

Welcome to the

# Pebbles

## Newsletter



**Pebbles**  
Care | Education | Therapy

## Director's welcome

As we approach Christmas (my favourite time of the year!) and the end of 2024, it's a perfect time to reflect on all the achievements we have made and start to look forward to some exciting developments in 2025.

It was fantastic being able to attend numerous awards ceremonies over the past couple of months. Seeing our young people get the chance to get dressed up and dance the night away was definitely a highlight for me, as well as making chocolate truffles at our staff event! Another amazing achievement was when we won the Safeguarding and Leaving Care awards at the National Children and Young People Awards in Birmingham in October. It is a true testament to how we put children at the heart of all we do and how we strive to provide the highest levels of care, education and therapeutic support. I am extremely proud of all our teams being recognised at this level and look forward to an equally successful awards season in 2025.

Recently we have also seen some new additions to the Pebbles family. Please join me in wishing Jenny Chadwick a warm welcome! We have also had the opportunity to celebrate our wonderful and dedicated staff. People such as Ian Boyd, who has dedicated 25 years of his career to Pebbles. We are so lucky to have you Ian, thank you for being part of our Pebbles family.

I would also like to extend a thank you to everyone who entered our annual Christmas card competition this year. We have so many talented artists in our midst which made picking the winner very difficult. A special well done to those who made the shortlist.

I hope you're able to have some time over the festive period with your loved ones and those close to you. I look forward to catching up with as many of you as possible in the new year and hearing about your new personal targets and challenges you are embarking on. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Chris Strong**  
CEO



## Celebrating 25 Years of Dedication – Ian Boyd

Ian Boyd's commitment to nurturing young people and improving their lives has been an inspiring journey spanning 25 years.

From his early days as a child care worker to his current role as Estates Maintenance Manager, Ian's dedication and resilience have made a lasting impact in the Pebbles family. In October 1999, Ian joined Radical Services as a child care worker. His first assignment was memorable – he was given the keys to a van and tasked with taking a young person camping. It was a simpler time, before the company expanded its residential facilities. Right from the beginning, Ian demonstrated his passion for helping young people, which quickly propelled him forward.

By 2000, after showcasing his commitment, Ian was promoted to senior care worker. Just a year later, he took on a new role as manager of a home in Carlisle, all while working toward his NVQ Level 4 in Children and Young People and Level 4 in Leadership and Management. Ian's progression was marked by a dedication to growth, learning,

and providing stability and care for the young people in his charge.

Ian's role often called for courage and quick thinking. On one occasion, when a young person encountered a serious situation, the police advised him to take them into hiding. Without hesitation, Ian found a safe place on the coast, where they could spend peaceful, undisturbed time. Stories like these highlight his unwavering commitment to the welfare of children and young people.

During his time as a home manager, Ian managed several homes across Cumbria before settling at Tyne Close in Penrith. For 18 years, he created a stable and caring environment, impacting over 40 young lives. His dedication did not go unnoticed, with Ofsted recognising the exceptional care in his home, with them consistently being awarded 'Good' grades.

In 2020, Ian expanded his role to focus on the maintenance and health and safety of the Cumbrian homes. His diligence in this field led to his promotion to Estates Maintenance Manager. Over the past four years, Ian has been instrumental in raising standards across Pebbles' facilities, including recent improvements at Rowan House, Cherry Blossom House, and Pine House. Today, he oversees four maintenance technicians, ensuring Pebbles' high standards are maintained across the business.



Outside of work, Ian enjoys a balanced personal life. A devoted father and grandfather, he cherishes family time, often planning vacations to sunny destinations. While he usually frequents Egypt for its guaranteed blue skies and beaches, this year he chose Tenerife. Both destinations provide plenty of sunshine, though camels are a rare sight in Tenerife!

Ian is also an avid motorcyclist, finding joy on two wheels whenever he can.

We are proud to have Ian as part of the Pebbles family. His 25 years of unwavering dedication, resilience, and compassion have left a mark on us all. Please join us in celebrating Ian Boyd, whose commitment continues to inspire us every day.



## The Dogs of the Leeds cluster

A lot of our teams have dogs that have become part of their home's family unit, and our amazing Registered Manager at Cara House, Sarah Hutchison, got them all together in their festive outfits.



