



The Magazine of Grampian Opportunities

Grampian **Opportunities**
Finding the way forward



Issue Fifteen

Mentoring Service receives National Recognition Award

The New Explorations Mentoring Service received the Health and Disability Recognition Award for 2011 from the Scottish Mentoring Network.

The main aim of the Mentoring service is to enable adults to move into regular employment or be actively involved in their community.

“New Explorations mentoring service takes a person centred approach, based on the individual needs of the mentee,” explained Tricia McLean one of the Mentoring Co-ordinators.



Katrina and Tricia with the mentoring award

“One size does not fit all,” she explained adding, “We aim to give true recognition to the value of people sharing their unique experiences of disability and mental ill health together. We also hope to raise awareness within the community of disability issues, together with the ability, and employment potential of people with mental health problems and disabilities.”

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer mentor, or in a mentee opportunity to have one-to-one support, please contact Tricia McLean, Mentoring Co-ordinators on 01467 629675 or email: go.mentor@grampianopportunities.org.uk

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Lewis Oliver Wilson
(born 02.12.11)

Hope you all have had a prosperous year like us. We are delighted that staff and volunteer efforts have been recognised for their great work through the Mentoring Services. Thank you to all volunteers for their efforts during the year of European Year of Volunteering 2011.

Big congratulations to Katrina who gave birth to a baby boy. Well done. Look forward to bringing you all more news from Grampian Opportunities next year, thank you all for your support.

The Newsgroup Team.



Flapjacks (Recipe Makes 8)

50 oz (140 g) butter, margarine or oil
2tbl. spoons honey or maple syrup
1 oz (28g) sugar (optional)
1/2 lb (225g) rolled oats

1. Lightly grease an 8inch (20cm) shallow cake tin.
2. Gently heat the butter, honey and sugar in a pot until melted.
3. Stir in the oats, remove from the heat and turn the mixture into the tin.
4. Smooth the mixture and bake in a pre heated oven at 350 F / 180 C or gas mark 4 for 20 minutes. Allow to cool before removing from tin.

Quick Vegetable Soup 5 - 7 Minutes (for 4—5 Servings)

3 tablespoons of oil or 1oz. margarine or butter
1 medium sized onion sliced
1 medium sized carrot chopped
1 medium sized potato chopped
1-2pints boiling water
1 level teaspoon of flour
1 level teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon of soy sauce or yeast extract



1. Heat oil and fry vegetables for 1 minute stirring well
2. Add water and bring to the boil and simmer in covered pan for a few minutes
3. Stir in flour and salt blended with a little water
4. Put into liquidiser for a few seconds
5. Pour back into pan and thicken and stir in savoury extracts
6. Season to taste (Variation: for cream of vegetable soup, stir in a quarter pint of evaporated milk into finished soup).

The Inverurie Community Training Kitchen at the Wyness Hall is now completed and will be available for use soon.

A Development Worker, Janette Gascoine, has been appointed until the end of March 2012 to engage with all the groups and individuals wanting to use the kitchen and to look at their current capacity and training needs.

The first course to be run will be Confidence to Cook Training for Trainers by Fiona Matthew, Catering Advisor (Health Promotion Team).

If you would like to go on this course Carolyn Lamb on 01467 672704 or Jill Sowden on 01467 628338.



Grampian Opportunities Creative Short Breaks Project

Volunteers involved with GO's short break project have been busy.

In October, Denise and Maurice represented Grampian Opportunities at an event to thank fundraisers who took part in the Caledonian Challenge. Denise thanked participants for completing their challenge and highlighted how funds raised had been distributed through the Scottish Community Fund to support disabled people manage the challenges they faced on a daily basis. The money awarded to GO helped us set up the Short Break Project.

Funding through Shared Care Scotland will ensure Grampian Opportunities can continue to develop a short break information service for carers and people who need care. Improving access to information, raising awareness of choices, and promote a greater knowledge and understanding about how people can access appropriate short breaks.

At the start of November ten volunteers from GO accepted an invitation to Woodhead Cottages in Banchory to share in a programme of activities with families involved in the Shared Lives Scheme. Volunteers had the opportunity to benefit from beauty treatment, take part in a craft session, archery session, golf taster and a "brain gym session". We also had the chance to see the chalets and meet some of the Shared Lives members.

Three volunteers benefited from a break at Crathie Opportunities Holiday Cottage, where they had the chance to visit a nearby fishery and catch their supper! Following this break away, Bill and Allan travelled to Dunfermline to take part in Shared Care Scotland's Creative Breaks event, where they were able to hear about the work of other services across Scotland.



