



Winter 2025 Newsletter

Welcome all to our Winter Newsletter and Happy New Year to all our members, families, staff team and followers!

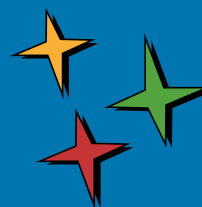
We hope everyone has had an enjoyable festive period, and wishing everyone all the best in 2026.

Here is a quick update on what's been happening at HOPE from the end of 2025 and into the New Year.





Top Story



On Christmas Eve 2025, Children in Need launched a wonderful new story featuring Pudsey the Bear in "Pudsey and the Thread of Hope".

HOPE for Autism received an amazing invitation to head down to London in December to catch the premiere of this story!

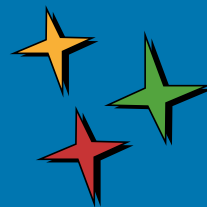
Our then CEO Louise Carson and our admin Holly Jackson, who both worked closely on the project with Children in Need, were invited along, where they got to meet Pudsey in person!

They can't confirm or deny that tears were shed during the premiere!





Top Story



We managed to get a few words from Holly about her experience down in London!



Louise and I were delighted to accept an invitation to attend the London premiere of Pudsey and the Thread of Hope. We had previously worked alongside BBC Children in Need to help develop an autistic character for a special project they were creating for a Christmas broadcast on CBeebies.

Over a series of meetings, we contributed to discussions about the characters' appearance and how they would behave in different environments. At one stage in development, both characters were shown wearing ear defenders. I shared my personal experience of my daughter, who is sensitive to noise, but whose love of dancing and the sensory feedback she receives from movement often outweighs the discomfort caused by loud environments. It was incredibly meaningful to be able to bring real-life perspective into the creative process.

After some time without news, Louise received an email in December inviting us to the London premiere. This was totally unsuspected and we were both thrilled to attend.

The premiere took place at Cineworld Leicester Square and brought together several organisations involved in the project. Tom Fletcher and his family were also in attendance, as Tom and his son recorded the feature song for the film. We had the opportunity to meet Pudsey Bear himself, enjoy activities such as face painting and bauble making, and contribute to a "Tree of Hope," where guests shared their hopes for the year ahead.

Before the screening, a DJ entertained the children with games, and we were treated to the premiere of Tom and Buzz's music video for Thread of Hope. Each guest also received a goody bag, adding to the celebratory atmosphere of a truly special evening.

We are deeply grateful to BBC Children in Need for this fantastic opportunity. It makes us incredibly proud that the important work of Hope for Autism has been recognised by such a respected national organisation.

If anyone is interested in viewing Pudsey and the Thread of Hope it is available on the BBC iPlayer!



Fundraising



Thank you Bellshill
Central Parish Church
for raising £270 at your
Pancake Day event!



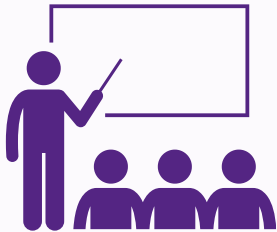


In other news...



We would like to thank all of the families who joined us for our annual Christmas treats, mainly our cinema trips to see Zootropolis 2 and Five Nights at Freddy's 2.

Also congratulations to Claire Mansey, Brian Weldon and Derek Russell in each winning one of our luxurious Christmas Hampers!



HOPE would like to thank Youth Scotland again for its continued partnership in allowing our staff to deliver Autism training sessions in 2025! Our Level 1 and 2 sessions have continued to prove popular with 9 sessions delivered over the year, with over 100+ attendees!



We have been delighted to see one of our autistic adults, Aimee become one of our newest volunteers with HOPE. She has been previously attending our Chat and Chill sessions, but has now joined our team and supporting the children in Family Fun sessions in Airdrie. Welcome to the team Aimee!



As we edge closer to the end of the Premier League season once again, the race for the HOPE Fantasy League title is heating up! There is a 3 way race for the top spot, with Daniel Mason having a very narrow 17 point lead over Thomas Spiers. Our reigning champion Alan Cowie may be 3rd by 85 points but he is not out of the race yet!



Meet our Team!