## Length of Service Congratulations

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the following people who are celebrating milestones as part of the Pebbles family:

- **Bobbi Smart,**  
RCCW at Earlseat, 7 years
- **Wendy Lee Collins,**  
RCCW at Earlseat, 4 years
- **Margaret Jones,**  
RM at The Paddock, 9 years
- **Toni McCourt,**  
DM at Highview,  
1 year in post as DM
- **Phil Leary,**  
DM at Thistlebank,  
1 year in post as DM
- **Tracey Harkness,**  
Talent Acquisition Specialist,  
1 year
- **Vanya Griffin,**  
Senior Management  
Accountant, 1 year
- **Freda Cunningham,**  
Accounts Assistant, 2 years
- **Abigail Adams,**  
Finance Assistant, 2 years

**FLOWER checks**  
Make sure your vehicle is safe and roadworthy.

- F = FUEL - enough for your journey
- L = LIGHTS - headlights, brake lights, indicators
- O = OIL - check oil levels when engine is cold
- W = WATER - lubricants, coolants, washer fluid
- E = ELECTRICS - ensure battery is present and secure
- R = RUBBER - tyre pressure, uneven wear, side wall damage, tread

## Is your car roadworthy? FLOWER checks

Colin Smith, our Fleet Manager, has put together an easy-to-follow acronym to help ensure that all cars are safe and roadworthy. These checks should be carried out before every car journey.

## Tough Mudder 2025

We are looking to put a team together to take part in Tough Mudder at Hopetoun House on Saturday 7 June 2025.

Grant Thomson, our Finance Director, has volunteered to be our team captain as we get together to take on the course.

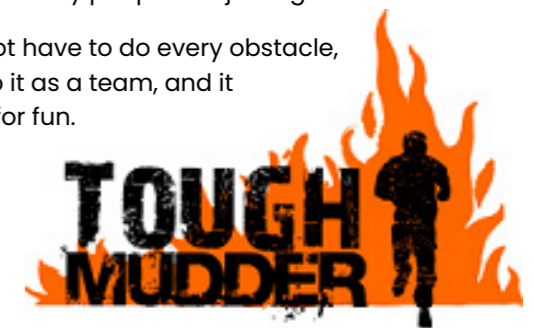
If you would like to join our Pebbles team, here are the details you need –

**Event name:** TM 15km Participant  
**Time:** 12:00PM – 12:45PM  
**Date:** Saturday 7 June 2025  
**Link:** <https://toughmudder.co.uk/events/scotland/>

Tough Mudder is a great experience, and we'd love to get a decent sized team together.

Please inform us by emailing [marketing@pebblescare.com](mailto:marketing@pebblescare.com) when you sign up so that we know how many people are joining us.

You do not have to do every obstacle, we will do it as a team, and it is purely for fun.



# Awards Season

October and November have been an exceptionally busy but exciting time across Pebbles.

Our young people and teams have had the chance to get dressed up and celebrate their achievements from over the past year. We are honoured to have been shortlisted as a company for a number of industry awards too and have enjoyed having the opportunity to attend the award ceremonies and network with our peers.

## Evening of Celebration

October saw our young people in Scotland get together for an evening of celebration at Lochside House Hotel. Everyone took the opportunity to get dressed up in their formalwear and danced the night away.



## Halloween Awards Night

The awards night for our young people in England took place at The Totally Wicked Stadium and fell on the same date as Halloween which allowed everyone to get very creative with their costumes. We had the entire cast of Alice in Wonderland, The Addams Family, Mario and Luigi and more!



## The National Children and Young People Awards, 24 October 2024

We were shortlisted as finalists in the Leaving Care Award, the Employer North Award and the Safeguarding of Children Award.

Our team were delighted to win the awards for both the **Leaving Care** and **Safeguarding of Children** Awards.



# Pebbles People Awards

Our inaugural Pebbles People Awards took place at Headlam Hall near Darlington on Wednesday 6 November.