November finished with GO volunteers being actively involved in the process of recruiting a Project Coordinator to support them. GO would like to welcome Shona Owen to the post of Short Break Coordinator.



Shona started in post on 1st December, just in time for the groups first visit to the South Aberdeenshire Carer's Forum.

And at the start of December, Shona went with Shona, Bill and Allan went to the Carers meeting and made some useful contacts.

Are you a Carer?

Do you need a break?

**Apply to the short breaks fund to pay for;
a night out to the cinema,
a day out with friends, a trip to the hairdressers,
or a holiday somewhere sunny?**

**Choose whatever you need to recharge
your batteries and get some 'me' time.**

**To get help filling out the application form,
planning your break and getting provision
for your cared for person, get in touch with us;**

**If you live in:
Aberdeen City
VSA Carers Services
Tel: 01224 212021**

**Aberdeenshire
VSA Aberdeenshire Carers Support
Tel: 01651 873953**

Ask for the Short Breaks Fund.

George Square Nightmare!!!

To finish a Research Project I was participating in, a friend and I had to go to Glasgow. I was looking for affordable places to stay, and found the Premier Inn on George Square. It looked okay close to the shops and entertainment all the things you need for a "girlie" weekend.

I wanted a twin room with wheelchair access but they didn't have that type of rooms available at all, so I had to opt for a disabled double room with a sofa bed. The lift for access was on the corner of the street and on entry there was an automatic machine where you accepted your booking and paid. This was not the friendliest or safe welcomes.

The sofa bed was not in the room and we found a bath and not a walk in shower. For a room classed as disabled friendly this was a challenge because not all disabled people or older people can use baths. A room change was called for when we found the toilet was coming away from the wall. Eventually we got a change of room and a sofa bed – shame it collapse on my friend. Finally we had to laugh because if we didn't, we would have cried... We managed to get a night free, and as my friend said to my brother "I have had my eyes opened being friends with your sister". I joked back "at least I am good for something."



Here is my first question to the Premier Inn why don't you have disabled twin rooms as well as doubles, why don't we as disabled people have the same choices as the rest of the public?

ES

The Challenges of Organising a Short Break!

We know there is a need for an information service to plan short breaks – the Glasgow story above reflects my own story.

Lying in my bed having just been told of a Boccia competition in Aberdeen, I thought I can't go because it would be too expensive for the distance and I wouldn't get there in time. Then I thought "short break". I could stay somewhere close to where the competition was being held, carers could get me up in time and my daughter would get some time on her own.

Planning the detail for a break is difficult:

- The hotel has to be organised, if they have facilities i.e. wheelchair friendly rooms, if the doors are wide enough and if the bed is high enough to get the hoist under. I find it easier to move in a single bed, and I wanted two single beds so a friend or carer could stay with me.
- Carers have to be organised well in advance. My regular carers work mostly in Aberdeenshire, so I had to look at getting agency carers in Aberdeen.
- I was loaned a hoist and bed rail but would have needed transport to get these to the hotel.
- Most important of all I needed to be clear about what my Care Manager would support.

I did make to the Boccia competition, won a medal and had a great day out. My plans for an overnight stay didn't work out this time but I learnt a lot about what I need to arrange and look forward to a well planned time away from home next year.

Angela Will



Adult Aspergers Family Group Aberdeen

This group is for the families of adults with Aspergers.

We come together to share experiences, information and offer mutual support in a relaxed and safe environment. Topics covered include: Advocacy, housing, employment, education, legal matters, services and organisations. Contact Elaine Dukes on 01224 358595

E-mail Elaine.dukes@vsa.org.uk or Arlene.malcom@vsa.org.uk

Self-Directed Support is when you arrange some or all of your (or your child's) support instead of receiving directly provided services from your local authority social work or housing department. Self-Directed Support is for people who would like more flexibility, choice and control over their support so that they can live at home more independently. It is not the name of a particular type of service, but a way to tailor-make community care that better suits you. If you choose to direct your own support, you are in charge of the arrangements. You will get a sum of money to spend on the support you need instead of receiving council services. If you want, you can choose to organise some of your own support and also receive some council services <http://www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk/>

Directing your own support



During 2012, OTBDS (Outside the Box Development Scotland) will be working with Grampian Opportunities and Stepping Stones to look at how smaller organisations, with a strong member-led focus, build their capacity as service providers to support people using Self Directed Support directly or indirectly purchase the support they need.

