

Real News

Issue 102



Getting Crafty

Discover the benefits of embracing your creative side

Committed staff
brave the Beast
from the East

Welcome to our
new 1st Homecare
Area Manager

Real Life Options
a real choice | a real voice | a real difference

Welcome

Welcome to Issue 102 of Real News. Our regular magazine is your opportunity to contribute and find out more about what is going on at Real Life Options and 1st Homecare.

This will be my last Real News magazine before I go on maternity leave in April, and it's jam-packed with lots of wonderful stories. You can find out more about how our committed staff team have been battling through the snow to deliver exceptional support, discover the benefits of embracing your creative side and learn all about our new interactive blackboard.

Your new Real News Editor is Sharon McCutcheon who joined the Real Life Options Group in April. Please do send all your news and stories to her on sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org or by post to the Head Office address (see the back page). It's been a pleasure writing all the Real News magazines during the last 3 years and I hope to be back in the not too distant future. I hope you enjoy your read.



Sam
Sam Goodwin, Editor

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Stay up to date

Keep up with all the latest news on Facebook, Twitter and our website.

- /RealLifeOptions
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- www.reallifeoptions.org

Got news? Get in touch!

Please get in touch with your new Real News Editor:
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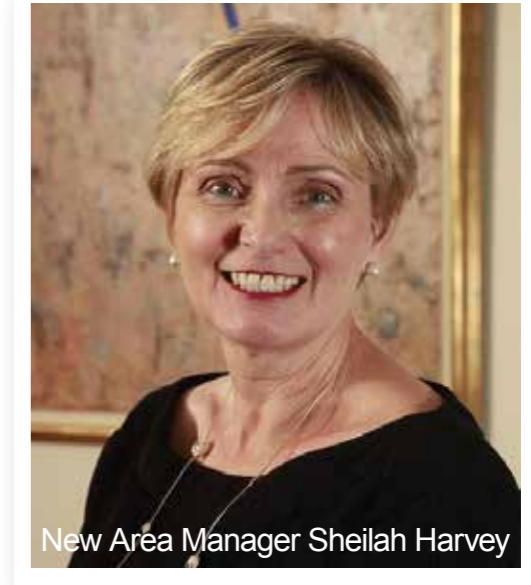
What's New?

Going from Strength to Strength

With a new Area Manager at the helm, 1st Homecare embraces future direction

January saw the exciting new appointment of Sheilah Harvey who joined 1st Homecare as Area Manager in charge of overseeing all operations. 1st Homecare is a key subsidiary company of the Real Life Options Group that delivers personalised care at home and support services to people in Scotland.

"I am delighted to have joined such a dynamic team here at 1st Homecare. I believe I bring a fresh, optimistic yet realistic set of ideas, knowledge and skills to assist us as an organisation to accomplish what we set out to achieve."



New Area Manager Sheilah Harvey

With over three decades of experience in the Health and Social Care sector, Sheilah brings a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to the 1st Homecare team. She is keen to fully immerse herself in the role to ensure that all care and support continues to be delivered to the highest standard, as well as exploring future opportunities for growth.

"I am delighted to have joined such a dynamic team here at 1st Homecare, said Sheilah. "Originally born and raised in Edinburgh, I trained as a Registered Nurse before moving to Australia 27 years ago. I recently returned to the UK and can clearly see a number of synergies, similarities and challenges between the UK and Australian social care sectors. I believe I bring a fresh, optimistic yet realistic set of ideas, knowledge and skills to assist us as an organisation to accomplish what we set out to achieve."



Braving the Beast

Our committed staff battled through the snow to deliver exceptional support

Britain was battered by icy weather in March as the polar vortex nicknamed 'the Beast from the East' collided with Storm Emma, resulting in some of the worst weather conditions experienced in years. The Met Office issued a red warning (its most severe alert) as temperatures plunged and up to 50cm of snow fell, causing widespread disruption across the UK.


However, our committed staff battled through heavy snowfall and blizzard-like conditions to ensure that exceptional support continued to be delivered at all our services. Heart-warming stories flooded in from across the Real Life Options Group as Service Managers praised staff who had worked extra hours, stayed overnight, drove to pick up colleagues who were stranded by the lack of public transport and even gave up days off in order to cover for staff who were stuck in the most remote areas.





