

Real News

Issue 100



Truly Special

Celebrating the Special Olympics

Welcome to
our new Board
Members

Congratulations
to our Real Hero
winners

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

Welcome

Welcome to Issue 100 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 issue is full to the brim with exciting news, including how Real Life Options got involved with the Special Olympics National Games. You can also read all about how Lyn competed at the RDA National Championships and discover how the people we support in Fraserburg have been trying their hand at firefighting while learning about fire safety.

As always, please do let me know your wonderful stories for future issues. Plus, if you're a person we support who would like to get involved in Real News I'd love to hear from you - so please do get in touch!

I hope you enjoy your read.

Sam
Sam Goodwin, Editor



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Got news? Get in touch!

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What's New?

Welcome to our New Board Members

Ian Hardcastle and Linda Tully join the Group as Non-Executive Directors

1) Can you tell me a bit about your other job, or what else you do, as well as working for Real Life Options?

Linda: I have 2 other Non-Executive Director (NED) positions; for Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group with the NHS and the Yorkshire Sports Foundation, as well as being the Chair of Club Doncaster foundation.

Ian: My day job is HR Director for AXA group. I also have 2 other NED positions for Borough Care and the Charter Banker Institute.



2) In a nutshell what does your role as a Non-Exec Director involve?

Linda: I see it as a role that should challenge the organisation, being a critical friend to make sure they are doing the right thing at the right time. It's a role as an ambassador - we need to represent the organisation and be a positive influence.

Ian: We need to be passionate about being a role model for the values of the organisation. If people sense we are authentic in wanting to help, support and challenge, it will allow us to utilise our expertise for the benefit of the people we support.

3) What do you hope to achieve in your new role on the Board at Real Life Options?

Linda: I'd like to see Real Life Options build on its existing good status, but also keep up with change and be the best that it can be.

Ian: I enjoy having a strong emotional connection with the organisations I support so I hope to achieve that but also utilise the things I've learned, good and bad, and be recognised for that.

4) What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

Ian: Always count to ten before you say or act on anything.

Linda: Believe in yourself. I think the best thing anybody can do is believe in themselves. Confidence is better than qualifications.

5) What are your hobbies?

Linda: I like eating good food, drinking good wine and laughing with friends and family.

Ian: I'm a season ticket holder for Liverpool. I do a lot of cycling and socialising too.

6) What's your favourite film, music and book?

Ian: Favourite film; South Pacific. Favourite book; The Narrow Road to the Deep North by Richard Flanagan. Favourite music; Anything!

Linda: Favourite film; Love Actually. Favourite book; The End of the World Running Club by Adrian Walker. Favourite music; Blues and Motown.

7) What would you say people like and admire about you?

Ian: I'm a team player and I like to have a passion for something.

Linda: My friends tell me I'm loyal and very tolerant.

8) What's important to you?

Ian: Getting things done, good team dynamics, having fun and thinking big.

Linda: Freedom to act, autonomy and having nice colleagues.

9) How best can you be supported?

Linda: I welcome constructive criticism so people shouldn't be afraid to advise me and support me.

Ian: Tell me what's important to you and how I can help you. Be open and honest with me.

Real Hero Award Winners Announced!

Every year Real Life Options takes great joy in celebrating the amazing, inspirational people who have been making a difference across the charity

We take great pride in all our staff, people we support and community champions - all of who are stars in their own right. But our Real Heroes Awards recognise the outstanding individuals and groups who have gone the extra mile and demonstrated that they share similar beliefs and values to Real Life Options and have helped to make a significant difference in improving the quality of life for the people we support.

The awards acknowledge their humanity, their contribution to the local community and their willingness to go above and beyond to best meet the individual needs of the people we support.

Congratulations to all our winners, runners up and nominees.



Well done to Graeme Masson and Andrea Halliday who this year both won the prestigious National Real Hero Award.



Head Office

1st Winner (joint): Lorna Barenburg
Lorna has demonstrated exceptional skills in leading a collaborative team to achieve the turnaround of two services to deliver excellence and continuity in care for the people we support. She is also actively working on coordinating new business opportunities and puts a strong emphasis on working as a team to achieve this.

1st Winner (joint): Tracy Connolly
Tracy expertly supported one of our service teams to rebuild confidence and commitment after some difficult months. She helped to refocus the team on positive outcomes and facilitate open and honest communication which has strengthened the positive working relationship between the organisation and external professionals.

2nd Runners Up (joint): Nick Dow
Nick has been instrumental in bringing his experience to influence the bid writing process and has spearheaded the development of a suite of bid assessment tools that are now used by the whole team. He has worked closely with operational staff to improve the quality of bid submissions and has also utilised his research skills to identify potential future contract opportunities.

2nd Runners Up (joint): Sam Goodwin
Sam has demonstrated great commitment in ensuring that all communications are high-quality, accessible and effective. She always delivers prompt, efficient and creative support to all teams requiring marketing and communications materials. Her imaginative approach to promoting the new values has been very well-received.



David and Viv present Real Hero Awards



Jodie and Joanne



Joanne and the Longore and Averton Team

North East England

1st Winner: Bernice Holohan
Having worked for Real Life Options for over 18 years Bernice always embraces our company values and goes above and beyond to ensure the people she supports receive an excellent service. She recently took on additional work during the recruitment of another manager, excellently supporting her team.

2nd Runner Up: Veronica Dorrian
Veronica looks after all the people she supports as if they were her own family. She always makes sure they get the best of everything, sticking up for them when needed without a second thought. She organised a 40th birthday party for a person we support with food, entertainment and Elvis tribute.

