

get **2** gether

Impact
report



2023: 10 years of love and friendship

Over the past 10 years get2gether has...



Expanded through the Lothians and beyond!



Grown the membership to over 1,100 adults with lived experiences of disabilities



Hosted over 2,000 social events



Produced and distributed over 200 Community Magazines



Delivered 20 courses to 119 graduates



Offered paid employment to 19 members

A decade of social inclusion and improving lives!

Over the past 10 years, get2gether has been an organisation where barriers experienced by the disabled community to ordinary adult life have been broken down and where our members demonstrated what they are capable of if they are given the chance.

New friendships have dispelled isolation and loneliness — we have seen members forming relationships, getting engaged, getting married and having babies!

As we embark on the get2gether's next chapter, we remain committed to promoting social inclusion and advocating for a world where every individual, regardless of their ability is valued and has opportunities to lead their best life.

Mojca Becaj
get2gether's Director

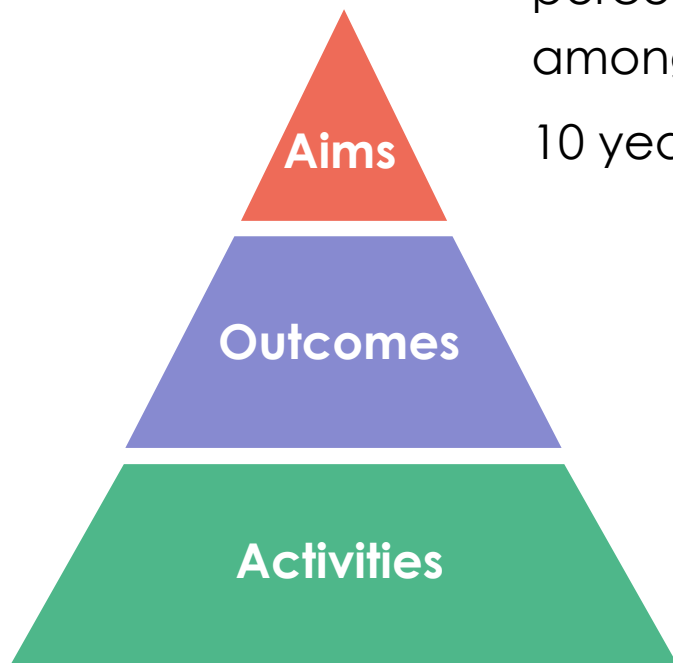


Our aims

get2gether was founded 10 years ago when 4 organisations worked together to combat perceived loneliness and social isolation amongst their service users.

10 years later, get2gether aims to:

1. **Reduce social isolation** among adults with disabilities
2. **Increase the emotional resilience** of adults with disabilities and
3. **Increase the self-determination** of adults with disabilities.



Outcomes & activities

We defined the outcomes we want to achieve for our members. As a result of our work, adults with disabilities will:

1. feel more connected
2. spend more time doing the things they want to do
3. gain a bigger peer-support network
4. have a greater number of relationships (any type)
5. be active in the community
6. be better able to express their emotions
7. take more positive risks
8. be better able to build meaningful relationships
9. have increased self-confidence
10. spend more time with people that they choose
11. have increased expectations for what might be possible
12. be able to deal with the ups and downs of life

The **activities** we arrange with and for our members support our outcomes. get2gether's main activities are:

- Social **events** in person and online
- **Courses** aimed at Building Healthy Relationships
- Skill-building **workshops**

The approach

At get2gether, we combine an adult-to-adult approach with coaching and mentoring approach.

Our aim is to increase the self-determination and increase the emotional resilience of adults with disabilities by encouraging ownership of their own lives.

We incorporate coaching and mentoring into all aspects of our work. Our approach helps members develop strengths and enables them to fully deploy their abilities.

This approach supports the belief in the potential of adults with disabilities, enhancing their growth, personal development, as well as sustain our organizational aims.



Community driven



On average we have **26 members** attending our hybrid steering group meetings, **driving the community**

The steering group gives members an opportunity to be involved in the operations and decision-making processes.

