

Welcome to the

Pebbles

Newsletter



Pebbles
Care | Education | Therapy

Director's welcome

Spring is certainly my favourite season, as we witness evidence of the cycle of new beginnings. It's great to see the sun start to shine, blossom appear on the trees and shoots of spring flowers emerge.

It's also a time for growth within Pebbles as we extend a warm welcome to our colleagues within the BDT business. We are thrilled to have you on board and are certainly excited about our future together!

Whilst on the theme of growth, why don't you join me in giving gardening a go? It's been great to launch our Flourish and Thrive initiative across Pebbles. I look forward to reviewing the submissions as they come in of your garden transformations. It's also important to note that as a central team we will be on hand to come out to help where we can. I'll share further details regarding this soon.

I thoroughly enjoyed attending the final day of our management training course in Carlisle and meeting some of our amazing Registered Managers recently. We were able to reflect on theory and also discuss practical leadership and management experiences within our children's homes. It was positive to be able to reflect on how we are streamlining our processes and providing clear career pathways to support our teams' development. At the end of the day, I had the pleasure of presenting our leaders with their completion certificates.

Keep an eye on upcoming editions of the newsletter which will no doubt include achievements from our leaders of the future.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has come along to Sovereign House to attend our Keep in Touch Wednesdays. The days were set up as a way for our home-based staff to get the chance to spend some time together face-to-face and it has been great to see everyone embrace the opportunity. I look forward to seeing you all again at next quarter's Keep in Touch Wednesday dates.

Chris Strong
CEO



Welcome to the Pebbles Family! Our New Homes

We are extremely proud to announce that we recently finalised the acquisition of BDT Care Solutions as part of our continued commitment to supporting children and young people in care to develop and flourish.

With a total of four nurturing homes in the peaceful countryside of Scotland, from single occupancy to four-bed residencies, BDT shares the same view as Pebbles that every child is unique and deserves an individualised approach to overcome their traumatic experiences and thrive. Their trauma-informed care is anchored in a therapeutic practice, strongly aligning with our provision, where therapeutic parenting is at the core of everything that we do.

BDT was acquired with the aim of supporting more children and young people across the country who need a safe and loving space to call home.

Please join us in giving the BDT Care Solutions teams a warm welcome into the Pebbles family.





Further growth plans in 2024 and beyond

Alongside the acquisition of BDT Care Solutions, Pebbles is also opening two new homes this year.

One is a single occupancy in Leeds which will be named Rowan House and is in proximity to two of our existing homes (Willow and Emerald). Our dedicated Registered Manager, Hayley Bell, currently manages the two existing homes and will also take the helm of managing Rowan House.

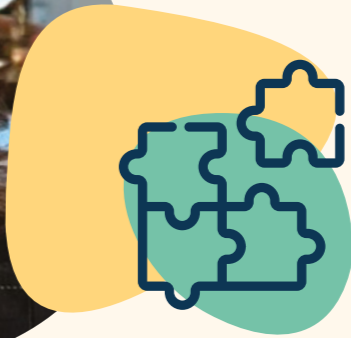
The other is a two-bed residency in Pontefract, Yorkshire. Our Area Manager, Luke Chadwick, invited the homes in his area to take part in a competition to name our new home. The competition was open to all teams and young people in the area and the brief was simple; as most of our homes in the area are named after trees or gemstones, we wanted to continue this theme for the new home.

The entries we received were exceptionally well thought out with some teams even including a visual representation of the homes in their entries.

Our winning entry came from R., one of our young people at Amber House, with the suggestion of Cherry Blossom House. R. based her submission on research she had completed where she found out that cherry blossoms do not always bloom. R. thought this was a great representation as to how we cannot always be ok and that this is ok. Congratulations to R. for her winning submission!

This marks the beginning of a fantastic year where both our young people and employees will continue to grow and achieve astonishing outcomes.

It is also a very exciting time for Pebbles in terms of our education provision, as we are looking to expand our service to England, with plans to open a new school in the North East by the end of 2024, and another in the North West in early 2025. The expansion will enable more young people to benefit from our ground-breaking Adapt Learning model, which has already transformed the learning journeys of the pupils attending our two Scottish schools.