North East & Yorkshire

1st Winners: Mel Addie, Maxine Harrison, Louise Holden, Angela Lindley and Sarah Parkinson
The Kingsway team truly live the Real Life Options values and deliver excellent care. During some recent challenging issues the team worked hard to remain in good spirits and resolve the problems, ensuring no one experienced any negative effects.

2nd Runners Up: Darlington Road Team
The staff team have been exceptional in supporting a new manager. By embracing new systems of working they have actively improved the service. The staff have proactively organised a raffle, which raised enough money to introduce a multi-sensory room. They also initiated informal coffee and cake chat days to better connect with families.

Birmingham

1st Winner: Swan, Bevis and Lawrence House Staff Teams
For consistently demonstrating steadfast commitment to embody the Real Life Options values and providing effective person-centred support. The staff teams have coped admirably well during a period of change and have taken on constructive feedback to better improve the services in Birmingham, which has been recognised by CQC.

2nd Runner Up: Ruth Field
For the innovative suggestion of redesigning the staff identity cards to incorporate the newly launched values. This will provide a great opportunity for staff across the Group to be reminded of the important values on a daily basis.

Midlands & South

1st Winners: Longore and Averton Staff Teams
Absolutely stepped up to cope with some massive changes in the support needs of the people at these services. The staff team dealt with the changes in a professional, caring and person-centred way ensuring that the very best care continued to be delivered during a really challenging and difficult time.

2nd Runner Up: June Edley
An exceptional Support Worker who is extremely caring, thoughtful and inclusive in her approach. Always hard-working June consistently puts others needs before herself and stands up for the people we support. She is excellent at helping new staff feel welcome and included. June's colleagues call her a 'true hero.'



East Scotland



Winner: Lesley Ross

A tutor at Auchmuty Learning Centre, Lesley, was nominated by a person we support, Derek, for giving him the confidence and skills to partake in his first SQA exam. Derek said, "Lesley always believed in me, made learning fun and enjoyable and I am very grateful for her help."



Runner Up: Stuart Simpson

A non-contracted handyman in Fife, Stuart, can turn his hand to anything required by the service and has excelled in painting, joinery work and gardening. He always has a smile on his face which brightens everyone's day. Stuart always treats all the people we support with the utmost respect and dignity.

North East Scotland



Winner: Graeme Masson

Graeme recently had the ingenious idea to utilise some spare ground and introduce chickens at our Broomfield service. He established every bit of the project in his own time, from fundraising and building structures to researching benefits and community networking. The people we support greatly enjoy interacting with the chickens and the project has been a brilliant success.



Runners Up: Steven Moggach

Steven is a Bank Manager who delivered absolutely first-class service when one of our service user forum groups raised the issue of limited wheelchair accessibility at their local bank, which affected their independence. Steven was very understanding of the situation and took responsibility for the matter and kept the forum updated on the progress of installing a ramped entrance.

West Scotland



Winners: Isobel Campbell, Caroline Maley, Donna McSherry & Anne Richmond

An extraordinary well-established and cohesive team who have responded to the changing and increasingly complex needs of the people supported with incredible sensitivity and expertise. The team frequently demonstrate commitment, initiative and dedication.



Runner Up: Tricia McDonald

Continually went beyond her duties in providing an exceptional level of care to the family of a person we support, who was extremely ill in hospital and subsequently died. Tricia was a great pillar of support to the family and visited the person in hospital even on her days off.

Central & Southern Scotland



Winners: Liam Kiloh

Liam is a highly respected, extremely hardworking team member. He has had a very positive impact on the people we support who have grown greatly in their confidence and willingness to try new things. He always goes the extra mile and is instrumental in researching, planning and booking fun active holidays.



Runners Up: Hawick Staff Team

The Hawick staff team consistently go above and beyond the call of duty to provide an exceptional level of care and support. The team's dedication was recently rewarded when they achieved the best grade possible '6 Excellent' in their latest Care Inspectorate report.

A True Hero



Andrea Halliday, a Care Worker from 1st Homecare, helps to save a person we support from a home fire

Andrea Halliday is known by all her colleagues as a very compassionate and considerate Care Worker who always goes above and beyond to deliver the very best care to all the people we support. Her relentless commitment was recently put to the test when she showed exceptional bravery when arriving at the house of Ian, a person we support in Lockerbie. Upon arrival Andrea was shocked to discover that the house had been on fire and Ian had collapsed whilst trying to escape.



Ian and National Hero Winner Andrea

"When I arrived at the house the fire had been so intense that the smoke alarm had melted and the floor was still so hot that my shoes started to melt."

Andrea immediately informed the emergency services and supported Ian into the recovery position. She continued to talk to Ian who was drifting in and out of consciousness until help arrived. Thankfully, Ian went on to make a full recovery and is very grateful to Andrea for intervening when she did.

Andrea Halliday said, "I feel proud that I was able to help Ian and am really pleased that he's okay. Thankfully, he only suffered from smoke inhalation and managed to avoid getting any burns. When I arrived at the house the fire had been so intense that the smoke alarm had melted and the floor was still so hot that my shoes started to melt whilst I was helping him."

Service Manager Garry I'Anson added, "It was Andrea's heroic actions that helped to save Ian's life and ensure a full recovery."

Unsurprisingly, Andrea is one of this year's National Real Hero Award Winners and also received the inaugural Real Hero Bravery Award in recognition of her courage.

1st Homecare



Winner: Diane Gallagher

An exemplary member of staff who always shows the utmost consideration and compassion for all the people we support and her fellow staff members, Diane, always ensures that all support needs are met in the best way. She recently supported the recruitment of a new Aberdeen manager and is a great model to her peers due to her honest, positive and solution-focused approach.



