



The Magazine of Grampian Opportunities

Grampian **Opportunities**
Finding the way forward



Issue Ten

What a busy month we have all had here at Grampian Opportunities, from the updated webpage that one of the media team has worked on to all the events we have been to and hosted.

There has been a lot of exciting opportunities for volunteers to experience. A few examples of these are the Sus-it-Out Plus event and the Shared Care Scotland Inspiring Breaks facilitator training. There have also been a number of courses which volunteers are having the chance to go on through Grampian Opportunities, from the Confidence to GO course that aims expand on and build on individual's confidence, to the New Explorations project actively recruiting new mentors. There are many other interesting and exciting things happening at GO. However I would run out of room, listing them all, and there is always the next newsletter.

As a member of the newsletter team, I hope that you, the reader, enjoy this quarter's edition of the Grampian Opportunities newsletter. May I thank everyone for all their hard work for their contributions.

May I also take this opportunity to say congratulations, to Phyllis Gordon a fellow volunteer, on becoming a grandmother to baby Matthew. I am sure all of the media team and Go would join me in this.

GO Website is now up and running, please feel free to have a look at it at

www.grampianopportunities.org.uk

Eddy, Go volunteer and Editor

Contacts

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SMILE Campaign	www.ltcas.org.uk
Technology and Design	www.capability-scotland.org.uk/designandtechnologyworkshops
Cinema Card	www.ceacard.co.uk
Sus it Out Plus	www.forward-scotland.org.uk/Sus-it-Out
Shared Care Scotland	www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk
Future Choices	www.futurechoicesaberdeen.org.uk



**New Explorations
MENTORING SERVICE
for disabled people**

Mentee Recruitment

- Are you stuck in a rut?
- Lost your way?
- Don't know what the first step is or how to take it?

But know that you want to change!

- Scared to speak out or ask for support?
- Say what you really want and be heard and understood!

But know that you need support!

Contact us and discover what New Explorations can do for you by becoming a Mentee.

Support Network

People need support networks. You may not use that phrase or even think of your family, friends and colleagues in those terms but that is what they are – your support network.

For those with disabilities and mental health issues the support network is even more important but often more difficult to establish. But with support much more can be achieved.

Small steps

Being a Mentee can help you to develop skills, confidence and, through discussion, make life's stresses take on a different, less threatening shape. With good mentoring it is possible to explore new opportunities which may have seemed impossible in the past for those with a disability.

Opportunities for change

New Explorations Mentoring Service assists Mentees to be ambitious, to see the opportunities for personal development and, for many, to achieve a job at the end of the journey.

New Explorations Mentoring Service is a one-to-one mentoring service for adults with disabilities in Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen and Moray.

Come and speak to us:

Tricia McLean and Katrina Wilson , Mentoring Coordinators

New Explorations Mentoring Service, Grampian Opportunities

Tel: 01467 629675 or Email: go.mentor@grampianopportunities.org.uk

Update on Grampian Opportunities

The past year has been an incredible time of growth for Grampian Opportunities as the New Explorations service completed and reported back on the first year of delivering our mentoring service.

We are delighted that we continue to be supported by a growing number of volunteers who help us to maintain and build on a peer-led approach to the delivery of our services. This sense of ownership and leadership was confirmed by the staff and volunteers taking part in a workshop as part of the Sus-It Plus Programme. Facilitated by Forward Scotland, we were encouraged to look at who we are.



Feedback from the group taking part said:

1. We respect and celebrate the diversity of human society
2. We are committed to achieving social justice and well-being for all
3. We make decisions in an open, inclusive and accountable way

We
respect and
celebrate the
diversity of
human society

During the year, to ensure people can fully participate and contribute to our work, we have sourced adaptive equipment and specialist software for both staff and volunteers - but one of the ongoing challenges we have is finding accessible meeting places. To help us identify venues we have secured support from the Garioch Community Planning Partnership and the local access panel.

Researching accessible meeting places

This research activity opens up the opportunity for volunteers to be part of a team, to use and develop skills. Support from the Garioch Community Planning Partnership and the local access panel have made this possible and we know that the information about accessible meeting places will be of interest to disabled people and groups

We
continually
educate and
develop
ourselves

Short breaks

When volunteers have travelled outwith the area as part of their learning or volunteering activities, arranging transport, finding accessible places to stay, hiring hoists and booking carers all add considerably to the effort required. The experience of making these arrangements inspired several volunteers to recognise they could use the same knowledge to support disabled people consider inspiring short breaks as an alternative to traditional respite.

One volunteer has risen to the challenge by signing up with Shared Care Scotland and undertaking training as a peer facilitator. Three volunteers have supported this activity and a small team has started to look at how they can raise awareness of short break options.

A successful funding application to the Scottish Community Foundation will help us involve more volunteers and have access to the internet wherever we are. If volunteering on a short breaks team or taking part in the Shared Care Workshops interests you, get in touch with us at Grampian Opportunities. Contact: go.volunteer@grampianopportunities.org.uk

Sharing experience and Learning Opportunities

During the year we have been able to support a wide range of learning opportunities.

