

Welcome to the

Pebbles

Newsletter



Pebbles
Care | Education | Therapy

Director's welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to our first newsletter of 2023. It is wonderful we can share so many joyous and inspiring stories from our teams and young people every few months.

We displayed great progress and development throughout the company last year and are already on the way to doing the same this year. A huge thank you to all the teams across the business for their efforts and commitment contributing to our continued success!

A landmark of our significant positive development is our new branding and website which have just been launched. This signifies how we are continually progressing to be the best we can be and allows us to clearly communicate that young people are at the heart of everything we do to both internal and external parties. Despite this revamped look for Pebbles, our core values remain the same and in everything we do we'll always be:



Accountable

We accept responsibility for our own words, actions, and results.



Collaborative

We work together to be more effective, efficient, and fulfilled.



Considerate

We are respectful in every relationship we build.



Progressive

We approach everything with a 'can do' attitude.

Much is still happening in the background at Pebbles this year, we are aiming to add more homes and are launching our education provision in England.

It has also been great to hear that our existing homes and schools are functioning well to provide the best possible care and development opportunities for our young people. This is reinforced by the wonderful feedback we have been receiving from many different external parties.

A huge thank you again for the hard work of everyone in the Pebbles family and I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.



Michael Walsh
CEO



An Award-Winning Career

Krysia Watson, Area Manager in Cumbria, joined the Pebbles family in September 2021 and recently took home the Senior Manager Award at the National Children & Young People Awards in October 2022.

We caught up with Krysia to find out what winning the award means to her and found out more about her career journey so far.

Congratulations on winning the Senior Manager Award, what does the award mean to you?

It is my proudest achievement (other than my kids!). I was completely blown away to even be nominated for the award, let alone to win it. What made it even more special for me is that all nominations are anonymous, so to know that someone in my team did that for me is absolutely humbling. My award now sits pride of place on my bookcase next to the TV.

Tell us a bit about your previous work experience.

I've been in social care for 25 years now, working predominantly with children's charities. I started out working in drugs and alcohol services and since then have also worked with young people with disabilities and autism.

What separates Pebbles from your previous roles?

My role as Area Manager for Pebbles is the first time I've worked directly with young people with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). I feel strongly about making sure these young people are given the time and understanding they deserve – they aren't 'naughty kids' as they are often labelled. Pebbles' Therapeutic Parenting approach is a huge component in setting it apart from other care services. It ensures that everything we do comes from a trauma informed position. It isn't a case of simply looking at a behaviour and trying to modify it, we look to make our young people feel safe and build a relationship first and foremost before helping them with their behaviours.

What is the most rewarding part of your role?

It would have to be being a support to my team. I'm directly responsible for around 50 team members across six homes throughout Cumbria. I love getting out to visit the homes and building meaningful relationships with my team. I am very aware of the toll being a residential childcare worker can have on you both mentally and physically and will always advocate for my team to ensure they get the support they need as this means they can deliver the best quality care for our young people.

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded the RoSPA Silver Award for health and safety performance!

The RoSPA Health and Safety Awards is the largest occupational health and safety awards programme in the UK. Now into its 67th year, the Awards have almost



2,000 entries every year, covering nearly 50 countries. The programme recognises organisations' commitment to continuous improvement in the prevention of accidents and ill health at work.

A huge thank you to Derek Johnson, our Health & Safety Manager, for his hard work and dedication in putting the systems in place to allow us to win this prestigious award!

Empathy is how kind hearts breathe...

Our Therapeutic Parenting model reminds us of the need for relationships with significant adults as being key in addressing insecure attachments. Whilst care environments often share the resources of a care team, one significant person in the role of mentor/befriender can bridge the gap where those meaningful trusting relationships are very much needed, not least where young people may be transitioning toward independence.

Cat recalls her placement being ended and the next day, age sixteen, being expected to survive in the world alone. She was largely alone and ill-prepared for the future, hence her longstanding interest in championing better throughcare and aftercare support for young people in care who are transitioning to semi or independent living. Moving towards independence without a close network of support or even one person who cares enough to be there can leave an individual feeling hopeless at best. Cat is keen to provide long term social relationships aimed at empowering and enabling young people to realise their own potential. However, for now, her primary goal is clear; to befriend and build trust. The success of the relationship isn't focused on the achievement of goals or outcomes. Trust and connection is the goal for Cat, our young people's mentor.