Runner Up: Andrea Halliday

A very compassionate and considerate individual who always goes above and beyond to deliver the very best care to all the people we support. She shows great responsibility in her role and recently showed exceptional bravery when arriving at the house of a person we support and discovering it had been on fire and the resident had collapsed. Andrea immediately informed the emergency services and supported the person into the recovery position until help arrived.

Truly Special



Celebrating the Special Olympics 2017

In August, Sheffield hosted the 10th Special Olympics GB National Games, which is the largest multi-sport disability event of 2017. Held every four years, the National Games saw over 2,600 inspiring athletes with learning disabilities come together from across the UK to compete in 20 different sports across 4 days of competition.

The National Games took place at a number of exciting sporting venues across the city and Real Life Options Service Manager, Amanda Richardson, was on hand to ensure that everything went smoothly.

"There was a really fantastic atmosphere at the National Games. Everyone was really friendly and my team got a lot of praise from the coaches who said it was all very organised and looked great."

"I was one of the Volunteer Coordinators for the Special Olympics National Games," explained Amanda Richardson. "I was in charge of the All Saints venue which hosted 21 basketball teams and 6 netball teams in addition to approximately 450 spectators over the four days.

I had the important job of coordinating all the volunteers for the venue which involved devising a rota, allocating roles and overseeing everybody. This included all the sport-specific volunteers who worked closely with the athletes and general volunteers who coordinated the catering and welcome desks. It was pretty challenging as it was very logistical to organise the sheer number of people but everything was worth it in the end.

There was a really fantastic atmosphere at the National Games. Everyone was really friendly and my team got a lot of praise from the coaches who said it was all very organised and looked great.

There was a real sense of community too. Volunteers came from really diverse backgrounds, all bringing something truly different and unique. Athletes came from all over to compete. We even had one netball team fly over from Australia!



The most important thing for me was to give something back and raise awareness about learning disabilities, which is something I feel really passionate about. I was very committed to ensuring all the volunteers had the best experience so hopefully they will volunteer again in the future and may even consider working in social care."

A spectacular Olympic-style Opening Ceremony kicked off the Games at Sheffield United's football stadium Bramhall Lane in front of 20,000 people. Headlined by iconic singer Tony Hadley, the ceremony was hosted by Downton Abbey's Jim Carter, Moto HP broadcaster Suzi Perry and football pundit Chris Kamara. Also featured was entertainment from Britain's Got Talent finalist Kyle Tomlinson, the Rationale Theatre Company and a number of local Yorkshire based artists

The ceremony climaxed with former double World Superbikes Champion, turned rock music artist, James Toseland, who performed with Chorus UK the 2017 Official Special Olympics National Summer Games Anthem; 'We'll Stop at Nothing.'



2 Medals for Graham

Graham from Angus achieves a silver and bronze medal in cycling

Huge congratulations to Graham from Angus who triumphed in the Special Olympics National Games. Graham travelled down to Sheffield as part of the Tayside cycling team, winning a silver medal in the 10km race and a bronze medal in the 5km race.

Originally, Graham was asked to try out for the team while attending a Smartfit course run by Angus college about a year ago. After attending the trial he won a place in the Tayside team and since then has attended cycling training every fortnight, putting in a huge amount of dedication and commitment.

Graham and some of his Tayside teammates



"Graham has worked so hard on his training," said Liz Myles, Service Manager. "He has been cycling along Arbroath seafront when the weather was permitting to do so and all his hard work from the past year has finally paid off. He truly deserves his two medals and the whole staff team are very proud of his achievement. Graham said that he had a fantastic time in Sheffield and would love to take part in the Special Olympics again."

Graham's cycling commitment has also really improved his confidence and independence, so much so that in the past year his level of support has reduced from 89 to 44 hours per week.

New Supported Living Service opens in Oxford

Official launch attended by local MP

Real Life Options is thrilled to announce the official opening of Hope House; a new supported living service based in Oxford which will be managed by John Bacha. The occasion was marked with an open day on Monday 24th July and the ribbon was cut by the people supported at the flats.

Chief Executive, David Sargent, and Deputy Chief Executive, Azra Kirkby, represented Real Life Options at the event along with Area Manager, Joanne Allen, and Head of Business Development and Communications, Anthea Sully.



Cutting the ribbon to officially open Hope House

members it was agreed to relocate to the new service Hope House, which could offer more independence and security through a supported living set up.

The new service consists of 10 flats, accommodating 15 people in total. The flats are designed to accommodate a wide range of needs for people with learning disabilities, therefore it is flexible and spacious throughout. It has a lift, wider doorways to accommodate wheelchairs and underfloor heating to provide a constant temperature.

Chief Executive, David Sargent, said, "We are really excited to be the support provider for this project and to be working in close partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and other local organisations. Real Life Options has had an established presence in Oxford for over 10 years and our local expertise is backed up by a national structure across the UK. We have an excellent track record of establishing new services and recruiting committed staff teams; in fact in our recent staff survey 100% of our staff in Oxford said they felt that the work they do gives them a sense of personal achievement."

"I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all the new people at Hope House who are now supported by Real Life Options and to all the new staff members who have come on board."

"We are really excited to be the support provider for this project and to be working in close partnership with Oxfordshire County Council."

Also in attendance were Anneliese Dodds MP for Oxford East, Councillor Lawrie Stratford and County Councillor Liz Brighthouse, in addition to a number of representatives from Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and representatives from the other partner organisations involved in the scheme.

The project came about due to the need to find a replacement for the care home on Islip Road in Oxford, which no longer met the needs of the people supported. Following extensive consultations with the residents and their family

Some new people we support and staff



Riding into the RDA National Championships

Lyn achieves 5th place in prestigious national dressage competition

Lyn from Middlesbrough recently qualified for the 2017 Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) National Championships. Held in Gloucester in July, the National Championships is the RDA's flagship event, bringing together hundreds of competitors of all abilities to compete in events including dressage, showjumping and vaulting.

