



Care & Share Companionship

Scottish Registered Charity No : SCo48873

CARE AND SHARE COMPANIONSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

Fife Health
& Social Care
Partnership



Supporting the people of Fife together



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CARE AND SHARE COMPANIONSHIP

Introduction

“We know of many inspiring examples of volunteering, community projects and initiatives to tackle loneliness and isolation this year. Indeed, 94,000 over 65s in Scotland say they would not have got through the crisis without the kindness of strangers.

Key concerns: Prior to the pandemic, levels of loneliness and social isolation were high, though often under-reported due to social stigma. COVID-19 has increased these feelings.”

Age Scotland 2020-21

Our Vision

To provide personalised, flexible companionship and support to people over the age of 60 who are experiencing isolation and / or loneliness within their communities.

To increase the engagement of volunteers within communities to maximise community spirit regardless of age, culture and background.

To connect with people over the age of 60 to provide flexible and diverse support.

To make people feel valued and part of their community.

GOVERNANCE

Trustee Board meetings are held every 6-8 weeks. Our link worker from Health & Social Care Partnership is invited to guide and advise. Occasionally people with expertise in a particular field give a short presentation which strengthen and support the members to govern effectively.

Board of Trustees

| | | |
|------------------|---|-------------------|
| Chair | - | |
| Vice Chair | - | Janet Milligan |
| Treasurer | - | Lars Christiansen |
| Minute Secretary | - | Mairi McKay |
| Trustees | - | Laura Lamb |
| | | Eileen Spence |
| | | Judy Hamilton |
| | | Eddie Mwiinga |

Facts

Loneliness and social isolation are different but related concepts. Social isolation can lead to loneliness and loneliness can lead to social isolation. Both may also occur at the same time.

Loneliness and social isolation also share many factors that are associated with increasing the likelihood of people experiencing each, such as deteriorating health, sensory and mobility impairments. *Age UK Love Later Life*

100,000 older people in Scotland feel lonely all or most of the time. 200,000 will go half a week without a visit or call from anyone.

Tackling Loneliness | Age Scotland

Aims and Purpose of Care and Share Companionship (CSC)

***Companionship* is spending time with someone or having someone to spend time with.**

A companion is a person who frequently spends time with you, associates with you, or accompanies you when you go places. *Companionship* is similar to friendship, and a person one calls a *companion* is usually their friend. But the word companionship specifically implies that a lot of time is spent in each other's company. *Dictionary.com*

We know people are living longer; family dynamics have changed – more people are living away from home, people who have shared a lifetime together now find themselves as one. Confidence, self-esteem, health and wellbeing can all be affected. We would like to be recognised as the charity who imitates the extended family member. Spending time with them in a relaxed comfortable, friendly manner.

We use the term 'friend' when speaking about the person we support rather than 'client' because companionship leads to friendship on many different levels.

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Care and Share Companionship is a charity focused on giving companionship to people over the age of 60 living in isolation and/or loneliness. The aim of companionship is to form a rapport that in time will build trust, respect, friendship and bring enjoyment. In effect this will enhance both the volunteer and friend's lives helping to promote and sustain health and emotional wellbeing.

Companionship helps to

- build confidence and self esteem
- develop friendship with peers
- stimulate and maintain conversational interaction
- give a sense of value and belonging
- promote health and wellbeing

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## Continued Impact of Covid-19

Throughout 2020 and the beginning of 2021 the Covid-19 crisis meant face-to-face social interaction wasn't always possible which made for a difficult and challenging time for people. Restrictions continued to be in place. We continued adjusting our support to ease the loneliness and isolation felt by our friends. We knew the devastation caused to health and wellbeing of our friends when we gathered information from regular evaluation calls. The most common expression was they felt, because of their age, no one cared.

“What can we do? We just have to get on with it.” Friend 90+

A small glimmer of hope and brightness appeared as Scotland began its vaccination programme in December 2020. Priority was given to residents in care homes, carers and other frontline staff.