The three organisations share a commitment to promoting equality and diversity within their organisations, and when influencing the policies and practices of other organisations. Together we will take time to learn more about Self Directed Support and the implications this can have for our organisations. We will have the opportunity to learn from each other and look for new solutions and approaches which will open up more choice and control for the people who use services.

OTBDS has already carried out research which pulled together a range of issues small user-led providers identified. It also builds on a networking event held in Edinburgh in September 2011. The event titled People Working Together brought together people who use social care services who are working together to deliver services or create more opportunities for them and other people.

Discussions on the day looked at peer support, co-production, participation, and inclusion and using self-directed support to get the sort of life you want

The project work is supported by Scottish Government funding to promote the implementation of the Self-directed Support in Scotland strategy to build the capacity of providers. Whilst many providers already deliver personalised support packages, successful implementation of the strategy will need all providers to engage with the shift in culture.

Outside the Box is a source of independent community development support, information, training and advice to people who tend to be marginalised from their communities and who want to make a contribution.

<http://www.otbds.org/>

The Stepping Stones Organisation (Mental Health) aims to promote self help and provide facilities and services for the members of West Dunbartonshire, where mental ill health exists. They support members individually or as part of a group, with the goal of regaining and maintaining good mental health.

<http://www.stepstones.org.uk/>



Adjusting to Life with having a Carer come into your Home.



For just over a year now I have had carers coming into my home to help me with housework, meal planning, cooking a meal, looking after myself, helping me to budget, keep well, get out of the house, and sit and talk to me when I need someone to listen to me.

When I first started to have the Carers coming into my home I found the experience hard to adapt to. People never came to my home, I found it extremely difficult having a complete stranger come in and do things for me, even if it was just washing my dishes.

Some carers came in and just took over and did what they thought should be done, not always what I wanted them to do that day. I am lucky now as I have a regular carer who comes in three times a week. We have got to know each other really well and we now share the tasks together. If I am having a bad day we sometimes don't do anything apart from sit and talk which can be a great help to me. Having her come in three times a week helps me with the loneliness, the isolation but most of all, it allows me to know that someone is thinking and caring about me. I have gone through a bad patch in recent weeks and she has been there for me even days and nights when she is not working. I am so grateful for her help and kind words, the encouragement to keep going a little at a time. Thank you to the Carers who give up their time to help others.

The Green Bag scheme.

There's now an easier way to cart your medicines about.

A patient medicine bag or 'Green Bag' is a reusable, re-sealable green bag for putting medicines in - ideally in their original packaging. It should be used to keep all of the medicines a patient brings with them together in one place so that whenever they go in to hospital staff knows which medicines patients are taking.



Any medicines, supplements or herbal remedies which you are taking from a pharmacy, supermarket or herbalist can be put in your Green Bag including:

Tablets and capsules	Creams and ointments	
Medicated shampoos	Sprays	
Liquid medicines	Inhalers	Patches

The bags will be given out at pre-admission clinics. Ambulance staff and G-MED staff will use Green bags to collect your medicines if you need to go to hospital in an emergency. When you arrive in hospital, you will be given a green bag to keep all your medicines together. When you leave hospital, you may use the green bag to take your medicines home.

If you need a Green Bag or would like to find out more, contact Susan Healy on 01224 553368 or email s.healy@nhs.net

Self Help Management for Long Term Conditions

NHS Grampian, the voluntary sector and people with long term conditions and their carer's are being helped with a campaign for advice on where to turn to. This is part of a wider initiative in the Know Where to Turn Too campaign which signposts the public to the most appropriate service to turn too. For more info go to: www.know-who-to-turn-to.com/selfmanagement

At a recent meeting of the Inverurie Health Improvement Group, Ian Powell, CHP Services Redesign Manager, gave a presentation on the Stay Well scheme which allows patients to access personal health plans for long term conditions. The test system can be accessed on <http://www.itwh-staywell.co.uk/Training-Site-Aberdeenshire.aspx>

How do we address societal isolation and tackle negative societal attitudes towards people with long term conditions?

In September Grampian Opportunities was represented at an event organised by the Long Term Condition Alliance in Edinburgh, where we were asked to provide a speaker to talk on the theme of social isolation and negative societal attitudes.

Denise's personal story started around the use of words and labels, what our place is in society and the need to be treated as an equal. She said "When I volunteer I feel like I am contributing. I feel I have more control over my life outside of my home than in it. I often feel safer with strangers than with carers. When receiving care you can be made to feel that you should be grateful, even when the care does not meet your needs. There are challenges when you have people in your home... that then becomes their workplace."