Supported by Leigh McCusker, Service Manager, and Carole Johnstone, her Keyworker, Lyn arrived in plenty of time and had a chance to meet up with her friends from the Unicorn Riding Centre who were also at the event. Lyn rode her horse 'Thunder' in the dressage event Countryside Challenge. The event focuses on being both challenging and stimulating for the rider, with steering, balance and confidence all put to the test. Lyn rode fantastically and achieved 5th place, with a high score of 107.



Lyn gets ready to ride

Lyn competes on Thunder

"We are all very proud of Lyn's brilliant achievement," said Leigh McCusker, Service Manager. "She has been working hard all year to hone her riding skills and it was great to cheer her on at the Championships and see all her dedication pay off."

Perfect Grade 6 for Hawick

Congratulations to the staff team at our Hawick Service in Scotland who are the latest service to be awarded the best grade possible – '6 Excellent' in their latest Care Inspectorate report.

Staff were thrilled to find out that they had achieved the top grade in this recent report, with no further recommendations required. They were also recognised for their efforts with the team receiving a Real Hero prize for their hard work.

"It's wonderful that staff are being recognised for their great work," said Lynn Jack, Service Manager, who has been working at the service for 18 years and has managed it for 11 years. "Families gave us really positive feedback and were pleased that we were finally awarded the high grade as they have thought we have done

a great job for years." In March 2016 the Hawick service was de-registered from a care home to become housing support.

This involved making a number of changes to the service, which staff have adapted to really well. This has included a lot of changes for staff around paperwork, following different care standards and identifying how to support individuals effectively in their own tenancy rather than a care home. Each person supported now has their own 1:1 support, along with shared hours.

Lynn Jack added, "I'm really looking forward to developing the service even further and making sure we keep our grade 6's next year."



EXCELLENCE

Empowering People with Autism

Two more of our services achieve official Autism Accreditation

The Autism Accreditation programme run by the National Autistic Society is an internationally recognised process of measuring and evaluating whether a service reaches a set of standards for providing support to autistic people. A number of Real Life Options services have been Autism Accredited for many years and two of our Leeds services were the latest to become accredited.

"It's a really fascinating process working with the National Autistic Society (NAS). It's useful to make you think about what you do every day and the impact that can have."

"It's a really fascinating process working with the National Autistic Society (NAS)," explained Stephen Thackray, Team Coordinator. "It's useful to make you think about what you do every day and the impact that can have. It's good to be officially recognised for all the hard work staff are putting in on a daily basis. The NAS conferences were really valuable too – they provided a great opportunity to network with other service providers going through the same process and be inspired by listening to people with autism talking about their own experiences."



Staff celebrate the NAS accreditation

NAS worked with the staff teams to make useful recommendations throughout the process which has led to the development of a number of new tools, such as the comprehensive Sensory Assessment Tool, which records information about people in a much more detailed and accessible way.

The actual assessment took place over three days and involved an external NAS review team who undertook a series of observations at the services and in the community. In addition they reviewed paperwork, held discussions with Service Managers, support staff and the people we support and sent questionnaires to family members, advocates and social workers.

Both services received a lot of praise during the assessment, being commended for their enthusiastic staff teams and for providing consistent, yet individualised, person-centred support to young adults with autism. They were also praised for their use of a variety of communication strategies, their structured training schedule and for encouraging the people supported to make choices and decisions.

"I genuinely think that it gave everybody a bit of a self-esteem boost – it makes you realise that everything you are doing is worthwhile and really does make a difference to people's lives."



Oliver attends a specialist autism college



Tyren enjoying a countryside walk

The services were also congratulated on their multidisciplinary approach and for the strong links that they had formed with other professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists and speech and language therapists.

The parents of those supported were also keen to express how choices are recognised and respected, explaining that "the needs of those living in the home are always given first consideration."

All the people supported at the Leeds services are very actively involved in their local communities and are involved in a wide range of different activities. Tyren and Oliver both attend autism specialist colleges. John* is a member of the Mind The Gap theatre programme, Neil* attends a number of activity groups including arts and crafts and drumming, Dean* works at an equestrian centre and Frank* works at a local farm, which involves exhibiting the livestock at the Great Yorkshire Show.

* Names marked with a * have been changed to protect the privacy of the people we support

"The process is really interesting," added Lindsey Bird, Team Coordinator. "It's so useful to learn how we can adapt to become even better. It was really eye-opening for staff who are now even more aware about how to effectively support people. I genuinely think that it gave everybody a bit of a self-esteem boost – it makes you realise that everything you are doing is worthwhile and really does make a difference to people's lives."

"This is a fantastic achievement for both services. It's no easy task to secure accreditation."

Vivien Simon, Executive Director, praised the teams saying, "This is a fantastic achievement for both services. It's no easy task to secure accreditation. The teams have all worked really hard on this for a long time so it's great to see it finally pay off."

It's Safe to Speak Out!

0800 032 7333

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



Enlightening Interactive Fire Safety Experience

The people we support in Fraserburg visit local fire station

All the people we support in Fraserburg recently attended their local fire station for a home fire safety talk. The experience was organised by staff following previous discussions in forums when some people admitted they were not confident in knowing what to do in the event of a fire.

The firefighters held an interactive discussion to explain how to stay safe in your home, for example by not overloading plug sockets and switching off appliances when not in use. People also got the chance to confirm what they should do in the event of a fire, from sounding the alarms to confirming where to meet. The firefighters also made the wise suggestion that during regular fire drills staff make the 'fire' at one of the usual exit routes so people can learn that there are different routes of exit in an emergency.