People living in the community over the age of 90 were then offered vaccinations either by attending their health centre or receiving a home visit.

The impact of Covid-19 remained as we entered 2021. Loneliness and isolation were more pronounced and on the increase. Consequently, having a devastating impact on the mental health and wellbeing of our friends. Their resilience continued to be sorely tested throughout this time.

*There are well documented mental health impacts of social isolation and loneliness, including a higher risk of depression and, of more relevance to our client group, a greater likelihood of developing clinical dementia. There are also significant physical impacts which can be as severe as obesity or smoking.<sup>1</sup>*

*The Scottish Government have recognised social isolation and loneliness as being a significant public health issue in Scotland and in an effort to tackle it in December 2018 they published a strategy<sup>2</sup> - one of the first of its kind in the world, to run from 2018-2026 in an effort to address this.*

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<sup>1</sup> Campaign to End Loneliness. Threat to Health. URL: <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/threat-to-health/>

<sup>2</sup> A Connected Scotland: our strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections. December 2018

The pandemic had engulfed the world and all aspects of our everyday lives. Businesses, and charities adapted and changed when lockdown was enforced.

The challenge was how we would move forward adapting to support our friends through the transitional period of restrictions being eased to reintroduce them to their volunteer companion and their community in a safe manner.

Rigorous risk assessments with our friends and volunteers were completed before visits were resumed in April following and adhering to NHS and Scottish Government guidelines.

Volunteers were offered free PPE or alternatively be reimbursed if they wished to buy their own.

Information and guidance were given on what to do if experiencing symptoms of Covid-19, lateral flow testing, and a link sent with the locations of the Covid Centres.

We considered not only if both vaccinations had been given but also how volunteers and our friends felt about face-to-face visits.

When we reinstated face-to-face contact in April 2021, visits were limited to one hour.

There were a small number of people who continued to feel very anxious and were more comfortable continuing to receive telephone calls.

## 2021 Support

As we entered the first quarter of 2021 restrictions were cautiously being lifted and we felt optimistic entering a new year.

We continued to offer telephone and shopping support.

## Project with David Latto

We were delighted to be contacted by local singer/songwriter David Latto, who was given the opportunity through Fife Cultural Trust and Creative Scotland to be Fife's Artist in Residence for January. His aim was to reach elderly people living in the Fife community who may be experiencing isolation or loneliness. This involved interviewing, by telephone, 4 residents who were experiencing isolation or loneliness and asking them about their lives. David was hoping that their conversations would not only make them feel valued but help him to create 4 very different songs from different people over the age of 65.

The Service Manager spoke with Margaret and Danny, who were both being supported by CSC, to explain this exciting project and ask if they would be happy to take part. It was a resounding 'yes' from both.

We were contacted by Gillian from Fife Cultural Trust about a digital preview of the songs with participants and David to gather some feedback before the actual launch. The songs hit a chord with both Margaret and Danny; telling their life stories with clarity using two different genres of music. They were fantastic and well received. There was a press release, and the songs were launched digitally by video in June. David gave a synopsis of

the thread of what he had taken from his chats with Mary and Danny and how he created each song - their lyrics and music.

It was very interesting, exciting and emotional to be a part of this fabulous project. Margaret's family in America were sent the link along with Danny's niece who lives in the community.

The link to all four songs was shared to all volunteers and Trustees with fantastic feedback.

<http://www.fifesongproject.com/>



### Balwearie High School

We were also delighted during the bleak winter months when Balwearie High School pupils continued to be supportive by sending us drawings in celebration of Burns Night relating to his poetry and all things Scottish including a pencil drawing of Irn Bru and Tunnock's Tea Cakes! Our friends were overwhelmed with gratitude and they were heartened to know that younger people were concerned about their wellbeing at this time.