Meet the Team – Karen Blanchard-Ellis

Karen has been part of the Pebbles family for almost 13 years. Joining the team back in April 2011, Karen started her journey on a part-time basis, working 16 hours a week to support the Business Manager.

Karen's early responsibilities involved reaching out to commissioners across Scotland to build relationships and promote Pebbles' services. Her efforts significantly boosted occupancy levels, setting a trajectory of success for Pebbles. As the company evolved from a family-owned venture, Karen's role expanded, encompassing council meetings, administrative tasks, and project support.

Karen had no previous experience of residential child care before joining Pebbles. She qualified as a hairdresser when leaving school, then followed a totally different career path by joining a UK and international sales team where she developed her skills and was promoted within. Karen then decided to take a career break which led to her being a stay-at-home mum for four years.

Her transition to working in the care sector was fuelled by her desire to make a meaningful difference to children's lives. She was able to take the transferable skills she'd gained through her previous employment such as communication skills, problem-solving, time management, attention to detail and relationship-building. Everything else, she has learned on the job.

Over the years, Karen's dedication saw her to take on various roles within Pebbles, leading up to her appointment as Head of Commissioning in October 2023. Managing a team of four Referral Coordinators, Karen has effectively streamlined



I would like to say that this current move is the least stressful experience with referrals I've had at Pebbles. I felt you, Margaret, Michael, and Lauren listened and took on board our concerns. So, for me a much more improved experience with the referral process.

Sarah Kimpton, RM Broadoak and St Paul's.

the commissioning process to allow herself and her team to efficiently handle a high volume of referrals and place children in a carefully matched home.

Karen has placed a strong emphasis on the matching process since her appointment to Head of Commissioning, ensuring it is as streamlined as possible. This not only facilitates clear communication but also enhances the likelihood of successful placements, ensuring children find suitable homes where they can flourish.

For Karen, the role of Head of Commissioning is more than just a job; it's a fulfilling opportunity to give back and make a tangible difference in the lives of children. Her journey from part-time support to a leadership position exemplifies Pebbles' commitment to nurturing talent and driving positive change in the care sector.

Successful transitions to independence

A lot of the work our teams do is to help prepare our young people for a transition into independent living and setting them up for success in their adult lives.

Although it's a bittersweet moment to say goodbye to our young people who have been with us for years, the pride our teams have in seeing their young people flourish is unmatched. We have some recent examples of our young people moving on to independence.

Bellview Cottage

In January, our Bellview team said goodbye to A. who had been with them for five years.

Jadwiga, our Registered Manager at Bellview, said,

"A. has grown into a beautiful young adult right in front of us and it was great to see her move on to her own home. We have been preparing her for the move for the past year and are super proud and happy for her to be living in such a state-of-the-art cottage.

"This transition was nothing but a pleasure which is down to the Bellview team going the extra mile for our young person. It is the best transition I have ever been part of."

To celebrate the milestone of A. moving on, the team at Bellview threw a party where colleagues and young people from other homes attended.

A. is now happy and settled in her new home and has expressed her gratitude to everyone who has supported her over the last five years to get to this point.



Cara House

After over three years at Cara House, our young person H. has also made the move to semi-independence. While this transition wasn't without its challenges, with H. initially being reluctant to leave, his dedicated team ensured that every step of the transition for him was thoughtful, caring and that H. felt supported every step of the way.

We are so proud of H. and are excited for him to undertake this new chapter of his journey towards greater independence.

The team at Cara House have been nothing short of impeccable during this time and their commitment to H.'s wellbeing has been exemplary.

Stories of Change

On 5th February, our Area Manager Sheena and Registered Managers Fern and Eileen joined hundreds of other care professionals from all over Scotland to attend The Promise Scotland – Stories of Change Conference in Edinburgh.