Visiting the fire station for a fire safety talk

After the safety talk, the people we support got the opportunity to have a look around the fire station, try on outfits, get in the fire engine and even use the fire hose. "Everyone said they really enjoyed the fire safety talk and learned a lot of useful information," said Darren Moore, Team Coordinator. "It was a fun, memorable experience

but it had a very serious purpose which really resonated with people. The firefighters have also organised coming out to people's homes to do a personal fire safety check to make sure everything discussed has been put into practice."



'Firefighter' James



Stephen tries his hand at firefighting



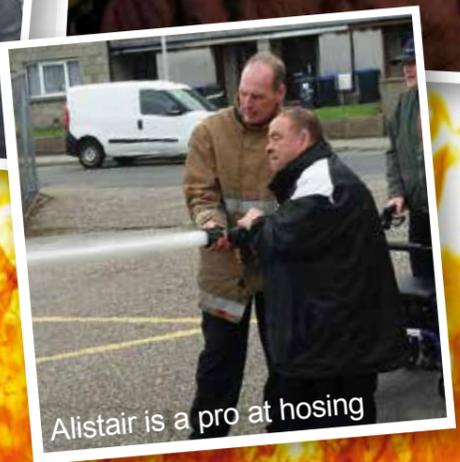
Walter looking the part



Gordon tries out the fire hose



Alan tries on the firefighter uniform



Alistair is a pro at hosing

Congratulations to Janet and Andrew

Huge congratulations to Janet from Hartlepool who has been achieving great success in her Maths and English classes held by Alfie Lindley, a former Head Teacher. Janet has been putting a lot of hard work into her studying and has already achieved a significant amount. Andrew from Saltburn has also been making great progress and Alfie is really proud of his achievements to date.

After being presented with certificates, Alfie took the pair out to Hollywood Bowl for a celebratory meal and 10 pin bowling as a congratulations.



Janet

Andrew

Ann and Margaret recognised for Excellence

West Lothian Council have been extremely complimentary about an innovative new project they have been working on in partnership with two Support Workers from An Carina Day Service; Ann and Margaret.

The project involved developing and implementing a year-long programme to create a digital story for a person we support who attends the day service. The new innovative piece of work has really benefited the person we support and has helped to generate real outcomes for him.

The excellent working relationship has paid off in another way too - this piece of work has now been recognised for a European award called 'Recognised for Excellence.' This marks the first Health and Social Care Partnership to be

nominated for this award, which boasts previous winners, including Coca Cola, BMW and Bosch.

The project was entered into the third stage in Quality Scotland's award process for a HSCP, Committed to Excellence Project Validation 2014 and Committed to Excellence Assessment.

Huge congratulations to all those involved with the project.



Raising Awareness in Ibiza

Gerald from Glasgow explains in his own words what Ibiza means to him

My name is Gerald, I am from Glasgow and I have Cerebral Palsy. I am a friendly, outgoing person who has a great sense of humour. I use a wheelchair and communication pad but I do not let this stop me living my life, especially in Ibiza!

I have been going on holiday to Ibiza every year since 2001. Unfortunately over the last three years I have had to raise funds to pay for carers to support me there. This year I was very lucky because someone set up a GoFundMe page to raise awareness and funds for me to go to Ibiza.

"I like to raise awareness for people with disabilities; I've been on TV 4 times now!"

Ibiza is not just a holiday to me, it is my life. I feel people over there accept me more and feel they understand more about my life. This year I went to a festival called Flower Power and loved it! Every year, I meet new people and have gained friendships through my trips to Ibiza.



Since returning home this year, there are already people who I met over there who are willing to help raise awareness and funds for me to go next year. I enjoy house music, going to the gym and have been on TV four times now. I like to raise awareness for people with disabilities and I am looking forward to planning my next trip to Ibiza.

Guest Writer: Gerald from Glasgow

Special tree to commemorate two anniversaries

Staff at our An Carina Day Service in Livingston have double the reason to celebrate this year. Not only does 2017 mark 25 years since Real Life Options began, but it also marks the 20th anniversary of the day service too.

The team hosted a celebration to mark this double whammy and even bought a special tree to plant in order to commemorate the occasion.

Colin, who attends the Day Service was thrilled at the opportunity to get his hands dirty and prepare the ground and plant the tree. He was supported by Azra Kirkby, Deputy Chief Executive, and Jean Trench, Area Manager, who helped Colin during a recent visit to the service.



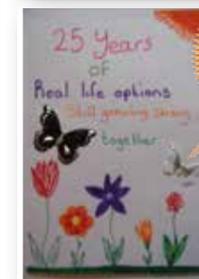
25TH ANNIVERSARY CARD COMPETITION

Huge congratulations to **Carol from Stockton on Tees** who fought off tough competition to win 1st place in our 25th Anniversary Card Competition. As well as receiving £50 prize money, Carol will see her design made into a real card! **Robert from Glasgow** claimed 2nd place and **Joanne from Leeds** achieved 3rd place.

1st place winner
Carol with Joy



All the wonderful entries



Share what you like about Real Life Options to win £50!

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Real Life Options we would love to know what our people we support, their families and our staff like the most about Real Life Options.

Let the editor Sam Goodwin (details on back page) know what you like about Real Life Options or your favourite memory of the company by **17th November 2017** to be in with a **chance of winning £50**. Please include your full name and contact details so we can let you know if you win.

The winner will be drawn at random and will be notified by **8th December 2017** and will receive a £50 cash prize. Entries may be used in future marketing materials with your first name. Please say if you wish to remain anonymous. The editor's decision is final.

Win £50!

Competing for Team GB

Bid Writer Alice Leake competes at the World Orienteering Championships

What is your role at Real Life Options?