Cat has been a mentor for young people in our care for over seven months. She works with a small number of young

people across our homes in Scotland. As a successful young woman in her twenties, Cat loves the opportunity to be in a role where she can truly just 'be', using her non-judgement and highly empathic ability to relate to the experiences of those she supports. She has spoken about allowing the individuals she supports to lead the conversations, especially where they feel safe to talk openly and freely about things that are important to them. Cat feels that little will surprise her, and they know that she can relate to their feelings and experiences. Cat is a young woman with care experience who wants to make a difference. She has developed strong and trusting relationships through her ability to respond and offer support. Often by drawing upon her own experiences she has been able to support her mentees to look beyond the 'here and now' and envisage a better future for themselves. As a trainee nurse Cat is aware of and has been trained in the importance of safeguarding and child protection. However,

her mentor role isn't that of a residential carer. She doesn't feedback through handovers, write reports or daily recordings, and she certainly didn't want her photo in the newsletter! She is humble, yet fierce in her passion for children and young people to have the care they deserve. She simply hopes to have fun, build trust, and support young people to grow and see the potential in themselves that she sees in them during every meeting. Her affection and pride for her small group of mentees is clear. She gives lots of herself and claims that she receives so much more back in return. Most of all she just enjoys being present or in the moment with them.



A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.

Oprah Winfrey.

A mentor is not someone who walks ahead of you to show you how they did it. A mentor walks alongside you to show you what you can do.

Anon.

If you cannot see where you are going, ask someone who has been there before.

J Loren Norris.



Whether it's alpaca or dog walking, cinema trips or horse riding, Cat loves the opportunity to enjoy the relationships she has built. Those she has befriended mean a great deal to her. These relationships are most certainly reciprocated. One young person has given permission to share her experience of having Cat as a mentor.

She says,

"Cat has been a really good role model since she came into my life, and I look forward to seeing her every week. She's there for me all the time and I can talk to her about anything, and I know she won't judge me. We usually go to the cinema or to see her horse, Promise. She lets me ride him and is teaching me to do groundwork and stable work, which is helping with my confidence massively. This has inspired me to look forward to getting my own horse and I just want to say how much I appreciate her and thank her for everything she does for me."

Managers of the homes where Cat currently spends time also speak highly of her.

Cluster Manager Helen Kelly states,

"Cat has been an amazing mentor. Our young person loves her time with Cat and feels that she can talk to her about how she is feeling. Staff say that Cat is always smiling when she arrives to collect our young person and is easy to chat with. Keep up the amazing work Cat as you are a dream to have around".

At Highview, Cluster Manager Eileen Robson has commented upon how one of the young people loves it when Cat comes to visit, describing the positive relationship they have. It was good to hear the Care Inspectorate acknowledge the positive relationships she has developed through our creative and somewhat pioneering approach.

Cluster Manager Sheena Hannigan goes as far as to say,

"I feel personally that Cat has added to the support networks needed in helping this young person to stabilise and support her in her placement at Kippsbyre".

Comments like this from Cat herself, surely say it all,

"There isn't a day when I don't go home buzzing after being with a young person. I laugh so much on the way home in the car, reflecting upon just how much fun we have had that day. I feel as if I have the best job in the world."

Joy Wakenshaw
Head of Care



Our Wonderfully Kind Pebbles Family

Here at Pebbles, it is very important for us to encourage both our young people and teams to develop their positive qualities and characteristics in all the relationships, interactions, and activities they are a part of. Kindness, thoughtfulness, generosity, and compassion are some of the wonderful qualities many of our Pebbles' family continuously display and develop with many showing them daily in their actions.

We wanted to highlight some recent examples of lovely gestures that we have seen in our homes that show how these qualities are being displayed:

A., is a relatively new resident of Cobbledyke, only arriving on Boxing Day, despite this they went out of their way to buy a beautiful bunch of flowers for the carers of the home while visiting the shops. This was such a thoughtful and kind gesture, especially since A. had only known the carers a few weeks at the time.

