



## WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION NEWSLETTER



What an incredible year it has been! As I take a moment to reflect, I am truly amazed at everything we've accomplished together. This has been a year of growth, innovation and impact, from exciting new ventures to meaningful improvements across our services.

First, let's celebrate our investments. A key milestone for us in the past year was our significant investment in purchasing Westview House and Westview Cottage, which represents our dedication to growth, ensuring our services continue to have a positive impact in every way we can. We have worked hard to establish our new service, ensuring that it meets the needs of the residents who moved from Chestnut Cottage to Westview in November.

The moving went extremely smoothly, and the residents have settled in well. The move was organised collaboratively involving family members, guardians, NHS social workers and occupational therapists. Of course, we cannot forget the hard work of the support staff, who, on the surface, made the move seem effortless. We know it took a lot of organising, moving everyone's possessions — goodness knows how it all fitted into Chestnut Cottage!!

We intend to continue investing in upgrading the facilities at Planefield House in the coming year.

We have also developed our Gateway2Good Health activities club, creating opportunities that bring joy, engagement and value to those participating. Our activities cater to diverse needs, interests and aspirations. The exciting range of activities can be seen throughout the newsletter; these pictures reflect our commitment to delivering meaningful and impactful services.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible people behind it all — you! Your hard work, commitment and passion are the driving forces of our success. Whether on the front lines or behind the scenes, you have played a vital role in making this past year one to remember.

I would like to extend a personal welcome to new members of the management and support teams, who are joining the organisation at a very exciting time. I look forward to working with you all in the coming months.

As we look ahead, I feel confident that we will continue to achieve amazing things together. Let's continue this momentum into the year ahead and build on our outstanding work.

Thank you for being part of this journey — we couldn't do it without you!

Alex Gilchrist, Chief Executive Officer

#### news >

#### GATEWAY'S INVESTMENT IN WESTVIEW HOUSE AND WESTVIEW COTTAGE







#### We are delighted with our new home

The new residents of Westview House and Westview Cottage were filled with both excitement and a touch of apprehension as they moved into their new homes back in November. Now, several months on, they have all settled in well. Their new homes are spacious, bright and full of warmth, with the added bonus of a large garden to enjoy.

#### Say hello to the wonderful Mrs Jean Adams

Jean recently celebrated her 106<sup>th</sup> birthday but you'd never believe it! We provide Jean with Care at Home and she is an inspiration to us all.







Gateway Events
Gateway New Employees
Success Stories

O&I Updates Cookery Corner Team News











#### JOB FAIR WITH CHRISTINA

Gateway recently attended a Job Fair and Christina Lamont from Westview was a great help on the day. Thanks Christina!

Hello, my name is Christina, and this is a picture of me along with two members of the Gateway support team. I was helping out at a Recruitment Fair which was being held in the Eastgate Centre.

This is not the first time I have helped out at this type of event. I really enjoy meeting the different people who come to the stall and telling them about the work that they might do if they came to work for Gateway. It is always a special day for me to help.

Afterwards we go for a coffee and a cake. It can be quite hard work helping out.

Christina

## **GATEWAY'S NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

A big Gateway
welcome to:
Coral Gotham,
Natasha Wood and
Kathleen Chambers
(Kat).







Hi, my name is Coral, and I am joining Gateway as the Registered Manager for the Care at Home Services and Learning Disability Services.

I have dedicated my career to the care sector since the age of 18, gaining experience in a variety of care sectors while working in both private settings and for the NHS.

As a manager for my previous employer, I had the privilege of growing the company from the ground up, focusing on enhancing community engagement, championing person-centred, high-quality care, and promoting independence for those who still live in their own homes.

I am passionate about making a difference in people's lives and excited for the opportunity to work with such a great company to continue to do this, being able to share knowledge and practices that have improved care while working alongside like-minded individuals and having their support throughout my new journey with Gateway. I am looking forward to seeing what the future holds while working with teams in Care at Home and Learning Disability Services.