*"Loved the little letter and was very impressed with the drawing. Fair cheered me up." Friend on receiving drawings and letter celebrating Robbie Burns Day from pupils at Balwearie HS*

*"She was well chuffed with her letter and drawings from a girl at Balwearie. Said it cheered her up and made her day" Volunteer report after telephoning her friend*



Regular contact with our friends and volunteers was helpful in monitoring and adapting in planning future support. They expressed their longing to see someone face to face and have some human contact, stimulation and interaction. What became apparent from their feedback was their appreciation of our support and how important it was to them. They missed human interaction with others, however, were looking forward to better days.

*"Thank you for the letter you sent. It is good to know other people are thinking of me. It gets very lonely." Friend 60+*

*"I called E and arranged to visit today. He was absolutely delighted to hear that I was able to visit. He told me on the phone that, "It's made my day. The best news in a long time". Response from Friend when speaking with volunteer.*

In April face to face visits slowly began to increase either indoors or if weather permitted, gardens visits.

Government and NHS guidelines were strictly adhered to.

It is widely known the importance to mental health and wellbeing of the benefits of social stimulation with other people.

***"Studies have proven that regular social interaction leads to happier and more fulfilled lives which, in turn, means better long-term mental health for senior citizens. Staying socially active helps to maintain both good emotional and physical health, whereas remaining in isolation can greatly reduce a person's quality of life." A G Rhodes***

As the warmer weather continued volunteers used their initiative to suggest outings to local coffee shops, a short walk in the local park or along Kirkcaldy sea front.

Volunteers were advised to curtail their visits to crowded indoor places to lessen the health risk to our friends as well as themselves.

We continued to get excellent feedback at the difference this made to them.

*"Love it, look forward to the weekend and my walk. Can feel the difference, walking farther and feel much more confident." Friend*

*"Many thanks for your hard work and support for mum at this time." Family member whose mother has a diagnosis of dementia. Volunteer regularly took out for a walk.*

*"Thanks for matching me with 2 such excellent volunteers." Gentleman with Parkinson's wheelchair bound unable to go out unassisted*

## Arnold Clark Community Fund

Our fundraising event calendar continued to be suspended however, we were fortunate to be successful in securing a sum of money from Arnold Clark Community Fund which we used to arrange two social events inviting trustees, volunteers and friends.

We arranged a Chippy Tea (Fish and Chips) at Linton Lane Community Centre on a very wet and wild day – Saturday 21 August. The local Chip Shop K&K's supplied the 30 fish suppers with ice cream for dessert. Refreshments were served by volunteers with cake and biscuits. We were delighted that David Latto, singer/songwriter could join us. He met Danny face to face and thoroughly enjoyed speaking with him and his volunteer Anne. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed getting out, meeting other people and thought the food was delicious. Transport was via our volunteers or Royal Voluntary Community Companions Transport.



*"Thank you so much for inviting me to such a wonderful afternoon. The food was delicious and the company great." Friend 90+*

*"What a lovely afternoon Teresa. Thank you so much for all your hard work" Friend 70+*

*"This has been a really nice day and the volunteers are all lovely people." Friend 80+*

*"What a lot of work you've done to organise this, Teresa. The tables look lovely. Thank you so much." Friend 90+*

*"Saturday was one of the best days we've had here. It was so straightforward and so much fun and as far as I could see a success! I hope you decide to have more here! Linton Lane Coordinator Michael*

Our second event was an Afternoon Tea held at Linton Lane in November.

Volunteers were willing and happy to help with contacting friends, arranging transport to and from the event, serving refreshments and enjoyed meeting everyone. A local coffee shop, Hug a Mug, supplied the delicious food at a discount. Our friends who couldn't attend received an Afternoon Tea delivered to their home.



