Waverley Care is Scotland’s HIV and Hepatitis C Charity

From our five bases across Scotland, our work is making a positive difference to the lives of people affected by HIV or Hepatitis C.

Across Scotland we’re:

- reducing new infections
- challenging stigma
- getting people diagnosed
- providing support

Our services

- Advice & Information
- African Health Project
- Befriending
- Children & Families
- Community Outreach & Support
- Condoms by Post
- Gay & Bisexual Men
- Group Support
- HIV & Hepatitis Testing
- HIV & Hepatitis Training
- LGBT Support
- MY Voice FGM Project
- One-to-One Support
- Peer Support
- People Affected by Drug Misuse
- Poz Youth
- Prevention, Education & Awareness
- Residential
- Self Management
- SX (Gay & Bisexual Men’s Project)
- Women

To find out more about our work, our services and to get involved, contact us at admin@waverleycare.org, or visit www.waverleycare.org.

Save the date!

ABBA
Conductor: Ben Parry

Saturday 24th February 2018
St Cuthbert’s Church, Lothian Road
Edinburgh EH1 2EP

Booking Opens: Friday 3rd November 2017

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Palmerston Place Church
Saturday 16th December 2017 @19.30
Tickets £11.00
from Hilary Stokes, 0131 258 3235
20 Ravenscroft Gardens,
Edinburgh, EH17 8RP

www.KevockChoir.org.uk
A Pleasance Surprise

Our Fringe fundraising was topped off with an added bonus this year, with news that we were in the running for a Scottish Fundraising Award.

Along with our friends from the Pleasance, we were nominated for Best Partnership in recognition of a unique and enduring relationship that stretches back twenty-five years.

Although we didn’t take home the prize, it was great to have our work recognised alongside so many other great causes.

Between bucket shakes and benefit shows, the relationship has helped raise more than £465,000 to support our work – money that has made a huge difference to the lives of people living with HIV or Hepatitis C.

Alongside the fundraising, setting up camp in the Fringe’s biggest venue each August also provides an amazing platform to raise awareness of HIV and Hepatitis C in Scotland.

We are incredibly grateful to the entire Pleasance family for their continuing support for our work, and the countless performers, backstage staff and volunteers who have made all of these achievements possible.

For a full round up of all the fun of the Fringe in 2017, turn to page 8!

Hepatitis See

Thought provoking art and photography created by people living with Hepatitis C was displayed in Glasgow to mark World Hepatitis Day at the end of July.

The Hepatitis See exhibition went on display in the Gallery of Modern Art, exploring issues like stigma and mental health, and the positive impact of new Hepatitis C treatments.

Today in Scotland, there are an estimated 36,000 people living with Hepatitis C, 40% of whom have never been diagnosed. If left untreated, the condition can lead to serious liver damage and liver cancer, but it can now be cured thanks to effective treatments.

We were delighted to support the Hepatitis See project, and hosted workshops in Edinburgh and Glasgow where service users created their pieces for the exhibition.

Through a variety of projects, we’ve found that art is a fantastic way to support people to express themselves and share their experiences in a positive way that can improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Thank you to our partners in HepCScot, particularly Hepatitis Scotland, for their work organising the exhibition.
Training focuses on life-saving drug

Staff and service users at Milestone took part in training recently to use the life-saving drug, Naloxone. Naloxone temporarily reverses the effects of opioid overdoses, saving lives by providing valuable time for emergency services to respond to 999 calls.

Many of the people we work with have a history of drug use, and we regularly support people to access recovery services and peer support. However, accidental overdoses still occur and Naloxone kits are an important emergency intervention.

A national Take Home Naloxone programme, coordinated by the Scottish Drugs Forum, makes Naloxone kits available to people at risk of overdose, their family or friends, and service providers.
Introducing... Stephen Davidson

Stephen recently joined our Hepatitis C team in Glasgow after a year’s SVQ placement. We caught up with him to talk about his placement, his role with Waverley Care and his love of green tea!

How long have you worked with Waverley Care?
I started in August 2016 as a student, working towards an SVQ in health and social care. I got the opportunity to join the staff team in the summer and jumped at the chance.

What inspired you to get involved in the SVQ programme?
I’d worked lots of different jobs but hadn’t found anything that was rewarding. Working in healthcare had always appealed and the qualification was a chance of a career change.

Had you heard of Waverley Care before you started?
I’d heard of them, but didn’t know a lot about the specific services. I was looking at the different organisations offering the SVQ – services like addiction and homelessness – and Waverley Care stood out.

What was involved in your SVQ?
Over the course of the year, I had to work through eight units. I looked at the different parts of the role I’d be doing at Waverley Care – group work, one-to-one support, hospital assessment – and made choices that would support those skills. Taking the SVQ was a huge thing for me. It’s helped to build up my confidence and self-esteem, and I’m now doing a job I love.

