



Bighearted
Scotland

Heartbeat

Issue No.3 Autumn/Winter 2024



Thank you for being BIGHEARTED!

We are deeply grateful for your continued support through payroll giving to Bighearted Scotland.

Your generosity is making a meaningful impact on five essential Scottish charities: Epilepsy Scotland, Erskine, OneKind, Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Scotland, and Penumbra Mental Health.

In the face of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, all of these charities are facing immense financial challenges while experiencing increased demand for their vital services. Almost entirely self-funded, their crucial work in local communities simply wouldn't be possible without your help.

This newsletter offers a glimpse into the incredible achievements your donations have made possible over the past year.

To keep costs low, we send this newsletter annually, but we encourage you to visit www.bighearted.co.uk or find us on Facebook for regular updates on how your contributions are being used.

We're excited to announce the relaunch of Bighearted Scotland during National Payroll Giving Week in February 2025! Keep an eye on the press and social media for updates and help us spread the word about the incredible benefits of payroll giving.

This relaunch aims to tap into the remarkable generosity of the Scottish public, encouraging more people to join Bighearted Scotland and support the five vital charities that rely on this consortium to continue their life-changing work.

Thank you again for your kindness and support. Wishing you a joyful festive season!



Read the following pages to find out the charities have been helping over the past 12 months

www.bighearted.co.uk

Follow us: @BigheartedScot bigheartedscot

SBH Scotland

Fighting for their future from day one.

For children born with spina bifida, life begins with a fight.

Before you have even taken your first breath, you're facing surgery to close a hole in your spine. For children with spina bifida, that's the brutal reality – a life that begins in an operating room and continues with years of medical treatments and hospital stays. They can miss out on so much in their personal development, at school or simply just making friends.

But with support, they don't have to be left behind. Your support isn't just a donation – it's the strength needed for a child to grow, learn, and build a bright future, no matter their challenges.

Your Bighearted donations help fund dedicated support staff who provide counselling, a finance and benefits support service, health and wellbeing clinics, one-to-one support in homes and hospitals, transition clinics, family groups, outings, workshops and a listening ear when there's nowhere else to turn.

We need your help more than ever. With the current economic situation fundraising is becoming harder, and costs are rising.

From taking part in a range of exciting adrenaline events to making a single donation; from funding a project or staff member to volunteering – every contribution makes a difference.



We need your help more than ever

Meet the individuals that we support- Michaela & Benjamin

"I love my six-year-old son Benjamin more than anything. He is the most caring and funny boy. Like any little boy he loves trucks and dinosaurs. But many children don't accept Benjamin for who he is. He was born with spina bifida and hydrocephalus. This affects his brain and movement and means he uses a wheelchair to get around. The lack of understanding from other parents and children is the hardest thing to deal with. I see other children playing at the playground but Benjamin either can't use the equipment or no one speaks with him. It's heartbreaking. At the SBH Scotland family groups I can relax and chat normally to people who understand about the issues we face and Benjamin gets to play with other children just like him, children in wheelchairs. The groups and activities at SBH Scotland give him a chance to make friends and be proud of who he is. Knowing we have you on our side gives us strength."

At her 20-week scan, Michaela discovered her pregnancy was affected by spina bifida. Isolated and fearful, she avoided seeking information online.

When her son Benjamin was born, Michaela felt overwhelmed by the challenges ahead. At six months old, a change in Michaela's personal circumstances allowed her to reach out to SBH Scotland. Support Worker Linda introduced her to the organisation's services, significantly improving Michaela's situation.

Michaela recalls, *"They [SBH Scotland] did everything for me! I didn't know about DLA, benefits or the conditions. SBH Scotland showed me what Benjamin and I were entitled to, and helped with all the paperwork."*

Linda's support included regular visits and guidance on experimental play as Benjamin grew. As a single parent, Michaela found SBH Scotland invaluable in managing daily challenges. Now five and a half, Benjamin is thriving, and both have remained actively involved with SBH Scotland.

Michaela reflects, *"SBH Scotland is like a second family to us; without them, we don't know where we'd be. We're so happy to have them in our lives."*

To find out more about the support offered by SBH Scotland please visit: www.sbhscotland.org.uk

At the SBH Scotland family groups I can relax and chat normally to people

Epilepsy Scotland

70 years of Epilepsy Scotland

This year, Epilepsy Scotland is turning 70!

That's 70 years of support. It's 70 years of campaigning on behalf of people living with epilepsy in Scotland. Ensuring that appropriate services and support are available and continuing to fight the discrimination and stigma experienced by those living with epilepsy.

But sadly, our services are still acutely needed. We must now make sure that we are moving forward together with purpose. Making lives better for people living with epilepsy and those who care for them.

To find out more about Epilepsy Scotland's history, please go to www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk

Easy Read Guides

Epilepsy Scotland is delighted to announce that they have 4 brand new booklets in Easy Read for people with learning disabilities.

The booklets explain epilepsy to you and tell you about how epilepsy is treated.

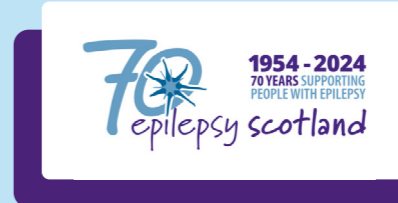
Ayrshire Epilepsy Meet Up

Epilepsy Scotland is holding a new monthly meet up for people living with epilepsy in Ayrshire.