## Monthly Get-Together

We have organised a monthly get together between volunteers, friends and trustees at the Olive Branch Café held in Bennochly Parish Church every Thursday from 11am – 2pm. This gives everyone, an opportunity to get together have a blether and enjoy the company as well as sample delicious home baking. Although still in its infancy with only two meetings it has been a huge success. Lots of laughter, and stories shared. A few of our friends have actually met some of their old friends who are regular attendees. One of our friends 80+ met one of her ex-pupils from primary school!

*"That was lovely Teresa. Lovely food and company."*

*"It is lovely to get out of the house and meet other people to have a laugh with"*

*Friend 80+*

*"I think this has been a success Teresa. Look forward to coming the next time."*

*Volunteer Companion*



## Working with Other Organisations

It is important to us as a small charity to support and connect with local businesses and other charities whenever we can. This can be two-fold as it helps raise awareness of CSC; the support we offer and the different support services in the area that may be useful to our friends and their families.

We have strengthened our relationships with Crossroads, Carers Centre, Linton Lane and Fife Forum to name a few.

We regularly use Linton Lane Centre for Board meetings/events and the Royal Voluntary Service Community Transport.

We use social media Facebook to highlight our charity; the support we offer; new volunteer companions and any events we may have, all to highlight our charity and the brilliant support our volunteers give.

## Our Volunteer Companions

**“We all need support and friendship, regardless of circumstances. But where do people turn when friends and family are simply no longer there, or can’t help us through a difficult time, or need all our care and attention and can’t give us any in return? Thank goodness for befriending projects, who help fill the empty spaces where care, support and a listening ear need to be.”**

*Nicola Sturgeon*

Since January 2021 we have had 20 volunteer enquiries of which 10 were successfully recruited and inducted. The impact as volunteers on furlough returned to work was felt across charities. We are not alone in facing the ongoing challenge in recruitment. To conquer this, we have embraced social media, local press and distributed posters and leaflets throughout the community.

However, we are optimistic as we return to ‘near normal’ life that we will engage with local community groups and people from 18 years of age upwards to support those over the age of 60 living in their community who are lonely or isolated.

It is important to consolidate our connections with other charities to connect and share strategies and ideas to increase our volunteer numbers.

Fife Voluntary Action (FVA) provide a platform which enables charities to meet and discuss the challenges we all face with solutions which our Service Manager attends. It is refreshing and exciting to hear new ways of engaging and connecting to try to increase volunteer numbers. It also provides much needed peer support. We also have volunteer opportunities posted on FVA website. We feel intergenerational communication and engagement is of great benefit to health and wellbeing not only to our friends but to young people. Our connection with Balwearie High School is testament to that. This is an area that we would like to explore further including primary school age children.

Our biggest challenge is recruiting male volunteers. We are actively working on ways to address this challenge.

Since May 2021 we have returned to face-to-face meetings and induction with volunteers, which we feel makes people feel more at ease and is much more beneficial for the prospective volunteer and the Service Manager.

## Volunteer Information Sessions

Our volunteers are not professionally trained, however, we do aim to provide as much information and support as possible for volunteers supporting people with early onset dementia or with sight or hearing impairments. We will continue to offer a variety of information sessions which are relevant to the volunteers' wellbeing and supporting them in their role

During the pandemic we were unable to have face to face information sessions with volunteers, however via Zoom, we invited them to a training session given by Deaf Blind Scotland which was attended by 10 people. We also had 8 volunteers join Ruth, Gerry and Irene to learn more about Dementia. Gerry and Irene live with dementia and spoke very eloquently about their initial diagnosis and how they maintain and enjoy their independent and active lives. Both sessions were interactive, interesting, informative and beneficial.

Our Service Manager attended many varied training/information sessions organised by Fife Voluntary Action; Befriending Networks; Intergenerational Networks; NHS and Deaf Blind Scotland.

During volunteer's week 1 – 7 June 2021, our Trustees wrote personal cards to our volunteers expressing their gratitude and thanks for their time and continued support to our friends.

