

A Year of Life is for Living 2016-17

www.thistle.org.uk

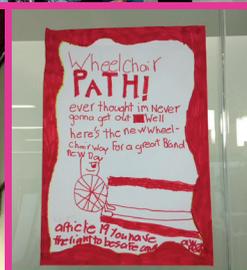
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Welcome

A staggering 1 in 3 adults in Scotland is living with a long-term condition such as arthritis, diabetes, chronic pain, hypertension, ME or depression.

For many of these two million people, the diagnosis is devastating and has a great impact on the way they live their lives. While diagnosis and medication are provided by the NHS, at Thistle we fill the void that often opens up after diagnosis when people are struggling to come to terms with their condition and re-gain control of their lives.

We believe that life is for living, so the support we provide focuses on empowering people so that they can live the life they want regardless of their physical or mental condition.

Whether we're providing 24/7 support for someone living at home with a disability or working with someone who has one or more long-term conditions at our Centre of Wellbeing or at a GP practice, we apply the same positive approach. Rather than asking, "what's the matter?" we ask "what matters to you?" This is the start of a conversation about what people want from their lives and means we can provide the right support at the right time for them to achieve their aspirations.

As we all live longer, more of us will have – or know people with - one or more long-term condition. And more people are asking for the type of support we provide at Thistle. For these reasons and for the first time in our history, Thistle has a waiting list for our health and wellbeing services.

We believe that no-one should have to wait for support when they need it and that no-one should have to face life alone with their condition. Through fundraising and finding creative ways to reduce our waiting list, we're optimistic that we'll be able to get the balance right – in time.

One of the reasons we can feel confident about the future is the dedicated and inspirational community of supporters we have at Thistle. It's a privilege to work with you our volunteers, donors, employees and funders. And without you, we wouldn't be able to deliver support to the ever-increasing numbers of people who need us.



Diana Noel-Paton,
CEO



David Giffin,
Chair of the Board
of Trustees

Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, donors, funders, fundraisers and supporters for your help throughout the year.

Find out more about us and how to join our community of supporters

www.thistle.org.uk

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Health and Wellbeing

Thistle is one of the only charities in Scotland that provides support for people regardless of mental or physical health condition. We want to support people to get what they want from life and so at our consultations, we ask people, “what matters to you”, not “what’s the matter?”

This year:

758

people were referred to us by GPs in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

338

We held 338 1:1 consultations with people needing our support.

21

We ran 21 courses including lifestyle management, nutrition, exercise and mindfulness to help people live the lives they want.

Lifestyle Management Course

We run lifestyle management courses to help people understand how to manage physical or mental long-term conditions and live the life they want. People who attend our courses tell us that they benefit greatly from meeting others who have either lived through a similar experience or who are currently facing similar challenges. In addition to lifestyle management courses, we also run sessions on nutrition, mindfulness and even Tai Chi.



Centre of Wellbeing

Our Centre of Wellbeing in Craigmillar opened in June 2016. It was purpose-built to provide a fully accessible place for our consultations, courses, meet-ups and community events. Our gym and Changing Places state-of-the-art bathroom are key features and we have won a number of awards that recognise how the design meets the requirements of the people we support from choice of colours and patterns, to accessibility for all. We have an open door, so anyone can visit and have a hot drink and a chat in our vibrant hub.

During the year:

11,107

people attended our new gym.

1,443

people attended Tai Chi classes. Tai Chi combines deep breathing, relaxation and flowing movements to help reduce stress, improve posture and mobility.

30

wonderful volunteers support our activities and help maintain our building and grounds.



In our Community

Our aspiration is that our local community will become a community of wellbeing. For almost 75 years, Thistle has made Craigmillar its home and this is reflected in the many, varied activities that we support.

In the course of the year we have:

Supported the launch and on-going production of The Craigmillar

Tapestry

designed by Andrew Crummy, of 'Great Tapestry of Scotland' fame. The Tapestry will take many years to produce and there's an afternoon stitching club at Thistle.



Hosted a weekly meeting of

creative writers,

called The Scribblers which is open to people of different interests and writing experience – from beginners to published authors.

We're all here on a journey
With poems and stories
And friendship to share
In our weekly meetings
Do talk or - just listen
Our welcome is genuine
"Life is for Living"
Extract by
Shona McMillan

Hosted the

Hobby Hut

which is run by a group of enterprising women who make jewellery, knit, paint and screen-print.



Last out: volunteers, staff and professional boxer, Paddy Reilly, all started our sponsored Santa Walk at Thistle.



Malcolm's story

By the time Malcolm came to Thistle aged just 22, he had already had two brain haemorrhages and felt alone, desperate and in urgent need of help. Malcolm, like many others who come to Thistle, was suffering from the physical and emotional impact of severe illness that had knocked his confidence and left him both feeling cut-off from his friends and fearful of further ill-health.