The registered manager of Stoneraise, Stuart Cowper, shared a lovely gesture he received from all the staff and young people of the home around Christmas time. He received a gift basket with some of his favourite and useful things to create a 'survival kit'. The tag on this gift said it was to thank him for everything he does in the home. Stuart was very grateful and happy for this display of generosity and thoughtfulness by everyone at Stoneraise.



Encouraging Involvement in Local Activities

A main priority for our young people is providing them support to overcome their disadvantages and continue their lives as high functioning and admirable individuals in their communities and society. When young people reach a certain point of development in their journey, they are encouraged to participate in activities such as youth and sports clubs offered in their local areas. This is a great way for the young people to gain many benefits such as improve their social skills, make friends, learn new things, and develop their skills. We have a few of the many examples of this that we would like to share to show the variety of activities our young people have been getting involved in recently.

All three of our residents at Whispers House have been getting involved with some interesting clubs. J. has recently joined a table tennis club run by the community which he is really enjoying. It has allowed him to meet and socialise with many local peers with similar interests. This has been a great achievement for J. who is pushing the boundaries of his comfort zone in social settings.

M. from Whispers has returned to Sea Cadets after a small break at the end of last year and has picked up right where he left off with all his knowledge of the tides and the water. M. has developed in his social environment, and this is evident with the positive feedback from the Cadets.

This month has seen K. from Whispers return to his Explorers Unit, and he has enjoyed different activities such as orienteering and fire making. He has also joined a new table tennis club which he goes to weekly. K. has been chosen to participate in an upcoming tournament due to his commitment.

Our young person from Forest View, H., has also been doing exceptionally well at horse riding. H. has greatly built up her confidence with the activity and is now attending horse riding at the stables at least twice a week. This hard work has led to her winning 1st, 2nd, and 3rd medals in the competitions she has participated in recently. She has also greatly improved on socialising at the stables and has made a group of friends who she meets up with often outside of horse riding.

It is extremely important to us to build strong relationships and communication links with external parties involved with our company and especially our young people. An example of this is with social workers, as positive relationships with them means the needs of our young people can be met in the most effective way. For this reason, we are delighted to hear that our homes and staff have been receiving fantastic feedback from the social workers they are involved with.

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“I just want to say a huge thanks to you and your team for your hospitality. You all are simply wonderful set of people. We really appreciate your support that made our trip stress-free. Thank you all and I'm sure T. will have a really good experience at the placement.”

C., Social Worker about Kyllimoons

“

A true sense of it being a relaxed family environment in the home where there are no seen or unseen boundaries in terms of the young people approaching staff. In my experience this is rare for a residential setting. The young people are allowed to be themselves, music playing, casual approach to staff, relaxing on the furniture, always good to see!

D., Social Worker about Stoneraise

Celebrating our Achievements

At Pebbles, we offer all of our employees pathways for progression and believe in our collaborative and considerate culture, where our people are at the forefront of everything we do.

We pride ourselves on supporting our team to obtain qualifications in their field and we would like to give a huge congratulations to the following people who have recently gained new qualifications:

Trudy Pipes, Deputy Manager at Green Towers, who has just gained her level 5 qualification

Alisha Walsh, Deputy Manager at Glen Cottage, who completed both her SVQ3 and 4 within a year

Darlene Smith, RCCW at Glen Cottage, who has completed her SVQ3

Laura Stewart, RCCW at Glen Cottage, who has completed her HNC

Lorraine Ness, Deputy Manager at Kippsbyre, who completed her SVQ4 in less than 7 months in addition to completing her BSc Psychology

Gemma Rice, RCCW at Kippsbyre, who completed her BSc Psychology and is now doing her MSc in Clinical Psychology



Shoutout to our staff teams

Not only is feedback from external parties important to us but so is internal feedback. In this edition of the newsletter, we wanted to highlight the fantastic work going on in our homes and give a huge thank you to all of our teams for their hard work and dedication.



"After a bit of a whirlwind of a time, we have moved to 1:1 staffing at Jasmine House and the dedication and motivation from the team has been nothing short of admirable. Everyone has dealt with the change so well and has teamed together to make sure all shifts are covered so that we can continue to keep our young people safe. I'm so proud of all of you!"

