

Winter 2017

What a year for Equal Futures

Welcome to your Winter Newsletter. 2017 has been a year of big changes for Equal Futures.

In the summer we moved office to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations hub on Lauriston Street in Edinburgh. Many Third Sector organisations are based here, which adds a positive vibe with opportunities to network and share ideas. The building is fully accessible, with disabled parking bays outside.

We are developing new models of Circles which will complement our lifelong Circles. These will be shorter term Circles, with Equal Futures providing support for up to two years.

The Circles will have a specific focus, which might be a transition phase at school, moving out of the family home or building social connections.

Another key difference is that the Circle Facilitator will be a volunteer. We have taken this route to make Circles more accessible to people with learning disabilities and families. This approach has been viewed favourably by funders, and we secured grants from the Scottish Government and Tudor Trust to develop two pilot projects.

The new work has allowed us to develop our team. Ekta Marwaha and Sarah O'Reilly are working with Carers at the East End Carers in Glasgow. We recruited from the Carers for the Family Link Worker post. Sarah brings a wealth of experience and knowledge which will help us to grow Circles in the best ways to fit with families.

In the east of Scotland, Sarah Murphy has taken over the role of Network Coordinator. Sarah has lots of experience of working with families. She will manage the lifelong Circles, develop our partnership work with TEN and a pilot project with Volunteer Circle Facilitators.

These are exciting times for Equal Futures. A larger team gives us capacity to grow our ideas and to make them happen. We are looking forward to exploring new ways in how circles can enhance the lives of people with learning disabilities and Autism.



Our team From left to right
(Back) Sarah O'Reilly, Ekta Marwaha, Kenny Walker, Alison Roy
(Front) Sarah Murphy, Fiona Wilkie and Suzanne Cockburn

Glasgow East End project up and running

Ekta has been very busy with the new East Glasgow project and has this to say...

“Lots has been going on in the East End of Glasgow with our new project. This project will be supporting children, young people and adults with autism and their families. We recruited Sarah O’Reilly the Family Link Worker, who started in November. We feel she is a brilliant asset to add to our team and to ensure the project is a success.

At present the project is focusing on recruiting and interviewing Volunteer Circle Facilitators and increasing our referrals to the project. We have been creating links and relationships with various organisations and services to market and outline the benefits for individuals.

It is anticipated that at the end of January/beginning of February we will be facilitating training for the Volunteer Circle Facilitators, with us looking to start establishing Circles of Support thereafter.

If anyone would like to find out more about the project, please get in touch on ekta@equalfutures.org.uk”

Introducing two new staff members

Sarah O’Reilly – Family Link Worker

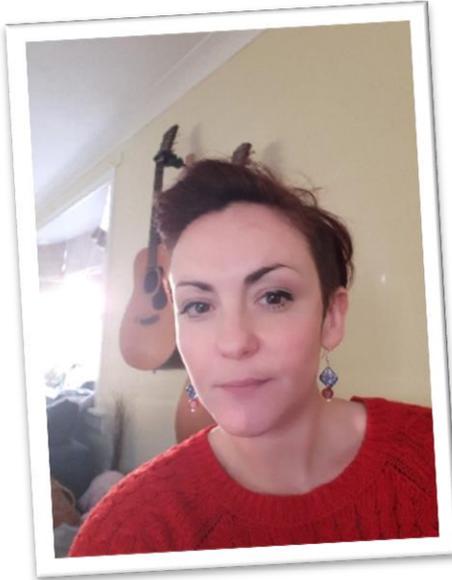
Hi, I am a new member of staff at Equal Futures.

I am employed as a Family Link worker in the East End of Glasgow. I will be part of a new project that aims to set up circles of friendship for children and young people With Autism. The project aims to help Autistic people feel more involved in the community and feel less isolated

I am currently involved in recruiting volunteers as circle facilitators. Although the Project is still in its infancy it has an extremely positive feel and I am excited to be involved in such a worthwhile project from the beginning.



