befriender with Equal Futures.

I moved to Glasgow to be near my daughters and grandkids in 2019, having spent early retirement living north of Oban in a house with a sea view. More recently I moved again and now live in Largs by the water and my boat, having recognised that city dwelling is not for me.



For most of my adult life I took part in the Children's Hearing System as a Panel member. My working life as a Geo-engineer and Environmental Business Manager was equally rewarding.

What is important to me now is having good friendships, good health, and opportunities to be out and about - up a mountain or on the sea. I never want time to pass me by.

What also matters to me is having worthwhile experiences and being able to make a difference, to help out. In being a Befriender, I see an opportunity to be there for others and in doing so have others be there for me - the 'Circle of Support'.

Pizza and Petals

On Saturday 28 August, some of our Equal Futures Edinburgh families joined our new staff team at the incredibly beautiful Amisfield Walled Garden, near Haddington.

Thankfully those guests that managed to conquer the holiday traffic in and around our busy capital were blessed with a beautifully warm and sunny afternoon to enjoy the tranquil delights of this hidden gem of a venue at the heart of East Lothian that we had all to ourselves.

The opportunity to become a budding pizza slinger occupied our guests who were given a quick pizza making masterclass by Kirsty at Sweet Knead.

Later on, Mr Mark Mclaughlan entertained the group with some popular tunes on his guitar and after refreshments, guests were given the chance to harvest their pick of goodies from the kitchen garden area of the walled garden. (Is there anything nicer than foraging your own figs or picking your own pears? I'm not sure there is....)

A lovely afternoon was had by all.

Jane, our Edinburgh co-ordinator and the whole staff team were so pleased to have a chance meet and greet more people in person. We are looking forward to many more gatherings to come.



Our team (from left to right): Kelly, Donna, Tasha our Event Volunteer, Jane and Shona.



Jason and his dad Bernie making Pizzas under the watchful eye of Anna.



Antony with his carer enjoying the glorious sunshine.



Rachel and members of her circles of support admiring the beautiful gardens.



Our new Board Trustee Steven and his wife Kate attended the event and were delighted to meet the Equal Futures Team and families.

Creative Corner

New York style pizza

Note: For this recipe we will be using a food processor to knead the dough.

Ingredients:

Recipe for x4 220g dough balls:

- Water: 250g
- Flour: 320g
- Semolina (fine): 90g
- Olive oil: 30g
- Dry yeast (none active): 8g
- Salt: 12g
- Honey: 10g

Method:

- Add room temp water to the food processor mixing bowl. Add the yeast and olive oil - Mix until dissolved. Add 10% (32g) of the flour and mix until milky. Add the salt and mix. Add the honey and mix. Add the remaining flour. Mix until a dough.
- Remove and knead, or continue using a machine until all ingredients are combined. Make a large dough ball and leave for 30 mins.
- Split into 220g dough balls. Place in a tray with olive oil for 3 hours at room temperature.
- Place in the fridge for 24hrs, sealed.
- Remove from fridge 2hrs before cooking.
- Pre Heat Oven to 200 degrees (fan).
- Roll out thin with a rolling pin.
- Par cook bases for 5 minutes in the oven.
- Now top with tomato sauce (separate recipe) and your favourite toppings then cook in the oven for 15 mins or until it is golden brown on the crusts and the cheese is golden.

A real hit on the day was Haggis and Pepperoni.

Sugo di Pomodoro (Authentic Italian Tomato Sauce)

This is a basic recipe for authentic Italian tomato sauce flavoured with extra-virgin olive oil, garlic and basil. Toss with your favourite pasta or use for pizza, gnocchi and more.

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, halved
- 2 (14 ounce) cans passata (crushed tomatoes)
- ¼ cup fresh basil, torn in half
- salt to taste

Method:

- Heat oil in a saucepan over low heat.
- Add onion and garlic. Cook and stir until onion is soft and translucent, about 5 minutes.
- Add passata, basil, and salt.
- Cover and simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until tomato sauce has thickened (about 20 minutes).
- Remove garlic halves before serving.

Easy Peasy Peanutbuttery Bird Feeder

At our event we spent some time showing guests a really simple way to keep our feathered friends happy during the colder months (sorry we all know it's coming).

This bird feeder is super simple to make and can be fashioned from cupboard and handy ingredients – or with wild bird seeds like we at our event.

You'll need:

- Ice cream cones/ cups
- String
- Smooth peanut butter
- Knife or spoon for spreading
- Shallow dish for rolling the peanut butter covered cone
- Bird seeds/ cereal (cheerios are a hit)
- and the ability to channel your inner blue peter presenter!

