

Welcome to the

Pebbles

Newsletter



Pebbles
Care | Education | Therapy

Director's welcome

As we step into 2025, I am incredibly proud to reflect on the remarkable achievements and moments at Pebbles over the last 12 months. Our young people and teams have continued to inspire us with their dedication, resilience, and compassion — whether through personal milestones, academic successes, or giving back to their communities.

From unforgettable winter adventures in Lapland to the generosity of those supporting local charities, our homes have been brimming with positivity. It's been amazing to see our young people flourish, mastering new skills, and building confidence whilst forming meaningful relationships. Our commitment to nurturing and developing every child in our care remains at the heart of all we do, ensuring that they have the support and opportunities to thrive.

A special thank you to our incredible staff, whose passion and dedication create a safe, supportive, and empowering environment for our young people. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and we celebrate every success, big and small, together as a family.

I was recently pleased to announce the successful acquisition of Nurture Children's Services, a specialist residential care provider of six children's homes in the north west of England. This represents a significant milestone for Pebbles, reinforcing our commitment to providing high quality care, education and therapy to more children across the UK. With the integration of Nurture, we are poised to expand our geography into new areas thus offering further solutions to more local authorities and more opportunities and career progression for our colleagues.

As we look ahead, our Flourish and Thrive gardening initiative reminds us of the power of growth, both in nature and in ourselves. I encourage everyone to get involved, embrace new opportunities, and continue making a positive impact.

Here's to another season of growth, achievements, and unforgettable memories!

Chris Strong
CEO



Meet the Team – Neil Fraser-Hearne

At Pebbles Care, we're proud to have a dedicated team of professionals who are passionate about making a difference in young people's lives. One such team member is Neil Fraser-Hearne, who joined our Pebbles family nine months ago, bringing with him a wealth of experience and a deeply personal connection to the work we do.

Neil first started working in residential care in the early 2000s. At that time, the approach to care was quite different – with less of a focus on therapeutic parenting and understanding the needs of the children. Ultimately, Neil moved on to explore other roles outside of the sector.

Moving between Liverpool and Glasgow, he worked as an Assistant Manager for the Dog's Trust, a role he loved. However, Neil wanted a new challenge in his career, leading him to seek a new direction.

Neil then spent 17 years at Dingbro as a Transport Manager, overseeing a team of more than 20 people and managing logistics, deliveries, and staff wellbeing. But in 2017, his life took a profound turn when he and his partner adopted two young boys. The experience of adopting and raising them sparked something in him – a realisation that he could use his experience and skills to help other children.

Taking a year off to focus on his new family, Neil then returned to work part-time, but the pull toward the care sector never left him. While browsing Indeed, he saw an opportunity with

Pebbles that caught his eye. The shift pattern suited his family life, and when he noticed that Colin who works at our Stormont home (who he had met during the adoption process) had shared a Facebook post, it felt like a sign.

Since joining Pebbles, Neil has found the sector transformed from when he first worked in residential care. He loves the therapeutic, hands-off approach at South Lodge, where de-escalation and relationship-building are at the heart of everything they do. The level of professionalism and support within the team has made a significant impact on him. He's passionate about contributing to the positive, driven, and determined atmosphere that his colleagues share, and he values the team's commitment to supervision, development, and ongoing learning.

Currently working towards his HNC, Neil has big ambitions. He hopes to complete an HND in Counselling and eventually a degree in the field, with the long-term goal of progressing into a managerial role. He's also a huge DIY and interior design enthusiast, always working on projects at home when he's not spending quality time with his boys.

Neil's passion for care shines through in everything he does, and we're lucky to have him as part of the Pebbles team!

Winter Wonderland

Throughout the winter our teams and young people were as busy as ever, going on once in a lifetime trips, having fun with their elf on the shelf, giving back to their local communities and getting creative with some winter photography.

Our young person at **Kyllimoons** took the once in a lifetime trip to visit Lapland where he got to ride in a dog pulled sleigh, sit on an ice throne, drive a snow mobile and of course, meet Santa himself! The wonder of Christmas was all around, and a fantastic day was had by all.

Our lovely neighbours at **Kyllimoons** gifted the home with a chocolate hamper for Christmas that was enjoyed by everyone.

This year, the elves from **No. 57** snuck out of the home for a trip to Butlins where they got up to their usual mischief and enjoyed a photoshoot all around the park. The best part of this was that the young people from No. 57 had no idea the elves had snuck along for the trip and only found out on Christmas Eve when the elves fessed up to their adventures.

Our wonderful young person at **St Teresa's** collected Christmas gifts and donated them to the women's refuge in Leigh. The shelter was so happy to receive the donations and couldn't thank our young person enough for her generosity and time.

A huge well done to our young person for going above and beyond to help others and make a real difference. The women's refuge thanked her with a lovely chocolate gift box.

