



Tending the Light

FESTIVAL OF CARE 2022



**WHO
CARES?**
SCOTLAND

EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE

Impact Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Who Cares? Scotland Festival of Care is a marquee national sharing, learning and connection event in the annual calendar for Care Experienced people and the people who work with and care for them.

In 2022, the third annual festival started on Care Day on 18th February and ran for five days with the theme of **Tending the Light**. As with both previous festivals, the theme is built from the metaphor of the lighthouse or beacon. In this Festival, there is a focus on the courage, care, commitment and togetherness that the lighthouse keepers had to nurture to ensure that their light kept shining bright all through the night, however dark or wild, from dusk 'til dawn. This practise was known as 'tending the light'.

The question was posed across the country:

What does it take to 'tend the light', every night, over the years?

The objectives of this year's Festival were to create:

BELONGING and CONNECTION

The embers of last year's Festival would be reignited to create a programme of events that bring Care Experienced people, leaders, Who Cares? Scotland staff, practitioners and carers together to connect, create, build relationships and feel a sense of belonging.

COMMUNITY LEARNING and INFLUENCING

The activities of the Festival of Care would create spaces (physical and online) for impactful community learning and development to happen. The Care Experienced community and, more widely, the social care and third sector communities would share their knowledge and lived experience through varied mediums, resulting in learning for participants and, ultimately, positive changes in policy and practice.

NATIONAL LEARNING and INFLUENCING

The Festival would again have its heart in Shetland, but with the doors flung open across Scotland – allowing for participation and engagement wherever you are. It would launch on Care Day, with Flags being raised across the North and beyond, and a high-quality online film. It will close with the online element of the Care Conference, the Twilight Gathering, allowing for nationwide participation.

TENDING THE LIGHT

“If you’re Care Experienced, it can be a hard lonely job to rally the light on your own.

The Winters are long and sometimes you just can’t ignite the light and you have to wait for a spark from someone else to fire it up.

As we strike our flint on the rock, we look for something to spark our shine, it could be a teacher who says they’re proud of you, it might be seeing laughter light up in someone’s eyes, it might be feeling a part of something when often you don’t.

Our times in the light are special to us, the more special they are the tighter we hold on. When you believe in us, it helps us believe in ourselves. We can draw on it when we need it most. You shining for us makes our rays shine just as brightly and beautifully as you’ve done for us. This way we pass the light. Each of us shining out in our own special sequence.

For the #ShetlandCrew it means a lot if we can bring other Care Experienced kids into the light with us. We keep the light burning passionately and fiercely for those who come after us.

Tending the Light Festival of Care 2022 invites you all to tend the light with us so that we can keep the light burning brightly for every little kid that needs safety and love, until they can stand steady on the shore again and keep their own light burning.”

- #SHETLANDCREW, Tending the Light **Opening Film**

IN NUMBERS

Over **500**
people

took part over **5** days

in events across
12 Local Authorities with

engagement from over
30 Corporate Parenting bodies

101,953

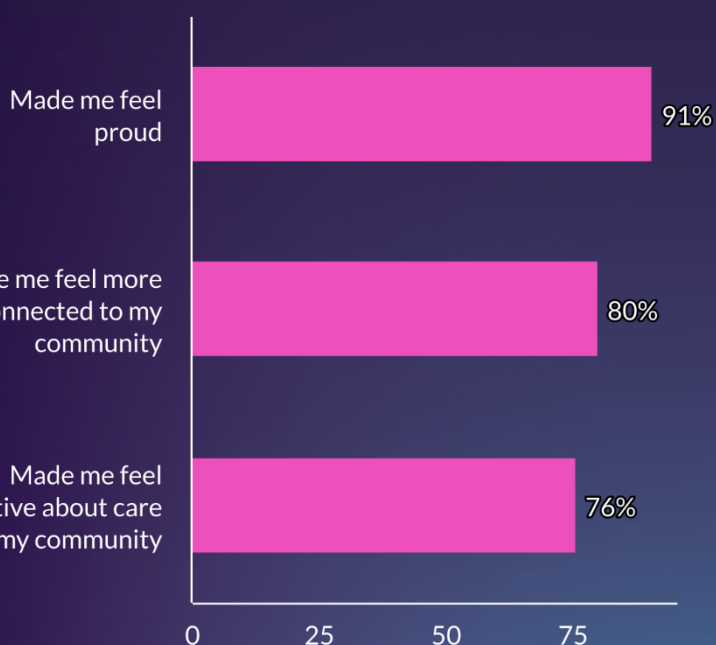
Twitter impressions (reach) from posts about the festival, with