Dedicated staff battled through the blizzards

unwavering commitment and sheer determination to put the people we support first. It's an excellent example of how our staff have been living our values and showing how we truly are a person-centred organisation. **You are all heroes.**"

Service Managers from across the UK have also been praising their staff teams for their passion and dedication. A small selection of these tributes are outlined below.

 "The people we support have truly impressive staff. I would like to personally thank everyone for their amazing support. **The Beast from the East met our staff teams and lost.** Well done everyone." – *Kawe Enoka*

 "To all our staff in West Lothian - you are all stars for making it into our services in this terrible weather. **You all deserve medals.**" - *Fay Rodger*

 "Our staff teams all worked extremely hard to ensure they got to work. **Dedication above and beyond.**" - *Shirley Robertson*

"I am extremely proud of the outstanding dedication and resilience shown by our staff teams across England and Scotland."

"I am extremely proud of the outstanding dedication and resilience shown by our staff teams across England and Scotland," said David Sargent, Chief Executive. "On behalf of all the directors, I would like to express our gratitude to every single member of staff who battled through the harsh weather to continue delivering support to vulnerable people. This was even more crucial for the older and less physically able people we support who may have otherwise been left housebound with no human contact by the extreme weather conditions. The team spirit on display has been overwhelming and I congratulate our staff for pulling together and showing

New Real News Editor: Sharon McCutcheon

Sam Goodwin is going on maternity leave in April

Real News now has a new editor; Sharon McCutcheon, who joined the Real Life Options Group in April as Marketing and Communications Manager. Sharon has a wealth of experience in marketing and is extremely passionate about the social care sector, so she is thrilled to be joining us. Sharon will be covering all marketing activities while Sam Goodwin is on maternity leave as she is currently pregnant with her first child - a little boy due in May.



New Editor Sharon

"I've absolutely loved writing the Real News magazine," said Sam. "It's always great to hear about all the fantastic things going on across Real Life Options and 1st Homecare. It's my favourite part of my job and I've particularly enjoyed seeing the people we support contribute by writing their own articles and sharing artwork and recipes."

Please now send all your stories and news to **Sharon McCutcheon** on sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org or by post to: **Sharon McCutcheon, Real Life Options, David Wandless House, A1 Business Park, Knottingley, WF11 0BU.**

A huge thank you also to our latest Marketing and Business Development Intern Olivia Conneely, who has spent the last three months working on a number of different projects, including this Real News magazine. Olivia is currently studying Social Sciences at Bath University and has been doing a number of different placements this year to pursue a future career in marketing, media and PR for the not for profit sector.

"My time at Real Life Options gave me a great opportunity to undertake meaningful work to not only aid my degree, but also my future career," said Olivia. "I really enjoyed my time here and have learnt a lot!"



Intern Olivia and Manager Sam

Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

Our rolling programme to support our Scottish staff in SSSC registration

Given that all our Scottish staff (Housing Support Services or Care at Home Services) will be legally required to be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) by October 2019, it has been important for the Real Life Options Group to aid our staff through what could be for some a daunting process.

Therefore a rolling programme has been launched with the aim of supporting all staff to register so no one gets left behind and ensuring every service is fully compliant on a planned basis well ahead of the official deadline date.



"There are multiple benefits to the SSSC register which aims to improve public confidence and ensure the entire workforce demonstrate the same level of competence," explained John McDonald, Executive Director. "The Real Life Options Group already benefits from a highly professional staff team who are all officially qualified in Health and Social Care (to at least SVQ Level 2), but it's great to see these high standards are being formalised across the whole social care sector in Scotland."

Spotlight on Jobs

Working Hard Everyday

Supporting people to get into employment and maintain their jobs is very important for the Real Life Options Group

A number of the people we support have a variety of rewarding jobs, from voluntary roles to paid ones. Having a job can be really important for improving people's self esteem, confidence and sense of purpose, while helping others and contributing in a positive way to their local community. The Real Life Options Group is committed to support people into employment whenever possible and there has been loads of success stories from across the organisation.

Fred from Leeds works four days a week at a working farm, run by the charity Caring for Life. Fred's work on the farm varies depending on the time of year, but it can be anything from taking cattle to agricultural shows, hammering fence posts and doing late night shifts in the baling season. On a normal day Fred leaves the service at 8am and returns at 5pm. He likes to go in nice and early to enjoy breakfast at the farm before he starts his hard day at work. Fred has worked at the farm for over 7 years and his staff team have worked closely with him to develop his independent travel skills to and from work. Fred now travels on his own via taxi most days and on Fridays he travels part way of the journey on the bus with minimal supervision.



