

Real News

Issue 105

Right on Target

Success story for fundraiser
and ladies darts champion

Launch of the
Real Heroes
Awards 2020

Outstanding results
with support &
enablement

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

Linda wins Ladies Darts Championship

Right on target when it comes to playing darts, socialising and fundraising

Linda from Elgin, achieved fantastic success when she recently won her local Ladies Darts Championship. After playing incredibly well and securing first place in the competition, the size of Linda's giant winner's trophy could only be matched by her huge beaming smile. "I like the darts very much," said Linda. "I'm very happy when I win the trophies, it's great fun!"

Staff members and volunteers from Inspire supported Linda to get involved with the darts club after identifying that it might be a good opportunity. Right from the start, Linda really enjoyed it, particularly the social aspect of the club and making new friends.

Not only is Linda clearly a fantastic darts player, but being part of the club has also hugely increased her confidence and self-esteem and provided much better inclusion within the community. She also volunteers with fundraising events for the club, including helping to run stalls at local fairs, participating in sponsored walks and organising raffles.



"Support staff have done an excellent job enabling Linda to attend the darts club, increasing her independence and self-esteem through it. Linda now has a whole group of new friends and her confidence has improved very much through her participation."

Fiona Lawless, Team Coordinator



Linda from Elgin likes playing darts and recently played in a darts competition.



Linda is smiling because she is the ladies darts champion and she got a trophy for coming first.



Linda likes playing darts at the club. She gets to spend time with people and make new friends.



Linda helps raise money for the club through sponsored walks, running stalls and raffles.

Recognising and rewarding outstanding Individuals across the organisation

We are delighted to announce the official launch for the **Real Heroes Awards**, which recognise and reward outstanding individuals across the organisation. The Real Heroes Awards should help to encourage staff recognition and also celebrate the achievements of the people we support.

There will be **monthly Real Hero prizes** awarded for both staff and the people we support and we welcome nominations from everyone.

To nominate someone for a Real Hero award, all you need to do is complete a short nomination form and give this to your Service Manager or Head of Operations (for service nominations) or email Sam Goodwin samantha.goodwin@reallifeoptions.org (for Business Support nominations).

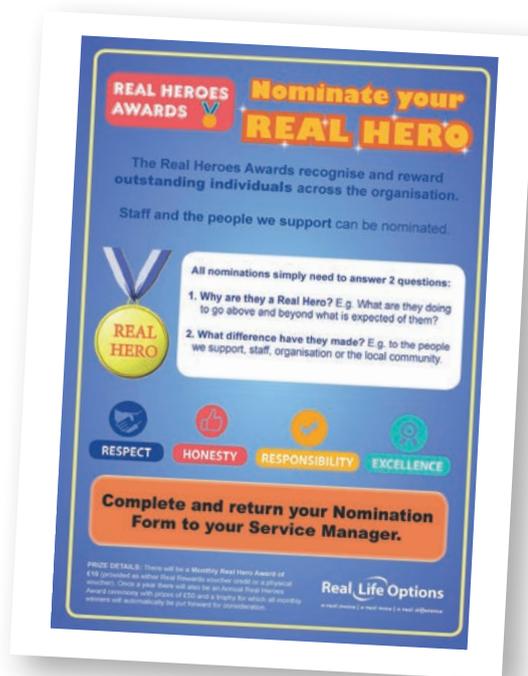
You can request a nomination form from your Manager or Sam.

We look forward to hearing all about the fantastic Real Heroes over the course of this year.

All nominations should provide an answer to two

basic questions:

- Why is the person a Real Hero? e.g. What are they doing to go above and beyond what is expected of them?
- What difference have they made? e.g. to the people we support, staff team, the organisation or the local community.



We have a new way of thanking people for the good things they do. It is called the Real Heroes Awards.



Anyone can name a staff member or someone supported by the Real Life Options Group for an award.



We want people to tell us why the person should get an award and what they do that is so special.



To name someone for an award, email samantha.goodwin@reallifeoptions.org to send you a form.