She asked the audience "I'm only in my twenties, is it right that we have to go to bed at 9pm? I don't want to complain but if I don't will anything change? **I can't get better but I do want a better life.** I have a disability and I have a degree. It would be good to get on with your life without budgets, eligibility etc., but when you are in receipt of care you are at the bottom. I wish for less prejudices, and the opportunity to do the things you want, but still professionals hear what they want to hear."

She cautioned that people should avoid getting sucked into care models, and remember supported people can contribute. "I have to cope with a changing body shape that makes it difficult to get clothes but if was to allow myself to feel embarrassed I would never go out. **A lot of people do hide away.**"

The full report forms part of an initiative that has been established to facilitate improved dialogue between those receiving, planning and delivering social care. It is intended to help inform emerging developments on increasing integration of health and social care, with a focus on long term conditions.

Denise's session questioned the value that society places on people receiving, and those providing, care. People who require social care are often marginalised and experience isolation; poor quality of life; and, sometimes, serious physical and emotional harm, as a result.

Staff who provide care are engaged in some of the most important and intimate aspects of people's lives and yet occupy among the lowest status and lowest paid employment.

This session shone a light on isolation, negative attitudes and the societal value placed on social care as absolutely fundamental to how Scotland responds to its ageing population.

Pet Therapy

A dog is a man's and woman's best friend, an old saying but relevant today with an increased awareness of the benefits of human and animal relationships. The ability of animals to provide health improvements is immense. The Aztecs recognised that certain breed of dogs could help stomach problems by lying the dog over the sore area and promoting healing, Now hundreds of years later health professionals are following in their footsteps and recognising that animals can play a part in improving health. The following are benefits of Pet Therapy:

- Companionship
- Fun and relaxation
- A sense of responsibility
- Calming effect of stroking an animal
- Bond between animal lovers
- Reduction in medical care
- Cats in nursing homes
- Assistance dogs for the blind and deaf
- Unconditional love



All kinds of animals can be therapists around the home. Guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, fish; cats, dog, in fact any small animal. Outside the home farm animals and animal sanctuaries all provide opportunities for human animal interactions. The bond between animals and humans has been around a long time with cave paintings from 30,000 years ago depicting animals. It shows how much they have meant to mankind and interdependence to benefit both species.

One of the organisations which offer the chance to interact with animals is Willows Animal Sanctuary and Animal Assisted Therapy Unit based at Strichen, Tel. 01771 653112. E-mail kate@willowsanimals.com www.willowsanimals.com



LEAD Scotland Information Service

Freephone helpline : 0800 999 2568

2pm- 4pm (Tuesdays & Wednesdays) 10am- 12 pm (Thurs. & Friday)

Information and advice for disabled learners and carers is now available through a service being piloted by LEAD Scotland. Information available includes:

- Applying for educational courses and training programmes
- Sources of funding and support for disabled learners
- Information regarding disability equality and discrimination
- Signposting to specialist sources of support and much more...

Hobby Group

Congratulations to Phyllis for leading a programme of craft classes at Grampian Opportunities, Comraich and APEX.

A new programme of hobby activities will be developed in 2012 with support from the Triangle Trust.



Employment Forum

A series of meetings have been held at Credos in Aberdeen hosted by GO with participation from Aberdeenshire Council and RNIB employment service.

Topics covered included:

1. role of job centre
2. benefit changes
3. employability strategy and pipeline
4. work clubs
5. support for disabled people

Common points raised included the need to bridge the gap between employers, job centres, disabled persons and job seekers. The need for an up to date directory of helpful contacts was identified as something the group could help create and an achievable outcome of the meetings.

A voice for disabled people to raise awareness of disabled people's needs in the working environment was also felt to be important.

The next meeting will look at Work Clubs.

If you would like to know more or get involved in a working group to support disabled people look for and work towards securing employment, please get in touch with Linda at Grampian Opportunities. Tel 01467 629675

Welfare Reform Bill

The coalition government is determined to save £18 Billion over the next 4 years by undertaking the biggest reform of the Social Security System since its conception in 1948 when the Labour Government of Clement Atlee introduced the idea of looking after its citizens from "the Cradle to the Grave".