The conference was held to give the opportunity for us to reflect on the two years that have passed since The Promise was introduced and the positive change that we have seen throughout the industry as a result. Not only this, but it was an opportunity to look ahead to the next two years and discuss further changes that need to happen to ensure that we all #KeepThePromise



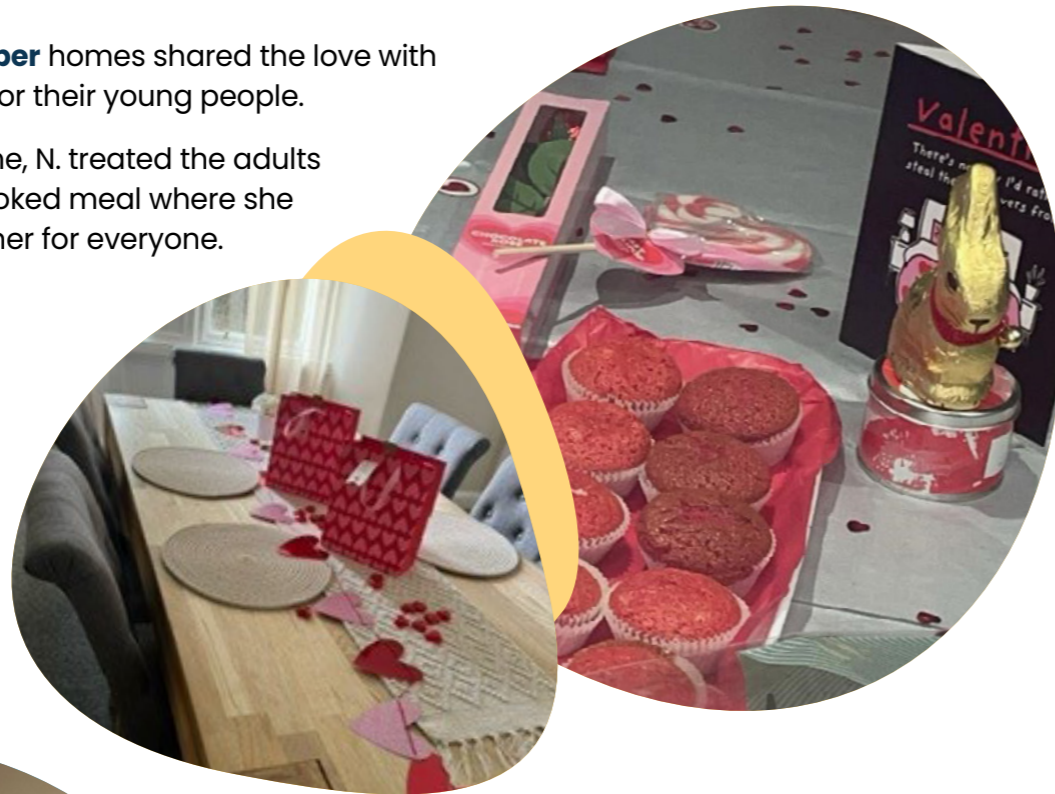
#KeepThePromise

Recent celebrations

There have been lots of reasons to celebrate and share the love over the past few months, with our homes getting involved in celebrating Valentine's Day and Pancake Day, and our Scottish homes getting involved in Burns Night celebrations.

Our **Earlseat** and **Jasper** homes shared the love with Valentine's gift bags for their young people.

At our **Kippsbyre** home, N. treated the adults on shift to a home cooked meal where she prepared a steak dinner for everyone.



Earlseat celebrated Burns Night with haggis, neeps and tatties alongside an Irn Bru. This was followed by both shortbread and tea cakes to round off a traditional Scottish evening.



We were all flipping over with excitement as P. celebrated his very first pancake day at **Cara House**. With the help of staff, he threw himself headfirst into the world of pancake making - mixing batter and showing off some serious flipping skills. Despite a few pancake mishaps

(ceiling pancake, anyone?), P.'s infectious enthusiasm made it a day to remember.

Jasper House also got in on the pancake flipping action for Pancake Day (even Bella the dog got involved in making sure the batter was up to scratch!)

Some of our young people have celebrated some huge milestone birthdays over the past few months.

J. at Glen Cottage recently celebrated his 16th birthday.

F. at Murraythwaite recently celebrated her 18th birthday.

F.'s social worker also provided the following feedback,



I would like to say thank you so much for all the amazing work that you are doing and will continue to do with F. For me, it has been a pleasure to work with you all and I have learnt so much from your practice. You have made a massive and positive difference in F.'s life and the fruits of your hard work and commitment to F. are clear. Thank you.