Introducing our super Support and Enablement Model



An outstanding result for Lisa and her team at Darlington Road

Real Life Options is pleased to reveal an ambitious two year plan for embedding **Support and Enablement** across its services. This fresh approach to social support and care encompasses the principles of positive behavioural support combined with in-depth staff training and bespoke technologies.



My Real Life Options, our model of support, concentrates on the key essentials that contribute towards people's happiness and wellbeing. The aim of our Support and Enablement strategy is to drive excellent support that is focused on enabling individuals to achieve their potential whilst actively engaged in activities that are a part of

everyday life. The decision to invest in this innovative programme is due in the main part to a successful pilot that has seen our Darlington Road service recently achieve 'Good' across four domains and an **'Outstanding'** for responsiveness from the CQC.

The trial, led by inspirational Service Manager Lisa Livingstone, has seen the people we support and their staff team flourish as a result of the transition from a caring to an enabling environment with one team member winning the Support Worker (not for profits) Award category at the National Learning Disability and Autism Awards 2019.

"I'm delighted that our Support and Enablement pilot has been so successful and congratulate Lisa and her team on a fantastic achievement. We're confident that embedding this approach organisation-wide will make a real difference to the people we support."
David Sargent, CEO.



We have a new way of working which means that we support and enable people to do more for themselves.



Staff are being trained to support and enable people to do the best they can for themselves in their everyday lives.



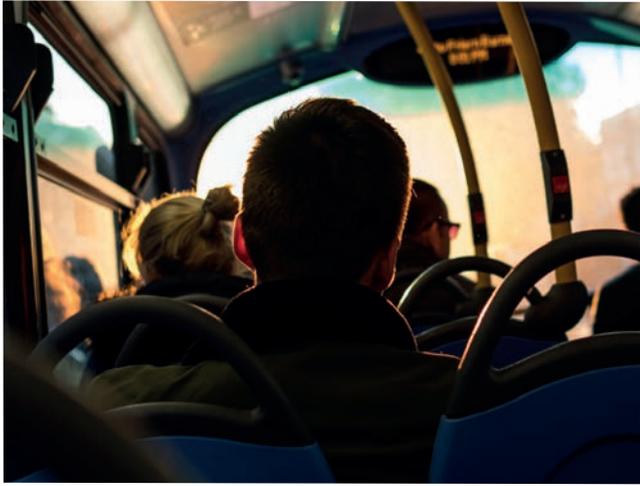
The people who live at Darlington Road took part in the support and enablement trial.



The people who live at Darlington Road, the staff team and the CQC are very happy with the new way of working.

Always Looking out for Others

Irfan's caring nature came to the fore when lady fell ill on the bus



"I'm really proud of Irfan remaining so calm and collected during the incident. He's a very kind and compassionate man so I'm not surprised that he found a thoughtful way to help out the lady in distress."

Ann-Marie Steyn, Team Coordinator

Irfan from Leeds, recently had the opportunity to put his caring nature into practice during a dramatic experience on the bus.

During a bus journey to York, Irfan was seated behind two elderly ladies and when the bus arrived at York train station he was one of the first to notice that one of the ladies had fallen unconscious. After being alerted about the incident everyone was told to get off the bus to make way for the paramedics who had been called.

Irfan was the last person off the bus and when he passed the unconscious lady, he stopped and looked at her in concern. After making eye contact with his Support Worker, Shadreck Sibanda, and the bus crew, Irfan did a caring vocalisation noise and shook his head. He then went back behind the lady and thoughtfully opened the window next to her.

The fresh air came into the bus, which helped the lady to quickly regain consciousness. Even though she was weak and still feeling faint, she did manage to smile and nod at Irfan as he left the bus as the ambulance arrived.



Irfan from Leeds recently travelled to York on the bus and sat behind two older ladies.



When the bus got to York, Irfan saw that one of the ladies was unwell and had her eyes closed.



Everyone was asked to get off the bus so that people called paramedics could help the lady.



