



Annual Report

2023-2024

OVERVIEW

Over the past 12 months, Crossroads has continued to provide support to local carers and their loved ones.

The past 12 months has seen our charity continue to grow and develop to meet the needs of carers, as well as navigate challenges, and I am delighted to share this report with you which highlights some of our key achievements and details our current service provision.

Staffing Changes

This year, Christine Barlow and Billie Hall, who had been acting as temporary Children's Services Coordinator and temporary Young Carers Team Lead respectively, had their positions made permanent. Both Christine and Bille have done a brilliant job in their new roles, and I would like to congratulate them both on their hard work.

Emma Dulson, Deputy Nursery Manager, was also promoted to the position of Nursery Manager and is now working alongside Dee Casement in the running and managing of the Crossroads Nursery.

We also welcomed back Charlotte Caley from maternity leave as Adult Services Care Coordinator. As part of her role, Charlotte is also acting as our MS Welfare Support Worker, working closely with the MS Society to provide support, advice and guidance to MS patients, their carers and families.

Tynwald Street Charity Shop and Community Space

In May, we opened our newest charity shop in Tynwald Street, Douglas, which has proved to be a great success. We have welcomed new and familiar faces to the shop and I am very pleased with how well its first 12 months have gone.

Alongside the charity shop, we also launched a new initiative, the Crossroads Community Space. The community space is a welcoming, warm space for the community and has also been used by our Young Carers project and external organisations. Within the community space, we have also launched our Community Café, which is a project being run by our Crossroads Community Venture (CCV) team. CCV is a project for adults with disabilities, and alongside a staff member they run a small menu every Thursday and Friday. CCV have really enjoyed getting stuck into their new venture, and it has been great to see the café flourish.

Prospect Terrace Charity Shop

After an incredible 15 years, our Prospect Terrace Charity Shop closed its doors for the final time in November.

Jackie Betteridge
Chief Executive Officer

Prospect Terrace was our very first charity shop and over the years not only served as an important source of income for the charity, but also as a welcoming and friendly place for anyone to come to, whether that be to shop, socialise or just to say hello.

We would like to thank our amazing customers, donors, staff and volunteers whose continued support made the shop such a success.

Although our Prospect Terrace Charity Shop has closed, our other three shops continue to flourish and I am especially pleased to see how our new Tynwald Street location has been received.

Trustees

In June 2023, Corina Jackson De-Botte resigned from our Board of Trustees. I would like to thank Corina for all of her hard work and support during her time as Trustee and wish her the best for her future endeavours.

With this, we welcomed a new Trustee to our Board, Mike Simpson. Mike is a chartered accountant and a former partner in PwC, and brings a wealth of knowledge and skill to our Board. I am delighted Mike has joined us and look forward to working with him.

Staff Training

At the beginning of 2024, Crossroads' Strategic Officer, Jayne Sloane, began a two-year CPD-accredited programme in strengths-based leadership. The programme, provided by the Social Care Institute for Excellence, focuses on individuals' strengths and practice and looks at holistic and multidisciplinary approaches, working with individuals to promote their wellbeing.

I am very excited to see how Jayne's learning can help the organisation develop and look forward to Crossroads adopting a more strengths-based approach in the future.

Fundraising Events

2023 and 2024 saw some exciting fundraising events take place to raise money for the charity, including a successful Charity Ball held at the Comis Hotel, our annual 'Spooktacular' event and a 24-hour Spin-a-Thon. We also had some wonderful supporters raise money through their own events, such as the Parish Walk. Fundraising events are a great opportunity to not only raise money but also raise awareness of the work we do, and I am delighted that we have had such a successful year with this.

ADULT SERVICES

Care at Home & ASK

Care at Home provides regular respite for carers for up to three hours each week. Our Care Practitioners take over the caring responsibilities to allow carers to have a meaningful and stress-free break whilst their loved one receives high quality care. Our ASK scheme is an independent living support service that provides additional personal and domiciliary care.

Over the last 12 months, our Care at Home scheme has continued to operate at capacity, and Care at Home and ASK continue to be in-demand services and currently hold a waiting list of over 100 individuals.

Premium Project Day Service

Premium Project is project run from our Masham Court Day Services Centre and currently has 52 clients who attend. However, this number is restricted by transport availability.

Premium Project continues to provide a range of activities for our members as well as trips out to the community.

In the past 12 months, our Premium Project has delivered just under 30,000 hours of care to support carers and the people they care for.

In February 2024 we received a regular inspection which was carried out by inspectors from the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and an inspector from the Isle of Man Department of Health and Social Care.

The inspection found that “good practice was identified in relation to the care and support provided to service users and their families” and that the atmosphere of our Day Services Centre was “calm and relaxed”.

In addition to this, questionnaires returned to the RQIA indicated “that service users were satisfied that care was safe, effective and compassionate and that the service was well led.”

Although we did receive some recommendations, the inspection was very positive which is testament to the wonderful team of staff we have.

