

Welcome to the

Pebbles

Newsletter



Pebbles
Care | Education | Therapy

Director's welcome

As summer blooms around us, so does the remarkable energy and spirit of our Pebbles community. This past quarter has been a celebration of both monumental achievements and the quiet, daily acts of care that keep our homes, schools, and hearts thriving.

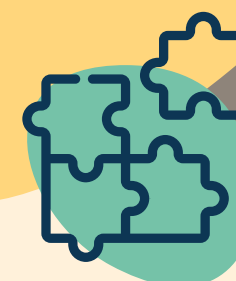
Across these pages, you'll discover stories that uplift and inspire, from Lisa's moving journey as a working mother to Colin's heartfelt insight into pride, parenting, and living authentically. These powerful reflections remind us of the values we hold close: nurture, growth, and connection.

We've had the joy of welcoming new faces, both team members and young people, while marking exciting milestones like the opening of Darwin School, our first in England. Initiatives like the Money Co-op show our continued dedication to supporting each other in meaningful ways. Whether it's a personal win, a home refresh, or a team taking a moment to recharge, every effort is valued. Every moment counts.

I must also mention the recognition we have received from our respective regulators with Good or better judgements now exceeding 90%. As we strive for excellence I must pass on my sincere thanks to you all for this achievement.

Thank you for bringing your full self to Pebbles each day. Your empathy, dedication, and passion do not go unnoticed. Here's to a season filled with sunshine, celebration, and possibility.

Chris Strong
CEO



Meet the Team – Lisa Marshall

After more than two decades in the care industry, working with both adults and young people in health and social care, Lisa knows a thing or two about what it takes to create a nurturing, supportive environment. And for the last two years, she's brought that wealth of experience to Pebbles, first as a Registered Manager, and now as an invaluable member of the Resource Team.

Lisa began her journey at Pebbles as the house manager at Cobbledyke, where she quickly became a familiar face and a calming presence in the home. But when she fell pregnant, life offered her a new role – mum. As she prepared to return to work, her priorities shifted. With a little one now at the heart of her world, Lisa wanted to stay in the sector she loved while also being present for her growing family.

Enter the perfect role. When the position of Resource Coordinator came up, Lisa saw an opportunity to stay within the Pebbles family, but in a way that gave her the flexibility she needed. With her background as a home manager and a deep understanding of the challenges the role can bring, she knew she could offer genuine, grounded support to others. Plus, teaming up with Donna, our Resource Manager, someone who shares her passion, experience, and knowledge of Pebbles was a no-brainer.

Now, Lisa is the behind-the-scenes hero. From taking the reins on the Children's Guides to helping shape Statements of Purpose, policies, and procedures, she's helping keep the cogs

of the organisation turning smoothly. She often works collaboratively with the homes to lend a neutral and thoughtful eye with internal systems, resource tracking, and staffing needs, offering homes the support they need to focus on delivering bespoke care to our children and young people.

Still, Lisa admits she sometimes misses the "family feel" of working in the homes:

"There's something really special about the relationships the teams build with each other. It's what makes Pebbles so different. It doesn't just feel like work; it feels like home."

Lisa has really embraced the change and is excited about how her role might develop. The opportunity has allowed her not only to grow professionally, but also to help shape the way Pebbles works, bringing fresh ideas, thoughtful support, and a real passion for making a difference.

And while her role may look different these days, Lisa's heart for care and her commitment to supporting the Pebbles mission hasn't changed one bit whether she's guiding teams, or just sharing a friendly word of wisdom, Lisa's journey proves that care doesn't only happen on the front line. Sometimes, it also happens in the places you don't always see.



People Awards 2025 – Nominations are now OPEN

Following the success of our inaugural People Awards last year, we are delighted to share that the nomination process for the Pebbles People Awards 2025 is now open.