Before leaving the bus, Irfan opened a window to let some air in which helped the lady feel better.

Having a Ball of a Time

Mark enjoys a tour of Old Trafford during his action-packed holiday

Mark from Glasgow, enjoyed a unique holiday experience when he got the opportunity to visit the Manchester United Old Trafford Stadium and Alton Towers. The action-packed trip marked the first time Mark has gone away on holiday while he has been supported by Real Life Options and he adored every minute of it.

Paul Sloss, Mark's keyworker, organised the whole trip with Mark's full involvement and he travelled down from Scotland on the train with Mark and another Support Worker, Kevin Halligan, to enjoy the entertaining city break.



Unsurprisingly for a passionate football fan, Mark's highlight was visiting Old Trafford, one of the world's most iconic sports venues. The behind-the-scenes tour provided access to many areas of the stadium that are normally restricted to players, including the home dressing room, the players' tunnel and of course, the football pitch itself. The award-winning museum also showcased an impressive collection of club memorabilia and Mark loved having his photo taken with all the trophies and next to the pitch. Fittingly, Paul said, "Mark had a ball!"

Next on the fun-packed trip was a visit to Alton Towers, the UK's largest theme park and thrill seeker Mark was delighted to go on loads of the exhilarating rides. He even managed to persuade Kevin, who had never been on a rollercoaster in his life, to go on The Smiler which is the largest ride in the park and is the world's first 14 loop rollercoaster. Mark thoroughly enjoyed the experience...the same could not be said for Kevin!

"Mark really loved the trip. His next goal is to organise a holiday abroad which is something he and his team are working towards for next year."

Fiona Campbell, Team Coordinator



Mark from Glasgow went on a holiday to Manchester to visit Old Trafford football stadium.



Mark really likes football and enjoyed a tour of the grounds, the museum and seeing the trophies.



Mark also went to Alton Towers. Alton Towers is a fun park with rides and a big rollercoaster.



Mark is thinking about planning his next holiday. He would like to visit a different country.

New Volunteering Pilot in Scotland

Promoting volunteering opportunities with help from the National Lottery

Real Life Options has been supporting people to have a strong voice and a real choice in the way they live their lives since 1992. To enhance opportunities for the people we support, we are piloting a programme in Scotland with funding from The National Lottery to recruit community volunteers under the Real Life Volunteers banner.

"Over the last few months, we have been connecting with a range of organisations including Volunteer Glasgow, Falkirk Council and the Job Centre to promote the programme with positive results. The support from partner organisations and the interest from potential volunteers is really encouraging."

Nick McLaughlin, Volunteer Coordinator

Nick's previous experience of working with children and adults with disabilities is invaluable as he introduces interested volunteers to their role through an informative and robust induction programme. Volunteers work alongside paid



support staff to build their experience, capabilities and skills in an interesting and highly rewarding sector. Their roles complement rather than replicate the work by paid staff however volunteers do have access to the same training opportunities and our Real Rewards staff benefits portal.

The campaign is being promoted initially in Scotland through colleges and universities to reach a wide audience base with a broad range of skill sets, which is generating good levels of interest. We feel confident that as the pilot gains momentum, it won't be too long before we introduce a similar scheme for our England services.

If you want to know more about becoming a Real Life Volunteer, visit our website or email Nick at reallifevolunteers@reallifeoptions.org.



We have a new member of staff called Nick. He is our Volunteer Coordinator.



Nick is talking to people in Scotland to see if they want to be a volunteer for Real Life Options.



Volunteers work with staff to enable people to do more and get the most out of life.



If you would like to volunteer, you can email Nick at reallifevolunteers@reallifeoptions.org.

Going Quackers for Children in Need

Knottingley Staff fundraise at lunchtime to support disadvantaged children



A big shout out to everyone who got involved for Children in Need in November.

Our Knottingley based business support colleagues held a fundraising lunch at their office, 'buying' ducks and bears throughout the week prior to the event, culminating with a draw on the day.