Recent celebrations

One of our four-legged friends has also celebrated his birthday recently.

Billy, who belongs to Registered Manager at Jasper House **Becca**, celebrated his first birthday.



Deputy Manager at our Kippisbyre home, **Simone**, recently broke off on maternity leave and the team and young people couldn't let her go without a proper send off! The team organised a baby shower for Simone and we all wish her all the best for the arrival of her bundle of joy.

Fun-filled fundraising adventures

We love that our young people and teams are empowered to take the initiative to raise funds for charity. There has been a variety of different fundraising activities throughout our homes, from using skills such as baking to taking on more physical challenges.



No. 57

Our young person at No. 57 organised a coffee morning that included a bake sale that everyone contributed their bakes to. This raised an amazing £60 for Barnardo's.

Glen Cottage

J. recently completed a 5km charity walk with his friend and the Glen team. J. was keen to raise money for the NSPCC and raised a lot through sharing the page and link with his family, friends and Pebbles family too. He absolutely smashed his £100 target by raising over £250!



Jasmine House

Our young person W. took on a chilling ice bath challenge to raise funds for St Gemma's Hospice. We are so proud to report that he was successful in the challenge, raising £350 in memory of his dad.

Pebbles Education Dunfermline

Our staff and pupils from Pebbles Education Dunfermline are set to take on Cancer Research UK's Pretty Muddy 5km on 12th May 2024. The Pretty Muddy event is a muddy obstacle course, where the team will have to climb, crawl and slide their way round, raising money for life-saving cancer research and having a good laugh at the same time!



The Kiltwalk

There's still time to join the Pebbles Kiltwalk team!

This year on Sunday 28th April, the Pebbles Dashers will be taking on the Kiltwalk's Mighty Stride or Big Stroll, walking 23 or 14 miles from Glasgow to Balloch on the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond. There is also the Wee Wander option (3 miles), ensuring there is an option to suit all abilities.

We will be raising funds for St. Andrew's Hospice, who provide specialist palliative care to people living with life-limiting illnesses.

We would love to get a big team together to take on this challenge and to help make that easier Pebbles is covering the cost of registration. Simply sign up and claim the registration fees back through expenses.

Head to the Kiltwalk's website and use the QR code below to join the team:



Charity: St. Andrew's Hospice
Team name: Pebbles Dashers
Team Captain's name: Valerie MacGregor
Preferred start time: 9:00am

We can't wait to see you there!

Flourish and Thrive: Pebbles' Green Project 2024

With spring around the corner, we are excited to launch the very first green project in Pebbles' history: Flourish & Thrive.

This will be a fun, therapeutic, and educational activity aimed at harvesting hope and cultivating change for the children and young people in our homes.

Whatever the size of your home or garden, there'll be at least one option available for you! The categories for this competition are:

Mastering Upcycling:

Get creative and transform something that could end up in the landfill into a garden centrepiece.

Best Blooming Corner:

If you have a tiny outdoor space, you can create nice green corners, that could also become beautiful mindfulness spaces.

Indoor Green Beauties:

No outdoor space? Then this category is for you, and indoor plants will be the stars of the show!

Wildlife Lovers:

There's a whole ecosystem running around gardens! Make this ecosystem thrive through wildlife-friendly plants, bird feeding stations, hedgehog houses, butterfly shelters, etc.

Garden Kitchen:

What's better than going to the garden to pick some fresh herbs and sprinkle them on your plate? Grow your own food and learn about being self-sufficient.

The benefits of gardening? Improves mood, involves physical exercise, teaches about the environment, helps our planet, teaches caring skills, teaches patience, improves diet... and makes our homes more beautiful!

Prize:

The winners of each category will receive £200 to organise an activity for their young people linked to the theme of this project, for example, a visit to the botanic garden. You will be able to choose what to do based on what's available in your local area.



How to enter the competition:

Start making a plan with your young people now, take advantage of spring time to harvest, and send us the results in the format of a picture, explaining the category you've entered and why, by 15th July to marketing@pebblescare.com.

Help from the senior team: Senior team members will have the opportunity to visit your homes at the end of June and help you with any gardening support you might need.