411

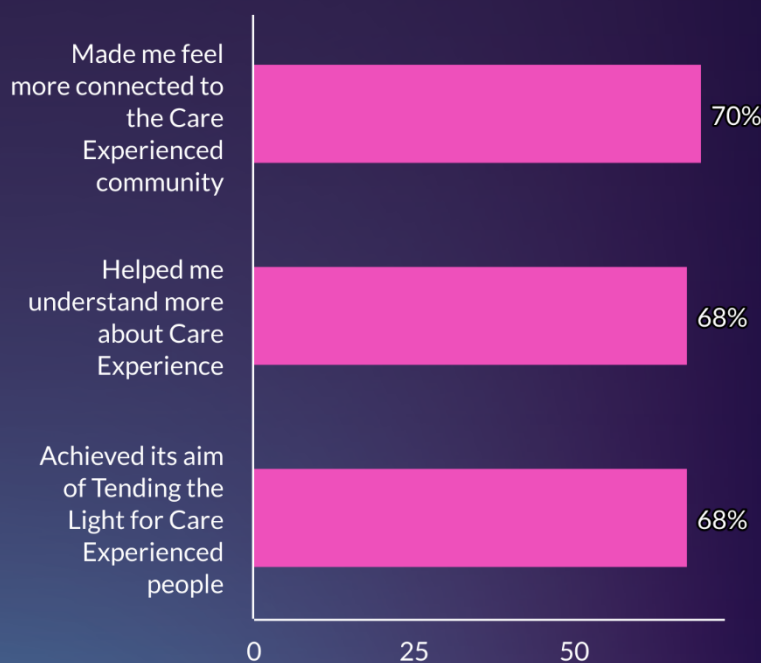
reshares of Festival of Care/Care Day content

We asked those who took part whether the Festival...

Care Experienced People



Professionals & Carers



CARE DAY

The chilly morning of Friday 18th February heralded the arrival of the annual celebration of Care Day. Care Day originated in Scotland in 2015 and always takes place on the third Friday in February. It is now recognised internationally as an opportunity to celebrate the lives and voices of Care Experienced people. The theme for Care Day in 2022 was **Community**.

Activity across the day included:

- [A five minute festival opening film](#), created by the #ShetlandCrew, was premiered on YouTube at midday to mark the start of the Festival. The video features Care Experienced people from Shetland and their supporters shining a light on Sumburgh Head Lighthouse, the most southerly point on Shetland.
- The raising of Care Experienced flags and evening illuminations at the headquarters of several Local Authorities, including Shetland, [Moray](#), [South Lanarkshire](#) and Clackmannanshire, with [illuminations on the Wallace Monument in Stirling](#) and St. Magnus Cathedral on Orkney.
- An [interactive Festival of Care map](#) was published on the Who Cares? Scotland website. The map was created by artist Anupa Gardner and included 11 separate areas to discover.
- Care Experienced people, carers, Corporate Parents and school children alike [built and shared their own lighthouses](#) to adorn their windows and send good wishes using the hashtags **#CareDay22** and **#FoC22**, with [The Promise publishing a blog](#) on what the proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child' could mean for the future of care in Scotland.
- The creation of a [Tending the Light padlet board](#) – a 'live growing space', allowing anyone to post some words, pictures and inspirational quotes about what *tending the light* means to them.
- The publishing of [a podcast](#) following a digital event for Care Experienced young people and adults from across 5 nations (as part of the 5 Nations 1 Voice alliance of charities), where Who Cares? Scotland welcomed participants to our digital village and explored community through the themes of education, transitions, accessing information, and recreation.