Congratulations to Matthew's 'Ducktor Who' for winning the Duck Race and Frank's 'Bear in Space' for winning the Bear Hunt. Laura's tie-breaker answer in the Duck and Bear Fun Quiz earned her a Quiz Master accolade for 2019.

Thank you to everyone who provided treats and nibbles to share on the day and for raising a fantastic £124 for Children in Need.



Children in Need is a charity that supports children to be safe and belong in their communities.



Our Knottingley staff got together one lunchtime to raise money for Children in Need.



Staff had a raffle and a quiz. They all donated some money and raised 124 pounds.



Staff took food for each other to share. They all had a really good time.

Key Appointments at Real Life Options

New roles to support excellent operational delivery in England and Scotland

We are pleased to announce four new key appointments to oversee and strengthen service delivery across Real Life Options England and Scotland.

Ann Ferguson, Head of Operations England North has a strong background of working in local authority and third sector organisations in addition to experience as a Care Quality Commission Inspector.



Nen Pillay, Regional Operations Manager for London & Oxford is a strong advocate of person-centred support and brings to the role extensive experience of supporting people with learning disabilities, autism, brain injuries and other complex needs.



"Ann and Nen have a broad range of skills and a strong track record that fits well with our organisation's direction and plans for the future."

Vivien Simon, Director of Operations England.

"I am confident that Donna and Craig's skills and leadership will be a great asset to Real Life Options' operational delivery in Scotland."

Jean Trench, Director of Operations Scotland.

Craig Anderson, Head of Operations Scotland North is a registered general nurse and has over twenty years NHS and private sector experience with an established record of developing complex care, care at home and children's services.



Donna Littler, Head of Operations Scotland South has strong management experience of contracts and of supporting people with disabilities, learning disabilities and health conditions into sustainable employment and training.



Four people have joined Real Life Options to help staff teams provide great support in England and Scotland.



Craig looks after people in the North of Scotland. Donna looks after people in the South of Scotland.



Ann looks after people in the North of England. Nen looks after people in London and Oxford.



Our Directors think that Ann, Nen, Donna and Craig will do a great job in England and Scotland.

Anjum's Visit is right on Cue

David and the business support team in Knottingley enjoy time with Anjum

Real Life Options Business Support staff in Knottingley were delighted when Anjum from Newcastle recently paid a visit to meet with them and CEO David Sargent.

Anjum, who was one of the interview panel members for David's appointment, was keen to find out how David is getting on in his role and to try out the pool table that has been installed for visitors to enjoy. A big fan of pool, Anjum enjoyed several matches with Support Worker Raymond, David and finance guru Frank with some winning results.

Anjum, who has experience of working in a café, was thrilled to hear about plans for developing the former finance offices into a space where people can develop skills for independent living. He looks forward to coming along when the facility is open and trying out some of the tasty food on offer.



When Anjum isn't keeping an eye on David and the team in Knottingley, he enjoys getting involved in his local community.

Together with other individuals, family members and support staff, **Anjum is taking part in this year's Glow Memory Walk** in support of the Alzheimer's Society on the 14th March.

If you would like to support Anjum and the team, simply follow the link to their Just Giving donation page set up by Service Manager Katie Murphy.

If you would like to support Anjum and the team in their fundraising, simply visit - <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mw513430>



Anjum from Newcastle went to Knottingley to meet with Real Life Options CEO David.



He enjoyed playing pool with David and with Real Life Options Staff Raymond and Frank.



Anjum thinks that changing some offices into a space where people learn skills like cooking is a great idea.



Anjum is taking part in the Glow Walk in Newcastle to raise money to support the Alzheimer's Society.

A Day in the Life...

David Sargent is keen to find out what it's like to walk a day in your shoes

Every person who works for Real Life Options plays an important role in enabling the people we support to reach their potential.

Our Chief Executive, David Sargent, would love the opportunity to experience a day in the life of all our different staff roles, in order to fully appreciate all the various aspects of Real Life Options and get a more in-depth understanding of how everybody plays their part in making the organisation what it is .