## Hi, I'm Natasha Wood, Care at Home Service Manager.

I'm excited to be part of the Gateway team. The work we do with individuals is truly inspiring, and it's been incredible to start getting more involved. I'm looking forward to continuing this journey and making a meaningful impact together.

I have worked in childcare for most of my working life and have come from a management position in a day care centre in Inverness. I am keen to expand on my experience within the care sector, and welcome the challenges of exploring the potentials of the company.

The team I have met so far have been so welcoming and supportive, which has filled me with confidence that everyone has a shared vision of providing the best possible care for those who need it.

I am so excited to meet the rest of my team and the clients, and to start building trusting and supportive relationships through great teamwork.

I look forward to meeting you all soon!

#### Hello, I'm Kat, Care at Home Co-ordinator.

I have just joined the team. I have worked in health and social care for 10 years and I'm looking forward to expanding my knowledge and skills.

I'm doing this job as I love caring for others and I love working with people. I can't wait to start my new adventure. The team from Gateway have been nothing but supportive since I have started. Everyone is very approachable and kind.

I am incredibly proud to be a part of the team here at Gateway.

## HAPPY TIMES FOR HEATHVIEW RESIDENTS

Residents in Heathview have enjoyed some fun activities over the past few months.

#### **BROOMHILL HORSE RIDING**

Simone and Courtney both look forward to horse-riding.

They learn how to groom their ponies during their weekly sessions. Their teacher Anna has been very encouraging to Courtney. She can now sit

confidently on Jack's back while riding, and knows how to place her feet carefully when mounting and dismounting.

Courtney has also grown in confidence by caring for Jack.

Simone rode Big Ben, whom she loves dearly, until he had

a severe leg injury. Simone then learnt to lead a very small pony, Little Mac, whom she has become fond of.

They feed plenty of carrots to reward all the ponies in the yard at the end of each lesson.











#### **SANTA CRUISE**

Nathalie, Caitlin, Simone and Malcolm dressed warmly to go on the **Santa Cruise** at **Dochgarroch**. They were

met by friendly elf staff who welcomed them on board, and it was all very exciting! Santa and the elves kept everyone entertained with singing and games and stories.

The boat was filled with cheering and clapping and laughter. It was hugely successful, with requests from all four to go again next year.



## **POPPY FROM PLANEFIELD**

A positive path for Poppy.

"For years, my life was full of trouble, drugs and alcohol. I didn't care about much, just getting by and numbing the pain. I was stuck in a cycle that felt impossible to break.

But something in me knew I couldn't live like that forever. I started to realise how much I was hurting myself and the people around me. Moving into supported accommodation gave me the space to reflect and reset, but I had to put in the work to really change.

Now I'm sober, present and learning who I am without all the chaos. It's not always easy, but it's real and I'm proud of how far I've come.

If you're feeling lost, know that it's never too late to turn things around. One step at a time really can change your whole life."

Poppy, Planefield House resident



From dark clouds to clear skies — every step was worth it.

## **SUPPORT MADE THE DIFFERENCE**

I have been receiving support from Gateway since 2020.

Before I started having support, I felt isolated and did not go out much but since having support I feel my confidence has improved.

I enjoy my time with Virag and Peter and when anyone asks how my support is going I always reply 'Excellent', and smile.

I think that after Covid I became more anxious about going outside, so support tended to be inside my house where I learned to bake. I enjoy this, and the support workers take photos of my baking that makes me feel proud of my baking skills. I am especially good at Victoria sponge cake.

I am more comfortable going out now and I enjoy going out in the car. In the summer I have enjoyed many activities. I especially like magnet fishing and have retrieved many unusual objects.

I have a dog, Patch, he is like a therapy dog for me and we go everywhere together, so if I go out in the car Patch enjoys coming with us. I am happy that the support workers understand that having Patch come along with us helps my anxiety.

I have recently bought electric drums, a tambourine and a harmonica, and with the support we all enjoy learning how to play the instruments. I think that I am great at playing the drums, I think that we might start a band one day and make my fortune.

Gateway help people in need, and I see them as friends who can offer support and advice and who are fun to be around.



