



Equal Futures

Equal Futures Newsletter - Edition One

January 2021



I am delighted to introduce the New Year newsletter. I do hope that you and yours are all keeping well in these strange times.

As you may know, Alison Roy left us after nine years service and I'm delighted to take this opportunity to welcome Jayne Laidlaw as Managing Director of Equal Futures.



team

The new team of Catherine, Caroline and Elizabeth started at the beginning of lockdown and despite having never met, they have formed a splendid team. I am so pleased they have managed this under difficult circumstances.



support

The only reason we have been able to go on is with the support of Thera during this time. I am so happy we agreed to join them several years ago. Katie Winn from Thera skillfully led the team until November and I would like to thank her for all that she contributed.



meeting

Catherine, Caroline and Elizabeth have been in touch with you and look forward to meeting you in-person soon.

Best wishes to you and yours,

Christine Johnson

Chair of Equal Futures Board

Hello from our new Managing Director, Jayne Laidlaw



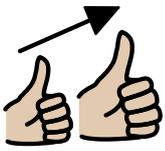
Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones in good health and feeling hopeful that brighter days are on the horizon. The long, dark nights of winter and the ongoing pandemic can make it especially hard to feel positive about anything - but there is much to look forward to.



circles

In my first two months at Equal Futures I've been hearing from individuals, families, volunteers, staff and the board about how important the Equal Futures model of support is to you. It is one of my priorities to ensure the circles model, befriending, and social opportunities we want to offer are made available to more people who need us.



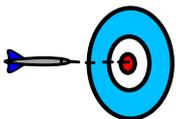
improve

To achieve this, we must consolidate what we have by improving our communication with you and the wider public. We also need to improve our record keeping and compliance, ramp up our effort to recruit more volunteers and increase our ability to adapt to the strange times we are living in.



dedication

Work on these first improvements is already underway in the team. I've been thoroughly impressed by the dedication and professionalism of staff working alongside me to get Equal Futures back on track.



aims

One of my aims will be to recruit someone into the vacant Project Co-Ordinator role we have in Edinburgh & Lothians. This will mean our individuals and families there can begin to have a service again. We also have new people in this area who were referred some time ago and we want to start working with them too.

It's one of our core principles that the support we offer is free to those who need it. This means we no longer charge a membership fee to join Equal Futures. We believe that friendships based on



free



challenge



patience

mutual respect should be enjoyed equally by all and everyone should have a right to access social opportunities based on those friendships, without having to pay someone to be there.

One of our biggest challenges is fundraising enough income for the charity to be able to deliver much-needed support. I've already begun looking at potential funders to help us grow, flourish and reach more people in other parts of the country. We'll keep you informed of our progress on these funding bids.

Thank you for persevering with our small but important charity over the last year. I understand it has been a bumpy road for many of you. I am very grateful for your patience and good grace. I hope my appointment brings stability and a chance to work with you. Together we will develop our vision and realise the potential of Equal Futures.

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy 2021.

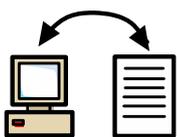
Jayne

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Good Housekeeping



consent

As part of our legal obligations on Data Protection, we will soon be writing to all individuals and members to ensure we have your continued consent to hold your data. We store data so we can contact you, share the newsletter, send other updates and arrange your Equal Futures support. It is good practice to ask for your consent every two years.



update

If you received this newsletter by email, you would have had the choice to 'opt out' of receiving more newsletters. We will update your newsletter preferences straight away. If you would like us to remove all of your personal data from our files and you no longer wish to receive any communication from Equal Futures, please let us know. We will update this as soon as we can.

Hello from the Team



teamwork

Catherine, Caroline and Elizabeth have been helping support Equal Futures as we become a part of Thera Trust. They've been contacting our focus people and their families. They have also been preparing new marketing materials and worked alongside the Thera communications team to update the Equal Futures website and social media. They spent time working on a draft business proposal which included befriending and Circles of Support and are excited to take the organisation forward. They will continue the good work of those before them and uphold the ethos and values of our founding members.