Lucy Dean, Registered Manager



"I'd like to thank Willow House and Emerald House staff for always going above and beyond in their role to make sure that our young people get the best possible care and outcomes that they can. I'd like them to recognise that although Ofsted didn't see them as outstanding that our young people clearly do for the love and care that they provide by each and every one of the things that they do."

Hayley Bell, Cluster Manager

Our Inspiring Staff – Sharon's Challenge

Many of our Pebbles family continue to impress and inspire us both during and out with their working hours. A great recent example of our staff pushing themselves to achieve something very admirable outside of work is Sharon Mecklenburgh's 31 miles in January challenge. Sharon is a learning and development officer at Pebbles and participated in the challenge of running 31 miles throughout January to raise money for St John's Hospice.

We would like to wish Sharon a huge congratulations for completing her challenge and raising a fantastic £240 which contributed to an overall £22,000 raised for the charity by everyone who took part in the challenge this January.

Sharon is very proud to have helped such an amazing organisation that is very close to her heart. She is also extremely thankful to everyone who has donated and supported her throughout her experience.



Moving on From Pebbles

A huge part of working with our young people is supporting them in a way which allows them to flourish into responsible and independent young adults. Once our young people reach this stage it is time for them to move onto the next chapter of their journey.

Recently a young person from Green Towers is the perfect example of how the support they have received during their time at Pebbles has allowed them to venture on to something new. B. was a resident at Green Towers for over 4 years arriving as a young boy at just 15 years old, he has now moved on from Pebbles into his new independent home. B. will be well missed by the staff and other young people at Green Towers and everyone wishes him all the best.





Learning Outside the Classroom

We strongly believe that Education should be developed around the individual needs, experiences, and skills of the learner which is why our ground-breaking Adapt Learning Model is at the center of the education we offer. As part of our learning model, we integrate learning outside of the classroom.

As the weather has been slowly improving the young people in our schools have been taking part in an outdoor education program at Lochore Meadows which has been a huge success. The young people have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in new activities such as team building, mountain biking, hill walking, zip lining, and campfire cooking. By taking part in these activities, our young people have been developing many different transferable skills as well as their confidence and fitness all while having fun!

Another activity some of our young people have been really enjoying taking part in is our cooking and baking classes. Each week, they have chosen a recipe and gone on a trip to the supermarket to buy the ingredients before returning to school to bake or cook. So far, they have made, Scottish tablet, Malteser tray bake, flap jacks, blondies, and sweet and sour chicken. They are learning a range of skills through doing this as well as making some delicious creations which have been greatly enjoyed by everyone they shared them with.



Murder Mystery at Jasper House

Our teams love to get together and have a bit of fun and Jasper House is no exception! Our team and young people got all dressed up and worked together to solve the crime in a murder mystery game recently.

It was fantastic to see how much our young people embraced the murder mystery and how many laughs they had at everyone dressed up in their cowboy hats and moustaches.

As a prize for uncovering Levi and Carole as the criminals our young person won a new Xbox water bottle and a box of sweets.

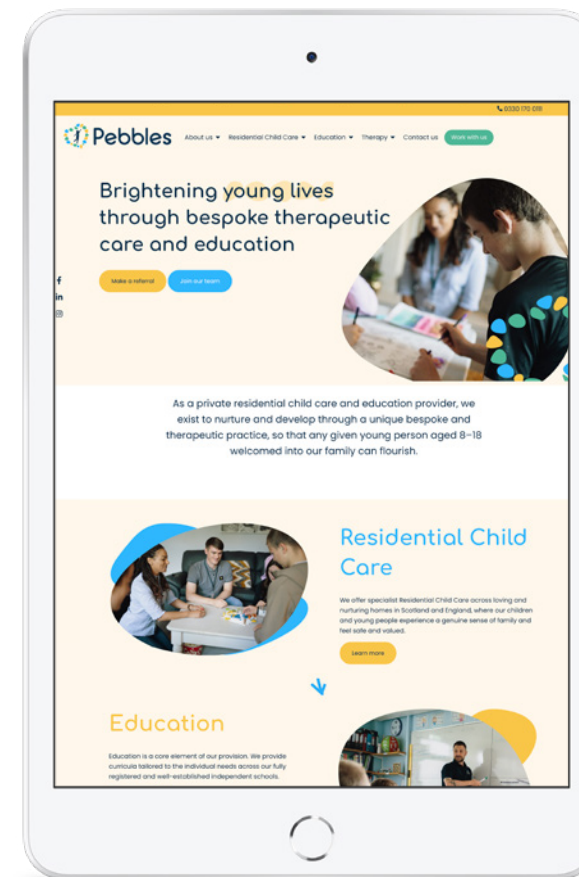
Birthday Celebrations

Our young people have celebrated some milestone birthdays during January, February and March this year.