Malcolm explains, "The first time I reached out to Thistle, I was a bit nervous to ask for help. What if they couldn't support me? I hoped to leave my crutches behind and walk freely but what if they couldn't help me do it?"

"But straight away, I knew I'd come to the right place. The people at Thistle understood what it was like to need support but be afraid to ask for it"

With the support of a Thistle health and wellbeing practitioner and a lifestyle management course, Malcolm developed the confidence to take the first tentative steps without his crutch. As his confidence grew, so his dependence on his crutch reduced and now Malcolm only uses it to walk for longer distances.

Malcolm now volunteers with Thistle, helping with Scribblers, a creative writing group and producing much of our audio-visual material.



Official Opening of Centre of Wellbeing

Speaking at the opening of our new Centre of Wellbeing in Craigmillar, the First Minister said, “Bringing health and social care together is a key priority of the Scottish Government and third sector organisations such as Thistle have a vital role to play.

“We are supporting work to ensure that services are brought together to meet the needs and demands of people within communities across Scotland and the Thistle Foundation’s Centre of Wellbeing is a great example of this vision in practice.”

This year:

18,000

people came through our doors – from people looking for support with long term conditions, to health and social care practitioners taking part in our cutting-edge training.

Our Centre won

2

architectural awards and nominated for a further 4 demonstrating the care we have taken to make sure the design meets the requirements of those we support.

We welcomed

partner

organisations - Get2Gether and Connecting Craigmillar (LinkUp), and SureStart to share our building.

We provided meeting and event space for

community

groups.



Young People's Work

Thistle pioneered the development of a programme that now supports young people at special schools - in Edinburgh, Midlothian, Fife, Argyll & Bute - to work with their families and supporters to plan for life after school. We call this the Big Plan.

This year:

We have worked alongside

68

young people, 47 carers and 75 practitioners in the Lothians, thanks to funding from the Scottish Government.

Young people with lived experience of disability

co-facilitated

our sessions.

18

young people set up a 'Watch Me Fly' meet-up group which met 19 times across Edinburgh. They voted on places and experiences to try together, often without involving family for the first time. Experiences included a visit to a virtual reality arcade, trying sushi and a trip to a comedy club.

We

extended

our reach to Argyll & Bute and Fife taking our local experiences and learning to a wider population and engaging with partner organisations

“It has opened up his world. The world has expanded.”

Family member of Big Plan participant.

Volunteers and Fundraisers

From baking for fundraising events to helping with our nutrition pop-ups, and from leading Tai Chi classes to supporting us by interviewing prospective employees, our volunteers are at the heart of the Thistle community and vital to our success.

We rely on our volunteers to help us **deliver** classes at the Centre of Wellbeing.

We **train** our volunteers so that they can be successful in their chosen role.

Many of our volunteers, employees and donors also fundraise for Thistle and we want to thank everyone who has fundraised or sponsored our intrepid supporters as they ran, walked, threw themselves out of aeroplanes or sang. Here are just some of the activities from the past year:

Walking on fire, Abseiling off the Forth Rail Bridge, Sky diving from planes, Santa-walking around Craigmillar, Running Marathons, Video-Gaming-Marathons, Singing for Thistle



Thistle Learning

Everything we do at Thistle is person-centred. That means that we focus on what's important to the person we support. We believe that this approach combined with helping people to identify and build on their strengths and skills is essential to all our relationships whether between work colleagues or with the people we support.

Thistle Learning is committed to helping the health and social care sector across Scotland to adopt person-centred approaches into its work.

Over the year:

30

courses on person-centred approaches were delivered for 580 health and social care professionals across both statutory and voluntary sectors in 8 geographic areas.

We delivered

bespoke training on delivering lifestyle management courses for teams in Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire.

2

new courses were piloted.

We delivered 2 leadership courses focused on embedding a

personal

outcomes approach.

We also have a comprehensive training programme for our own employees which mirrors the ones we manage and facilitate for other organisations.



Rameez's story

Rameez found out about Thistle's young people's work when he was just 16 and studying at Kaimes, a school for young people with autism. He attended Thistle's drama workshops and Big Plan with his family to explore what he wanted to get out of life and plan for the future.

"I was sharing my aspirations and how I'd make them possible," explains Rameez. "I started to plan what was going to happen in the next year and in the following years. It was like a road map setting out your future goals and how you'd get there."

Rameez's aspirations included learning to drive and owning a car, going to university, working as a scientist, film-maker or nurse, joining a film club and starting his own family.



Since completing the Big Plan, Rameez's list of achievements is impressive. He has:

- passed his driving test.
- bought a car.
- joined Edinburgh film-making organisation Media Education - learning how to make films, act and direct.
- played an active role in Thistle's partnership with the Filmhouse arts cinema with staff training and website development to improve inclusivity for young people with additional support needs.
- completed a Thistle traineeship in a community print studio and café;
- got on-track for getting the qualifications he needs for university.