"No half-heartedness and no worldly fear must turn us aside from following the light unflinchingly - J.R.R. Tolkien (a Care Experienced author)"

- [Tending the Light padlet](#) submission, anonymous

LOCAL ACTIVITY

On and around Care Day, face-to-face activities with Care Experienced people took place across at least 12 Local Authorities, including:

- At **Kibble in Renfrewshire**, over 60 Care Experienced people created [an immersive and interactive art exhibition](#) with the theme of *Tending the Light*.
- In **West Lothian**, Care Experienced people created a [short live action animation](#) with their advocacy workers, asking: *Who shines the light for you?*
- In **East Ayrshire**, 35 people took part in an afternoon of fun at our new Kilmarnock office.
- The Champs and Little Champs group in **Highland** held a Care Day party, attended by 17 Care Experienced members.
- The **South Lanarkshire** Champions Board and **North Lanarkshire** TNT group held a [Pan-Lanarkshire fun day](#), supported by Corporate Parents and attended by more than 100 Care Experienced people, friends, family and supporters.
- The ACE group in **Aberdeen** held an arts and crafts session, creating their own version of the northern lights.
- 13 young people participated in **Moray**, creating light houses which lead to discussions about beacons for care experienced young people.
- In **Clackmannanshire**, 16 Care Experienced people and staff met up together to celebrate with tea and cakes.
- Corporate Parents across **Stirling** hosted their own festival, including [an art exhibition from Forth Valley College students](#), a family fun day and a lantern parade.
- **Pupils at primary schools across several local authorities** took part in lessons about Care Experience, following a letter from the #ShetlandCrew and resource pack of activities being sent out. One teacher at Dunrossness Primary in Shetland wrote [a blog about how the school engaged with the festival](#).

We asked some primary school teachers who used the resources...	Average score
How helpful were the resources in raising awareness about Care Experience in class?	93%
Before the activities how much do you think the children understood about care?	45%
After the activities, how much do you think the children understood about care?	80%

“They enjoyed it and learned a lot and it helped out Care Experienced children, as it began discussions about different life experiences.”

- Primary School teacher

To #ShetlandCrew,

Hello. I really liked the letter you sent to us. I was surprised when my teacher read the letter. I nearly cried because it made me think there are other children like me.

I live with a guardian. She is also my Nana. My mum works and lives somewhere else with my step dad. We don't talk to my real dad anymore. I think that makes me Care Experienced too, like the #ShetlandCrew. My Nana is a care worker so I go to my Grandad's after school sometimes.

I thought the games were fun. I understood what you were trying to tell us through the games. You were trying to make us understand that we need to lead them to their place in the world.

I understand that we all need to be a lighthouse for everyone. We need to be there for them when they worry about being picked up after school or if they will be on their own. We need to look out for them.

(Letter from Primary School pupil, Shetland)

FESTIVAL OF CARE: SHETLAND

The five day Festival of Care in Shetland consisted of an exciting [full programme of events](#):

On **Friday**, the Festival's launch was accompanied by an opening film. Later, in ['Projectiles'](#), Shetland was lit up with the powerful words of Shetland's Care Experienced community alongside poet Jen Hadfield as part of the Home & Belonging project. The [Home and Belonging exhibition](#) was launched at Shetland Museum, too, and open to the public throughout the festival.

Saturday saw performances of the [Safe with me live performance](#) at Shetland Museum. Five #ShetlandCrew Care Experienced people were paired with their chosen Corporate Parent. In pairs, they embarked upon a highly unusual process of growing openness, care and trust. Supported by theatre director, Tony McBride, each comes to tell the other's story of an object of real importance to their own sense of home and belonging. Both Saturday and Sunday, too, saw special sessions in the heart of a unique Minecraft map of Lerwick, an interactive space created by #ShetlandCrew and Minecraft Artist Adam Clarke.