The event will take place on **Wednesday 19 November 2025** at **Hamilton Park Racecourse**, and will celebrate the winners of eight different categories:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Residential Child Care Worker of the Year | 5. Team of the Year (Support) |
| 2. Deputy Manager of the Year | 6. Support Staff of the Year |
| 3. Registered Manager of the Year | 7. Educator of the Year |
| 4. Team of the Year (Care Ops) | 8. Community Spirit Award |

The nomination process is the first step towards allowing us to be able to shortlist our finalists and send out official invitations to the awards ceremony.

For those who received nominations last year, you will know we share the lovely comments that people have said with the nominee, so whether or not they are shortlisted as a finalist they will still get the recognition from their colleagues.

Nominations will close on 31 July.

If you have any questions about the nomination process, please get in touch with marketing@pebblescare.com

Big birthdays at Kirran Cottage

There has been no shortage of birthdays to celebrate at our Kirran Cottage home over the last few months.

Starting off with our wonderful Registered Manager, Nataline Cain, who celebrated her 40th birthday in February. The team organised gifts for Natalie and managed to keep everything top secret, leaving her shocked to say the least!

Natalie was unaware of the plans going on behind the scenes for her own birthday because she was busy helping to pull together a surprise for RCCW Jorden Trickett, who was turning 30!

The team did a great job of organising both celebrations simultaneously for these two brilliant, much-loved people without either of them knowing.

Then in June, the team had the chance to get together again to celebrate a special birthday, this time for their young person turning 16. She was so happy to see her gift, cake and balloons. The team baked the cakes for her as per her request and did an amazing job.

Well done team Kirran!



Stoneraise's Wellness Day

Our Stoneraise team recently joined Josh and Wez from L&D for a Wellness Awareness Day at Leighton Hall.

The team massively enjoyed the day and left feeling more refreshed to go and do a better job for their young people. They learned a lot about themselves and their team, and all about self-care.

Feedback gathered after the day was fantastic, with attendees reporting that they felt extremely valued by Pebbles and that they haven't experienced an L&D team as amazing as ours in all their time working in care.

Updates from our teams

We are immensely proud to celebrate the achievements of our dedicated teams, whether it's celebrating a promotion, gaining their professional qualifications, celebrating a work anniversary or having successful Ofsted or Care Inspectorate inspections. There is always something to celebrate in our Pebbles family!

Gaining qualifications

- **Simone Heminsley**, Registered Manager at No. 57, passed level 5 with distinction
- **Chris Pyle**, RCCW at Blue Potts, passed level 3 with distinction
- **Gabby Marshall**, RCCW at Blue Potts, passed level 3 with distinction
- **David Wells**, Registered Manager at Blue Potts, passed level 5 with distinction
- **Kayleigh Slater**, Registered Manager Pine House, passed level 5 with distinction
- **Corey Dewar**, RCCW at Blane Cottage, passed SVQ 3
- **Natalie Whitehouse**, RCCW at Blane Cottage, passed SVQ 3

Celebrating length of service

- **Chris Pyle**, RCCW at Blue Potts, 3 years
- **Gabby Marshall**, RCCW at Blue Potts, 2 years
- **Roisin Robertson**, RCCW at Blue Potts, 2 years
- **Lisa Plumley**, RCCW at Blue Potts, 2 years
- **David Wells**, Registered Manager at Blue Potts, 2 years
- **Ben Ross**, RCCW at No. 57, 6 years
- **Amelia Chapman**, RCCW at No. 57, 3 years
- **Maggie Oliver**, RCCW at No. 57, 1 year
- **Khulekani Mthimkhulu**, RCCW at No. 57, 1 year
- **Sadiq Aloa**, RCCW at No. 57, 1 year
- **Shanshan Yu Kane**, RCCW at Earlseat, 5 years
- **Abigail Adams**, Finance Business Analyst, 4 years
- **Diane Sherlock**, RCCW at Highview, 5 years

Inspection results

Our **Murraythwaite** home received a Very Good rating following their Care Inspectorate inspection.

Our **No. 57** home received a Good rating following their Ofsted inspection.