The Ayrshire Epilepsy Meet Up will meet once a month at Ayr Town Hall between 2-4pm.

It is an opportunity for people living with epilepsy in Ayrshire to come together and get support in a friendly space.

The meet up will be hosted by a member of Epilepsy Scotland's Helpline and Information team.



To find out more on the above please email contact@epilepsyscotland.org.uk or call 0808 800 2200.

OneKind

OneKind: working towards a better future for Scotland's animals.

2024 has been another jam-packed year for OneKind, with important achievements for animals, including the end of the "sport" of fox hunting, achieving a ban on the use of snares, and the launch of a new campaign: "Stand Up for Pigs" to end the use of farrowing crates for mother pigs. It has also been a year of progress on our current campaign to end dog racing in Scotland. This winter we will also continue our work to end the use of live reindeer in festive parades and events.

Snares

After decades of campaigning for a ban on snares, the Scottish Government will introduce a snaring ban on the 25th of November. This means it will become an offence to use a snare to trap a wild animal, or in any way that is likely to injure a wild animal. The Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024 has also introduced licensing of grouse shooting, trap use, and muirburn, and a ban on the use of glue traps. Snares are primitive wire noose traps designed to catch an animal by the neck and glue traps are very cruel, inflicting a great deal of physical and mental stress upon the animals trapped in them.

It will become an offence to use a snare to trap a wild animal

The licensing scheme will also be the culmination of years of work by the REVIVE coalition for grouse moor reform, of which OneKind is a member. The ban on the use of snares and glue traps means we have achieved two of our major goals, which we have been working towards for years.



Unbound the Greyhound

In June of last year, OneKind launched the Unbound the Greyhound coalition campaign with a public event in Glasgow, marking the beginning of a powerful movement to end greyhound racing in Scotland. We are delighted to have achieved significant parliamentary action, within a year of launching the campaign.

Thanks to the coalition's persistent efforts, Scottish Greens MSP Mark Ruskell has gained the right to introduce the Proposed Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament, moving us one step closer to making this historic ban a reality.

On Friday, March 7, OneKind, alongside coalition partners, delivered an open letter bearing an incredible 22,655 signatures, calling for an end to greyhound racing. Joined by MSPs, coalition members, and greyhounds rescued from the industry, the group gathered outside the Scottish Parliament to present the letter. Prominent figures, including TV presenter and naturalist Chris Packham, actor Peter Egan, and historian David Olusoga, also lent their voices in support of this cause.

The letter hand-in came just weeks after Mark Ruskell launched a public consultation for his proposed Bill to ban greyhound racing. The Bill received the necessary cross-party support from MSPs in under 24 hours. As a result, Mark Ruskell MSP is now in a position to introduce the Bill to the Scottish Parliament.

The coalition strongly backs this proposal and encourages public support. In response, 9,505 people have already pledged their support for the proposed ban by participating in our Unbound the Greyhound public pledge.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the campaign so far. Together, we are making strides toward a future without greyhound racing in Scotland!



Penumbra Mental Health

Each week Penumbra Mental Health supports over 2500 people, a significant increase in the number of people who accessed our services from previous years.

The support provided ranges from 1st response and brief interventions to services that operate 24 hours a day. In 2023/24 a total of 17,755 people accessed our services, 12,779 of whom were new to Penumbra Mental Health meaning our services are needed more than ever.

Over the past few months our Comms Team has been busy supporting several incredible individuals to share their personal journey with Penumbra Mental Health as part of our lived experience film series. Watch their powerful Penumbra Mental Health stories at penumbra.org.uk/journeys/.

In other news our Hope Point service in Dundee has recently marked its first year anniversary of providing 24/7 support to people experiencing emotional distress.

Hope Point service in Dundee marks its first year anniversary

"Looking at feedback from people, what strikes us most (although not surprisingly) is the success of the peer model. People truly feel they've been met with compassion, and they feel valued and listened to. The accessible nature allows people experiencing a wide range of difficulties the opportunity to access support on their own terms."

"We have worked hard at building partnerships and relationships with other agencies, and this allows a more seamless experience for people at the time they need it most."

We thank all our partners for their continued support. People truly feel they've been met with compassion, and they feel valued and listened to."

931 

people have been supported

 **3783**

support sessions have been carried out via drop-in, phone and text



People truly feel they've been met with compassion, and they feel valued and listened to.

Emma Wilson

Senior Service Manager, Hope Point, Dundee Wellbeing Support

Erskine

The opening of the Erskine Veterans Activity Centre (EVAC) in Forres, Morayshire is fast approaching.



With construction nearing completion, the former Victoria Hotel has been transformed into a vibrant hub where local Veterans can gather, learn, and connect.

The Forres centre is modelled on the highly successful Erskine Reid Macewen Activity Centre (ERMAC), which has supported nearly 400 members over the past six years. The new centre will offer a range of services, including sports, recreation, computing, arts, and health-related activities. It will also provide a dedicated space for Veterans to relax and engage with others who share similar experiences, learn new skills, explore personal interests, and access vital support services.

A dedicated space for Veterans to relax and engage with others

Wing Commander Ian Cumming MBE, Chief Executive at Erskine, said: *We are incredibly excited to progress this local transformation. The establishment of the Erskine Veterans Activity Centre, in Forres, is part of our ongoing nationwide expansion to better support Veterans and their families across Scotland. We believe that providing a dedicated space for Veterans to come together, access support services, and engage in various activities, will greatly benefit the surrounding community and honour the sacrifices made by those who have served our country."*