

Welcome to the

# Pebbles

## Newsletter



**Pebbles**  
Care | Education | Therapy

Artwork created by our  
talented young person,  
H., from Cara House



# Director's welcome

None of us can quite believe how quickly this year is going! How can we be halfway through the year already with the long summer holidays approaching?

As we look back on what we have achieved this year so far, we can all be so proud of the achievements of our staff teams, as well as the children and young people that we support. What you see in the following pages is only a snippet of the amazing work that has been going on throughout the country.

This time of year always sees some of our older young people moving on as they approach independence. While it is sad to say goodbye, let's make sure that we take the time to reflect on our successes as a team. We can pride ourselves that each and every child will be leaving us better equipped for the future due to the time that they have spent as part of the Pebbles family.

Congratulations to those team members who have recently been promoted into more senior roles, evidence of our commitment to provide a clear pathway of development through the organisation. The Quality Improvement Managers in particular, all recruited from within, are making a huge impact in the support that they are able to provide in our homes.

These are new roles and we hope they demonstrate to all the commitment that we have made to invest in our homes, our teams and our young people by giving everyone the resources they need.

As you will be aware, there have been some changes here in the Executive team. We were sad to see Mike Walsh leave us as CEO, but this sadness was offset by being able to welcome Valerie MacGregor as our new HR Director. Although her feet haven't touched the ground since she started, we know that some of you have already met her and she is committed to being "out and about" within the organisation as much as she can. There is much to do but doing even more to improve staff retention and wellbeing is very high on her agenda.

We were also delighted to see Grant Thomson appointed as Interim Finance Director. His role is invaluable to us right now as we continue to work hard to ensure the future expansion of Pebbles – opening new homes is still very much at the forefront of what all the Directors are working on for the remainder of this year.

So, thanks to you all! We know it can be tough. Supporting our young people can be challenging and requires real commitment and dedication. We really do appreciate all that you do to make the Pebbles family one with so much to give to those in our care.

Long may the sun continue to shine in the coming months!

**Julie, Mark, Val and Grant**



## A Heart of Gold – Lee MacInnes Appointed as Trustee of Local Charity

Lee MacInnes, a dedicated and familiar face within the Pebbles family, has recently been appointed as a Trustee of HCL Transport, a charity based in the Lothians.

HCL Transport provides supported accessible transport for people with mobility challenges in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Their services support people of all ages with disabilities, additional support needs, health issues affecting mobility; and geographic remoteness. HCL's service is provided 365 days a year and helps people get out more, feel less isolated and retain their independence.

This voluntary position will see Lee give up some of his free time to ensure that HCL Transport remains aligned with its five-year strategy while continuing to grow and provide accessible and inclusive transport within the local community. Lee's experience as Fleet Manager at Pebbles over the last four years and his caring nature make him a perfect addition to the Board of Trustees.

When asked what motivated him to apply to this position, Lee said,

"My job at Pebbles ensures that the young people in our care get around safely and efficiently to school, appointments, holidays, time with their families, and more.

"The fact that some people don't have access to this same basic need due to reasons out with their control really spurred me into dedicating my free-time and knowledge to help HCL continue to provide this service for those in my local community who need it most."

At Pebbles, we continuously strive to support and nurture our teams and are proud to support Lee in pursuing this new opportunity.

### HCL Transport



#### WEBSITE

<https://www.hcltransport.org.uk/home>



#### FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/handicabs.org.uk>





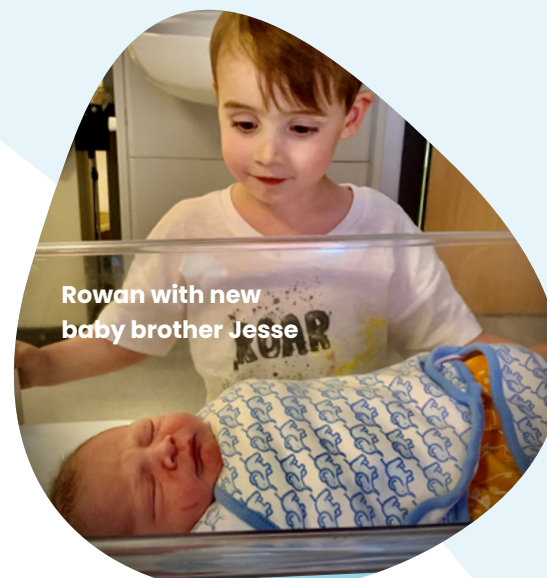


Nova

Jill Ferguson, Teacher at Muirkirk, welcomed her son Ross who arrived five weeks early on 7th April, weighing 5lb 2oz