We are delighted to share the winners from each awards category:

**Amy Davenport**, Jasper House – RCCW of the Year

**Christopher Mitchell-Lay**, Kyllimoons – RCCW of the Year

**Trudy Pipes**, Green Towers – DM of the Year

**Claire Watts**, Murraythwaite – DM of the Year

**Hayley Bell**, Wellington Cluster – RM of the Year

**Helen Kelly**, Kyllimoons & Forest View – RM of the Year

**Forth Craig** – Team of the Year – Care Operations

**Maintenance** – Team of the Year – Non-Care Operations

**Adelle Sutherland**, Psychology – Support Staff of the Year

**Katie Scott-Bennett**, Pebbles Academy Dunfermline – Educator of the Year

**Amelia Chapman**, No. 57 – Community Spirit Award

Following the awards ceremony, our attendees were treated to a truffle making workshop with local Yorkshire artisanal chocolate company, Inspired Chocolate.



## The Great British Care Awards, 10 November 2024

We were shortlisted as finalists for both The Three R's Award and The Care Employer Award at the regional final.



## LaingBuisson Awards, 21 November 2024

We were shortlisted for the Excellence in Children's Services award.



## The National Care Awards, 29 November 2024

We were shortlisted for the Training & Development of the Year award.

# Encouraging learning in the local community



As an Adapt Learning Practitioner, Denise Law shows passion, dedication and has nurtured a profound connection with the young people she supports.

Denise's journey into residential child care began after the loss of a close family member who had always dreamed of working with young people. This tragedy motivated Denise to see their dream through, starting to carve out her own path in the sector.

Denise began her career at Pebbles in 2017, initially as a Residential Child Care Worker, before joining the Education team in 2020. The role of Adapt Learning Practitioner is the equivalent of a Pupil Support Assistant within mainstream schools.

"I'm not a teacher," Denise says candidly, "but I understand the role they play. I'm here to get to know the kids and build relationships." This straightforward approach allows Denise to connect deeply with the young people she supports. She relates to them honestly, with a real sense of commitment to their growth and development.

Joining at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that Denise had to quickly adapt to new ways of learning. Supported by the Head Teacher, she worked to reshape how they could engage kids in education who were struggling, including introducing innovative outdoor learning approaches in the local community.

Denise uses her skills to go out and meet young people who aren't engaging in education. For her, the most important first step is fostering a strong relationship – figuring out the young person's likes and dislikes – she takes this information and formulates a plan from there.

For Denise, learning is not confined to a classroom.

Building strong relationships with community initiatives like Kingdom Bikes, Denise secures education for young people where they get to learn the mechanics of and ride motorbikes. Through this method, students not only gain hands-on experience but also work towards gaining youth achievement awards.

Researching local opportunities is a critical part of Denise's role. Whether it's outdoor activities like orienteering, rock climbing, and survival skills at Lochore Meadows, or volunteering at local spots like Rosyth Garden Centre and the Hive LGBT+ Centre in Kirkcaldy, Denise ensures that young people gain valuable life skills and work experience.

Denise acknowledges that not everyone is suited to sitting in a classroom and focuses her work on finding alternatives to traditional education, allowing pupils to achieve awards and recognition that reflect their hard work outside of standard academic frameworks.

Denise also plays a crucial role in helping students transition from education to their next steps, whether it's college, work, or university. Her relationship with a former student who is now in college is a testament to her enduring commitment. Denise works closely with the college tutor to offer additional support wherever needed. For Denise, the job doesn't stop when a pupil leaves school.

Denise credits the strong team and support system around her for making her work possible. Supported by her colleagues, she has the resources she needs to make a meaningful impact. "I don't give up easily," she asserts. "I'm persistent. I won't give up on our young people."

When she's not working, Denise takes time for herself, going for runs and travelling in her camper van, Betty, to maintain her own mental health. She recognises that her role can be challenging and prioritises looking after herself too.

Denise's story is one of dedication, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to giving young people the experiences and opportunities they deserve. Through her work, she's not just shaping the lives of those in her care – she's paving the way for brighter futures and happier communities.



# Our Christmas Card Competition

We are delighted to announce the winners of our Christmas Card Competition this year.

We received some wonderful cards from our children and team members and would like to send a heartfelt thank you to all the participants. All the cards put a big smile on our faces – well done everyone!