L. at Tanglewood celebrated his 18th birthday which was a daunting prospect for him to realise that he is now officially considered an adult, but he very much enjoyed the surprise party that was organised for him.

Meanwhile at Forth Craig, we celebrated L's 13th birthday. The team really went above and beyond to make sure she got spoiled to mark her transition to a teenager.

A huge thank you to the care teams involved in helping our young people celebrate their birthdays!



Our new branding

Young people have always been at the heart of everything we do at Pebbles and now our logo and brand reflect that too.

We hope that everyone has had a chance to see our new website and SOPs.

We have also produced new presentation templates, letterhead templates and email signatures to ensure that we are aligned in using our new brand through all of our communications.

If you need access to any of the new branding, you can find everything saved within the Marketing – Shared folders on the server. Please ensure that you regularly check back in these folders to ensure you are using the most up to date version of everything.

Refer a Friend & Get £400 Bonus

Talented people like you are what makes Pebbles so special, and while we strive to attract the best professionals to join our family, we know that word of mouth generated by our own people is what brings us the most wonderful candidates. As a gesture of appreciation, we offer you a monetary reward of £400 when people start a successful career journey with us thanks to you.

Your name must be included in the job application, and if the candidate is successful, the one-off bonus payment will be given to you after their six-month probationary period. For more information about the scheme, please visit Natural HR, talk to your line manager, or contact our recruitment team at recruitment@pebblescare.com

Do you have someone in mind already? Tell them to apply today at www.pebblescare.com/our-jobs



L's Song – The Tanglewood Crew

Creativity is a valuable skill in so many aspects of life, so we try to encourage our young people to express their creativity whenever possible. Our young person, L, from Tanglewood has recently displayed his creative talents through writing a song about why he enjoys being at Tanglewood.

There's a place we live in
A place called Tanglewood.
We're one big happy family
A place that makes me
feel good.

Jane works hard all the time
Finding things for me to do
From riding the bus on my own
Or taking a trip to the zoo

Paula loves to cook
I call her the little chef
Everything she puts in
front of me
Takes away my breath.

And then there's Pedro.
He comes from Portugal
When I play him at FIFA
I beat him 20-0

We're the Tanglewood crew
We're the Tanglewood crew

Robyn likes to have fun
She's always up for a laugh
And if you don't believe me
Check out the photo-graph

Caitlin likes to go on walks
We once climbed up a hill
It was very narrow and steep
But we made it up still

Abbie is amazing
When it comes to time to bake
She can make anything
From a pie to chocolate cake

Billie the rascal
At bowling she's really good
I really want to beat her
I really wish I could

We're the Tanglewood crew
We're the Tanglewood crew

Tony likes to play pool
With his shots he does impress
But it doesn't bother me
too much
Because I beat him all the time
at chess"

Laura likes to watch movies
She'll watch any-thing
She'll watch horrors
But prefer ones where they sing

And finally there's Reilly
My little bro
I love you forever
No matter where I go

We're the Tanglewood crew
We're the Tanglewood crew
We're the Tanglewood crew
We're the Tanglewood crew.

Spread the happiness

We love being able to share all the positive stories we receive about our staff and young people and show how much your hard work means to so many. We would love to be able to keep sharing wonderful stories in our newsletters and on social media for others to get the pleasure of reading. If you have any positive stories about yourself, colleagues or the young people please feel free to share them with us through the email **marketing@pebblescare.com**. When sharing stories, it would be great to include detail and pictures where possible.

Thank you!

Follow Pebbles on Social Media for Latest News & Updates

For more positive stories about our Pebbles' family and what's happening with the company please follow us on social media. We are regularly active on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.





Pebbles

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