We arranged training on Epilepsy delivered by Quarriers, worked with WEA and ATtraining to develop a “Confidence to GO” course (based on material used by GCIL and LCIL) and volunteer mentors are leading and delivering our second mentor training programme.

We have also identified a method for volunteers to be able to achieve accreditation of core skills through portfolio development linked to their volunteering opportunities.

Working together to help each other

We feel that by working together we can help each other achieve our goals. Our core aim is to support people take up and progress in learning, volunteering and employment. When people say “What can you do for me” – we often reply “what can you do for us”. If you feel you can help us help you or others give us a call on 01467 629675.

SMILE Campaign

Long-Term Conditions Alliance Scotland (LTCAS) have launched the 'SMILE for Self Management' campaign which aims to allow people from all walks of life to show their support for self management in a simple and fun way. The campaign is linked to a national awareness raising campaign and Self Management Week.

Smile
Management
Improve
Lives for
Everyone



LTCAS are asking people to take a photo of themselves, their group or organisation holding an oversized SMILE over their own mouth. LTCAS have provided a selection of SMILEs and these are available to download on the LTCAS website. Then simply send your picture back to them.

The campaign has a Facebook page "Facebook/LTCAS SMILE Campaign" where SMILEs can be downloaded, and photos taken uploaded. Please join the facebook page to show support for the campaign!

For more information including other ways to get involved, download the leaflet here or e-mail smile@lucas.org.uk. Website: www.lucas.org.uk/smile

Partnership project to explore disabled people's experiences of design and technology within the home.

A Technology and Design workshop was held on Wednesday 29th September at Raeden Court in Aberdeen. This event was facilitated by the Blackwood Foundation, Capability Scotland and Ownership Options.

Two members of Grampian Opportunities reported that the event was very interesting and informative.

"We looked at technology and design, what works and don't work for us with the technology and design we use in life. It was very easy to express your views because the group had only 8 people in it and the facilitators were very helpful. Everyone who attended had a physical disability or visual impairment. For our attendance we all got £20 Tesco voucher and had lots of fun."

There will be a total of ten events across Scotland and the information gathered will be sent out to a number of organisations including housing associations, local authorities and technology companies across Scotland, with the aim of influencing future home designs and the technology devices they are developing

Sus-it Out Plus



Thanks to a successful funding application to Forward Scotland, Grampian Opportunities were offered the services of a facilitator to help us draft a sustainable Communities Action plan for Grampian Opportunities.

A group of GO's key decision makers, including staff, volunteers and a board member, went to the Catholic Hall in Inverurie on the 24th August for a "Sus it Out Plus planning session".

The key focus of the session was to improve our organisation for the community by making GO more Sustainable. We were supported to look at GO's issues in a structured way, by using interactive activities and lots of discussion. The end result being that we have all committed on specific actions on which to carry GO forward into the future, with the facilitator sending us a draft report of the day's findings. Training will be available to help us take forward the action plan.

The overall impression of the day was that the GO team is a very strong one and works very hard and well together, and that Grampian Opportunities works hard to deliver to its community.

Cinema Card

The Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. Terms and Condition of use apply. To apply for the card, you will need to be in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or be a registered blind person.

More information on their website www.ceacard.co.uk

Shared Care Scotland Inspiring Breaks facilitator

On Monday 27th September I went to Edinburgh for an interview to become a peer facilitator for a project called, Inspiring Breaks run by Shared Care Scotland. Following this I travelled by train to Dunfermline for the two day training and with the support of fellow GO volunteers stayed in a hotel.

There are 6 peer facilitators and our role is to co-facilitate events run by Shared Care Scotland where we take people through a person centred planning process of designing their own respite or short breaks. These events will give people a chance to meet new people and learn from others.

Shared Care Scotland aims to hold 20 events across Scotland and it is expected that two of these will be in Aberdeenshire. These events will be open to carers and people with long-term health conditions. More details will follow.

Future Choices Fundraising Quiz Night...

On Saturday the 16th October, a bunch of Grampian Opportunities volunteers gathered for a night out at the Ashvale Restaurant, Great Western Road, Aberdeen. We went to support our fellow friends from Future Choices at their fundraising event.

The quiz night included dinner and a raffle. The quiz itself brought much laughter and Grampian Opportunities very competitive side and nature.

GO didn't do to badly, with one team coming 5th and the other team sharing top points and eventually coming in as runners up.

Many raffle prizes were won by us, so on all counts it was a very enjoyable and successful evening for GO and Future Choices.

Vital Skills

Heather, Katrina and Linda have signed up for Vital Skills training to ensure good practice in the delivery of our mentoring service.

The course covers 9 key areas and those who successfully complete all the sessions will be presented with a Befriending Network Scotland Vital Skills in Befriending certificate.

Training is taking place at Befriend a Child's office in Aberdeen – giving our staff team the opportunity to dress up and have fun during a break in the training. <http://www.befriending.co.uk/>





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