The Service Manager regularly sent emails with updates on any developments, giving guidance and expressed gratitude for their continued support and loyalty, not only to CSC but their friends.

At present we have 22 volunteers.

19 matched with friends

1 inactive due to personal circumstances

1 waiting to be matched

1 volunteer who will provide holiday/emergency cover

## Personal Statement - EMMA



I'm Emma, a 21-year-old Psychology student at Abertay University. After beginning to volunteer for a mental health focus group at the age of 17, I developed a specific interest in adults' mental health, hence my chosen academic subject at university. Now in my final year of university, I soon came to realise how competitive it is to secure a job after graduation. I used my initiative and decided to seek relevant volunteering experience within the mental health field. This is where I stumbled across the opportunity to become a volunteer companion with Care and Share Companionship, which was advertised on Volunteer Scotland.

I am a companion for MH, who is a lovely 81-year-old lady, who has a diagnosis of dementia. She lives in an isolated area, cannot drive, and has little family and friends. Her only son works offshore and therefore when he is away, she finds herself struggling to keep occupied. Since the passing of her husband a few years ago, she has found it challenging to be independent and has suffered from loneliness as a result. Despite this, she is a bubbly character who enjoys having a laugh and is happiest when she is telling others about the stories she has acquired over her eventful lifetime.

I meet with MH every Thursday and phone her every Wednesday to remind her. This provides structure to her week and gives her something to look forward to. I usually meet her in her house, and we sit in her conservatory and have a coffee and a blether. Sometimes I take my dog down and we take him on a walk round by the water: which is good exercise for the 3 of us! This week, I took MH to the Olive Branch Café at Bennoch Church. We enjoyed lunch together and MH kept an eye out looking for people she knows but hasn't seen in years. Everyone was so friendly, and a few people even approached our table to introduce themselves.

Being a young adult and working independently with older individuals was a bit daunting to begin with, as I always fear people won't take me seriously. However, from the get-go Teresa was so welcoming and I have managed to develop a great bond with MH. It was difficult meeting MH in the beginning as she was unfamiliar with me and kept forgetting who I was. It took a couple of months to really get going and since the beginning I have seen a big difference in her. Now, she can address me by my name without me telling her and asks me questions about my job and boyfriend who I have mentioned in previous weeks.

The best word to describe my experience as a volunteer is REWARDING. I have felt a sense of purpose through my role and leave MH every week feeling like I have accomplished something. As well as boosting my confidence, volunteering has given me responsibility as MH relies on me every week to visit her. She thanks me every week and tells me how much she appreciates me, which is lovely and yet again rewarding. I would recommend everyone to do some aspect of volunteering as it genuinely makes an impact on others and does not take up a lot of your time.

## Personal Statement - JAN



I have been a volunteer befriender with Care and Share Companionship for just over a year.

One friend, whom I started visiting several months ago, was initially sad and uncommunicative. Previously an avid gardener all she wanted was to walk round her garden but was unable to do so as she was unable to carry her walking aid down the 2 steps from her house. Initially I visited her once a week for an hour, lifted the walking aid down the 2 steps and escorted her round her garden with very little conversation. Now I visit 2-3 times a week for an hour and a half each time. Not only do we walk round her garden discussing the flowers and bushes but we walk along the street where she has the opportunity to talk with her neighbours. I am greeted with a smile and lots of chat about what has been happening since my last visit. She is visibly more alert, more physically able and there is a cheeriness in her voice. As winter approaches we may not be able to walk as often but she has asked me to continue visiting. Next week I am going to assist her in replanting her (very many) house plants.

As a befriender I have learnt so much about flowers and shrubs and I welcome the valuable advice given by my 'friend' on how to tend to my own garden. By sharing her excellent gardening knowledge my friend says she feels useful again. It is immensely rewarding seeing the difference the visits have made to her.