Social Club

Social Club is a day service provision for adults with learning disabilities. The range of dependency varies, with personal care and engagement abilities forever changing.

This year, Social Club has continued to support clients with complex care needs and has provided suitable and exciting activities for our clients, including trips out to the Wildlife Park and the Douglas Tramway Stables.

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Crossroads continues to encourage community-based activities for our Social Club clients and in the last year they have enjoyed sensory experiences, trips out to the community and individual activities such as cinema visits.

Social Club currently has capacity for between eight to ten service users (dependent on clients' needs) and operates Monday to Friday from our Masham Court Day Services Centre.

Men's Group

Men's Group is a scheme for male adults where they can socialise and take part in activities whilst being supported Crossroads staff member. Activities are varied and most weeks those who attend go out for a meal or drink and enjoy visiting different places. Most of our Men's Group attend other Crossroads services, and over the past 12 months we have had 11 men attend.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Young Carers

Our Young Carers project remains one of our biggest schemes and is all about giving children time away from their caring responsibilities to make the most of their childhood. In the past year, 136 children aged between five and 18 years of age attended regular group sessions across nine groups. This included 27 new starters who we were able to offer a space to.

Young Carers continues to be a highly sought-after service, and there are currently 156 children on our waiting list. We are able to offer some of these children quarterly Manx Sport and Recreation sessions which are activities put on for young carers who we cannot offer a regular space to currently.

Over the last 12 months our young carers have enjoyed their regular fortnightly sessions as well as activities during the school holidays including pony trekking, overnight residential trips at the Venture Centre and paddleboarding.

Crossroads Nursery

As the Island's only fully inclusive nursery, our Nursery has continued to be at full capacity supporting 47 children over the last 12 months. Of these children, over half have care needs or are a young carer.

Demand for places at our nursery remains high, however in the last year we have successfully applied for permission to increase the number of spaces we can provide and we now have registration for 24 children to attend daily. Our staff to child ratios are higher than those set out in Minimum Standards which allows for additional support to those who need it and for all children to learn and thrive ready for school.

The nursery continues to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and creates a full learning program with season topics and themes throughout the year. A scrapbook is kept for each child to record developmental milestones and given to them as they leave for school, as a memory of their time at Crossroads.

In October we received our annual inspection which found that our nursery was safe, effective, caring, responsive, and well-led.

The inspection found that "the nursery provided an inclusive setting for children with both additional needs and none additional needs. Children interacted together in a friendly environment learning from each other and acknowledging each other's differences." The inspection also found that "all records and documents checked were completed thorough detailed and clear information" and that our "team had a clear understating of each of the children's individual needs. They demonstrated genuine compassion and care for each child."

We also received some lovely feedback from parents. I am delighted with such a positive inspection; our nursery team do an outstanding job and it is wonderful to see their hard work been acknowledged.

Nursery Outreach

Nursery Outreach enables children with care needs to access other nurseries across the Island. Highly skilled staff support children to access the activities and learning within a nursery setting. Communication systems such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) or 'sign-a-long' may need to be introduced to the staff and build the confidence of the nursery team. Some will need a minimal amount of support as they settle into a new routine and others will require Crossroads through the entirety of the academic year.

This year the number of children we have supported has increased and over the last 12 months we have worked with 27 children in nurseries across the Island.

Holiday Scheme

Our Holiday Scheme project operates during the Easter and Summer school holidays and offers respite to parents of children with disabilities who attend a school unit or mainstream school with support.

In the last year, 41 children attended our Holiday Scheme. Of those children, some have needed one to one or two to one support, whilst others can receive support as part of a group.

Holiday Scheme has continued to use the Annie Gill Building, located within the University College Isle of Man, as its base, with service users also enjoying trips out including visits to Red Mie farm and a sailing experience with Sailing for the Disabled.

We continue to have a high number of children on the waiting list for Holiday Scheme due to demand for this type of service, however we work closely with other agencies and statutory services to ensure families are supported.

Additional Hours

We have also provided an additional 1,200 hours of care across our children's services for ad hoc care packages where statutory services have been unable to provide care.

OTHER SERVICES

Benefits Support

Crossroads continues to provide support to individuals requiring assistance to complete applications for Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, and Income Support/Incapacity Benefit. Increasingly, the support offered by Crossroads is not solely just about completing the applications; there have been follow ups on support, signposting to other care agencies and means of support and further discussions with other organisations held on the applicant's behalf.

In the last 12 months we have assisted 262 individuals with disability benefit applications and appeals. Of these individuals, 145 required assistance with Disability Living Allowance applications and 113 required assistance with Attendance Allowance applications. We supported one individual with a Carers Allowance application, and one individual with Carers Allowance and Income Support applications. In addition to this, we also supported two Disability Living Allowance appeals.

The number of individuals we support through our Benefits Support service has increased year on year, and we continue to have a strong relationship with The Treasury to be able to continue this work.

Carer Advocacy and Listening Support

For our first full year of this service, our Carer Advocacy and Listening Support service has gone from strength to strength.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, our Listening Practitioners received 145 referrals for this service. Of these referrals, 35 cases are still ongoing, and the remaining were resolved or currently require no further action from our Listening Practitioners.