## Young People's Winning Entries



**1st place**

H from No.57



**2nd place**

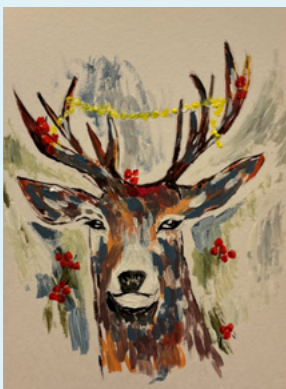
N from Stormont



**3rd place**

P from Forth Craig

## Staff's Winning Entries



**1st place**

Kirsty Eddington  
(Payroll)



**2nd place**

Tracey Harkness  
(Recruitment)



**3rd place**

Lauren Reid  
(DM at Amber House)



## Welcome to Jenny Chadwick

We're excited to welcome Jenny Chadwick to the Pebbles family as our Head of Business Development. With a career built on dedication, adaptability, and a passion for driving teams forward, Jenny joins us with extensive expertise in social care, commissioning, and referral management.

Jenny began her career as a residential support worker, moving up to a management role before transitioning into referrals to balance her professional commitments with her young family. Since then, she has held several senior roles, including her recent position as Director of Commissioning and Referral Management. In this capacity, she led a large multidisciplinary team spanning England, Wales, and Scotland, covering areas such as parent liaison, commissioning management, and referrals coordination. Her hands-on experience with care and education portfolios across the UK has equipped her with a deep understanding of the complexities of commissioning services across different regions and inspectorates.

Known for her ability to streamline processes and uplift team performance, Jenny is passionate about supporting Pebbles as we enter our next phase of growth. She aims to create a gold star business development

function that not only excels at placements but also enhances the entire journey, reducing pressure on our operational teams. Drawing from her time in operations, Jenny understands the importance of fostering collaboration and working towards shared goals.

Outside of work, Jenny has a lively family life, with five children between her and her partner, the youngest just 8 months old. Her love for football is fierce – she's a lifelong Manchester United fan, a season ticket holder, and a devoted follower of the team at home and abroad. In her rare downtime, she enjoys spending time with her family and their labradoodle, Cooper, embracing the joys of a bustling, always on the go lifestyle.

With her expertise, passion for team development, and dedication to creating impactful support systems, Jenny is set to make a significant impact at Pebbles. Please join us in welcoming her to the team!

# ↑ THE ENCHANTED FOREST

## Updates from our young people

Forest View visit to Enchanted Forest.

### We are so proud of the progress our young people make as part of our Pebbles family, whether big or small.

While growing into young adults, they are making great strides in their education and a few already know what they would like to do as a career path, taking the first steps towards achieving their goals.

W, from **Kippsbyre**, recently started a new job at an elderly care home, after submitting an impressive job application. She tailored the CV to her skills and qualities, based on the job advert, then applied and interviewed for the role all on her own, without receiving help from the team whatsoever. The owner of the company, who interviewed her, expressed how impressed he was with W's knowledge, skills and her ability to apply her own personal experiences to answer the interview questions. Not only that, W is also taking weekly driving lessons and is practising for the theory test, taking a step further towards her independence.

F at **South Lodge** wrote her own personal statement to become a fire volunteer. When the fire brigade visited, they said that this was the best statement that they'd read in a very long time. The statement helped her be successful in securing a place for this fantastic volunteering

opportunity. Thanks to her maturity and attitude, our young person has also been able to start a barista qualification through the school, despite not being a senior pupil yet.

Our young person at **Bellview Cottage**, G, has been making wonderful progress. They have started to call Bellview their home, their attendance at school is 100% and they have been making the most of their free time, filling it with adventures wherever they can. In preparation for Halloween, G joined arts and crafts day and created a balloon ghost. G has an interest in balloons and is dreaming of a hot air balloon ride – they are saving money for this, and we are all hoping their dreams will come true!

Jasmine House – First aid course

Our young person at **Thistlebank**, F, has been attending police volunteering to pursue a career in the field. She also attended Sutton Council's fun day which took place at Chessington Park and had a fantastic time.

T at **Lettershaws** received a glowing report card from school for the autumn term. The whole team is so proud of his progress in education.

A, from **Glenochar**, has taken a keen interest in playing guitar and attends lessons in the community weekly. He has also taken a broken guitar apart and has been modifying it using tools and adding his own design to the body of the guitar with spray paints. We are also very proud of A for attending weekly horse-riding lessons. He has just started an SQA level 4 in horse care, which is a particularly amazing achievement for A as he has been out of education since June this year.

Our young person, B, at **Jasper House**, has been enjoying cooking and growing in her independence. She decided to treat the home with a "come dine with me" experience and carefully prepared a delicious meal, with halloumi for starters and chicken curry for main dish.