One of our young people at **Jasper House** also did their bit to give back over the festive period by buying gifts for children who were spending their Christmas on the children's ward in Pinderfields Hospital. She thought very hard about her gifts and even bought some gifts and treats for the nurses. Well done!

Our young people at **Amble Cottage** were encouraged by Anthony Reid, Deputy Manager, to get creative with their cameras after some particularly heavy snowfall in the area. The home then had a competition where the winning photograph would be printed onto a canvas to be hung up in the home.

Amble Cottage



No 57



Jasper House



Kyllimoons



Kyllimoons



No 57



Amble Cottage

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, birthdays, anniversaries, and moving onto independence.

Love was in the air on Valentine's Day at **Forth Craig** and **Jasper House** as they celebrated with presents and hampers for each of their young people.

Jasper House has also enjoyed celebrating Pancake Day. Our young person got into the spirit and gave it a go. He was able to flip his pancake and, while it didn't land as well as he hoped, it still tasted amazing!

Our young person at **Forest View** recently celebrated her one year anniversary as part of the Pebbles family.



Forth Craig – Valentines



Forest View

One of our young people at **Jasper House** recently celebrated her 16th birthday where she enjoyed time in the home with the adults and took a day trip to the city centre to the arcades and bowling before coming back to the house to enjoy her birthday cake!

She also celebrated her 1-year anniversary at **Jasper House** in March. She enjoyed her favourite treats and received a beautiful Pandora charm to add to her collection. The whole Jasper team is so proud of her, who she is and how hard she has been working towards her GCSE exams and the dedication she has shown!



Kyllimoons

Our young person at **Kippsbyre** recently passed her theory test. We are so proud of you!

Our team at **Murraythwaite** has supported their young person to move into her own home after three and a half years with them. We are all so proud of her and proud of the team supporting her to achieve her goal of having her own home!

Our young person at **Moss House** has recently passed his Functional Skills in English exam through his college course and is really smashing his cooking apprenticeship. We are all so proud of him!

Our young person from **Kyllimoons** has been on lots of adventures recently. He had the opportunity to travel down to London to go and see Mamma Mia on the West End. Not only this, he also took a trip to Newcastle for a hospitality day at Newcastle United Football Club.



Forest View



Jasper House

Our team at **Jasmine House** recently supported their young person to make a trip to Ireland to visit his family. He had an amazing trip and following his visit his family have requested to be his kinship carers which is amazing and such a positive for his future.

Jasper House has had new grass laid in their back garden and while they aren't able to play on it until it settles down that hasn't stopped our young people from getting creative and finding a way to still play a game of catch with the rugby ball.

Blackbrook House recently welcomed a new young person who has settled in really well and is taking great care of her new hamster, Pebbles.



Blackbrook

Updates from our teams

There is always so much positive news at Pebbles, whether it is our staff achieving new qualifications, celebrating length of service, birthdays, or the pride of our homes passing inspections and receiving glowing feedback from social workers.



Congratulations to all our staff members who have recently passed their professional qualifications, including:

- **Georgina Norris**, RCCW at Cambridge House, passed NVQ
- **Beth Wilson**, RCCW at Blackbrook House, passed NVQ
- **Amy Clarke**, RCCW at Blackbrook House, passed NVQ
- **Joanne Evans**, Deputy Manager at Cambridge House, passed NVQ
- **Hayley Bisland**, RCCW at Moss House, passed Level 4 Diploma
- **Jamie Weir**, RCCW at Highview, passed SVQ
- **Ryan McCann**, RCCW at Highview, passed HNC
- **Gemma Rice**, RCCW at Kippsbyre, passed SVQ

Celebrating length of service

- **Georgina Norris**, RCCW at Cambridge House, 2 years
- **Joanne Evans**, Deputy Manager at Cambridge House, 2 years
- **Lauren MacDonald**, RCCW at Cambridge House, passed her probation
- **Heather Innes**, Procurement Finance Officer, 2 years
- **Lesley Smith**, Management Accountant, 5 years
- **Wendy Reid**, Credit Controller, 5 years

Welcome to the team

Welcome to **Gina Pendlebury**, Deputy Manager at **Moss House**. She has been a welcome addition to the home with lots of positive feedback and praise from the home's visitors as well as the children who really enjoy her calming nature.

Welcome to the **Kippsbyre team** to **James Clark**, **Cheryl McMillan** and **Lynn Bjorck**.

Welcome **India Moody** to the team at **No. 57**!



Our **Cara House** home recently received an Outstanding following their inspection by Ofsted.