We look forward to seeing our Pebbles homes flourish and thrive!

Flourish & Thrive

Pebbles Green project 2024

Finance update for our homes

There's a big change happening for home expense management: We're happy to announce that we'll now be using a system called Soldo to help you manage your home's expenses! Soldo allows you to attach receipts directly to your bank transactions/payments, and to customise controls on your account for different levels of staff to make budgeting easy. If you missed the training session on the 22nd and have questions about how to get started, please get in touch with Abby Adams (abigail.adams@pebblescare.com). Abby and the rest of the finance team will be available and happy to support as we make this change.

We're grateful for all your hard work, and we hope that this will make your jobs easier.



Academic success for our young people

Our young people never fail to impress us with the progress they are making towards gaining their qualifications at school and college.

Recently our young people at Kippsbyre have had lots of academic success; with R. passing her maths prelim with 80%! She has also completed her human development unit at college. G. at Kippsbyre has also recently passed his Nat4 numeracy and written, sang and recorded his own music video.

Updates from our homes and teams

A huge congratulations to our team who have been working hard to achieve their professional qualifications:

- Racheal Redmayne, Cobbledyke, passed her Level 4
- Sam Turner, Murraythwaite, passed his HNC
- Colin McIntosh, Stormont, passed his SVQ3
- Angela Stirling, Kippsbyre, passed her SVQ3 and was successful in gaining the interim Deputy Manager position



Pebblescare.com

I feel that the staff at St Teresa's are a credit to Pebbles Care and represent the brand to an exceptional standard. I have found all staff to be friendly, polite and professional whilst acting in A.'s best interest. Staff are extremely nurturing with A., which creates an environment that is supportive/emotionally warm and a place in which A. feels important. All of which provides her with the foundation from which she can go on to achieve, therefore giving her the opportunities that are available to every other young person.

Community Support Worker for A. at St Teresa's

We are pleased to announce that our Stoneraise home received a good in all areas following their Ofsted inspection.



Amble Cottage also received a good in all areas from Ofsted. Registered Manager Lisa said, "I am lucky to have an amazing team around me and by working together we make Amble cottage a wonderful home to live and work in."

We want to extend a warm welcome to the following team members who have recently joined the Pebbles family:

- Aimee Hughes, Commissioning
- Paul Greenway, Cara House
- Kristen Sharp, Cara House



A huge thank you to Wilma Wilkie for her hard work to enable our Keep in Touch Wednesdays to run smoothly.



The staff always put the young person at the centre of everything they talk about and advocate for the best provision for the young person. They clearly have a very good understanding of her needs. I feel the staff team who I have met go above and beyond for the young person we have placed at the home. I feel they are kind and interested in what is best for the young person. I am always very impressed. I feel our young person is very settled and happy at home. They are quite unsettled at school, but the home does everything they can to support with this and get school staff to listen to how she feels. The communication and support are excellent with our local authority. They always strive to do their best by our young person.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator for T. at Prospect Place

Education updates

Through our Adapt Learning Model we provide bespoke education based on the individual needs, experiences and skills of the learner. We are delighted to share some of the learning activities our pupils have been getting up to recently.