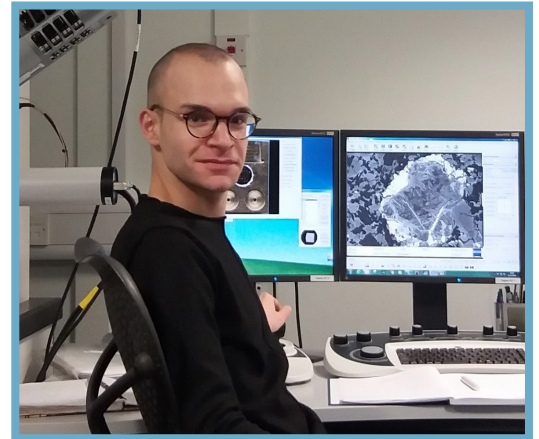
Method

- Poke 2 holes into the icecream cone – thread through the string and tie with a knot leaving approx. a 10cm loop so you can hang up the feeder to the nearest tree later.
- If you are feeling extra crafty why not thread some cheerios onto the string before you tie the knot.
- Smother the cone in peanut butter then roll around in your choice of seeds or cereal.
- Put aside to set
- Stand back and admire your work ...

Thank you, you are now your neighbourhood birds favourite human!

Meet Evangelos

My name is Evangelos, I come from Greece and I'm a final year PhD candidate in Planetary Science at the University of Glasgow, researching the habitability of ancient Mars via the investigation of Martian meteorites.



Since my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, I have

become attentive to the mental health and wellbeing of people with a learning disability; as two of my friends/colleagues had also been diagnosed with a learning disability during their studies, and so, I got even more motivated and determined to learn from, interact with, and help such focus groups.

Nowadays, as a tutor and teaching assistant at the University of Glasgow during the years of the recent pandemic, I have also evidenced that the vulnerable groups of our society have been severely and disproportionately affected. Therefore, the least I could do as a fellow human, is dedicate a couple of hours from my free time every week to reduce the social isolation of, and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable members of our society.

I'm confident that my volunteering experience in Equal Futures (which is one of the most significant promoters of social inclusion in Scotland) will help accomplish their highly appreciable humanitarian aim; to ameliorate the lives of people with a learning disability and their families.

The experience from my initial stage of application to matching with an individual has been very pleasant, with insightful and deliberate training on supporting individuals with a learning disability and on the roles of safeguarding and building relationships.

Simultaneously, my responsibilities and tasks have been very transparent and straightforward, as the supervisory team has offered limitless support and resources, so that we (as volunteers) can be as effective and caring as possible during our safeguarding experience.

Meet Liam

I have had a couple of difficult years regarding my physical and mental health. I have made positive changes and I am focusing on losing weight, eating healthily, and getting fitter.

I have moved into an adapted modern house with my own front door and garden. I am looking forward to connecting with new people with the help of Equal Futures.



This is my dog Murphy; he is a miniature Schnauzer, and he is twelve years old. I got him in September 2009 when he was sixteen weeks old.

Murphy is my wee companion, and he is an adorable dog. He likes going for walks and playing with his ball. He also loves getting cuddles.

Statement from Donna McCallum – Project Coordinator for Greater Glasgow.

I have had the privilege of working closely with Liam over the past 7 weeks, getting to know each other and looking for a befriender volunteer to match Liam's needs.

We will also be working together to build a circle of support over time. I am really looking forward to working with Liam and supporting him to live his best life and achieve his goals.

Communities Back Together

Kelly our Ayrshire Project Co-ordinator attended the “Communities Back together” events hosted by Voluntary Action South Ayrshire. These events were in Girvan, Maybole, Prestwick, Troon and Ayr Central.

These events were a great opportunity for voluntary organisations to come together and speak about volunteering opportunities that are happening in our local area.

These events also provided an opportunity for people to find out about the volunteering opportunities Equal Futures have to offer.

Human Rights Town App

The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD) has launched a new app, ‘Human Rights Town’ designed to empower people with a learning disability to recognise and realise their human rights.

The app invites users to travel around a virtual ‘Human Rights Town’ where they encounter different scenarios at each location, such as using public transport or working at the supermarket. Through practical examples ‘Human Rights Town’ introduces users to each of their human rights, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and asks them to choose whether they believe their rights are being respected or not in each scenario. Users have the option of further explanation at each location. Each scenario has been voiced over by a person with a learning disability who has helped to develop the app.

If you would like to download the app, please see the links below.

Here is the link for Apple App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/human-rights-town/id1560787432>

Here is the link for Google Playstore: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.humanrightstown&gl=GB>

How to contact us

Your first point of contact is the Project Co-ordinator for your area, and you can reach them by email or telephone as follows:

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Please note that all Equal Futures staff are home based and don't have an office. If you no longer wish to receive our Newsletter please contact Shona Fleming.