I am a Bid Writer which means I help Real Life Options retain existing work and help it grow by winning new services.

What is it like being a Team GB athlete?

Awesome! I recently competed for the third time at the World Orienteering Championships which were in Estonia this year. There's no better feeling than the adrenaline of when you race. But it can be a lot of pressure, especially when it comes to balancing work and life.

How do you balance your work and competitive life?

Real Life Options are really helpful at supporting and understanding what I do, so they're flexible with my work. My colleagues are great when they know I have a race coming up so they cheer me on. It's more the weekends that I have to balance as orienteering takes up a lot of my time, especially when there's a competition.

What are you hoping to achieve in the future with orienteering?

I'd love to be in the Top 10 in the world but I try not to think too much about results and just focus on being the best that I can be.

What is the best thing about orienteering?

Getting to travel the world to places you don't normally get the chance to visit.



Alice at the World Orienteering Championships

Where's the best place you've been to?

Beijing or Zermatt in Switzerland. Last year I spent 2 weeks competing in China which included running along the Great Wall!

What is the toughest challenge you've had in orienteering so far?

I want to do my very best whilst competing for Great Britain so it was tough when I didn't do as well as I wanted to this year. I love the sport though so I won't give up!

Does your orienteering help you in anyway with what you do at work at Real Life Options?

I'm ridiculously competitive which is useful when we need to win bids for services. Fitting up to 10 training sessions a week into my already busy life also teaches me how to be disciplined in planning and using my time effectively.

What advice would you give to people who are interested in taking up the sport?

As with any sport the best thing is to just go do it! Finding your local orienteering club is a good place to start. You don't need much to do it as most of the things you need are provided. The good thing about orienteering is it's a sport everyone can get involved in as you don't need to be competitive.

www.britishorienteering.org.uk

Guest Writer: George Cox,
Marketing and Business Development Intern



Alice in action

PC Speaks at our Forum

The people we support from Newcastle learn about Hate Crime

Police Constable Janine Turnbull from the Northumbria police recently attended our forum in Newcastle to speak to the people we support about Hate Crimes. Accompanied by a student Amy, PC Turnbull explained about her job and how her Central Communities Engagement Team are working with everyone to tackle Hate Crime.

The interactive discussion meant that all the people we support got the opportunity to explain what they thought Hate Crime was and talk about their own experiences. PC Turnbull explained why Hate Crime is wrong and how it can be reported. She also gave some useful tips such as the Text 999 scheme (so people can text rather than phone if they are in danger) and also that bus drivers are trained to help intervene and are responsible for reporting any bullying on their bus.



PC Turnbull at our Newcastle Forum

Topics such as who to trust, consent, bogus callers and how to keep yourself safe online were also discussed. "It was excellent having PC Turnbull come and talk to everyone," said Katie Murphy, Team Coordinator. "She gave out pocket alarms, posters and leaflets on how to report Hate Crimes. She enjoyed her afternoon with us so much that she wants to come along and work with us again!"

Going the Extra Mile

Raising awareness as Team Real Life Options at the Leeds 10k

Team Real Life Options (RLO) recently braved the summer heat to take part in the Asda Foundation Leeds 10k and even had a dedicated group of supporters to cheer them past the finish line.

With Head Office staff from HR, Business Development and Communications and IT the running team were proud to be raising awareness of the important work that Real Life Options does supporting people with learning disabilities and autism across the UK.



Nicola Strong, HR Business Partner, was the first across the finish line, clocking an impressive time of 1 hour 8 minutes. Hot on her heels and finishing together were Paul Ampuero, IT Support Engineer; Anthea Sully, Head of Business Development and Communications and Graham Sparkes.

Launched over 10 years ago the run is one of the highlights on the UK's running calendar. The impressive route takes runners through the heart of one of the UK's biggest cities before ending on the spectacular Town Hall finish.

Team RLO runner Anthea Sully said, "It was great fun to take part in the 10k run with colleagues and we were cheered on our way with some great support. I felt really proud to be flying the flag for RLO in Leeds and I'm sure that at least some of the thousands of people noticed our presence. I hope that we can make RLO taking part in community events like this a regular fixture in the future."

A Famous Encounter

Jimmy meets singer Daniel O'Donnell

Jimmy from Fife went to see singer Daniel O'Donnell in concert over 5 years ago and loved it so much he talked about nothing else for weeks after. Staff wrote a letter to Daniel's agent expressing Jimmy's delight at the concert and lo and behold Daniel O'Donnell himself wrote back thanking Jimmy and told him to let him know if he ever came back for another concert.



Jimmy meets singer Daniel O'Donnell

So when the time came around for Jimmy to go to another concert, staff member Bev MacWyne wrote to let the agent know Jimmy was coming back and duly received a letter back saying to inform the ticket office when he arrived.

before Jimmy had his photo taken with his hero and then they went to their seats to listen to the concert.

Prior to the concert Jimmy had a lovely time in Edinburgh; visiting the castle and museum before enjoying tucking into a large mixed grill meal. When they arrived at the ticket office they were asked to follow the steward to the backstage area where to Jimmy's surprise Daniel O'Donnell was waiting for him. They chatted for a while

"Jimmy has told everyone that he had his photo taken with Daniel O'Donnell," said Bente Muir, Service Manager. "It had to be one of the best days of his 75 year young life. Weeks after he was still telling everyone about meeting the star in person. It really was a magical time for Jimmy and I'm so glad we could make it happen for him."

A Fond Farewell to Betty

Betty Morrison, our longest serving member of staff at 1st Homecare, recently made the decision to take up retirement after over 10 years of working for the organisation.