With the support of the care team at **Forest View**, K was able to visit both the Enchanted Forest and Harry Potter World and had a wonderful time. Well done to K for stepping out of her comfort zone and well done to the Forest View team for going above and beyond for their young person.

Our young person at **Jasmine House** recently took part in first aid training. They were extremely engaged in the session and thoroughly enjoyed learning new practical and useful skills.

The **Stonerise Cottage** team recently decorated S's bedroom as a surprise. S has a real passion for top end cars, so the team worked hard on making it look like the dream room for their young person. S's reaction when he saw the newly decorated room after coming back from school was priceless and well worth the team's effort.

Our **Jasper House** team held their second annual awards night with lots of funny nominations. Team members Levi and Lilli won the "best duo" award and walked the red carpet together. B won the kindest and the most savage award, while T won the fastest runner and the funniest. After the awards ceremony, everyone went out to share laughter and a nice meal at Nando's. Well done to Jasper House's winners!

Our young person at **Jasmine House** recently celebrated his 15th birthday. To make the day truly special, the team organised a celebration and gifts such as new sliders, money, a power bank, boxers and sweeties. They had a fabulous time.

Jasper House – Awards night

Stonerise Cottage – New bedroom decor

Jasper House – Come dine with me

# Education Updates

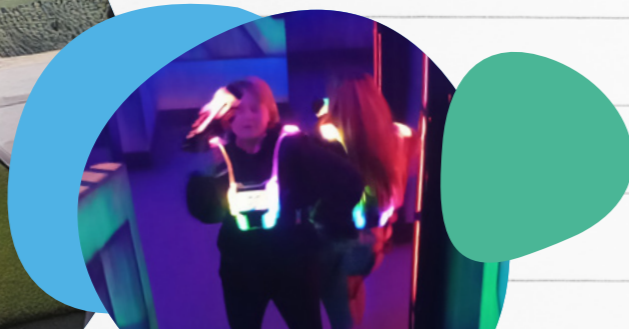
Pebbles schools keep thinking outside of the box to provide educational opportunities for our pupils. Here are some of the activities recently organised to engage our young people in real life learning experiences.

In October, the schools organised a fun trip to Murrayfield Stadium, including a tour. Our pupils experienced being part of a squad before a match. One student said that they loved being the captain of the Scotland team as they ran out on to the pitch together, showing true team spirit and leadership skills.

This term, our pupil T went to the Ewe Project at Hillview Animal Farm in Fife. They saw lots of different animals, including alpacas, goats, and rescue donkeys. T's favourite was the little black donkey – the cutest of all! T enjoyed the experience so much that they are going back there once a week to volunteer and put their passion for animals into practice.

To enhance their skills and expand their interests, our pupils have been given the opportunity to choose different activities in electives this term, including boxing, film club, baking, and school of rock. In school of rock, our students put together a song, with some singing different parts and others playing instruments such as guitar and drums. When it was finished, they played it to an audience – a nerve-racking experience for many of the young people who had never done something like this before – but everyone enjoyed the experience in the end and it was worth stepping out of their comfort zone.

There was also a bake sale at Dunfermline school to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support. To support the event, the young people made advertising posters, selected everything they wanted to sell and then made the bakes during their cooking session. They raised a fantastic total of £202.90.



Our schools also organised some other exciting educational trips recently to Top Golf and Laser Station in Glasgow, Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, and the Scottish Assault Course at the SAC in Galston.

At the Scottish Assault Course, the pupils had a fun-filled day out completing three different activities (Nerf Wars, Gel Wars, and Bushcraft). Gel Wars was an exciting and innovative activity where the pupils used state-of-the-art gel blasters and worked in teams (staff vs pupils) to get opponents. Armed with advanced gel blasters, the pupils experienced the excitement of shooting biodegradable gel balls at their peers and staff. Nerf Wars was a fast-paced team building game, using foam darts to fire at each other. Both pupils and staff had a lot of fun and laughs playing in the purpose-built indoor nerf game zones that had lots of places to hide. Bushcraft was a skilled-based activity where the pupils were given the scenario of a helicopter crash and had to use the natural materials around them to survive and patch the helicopter, so it was waterproof to sleep in! The pupils also learned how to create a fire to keep warm using twigs from around the forest and special fire lighter blocks to get the fire burning.