I look forward to my support days and my time spent with Gateway staff. Gary, Service User

## cookery corner





### @ CHICKEN WITH ROSEMARY @ BUTTER SAUCE



PREP: 10MIN > COOK: 15MIN



#### Ingredients Method

4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (6 ounces each)

4 tablespoons butter, divided

1/2 cup white wine or chicken broth

1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary

- 1. In a large frying pan over medium heat, cook chicken in 1 tablespoon of butter until golden brown. Approx 4-5 minutes on each side. Remove and keep warm. Alternatively, steam or air fry chicken until cooked then add chicken and butter into the pan.
- 2. Add wine to pan; cook over medium-low heat for a few minutes. Add cream and bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cook and stir until slightly thickened. Stir in rosemary and remaining 3 tablespoons butter until blended.

Serve sauce with chicken, potatoes and vegetables.



Ingredients



Serves: 4

Prep: 10min > Cook: 20min



- 2 tablespoons olive oil 1 peppercorn pork tenderloin (1 pound) or flavour of your choice, cut
- into 3/4-inch slices 1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
  - 2 tablespoons plain flour

- 1. In a large pan, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium heat. Brown pork on both sides. Remove from pan.
- 2. In the same pan, heat the remaining oil over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and onion; cook and stir until tender, 4-5 minutes.
- 3. In a small bowl, mix flour and broth until smooth. Stir into mushroom mixture. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until sauce is thickened. Return pork to pan and cook until thoroughly done.

Serve with seasonal vegetables.













### @ MACARONI AND CHEESE @





SERVES: 4 PREP: SMIN > COOK: 20MIN



#### Ingredients

2 cups uncooked pasta (about 8 ounces), such as macaroni or shells 2 tablespoons butter 2 tablespoons plain flour 350ml single cream 350g cheese

Optional toppings: crispy onions

#### Method

- 1. Cook pasta and drain.
- 2. Meanwhile in a large pan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in flour until smooth; gradually whisk in cream. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook and stir until thickened, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat; stir in cheese until melted.
- 3. Add macaroni; cook and stir until heated through.
- 4. Add toppings as desired.

Serve with garlic bread:)



#### Upgrade Tips & Variations

#### CHEESE MIX FOR DEPTH

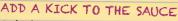
Mix cheeses for flavour and meltiness:

Cheddar (sharp, classic)

Gruyère (nutty)

Mozzarella (gooey)

Blue cheese (bold)



A dash of hot sauce or cayenne pepper Dijon or wholegrain mustard

Smoked paprika for warmth

#### CRUNCHY TOPPING IDEAS

Crushed crisps or cornflakes Mix breadcrumbs with herbs and garlic Bacon, crisped up

Cheesy dreams and crispy tops – enjoy!





### A roundup of GATEWAY events and news

Positive feedback and team support through awesome adventures and activities.

I've had such lovely feedback from service users about the activities — they're always so thankful, which truly makes it all worthwhile. Knowing that I've helped make their day a little brighter, and created memories they can cherish, is incredibly rewarding. A big thank you also goes to the amazing support staff who help with driving, logistics, and on-the-day support — it's genuinely appreciated by both me and the service users, and it plays a big part in making these activities happen for everyone.

Thank you all once again – Belinda Johnstone, Activities Co-ordinator

Employee Achievement Award 2025 🌟



We recently introduced a new annual award for employees who have made an outstanding contribution to the organisation and service users.

Staff are asked to vote for anyone they feel is worthy of receiving the award. We also ask service users and families to vote on our website if they feel that their support worker or carer deserves the award.

We're delighted that Care Practitioner Eva Marfoldi is the winner of our very first award, reflecting her hard work and the positive impact she has on colleagues and service users.

Presenting the award to Eva, Chief Executive Office Alex Gilchrist commented: "It is with great pleasure that we are awarding our first Employee Achievement Award today to someone who is not just an employee.