On **Sunday**, a further performance of *Safe with me* was supplemented by a workshop and associated launch of the [Take a Walk in my Shoes](#) book. The book about what it is to be a person of any age who has experienced the Care System. The #ShetlandCrew, working alongside poet Jen Hadfield created stories about identity, stories about love, stories of how we survive and how we thrive. There are stories of belonging, of self-belief, of the shining stars we all are. There are stories of who we are to each other.

Monday and Tuesday saw the beginning of the two-day Care Convention in Shetland, one of the highlights of the festival bringing together the #ShetlandCrew, Care experienced leaders on Shetland with Care Experienced leaders from across Scotland and significant decision makers within Shetland Island Council and NHS including the chief exec of SIC and the director of children's services. We were also joined by the Youth Commissioner for Scotland, Bruce Adamson and Thomas Carlton from The Promise. The event was facilitated by Tony McBride around a theme of creating more significant and nurturing relationships for Care Experienced young people. It was agreed that Shetland would feedback on progress and bring the group back together in 6 months to look at progress.

"Another successful festival of care and I personally think the one that will create most change. The sessions I attended over Monday and Tuesday were inspiring and thought provoking. The contribution from the young people was superb and insightful, and an excellent example of learning through lived experience."

- Denise Morgan, Chief Social Worker, Shetland Council

THE TWILIGHT GATHERING

On the final evening of the Festival, as the sun began to set, came the online 'Twilight Gathering'. The event brought together Care Experienced people, professionals and decision makers together to explore what it means to 'Tend the Light' for Care Experienced people, with particular focus on how to support mental health, relationships and wellbeing. This included attendance from MSPs, the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing and the Deputy First Minister.

We hosted a panel discussion with prominent 'Lighthouse Keepers': Lynda Greig from our National Representative Body, Megan Moffat from our Board and Bruce Adamson, the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland. This was followed by a Q&A session with the audience. Resident artist Anupa Gardner created [a graphic of the panel discussion](#).

Breakout rooms then allowed attendees to hear directly from Care Experienced people across Scotland about what they have been doing in their local area to create change, especially around mental health.

This work included the #ShetlandCrew, who performed a verbatim theatre piece on Home and Belonging, the ['Today Not Tomorrow' group](#) from North Lanarkshire presenting their work on mental health, [a video from the East Lothian Champions Board](#) about mental health and a group from Angus who [presented findings from a local survey](#) on mental health and care experience.

Discussion throughout focused on the action needed going forward to #KeepThePromise, including hearing from Lynda about the findings and asks from our [Mental Health Annual Participation Programme report, 'Tend Our Light'](#).

The festival then concluded with the premiering of [a special closing video](#), including footage of highlights from the Festival in Shetland.

"To tend my light, when I'm sad or feeling low I like to talk it out, have a cry and a cuddle with people I love. It helps not to keep feelings bottled up and feel okay about being vulnerable with others."

- [Sparks of Light padlet](#) submission, anonymous

"In the last decade, Care Experienced people have been speaking and have captured the attention of politicians and media alike... Despite the brightness of the flame that exists, progress must continue, as fires can be put out."

- Megan Moffat, Care Experienced panel member

KEY IMPACT THEMES

Feedback from the festival was collected across several mediums, including online surveys, debrief and reflection sessions, emails, flipchart pages and 'word catching' from sessions. We spoke to Care Experienced people across Scotland, professionals, carers and teachers who took part in the festival, as well as key Who Cares? Scotland staff and volunteers. A careful analysis of this feedback gave rise to the following impact themes:

Energy, Light, Emotion

The first key theme we heard about through feedback was the (at times overwhelming) feeling of energy the Festival brought, the associated coming to life of the metaphor of light, and the strong emotions that these stirred up for people.

Many people told us about a special sense of energy that taking part in the Festival gave them, something indescribable for Care Experienced people that could be felt through their body:

"I feel like there is now light shining through my heart. In my mind, that means where there is love/safety, there is light."