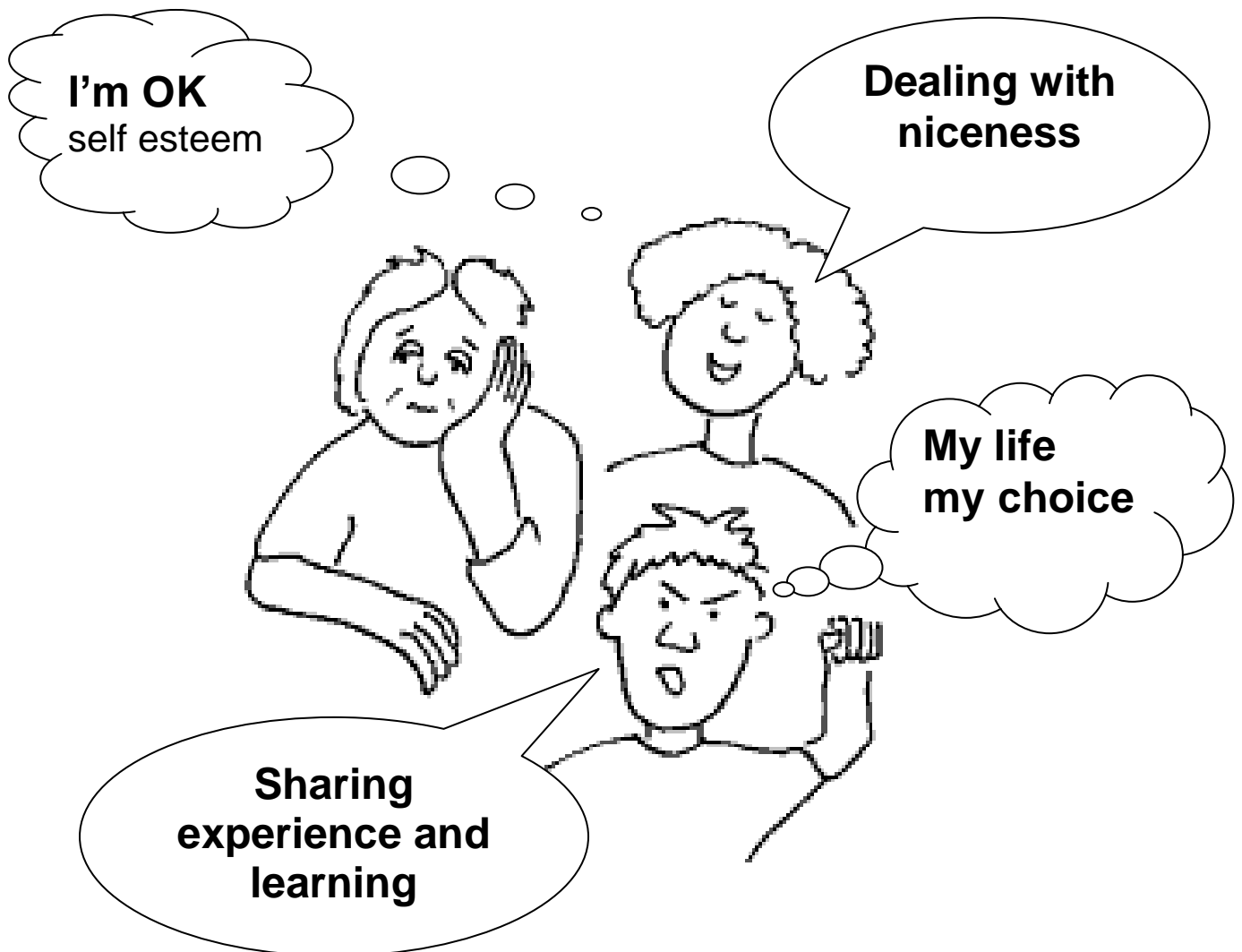
Prior to this poverty was a national disgrace and the terror of the workhouse was a real fear for people. The government moved to provide education, health and benefits for sickness and unemployment. The concept of "Free At The Point Of Use" was introduced.

Critics argued that industrialisation needed a healthy and educated workforce to cope with the sophistication of the modern world and to stop social unrest. Others argued that it stops people from taking personal responsibility and creates immature attitudes. It was also hoped to reduce health costs for people but did not foresee the costs of building new hospitals for government.

The original ethos of the Welfare System is now being changed. The benefits system is going through a costly re-evaluation. Government finances the welfare state through national insurance contributions; taxes etc. and raise £90 billion annually to government revenues approximately 17% of receipts. Tax evasion costs the country £30 billion annually, while benefit fraud costs £1.2 billion. The N H S is in the process of being reorganised and nurse's morale is reported to be at an all time low.