As part of the physical and outdoor education programme, our pupils have been taking part in lots of sessions out and about with external providers:

- Dean Castle Country Park** – Either side of the October break students attended Dean Castle Country Park on Wednesday afternoons for Outdoor Education. They honed their park ranger skills by participating in some orienteering, pond dipping, den building, and fire starting.
- Skiing** – This term the students have been participating in a skiing program at the dry ski slope in Newmilns. They have been learning a variety of skills with the aim of getting onto the big slope by the end of the program. This has included making a snowplough to slow themselves down, turning/weaving in between cones, and making small jumps down the slope.
- Gym sessions** – The schools have recently built a partnership with a local gym, InDaHutFitness in Auchinleck, which allows the pupils to attend rigorous PT sessions once a week as a group under the strictest fitness instruction from the gym owner! Our young people can also use the gym individually via the membership scheme the school has set up, which is a great opportunity to enhance physical activity.



### Our pupils' achievements:

- In English lessons, our pupils have made lots of progress with qualifications. One pupil has completed their first draft of the N5 portfolio (personal essay style), another pupil has completed two of four assessments as part of their N3 Literacy unit, one pupil has completed three of four assessments as part of their N3 Literacy unit and another pupil has completed their first N3 unit, progressing from completing their N2 last academic year.
- In Humanities lessons, there has also been fantastic SQA progress. One pupil has completed their first N4 People and Society unit (Comparing and Contrasting) and another pupil has completed two of four of their N4 People and Society units (Comparing and Contrasting & Making Decisions).
- One pupil is continuing to independently complete their SCQF Level 4 Work Experience Award at a local primary school. They are also working towards their SCQF Level 4 Horse Care through a nearby riding school (this is the next step after passing their RDA award courses).
- Another pupil has started their SCQF Level 4 Work Experience Award at a local hair salon as well as their Introduction to Hairdressing award.

We have seen a lot of great work completed in all subjects since August and are looking forward to witnessing and supporting our pupils' achievements during this academic year.

### New space for learning

At Muirkirk school, the Learning & Development Team has recently vacated the training room and front office at the Sports Hall to relocate to a new facility. Whilst their presence at the campus will be very much missed by the school team and pupils, the education team is excited to transform the vacant rooms into new learning spaces for their students and further develop the curriculum.

### Our Education Team's achievements::

- This term one of our teachers, Kris Finlay, started a college course, studying an outdoor learning leadership award that incorporates the Forest School Practitioner Award. This qualification will enable him to independently lead Forest School and Outdoor Learning sessions. This will add another element to our young people's learning opportunities, through a holistic and learner-led program that allows students to develop themselves through healthy engagement with risk, problem-solving and self-discovery, all within a natural environment in a hands-on and thoughtful manner.
- Our Deputy Head Teacher, Darren Gavin, has successfully completed the National Autism Trainer Programme (NATP) and has therefore qualified as a trainer. Darren worked hard for four weeks to cover the comprehensive course material. Darren also attended the recent Formulation Unveiled webinar ran by our Head of Psychology in November to enhance his understanding of trauma-informed support to young people.

Well done to both members of staff, we are very proud of you and your achievements!

### Wishing all the best to Anneliese

We sadly say goodbye to Muirkirk Teacher Anneliese as she makes the move back to Australia. Our team and pupils will miss her, but we wish her all the best on her future ventures and hope she will pop in to visit whenever she comes back to "sunny" Scotland!

# Who's Who? Meet our Support Stars

We would like to introduce you to some of the team members that help keep everything running smoothly behind the scenes. In this edition, we are introducing some members of our Finance Team.

**Name:**  
**Freda Cunningham**

**Job title:**  
Account/Finance Assistant

**You can contact me about:**

- Accounts payable for all three companies.
- PO payments.
- Basic Soldo queries.
- I help out with other queries/payment requests where I can from the accounts mailboxes.
- I work part-time, Mon-Fri 8am-1pm.

**Name:**  
**Lesley Smith**

**Job title:**  
Management Accountant

**You can contact me about:**

- I would normally be contacted by Area Managers regarding their monthly management reports.
- Due to being here for over four years, I have a wide knowledge of the company, therefore people tend to contact me about various topics including Finance Introductions for new managers.
- Soldo queries.
- Any other issues the homes can have (finance related).