"...at some stage, well, the festival itself was happening. And I don't know how to describe this, but there is sort of the moments when you realised, it was actually happening and something felt like very sort of real and powerful and kind of like special and quite dangerous at the same time - special and dangerous."

- **Care Experienced people**

This was obvious, too, for some Corporate Parents who took part, where the energy and togetherness of the #ShetlandCrew shone through for all to see. For some staff who played a central role, reflecting on helping create this energy posed questions about the future:

"[I'll remember] the excitement of the young people involved, the sense of love and containment and care that oozed out of those speaking, and the togetherness of their group. How they can support each other as people who walk similar paths."

- **Practitioners**

"I still don't have any energy! The energy the young people have put in has been astounding. Their energy, and the energy of everything else involved, it made us think – how do we do more? It's about creating that energy and allowing the young people to take it on."

- **Staff member**

Related to the sense of energy was the idea of light, central to the overall theme of the Festival, and this was evident in a couple of different ways. First, in the metaphorical beacon of light Care Experienced people were seen to take on and became:

"...It was during COVID and we went and we sang in the cave. Yeah. We were all in the cave and we were all singing and there was that light. You can see the light too. We were just going through the zigzag and then I kind of thought a little bit like that and I thought, oh, that's what I've got, quite a lot of feeling of that light in me."

- Care Experienced person

"Each and every one of the young people who we gathered to celebrate has a bright and unique light shining. The love and respect they share for each other shone through."

- Practitioner

And, second, in the power of the passing of light – a lighthouse, a spark, a flame, an ember - from one person to another:

"I never had a lighthouse my whole life when I most needed one, so now I want to be that for someone else."

- Care Experienced person

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each one of us has cause to think deep with gratitude for those who have helped to relight the flame within us."

- Padlet submission, anonymous

"I've drawn a shooting star – all the little sparks of light coming from the breakout room. The group were fired up – [the Festival] made them want to fight harder and do more. Lots of sparks flying everywhere, need to keep that momentum going."

- Staff member

Discussion took place around the term corporate parents and the group decided to use the word MEID. A nautical phrase but a Shetland word meaning: "a prominent feature on the land, which when lined up with another landmark, enables fishermen to establish and maintain their position"

- Flipchart notes from Shetland convention

We heard that experiencing such energy and light awoke in many an overwhelming rollercoaster of feelings and emotions, and of emotional connections being made with the self and with others:

"It was overwhelming watching the opening film with everybody else in the group. It's still very emotional towards the end."

"The beach and car journeys were great - I was laughing my head off - openness and freedom and the pure banter and conversation, no filter - not having to act in a certain way."

“We had moments of being like very introspective and thinking very deeply about things or perhaps being a bit sad, then moments at the other end of the spectrum of being very shouty and trying to get a message across and being very loud, possibly even angry.”

- Care Experienced people

“[The Festival] showed how Care Experience is so varied and the connection everybody feels when they hear each other’s stories.”

- Practitioner

“The young people were nervous, they didn't know the Deputy First Minister and everyone else senior would be there! They did it, they did it well, and after the group were buzzing – the group chat was buzzing. They went to meet the Chief Executive of the council last week, still on a high from the presentation, the Chief Exec was congratulating them on it.”

- Staff member

People, Community, Relationships

The second group of key impact themes evident from feedback received from the Festival concerned the strengths of the bonding together of people to form communities, together with a recognition that relationships are absolutely central to this.

Some Care Experienced people told us that the highlight of their festival was undoubtedly the people they met, the experiences they shared with them, and the support they felt:

“Never met that many Care Experienced people – quite emotional hearing the stories – things have changed for some people and then others don’t feel it has changed enough – the trip has an important place in my heart for meeting the Shetland crew. The team were wonderful and I felt a strong belonging to the event even though I didn’t know anyone. I wish the crew so many good things and love in their journey.”

“I’ve just got it. ‘Home’ is about people, it’s not about things or places. It’s about people. It’s just having that that support that I’ve never had before.”

