

Jamie's garden brings people together

January 21, 2019

Bringing Jamie into Crown Care Day Service's community in Greenock has yielded positive results for everyone.



Meg Wallace, Manager explains: "Jamie Forbes was a prisoner at Greenock Prison and we worked closely with the prison to risk assess and plan so that he could start a work placement with us before he was transferred to Castle Huntly Open Prison for a short spell before he was released.

Meg said: "It wasn't always easy getting everything arranged for Jamie to come to Crown Care but I felt it was important to not only apply the CAPA principles to further support the people that come along to our service but also to take an active, more positive role as part of our wider community."

The team at Crown Care worked with those that attend the service to find out what they wanted from the garden and with Jamie, they developed a plan, which supported individual choices around the time people spent in the garden.

Paula Bisset, CAPA Improvement Adviser said: "Jamie settled into the service very well. He landscaped the back garden and moved existing raised beds, built new ones and also built their new greenhouse. This made it a much more useable space which made a huge difference to two gentlemen's lives in particular – Evan* and James*".

Evan, who died recently, used to have an allotment. He and Jamie and struck up a great relationship quickly and they spent a lot of time together in the garden. Evan gave Jamie advice on plants and tips on landscaping and after a while, Evan started going out to the garden himself to potter, plant and tidy even when Jamie wasn't there.

James' wife regularly attended Crown Care until she died last year. After he dropped her off, James often popped out into the garden to help Jamie in the garden.

The quality of conversations, engagement and movement for both men increased significantly as they continued to develop the garden space with Jamie.

Meg continued: "It was fantastic to see Jamie chatting with Evan and James. They hadn't spent any time outdoors before Jamie joined us and they both enjoyed speaking with him as much as helping in the garden.

Jamie then moved to Castle Huntly and has since been released. He still keeps in touch with Meg and her team and continues to volunteer at the service to maintain the garden.

Jamie said: "I know I was the first placement person that Crown Care took from Greenock Prison and I'm glad because it worked out really well for me. I was a peer support worker at the prison helping new prisoners to settle in. I was someone that people could talk to if they wanted to talk through things that worried them. I was a bit nervous about working at the care service initially as I had no experience of working with older people. Meg and the team have become my friends. I am really proud that I've been able to create a better garden space – it's turned into something amazing. I know there's more to do and I want to be help finish it off – I'll be linked to Crown for ever now. It's really important to me that I keep working as a volunteer now."



**Names have been changed due to data protection.*