You’ve now joined as a member of staff – how has that been?
I was made to feel like part of the team from day one so, to be honest, it’s a continuation. My work load has increased but the support has been brilliant all the way through. I know a few people who did the SVQ in other organisations where there wasn’t the same support, so I had an advantage.

What kind of challenges do you support clients with?
A major part of my work is to support people living with Hepatitis C to get to the right place physically and mentally to start treatment. There can be complex issues to address around mental health or a lack of support networks that can lead to people not wanting to engage.

What three items couldn’t you live without?
Green tea! I carry tea bags about with me just in case I’m caught short! My guitar as well, and a good book.

Who inspires you?
I’m inspired by life in general – family, friends, colleagues. I like being positive and interacting with people. The job gives me a lot of that as well.
Will you make yourself part of our future?

When Emma chose to remember Waverley Care in her will, she had faith that her gift would be used where it was most needed. She had no idea the impact that her kindness would have*.  

A couple of years ago, when Emma sadly passed away, Judith was a resident at Milestone. At that time, she was very unwell, isolated from her family and desperately unhappy. She wasn’t managing her HIV medication because her life was simply too chaotic. Two years on and Judith’s story is very different. With support from Waverley Care, she’s looking to the future with hope and optimism. She’s doing well on HIV treatment, has reconnected with her children and has made new friends through our support groups.

When Emma took that step to write us into her will, she made herself part of our future, and the future of people like Judith.

Will you do the same?

Even a small gift can help us make an enormous difference. Contact Karen in the Fundraising Team on 0131 556 9710 or karen.docwra@waverleycare.org for more information on leaving a gift in your will.

*Names have been changed
Volunteer Profile

Meet Paul. He’s been living with HIV since 2006. He first came to Waverley Care in 2011, not as a service user, but as a volunteer, supporting others as a peer mentor. We caught up with him to hear more about his role.

How long have you been living with HIV?
I was diagnosed in May 2006, started treatment in March 2007 and, as a result, am now uninfected.

What would you say has been the biggest challenge of living with HIV?
Something everyone faces when they’re diagnosed is who to tell. When you disclose, you’re asking someone to share that part of your life and, sometimes, you have to guide them through it.

I’ve had some very good disclosures, where people were concerned for my health and how I was feeling. There’s been bad experiences too. Since my sister found out, our relationship has been really challenging.

My ex-partner said I was diseased. And this was an educated gay man. Sometimes stigma and discrimination comes from the places you’d least expect it but, then again, so does the help.

I had some initial issues disclosing at work. I wanted to be upfront about my status, and found it quite empowering to be able to stand up for my rights and become an educator of sorts.

When did you first hear about Waverley Care?
I was going through a bout of depression a few years after my father passed away. A lot of the issues that people living with HIV face aren’t to do with the virus itself - it’s more about issues like depression, loneliness, isolation, growing old, all the other things that happen.

When I was seeing my psychologist there was always a Waverley Care leaflet sitting on his desk, and one day he said it might be a good idea to get some support. As it turned out, I never really used the services and threw myself into volunteering. In hindsight maybe I should have actually had a bit of support, but I felt I had something to offer.

I like to think that my experiences of HIV, good and bad, can actually be of benefit to others.

You act as a peer mentor. Can you tell us what that involves?
When people come in for peer support, they’ll be matched up with a mentor who maybe has that shared experience to help them with particular issues.

That’s the great thing about peer support, you are equals. You’re in a neutral situation where nobody is ‘better’ or ‘worse’. It’s the sort of service I’d have liked when I was going through difficult times.

The sessions are quite structured. At the beginning, I’ll talk someone through the process, and about what they want to achieve. As it goes on, they are the ones doing the talking and I’m there to help them find their own path. That’s the value of peer support, it plants seeds in people’s heads and allows them to reassess their lives.

Often, the issues you think you’re there to talk about aren’t what’s going to crop up. So you have to be on your toes and keep an open mind.

You see someone on their HIV life journey and realise you’re actually helping someone and making a difference to their life. It’s something that I’m really proud of.

You work full time and are involved in volunteering. How do you like to spend your free time?
I’ve got a staffy cross called Honey. Whenever I’ve been down, been hating the world, she’s always been there. You walk her, you feed her, and she loves you unconditionally. I love to take her walking out at Newhailes. There’s a woodland path round the estate. It’s peaceful and you can look out over Edinburgh.

I also enjoy my garden. I moved house a few years ago and it was the first time I’d had a garden to look after. I went away and researched it and, after a couple of years I was like ‘you’ve done it, it looks beautiful’!

I’m very fortunate I’ve got an ideal life, but you look back to your dark days and say, thank God, you know?