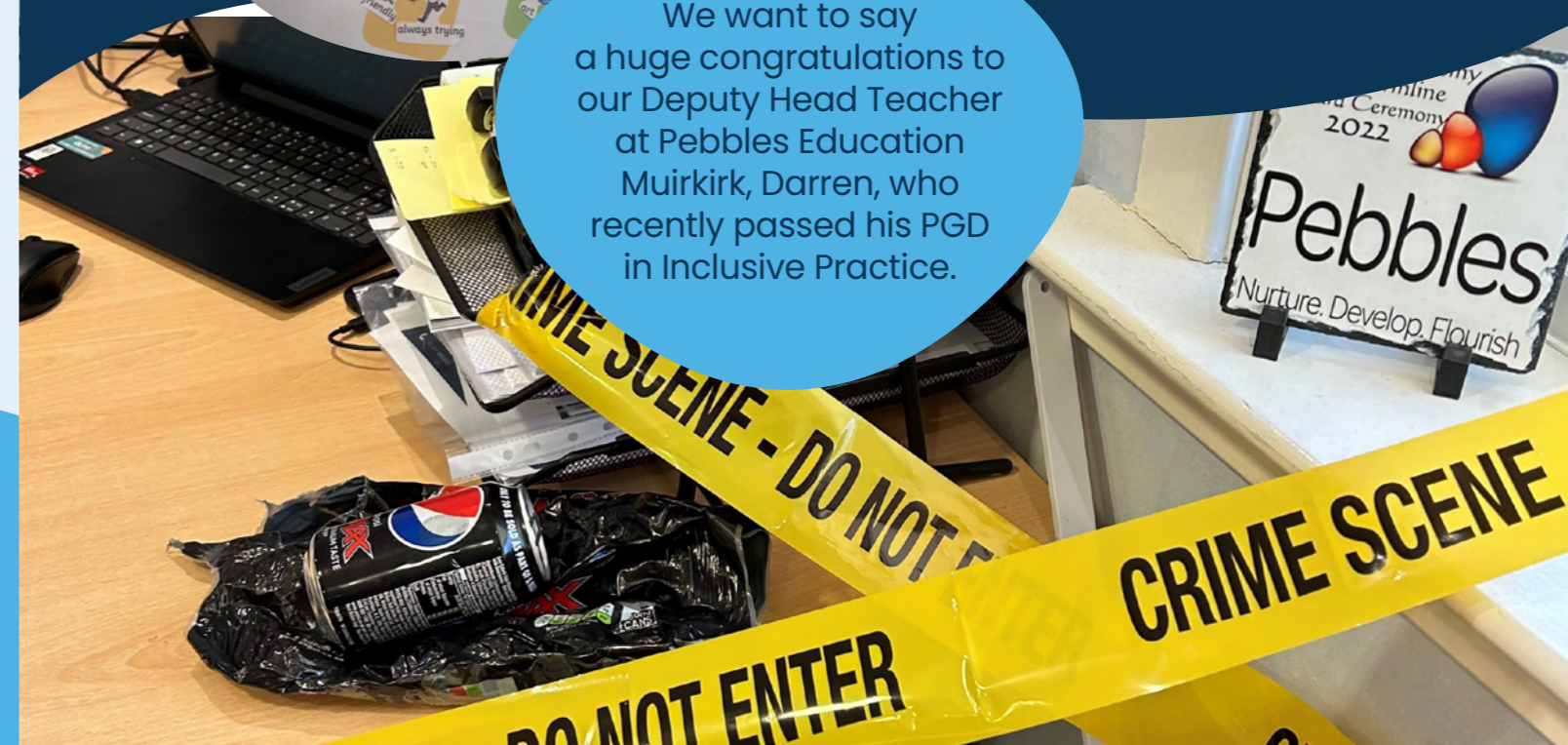
Our pupils at Pebbles Education Dunfermline recently had to use their deduction skills to figure out who had committed the crime of stealing all the Pepsi Max! They had to solve puzzles, collect evidence and interview suspects to finally piece together the truth. Once all the evidence was collected and analysed, they correctly identified the culprit. Well done girls!

As part of vocational skills at Pebbles Education Muirkirk, our young person H. looked at recognising and identifying personal skills and in therapeutic art she also created a poster of an inspirational person or character and what's inspiring about them.

Our pupils at Pebbles Education Muirkirk recently took a day trip to Dean Castle Country Park where they participated in a range of outdoor activities such as orienteering, den building, toasting marshmallows and foraging for wild garlic to make homemade garlic bread.

Everyone also took a tour of Dean Castle to learn about its history and explore all the old rooms, ancient weapons, and even haunted living quarters.

We want to say a huge congratulations to our Deputy Head Teacher at Pebbles Education Muirkirk, Darren, who recently passed his PGD in Inclusive Practice.





Mental Health First Aiders

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving the support for staff with their mental health, we have recently introduced Mental Health First Aiders.

Our Mental Health First Aiders are here to support anyone with a mental health concern - confidentially at any time. All our Mental Health First Aiders are qualified to Ofqual regulated Level 2 Award in First Aid for Mental Health (RQF) for England or Award in First Aid for Mental Health at SCQF Level 5 for Scotland.