Fred hard at work at the farm

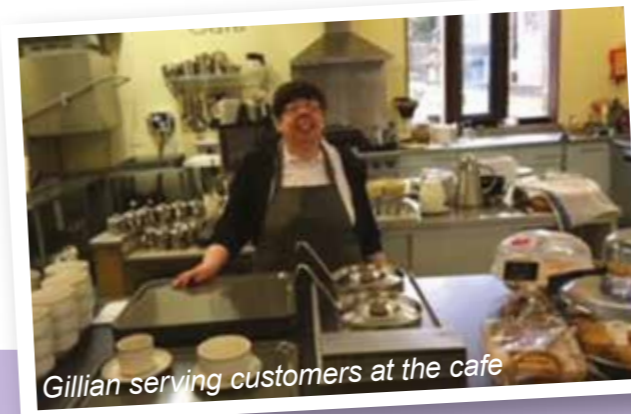
Another great example is **Cheryl from Glasgow**, who has worked at Asda for 17 years and has a great relationship with her colleagues outside of work. Having worked in a number of departments including the restaurant, grocery and George clothing, Cheryl has recently moved to a new position in the Services>Returns department and is enjoying the new challenge.

"I love working with members of the public and the most rewarding part of my job is the friends I have made as I get on well with my work colleagues."

"I really enjoy my job at Asda and can't believe that I have been working there for 17 years," said Cheryl. "The George clothing department is my favourite as you get to see all the new clothing range coming in which is exciting. I love working with members of the public and the most rewarding part of my job is the friends I have made as I really get on well with my work colleagues and we enjoy some great nights out."



Cheryl at her Asda job



Gillian serving customers at the cafe

Gillian from Skipton has three jobs which she loves, gaining experience in many different work environments. She has worked in a café for 9 years with her duties including setting tables, doing the ironing, washing and drying pots, filling up the drinks fridge and serving customers.

She has also worked in a local nursery for 11 years setting out toys for the children to play with and putting them away. She also gets creative with the children, drawing and painting with them. Gillian's latest job is in a local haberdashery which includes putting together sewing kits and selling at trade shows.

Danny from Leeds has a part time job doing one day a week at a local equestrian centre which is approved by the Riding for the Disabled Association and offers a number of affordable horse riding activities for all disabilities, including carriage driving for wheelchair-bound people.

Danny has worked at the centre for the last 6 years and his responsibilities mainly involve mucking out the horses and making sure they are being well looked after.



Accessible horse riding activities



Meanwhile, **Caroline from Leeds** carries out many roles volunteering for the charity Barnados. As well as offering her time to work in their local charity shop, she also works on stalls at various events and has helped to raise a lot of money for the charity.



Caroline staffing a Barnados stall

Jade from Skipton works in two local charity shops, sorting out clothes and categorising toys, clothes and DVDs to display and sell.

Jade said, "I love my jobs, they are very important to me. I like talking to the staff and talking to customers and answering their questions."

"I love my jobs, they are very important to me. I like talking to the staff and talking to customers and answering their questions."

Guest Writer: Olivia Conneely
Marketing and Business Development Intern

GETTING CRAFTY

Discover the benefits of embracing your creative side

Across Real Life Options, people we support have been getting crafty this year as we launched our new Art and Crafts competition. We set the open-ended challenge to encourage people to showcase their artistic flair to create their own wonderful masterpiece. This could be anything from drawing to jewellery making, knitting or origami.

Loads of brilliant entries came pouring in, all showing a great range of creativity. People tried their hand at everything from painting, montages, creating dream catchers and easter reefs, making bird feeders and even constructing unique rugs and tables!

After much deliberation, a team from Birmingham were awarded first place position for making their creative bracelets and keychains. Huge congratulations to **Geoffrey, Stuart, Paul, John, David and Anthony**, as well as Support Worker Katie White who was an excellent motivator and played a huge part in making the craft work happen.

Ruth from Leeds claimed second place with her innovative owl montage and joint third place went to **Irene from Hartlepool** for her house painting and **Pauline from Leeds** for her incredible homemade rag rug.

WHY ART AND CRAFTS?

Not only do all these creative pieces look great, there are also a number of benefits to taking up Art and Crafts. Creating art can increase the 'feel good' neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine has been called the 'motivation molecule' as it increases drive, focus and concentration, which means being creative can be good for your mental health too. Check out five more reasons why embracing your creative side can be beneficial...

