

**Annual Real Heroes Award Winners and Shortlist****2020**

**Huge congratulations to everyone who was nominated in the Annual Real Heroes Awards**, and of course to all of the wonderful people we support who presented an award in our special digital Award Ceremony.

We know every single one of us has gone above and beyond in 2020. But the Real Heroes Awards recognise those people who have been truly outstanding. Those amongst us who have achieved something exceptional and really embraced our values - both staff and the people we support.

It has been incredibly moving to read through all the nominations and it's been really heart-warming to hear about all the great things that have been going on across the Group.



## My Voice Hero of the Year (England)

**Winner: Ruth, Leeds**

Ruth has worked really hard this year to improve her mental and physical wellbeing. She has found the confidence to start talking more openly and honestly with her family and staff team about the difficulties she faces, which has greatly improved her quality of life.

For example, she has started volunteering for the first time at 2 local churches, she has been using the NHS Mood Zone advice to reduce her anxiety levels and start doing more physical exercise, she's been vocal about learning new cookery skills during lockdown and she has bravely attended a number of medical tests, including a brain scan to check on a dormant tumour.

**Shortlist:  
Angela, Stockton**

## My Voice Hero of the Year (Scotland)



### **Winner:** Kimberley, Fraserburgh

When Kimberley first joined Real Life Options back in 2013 she was very shy and never spoke up about things, instead looking to staff to speak on her behalf. Over time she has gained a lot of confidence and she now makes her own decisions.

During lockdown, her support staff suggested starting a daily exercise group in the garden and dressing up as characters from Fame. After a couple of weeks, Kimberley was the one planning the exercises, choosing the music and encouraging all of her friends, staff and neighbours to take part. With her positive attitude, she has been great at motivating other people to get involved and learn new skills in planning and decision making.



### **Shortlist:**

**Linda, Glasgow**

**Alec, Glasgow**

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## My Choice Hero of the Year (England)



### **Winner:** Michael, Leeds

Michael used to be nervous of cycling until he started attending the 'Let's Ride' pop up sessions organised by British Cycling. He is now a confident cyclist and has ridden 3 miles unaccompanied on one of the longest outdoor tracks in Britain.

He has also been attending Learning Disability Tennis lessons every week; and has established a great relationship with his tennis tutors and his fellow students. Even though he is non-verbal, when the classes started up again after lockdown, he approached everybody and said to them individually "I have missed you."

## My Choice Hero of the Year (Scotland)

**Winner: Adnan and Mark, Glasgow**

Adnan and Mark, who share a home, made loads of great choices during lockdown to use the time to their advantage. With all their normal activities suspended, the pair have been exploring creative ways to spend their time.

Adnan loves cooking and tried out lots of new recipes during lockdown, as well as going out for long walks and harvesting wild berries to make jam, and buying a punch bag to stay fit at home. Meanwhile, Mark invested in buying a bicycle to explore outside and also took up fishing. He's kept in contact with his friends via Zoom gym classes and social calls, and even co-hosted tribute acts on Zoom.

**Shortlist:****Jacqueline, Dunfermline      George, Glasgow**

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## My Community Hero of the Year (England)

**Winner: Paula, Leeds**

Late last year Paula enjoyed a bridal dress up experience in a local boutique, and has since maintained contact with the staff which has led to them offering other ladies we support bridal dress up experience with their mums.

Paula has also gone on to model the bridal dresses on social media, which has received lots of positive feedback from the general public praising her for normalising learning disabilities.

**Shortlist:****Sheila, Newcastle      Paul, Newcastle  
Anjum, Newcastle**

## My Community Hero of the Year (Scotland)

**Winner: Gordon, Fraserburgh**

Gordon has been hugely involved in numerous fundraising events in the local community. His enthusiasm and friendly personality really helped draw people in to our sales table and he also showed a great interest in getting involved creating handmade crafts to sell to raise money.

As a hugely positive person, he has also been doing a lot of work in the garden earlier this year and he never failed to make others laugh and make that difficult time more fun for everyone.

**Shortlist:****Paul, Macduff****Linda, Elgin**

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## My Wellbeing Hero of the Year (England)

**Winner: Eileen, Derbyshire**

Eileen has had an extremely turbulent year health-wise. Following a case of suspected COVID-19, she was actually put on end of life care, but she fought through it to return to good health and is now thriving.

Her fighting spirit really helped to bring her staff team together who really bonded over the situation as they could really tangibly see what a difference they could make first-hand.

**Shortlist:****Joanne, Durham****Ian, Newcastle**

## My Wellbeing Hero of the Year (Scotland)

**Winner: Derek, Glasgow**

When Derek first moved into his new home in Glasgow five years ago, very few people, including himself, thought he would ever walk again. As a result of an accident, he sustained a brain injury and was told by doctors he would be unable to walk and would have to rely on a wheelchair.