This ensures that the opportunities at get2gether are inclusive, accessible and tailored to meet the specific needs of our members.

Our steering group is driving the community towards a future that celebrates diversity and shared experiences.

Our events

With an aim to reduce social isolation among adults with disabilities, get2gether hosts accessible community activities for adults with disabilities, both in person and online.

Every month we offer between 15 to 18 social events delivered with, and for, our members.

In 2023 **76% of all our events were led by members**, with an average of 9 different members leading events each month.

Our events promote opportunities where adults with learning disabilities can meet new people, go to new places and try new things.

In 2023, we have seen **377 get2gether members** attending our events.

In 2023, we hosted a total of **212 events**.

On average **14** adults with disabilities attended each event.



Our courses

Starting with members' understanding of themselves as an integral part to **building healthy relationships** with others, get2gether provide information and coaching through our courses and workshops to address issues people with disabilities face when forming friendships and intimate adult relationships.

This umbrella of support was developed in response to the needs of our beneficiaries and the gaps in current provisions.

All our courses are delivered with people with lived experience of a disability who work as **Peer Mentors**. We see these roles as instrumental for the successful delivery of the Building Healthy Relationships work.



88% of members who attended a workshop told us they can communicate their needs better

“When I learned more about myself and about other ways of communication, I found it fostered better relationships. I could choose how to relate to others”

Live Your Life

Working with The Thistle Foundation in 2017, we have developed a lifestyle management 'Live Your Life' course that is accessible for adults with learning disabilities. The course uses techniques from solution focused therapy and person centred approaches to support the development of skills for reflection, emotional understanding and self-determination.

“Learning things on the course like thinking about positives and strengths.

I haven't ever thought of these things as strengths or positives because nobody has told me they are.

Being on the course has helped me to see it.

Knowing they are has helped me be more assertive.”

15 graduates have said the course has given them the skills to deal with the ups and downs of life. In 2023:

- 100% of participants on course said they made new friends on the course,
- 82% said that since coming on the course they feel more confident to take on new challenges,
- 82% said that since coming on the course they feel they can deal with difficult situations more calmly,
- 100% said that since coming on the course they had a better understanding of themselves (values, strengths, what's important to them).

Let's Talk About Sex

In 2020, we developed the 'Let's Talk About Sex' Course in partnership with Crew2000 in 2020, providing a safe space to our members where they can discuss adult relationships with their peers.

This course upholds members human rights, provides accessible information and promotes self-love, consent and boundaries.

“I've never had any education about it at all... It's been really dragging me down”

“I was taken out of sex ed class and this is the first time I am hearing about this at g2g”

19 graduates have told us that the course has given them a safe space to ask questions, and in 2023:

- 90% of participants told us they knew where to access further information.

- 90% were able to identify that consent, privacy and contraception were all important for sexual contact.

- 55% of participants reported having a better understanding of consent following the course. One member told us that *“the let's talk about sex course is the only thing that has helped me understand!”*.

Skill shares

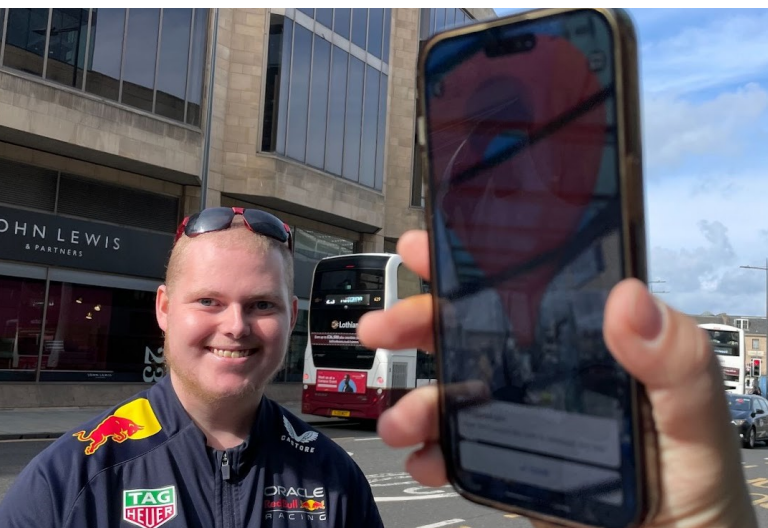
With the return to in-person events, we have noticed that some of the skills our members gained before the COVID-19 pandemic had been lost; for example skills around independent travel and the confidence to go to new places.