- Care Experienced people

Sharing experiences with people and offering shared support, can, over time, create strong communities. Community was a key discussion point in the Festival’s activities, and we know the evolution of the #ShetlandCrew represents a perfect example:

“Even though we’re not related through blood we still ARE family...just knowing that there are other people like me out there, that I’m not alone in this. [I will remember] the support and love that the crew have for each other - the changing of their stories into one of self worth, respect and love.”

- Care Experienced person

“I would say it’s very important to keep this group / team mentality and that might do more for the young people than anything one thing we can do as professionals.”

“The thing that struck me most was the support that the #ShetlandCrew provided to each other and the love that they had for each other.”

- Practitioners

Staff members, too, talked about the sense of sharing and of community needed to help create this year’s Festival, which felt stronger than ever:

“I feel like back in the beginnings of the festival...I started with the idea of a cup – you would pass a cup around in the olden days and share it. The festival felt like a deep sharing between people. It’s a deep sharing, a round table. Being around something and being in it. I feel like I’m around something and sharing in an equal way, with the festival and the convention. I am aware that the weight and the responsibility of it is shared, more than ever before, and that unlocked a lot of wisdom.”

- Staff member

Closely linked to this, and another tenet discussed consistently across the Festival, was the examination of relationships as a driving force in shaping a young person’s life trajectory:

“Systems change when people change and people change when they’re cherished. So the challenge is how do we create environments that nourish and cherish... so that people are experiencing nourishing relationships... because that’s what shapes you – relationships.”

- Care Experienced person

[We need a] commitment to exhaust all options before you move a young person out of their community, where these relationships are found.

- Flipchart notes from Shetland convention

“It was a real privilege to see how people were engaging with the idea of relationships. I think that’s the thing.”

- Staff member

Listening, Learning, Collaborating

A key aim of the Festival this year was to create spaces in local communities and nationally for learning to take place. The first element of this aim being achieved evident in the feedback we received from Corporate Parents concerned the raising of awareness and, more pertinently, the need to listen properly to Care Experienced people:

“The Festival offers an opportunity to raise awareness and to also showcase the fantastic contribution our Care Experienced young people make in our community: why would anyone not want to be involved in that?”

"I think it has made me think about my approach to care experienced young people and has encouraged me to listen more."

"I couldn't stop listening to what was being shared with me...compelling, challenging, deeply uncomfortable."

- Practitioners

Muckle

Peerie

Spaegie

Smoorikin

Soothmoother

Slester

- Word catching from the Shetland convention

The impact of the learning that Corporate Parents, school teachers and pupils garnered as part of Festival activities continues to be evident in workplaces and communities, whether that be including Care Experienced people in policy and practice, or exploring and challenging behaviours and stigmatic assumptions which can be prevalent:

"Yes, [we will implement] policy reviews which listen to and meaningfully include the voice of Care Experienced young people. In my personal life, I have learned things about myself which will alter how I view others."

- Practitioner

"The children will be encouraged to think about looking out for others and caring during whole school assemblies. We are working on the Rights of the Child as part of our School Improvement Plan and this ties in really well with that."

"I have learned we need to be more inclusive on events like mothers day - discuss it more with pupils and make it a carers day...[I'll remember] the impact the lessons had on my pupils and the wonderful discussions that came from the lessons and activities provided in your pack."

- School teachers

"[We need an] exploration of the assumptions we widely make and the understanding of love, how it's experienced in the care system and how it's shown and demonstrated... Love is not *all we need*"

- Flipchart notes from Shetland convention

Feedback also suggested that little, if any, learning from the Festival would be able to be put into action meaningful without collaboration with Care Experienced people, both in terms of the work of Corporate Parenting bodies, and the future of the Festival at Who Cares? Scotland:

“Services, carers, professionals need to work collaboratively with the young people and those supporting the festival of care to embed change and learn from experiences.”