From April onwards, David is keen to experience a day as a Support Worker, Team Coordinator and Service Manager, Head of Operations and Director in addition to other Business Support roles, such as in HR and Finance.

He would like to get as involved as possible in working with staff on day to day activities and actually carry out tasks when appropriate. He relishes the opportunity to spend the day with the people we support and our staff.

If you would be happy for David to experience a day in your role (with you providing supervision), please get in touch with David by

A DAY IN THE LIFE

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Our Chief Executive, David Sargent, would love the opportunity to experience a day in the life of all our different staff roles, in order to fully appreciate all the various aspects of Real Life Options and get a more in-depth understanding of how everybody plays their part in making the organisation what it is.

From April onwards, David is keen to experience a day as a Support Worker, Team Co-Ordinator and Service Manager, in addition to other Business Support roles, such as in HR and Finance.

He would like to get as involved as possible in shadowing day to day activities and actually carrying out tasks when appropriate and he relishes the opportunity to spend the day with the people we support and our staff.

If you would be happy for David to experience a day in the life of your role (alongside yourself providing supervision), please get in touch with David on david.sargent@reallifeoptions.org by 31st March 2020.

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

emailing david.sargent@reallifeoptions.org by 31st March 2020.



David is in charge of Real Life Options. He would like to spend some time with staff and the people we support.



David wants to find out about the different jobs that people do and work with them in that job for a day.



David would like to spend time with people with different jobs roles in different workplaces.



If you would like David to work with you for a day please email david.sargent@reallifeoptions.org by 31st March 2020.

Art Competition Results!

Fantastic submissions from lots of talented and creative people

A big thank you to everyone who entered, and to those who supported someone to enter, our art competition. The submissions were, as always fantastic!

Huge congratulations to **Jack from Fraserburgh** who won our national art competition with his jolly red bus picture. A well-deserved win!

Clearly there are a lot of budding artists in Scotland as second place went to **Shonagh** and third place went to **Stephen**, both of whom are also from Fraserburgh.

Everybody loved Shonagh's beautiful white bunny picture and Stephen's exquisite blue dragon picture.

Well done to all the people we support who entered the competition. There was an incredible amount of artistic talent on display and it has been great to hear of people who are now enjoying new hobbies, such as painting, as a result of getting involved in the competition. **If you have any suggestions for our next competition, please do send your ideas to: sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org**

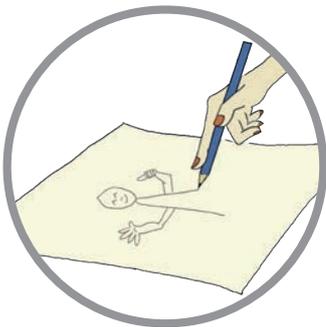
The Results!
Art Competition 2020

1st Place:
Jack, from Fraserburgh

2nd Place:
Shonagh, from Fraserburgh

3rd Place:
Stephen, from Fraserburgh

Well done to everybody who entered!



This competition was for the best art picture (painting, drawing or montage).



Jack from Fraserburgh won the competition. He got £50 prize money and a certificate.



Everyone who entered the competition receives a certificate.



Send your good ideas for the next competition by email to sharon.mccutcheon@reallifeoptions.org or call 01977 781385.

We Would Love To Hear Your News!

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 staff member with news to share or a person we support who would like to get involved, **we'd love to hear from you.**

It could be a painting you're particularly proud of, your best chocolate cake recipe or a film review - nothing is too small.

Whether it's sharing your artwork, photographs and recipes or writing your very own article, sharing poetry or gardening tips, all contributions are welcome.

There's no time like the present, **so please do get in touch with Sharon.**



Sharon McCutcheon

Marketing and Communications Manager

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 www.reallifeoptions.org



Sharon writes this Real News Magazine for people to read news and stories.



You can tell Sharon your story by emailing or phoning her using the details above.



We like to include lots of stories from staff and the people we support.



You can also share your artwork, recipes, photographs and writing.