Zoe Charnock, Area Manager, welcomed her granddaughter Nova on 22nd April, weighing 6lb 9oz

Luke Chadwick, Area Manager, welcomed his son Jesse on 23rd May, weighing 8lb



Rowan with new baby brother Jesse

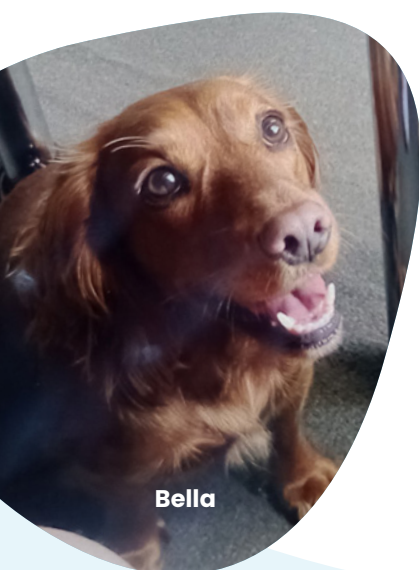


Flynn

## New additions to the Pebbles family

We're thrilled to share the wonderful news that a few members of our Pebbles family have recently become parents and grandparents.

We want to extend our heartfelt congratulations on the arrival of their adorable little ones. We wish them all the happiness, love, and precious moments with their new bundles of joy.



Bella



Penny

Ian Boyd Jnr, Estates Maintenance Manager, welcomed his grandson Flynn on 24th May, weighing 9lb 8oz

Our four-legged friends have also welcomed new members to their team, with Area Manager Dave's dog Penny becoming best friends with Deputy Manager at Prospect Farm, Daisy's dog Bella.



## Meet the Team – Zoe Charnock

Zoe Charnock, Area Manager in Lancashire, joined the Pebbles family in August 2022 and as we fast approach her one-year anniversary, what better time to find out a bit more about Zoe in her own words.

When I joined Pebbles Care last August, I approached it with a mix of anticipation and caution, due to my previous work experiences. However, since joining the company my experience has been nothing but positive. I have been able to demonstrate my knowledge, skills and abilities which have been fully recognised and utilised effectively. Initially joining as a Cluster Manager, it didn't take long for me to be offered the Area Manager position for Lancashire. Not only do I feel incredibly well supported and listened to by the Senior Management Team, but also by the Home Managers and staff for whom I am responsible.

At Pebbles, the company offers some excellent benefits to staff, and management and staff are regularly recognised for their progression and professional achievements. This recognition of the importance of the individual role staff play within the company is not only reflected in the salaries offered but also in the array of benefits including Medicash, personal counselling services, occupational health, and much more. The company is genuinely passionate about the health and wellbeing of our staff and go the extra mile in ensuring their workforce is fully supported both professionally and personally when required.

On a broader scale, Pebbles is diligently working towards enhancing and advancing the therapeutic services offered to the young people in our care. There is a genuine passion and dedication to achieving the best possible standards of care and support, thereby fostering positive outcomes for the children we care for.

In short, I can honestly say having worked in local authority for 20 years and alongside various private organisations, that my experience at Pebbles has possibly been the best that I have had so far in my professional career and is something that I value and fully appreciate. I work with some of the most fantastic colleagues with a wealth of knowledge and experience but also a passion and commitment to their roles and responsibilities in making a positive difference to the lives of children in care.