Over the last four years, slowly but surely, through determination and hard work, his mobility improved and now he can walk with the aid of a rollator. He has much greater independence to get on with his life and now only needs minimal support.

**Shortlist:****Pamela, Glasgow****Ann, Angus**

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## Special Achievement Hero of the Year (England)

**Winner: Angela, Stockton**

Angela constantly goes above and beyond with her Advocacy role which involves a PBS steering group, self-advocate training and working alongside a number of external agencies. She also has a post for Relief Quality Consultant with Dimensions Group. She is really passionate and effective when she talks about different topics and makes us all very proud.

In addition, Angela is also involved with recruiting new staff and has been volunteering at another Real Life Options service helping to support people there by assisting with meal times and activities in the house and in the community. She is a great asset to the team.

## Special Achievement Hero of the Year (Scotland)

**Winner: Ann, Angus**

Ann has made some incredible progress this year. Back at the start of lockdown, she found it really hard to leave the house to do any kind of physical exercise, preferring to stay indoors and listen to music as her usual activities were cancelled.

She finally agreed to go out for a 10 minute walk twice a week, and over time this has gradually increased so that she is now walking 5 miles and has set herself the new goal of reaching 6 miles. Her walking has made a huge difference to her health, confidence and also her communication. Now, she is even thinking about joining a walking group.

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## Support Worker of the Year (England)

**Winner: Sharon Fletcher**

Sharon has made a huge difference to the quality of life of a young lady we support who joined Real Life Options shortly after her 18th birthday and found the move very difficult due to her anxiety and autism. Sharon immediately developed a strong bond with her, and has patiently helped her to deal with the transition.

She has also been a fantastic role model for her colleagues, by coaching and mentoring them so they feel more confident. This has had a great impact on the person we support who is now a lot less anxious and is able to better share space with the others she lives with.

**Shortlist:****Karen Braidley****Margaret Lea**

## Support Worker of the Year (Scotland)

**Winner: Janette Halkett**

Janette is a very committed and passionate support worker, who is always thinking of creative ways to encourage the people we support to use their skills and stay occupied, especially with the current restrictions we have.

Some of the activities she has initiated has included having a weekly disco within the service, doing Fakeaway food night themes which have involved the people we support getting involved in the cooking. She has also organised virtual bingo nights on Zoom and has put together COVID-19 folders for everyone we support which contain artwork and activity details so they have something to look back on.

**Shortlist:****Mary Burnett****Malcolm Noble**

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## Support Worker of the Year (1st Homecare)

**Winner: Sarah Smith**

Sarah is the youngest Support Worker at 1st Homecare and she makes a massive difference to the people she supports and always goes the extra mile to make their day a little brighter.

Recently when she arrived at work, she found the gentleman she was supporting to be unresponsive and not breathing. Sarah remained calm, called 999, and performed CPR until the paramedics arrived. Sadly the gentleman passed away, however she took this in her stride, knowing that she had done everything she could to help.

**Shortlist:****Helen Wilson**

## Team Coordinator of the Year (England)

**Winner: Chris Shaw**

Since stepping up into the Team Coordinator role, Chris has been a massive support to the manager and the entire staff team. He always goes above and beyond in all he does, and his positivity rubs off on everyone – in fact he is even nicknamed Mr Happy.

During the COVID restrictions, he has taken on the role of going shopping and to the bank for those people who aren't able to, and is always on hand to deliver support. His colleagues say as a Team Coordinator he is 'the complete package.'

**Shortlist:****Mylene Brown****Carrie Hemmings****Keith Malham**

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## Team Coordinator of the Year (Scotland)

**Winner: Ann Logan**

Ann's colleagues say she is the perfect role model when it comes to 'embracing positive change'. When her day centre service was closed due to lockdown, with the staff team redeployed, Ann really stepped up to the challenge and focused on ensuring effective communication across the whole team, phoning people directly to provide reassurance and practical advice to cope with the new changes.

During a very challenging time, Ann was pivotal in building trust and reliability in the staff team. She has a tremendous focus for the people we support, and is described as a "wonderful and compassionate person."

**Shortlist:****Fiona Campbell****Gemma Williamson**



## Team Coordinator of the Year (1st Homecare)

**Winner: Margaret Carmichael**

Margaret is an amazing role model, driving quality across all areas of the business, and putting the staff teams and the people we support at the heart of everything she does. Nothing is too much trouble, whether that is driving long distances to drop off additional PPE or supporting staff when they are faced with distressing situations.