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An astute elderly gentleman I have been visiting for a year was desperately looking for company. With no family nearby, the television and the telephone were his only companions. I visit once a week for 3-4 hours. His face lights up when I arrive, ready to discuss the latest events from around the globe and share the memories of his fascinating work life and extensive travels. I managed to source some coffee from a country he worked in for many years. I make the coffee but he delights in supervising me in the making of it (it is made in a special pot on the hob, slowly and carefully). His mind is as sharp as a tack, the afternoons just fly by as we put the world to rights, giving the politicians a run for their money! Over the summer we have enjoyed visits to the waterfront and the local parks. After each visit a text message to his family, often accompanied with a photograph, gives them greatly appreciated reassurance.

As a befriender it allows me to gain much insight into past and present world events from an intelligent and wise elder. As a retired Professor the visits relive his days of discussion and debate which he very much enjoys. His family say the visits have 'awoken him'.

Care and Share Companionship changes lives – the lives of our 'friends', their families and us - the benders.

## Personal Statement - KATE



Hello, my name is Kate. I have been a Care and Share volunteer since September 2020.

There are three main influences that inspired me to become a volunteer.

On moving back to Fife in 2019 I wanted to get involved in the community.

Also, a friend had told me how rewarding her involvement was, in a similar charity the Cyrenians, in West Lothian.

However, the main influence was my dad. After my mum passed away he had become withdrawn. I started visiting and taking him out more regularly.

He was normally a quiet man with very little to say but as we began to talk and visit places from his early childhood he really opened up. It was fascinating listening to him recollect stories of his early life.

I believe older people have a voice, a wealth of knowledge to share and from which we can learn.

At present I am befriending two ladies, Cathy who I visit weekly and Margaret who I phone weekly.

Cathy is quite an inspiration. Due to her medical condition she really struggles with mobility issues, and is completely reliant on her realtor. She cannot leave the house without adult support. She is in constant pain but that does not stop her wanting to go out and experience living. In Cathy's words, 'I'm lucky having a nice place but it's just four walls.

I support Cathy by picking her up in the car and taking her for lunch.

She's very sensitive to the cold so of late my heated seats have been quite a relief for her. We usually stay local in Burntisland but have ventured to Kirkcaldy.

After lunch Cathy always asks if we can have what I call our little tour of Burntisland. This usually involves a little informative social history lesson. I can see how much pleasure it gives Cathy to talk about her hometown. I enjoy Cathy's company and her cheeky sense of humour. We have both enjoyed conversations about families and shared interests. Cathy always phones the next day to say how much she has enjoyed and appreciates our time together. I admire Cathy's positivity, and it's rewarding knowing that I'm helping Cathy to achieve a more fulfilling life.

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Margaret prefers to chat on the phone as she lacks confidence and due to past experiences has trusting issues with new people. We usually chat for an hour or more. Margaret suffers from depression and is on strong medication, which affects her stability. Over the years she has become more confine to her upstairs flat.

The pandemic has compounded this so having our weekly conversation is a real boost for Margaret. I can almost hear her light up as we talk about some of her interests such as ABBA or anything to do with the coast of Scotland. Also, sometimes she just needs the opportunity to talk about her week, the positives and negatives.

Very recently Margaret has suggested we meet up. It's rewarding to see that I am helping to build up her confidence, and her belief in friendship.

## Personal Statement – YVONNE



I have been fortunate to have been involved with C&SC as a volunteer since its inception.

Initially my role was in helping Teresa in trying to help recruit more volunteers and to organise some social and fundraising events, which is something I enjoy and had undertaken in my previous employment prior to retiring. Eventually I did also take on the role of a volunteer visitor and was paired with a client. I found this satisfying, but not without certain challenges, not the least of which was Covid.

Over this period, I felt the role of a volunteer visitor raised certain issues which were impacting negatively on me. However, I was very fortunate in that Teresa has always made clear that the wellbeing of the volunteers is as important as that of the clients and was extremely supportive in many different ways. She is also receptive to taking on board new ideas.