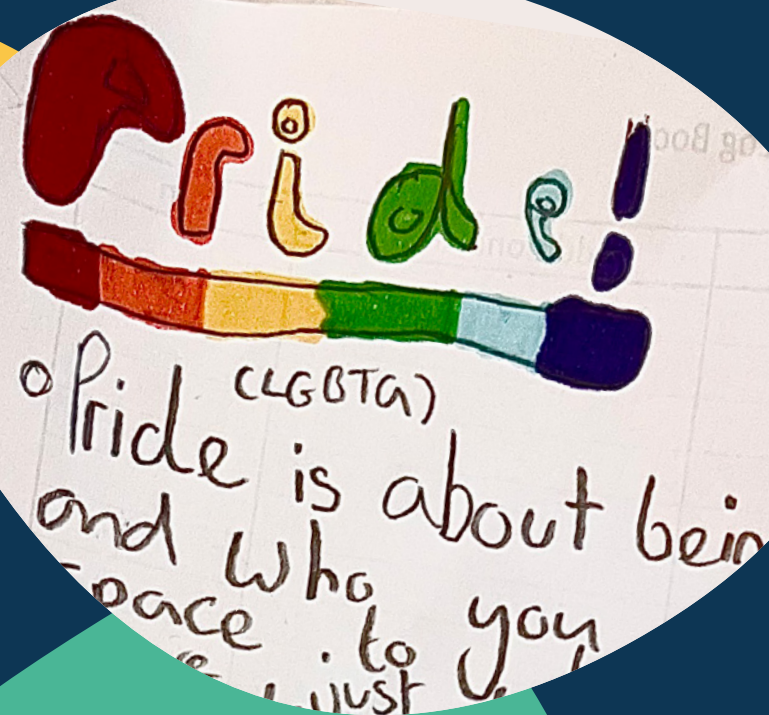
Despite already having 28 years' experience under my belt, I have continued to learn and grow since joining Pebbles. I feel fully supported to continue to learn, develop and progress along a path that I have strived towards for many years.



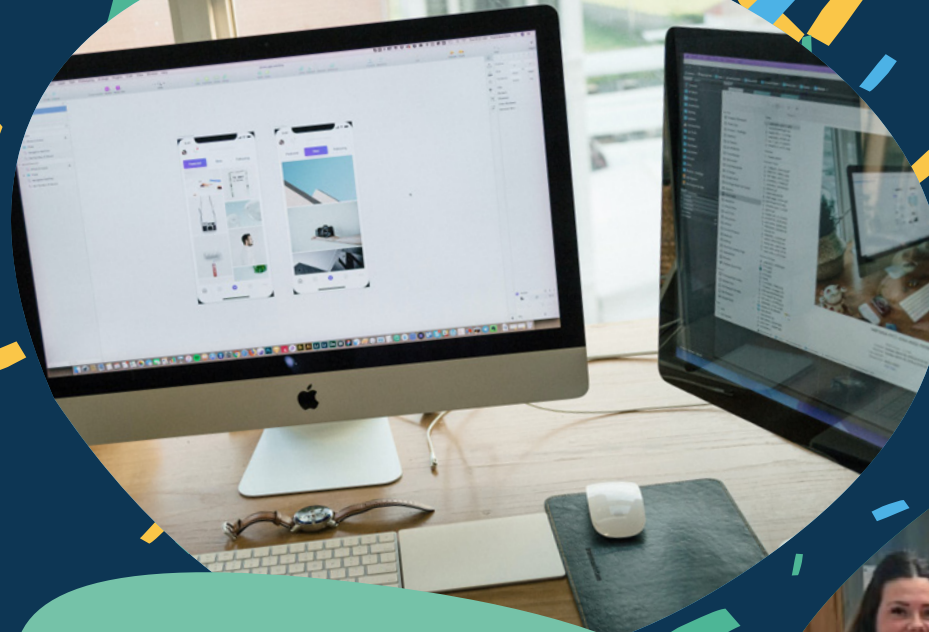
# Celebrations

There has been no shortage of reasons to celebrate throughout Pebbles over the past few months! Our young people and teams continually inspire us through their achievements, motivation and drive, willingness to learn and ability to let their hair down and have a good time.

With king-shaped pancakes at South Lodge and decorations and a buffet at Ruby House, our teams and young people in our homes up and down the country enjoyed celebrating the coronation of King Charles III in May.



June is Pride Month and while we embrace diversity, acceptance and equality all year round, our young person at Bluepotts has taken the opportunity to do their own research into the meanings behind each of the letters within LGBTQIA+ and the different colours in the Pride flag. We are proud to create a safe and affirming environment where everyone can be their authentic selves.



Our young person at Amber House, M., has recently started work experience as a content creator for Affinity. We are hugely proud of the progression and development M. has made to get to this point!



Our team from South Lodge got behind Mental Health Awareness Week in May. Anxiety was the colour for this year and as part of the Wear It Green Day, all of the team showed their support by coming along to their team meeting wearing something green – even right down to their socks! Anxiety can affect all of us, both mentally and physically, and we are happy to do our part to raise awareness.