"Eva is a pillar of positivity and a shining example of what it means to go above and beyond in every aspect of her work. Her cheerful demeanour is infectious, brightening the day of everyone she meets — colleagues and service users alike. She has an unwavering commitment to her work and the people she cares for.

"The recent feedback received in our Service User Questionnaires speaks volumes, reflecting her impact on their lives, which reminds us of the powerful difference one person can make."

#### Malcolm loved meeting Mila

Mila's mum used to provide support for Malcolm. He was very pleased when she came to visit his home. He got to hold her and sing her a little song.



I have had the privilege of running another season of activities for our service users over the course of 2024 – and what a lovely experience it's been for everyone again! Belinda Johnstone, Activities Co-ordinator, Gateway2Good Health

Attendance has been brilliant once again, with service users from all our units taking part. This year's activities brought plenty of smiles — from our all-time favourite archery to ten-pin bowling, creative art sessions, scenic walks, waterfall adventures, and a heartwarming visit to Invercannich Alpaca Farm.

HTSI was running community-based art sessions called **Arts in Nature**, which we had the opportunity to be a part of. We had two sessions throughout the year — one based up at Abriachan woodland, and the other based in Inverness Botanical Gardens. **These sessions were run by Charlotte**, who was very lovely and catered to all our service users' needs. Charlotte would take the service users for a walk in the surroundings, collecting pieces of 'nature' or interesting things that they would see on the way, to use to create an art piece. It made for a wonderful experience for the service users — being in nature, being creative with some sunshine and a picnic lunch — what more could you ask for!

Another memorable day was heading out to Corrieshalloch Gorge where everyone managed to overcome their fear of heights to cross suspension bridges and stand out on viewing platforms to witness amazing views of the gorge. It was also memorable for the swarms of midges that decided to make meals of us that

day! Lucky, we had Smidge ready to go, and when the sun and wind came out the midges went away.

Being able to take the service users on these adventures and activities once again highlights the importance of having opportunities like this to look forward to. These activities have had a benefit on service users' health and mental health, by being outside and active and using their creative talents. Activities help with building confidence in overcoming challenges and learning new skills, which in turn helps with building self-esteem.

As the group has been going out on activities for some time now, it's been nice to see the service users make friends with one another from different services. They all look forward to seeing each other at the next activity. It has been great to work alongside the local businesses and use their services for activities — thus promoting them, building a sense of community and enabling the service users to see what the Highlands have to offer.

## A BEAUTIFUL NEW HOME FOR OUR RESIDENTS

We were delighted to purchase a large new property back in October 2024. Set in beautiful grounds, there are two lovely homes on the site: Westview House and Westview Cottage.





I moved to Westview House in November 2024. It was a significant move, especially with the cold weather, but we managed it, and I was settled into my new room by Christmas.

At first, I felt nervous about relocating, but when I saw the beautiful surroundings and

realised I could still participate in all my activities, I began to feel excited.

I have a larger bed in my new room and a cupboard in the kitchen for all my snacks. I've been going out to do my shopping every week, which has been beneficial for my mental health.

After a busy Christmas and New Year, we decided to invite our friends from Heathview and The Bungalow for a Burns Supper. It was our first time entertaining in our new home, and we all had a great time.

In March, it was my 50th birthday, and the staff at Westview House arranged a surprise party for me. I was shocked when I came home from the barbers to find all my friends waiting for me!

Westview House on right; Westview Cottage on left



## This spring, I will be trying my hand at a spot of gardening.

Planters have been built to allow me to grow my own vegetables and anything else that might take my fancy.

My support staff took me to Simpsons Garden Centre, where I chose some gardening tools, vegetables, flowers and some berries.

## BURNS NIGHT SUPPER AT WESTVIEW

There was great excitement in the house preparing for our guests to come and celebrate Burns Night with us.

We all helped prepare the meal which everyone enjoyed. A great night was had by all, including our visitors.













We had some lovely raised beds made so that the residents could plant some vegetables and flowers. We had a big shopping trip to Simpsons and the residents enjoyed planting everything out.

Everyone's looking forward to watching everything grow over the next few months.