To this end I am hoping that I will be able to continue to play a part in some capacity in helping C&SC achieve its aims of providing support to older people in the area living in isolation and loneliness, by tailoring the support to their needs in different ways. Hopefully through 1-1 visits or phone calls on a basis of providing holiday/emergency cover, and in helping to promote and help organise engagement with others within their community in different types of social gatherings and events and visits which will interest and stimulate them and bring them into contact with others and help alleviate their anxieties and loneliness.

## Referrals

We receive referrals from statutory, non-statutory organisations, family member or self- referrals.

Since 2019 when we became an active support service, we have had 86 referrals. We are currently supporting 28 people.

Since January 2021 we have received a total of 33 referrals. We have a waiting list of 6 people.

After some research, speaking with support organisations, older people and families, they all agreed it is important that support is not restricted by a time frame and that it is open-ended. A large number of older people would like consistent and ongoing support. A few people do like to have time-limited support as they may have a goal in mind such as building their confidence and stamina to get out and about independently.

Both the needs of volunteer and friends are taken into consideration. After 6-8 visits we contact both volunteer and friend to evaluate the match. We are flexible in our approach to supporting our friends and our volunteers. We are aware that volunteering has evolved and consideration is given to the time and frequency that volunteers can offer, adjusting this accordingly.

Volunteers want to give back and help people by being a companion. They are not trained professionals and we are not the correct support service for people with complex requirements such as a chronic diagnosis. However, we do signpost or advise other suitable services which are equipped to address these needs of the person.

The overview from referrers is that our service is much needed and they would welcome a wider boundary area to refer to our service.

*“Care & Share is a valued community resource, offering a much needed service to many vulnerable people in the Kirkcaldy area, however it is desperately sad that this necessary service is not available within the wider areas of Fife.”*

*Referrer*

Our aim is to deliver a personalised, quality service to address the needs of the person being supported. It is vital that older people living in our community feel valued and part of their community. It is also of vital importance that carers can access and receive respite from their caring duties. We currently support a gentleman, a keen photographer, who cares for his wife 24/7. His wife is unable to communicate and is immobile. We provide a volunteer to be a companion to his wife to allow him to pursue his hobby on a weekly basis for a 3-hour period.

Another example of support we have given is where we have contacted The Well (a one stop shop for help/advice on health, benefits, housing etc) on behalf of a gentleman who had anxiety and depression and was unable to cope with practical daily life. Their response was quick and efficient, easing the worry and mental health of the gentleman.

We have made a referral to Social Services on behalf of a lady who lives on her own in an upper floor flat, where because of her ill health she was unable to take her rubbish out. We also suggested she contact her GP as her health was concerning after she had a fall. CSC took her to her appointment, she was admitted to hospital and stayed in touch by text throughout her stay.

Permission is always asked before we intervene or contact other support agencies.

## Future Plans and Challenges

One of our biggest challenges is securing future funding to continue offering our free support to people over the age of 60.

We would like to expand and continue to adapt in an ever-changing society. This can only materialise with the help of our supporters and our committed, loyal and kind volunteers and Trustees.

We realise the world is evolving; technology, family life and communities are constantly changing. We, as a charity, would like to consolidate, improve and expand our support by:

- continuing to develop interaction with young people to bridge the gap between generations
- securing ongoing funding to enable us to continue to grow and improve our service throughout a wider area of Fife
- strengthen and support the Service Manager role and CSC by employing a Volunteer Coordinator
- recruiting more volunteers, including the challenge of recruiting male volunteers – maintaining a flexible approach to encourage people who are students, people who are currently working or are unemployed
- including fixed-term volunteer opportunities i.e. 3-4 months link up with students
- having a variety of individual volunteer roles i.e. fundraising, events organiser, social media, administration and IT support
- developing and strengthen relationships with other third sector charities to hold joint events
- continuing to grow friendships with local community groups where mutual interests identified and shared

Throughout 2021 and in the foreseeable future there have been and will continue to be many challenges and difficulties, some unknown and unexpected, however we will grow, improve and develop. We will tap into the knowledge of the people we know to contact to ask for advice, guidance and also continue to source support in areas new us to learn and improve our skills and support.