Our Registered Manager at Murraythwaite, Jo-Anna, took to the stage in May to receive our 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 and it was an honour to be recognised at the ceremony.



K., at Thistlebank passed both his theory test and driving test on his first attempt and the team couldn't be more proud.





In April, N., one of our young people at Kippsbyre Cottage celebrated their one-year anniversary at Pebbles. Reflecting on her time with us, she said, "It's been good, all my staff have been nice, supportive and great towards me. Kipps is my home." We are delighted to know that N. feels supported and safe in our care and can't wait to see her continue to flourish.



H., our young person at Cara House has had so many things to celebrate over the past few months. He recently celebrated his 16th birthday and now happily takes on the role of being the eldest in the home. This celebration was made all the sweeter for our young person as he also received the all clear with his health.

He also sat his GCSEs and had an art exhibition to display his work. He is so talented and we hope to see him continue pursuing his artistic side even when he starts college full-time in September where he will be studying building.

We are so proud of the true gentleman H. has become over the past three years with us and how well he dealt with his illness and the bravery he showed throughout.

W., at Kippsbyre Cottage successfully secured a part-time job at KFC and has also been using their free time to gain additional work experience at a primary school and in a hair salon. W. will be starting college in August to study health and social care. So many achievements in such a small space of time!



## Giving a helping hand

There's no better feeling than knowing our young people feel supported themselves but also feel empowered to help support others. Our young person at Green Towers recently stepped in to help one of the other young people in the home who was struggling with her emotions. G., was a great support to the other young person and to

the staff team to help manage the situation. Not only that, G. has been making huge progression in her own independence by seeing her friends and boyfriend without staff support for the first time. She did exactly what was asked of her and had a great time. As a thank you and well done, G. got a fresh set of acrylic nails as a reward.



## Employee Engagement Survey

The Employee Engagement Survey for 2023 is now live. It can be found in the announcements section of NaturalHR.

We want to get feedback from as many employees as possible to allow us to move our people agenda forward and make Pebbles Care an employer of choice.

In order for the results to be as meaningful as possible and to allow us to develop an action plan, we are aiming for at least 70% participation rate. Please ensure that you set aside some time to complete the survey.

If you have any questions regarding the Employee Engagement Survey or wish to discuss any people related matter please do not hesitate to contact Valerie on [hr@pebblescare.com](mailto:hr@pebblescare.com)



## This is how we roll

Our super talented young person at St Paul's recently showed off their skills by making sushi for the rest of the home. The finished product was delicious and was the perfect treat on a hot day.



## Getting Active!

As the weather has continued to improve, and with the recent heatwave, our teams have grabbed the opportunity to get outdoors and be active.

- Our Pebbles family from Jasper House took part in the YoungMinds charity 5km fun run on 10th June to raise money for young people's mental health and fight so that no child feels alone with their thoughts and feelings. The team, which included our young people, absolutely smashed the challenge and raised a whopping £350 - £150 over their target!
- Our young person from Green Towers took part in a dressage event at her equine school in May. Our Registered Manager Simon arranged for her family to be there to cheer her on and everyone was overjoyed to see her do so well!
- Ferne, Our Registered Manager at Forth Craig, arranged a 5-week 'Let's Get Sporty' event for all of the homes in the area to take part in.
- Every Wednesday from 4pm-5pm, our young people get together at the local high school to take part in sports such as basketball and racket sports.
- Our young person at Kirran Cottage took part in an amazing activity - walking alpacas! As part of the experience our young person got to learn all about alpacas then took them out for a stroll. Our young person found this really interesting and really enjoyed himself.
- Our young person at Stormont has shown initiative and arranged a football tournament on 27th June to celebrate the end of term.
- Our young person at Amber House has been enjoying getting out and gardening. He has expressed that he hopes to see his flowers bloom each year. We are all so proud of him and the efforts that he has made to turn things around for himself. He is also in a strawberry growing competition with the other young person at Amber House!



## Therapeutic Activity

Therapeutic parenting underpins everything we do and the relationships we build with our young people. At Cobbledyke, our young person undertook a therapeutic activity where they worked with their staff team to work on emotions and feelings. Our young person had great fun, especially drawing each other, whilst discussing an important topic.



