



# Equal Futures

## Equal Futures Newsletter - Edition Two March 2021



### Update from Jayne

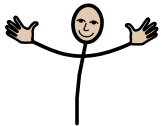
I'm thrilled to be able to share good news with you as we emerge from lockdown; we have successfully recruited a new Project Co-ordinator for Edinburgh and Lothians!

Jane Mcallister hopes to join us by the middle of April and is

looking forward to introducing herself to all the families we have supported across Edinburgh, Lothians and Scottish Borders but who have been without the support of a dedicated Equal Futures Project Co-ordinator for some time.

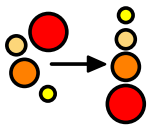


introduce



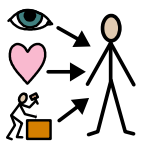
welcome

As well as being a skilled health and social care practitioner Jane has direct lived experience of being the parent of a child with autism and everything this entails. I'm sure you will all give her a very warm welcome.



organised

We've also appointed Shona Fleming to the role of Personal Assistant and Shona will be a terrific help in keeping us all organised and ensuring our processes are watertight.



experience

Shona has extensive experience providing business support with communities in the Voluntary sector as well as through her own initiatives and is looking forward to introducing herself to you in more detail in the May edition of the newsletter.



working hard

## Measuring our Impact

We've been working hard behind the scenes to develop a theory of change for Equal Futures. This has helped us to see the difference we make and identify ways that we can monitor and measure our success. There's a number of reasons this is important.



identify

Firstly, we need to know that how we support people is helpful and makes a meaningful difference to their lives. We need to learn how we can improve what we are doing and identify any gaps in our provision.



evidence

It's also helpful for us to assess how well we are doing with volunteer recruitment, social events and circle meetings and be able to evidence our impact to the Board of Trustees and to the donors who fund our work. It can be a real benefit when submitting applications for funding to have good, solid data to hand that shows how we help people live their best lives.



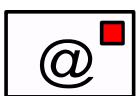
thinking about

Some of the things we're thinking about measuring are:

- Number of circles of support
- Number of befriending relationships
- Number of circle meetings taking place
- Number of support sessions to individuals or families
- Number of activities provided / attended
- Number of interactions with the focus person / circle
- Number of active Volunteers
- Number of Volunteers recruited and successfully trained

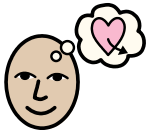
Feelings of (person being supported and their main carer if applicable)

- Wellbeing
- Anxiety
- Self-worth
- Confidence
- Decision-making capacity
- Stress



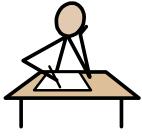
email

If you'd like to find out more about our approach to measuring the impact of our support, or have ideas or suggestions you like to share, please get in touch at [Jayne.Laidlaw@equalfutures.org.uk](mailto:Jayne.Laidlaw@equalfutures.org.uk). I'd love to hear your views!



hopeful

Here we are at the end of March already! – longer evenings and brighter days are slowly starting to creep in, and we are ever hopeful of the gradual easing of COVID restrictions to enjoy some sense of normality whilst remaining vigilant at the same time.



work

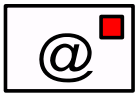
We have had a busy few months since our last newsletter – mainly background work that we will be able to put in place once restrictions are eased.



suggestions

## Name our newsletter!

Here at Equal Futures we are looking for you to help us out. We think our new newsletter deserves its own name and we are looking for you all to submit suggestions – we very much want Equal Futures to be a community so we feel its only fair to get you all on board!



email

Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated. Email your suggestions to Caroline at: [Caroline@equalfutures.org.uk](mailto:Caroline@equalfutures.org.uk)



graduation

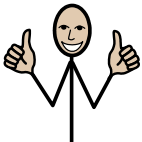
## Fiona's graduation

Our Ayrshire Project Co-Ordinator Caroline was delighted to be asked to be a guest at Fiona's recent graduation ceremony via Zoom.



online

Fiona took part in an online course during lockdown with Inspiring Scotland called 'Our Future Leaders' which was the first of its kind in Scotland.



encourage

Fiona felt she really benefited from the course and would encourage anyone thinking of doing something like this to just GO FOR IT!



happy birthday

Fiona also recently celebrated her big birthday! We had a lovely afternoon tea via Zoom, Catherine and Caroline not only wished Fiona Happy Birthday but thanked her for all the valuable support she has given them both.

Once again from all at Equal Futures Happy 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Fiona!



enjoying

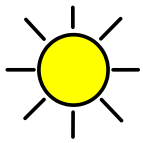


zoom

## Mini Zoom Circle Meetings

Catherine, our Glasgow Project Co-Ordinator has been busy linking up our Focus People from various areas. We are enjoying getting to know everyone and sharing our stories.