Rameez is training with Thistle to lead a Big Plan session so that he can share his experiences with even more young people and their families, friends and supporters.

"Thistle got me more motivated, it got me more social confidence. I'm interacting with people now, I meet up with friends and I go for drives - learning new routes and going to new places."

Supported Living

"This service has enabled me to go out and about safely and allowed me to become more confident and capable as I have been able to learn to do more for myself from my experiences." A person Thistle supports.

The Care Inspectorate's report on our services gave us grade 5 (the highest possible grade) for both 'quality of care and support' and 'quality of leadership and management' for our supported living service in Edinburgh.

Our support is tailored to each person so that they can live their life in a way that's meaningful and fulfilling for them.

We work flexibly and creatively with those we support. This includes making sure that support staff are recruited to match the person's interests and aspirations.

During the year:

We supported

109

people who are living with a disability to live in their own home.

We provided an average of

5,170

hours of support every week.



House of Care

“The house of care is a metaphor for a proactive co-ordinated system of care and support for people with long-term conditions...It represents a radical departure from the current focus on individual diseases towards a more generic approach in which patients’ goals drive care delivery.” Angela Coulter, The Kings’ Fund.

In Scotland, Thistle is co-leading the Lothians’ House of Care initiative – one of three Early Adopter projects funded by the Scottish Government – sharing our innovative approach to supporting people to live well with a long-term condition.

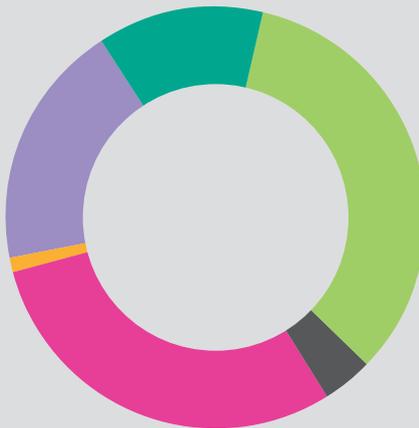
Thistle supports primary care teams by providing training and facilitation on care and support planning and ‘good conversations’. Some of our Wellbeing Practitioners are embedded in GP surgeries and early evaluation tells us that this support is well received by GPs, their practice teams and patients.



Financials

Where our money comes from

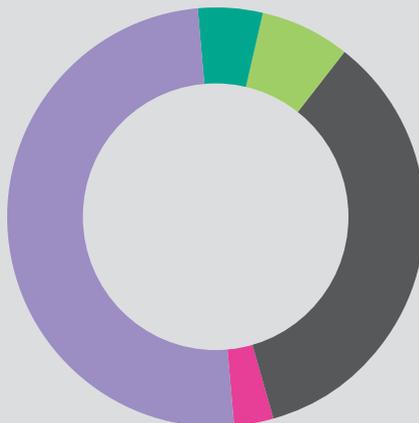
Thistle receives funding from a number of sources. For our health and wellbeing work (supporting people with long-term conditions) we are wholly reliant on individual donors and successful applications for money from charitable funds. The largest proportion of our fundraised income came from our monthly donors without whose ongoing support, we would not be able to develop and maintain our ground-breaking services.



Income from fundraising

- Trusts £97,719
- Statutory funding £63,457
- Individual giving £171,580
- Community £17,863
- Legacies £150,739
- Major gifts £44,461

Thistle's young people's work attracts Scottish Government funding and our supported living services are funded by local authorities and/or the people we support. We also receive income from organisations and individuals attending our courses for health and care practitioners or using our consultancy services.



Income

- Supported Living £4,019,799
- Fundraising £371,008
- Health and Wellbeing £583,373
- Consultancy £2,752,446
- Other income £246,618

We invest in our people

Thistle employs **331** personal assistants who support people living with a disability in their own homes; we also employ **3** directors, **20** health and wellbeing practitioners and facilitators, a team of **4** fundraisers and **23** administration and support staff. We invest in training and development delivered by our in-house team to ensure we provide the best support and there are regular supervision sessions, team meetings and reflective practice sessions. Our staff retention rates are high; **90%** for full-time staff (industry average 70-85%) and **72%** for part-time staff.

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We invest in our future

The cost of our new Centre of Wellbeing was met by investing reserves built up over many years. We care for and keep the building and its furnishings well maintained so that it can provide a safe and welcoming environment for all. In addition to the new Centre, we have a Garden Suite and grounds which are all easy to access and provide space for a wide range of activities.

Stop the Wait.↓

For the first time in our history, we have a waiting list for our health and wellbeing services (providing support for those struggling with long-term conditions). This means we need to increase the funds we raise so that no-one who needs help is kept waiting.

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