**Name:**  
**Heather Innes**

**Job title:**  
Finance Procurement Officer

**You can contact me about:**

- Contracts – When contracts are coming up for renewal, I assist other departments in looking at alternative suppliers and getting the best deal that meets their needs.
- Business Cases – Reviewing options to propose the best way forward. Some of the business cases I have completed are for the board, new homes, fleet, maintenance and education.
- Savings – Looking at current spend and finding ways to make savings.
- Implementing procedures for spend – i.e., approval flows in place to ensure overview and control of spend.
- Purchase Order Report – Detailing the monthly spend across homes and other departments.

# Recent Celebrations

There is always so much positive news at Pebbles, whether it is our staff achieving new qualifications, birthdays, the joy of becoming parents, or the pride of our homes passing inspections and receiving glowing feedback from social workers — there is always something worth celebrating!

Congratulations to all our staff members who have been working hard to achieve their professional qualifications, including:

- **Thomas Horne**, RCCW at Earlseat, passed SVQ3
- **Adam Howden**, RCCW at Amber House, passed Level 4 with distinction
- **Wendy Veale**, RCCW at Willow House, passed Level 4
- **Petrina May**, RCCW at Bell View, passed SVQ3
- **Darren Kilbride**, DM at Lettershaws, passed SVQ3
- **Paul Sanderson**, RCCW at Stoneraise Cottage, passed Level 4 with distinction
- **Rab McNeil**, RCCW at Glenochar, passed SVQ4 Social Services Children and Young People SCQF level 9
- **Charlie Dickson**, RCCW at Dalveen, passed his SVQ3
- **Nicola Murray**, RCCW at Dalveen, has enrolled on her SVQ3

Welcome to the following new members of our Pebbles family:

- **Michael Corbett, Vickie Kilpatrick, Harry Jess and Daryll Frencher** who've joined the team at Dalveen Farmhouse
- **Ania Filarowski** who has joined the Referrals team
- **Malachi Morris** who has joined the team at Cara House

**Prospect Place** has received a Good in all areas at their recent Ofsted inspection.

**Jasper House** has received a Good at their recent Ofsted inspection.

A huge happy birthday to maintenance man **Paul Donnelly** who recently turned 60! Lots of love from Pebbles House and the rest of your Pebbles family!



Happy birthday to **Tracey Harkness** from the recruitment team who recently celebrated a very special birthday!

The team at No.57 has taken inspiration from +Proactive and started giving a Support Star of the Month award. The first winner of this award is **Maggie Oliver**. Maggie has recently joined the team and passed her probationary period with flying colours. Welcome to the Pebbles family, Maggie!



**Tiegan McCall**, RCCW at Lettershaws Farm, has taken on the role of Care Plan champion within the home and is doing an amazing job.

Our **Forth Craig** home received the following wonderful feedback from a social worker -

"I have been lucky enough to work alongside Ferne and her team for just over a year now and can sincerely say that they are one of the best care teams I have come across. Each and every one of the team go above and beyond to care for M and ensure that she feels safe and loved and understood. I have never met anyone, whether residential staff or not, who would come in on their days off, voluntarily to see a young person to again make sure that they knew they were supported and loved. I know for a fact that Ferne and others within the team have done this on more than one occasion for M.

Things recently have been difficult for M and she has been incredibly unsettled, however Ferne and her team have gone above and beyond to try and support her during this difficult time. Unlike some homes who can be quick to move young people on when they begin to display challenging behaviour, Forth Craig have wanted M to remain with them so that she knows she has a team around her who truly care no matter what she is going through."

Our **Stoneraise** team received the following feedback from a social worker:

"The home has been great, the changes in S are outstanding. He has a great relationship with the staff and in particular Kylie, she is amazing. Kylie has so much warmth and I can see that in S' response. S can now tell his mum he loves her, he couldn't do that before. He can do this now because he is experiencing living with affection and positive relationships. It's a very therapeutic home and they use PACE really well.

S is now like a different child. The full days in school are phenomenal, he had not been to school for 2 years before. The planning around S going to school was done so well. I was happy to write to the courts about how well this was managed. It was done in a relaxed way - S visited the school before half term, a second visit was longer, and the preparation helped him start full time, it was really good and well thought out."