1. Self Confidence

Being artistic can help people to build self-awareness and self-confidence. Being proud of your artwork and displaying your creations can sky rocket self-esteem for any individual.

2. Stress Relief

Art and crafts can be a great stress relief and a form of meditation. There is no right or wrong way to be an artist, giving us freedom from pressures around us.

3. Inspire New Thought Processes

Getting creative can inspire us with new ideas and new ways of problem solving. From this we can gain confidence that can carry over into other areas of life.



4. Emotional Release

Art Therapy can help people deal with complex and confusing emotional issues. These may be things that cannot be expressed using words.

5. It's FUN!

Guest Writer: Olivia Conneely

Marketing and Business Development Intern

WELL DONE!

Huge congratulations to the **Birmingham Team** who won the Art and Crafts Competition with their creative bracelets and keychains. Well done to **Geoffrey, Stuart, Paul, John, David and Anthony**, as well as chief motivator Support Worker **Katie White**.

Ruth from Leeds claimed second place with her innovative owl montage and joint third place went to **Irene from Hartlepool** for her house painting and **Pauline from Leeds** for her incredible rag rug.

Well done to everyone who entered and check out the back page to find out what our next competition is...



INTERACTIVE BLACKBOARD

Transforming a wall of one of our Birkinstyle services into a giant blackboard

The people we support and staff in Birkinstyle have been embracing a new interactive blackboard that has recently been installed in the service. Everyone has been using the board to create lots of lovely images that can be rubbed off and re-drawn as often as they like. During the festive months they used the board to display the Christmas count-down which visitors to the service were very impressed by.

The innovative digital chalk blackboard has proven very popular so far and with its accessible floor to ceiling display everyone can join in to show off their creative flair. Together the staff and residents have been suggesting ideas to decide what they want to display on the board next.

"The people we support absolutely love it and we're considering introducing one in another service as well," said Service Manager Amanda Maquade.



Viv, Jenny, Polly and Support Staff



John's Exciting 81st Birthday

John from Birmingham enjoyed a truly exciting day when he turned 81 in January this year. Keyworker Simmy Pawar and Support Worker Katie White did an amazing job organising a lovely party for him and his friends to celebrate the special day.

The birthday treats continued for John as Simmy and Katie also arranged a trip to the Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre to watch a Cinderella pantomime, which they all really enjoyed.



John and his friend David



Dawn's Surprise Party

Dawn from Cleveland got a lovely surprise when all her friends and family threw her a surprise party to celebrate her birthday

Approximately 130 guests came together to wish Dawn a happy birthday and enjoy the amazing disco that her mum, Kath, had organised. Dawn said, "I thought I was going to a meeting about a fundraising event for Lourdes next year. When I walked in everyone shouted surprise and sang Happy Birthday. I was so shocked and gobsmacked and I cried."

"I thought I was going to a meeting about a fundraising event for Lourdes next year. When I walked in everyone shouted surprise and sang Happy Birthday. I was so shocked and gobsmacked and I cried."

There was loads of food and cake for everyone to enjoy throughout the night, which was all gluten free so Dawn could enjoy everything on offer. As well as all the amazing food there was plenty of entertainment for Dawn and the guests to get involved in, including karaoke and a Selfie Photo Table. Dawn even got to sing 'Rule the World' by Take That, her favourite band.



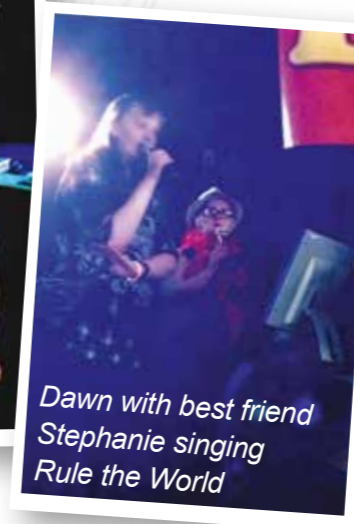
Dawn at her birthday party

"I loved everything about my party and loved seeing everyone. My mam did a good job at organising all my friends and family coming, all my best friends were there; Steph, Caroline and her mam Sandra, Brendon and Michael."

The night was a tremendous hit with all the guests. Sarah Ryan, Supported Living Lead, said, "It was lovely to see all the people we support all out together and having fun. The evening was very successful for Dawn and also other people from our services who all had a great time."