Margaret has also showed good leadership when the Service Manager was on annual leave, taking everything in her stride. Her positive attitude inspires everyone she works with and her dedication and commitment has been instrumental in improving the quality of the service that is delivered to the people we support.

**Shortlist:  
Denise McDaniel**

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## Service Manager of the Year (England)

**Winner: Joanne Stringer**

Joanne's team has gone from strength to strength over the past few years, largely due to her leadership, commitment and passion. She works tirelessly to ensure people have the bespoke support they require which is often not an easy task and she is not afraid to challenge decisions which are not in people's best interests.

Her dedication, drive and attitude to support and enablement have led to an abundance of people using the service having amazing new experiences, really being part of their community and getting a real zest for life.

**Shortlist:  
Tyrone Gilkes****Lisa Livingstone**

## Service Manager of the Year (Scotland)

**Winner: Keith Anderson**

Keith has been instrumental in building good team morale within his service and he always encourages the team to be more independent and grow their own personal skills, which has resulted in a confidence boost all round.

As a Service Manager, Keith is described as “kind, caring, firm but fair, funny, resilient and brilliant for his team.” He has been a positive light for the service and always takes the time to listen to both the staff and the people we support to constantly take their opinions on board to drive change.

**Shortlist:****George McGarry****Debbie O’Neill**

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## Service Manager of the Year (1st Homecare)

**Winner: Diane Gallagher**

Diane is always reliable, determined and gives 100% in everything she does. She is supportive to every individual and always makes time for everyone in her busy schedule.

She always strives for continual improvement and by going above and beyond in everything she does, Diane makes a huge difference to staff, the people we support and their families.

## Team of the Year (England)



### **Winner:** Leeds Outreach Team

The Leeds Outreach team have shown incredible dedication during the COVID-19 pandemic which has significantly changed their day-to-day roles. With many community services temporarily closed, some of the staff team were redeployed to other services, while others provided respite for families by supporting people in their own homes when required, rather than day centres.

Every single staff member adapted really well to the constantly changing circumstances and remained professional at all times while liaising with social workers and families. Together, their commitment and passion helped to ensure that all the people we support were well cared for and had everything they needed.



### **Shortlist:**

**Friar Street Team**

**Pinxton Team**

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## Team of the Year (Scotland)



### **Winner:** Go Team (Glenrothes)

The Go Team in Glenrothes have been an integral part of the outreach service success over the past year. This sub team, which includes both staff and the people we support, have shown incredible professionalism and integrity while working on a number of important projects.

They were integral in the launch of the new OneTouch IT system, and during lockdown they made themselves available for extra shifts, coordinated shopping and medication drop-offs and developed a number of innovative ways to support autistic people. The Go Team constantly exceed the Service Manager's expectations with their commitment and have received exceptionally positive comments from family members about how well they all work together.



### **Shortlist:**

**Dunfermline Team**

**Fraserburgh Team**

## Team of the Year (1st Homecare)



### **Winner: Irvine Team**

The Irvine team have really pulled together since January and have significantly improved how the service runs, due to the whole team effort and positive culture change.

Every staff member has really taken ownership of their part to play and have been making strides towards embedding best practice in all areas. Their collective team spirit has really benefited the people we support and ensured an excellent quality of care is provided every day.

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## Business Support Hero of the Year



### **Winner: Tracy Connelly**

Tracy is absolutely passionate about driving individualised support so that each person we support has choice and control in the way they live their lives. In her new business support role, she is pivotal in helping embed support and enablement across our organisation.

Tracy always puts the people we support first every time and is continually looking for ways to drive excellent practice. With coaching and support from her, managers and staff in services have really embraced new ways of working when they could see the positive benefits to the people they support who were now achieving much more than they ever expected.



### **Shortlist:**

**Desiree Maclennan**

**Keelie Thornton**

## Living the Values Hero of the Year



### **Winner: Dunfermline Team**

The Dunfermline team have been exceptional this year, demonstrating a collective outstanding effort during a very stressful and demanding time. Together the staff team have worked hard to find creative ways to entertain the people we support at home and reduce their anxiety, which has included Fakeaway meals, cinema nights, in-house discos, pizza making competitions, bake-offs and Zoom bingo between services.

On a sadder note, the team lost two people we support within 7 weeks early on in lockdown. This had a big impact on everyone who were understand devastated and the staff team really excelled in looking after each other and comforting the other people we support. They also helped to coordinate the funeral arrangements, making sure they were fitting tributes and organised for the hearses to stop by the service so everyone could line the street to bid each of them farewell.

One of the support workers said it best, when she said "We all have laughed, cried, and been there for each other. On the day the world stood still, we stood together. We are all heroes and I am proud to be part of a wonderful team."

## Congratulations to all our Real Heroes