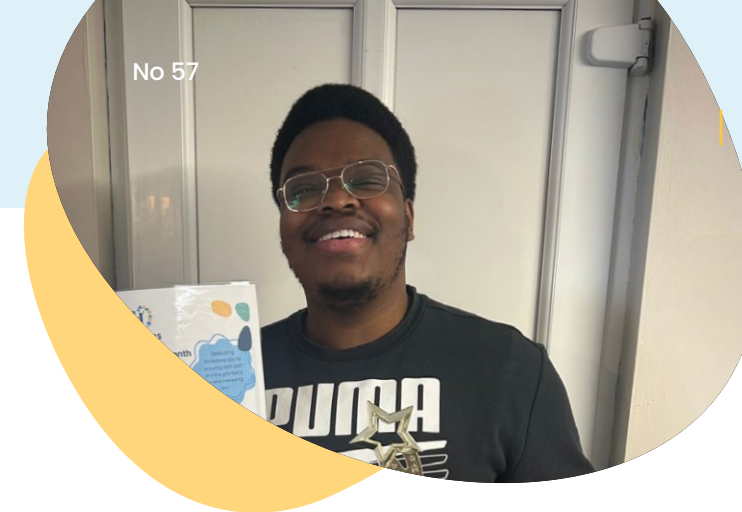
Our **Murraythwaite** home recently received a Very Good following their inspection by the Care Inspectorate.

No. 57's Superstar of the month for February is Khulekani Mthimkhulu. Congratulations!

The team at **Murraythwaite** have been busy celebrating lots of birthdays at the beginning of this year with Registered Manager Jo-Anna McCulloch and RCCWs Sam Turner and Janice Johnstone celebrating their birthdays.

Our young person at **The Glen Cottage's** safeguarding officer gave our team some amazing feedback where she said she was going to feedback to her teams that the way the Glen handled the young person's transition is how they should always be managed going forward.

No 57



9

Our **Kyllimoons** team recently took the day to do some team building where they completed an escape room with 14 minutes to spare!

Our **Kippsbyre** home has been collaboratively working with North Lanarkshire Children & Families and North Lanarkshire housing localities where they have an After Care team. The After Care team provide additional services to housing, including financial support, education and employability support, health and mental health support. Everything they offer is in line with The Promise and the North Lanarkshire team have offered these services to both our young people if they wish to engage with this. This is a fabulous piece of networking to help support our young people's futures. This is now a connection in which Kippsbyre will maintain for future young people.

Kyllimoons



No 57



We are so proud of all of the fundraising efforts that our teams and young people take part in. What a fantastic way to give back!

Our young person at **Cambridge House** completed a sponsored walk and raised an amazing £125 for Zoe's Place Charity.

One of our young people at **Whispers House** did a sponsored 10km walk for Dementia UK and raised £220!

Rebecca Williams-Seddon, Registered Manager at **Cambridge** and **Blackbrook** homes in St Helens, completed 'The Big Sleepout 2025' on Friday 28 February. She slept rough for the night on the stands at Clitheroe Football Club, raising funds for Lancashire Women – a charity that supports women in a variety of ways that have found themselves homeless or are escaping domestic abuse. Rebecca only managed to sleep for about 30 mins during the night and was the coldest she has ever been in her life. She has raised a fantastic £365 so far for the charity.

Our Marketing Manager, **Dionne Wood**, met with CHAS to donate the £450 that our teams raised at the Pebbles People Awards.



Rebecca Williams-Seddon



Dionne Wood, CHAS donation



Paige's Dedication to Empowering Care-Experienced Individuals

Paige, one of our RCCW's at Stormont Cottage, has dedicated her life and energy to supporting care-experienced people. Growing up in the care system herself, Paige understands the challenges that young people in care face, and she is passionate about making a difference in their lives.

For the past three years, Paige has been involved with The NLN (National Leadership Network), an organisation committed to improving the lives of care-experienced individuals. The NLN provides a platform for care-experienced people to collaborate, share ideas, and develop strategies for improving the support and funding available to them. Paige is one of 12 care-experienced consultants who meet regularly to collaborate and draw from their diverse backgrounds, including experience of fostering and kinship care, residential care, secure facilities and adoption, to help shape what the future can look like.

One of the exciting initiatives The NLN is working on is the release of funding applications to support care-experienced individuals. In the next two years, the charity will provide grants of £500 to help young people with things like purchasing a laptop for college or professional attire for job interviews. These grants will be released in three rounds, benefiting up to 60 young people across the country. The charity is also releasing £50,000 of funding to two chosen charities for further focused outreach.

Since joining The NLN in 2022, Paige has found the experience incredibly fulfilling, gaining valuable leadership skills and growing in self-confidence. She has redefined her understanding of leadership, seeing it as about supporting and guiding others, rather than simply being in control. She finds the leadership skills that she has gained throughout the experience to be invaluable and transferable. She has found good leadership is developed in more places than you would expect and is about supporting and leading the people around you to develop.