## A JOURNEY OF REBUILDING MY LIFE

Since moving to Thistle House, life has started to change in ways I never expected. With support from Gateway, I've begun to rebuild my confidence and find a fresh sense of purpose.

I have been receiving support from Gateway since moving into Thistle House in September 2023. Prior to this I had suffered a breakdown in my mental health; I had been experiencing paranoia and believed people were out to get me. This led to me becoming very cautious of people. I became withdrawn and unable to leave my home, and I eventually lost my job. Since receiving support from Gateway, I have felt my confidence grow massively. My support staff supported and encouraged me to begin volunteering in the local area and I have since secured paid employment in a local café which I really enjoy.

When I first arrived at Thistle House, I was quite reserved as I was feeling anxious and so I was quite reluctant to engage

with support staff. However, this has changed as I have gotten to know them over time, and we have built trusting relationships. I now enjoy a weekly catch-up with Denise over coffee, either within Thistle House or out at a local café. I enjoy visiting different cafés each time.

Before I came to Thistle House, I had been neglecting my physical health. I wasn't eating well or exercising regularly and I had trouble sleeping. Staff at Thistle House supported me to apply for a Highlife card and I am supported to attend the gym each week. I am also supported with shopping and my support staff encourage me to make healthy choices. I have found that my mental health has greatly improved while I have been working on my fitness. I find Rafal very supportive

and he encourages me to work hard to achieve my goals.

I recently had a meeting with the Highland Council about my housing situation. I was told that I will likely be offered a flat in roughly six months. Although I am excited to have my own place, I will miss the staff at Thistle House as I enjoy the time we spend together and appreciate all the support I have received.

OD

- ✓ SUPPORTIVE STAFF CONFIDENCE BUILDING
  - / VOLUNTEERING
- EMPLOYMENT ✓ PURPOSE REGAINED

Thank You

### 'THIS SERVICE IS VITAL FOR ME – A BIG THANK YOU'

been supported by this company. Really I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have them. Karolina and Amanda are my support workers and they are great. They help me with appointments, benefits and

For the last four or five years I have housing. They actually got me suitable housing after breaking my back.

> Today we will go shopping and after that we usually have lunch, which is brilliant as it gets me out

of the house. I can't go outside on my own as I'm afraid, so this service is vital for me.

Thank you for everything you have done to help.

Carol

# GATEWAY HELPED ME RESTART MY LIFE AFTER HOMELESSNESS AND ADDICTION

Moving into Thistle House in August 2022 marked the start of a new chapter in my life.

I started receiving support from Gateway when I moved into Thistle House in August 2022. Before this I was homeless and struggling with drug and alcohol addiction, and I had amassed a considerable amount of debt.

The staff at Thistle House supported me to engage with harm-reduction services and I was able to stop using illegal drugs. I found this very difficult, but staff helped and encouraged me when I was struggling.

I was supported to apply for benefits, learn to budget and manage my money, which allowed me to clear my debts. The debts I had run up were a source of great stress and anxiety for me and I am extremely grateful to now be debt free and for the support I received.

Unfortunately, I struggled to quit drinking alcohol and became alcohol dependent. This meant that when I did not drink alcohol, I would become very unwell. When this happened the staff at Thistle House would check on me regularly and support me to call for medical assistance when I needed.

I had tried attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, but I struggled to engage with them due to the language barrier as Polish is my first language and I struggle with English. I was admitted to and completed a rehabilitation programme in which I was successful, however I was unable to abstain from alcohol once back in the community.

Staff at Thistle House encouraged me to have regular contact with my family back in Poland as I did not have any family or friends locally. I found that this contact had a positive impact on my mental health, and I decided it would be best for me if I returned to Poland to be with my family. Staff at Thistle House supported me to reduce my alcohol intake so that I would be well enough to travel home and supported me to book my flight and arrange for my belongings to be transported to me.



The staff at Thistle House were compassionate and understanding and I never felt judged by them.

MW, Service User

I have been living back in Poland for two months now and with the support of my family, I have managed to quit drinking alcohol. I am very proud of myself and hopeful for my future, I hope to find myself employment soon, which I could not have done whilst I was unwell.