Who inspires you?
I think it has to be the people who work at Waverley Care. They give a lot of their time to develop you and give you a voice. I couldn’t single it down to one person or they might not let me peer support anymore!
Our 25-year relationship with the Pleasance continues to go from strength to strength, this year including collections at their new venue, Pleasance at the EICC.

Throughout August, our brilliant bucketeers collected a fabulous £41,500, including matched funding from Lloyds Banking Group, all hand counted by more amazing volunteers.

Still to be added are the proceeds from the flagship Tartan Ribbon Comedy Benefit, hosted by Stuart Goldsmith, and the hilarious Amusical, a comedy karaoke of show tunes hosted by Jayde Adams and Kiri Pritchard-McLean.

Elsewhere on the Fringe, the Off the Kerb Comedy Gala returned to the Edinburgh Playhouse with a whopping 19 comedians, headed by hosts, Rob Beckett and Russell Kane. Over £1,300 was raised in the buckets outside, again match funded by Lloyds, with ticket money still to come.

The gang from Austentatious, the Jane Austen inspired improv comedy troupe, once again supported us with a sell-out performance of Crosstentatious which should raise around £3,500.

Meanwhile, local groups were getting in on the act to support our work. The Bohemians took audiences on a whistle stop tour of stage and screen musicals with a £400 collection, Loud and Proud offered an eclectic mix of traditional and popular music, raising over £2,300, and The Two Moronnies served up a set of satirical music, collecting £965.

Last but not least, students Robbie and Elsa took to the mic on Fresh Air for a mammoth 24hr broadcast of music, chat and challenges, raising £965.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all the organisations, venues and performers who have supported us this year, to everyone who donated, and, of course, to all of our amazing volunteers and Fringe coordinators.

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Broughton Street Raffle

A huge thank you to the Broughton Street Traders whose summer raffle raised £570 to support Waverley Care. We were one of three charities to benefit from the raffle and we’re very grateful to all the businesses involved.

Best Foot Forward

We’re always delighted when people want to set themselves a challenge to support Waverley Care.

Back in September, Sam Oldershaw took on the Great North Run, raising over £700 to support our work. Sam was running in memory of her cousin Robert, a former member of staff at Waverley Care.

A week later, Ella Leith and Michael Richardson teamed up to take on the 26-mile KiltWalk in Edinburgh. Between them, the duo raised over £2,500, including a bonus top-up from the Hunter Foundation.

Finally, Gladys Ngwira, a volunteer in our Glasgow office, took part in the Great Scottish Run 10k, raising £220.

Thanks to Sam, Ella, Michael and Gladys. If you’re feeling inspired to dust off the trainers for Waverley Care, get in touch and we can help you get the most out of your fundraising experience. Call Lisa on 0131 556 9710.

Hitting the High Notes

A highlight of our regular Come and Sing events is the opportunity they offer for singers to learn from some of the biggest names in choral music.

In early October, we teamed up with Rae Macintosh Musicroom to offer workshops with vocal coaches, Gillian Robertson and Julie Morrice. Donations on the day raised over £250 to support our work.

As we go to print, we’re preparing for our next Come and Sing with the amazing John Rutter. The event sold out within weeks of being announced in July and it’s set to be a fantastic day.

If you’re an aspiring Agnetha or budding Björn, check out www.waverleycare.org/ABBA for details of our next a Come and Sing, dedicated to the songs of ABBA, in February 2018.

Gin & Comic

After sending this issue of Positive Interest to the printers, we’re making our way straight over to CC Blooms for ‘Gin and Comic’.

The event does exactly what it says on the tin – a masterclass in gin cocktail making, courtesy of our friends at Daffy’s Gin, served with a dash of comedy in the company of Bruce Devlin, Janey Godley and others.

With a great line up, and the promise of a bespoke Waverley Care cocktail, it promises to be an entertaining evening!
Focus on: Caring Conversations

“Whenever I visit my GP, she always links the ailment I’ve come to speak to her about back to my HIV. She doesn’t seem to be able to see past my HIV status.”

HIV stigma exists in many forms, even among healthcare staff. Back in 2014, we conducted research which found that a third of people living with HIV had experienced stigma in a healthcare setting.

Although a majority of the people we spoke to could also point to examples of excellent care, many told us that negative experiences knocked their confidence in seeking support.

Those experiences ranged from a lack of knowledge about HIV transmission, such as when staff chose to unnecessarily wear two pairs of gloves when working with someone living with HIV, to cases where a patient’s HIV status was disclosed to other people, including children and family members, without permission.

In response to the research, we developed Caring Conversations – a free, online learning resource for staff working in GP practices.