Ofsted inspection



Thistlebank – Development Day

Our **Thistlebank** team got together in April for a development day. It was a great opportunity for team building and reflective practice for the team.

Congratulations to **Taz Santar**, RCCW at **Blue Potts**, who came 6th in the English Strongman competition (under 105kg category)

Our team at **Kyllimoons** was presented with a certificate from their young person's college for not only supporting their young person, but for lifting up the whole class. Well done team Kyllimoons!

Congratulations to **Joanne Evans** who has been promoted to Deputy Manager at **Cambridge** and **Blackbrook** houses.

Congratulations to **Lucy Mackie**, RCCW at **Forth Craig**, who recently welcomed her baby boy, Koah.

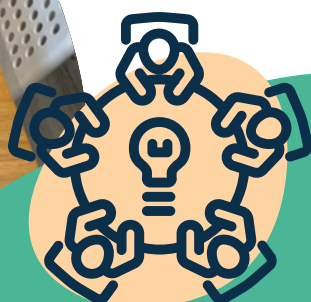
Congratulations to **Aimee Purdie**, RCCW at **Highview**, who welcomed her baby girl, Freya.

Happy 30th birthday to **Candice McWilliams** from our Finance team!

Amy Davenport at **Jasper House** is well known as the baker of the home; always baking the most amazing cakes and sweet treats for parties, birthdays, and celebrations of all kinds. For her birthday this year, the whole team at Jasper House decided to repay the favour and spent their time working hard to bake all sorts of wonderful creations, from cookies to cakes and buns. Happy birthday Amy!



Jasper House – Amy's birthday



Blue Potts – Taz Strongman



Colin's Story

- Pride, Parenthood and the Power of Being True to Yourself



Colin has been with Pebbles for four years, working in our most northern home, Stormont. During his time at Pebbles, Colin has not only supported the young people at Stormont, but also countless others in our local homes. Colin doesn't limit his care for children and young people to his work life; he is also a devoted father of four. He has two sons and a daughter who have grown up and started their own families, and a younger son, Daniel, who is eight and lives at home with him and his husband, Craig.

Colin didn't come out as gay until he was in his 20s:

"It was a different time back then. Being gay wasn't accepted the way it is now. Coming out later in life is strange; they say your 30s become your 20s because you never really got to experience that time in your life as who you truly are."

Colin is deeply thankful for all the support he received, and for the communities who lifted him up. Most of all, he is grateful that his children accept him and that his previous marriage brought him his three wonderful children. Colin and his husband, Craig, recently celebrated 22 years together. On New Year's Day 2014, they tied the knot on the first official day that same-sex couples were granted the same marriage rights as straight couples in Scotland.

Eight years ago, Colin and Craig decided to expand their family when Craig expressed his desire to raise a child. Colin had always felt he

would have a fourth child. And so, their journey to find their baby began.

The adoption process was long. But little did they know, the same time they started looking for a baby was the same moment Daniel was born. They spent months searching for a child that would suit their family. Then, on Colin's birthday, a young boy named Daniel appeared in the records. Every year, on his birthday, Colin remembers his friend Daniel, who passed away from cancer, turning his birthday into a bittersweet memorial. So, when they read this new profile, which became live on his birthday, despite there being no photo, they just knew he was the one.

It felt like fate.

They expressed strong interest and met with a family finder to initiate the match. There were many meetings with various professionals, going backwards and forwards, but things were set in motion. Daniel had been living with an older foster couple in their 70s, who adored him and provided wonderful care. In the lead-up to adoption, Colin and Craig would FaceTime Daniel every night before bed and visit whenever possible. The process was emotional and full of delays. But finally, Daniel came home, and their house has been full of love ever since. They still keep in regular contact with Daniel's foster family, who love visiting him, and Colin and Craig make sure to keep them updated on how he's doing.

This life-changing experience inspired Colin to make a difference in more children's lives. He studied Caring for Children with Additional Needs through the Open University. Colin considered fostering but worried it might unsettle Daniel. Concerned that seeing other children come and go might lead him to wonder when it would be his turn.