Based in Falkirk, Betty Morrison has made a huge contribution to 1st Homecare over the last decade and made a very tangible difference to the lives of the people she supported. Betty was a very dedicated team member and will be greatly missed by both the people we support and staff.

Everyone at 1st Homecare Falkirk wishes Betty all the best on her retirement and thank her for all her hard work over the years.



Betty is presented with her retirement gifts

Celebrating 40 in Style

Fiona from Hawick knew exactly how she would like to celebrate her special birthday. Fiona was supported by staff to plan for the party, which included making invite lists, organising a disco and coordinating food.

Originally Fiona wanted to also have a pink limousine, but as this proved hard to source in the Borders, she had to go for a white one instead. Fiona thoroughly enjoyed her limo trip round the Border towns, picking her mum up on the way and inviting a couple of friends along. There was lots of singing en-route and fizzy juice. The highlight for Fiona was sitting in the driver's seat!



Fiona takes the driver's seat in the limo



Fiona at her 40th party

"Fiona certainly knew how to celebrate her 40th!" said Lynn Jack, Service Manager. "The limo was a great start and the disco party a few days later was brilliant too. Family, friends, housemates, staff and housemates' families all attended and there was lots of dancing going on. Her cake was a Mercedes Benz with Fiona as the driver as it's her dream car."

New Multi Sensory Room

Anthony Harkin and Caz Hazel have been doing a great job leading the Darlington Road staff team to do some fundraising in order to introduce a new Multi Sensory room in the service.

The Multi Sensory room has been specially designed as a dedicated space in which individuals can develop and engage their senses.

"Anthony has done an amazing job installing the Multi Sensory room and all the people at the Darlington Road service absolutely love it. A huge well done to everyone involved," said Lisa Livingstone, Service Manager.



The Multi Sensory room

Welcome to our New Starters

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



Dunfermline Induction

- Leeanne Adlam
- Les Bawden
- Eva Eneremadu
- Velma Henderson
- Yvonne Herron
- Vicky Ilipoulou
- Ashley Irvine
- Sadie Sloan
- Joanne Smith
- Kirsty Upsall
- Celine Walsh
- Niall Warren

Dunfermline Induction

- Alisa Cameron
- Yvonne Downie
- Rebecca Hynd
- Jaye Garrad
- Millie Glasgow
- Kathleen McIntyre
- Jennifer Rawding
- Sandra Van Der Veer
- Billie-Jo Windmill
- Kelly Young



Glasgow Induction

- Heather Brogan
- Louise Campbell
- Danielle Delgreco
- Catherine Gallagher
- Jennifer McGoldrick

Huge thanks to Catriona from Glasgow who came in and provide some insights about what its like to receive support.



Inverurie Induction

- Jeffrey Agyaping
- Naomi Dryburgh
- Belinda Kieran-Ejimadu
- Rosemary Finnie
- Julie Hay
- Margaret Henderson
- Yetunde Longe
- Christopher Nicolson
- Abiy Orr
- Rachael Pike
- Lee Ponsonby
- Hayden Reeve

Stockton Induction

- Ben Harker
- Chris Munster
- Leanne Pickering
- Chipo Sana
- Amanda Sergeant
- Luke Shaw
- Lynn Turner
- Joe Wilkinson
- Julie Wright



Derbyshire Induction

- Rebecca Loxley
- Michelle Pickles
- David Sargent
- Hayley Shelbourne



Health and Safety Talk at Forum

The people we support at Oxford have been getting into the swing of balancing fun, social activities at their regular forums, with important, serious topics.

Their forums are always an all-day affair, from 1pm to 6pm and their latest event was focused around Health and Safety and everyone discussed what things they had to be aware of in their everyday lives when it came to health and safety and how to best deal with any potential issues.



The Oxford forum

In addition to a delicious meal, the people we support then enjoyed a number of light-hearted competitions and then took each other on in a fun pool tournament.

“There was really good participation levels as everyone joined in with the forum health and safety discussion,” said David Lazar, Team Coordinator. “I believe everyone learned a lot from the day. Everyone really enjoyed their time and had fun competing in the games as well.”



Enjoying the competition

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.**

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.**

So if this is you, or you know someone else who would be interested, **please contact the editor Sam Goodwin on 01977 781385 or email samantha.goodwin@reallifeoptions.org**



Learn My Way

Real Life Options is now an official partner of the Online Centres Network

Coming soon...

As an official partner of the Online Centres Network, Real Life Options can now provide a wide range of free learning materials to benefit staff and the people we support. The materials have been designed by the Tinder Foundation to support people with little or no computer skills to become 'digitally inclusive'.

There will be over 30 easy-to-learn modules available to access, including using the Internet safely, staying safe online, using Facebook and using email. This project aims to help support our staff and people we support achieve basic digital skills and gain confidence in using social media and the Internet.

More information about this will be available very soon...



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.



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

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



NICE TO MEET YOU

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

Tony from Nottingham

What people like and admire about me:

- Kind and considerate
- Good cook, great singer and brilliant woodwork skills
- Good gardener and I have great taste in clothes

What's important to me:

- My music and TV, including horror films
- To see friends at Smile and Achieve
- I like to know who is supporting me and to know they know how to help me
- Collecting things like CD's, DVD's
- Socialising, eLearning, shopping and cooking
- Visiting the seaside and doing exercise
- My Halloween party

How best to support me:

- I like people to be patient when I speak
- I like people to watch some programmes with me
- I like staff to guide me around healthy eating



Pat from Nottingham

What people like and admire about me:

- I'm funny and have a big smile
- I have a good sense of humour and I know what I want

What's important to me:

- My brothers
- That I feel safe
- Having time for tea and coffee
- That people respect me and my home

How best to support me:

- Speak to me in a clear and respectful manner
- Please talk to me, do not shout
- Dont rush me
- Help me make my own choices
- Assist and support me to do things for myself



Would you like to be featured in a future issue? Or do you know someone who would? Please get in touch with Sam Goodwin on samantha.goodwin@reallifeoptions.org

Real Life Entertainment

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

Wordsearch

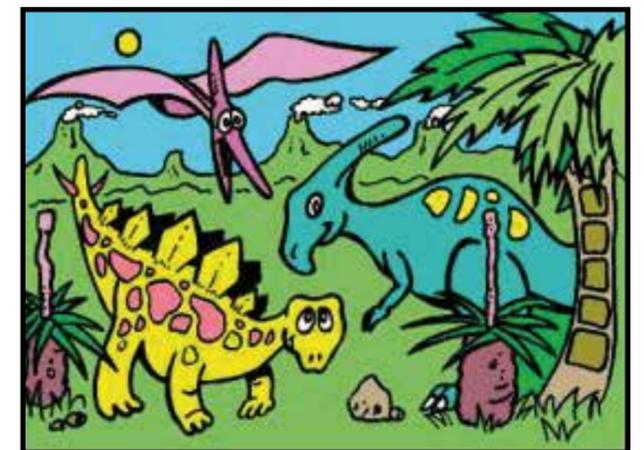
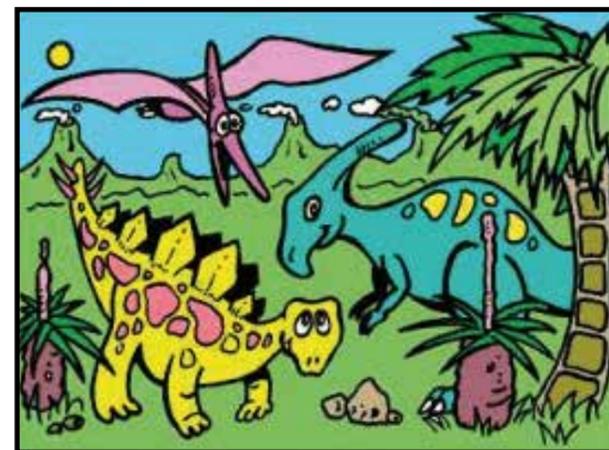
See how many words you can find in our 25th Anniversary wordsearch. Words may be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.

- ANNIVERSARY
- BALLOON
- CAKE
- CELEBRATION
- DIFFERENCE
- MEMORIES
- MILESTONE
- PARTY
- SILVER
- SUPPORT
- TWENTY FIVE
- YEARS

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

Spot the Difference

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



Competition Time!

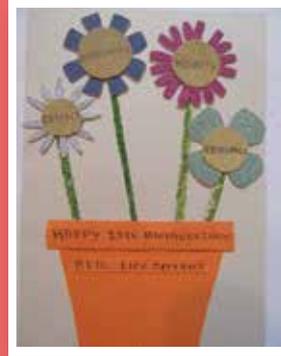
Share what you like about Real Life Options to win £50!

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Real Life Options we would love to know what our people we support, their families and our staff like the most about Real Life Options.

Let the editor **Sam Goodwin** (details below) know what you like about Real Life Options or your favourite memory of the company by **17th November 2017** 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 winner will be drawn at random and will be notified by **8th December 2017** and will receive a £50 cash prize. Entries may be used in future marketing materials with your first name. Please say if you wish to remain anonymous. The editor's decision is final.

Congratulations to **Carol from Stockton on Tees** who won the 25th Anniversary Card Competition.



What do you like the most about Real Life Options?

Got News? Get in touch!

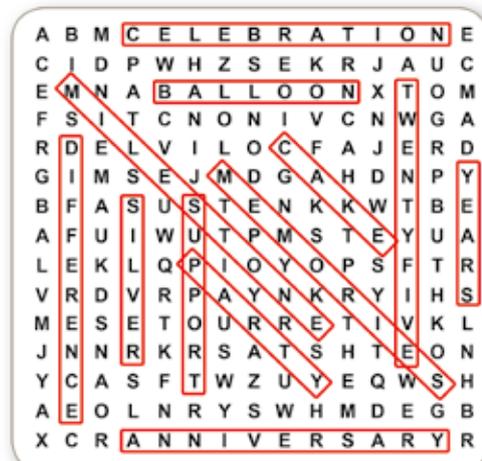
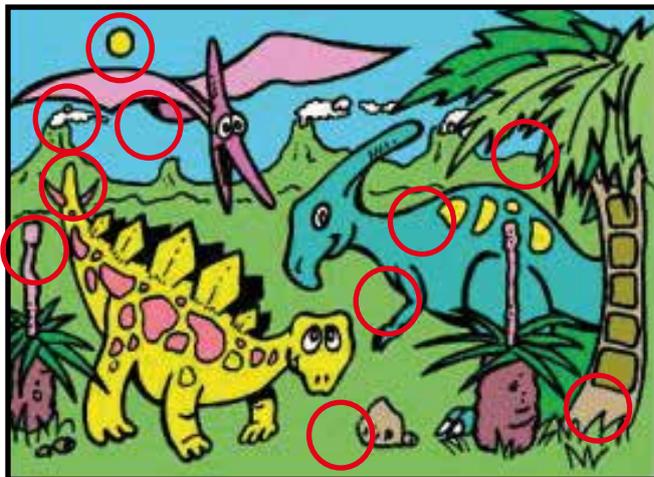
To be a part of the next issue or to share your thoughts simply contact the editor Sam Goodwin:

 samantha.goodwin@reallifeoptions.org

 01977 781385

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

Real Life Entertainment Answers



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

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