Dawn at the Selfie Photo Table



Dawn with best friend Stephanie singing Rule the World

Guest Writer: Olivia Conneely
Marketing and Business Development Intern

Tell Us Your Ideas...

The Tell Us email address is our **digital suggestion box** through which you can tell the Leadership Team your **bright ideas, good news stories and thoughts for improvement.**

tellus@reallifeoptions.org



Don't forget:

- ✓ For **complaints** please use the **formal complaints procedure.**
- ✓ For **safeguarding issues** or to **report poor practice or misconduct** please use the **confidential whistle blowing hotline 0800 032 7333.**

Local MSP visits Real Life Options for Scottish Apprenticeship Week

Real Life Options Team Co-ordinators meet MSP John Mason

John Mason SNP MSP for Glasgow Shettleston Constituency visited our Real Life Options Glasgow office to see first-hand how young people are benefitting from apprenticeships and in-work training. Also in attendance was Kenny from Skills Development Scotland.

Their visit was scheduled to coincide with Scottish Apprenticeship Week as we currently have 6 Team Co-ordinators in the area undertaking a SVQ Level 4 Modern Apprenticeship; Fiona McGill, Kirsty Richmond, Callum Blair, Nicola Toner, Leanne Bruce and Fiona Campbell.

Scottish Apprenticeship week was organised by Skills Development Scotland, running from 5th – 9th March and aimed to promote the positives this form of work brings for businesses, individuals and the wider Scottish economy.

Commenting on the visit, John Mason MSP said, "I was delighted to meet four of the staff who are training and working at Real Life Options in Shettleston at the start of this year's Apprenticeship Week. Real Life Options provide a valuable service to adults with learning difficulties to ensure they can live the most independent lives possible. The staff I spoke to agreed that the emphasis on training was really valuable to them.

"I was delighted to meet four of the staff who are training and working at Real Life Options in Shettleston at the start of this year's Apprenticeship Week."

I would highly encourage other businesses in the Glasgow Shettleston Constituency and beyond to take the chance to get more involved and show their support by pledging to recruit a Modern, Foundation or Graduate apprentice during the next year and to ensure their staff are receiving ongoing training."

Local MSP John Mason visits our Glasgow Office to meet some of our Team Co-ordinators



Your Confidential Whistle Blowing Hotline

0800 032 7333

Your Confidential Whistle Blowing Hotline is a safe way for you to report any examples of poor practice or misconduct.



We Need You!

Would you like to contribute to future issues of Real News?

Here at Real News we love to report on all your wonderful stories and **we'd be thrilled if you would like to contribute to future issues of Real News.**

So if this is you, or you know someone else who would be interested, **please contact the editor Sharon McCutcheon on 01977 781385 or email sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org**

If you're a person we support who would like to get involved we'd love to hear from you. Whether it's sharing your artwork, photographs and recipes or writing poetry, film reviews, gardening tips or even writing your own article, nothing is too small! We'd love to see more contributions from people we support across the UK to find out what you have been up to in your city – **all ideas are welcome.**



Getting Active for Sport Relief

Embracing fun sport challenges to raise money for Sport Relief

This year Sport Relief was back and this time for a whole week! From the 17th - 23rd March thousands of people took part in all types of various fun sporting activities to help raise more than £38m for various charities to tackle critical issues affecting people across the UK and the world.

At the Real Life Options Group Head Office staff got involved competing in a mini sports day at lunchtime. A number of exciting challenges were on offer, including hoopla, egg and spoon races, beanbag on head races and even a nerf gun shootout, all in aid of Sport Relief.

Since the last Sport Relief the money raised has helped more than 50,000 people in the UK living with a mental health problem, treated over 900,000 people across Africa with anti-malarial drugs and supported over 3.4 million people in Africa through maternal, neonatal and child health funding.

Head Office staff compete for Sport Relief



The Egg and Spoon Race



Nerf gun shootout

Guest Writer:
Olivia Conneely
Marketing
and Business
Development Intern



Welcome to our New Starters

Congratulations to the newest recruits who have joined Real Life Options over the past few months. Welcome to the team!



Dunfermline Induction

- Adele Currie
- Bob Wilson
- Chloe Hamilton
- Janett Hackett
- Jane Price
- Jennifer Godfrey
- John Miller
- Vikki Moran

Dunfermline Induction

- Chris Jackson
- Jenna Blackmore
- Margaret McCormack
- Mark Munro
- Rachael Scott
- Susan Wilson
- Samantha Reid



Go Real Digital...