In 2021, after extensive learning and reflection, Colin discovered Pebbles Care. He knew this role would allow him to truly make a difference. At Stormont, he's seen many changes, welcomed big personalities, and forged bonds with people who now feel like family. He's found he can have a meaningful impact on children and young people who are questioning their sexuality and identity:

"It's like they seek me out. They know I'm a safe space because I'm open about who I am and my journey. I think everyone knows I'll accept them as they are. I always try to make that clear."



Colin finds that both his colleagues and the young people have no problem accepting him or his sexuality.

"It doesn't really matter to them. Sometimes they joke with me in a playful way or ask questions but it's always out of curiosity and a desire to understand.

"A lot of the young people I've worked with are from different backgrounds and may not have spent much time around people who identify as gay. But I do feel like they really see me for me.

"Some of the younger staff connect with the kids more quickly due to their shorter age gap, but I still feel like I have a strong place in their lives—and it never stops them from connecting with me."

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"It was a different time back then. Being gay wasn't accepted the way it is now. Coming out later in life is strange; they say your 30s become your 20s because you never really got to experience that time in your life as who you truly are."



Celebrating Pride

Here at Pebbles, we recognise the importance of Pride Month not only during the month of June, but all year round.

Pride is a time to honour the LGBTQ+ community and stand together in support. We are proud to create homes and spaces where individuality is embraced, and voices are heard. Whether you're a young person in our care, a team member, or part of our wider community, you belong here, exactly as you are.

As part of this commitment, Pebbles provide LGBTQ+ and Transgender awareness training to all our staff. Additionally, we offered a specialised training programme for our Heads of Department, focused on deepening their understanding of transgender terminology and equipping them with the skills to engage with transgender individuals in a positive, respectful, and informed manner.

Successes for our young people

We are always proud to share our young people's accomplishments. Recently we have seen our young people make strides in their education, gain valuable work and life experience and successfully move on from our care onto independence.

One of our young people at our **Tanglewood home** won the Player's Player of the Year and the Coach's Player of the Year awards at her netball team's awards ceremony. She is currently captain of the netball team. She has also been excelling at school, receiving an award at high school for her learning in class. We are so proud of you!



Cambridge House
– Catering Exam

Our young person at **Moss House** has celebrated lots of success recently. He sat and passed his driving theory test first time and was also nominated for and won the Apprentice of the Year award at college. Fantastic achievements!

Our young person at **Cambridge House** recently completed her food tech exam, the whole team is so proud of her.



Stormont –
Leaving party

The team at **Stormont** and others from the wider business attended a lovely leaving dinner for their young person. Celebrating with her favourite meal, a roast dinner. We are proud to see her be able to move closer to family and although we will miss her a lot, we are excited for her to embark on her new journey.



We celebrated our young person at **Jasper House's** last day at the home with a leaving party and gifts for her new adventure. The gifts included gifts for her pet rabbit, Bob, and a scrap book made with lots of great pictures and moving messages from the team across the cluster. The team hosted a party where all her family and friends came, including the staff and young people from Jasmine House. She enjoyed her gifts, games in the new garden and the quiz that was all about her and her time with us.



The Pine House Olympics

Our new home, Pine House, got its registration in May and welcomed its first young person shortly after.

As a team building activity for the whole team and their young person, everyone participated in the Pine Olympics. This was a great opportunity for the newly formed team to come together and build relationships. The young person also joined in from the sidelines watching. They had a great laugh at the team falling over and hula hooping their way to the finish line!

The Money Co-op

Last month, we proudly launched the Money Co-op – a game-changing addition to the benefits already on offer. This new benefit is designed to help you save money direct from your salary and build a savings pot, consolidate debts, take affordable loans and give you a peace of mind over money worries.

Since launch, Money Co-op has received great reviews. Haven't explored it yet? Learn more www.themoney.coop/pebbles

Education Updates

We always try to engage our pupils in fun, creative and practical ways to learn and apply their skills in real life across our schools, and we are excited to share some highlights from over the past few months with you.