At present we are making plans to get together when lockdown eases – please get in touch if you would like to become involved in one of our new wee zoom meetings and we can definitely make this happen!



sunshine



enjoying



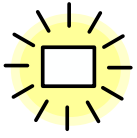
picture

## Sunshine in March

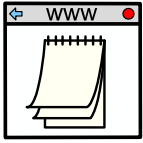
Caroline had a lovely walk in the sunshine with Fiona down on Ayr Beach. Fiona has been getting out and about for walks in the good weather and enjoying spending time with her mum's new puppy. She's also watched her husband Stevie do some cold-water swimming – both Caroline and Fiona agreed rather him than us!

She is just waiting on advice as to when she can head back to the East coast to her job and Equal Futures are hoping to be able to support her there. We managed to get a wee picture of our new addition to the EF family – Bramble! Madge is run off her feet and is very grateful for all the help Fiona has given her while getting Bramble used to life in Ayrshire.





new



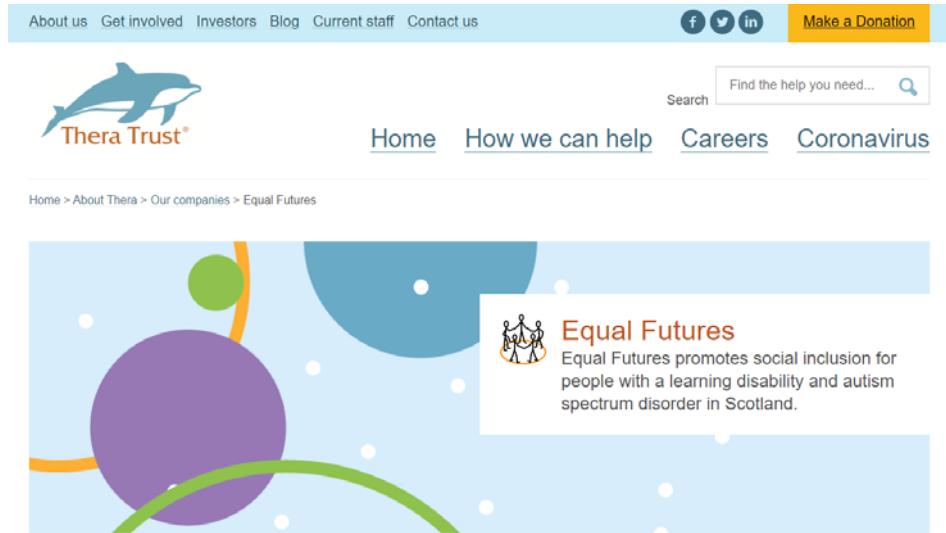
website

## New Website

Our new website has gone down a storm!

Views in February since we launched were 1059 and so far in March we are at 522 – great work by our Communications team!

[www.thera.co.uk/about/companies/equal-futures/](http://www.thera.co.uk/about/companies/equal-futures/)



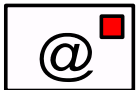
## Carers Trust Scotland

Carers Trust Scotland wants to hear from carers across Scotland, about their experiences of caring throughout the Coronavirus pandemic.



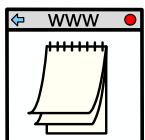
coronavirus

COVID has posed challenges for everyone. However, for those caring unpaid, for a friend or family member, there have been specific and unique challenges. The experiences of unpaid carers will inform Carers Trust Scotland's research and recommendations for carers' support moving forward into a world with a vaccine.



email

To make your voice part of the project, contact Hannah Martin at: [hmartin@carers.org](mailto:hmartin@carers.org)



website

Short on time? You can complete their short survey.

You can find the survey here:

<https://carerstrust.surveymonkey.com/r/QSX3GQV>



funding

## Essentia Foundation Grant

Essentia Foundation Grant Funding secured will enable Equal Futures to deliver 2 new youth services, one in Glasgow and one in Ayrshire for 16-18 year olds with additional support needs and their families.

These youth services focus is to support young people and their families in the transition from school to further education, training or employment. We aim to start these in the summer once COVID restrictions allow us to.

## Foundation Scotland's Response, Recovery and Resilience Fund –

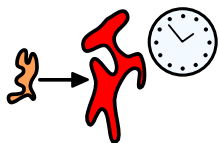
We also secured some funding as part of the 'Recovery and Resilience Fund'. We will use this grant to revamp our Volunteer Training and to recruit and train new volunteers.

The grant will enable us to deliver meaningful, relevant and pandemic aware training sessions online to 4 existing volunteers and 16 new volunteers we are hoping to recruit.

We are working alongside our comms team to execute a digital marketing campaign to recruit volunteers during the pandemic and will use some of the grant for boosted social media activity.

We will meet remotely with volunteering agencies to promote our volunteering opportunities at this critical time for people with a learning disability.

The grant will pay for equipment to ensure our online training can be delivered with good quality audio as well as covering costs of producing the new training materials and volunteer welcome pack.



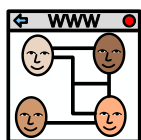
transition



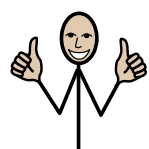
volunteers



training



social media



promote



good quality



Funded by the Essentia Foundation, through Foundation Scotland.