Hi, I'm Caroline. I joined Equal Futures from a Financial Services background. I'm a Project Coordinator for Ayrshire.

I've been volunteering for the past couple of years. This motivated me to change career as I found the time spent helping others extremely rewarding. I also work on a part-time basis supporting adults with challenging behavior for the National Autistic Society.

I'm married with three teenage sons and have recently moved to a small village in East Ayrshire.

Contact Caroline at:

Caroline@equalfutures.org.uk - 07921397615



Hi, I'm Catherine. I'm covering Glasgow as one of two new Project Coordinators.

Outside of Equal Futures, I work in teaching and widening participation roles in the education sector. I also work for the National Autistic Society as a higher education mentor. I am committed to improving social inclusion in Scotland.

I live in the West End of Glasgow with my partner Calum. I'm originally from Blackburn in Lancashire.

Contact Catherine at:

Catherine.Parkinson@equalfutures.org.uk - 07391011912



Hi, I'm Elizabeth. I will be working across Glasgow, Ayrshire and Edinburgh.

I have always enjoyed working with people. I have spent most of my working life supporting adults with a learning disability and autism. Most recently I spent four years managing a Carers Centre & Hub in the East End of Glasgow.

I am married to Colin. I have two sons and a stepson who has Down's Syndrome.

Contact Elizabeth at:

Elizabeth.McIntosh@equalfutures.org.uk - 07787516597

Hello from Fiona



Fiona has been a part of the Equal Futures family for many years. She lives independently in Ayrshire and works as a swimming coach, although she is currently on furlough due to COVID-19. Caroline and Fiona have been meeting regularly (at a distance, of course) throughout the year for walks and the occasional cuppa! Catherine and Elizabeth have also met Fiona via Zoom. As Equal Futures had gone through so many changes, Fiona's circle had unfortunately fallen slightly to the wayside. Caroline and Fiona worked together to resurrect this. At the end of November, Fiona successfully organized and chaired her own Circle of Support meeting via Zoom. It was a great success and her next meeting is already in the diary for the end of January!



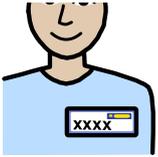
opportunities

Fiona actively seeks out new opportunities to push herself all the time and has certainly used lockdown to her advantage in many ways. One of the things she is currently involved in is a project being run by Manchester and Glasgow Universities – they are looking to engage with 200 people with learning disabilities about their experiences of life during the Coronavirus pandemic.

If anyone is interested in getting involved, visit:

vimeo.com/484426715 for information about the research project.

Name our newsletter!



name

The Equal Futures newsletter is a great opportunity for you to find out what is going on around our organisation, and we'd love to have your input - starting with finding a name for it. If you have an idea of what we should call it - whether it be something like "The Dot" or "Circling In" - email your suggestions to Caroline at: Caroline@equalfutures.org.uk



build

Build this newsletter with us

In each newsletter, we would love to share your contributions. If you have a story, recipe, poem, game, or anything like that - please send it on to us to include by emailing Caroline@equalfutures.org.uk

Boredom Buster: Lockdown Word Search

L P V A N W S O M P M I L L Y
Z E K Z I A L C Y Y U F A O G
X D G W S S L J Y Y C W A N H
O B C N N M A C O S Y F I W H
F E B D A M C X I L F T E N L
H A Y E A W M T Y K T H M Y C
A C C S H J O E W I C K S H Y
N H I E G G O N N Z C E O B L
D W S T M N Z K S V M C E O I
W A L A H A I B C A O K A I M
A L F U F A S K G L F A Z R A
S K A X W E U K A H C J K Q F
H A B B L L L T C B D F Y R O
V O G N W S E J X A A M L T V
H N F O H G U O D R U O S C O

The following words are hidden vertically, horizontally and diagonally in this jumble - they might be written forwards or backwards:

BAKING

KNITTING

JOE WICKS

BEACH WALK

PYJAMAS

CHOCOLATE

COSY

GAMES

SOURDOUGH

SNOW ANGEL

NETFLIX

FACEMASK

HANDWASH

SAFE

FAMILY

ZOOM CALLS