Caring Conversations focuses on how staff interact with patients, encouraging them to think about how the conversations they have and the language they use can affect patients’ experiences, and leave them feeling better supported.

The aim is to encourage staff to view conversations as a collaboration, involving patients in their own care and drawing on their experiences, thoughts and ideas to help improve physical and mental health.

The resource uses a mix of animated and interactive content featuring the real-life stories of people living with HIV, including examples where they have felt stigmatised in a healthcare setting. There are also examples from staff, highlighting the benefits they’ve seen in their work as a result of putting caring conversations into practice.

We are incredibly proud that Caring Conversations was recently nominated for an Alliance Scotland Self-Management Award. Although we didn’t take home a prize, the ceremony was an inspiring celebration of the tremendous work taking place across the country to empower people living with long-term conditions in the management of their health, and it was an honour to have our work recognised.

To help bring Caring Conversations to life, we recorded a series of stories from people living with HIV, talking about their experiences, good and bad, of dealing with healthcare staff.

This is Angie’s story...

There was one GP I spoke to when I was first diagnosed. I remember I was quite scared, and quite young.

Her tone was really bad. She barked at me and made me feel really intimidated. I just couldn’t speak to her.

I have really struggled with getting the right medication that allows me to have a normal life. I’d been working closely with one GP and we’d finally had success with this one drug.

I went back to see another GP for a repeat prescription and his reaction was, ‘Do you realise how much this costs?’ My answer was, ‘No, but it works.’

He was putting a price on my quality of life and made me feel that I wasn’t really worth the money that that drug cost.

He didn’t think about the impact of what he was saying, or understand that we’d got here after years of trial and error, and that, finally, I was beginning to feel normal again.

When you’re a patient with a long-term condition, the history is really important. A good GP will be open and warm, and engage and listen, and look at you properly.
Grant and Martha at a Thanksgiving Service to celebrate Waverley Care’s 25th Birthday in 2014.

Rumour has it that the man who first canned sardines took his inspiration from a walk through Edinburgh during the Fringe.

There’s lots to love about having the world’s biggest arts festival on your doorstep, but running the gauntlet of street performers, show flyers and tourists each August isn’t one of them.

One sunny evening, I sought refuge from the chaos in the relative calm of the International Book Festival, where I enjoyed a Q&A with American author, David France, who was in town to promote his book *How to Survive a Plague*.

Brilliantly written and meticulously researched, the book chronicles the early years of the HIV epidemic and, in particular, the activists who campaigned for action in the USA. So often, histories on HIV focus, understandably, on the scientific breakthroughs - so it was refreshing to read an account that brought people to the foreground.

During the event, I got to thinking about the books that could be written about the people who’ve been involved with Waverley Care over the years. We have people on the team who joined in the early days and have been on the frontline of Scotland’s response to HIV and Hepatitis C ever since.

One such colleague is Martha, our Deputy Chief Executive, who retires in December after 28 years working in the HIV sector in Scotland.

More than anyone, Martha has played a pivotal role in helping us, and the wider healthcare sector, to adapt to the changing needs of people living with HIV and Hepatitis C. It wouldn’t be possible to do that contribution justice here, so I won’t even try.

Suffice to say, without her, Waverley Care would not be half the charity it is today - a suggestion that I’m sure she’ll be mortified by when she reads this!

It goes without saying that everyone involved in Waverley Care – staff, service users, volunteers, supporters and partners - will miss seeing her in the office day-to-day, though I’m sure she can be tempted back to volunteer once in a while.

Until then, on behalf of the whole Waverley Care family, I’d like to wish her a very happy retirement.

The Last Word

We have people on the team who joined in the early days and have been on the frontline of Scotland’s response to HIV and Hepatitis C ever since.

Grant Sugden, Chief Executive
Thank you to...

Events Diary

Saturday 24 February 2018
Come and Sing ABBA
Whether you’re an aspiring Agnetha or a budding Björn, join us in the company of conductor, Ben Parry, for a Come and Sing dedicated to the hits of ABBA. Booking opens Friday 3 November. Visit www.waverleycare.org/ABBA for more details.

Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 May 2018
Edinburgh Marathon Festival
Be quick out the blocks and don’t miss your place on the start line of the Edinburgh Marathon Festival in aid of Waverley Care. Distances to suit runners of all abilities. Visit www.waverleycare.org/edmarathon to sign up now.

For more details on all our events go to: www.waverleycare.org/events

World AIDS Day at Broughton St Mary’s
Community Gathering
Friday 1st December 2017, 6.30pm
Broughton St Mary’s Church, 12 Bellevue Crescent, Edinburgh
An opportunity for remembrance, reflection and celebration. With music from Loud & Proud and the Tartan Ribbon Community Choir.
Free Event | All Welcome | Refreshments

www.waverleycare.org