## Education updates

Pebbles Education in Dunfermline have recently gotten pet fish, with one of our young people taking on the role of Aquarium Manager. The fish are named Blue, Princess Peach, Marky Mark, Reggie, Cheeto, Sir Fishy McFishington, SpongeBob and Patrick. Our Aquarium Manager has worked extremely hard to set up a beautiful environment for them and has been taking good care of them.

In Maths and English all students are working through different levels from 1st Level through to National 5 and are making excellent progress. Home Economics has also become a weekly part of school life. The young people have made lots of different dishes including brownies, gyoza dumplings and cheesy broccoli pasta bake.

In Art, the young people have been creating optical illusion art with some cool results.

Several of our young people have achieved National Qualifications up to National 4 level. One of our young people has been accepted into college and several of them are taking part in work experience activities in primary schools and salons.

In our school reward system, several young people have earned enough points to receive vouchers and awards through consistently attending school and classes, and meeting expectations while in school.

**We have recently started producing an education newsletter where you can find out more about the work we have been doing in our schools. Look out for it on the Pebbles Care website!**





## Staff recognition and social worker feedback

Following their Care Inspectorate inspection, our Kyllimoons home received a rating of 6 – excellent. The inspection noted that our young people were experiencing responsive and nurturing care, having success in education, that staff were very strong at promoting young people's rights and listening to their views, personal life choices were fully embraced and celebrated and that the culture at Kyllimoons was led by a strong management team. A huge congratulations to the team at Kyllimoons for this fantastic outcome!

Our Murraythwaite home also experienced a fantastic inspection. Jo-Anna, Registered Manager of the home, put together gift bags for her team which included a pillow with words that reflect their personalities as a thank you for their continuous hard work and for playing their part in the inspection going so well.

“

“It feels like a family being here, feels like home. I like them here and they like me, everyone makes me feel confident, they notice when I'm not ok and they come and talk to me. I want to stay here till I'm 18, this is my home.”

Quote from young person at Ruby House

### Staff recognition

**Michael Duthie**, Stormont Cottage, passed SVQ3

**Jane Spence**, Blane Cottage, passed HNC Social Care



## Moving on and moving in

When working with our young people the end goal is always to set them up for success in the future, allowing them to grow into responsible and independent young adults.

A recent example of this is our young person E., moving on from Cara House after four years with us.

E. has moved into semi-independence and will be greatly missed by the whole team. To celebrate him moving on, the team had a leaving meal with his favourite food, curry. Staff from other homes who have known him from the beginning came to say goodbye as well as other young people. The Cara House team also put together a memory picture book for him to remember his time with us. It has been a pleasure to watch him grow and turn into the polite, respectful and caring young man he is today.



We like to involve our young people in decisions that are important to them and their enjoyment of their time with us. Our two young people at Kippsbyre recently got involved in the design of their freshly decorated bedrooms, where they picked out the colours, flooring and accessories. They were even involved in the painting. The boys worked extremely well together and it was lovely to see them support each other in the decorating. They both love their new rooms!



## The power of support knows no bounds

Our Registered Manager at Earlsear, Kerry, is stepping into a new role which will take her away from the home. Earlsear's young people have shown so much support through sharing gifts and kind words to congratulate Kerry and thank her for the impact she has had on them during their time together. We want to take this opportunity to wish Kerry, Jade, Laurie and Liz all the best in their new positions as Quality Improvement Managers.



# Are you taking advantage of Medicash?

Medicash is extremely easy to use and is a great tool to help you take care of your health and finances, which is why we offer it to all our valued employees.

With the increasing cost of living, Medicash can support you to save money on medical treatments and on your regular shopping. Moreover, it can provide you with valuable wellbeing support, and what's even better is that you can add up to four children to it and share the benefits with them!

## Included in Medicash:

- **Dental Treatments**
- **24/7 Employee Helpline**
- **Free & Confidential Counselling**
- **Discounts on Gyms & Health Clubs**
- **Virtual GP & Prescription Service**
- **Optical**
- **Complementary & Alternative Therapies**
- **Inoculations & Flu Jabs**
- **SkinVision**
- **Meditation and Fitness Courses**
- **...and much more!**

## Get Started

Scan the code below to download the Medicash app and access it with your unique policy number. If you don't know your policy number, please email [hr@pebblescare.com](mailto:hr@pebblescare.com)



For more information, you can visit Natural HR or [www.medicash.org](http://www.medicash.org)

## 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](mailto: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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