I am very grateful for all the support I received and for the kindness I was shown by all of the staff at Thistle House. If I had not had support then I don't think my life would look as good as it does now.

MW



## UHI INVERNESS STUDENTS TRANSFORM NEW TENANT'S FLAT

Students from UHI Inverness volunteered for seven days to redecorate a flat owned by Gateway, preparing it for a new tenant.

Led by lecturer Jordan
Bryceland, the NPA Painting
and Decorating students
painted the entire interior of
the two-bedroom flat.

Lorraine Nesbitt, a business administrator at the charity, reached out to UHI Inverness to ask if students could undertake the project, knowing the value

of work experience. The team gladly agreed to do the work free of charge and secured material sponsorship from Valspar Trade and Trade Point, Inverness.

The students took pride in filling holes and painting the walls, ceilings, doors and skirtings.

Lorraine is delighted with the transformation of the property.

Alex Gilchrist, CEO at Gateway, commented, "The students made a wonderful job of redecorating the flat, better than some of the professionals who have worked for us in the past."

Thank you!

((

We are hugely grateful for the continued support for the organisation received from students at the UHI.

Alex Gilchrist, CEO at Gateway

# FOOD FOR FAMILIES .

Sadly, there are a lot of families in need across our region. That's why every year our Food For Families project aims to feed as many people as we can with tasty, nutritious meals. We work with kind businesses, organisations and folk to help make it happen.

Once again, we launched our **Food For Families Project in December 2024**. As well as our usual fabulous volunteers who assisted with cooking the meals for the project, **we were delighted to welcome the cooking team from the Kingsmills Hotel**.



#### FOOD FOR FAMILIES, A PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH UHI INVERNESS.

UHI Inverness students cooked over 400 meals for families in need in Inverness and Ross-shire this winter. Since 2017, they have prepared a whopping 3,000 meals. The Professional Cookery Level 4 students, along with lecturers Saurav Kumar and Richard Coyne, partnered with Gateway to cook meals for those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. This year marks the ninth year of our collaboration with UHI for the Food For Families project.





## A big welcome to our new employees

#### **NEW STAFF IN LAST QUARTER**

Coral Gotham - Registered Manager for Learning Disability Services and Care at Home

#### **CARE AT HOME**

Natasha Wood - Care at Home Manager

Kathleen Chambers - Care at Home Co-ordinator

Amelia Lejk

Mercy Maponga

Lynn Cooper

Laura Middleton - ERS

#### **OUTREACH**

Theo Wattsman

Elliott Mason - Acair House

#### No45

Richard Zugah

Patryk Ziombski







At **Gateway** our goal is to **support vulnerable people** in our **community**. We provide a range of high-quality services and activities that improve the well-being of the people we support.

**Gateway started back in 1998** when the Highland Homeless at Christmas Trust was founded to provide shelter for folk who were sleeping rough on the streets of Inverness. The service was provided by volunteers providing shelter and respite from inclement weather over the winter months.

Over the coming years we have grown significantly to become recognised as one of **the main supported accommodation and support providers in Highland**. Our services can now be accessed in **Highland**, **Easter Ross** and **Wester Ross**.

**Gateway**, a registered charity, now works with as many clients as 150 at any one time, providing supported accommodation to 49 vulnerable adults and supporting an average of 100 people in their own homes with a varying range of support needs. **We aim to promote independent living for everyone that we support, either in their own homes or to move on from our supported accommodations to their own tenancies.** 

While our mainstream work has been in housing support services, we have over the past few years expanded our scope to offer holistic services to vulnerable adults aged from 16 to 85.

#### Our Care and Support services include:

- Outreach Housing Support
- Outreach Care Support/Care at Home
- > Supported Accommodations
- > Overnight Care at Home Service (SOS)
- Waking Night Responder Service (WNRS)
- > Enhanced Response Service (ERS)
- > Self-Directed Support
- > Gateway2Good Health
- > Food for Families