Sarah Murphy - Project Co-Ordinator Edinburgh and Midlothian

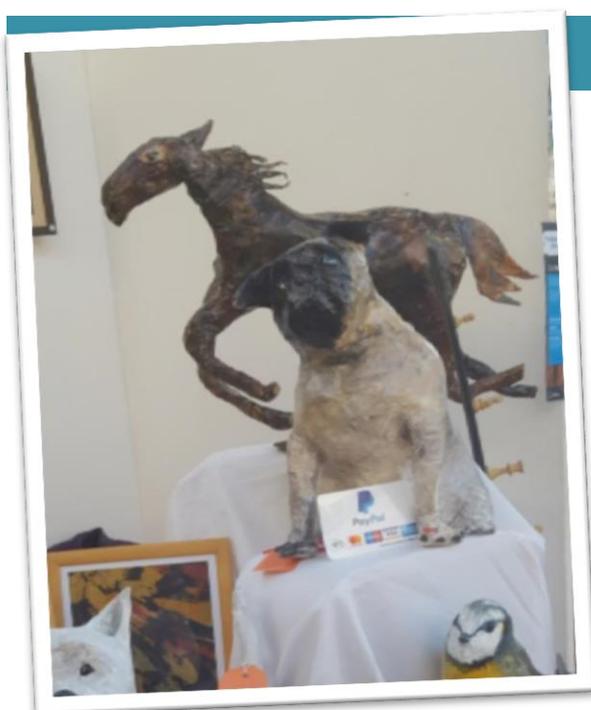


Hello all just a few lines to introduce myself as a new member of the Equal Futures team. I started on the 6th of December and was so excited to do so. I have worked in the voluntary sector for some time now but this is my first role in the beautiful city of Edinburgh. I am originally from Blackpool but a spell in the RAF saw me posted up here in 2004 where I met my other half, I am now proud to call Burntisland my home and we are raising our two young children here.

I have a degree in Psychology and Counselling which reflects the passion and interest I have in the helping community. My experience includes but is not limited to; some counselling, the provision of support for families who care for someone with complex disabilities, support for vulnerable families and people who have struggled with infertility. I also have experience with setting up new projects.

In my new role as project co-ordinator I will be looking forward to meeting the team to learn all I can from them about Equal Futures and established projects. I am currently finding my feet doing lots of reading and developing a plan for the coming weeks. Going forward I'm keen to develop a new team of Circle Facilitators and find new ways of doing this along with opening new lines of referrals.

I'm super passionate about the work we are doing here at Equal Futures and I know I'm not alone so if you are interested in being part of the team and would like to gain valuable experience whilst supporting your community, get in touch with us about volunteering. I would really love to hear from you at smurphy@equalfutures.org.uk or **07879982292**.



Fantastic creations by Kirsten

Kirsten Lawrie and her Circle member Artist Sarah Gaillers have been working on sculptures and recently Kirsten displayed her horse sculpture in an exhibition at The Drill Hall (see photo).

Kirsten and Sarah have been creating artwork together for several years and have explored many different mediums. Kirsten also loves doing cat sculptures as she loves cats and has recently made a Christmas wreath, although she has not decided who is the lucky person getting it for Christmas?!

Clodagh Harris



Join our Focus Groups

We want to have conversations with people who are involved with Equal Futures. We will have two Focus Groups. One will cover Ayrshire and Glasgow. The other will be for Edinburgh and the Lothians, Perth and Kinross and the Borders. The aim is to learn what works well in Circles, and what could be done differently. We are asking people to join us who have experience of Circles; whose insight and ideas will help us to shape Equal Futures into a better organisation.

The Focus Groups are open to anyone who is part of Equal Futures: families, Focus People, Community Connectors and Circle members.

To find out more contact Alison Roy at alison@equalfutures.org.uk or Kenny Walker at kenny@equalfutures.org.uk

Sticks & Stones

Scottish Disability Golf & Curling

Two sports founded in Scotland, are now on offer to disabled people for the first time!!!

The SDGP and the DCS have now merged to form
**Scottish Disability Golf & Curling
Sticks & Stones**

Providing sport all-year-round, for anyone of any age with a disability!

“We will still hold as much golf and golf tuition for our members, but over the winter months we will arrange ice curling games, at the numerous Scottish ice centres. Our next big event under the SDGC banner is a week-long ice event against a team of Canadian disabled curlers, early in January 2018. Games are being arranged in Edinburgh, Stirling, Dundee and Fife”

SDGC Membership is free, so why not get in touch and try out one or both sports.

www.scottishdgc.org.uk

Scottish Disability Golf & Curling is a Registered
Scottish Charity SC 041000

The Canal Shed

The Canal Shed is a project of the Scottish Waterways Trust. Its key aim is to bring people together to share and learn new skills, relax and make friends - while exploring and helping to care for the historic Union Canal.

Operating on a drop-in basis, the Canal Shed is a meeting place for people to plan and engage in a range of outdoor and indoor activities. These are very varied and aimed at providing gentle physical and mental stimulation to promote wellbeing, enhance community connections and encourage enjoyment and ownership of the Canal as a space for leisure and learning - and practical conservation opportunities. And there's always plenty of tea and cake!

Participation is free and open to anyone over 18 with a bit of time to spare on Wednesdays from 10.00-13.00.

Venue: Drennan Hall, Polwarth Church, [36-38 Polwarth Terrace, EH11 1LU](#). Contact: Anna on 07790 885969 or canalshed@scottishwaterwaystrust.org.uk for more details.

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Equal Futures is a family led organisation that helps families who have a relative with a disability plan for the future by building lifelong circles of support. For more information phone 0131 226 5454 or visit www.equalfutures.org.uk Registered as a Charity in Scotland SC033799