Real Life Options are always on the lookout for how we can operate more efficiently as an organisation. That includes being as **environmentally friendly** as we can and **reducing costs** wherever possible so savings can be invested directly into the services for the people we support.

If you would like to receive Real News by email rather than by mail please email sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org



Don't forget to recycle your Real News magazine too!



NICE TO MEET YOU

Getting to know some of the brilliant people we support across the UK...

Bobby from Angus

What people like and admire about me:

- I have a gentle and happy nature
- I am tactile and can be mischievous
- I make other people happy

What's important to me:

- I like company and interaction
- I like getting out and about frequently
- It is important to me to feel safe and warm
- I like to have my sensory toys most of the day
- I like lots of cups of tea
- I am a Montrose FC supporter and go to all the home games. I also go to the British Legion after the games and enjoy the banter.



How best to support me:

- Get to know me by watching my actions, facial expressions and my overall appearance
- Try and give me choice with regards to food and drink
- Repeat instructions to me if you think I do not understand or did not hear you
- Keep me safe inside and outside

Carol Ann from Angus

What people like and admire about me:

- I am a very good and honest person
- I am very good at making conversation with people
- I am not afraid to ask for what I want or need
- I am a good joke teller
- I try very hard to do things for myself



What's important to me:

- My family are very important
- My 'dream world' – ask me about this!
- Being carefree
- My writing jotters, books and belongings
- My church/beliefs and going out for ice-cream
- Going to the chip shop
- The present and the future

How best to support me:

- I like to have routine
- Listen to me
- Keep things simple for me
- Offer me supportive but clear guidance
- Don't say my dream world is not real, it is real to me

Would you like to be featured in a future issue? Or do you know someone who would? Please get in touch with Sharon McCutcheon on sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org

Soap Quiz

Christopher from Angus shares his Soap Quiz for all those soap fans out there. **Answers can be found on the back page.**



Quiz Questions

1. What is the name of the new street that's been added to Coronation Street?
2. What soap does Ray Meagher star in and what is his screen name?
3. In what soap is the Woolpack the local?
4. What was the name of Kat and Alfie Moon's spin off show?
5. Which jailbird in Coronation Street did Fiz marry?
6. What other soap has Samantha Giles (Emmerdale's Bernice) appeared in?
7. What soap celebrates its' 30th birthday this year?
8. What was the name of Dot Cotton's son in EastEnders?
9. How many times has Ian Beale been married?
10. What city is Hollyoaks set in?

Guest Quizmaster:
Christopher from Angus

Real Life Entertainment

Hope you enjoy our entertainment section. **Answers can be found on the back page.**

Wordsearch

See how many words you can find in our Easter wordsearch. Words may be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.

- APRIL
- BASKET
- CHOCOLATE
- CHICKS
- DAFFODILS
- DUCKLING
- EGGS
- HUNT
- NEST
- RABBIT
- SPRING
- SUNDAY

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

Spot the Difference

Can you spot the eight differences between the two pictures below?



Competition Time!

Design a staff Thank You Card for your chance to win £50!

We'd love for the people we support to showcase their best creative skills in **designing a Thank You card for staff** who are retiring or have reached a long service milestone (which means they have been working for Real Life Options for a long time).

Send in your card entry to **Sharon McCutcheon** (details below) by **1st June 2018** to be in with a **chance of winning £50**. Please include your name and contact details so we can let you know if you win.

The competition is open to all people we support. The winner will be notified by **15th June 2018** and will receive a £50 cash prize. The editor's decision is final.

Congratulations to the **Birmingham team** who won our Art and Crafts Competition.

Win £50!



Got News? Get in touch!

To be a part of the next issue or to share your thoughts, contact the editor Sharon McCutcheon:



sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org



01977 781385



Real Life Options, David Wandless House, A1 Business Park, Knottingley, WF11 0BU

Real Life Entertainment Answers

Coronation Street Quiz Answers: 1. Victoria Street, 2. Home and Away Alf Stewart, 3. Emmerdale, 4. Red Water, 5. John Stape, 6. Hollyoaks, 7. Home and Away, 8. (Nasty) Nick, 9. Five, twice to Jayne, 10. Chester



Registered charity no: 1156258 (England and Wales) and no: SC045939 (Scotland)

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