Updates to our facilities

Our **Dunfermline Academy** has had a new Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) installed and has been a huge hit with all of our pupils. They use it daily to practice their skills at dodgeball, football, basketball and handball.

At **Muirkirk Academy**, we have revamped a few areas of the school. It is now fully refurbished and a great space for our Humanities and PE coursework lessons. We also had a small revamp of the Therapy Room since our new Therapeutic Practitioner, Anna, joined us and the space is a fantastic resource for our pupils! Our English teacher, Olivia, has also completed her makeover of the Reading Nook in her classroom – this is now a cosy and inviting space for pupils to enjoy a book!

In the classroom

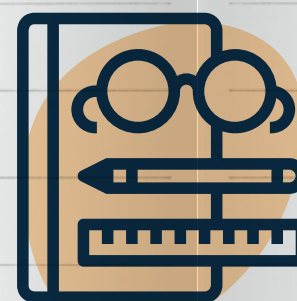
At **Dunfermline Academy**, our pupils have been growing plants in science while comparing the effects of different fertilisers, learning about the process of photosynthesis, animal food chains and other exciting topics, studying the relationship between living organisms and the environment. This has been done in partnership with Fife College who provided the exciting STEM boxes for all pupils.

At **Muirkirk**, our pupils have continued their valuable partnership with Police Scotland and the local policing team as part of our PSHE curriculum. We were delighted to welcome PC Daniel Dunlop to the school on several

Friday mornings, where he delivered engaging and informative workshops focused on the role of the police in keeping individuals and communities safe, with a particular emphasis on supporting young people. Throughout the sessions, PC Dunlop worked closely with our pupils to explore important topics such as the police's involvement in incidents of absconding, personal safety within the community, and the ways in which the police can offer support and protection.

These sessions have not only deepened pupils' understanding of law enforcement, but also encouraged open, respectful dialogue. Our pupils have responded extremely positively to PC Dunlop's visits, forming a strong and respectful relationship with him and his colleagues. We are thrilled that PC Dunlop will be continuing his work with us in the new academic year, with an exciting visit to the East Kilbride Police Station and training centre currently being planned. This ongoing collaboration is a fantastic example of real-world learning in action and has been a meaningful part of our pupils' personal development journey.

After a lengthy application process, our **Muirkirk Academy** has been approved to deliver the level 5 NPA Criminology course! Well done to our Humanities teacher, Sarah Braidwood, for all her hard work over the past few months to gain this SQA Approval for our school – our senior phase pupils are very excited to study Criminology next year!



Outside the classroom

As part of our outdoor programme, our pupils participated in an array of various activities.

In May, our **Muirkirk** pupils enjoyed an action-packed day at the Scottish Assault Course in Galston. The adventure began with several exhilarating rounds of Gel Wars, a fast-paced, team-based activity where pupils and staff faced off using cutting-edge gel blasters. Equipped with biodegradable gel balls, teams battled it out in a fun-filled, adrenaline-fuelled competition. Staff versus pupils brought out a fantastic spirit of friendly rivalry and lots of laughter! After a well-earned lunch break to recharge, it was time for the main event, the assault course. Pupils tackled a series of exciting and physically demanding challenges spread across the site, including high ropes, balance beams, monkey bars, wall climbs, and the undisputed favourite, the water obstacles! Teamwork was at the heart of the day as pupils supported one another through every splash, climb, and crawl. Our pupils showed great enthusiasm, resilience, and they all had an unforgettable experience!

Our **Muirkirk** pupils also attended an exciting STEM Garden Workshop at Dumfries House in May, where they learned with the team all about how science and gardening work together to support a healthier planet. They took part in tasks involving soil, planting and pond life. One pupil used these skills to help them complete their Level 3 Horticulture Personal and Vocational Skills course.