A huge congratulations to Registered Manager **Katie McCosh** who gave birth to the beautiful Georgia on 31 October 2024 weighing 6lbs 15oz.

Our Forest View team got together recently to do some team building. They took part in an escape room where they were able to show off their amazing teamwork skills and managed to escape the room with plenty of time to spare.



# Two Wheels, 400 Miles, and Endless Grit – Dr Faye’s Arizona Adventure

This year, our Head of Psychology, Dr Faye McLean packed her bike and her courage to join the Komoot Women’s Arizona Rally 2024, a self-supported gravel cycling adventure through the deserts of Southern Arizona.

The rally spans 400 miles over eight days, with participants climbing a gruelling 7,500 metres while carrying everything they need – food, water and camping gear. The days were long and challenging, with temperatures soaring into the 30s and dropping to near freezing at night. At times, Faye had to cycle up to 50 miles between water stops, relying on the 4 litres she carried, though she admits she could have used an extra litre on many occasions.

This wasn’t just a physical challenge but a personal milestone for Faye. “It’s been 30 years since I last travelled to Arizona and almost just as long since I travelled alone,” she shared. “I saw someone mention the rally in a gravel cycling group and thought, why not? I’ll apply. I never thought I’d get a place!”

To her surprise, she was accepted, joining about 70 women from across the globe – including the US, UK, Europe, and even New Zealand – for this incredible adventure. The camaraderie was fluid, with groups forming and dissolving naturally along the route. While she enjoyed riding with others, Faye also relished the solitude, occasionally choosing to ride alone and set her own pace.

“Not a lot of visibility exists for women in endurance cycling events like this,” Faye noted. “Confidence with mechanical issues could be a barrier for many women. I was nervous about building my bike myself for the first time as it’s something my partner usually handles, but I managed!”



Arizona’s breathtaking landscapes provided a stunning backdrop, complete with desert cacti, roadrunners darting across the trail, and the haunting howls of coyotes at night. Despite the rugged environment, Faye thankfully avoided encounters with any of the more dangerous wildlife such as bears or rattlesnakes.

Looking ahead, Faye isn’t done with her adventures. She’s already eyeing Costa Rica as a potential destination for next year. “There are always other places to see and challenges to take on,” she said with a smile.

As Faye continues to inspire with her bold pursuits, we’re reminded of the power of stepping outside our comfort zones and embracing the unknown.



## Christmas trivia and quiz questions

Our young person C from Stormont put together some fun Christmas trivia and quiz questions to be included in the newsletter this month. How many can you get right?

But first, some fun facts...

Did you know that the world's tallest Christmas tree was 221 ft high and was displayed in Washington in 1950?

Did you know that the most lights lit simultaneously on a Christmas tree are 194,672 in Belgium, on 10 December 2010?

### Questions:

1. Which country was St Nicholas born?
2. In the classic Christmas movie 'Home Alone, where were the McAllister family going on holiday?
3. Which Hollywood actor played six different roles in 'The Polar Express'?



## Getting into the festive spirit

Our team and young people at Cara House always go above and beyond to take part in their local community's garden competition and this Christmas is no different!

They have added a fun 'extension' to the home – a 9ft inflatable gingerbread house in the garden. The young people and staff are loving it, and it's already become a big talking point of the community Christmas garden competition.

A lot of our homes got the first snow of the season recently, with Kirran Cottage capturing a fantastic picture of the home looking magical in the snow.

Not to forget Halloween, where our homes got together and celebrated. The team at Forest View dressed up as Teletubbies and our young people at Jasper House were treated to Halloween Boo Baskets.



Kirran Cottage in the snow

Halloween costume at Jasper House

ANSWERS: 1. Turkey 2. Paris 3. Tom Hanks

## Caring for Carers Course

We are delighted to now be able to offer a Caring for Carers course through our Learning and Development Team.

It's called 'Caring For Our Carers' with the slogan – 'Empowering those, who empower them.'

The session is purely to provide protected time for staff teams to learn about the importance of self-care, workshops around morale, team building and practicing some self-care strategies within the session.

If you would like to attend the Caring for Carers course, please get in touch with the L&D team directly

# Keep in Touch Wednesday Dates for 2025

20.01.25  
19.02.25  
19.03.25  
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.

## 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](mailto:marketing@pebblescare.com)

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

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