Recently, Paige had the opportunity to take her advocacy to Parliament, where she shared her personal experience in care and discussed the charity's work, using testimonials from personal experience as well as the experiences of others working alongside her. In her speech Paige detailed the story so far, how the consultants have created their own planning strategies for developing the charity further and where they can go from here. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that the voices of care-experienced people are heard in decisions that affect their futures.

Through her involvement with The NLN, Paige continues to make a lasting impact, supporting others and creating a clearer, more supportive future for care-experienced individuals across the UK.

Education Updates

Our schools are always working hard to provide educational opportunities for our pupils. Here are some of the activities they have been taking part in recently.

Our **Muirkirk Academy** has been approved for new SQA awards/courses (Scottish Studies and Personal & Vocational Skills Group Award). They have also successfully passed their external verification for N2 subjects (English & Communication and Food, Health & Wellbeing).

Our **Dunfermline Academy** has recently undergone a complete transformation with the addition of new classroom spaces, including a music studio, art space and revamped gym. Stay tuned for photos of the transformation!

As well as the changes at Dunfermline, **Muirkirk** is also revamping some areas within the school – the old stationery cupboard is being transformed into a Staff Resource Centre and our English teacher, Olivia, is creating a reading nook in the English classroom. Three of our classrooms at Muirkirk will also benefit from new carpets which are due to be fitted over the Easter holidays.

Our **Muirkirk pupils** recently had a trip to Vikingar, where they learned all about the day in the life as a Viking and even got to play dress up which was a real laugh for everyone.

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

We have continued our partnership with a local gym, InDaHutFitness in Auchinleck, which allows the pupils and staff to use the gym individually via the membership scheme the school has set up.

Pupils have had a couple of 'icy' afternoons skiing down the slopes at Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex and skating around the ice rink in Kilmarnock. There were even some members of staff looking elegant around the rink...

Our Forest and Outdoor Learning Leader, Kris, has successfully lead Forest Schools sessions every Friday for the past few weeks (when weather has allowed). Pupils have been building hammocks, fire-starting and making hot chocolates!

Our **Dunfermline pupils** continue to attend the Horse-Riding Centre every Thursday and enjoy spending time with the horses.

We have all signed up for the Race for Life Pretty Muddy event again this year to raise money for cancer research. The event takes place on 11 May.



Three of the **Muirkirk** pupils recently travelled up to Dunfermline and joined two of their pupils to complete an SCQF Level 6 First Aid course all in one day. They all engaged very well and passed the course with flying colours. Well done to the five pupils, we are so proud of you all!

Our **pupils at Dunfermline** continue to cook up a storm in the kitchen every Monday, learning to cook a variety of foods.

All pupils at **Dunfermline Academy** have really enjoyed our Health and Wellbeing sessions on a Friday – many of them playing football every week but others using the gym and swimming pool too.

One of our senior pupils at **Muirkirk Academy** has passed their application and first interview to become a Marine. They are awaiting another interview in April and following this their basic training. Everyone at Pebbles Academy is so proud of them and this huge achievement!

Two of our pupils have completed their SCQF Level 4 Work Placements, both in completely different domains. Well done to them both for this amazing achievement and making the whole school proud in their workplaces!



Our young person at **Moss House** has recently commenced a new Education provision which we are hoping really helps her thrive and reach her potential. She has also made real progress in learning independent skills to prepare herself for her future.

Our young person at **Jasper House** has been working within his new home education plan and, while this has been a little bit of a struggle for him to get back into the swing of things, he has enjoyed playing rugby and football with the adults, has been working hard within his boxing classes and even learned how to make the most amazing scrambled eggs!



Wellbeing Day

Our Learning and Development Facilitator, Charlotte Baggaley, recently facilitated a wellbeing day for our Bluepotts team.

The session took place at Leighton Hall and gave the team the opportunity to learn more about wellness, and the importance of looking after themselves in order to care for our young people. During the session, they looked at different ways they can “fill their cup” and then put some of it into practice with mindfulness, breathing exercises and time outdoors completing a scavenger hunt.

The session also gave the team a safe space to discuss current concerns and brainstorm solutions in a way that promotes team cohesion going forward.



Flourish and Thrive 2025

With spring around the corner, we are excited to announce the return of Flourish & Thrive for 2025.

Flourish and Thrive is our green initiative which aims to be a fun, therapeutic, and educational activity to harvest hope and cultivate 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.

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 15 September to marketing@pebblescare.com.

We have put together a handy planting guide which tells you the best times to get planting throughout the year.

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



Getting creative!

We have some really talented artists in our homes. The creativity of our young people never ceases to amaze us!

Our young person at **Forest View** created a beautiful oil pastel picture of Strathclyde Country Park which we think is just fantastic!

The team and young people at **No. 57** have created a portrait wall where everyone pulled a name from a hat and painted whoever they pulled out.

Our young person at **Highview** got creative in a different way by showing off her new fancy dress costume.





Pebbles

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