Our Strategic Officer, Jayne Sloane, also continues to support six individuals on a long-term basis.

Although this service is still in its early stages, the number of referrals we have received over the last 12 months demonstrates the demand for carer advocacy and we hope to be able to expand this service in the coming years.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Crossroads Manx Workshop

The Crossroads Manx Workshop is a project that helps people with long term health conditions and disabilities realise their full potential whilst providing them with paid employment.

In 2023 and 2024, the Workshop has continued to make wooden garden furniture and a selection of small handmade items including the popular Manx Milk Boxes. The Workshop also continues to run its engraving and company seals services and was asked to once again complete the replica trophy engraving for the TT races.

The Workshop attended the Tynwald Day Fair and the Royal Agricultural Show in 2023 which not only generated sales, but also helped increase awareness of the work we do.

The Workshop saw a small change to its staff structure in 2023, with Kimmy Sayle being promoted to Workshop Supervisor. Alongside her new role, Kimmy also took on a special project last year and created a beautiful wooden plaque featuring the Manx language and a Celtic design to send to King Charles III in honour of his Coronation. Kimmy did an incredible job, so much so that we received a letter of gratitude from Buckingham Place thanking us for the gift. I would like to congratulate Kimmy on her hard work and success over the last 12 months.

Crossroads Charity Shops

The Crossroads Charity Shops continue to do well and provide a regular income to our charity. As well as raising funds, the shops also provide volunteering opportunities and employment training and we are pleased this has continued over the last 12 months.

2023 saw some big changes for our charity shops, with the opening of our Tynwald Street Charity Shop and Community Space, and the closure of our Prospect Terrace Charity Shop. Whilst we have been sad to say goodbye to Prospect Terrace, our new Tynwald Street location has proved to be a huge success and we have enjoyed good footfall and income since its opening.

Crossroads Community Venture (CCV)

Crossroads Community Venture (CCV) is an open referral, social enterprise scheme for adults with learning disabilities. CCV offers employment training and support placements, with regular access to a working environment to help those with learning difficulties become more independent. The project can help develop various skills including computer skills, record keeping, administration tasks, stock control, posting and packaging, teamwork skills and customer service.

CCV sits under our Social Enterprise arm with income generated from recycling DVDs and CDs and from CCV's ironing service run by the Steam Team, which is made up of

Jackie Betteridge
Chief Executive Officer

CCV service users. They are responsible for the ironing and sending text messages to clients to inform them when their ironing is ready to be collected.

Over the past 12 months we have supported 41 clients with our CCV service, some of whom have secured regular work placements, including at Noble's Hospital and local business Riley's.

CCV has continued to work in partnership with the Disability Employment Service this year, where work readiness is evidenced by an eight-week work ready assessment, following which individuals are supported to find work placements or employment from positions on the open job market.

We have also launched our Community Café this year which is located in our Tynwald Street Community Space. The Café is being run by our CCV clients with support from our trained support workers and is open every Thursday and Friday. The café runs a small menu of food and drinks, and since opening our CCV clients have really enjoyed their new venture and gained valuable experience and skills. I look forward to seeing how the café progresses over the next 12 months.

CONCLUSION

Over the last 12 months, Crossroads has continued to adapt to the needs of our Island's carers and I am pleased that we have been able to provide high-quality, person-centred care to those who need it.

As an organisation, we have had many successes over the past year including being able to open a new charity shop and community space, and some wonderful feedback from our regular inspections. However, we have also faced challenges during the last 12 months, particularly funding. Like many third sector organisations, we have found inflation and rising costs have impacted our income, and coupled with the cost of living crisis, it has become more difficult to raise money. As a charity, we rely on fundraising and donations to fund our services, however we have found over the last year that people have less money to donate which undoubtedly had an effect on our income.

However, although we have faced challenges with funding, I am incredibly proud that we have been able to continue providing support to those who need it most, and we have adapted to ensure we haven't had to reduce or close any of our services.

I am also immensely proud of the whole team at Crossroads and their continued hard work and dedication. We have an incredible team of staff across the organisation including in our Main Office, our Masham Court Day Services Centre, out in the community, our Nursery, our three charity shops and the Crossroads Manx Workshop, and without all of them and our dedicated volunteers, we would not be able to provide much-needed services to carers and their families. I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to them for their support.

Looking forward to the next 12 months, one of our biggest goals is to launch the Carers Strategy in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care. The strategy will set out to make commitments to ensure carers are better supported, valued and included, and will recognise their importance and contribution to our Island. The strategy is designed to address the challenges that were raised in our 2023 'State of Caring' report and I look forward to working with the Department to set out a plan of how we can ensure carers are fully supported in the future.

As an organisation, we remain committed to providing much needed support to carers and individuals with care needs and will continue to champion and advocate for their rights. Over the next 12 months we will continue to work hard to achieve these aims, and I look forward to updating you next year with our progress.