The role of a Mental Health First Aider in the workplace is to be a point of contact for an employee who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress.

This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting you to get appropriate help. As well as in a crisis, Mental Health First

Aiders are valuable in providing early intervention help for someone who may be developing a mental health issue. Mental Health First Aiders are not trained to be therapists or psychiatrists, but they can offer initial support through non-judgemental listening and guidance.

If you would like to speak to one of our Mental Health First Aiders, please email MHFA@pebblescare.com with your choice of Mental Health First Aider, they will then get in touch with you ASAP.

All communication is in the strictest confidence.

A list of our current Mental Health First Aiders is available to all our employees on NaturalHR. They can be found under Intranet > Human Resources > Mental Health First Aiders

Our commitment to drugs and alcohol awareness

We were deeply saddened to hear of the recent tragic loss of a child in residential care from substance misuse. As a residential childcare provider, we remain committed to ensuring that we offer the highest level of support to our children and young people.

They are at the heart of everything we do, and we will continue to do everything we can to keep them safe and to educate them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. This tragic death prompted other agencies to raise awareness, and the sense of communities working together was powerful.

A Moss House success story

Our young person, M., at Moss House has a passion of following his dream of one day becoming a world class chef. After attending a 6-week cooking course over the summer, he was ready to take the next step towards achieving his dreams.

Supported by the Moss House team, he recently attended an open day and a taster day at Kendal College, with a view to applying and commencing a catering course in September 2024.

Afterwards, M. independently applied for the course. This decision was made on the back of him changing his mind about wanting to leave Moss House when he turns 16. He was then offered an interview which would consist of him watching a presentation and then potentially having to wait around for a while until his interview took place. The whole process was supposed to last for around two hours.

Within half an hour of the appointment starting, the staff member there supporting M. called the home's Registered Manager



Hayley to let her know that M. had something he wanted to tell her. M. spoke to Hayley and told her that he was called in almost immediately for his interview. It appears that the open day and taster day had given the college tutor and his team an incredible first and second impression of M. and they were extremely impressed by how he conducted himself and his passion and commitment to his future.

He continued to conduct himself well, answered some really hard questions (about his life, history and experiences) was able to hold good eye contact, control his tics, implement his breathing techniques and strategies that he has learned with the Moss House team and absolutely smashed the interview process out of the park. So much so, he has been offered a placement next year.

M. has had many obstacles in his path regarding his education, and his journey up to this point in his learning has some gaps.

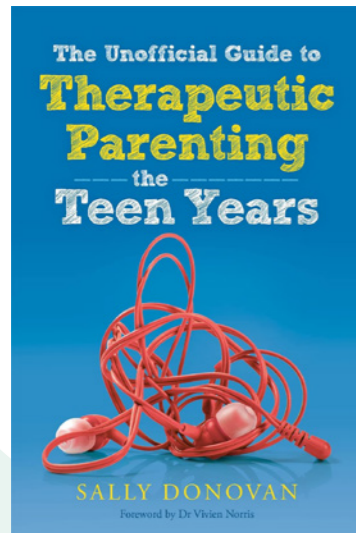
After being offered his place on the course M. said he was so happy and proud of himself that he could cry. We're all so proud of you too, M.!

We will continue to work in our local communities and take a multi-agency approach to providing support and sourcing additional services where needed.

The most important thing that we can do is talk about what has happened and ensure that we maximise opportunities for learning from it. As an example of this, two of our young people from St Teresa's House and Cambridge

House respectively, recently took part in a drug and alcohol workshop delivered by one of our Learning and Development Facilitators, Josh.

Our young people were really engaged in the session and took a lot away from the experience. Josh said, "Honestly, they were absolutely brilliant! I was over the moon with how well they did."