We made 2023 a year of skill shares, covering topics like independent bus travel and promoting the use of technology:

“I discovered the bus app AND google maps shows your the location. I get lost a lot, it can be lonely. It was so good to learn from my pals.”

Members put these skills in practice by travelling to ‘Summer Hangs’, outside of get2gether’s operational area.

Members loved ‘Summer Hangs’ - 8 members visited Glasgow; 4 went to Dundee; 5 travelled to Linlithgow and 3 to Inverness!



Phillip's Story

Phillip joined get2gether in 2022 to meet new people, make new friends and get out and about.

He started coming to the Big Nights Out and meeting other community members.

Phillip proposed event ideas, and our team worked with Phillip to co-host an event alongside one of our Ambassadors. This was a very positive experience for him and during the Summer, Phillip hosted a 'Summer Hang' independently.

Phillip reflected on his first year at get2gether:



“get2gether has given me new energy to be positive in the community!

I have more opportunities to do more and I found hosting events really exciting.

It made me feel independent.

It gave me a chance to communicate with people I've not met before.”

Employment

We employ adults with disabilities on our staff team.

They work as Ambassadors, DJs and Peer Mentors. They all work to expand the opportunities for social participation, skill development and overall personal growth for our members.

In 2023, our focus has been embedding the Peer Mentorship programme to support the delivery of our courses.



In 2019 in Scotland only **5.2%** adults with learning disabilities were in paid employment (SCLD)

Our work is contributing to elevating expectations of what life with a disability can truly look like.

Through the examples set by our Ambassadors, get2gether showcases that a fulfilling working life is not only possible, but attainable.

As a result, our members are inspired to 'think bigger' and aspire to greater possibilities in their own lives.

Emma's Story

Emma joined get2gether in 2017 with one interest only - to film people with disabilities leading ordinary lives. During the pandemic, Emma started actively participating in creating online events, forming connections with previously unmet members.

Emma experienced employment challenges since leaving school in 2009. In 2022, Emma applied for the Ambassador role and secured an interview, finding comfort in the organization's supportive environment. To her surprise - get2gether offered her the Ambassador position.

Emma has since excelled, embracing the importance of her role. She told us:

“Over the year, I’ve learnt to tune into members and get to know them, their wants, needs and interests.

Part of it is my desire to do my very best at my first proper job, an important job at get2gether - and the other part is enjoying working with this community.

Get2gether remains a safe space for many people. We are a group that for centuries was made to believe we couldn’t do this or we couldn’t do that - together, we can do anything.

We only have one life, let’s make the most of it.”

2023 Impact

34 Graduates

We delivered 4 courses aimed at Building Healthy Relationships



50% of our paid workforce are adults with disabilities

We worked with 377 adults with disabilities

In 2023 our team **hosted 212 social events** aimed at reducing social isolation and 377 members actively participated in at least one of them.

Members that were actively involved in 2023 told us that:

- **they had fun** with get2gether over the past year (73%)
- they had **made new friends** over the past year (71%)
- being a member made them **feel happy** (70%)
- they felt **more able to live life the way** they wanted because of get2gether (64%)
- they felt **more able to cope** because of get2gether (62%)
- they **feel more connected** to a supportive community (63%)

Our response to the cost of living crisis

get2gether has always promoted financially accessible activities and introduces members to places they can revisit. From the steering group, we have learned that the cost of living crisis is presenting an extraordinary challenge for our members. As part of our 2023 programme, we made our own events 'Pay what you can' donation based, rather than charging a fixed entry fee.

We wanted to prevent our community members from being further isolated due to the rise in living costs.

We would like to thank our Patron, Rosie Jones for subsidising the tickets for her Fringe Show — meeting Rosie in person was everyone's highlight of the year!



Cheers to 10 years of love and friendships!