As part of their Level 3 Health & Wellbeing Personal & Vocational Skills Group award, our third-year pupils organised and ran the school sports day at Cumnock Juniors Football Club. It was a total success with lots of pupils and staff winning many races. We hope to make this an annual

event for our pupils to arrange and enjoy in future years.

Some of our **Muirkirk** pupils have also continued to attend Forest School sessions this term, providing them with core skills in a unique outdoor environment through child centred learning and long-term engagement, fostering a deeper connection with nature. These sessions have been led by our favourite in-house Forest Ranger, Kris Finlay.

Our **Dunfermline Academy** had a visit from DJ Jase Thirlwall to show pupils how to mix some tracks and learn about life as a DJ.

As an Eco School, pupils from **Dunfermline** visited Whitelee Wind Farm to find out more about green energy. They experimented with their own windmill models and were given a tour by the fabulous staff to get up close and had a chance to hug the wind turbines.

Our **Outdoor Education** trips to Lochore Meadows have restarted and the beautiful weather means our young people have been able to take full advantage of the kayaking and paddleboarding already as well as abseiling down a local quarry.

Happy retirement!

We would like to wish our Adapt Learning Practitioner of the last 11 years, **Joyce Gray**, a very happy retirement. Joyce will be retiring at the end of this academic year. She has been a pivotal member of staff at Pebbles Academy Muirkirk, visiting the pupils at their homes to deliver education and helping them to achieve their next steps in life. We will miss Joyce very much and wish her all the very best for the future!





Feeling the heat

Our teams and young people have been making the most of the glorious weather we've been treated to recently.

The **Leeds** managers made the best of the sunshine during their meeting, ensuring maximum vitamin D sponging! The focus of the meeting was around boosting the wellbeing, both mentally and physically, of our children, young people and teams, so it was very apt to include a wellbeing boosting BBQ which went down well.

This inspired the team to now have a theme for the managers meetings each month, with July being Greek and everyone having to wear blue and white. Lots of great plans for activities and days with our young people with a prom, BBQ, picnic in the park and beach day to name a few, with all homes in Leeds invited. It is going to be a jam-packed summer!



The staff and young people at **No. 57** have worked on brightening up their garden to make it a more welcome place! With lots of hand painted plant pots.

Ben Ross has been instrumental in the transformation of the garden by working tirelessly to fix broken brickwork and patios, putting up a trampoline and making sure it's safe for our young people, and painting said brickwork and patio!

No. 57 didn't stop there! They all got together at the end of May for Hawaii day where they tried tropical fruits, had a BBQ and made mocktails, all while wearing grass skirts and flowery lei.

Introducing Darwin School

We are delighted to announce the opening of Darwin School. Located in the heart of rural North Yorkshire, near Thirsk, Darwin School is a fully inclusive specialist provision for young people aged 11-16 and is our first school in England.

Our Head Teacher, Carrie Fraser, has over 18 years of experience as a Senior Leader and Educator within mainstream and specialist provisions. She is an experienced practitioner in trauma-informed practice and is dedicated to supporting the personal development of young people to help them achieve positive outcomes within education and to contribute to wider society.



Welcome to the Pebbles family, Carrie!

Ahead of the school's first pupils arriving, Carrie wasted no time in getting to know the local community and held an open day where locals were invited in for a tour of the school. Many within the community attended the school when they were young so many memories are held within the school walls. Everyone was delighted to see the new chapter begin for the school.



Stars of CYP Awards

We are extremely proud to share that our Whispers house team was nominated for the Above and Beyond Team Award as part of the Stars of CYP awards.

Registered Manager of Whispers, Alex Stoker, attended the awards ceremony with some of the Whispers team, Learning and Development team, Psychology team and Area Manager, Keeley.

Although Whispers didn't bring home the award on the night, it was fantastic to be recognised!



Do you have a community champion in your team?

Someone who engages in the local community or goes out of their way to be involved with external organisations or charity, or who goes out of their way to involve a young person in the local community. We want to hear about them! Please send any information over to marketing@pebblescare.com



Pebbles

Care | Education | Therapy

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