## TESTIMONIALS

The feedback we have received from friends, volunteers and families has been overwhelming and demonstrates that Care and Share Companionship support is a much-needed service in Fife.

*"Do you know how fabulous this volunteer is that visits me every week? Thank you."  
Remarkable friend who has mobility/health issues however wants to get out and see life*

*"Thank you for your encouragement. I enjoy it when you visit." Friend 90+ male*

*"Have just heard you are taking J for her vaccination on Saturday. You are a wee star."  
Referrer Fife Forum*

*"Thanks for letting me know. We will check this out." Family member after being informed of a worrying situation with her parents who both have dementia.*

*"That's great news. Date and Time are fine. Look forward to seeing you both. I had forgotten how good Barclay James Harvest were until I played them after you left. Thanks for the chat yesterday."*

*A friend's comment after assessment visit and arranging a match with a volunteer.*

*"That is great news, he will be over the moon." A referrer after update on assessment visit and match details.*

*"I felt very humbled by some of your clients' stories and always inspired by the hard work and dedication that you and your team give. I just wish there were more people out there with the same tenacity demonstrated every day in supporting older people in Fife, I applaud you, keep up the amazing work that you do." Referrer Fife Forum*

*"That's great news Teresa. Thank you for all your hard work. " Referrer when notified a second visit was arranged for a gentleman wheelchair bound and unable to get out without assistance.*

*"Thank you Teresa. Mrs M is lovely and appreciates any help. Thank L (volunteer) from me, as always you do a great job." Referrer one off support visit to a lady.*

*"J was great" from a friend who had fallen. Volunteer made them comfortable until paramedics arrived.*

*" She thinks you are great" Friend's sister speaking with J during the event!*

*"Please pass on our family's thanks and best wishes to E, we really appreciate her visits. I hope she'll continue with her voluntary work, it's an extremely important service. Many thanks for all your care and support." Daughter of a friend when support ended*

*"Thanks to you, L and D for all the help you have kindly provided and to anyone else who may have been involved." Daughter who asked for shopping delivery to her mother.*

*"It's going smashing!" Friend's comment when asked how he was getting along with his new volunteer.*

## GRATITUDE AND THANKS

Care and Share Companionship could not continue to grow, improve, develop or function efficiently and effectively without the commitment and support provided from a wide range of organisations, friends and the local community. The pandemic exacerbated the difficulties all charities face and we would like to thank all those who have contributed and supported us throughout 2021. We are incredibly grateful.

- Our funder Health & Social Care Partnership including our link worker Susan McLean
- CSC Board of Trustees past and present who have contributed their time, expertise, support and loyalty
- Michael McLaren website designer
- Fife Voluntary Action for their guidance, training courses, events and prospective volunteers
- Volunteering Scotland for guidance on all aspects of volunteering and PVG Disclosure
- Disclosure Scotland for guidance and clarity
- Befriending Networks' excellent advice and support in all aspects relating to volunteering particularly in the area of risk assessments when we were emerging from the pandemic.
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- Social Services for advising and working with us to support some of our friends
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- Shell UK
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- Private donation from one of our friends

And finally, a huge and very special 'thank you' to our wonderful and most valued volunteer companions. We do keep saying this, however, it is true - without our Volunteer Companions - Care and Share Companionship could not function as a support service to people over 60 who live in isolation and loneliness. We are forever grateful for their time, commitment and loyalty given so freely.

*"I haven't walked in their shoes, so how do I know what their day is like or feel their loneliness. Only by visiting each week can I glimpse into their world."*

*Volunteer Companion*