Hardest Cuts Disability Rally About 1000 people attended the march in Edinburgh in October to highlight the proposed benefits cuts.

Life Skills programme



Learning Opportunities Coming Soon...

1. **Life Skills Course:** Grampian Opportunities is planning to repeat the successful Life Skills course we delivered last year. We plan to work with the WEA and follow the programme with a Discover New Horizon's Course. Our plan is to offer to match participants with buddies or mentors who can support them to identify their personal goals and plan how to work towards them.
2. **Signpost Training** – learn the skill of helping someone identify the support or opportunities that will help them live their life to the full.
3. **Mentor Training** – an opportunity to join our nationally recognised service and share your experience and knowledge to help others,

If you are interested as a participant and / or buddy then get in touch soon to book a place on the course which we plan to start early in the new Year.

Contact Grampian Opportunities on 01467 629675
Email: info@grampianopportunities.org.uk

CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

Find the following words connected with Christmas in our word search grid. Words run in any direction.

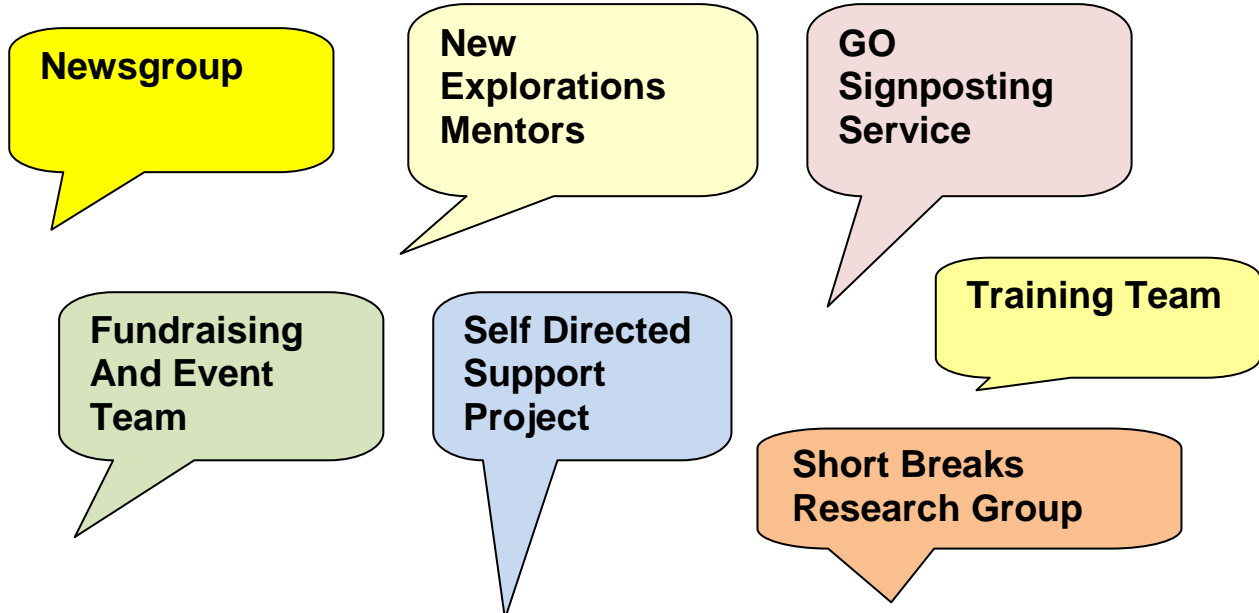
R	N	A	M	W	O	N	S	Y	Q	I	D
E	C	Y	J	N	E	F	L	U	N	E	S
E	H	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	T
D	R	A	S	Z	O	K	V	O	M	G	O
N	I	L	U	H	R	C	G	E	E	I	C
I	S	Y	S	E	V	A	T	Y	S	F	K
E	T	E	G	H	A	N	B	R	I	T	I
R	M	N	B	T	T	D	A	K	W	S	N
M	A	H	O	M	N	Y	S	C	L	T	G
M	S	Y	W	C	A	R	O	L	S	A	O
A	S	O	S	U	S	X	E	E	E	R	T
H	G	I	E	L	S	B	I	J	W	P	O



Christmas joy warms the heart

Bells	Christmas	Manger	Star
Bethlehem	Elves	Reindeer	Stocking
Bows	Gifts	Santa	Toys
Candy	Holly	Sleigh	Tree
Carols	Jesus	Snowman	Wisemen

WANTED ...Volunteering Opportunities at Grampian Opportunities:



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