For this newsletter, we caught up with one of our youngest current volunteers Rory Haldane. He has been a long standing member of HOPE, but has recently joined the staff team in our Gaming group and Adult Chat and Chill session.



Q: What made you interested in becoming a staff member at HOPE?

I've been a member of Hope since I was six, and I was curious about what it was like to be a volunteer, and I have met many amazing volunteers/staff at Hope who are friendly as can be, specifically Derek Russell.

Q: As someone who has attended groups for a long period of time, do you have any favourite memories?

I have many but the countless times playing the various Jackbox games stick with me, and I hope for many more in the future.

Q: How have you found your experience so far at HOPE?

I have found it uplifting to be a part of the volunteer circle and to be able to still be a part of the fun activities.

Q: What are you hoping to achieve in your new role?

To gain a tad more confidence being on my own (without the aid of more senior members).

Q: What's the best part about your job?

Being able to have fun and laugh just like when I was an attendee.

Q: Least favourite?

The only thing for me is the venue I work in can sometimes be out of sorts. At times we need to change the layout because it is used for parties and can be quite messy in some areas.

Q: Outside of HOPE, what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy playing games and catching up on sleep, I also tend to go out on my bike from time to time.

Q: And finally, what advice would you give to any new staff/volunteers who would like to work with HOPE in the future?

Be able to balance both sides as a volunteer and a friend to the attendees, friendly but calmly stern if the moment requires it.

Keep up the great work Rory!

Upcoming Events

Spring 2025

Family Support Service



Parent Support Sessions

Mondays

One Wellwynd, Airdrie. ML6 0BN

10.00am - 11.30am (Fortnightly during Term Time)

Tuesdays

Delivered Online via Zoom - last Tuesday of every month

7.00pm - 8.30pm

Wednesdays

Freedom City Church, Cumbernauld. G67 1QR

1.00pm - 2.30pm (Weekly)

Information Drop-Ins

Tuesday 10th March

Old Monklands Community

Centre, Coatbridge

10.00am - 12.00pm

Tuesday 12th May

Shotts Community Centre

10.00am - 12.00pm

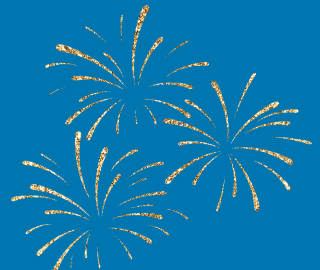
Training Calendar

There is still a number of exciting and useful upcoming training events from now, until the end of June! You can check using our Eventbrite QR code below!





Good News Story



A few of our autistic adults attended a CAB2CAREERS employability course where they completed Phase 1 of Personal Development and Life Skills, which is a SQA Employability award.

This 4-week course consisted of interactive workshops, where our adults were supported in getting ready for work, using a tailored development plan to suit each individual's needs.

We would like to thank Danielle and Claire from the Employability Team at Citizens Advice Motherwell, for delivering a fantastic course with a holistic approach that made everyone feel at ease and comfortable in taking part.



And Finally !!!



On a very sad note, we end this newsletter by saying goodbye to one of our fantastic members of staff, Fiona Beggs. As she leaves HOPE to pastures new, she wanted to leave with this lovely message to you all:



After three years working at HOPE for Autism, I recently made the very difficult decision to move on and accept a new job in Glasgow, a little closer to home. I finished up at HOPE at the end of February after just over three very special years with the organisation.

During that time, I truly loved being part of the HOPE community. It has been a real privilege to get to know so many wonderful families and to spend time alongside parents and carers.

Working with families has been incredibly meaningful to me. I hope that in some small way I was able to offer support, whether that was by being a listening ear, providing training, sharing information and signposting, or simply offering a bit of encouragement when it was needed. The honesty and resilience within this community is something that has always inspired me.

Deciding to leave was not easy, and it certainly wasn't a decision I took lightly. HOPE has meant a great deal to me, both personally and professionally, and I will always be grateful for the kindness, support and friendships I found there.

I am continuing to work within the autism field and have recently started a new role in Glasgow with East End Community Carers, where I will be running their autism project. While it feels like a new challenge, I'm really looking forward to continuing to support families in a similar way.

Thank you to everyone in the HOPE family for being so welcoming, supportive and friendly over the past few years.

We wish you all the best Fiona in all your future endeavours!