-Practitioners

“I think it’s key that we don’t frame the festival as an event – something we ‘pull off’, and it’s done, and we move on. Partly because of the educational aspect, and other things, the festival demanded ‘what comes next?’ What fuelled the impact of the festival was the cross directorate working and, more powerfully, Care Experienced people from Shetland. A big question for next year around collaboration with the Care Experienced community, this needs to continue.”

- Staff member

Movement, Reflection, Looking Ahead

The last and most frequently mentioned group of themes we heard about at and following the Festival involved introspection – the idea of continual movement and change, reflecting on progress on one hand, and ‘springing forward’ to imagine what the future holds.

Members of the #ShetlandCrew used metaphor to talk about the sensation of movement during the Festival – kinetic energy, things happening, things changing – while staff and Corporate Parents spoke about progression on collective and individual journeys:

“In the middle [of my drawing], there are three people dancing. Because not just at our dance party when we did actually dance, but there was this sense of celebration and like fun and being together and being quite excited. Like lots of movement happening and things changing, and that's sort of stuff.”

- Care Experienced person

“I really believe the Twilight Gathering and Ministerial attendance has been a big catalyst for our influencing work. It was very powerful and captured imagination - both hearts and minds. I'm excited to see what else it leads to. It's already resulted in a motion to Scottish Parliament!”

“It felt like snow falling, and then an avalanche after. The green shoots coming up through the snow are the young people. A group member had taken notes at the convention, and presented them back to the group last week. Just huge progress from young people. It’s all about a journey.”

- Staff members

“We are all on a journey and if we keep on navigating in the right direction then the processes and outcomes will keep getting better, not necessarily more, but keep improving.”

- Practitioner

The Festival was also a time for reflection for many people, not least Corporate Parents. For some, it served as an important reminder of what is at stake for communities and how they can make a difference, while others told us about actions and ideas they had come home with:

"I still have the lighthouse in my window, so I'm reminded every day of my responsibilities."

"In my professional capacity, I know I have opportunities to make a strategic difference to outcomes."

"At a meeting the following day, I stressed the need for a more urgent pace of change, and I will continue to do this."

"I just wonder if there was some way to help [Care Experienced people] achieve justice - it might not change much physically, but psychologically it might help them... there are groups that want Shetland to be a restorative island and community."

- Practitioners

Whilst reflecting on one hand, staff and Care Experienced people talked about the future on the other. They talked about using the Festival as a springboard rather than simply a moment in time, about how to improve care, tend the light, and find hope:

"I drew a picture of the world and the word 'courage'. Lots of reasons that came out of the pen. I've been on a real rollercoaster with the ups and downs. I am struck that it feels very different from an event, I feel like it springs forward in a way I haven't heard before. It feels like a question, or a challenge or a possibility. In a time of war in the real world – all of the joy of the festival, it feels like it's real."

- Staff member

"We should start working on how to improve [care] in little steps before bigger steps."

"We should just continue to help others and help them find their light."

"Gave me hope for the future. I found strength in the fact that love conquers all."

- Care Experienced people

Finally, there were important reminders from all sides that this willingness to help, make good and hope for a positive future should not be assumed or taken lightly – we should all continue to 'Tend the Light' for those of us that are Care Experienced:

"I think it's important for all of us to recognise our corporate parenting responsibility is 24/7, not just during a festival."

- Practitioner

"There's a tendency to lean into the status quo, but we should be leaning into the young people and asking "what's not working" or we'll be back here in five year."

- Word catching from the Shetland convention

THANK YOU

Tending the Light Festival of Care 2022 was dedicated to the memory of our dear friend Aylesha, a Who Cares? Scotland member and a driving force within the #SHETLANDCREW.

Now as the lighthouse she shines out,

Her message of love ripples across the sea,

And although sweet friend your story has no more pages,

We will make sure your lighthouse is remembered through the ages.

- from Aylesha's Poem, by Shannon Boston

Thank you to:

The #SHETLANDCREW and their Meids, for hosting the Festival of Care 2022.

Those who participated, wherever you are, particularly all those with Care Experience.



Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Ionad airson
Cruthachalachd nan Eilean