Resource of the month

The Unofficial Guide to Therapeutic Parenting - The Teen Years

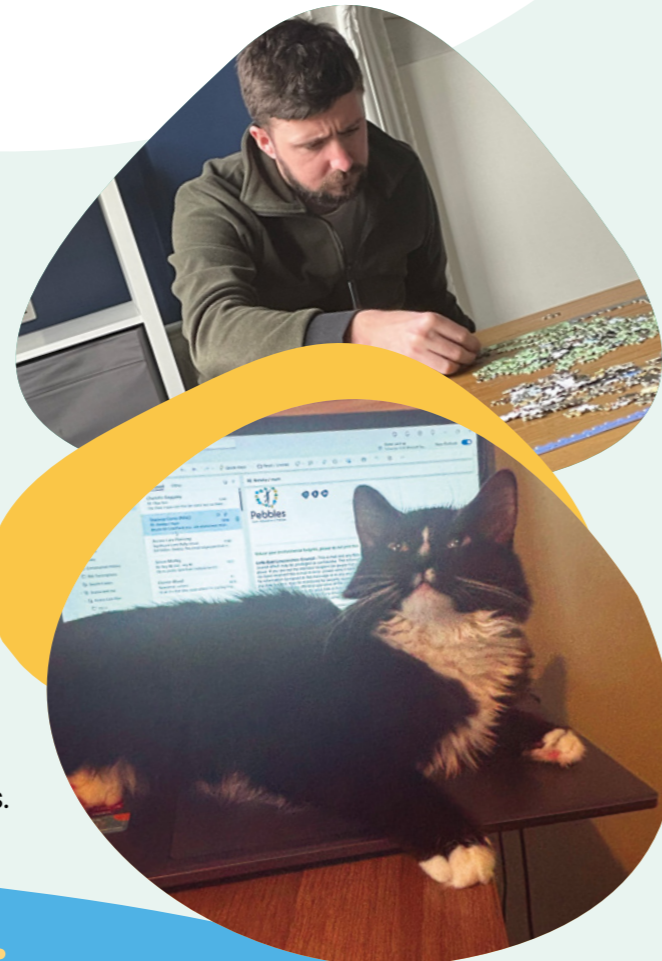
This book provides an unofficial look at therapeutic parenting towards teenagers, it's given from a truthful view of a previous foster carer who share valuable insights into her life using therapeutic parenting. It is funny, sad and gives a different view of therapeutic parenting that we can relate to.

It's all fun and games!

The team at Jasper House have recently finished redecorating their Games Room which the young people wasted no time in taking full advantage of as they got settled in for a relaxing afternoon with a good movie.

Levi, one of our dedicated Residential Child Care Workers at Jasper House, also recently managed to complete a jigsaw he had been working on for months with the help of the young people in the home. Well done, Levi!

Boots the cat, our young person at Prospect Place's cat, has been lending a helping paw to Registered Manager Katie to reply to her emails.



Feedback and Suggestions

Your feedback matters.

If you have any suggestions for future newsletter topics or feedback on our training programs, please don't hesitate to contact us at marketing@pebblescare.com

Your insights help us improve and tailor our support to your needs.

Follow us on social media



Keep in Touch Wednesday

Dates for 2024

17.04.24

22.05.24

19.06.24

Sovereign House

This is an opportunity for our colleagues who have been working from home to spend some time together face-to-face, celebrate successes, collaborate across teams, brainstorm and more.

Lunch will be provided, so all you have to do is book your desk and come along! You can find information on how to book a desk in the head office calendar on Outlook.

Members of our Senior Management Team will also be attending Keep in Touch Wednesday, making it the perfect opportunity to get to know them better and ask any questions you may have.

Learning & Development updates

As we continue to prioritise growth and development across Pebbles Care, we're thrilled to share some exciting updates and upcoming opportunities.

We're excited to introduce several new training programs designed to meet the evolving needs of our young people and our teams.

We have started working on and delivering **Grief, Bereavement and Loss training** – focusing on how to best support people through difficult times and how we can start supportive conversations.

In addition, we are in the process of creating a '**Transgender training package**' to foster skills and knowledge around the topic.

We have also got positions available to become **+ Proactive trainers** to come and work collaboratively with the L&D team delivering new and tailored de-escalation and physical intervention training.

We're pleased to announce the launch of new initiatives aimed at creating collaboration and knowledge sharing among team members and can't wait to share further opportunities to participate in therapeutic parenting workshops and discussion groups.



Pebbles

Care | Education | Therapy

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