

Have your say

Borders
Voluntary
Care Voice



Annual Report

2016-2017

A message from our Chair - Graeme Nisbet

Public finances and the political outlook over the last year have, unfortunately, not stabilised. In this context of ever-tightening budgets and insecurity, we have observed the impact of 'cutting corners' on the quality of services and, ultimately, the quality of people's lives.

Co-production is a legal requirement according to the Communities Empowerment Act 2015. The reasoning is that services are better when co-designed with the people that use them.

Ultimately, we are all users of health services; we all visit the GP. We all have a responsibility to see that the design of, and changes to, services are being co-developed to meet the needs that we have.

Due to financial restraints, there is a danger that co-production, especially at less visible levels, is forgotten, or shortcuts are taken to meet tight deadlines being met by fewer staff.

Over the last year, we have observed attempts to make processes more efficient and streamlined, or to meet national timescales.

Although well intentioned, these can sometimes lead to service user and carer representatives, as well as third sector providers, feeling disempowered or less valued.

It is our responsibility to make co-production work. We need to speak up, get involved, and play a part in the co-production of better, more recovery-focused services.

In this uncertain landscape, it is more critical than ever that we continue our work, raise our profile, and find new ways to make sure that people who need these vital services still have them.

It is also vital that we continue 'keeping check' on the processes of our statutory partners.

We should continuously revisit the co-production cycle, to remind ourselves and our partners that real co-production takes place at every stage in the delivery of health and social care services.



1991

Celebrating 25 years

2016

Some of the year's highlights



25th anniversary event

Service User & Carer Working Group

Guests at meetings of the User Carer Working Group during the year included:

- Jane Davidson, Chief Executive, NHS Borders, who discussed complaints, recruitment values and overall quality of care
- Lead Pharmacist for Community Pharmacy, Adrian Mackenzie, attended to answer the group's questions on medication review and prescriptions.
- Jane Robertson and

Clare Richards from the Health and Social Care Partnership gave an update on progress and spend from the Integrated Care Fund.

The group expressed an interest in helping to devise the commissioning and implementation plan for the Health and Social Care Partnership.



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Borders Care Learning Network courses in 2016

Ability Borders

BVCV's involvement on the Board of Ability Borders ceased in November. We were involved in working with funders and partners to develop the information service for people with a physical disability or long-term condition. Once it was established as a charity, we felt it was appropriate for the service users to take on the development of the organisation.

Carers Planning Group

Most of the activity in the past year involved working on the new Carers Strategy. It was agreed to change the name to Carers Advisory Board, and to change the membership to consist of carers only. It has recruited more members and will elect carer representatives for planning and strategy groups such as the Integrated Joint Board and the Carers Parliament in 2018.



MSPs meeting with BVCV members in 2016



Parent Carer Working Group

The group agreed to reduce the frequency of meetings to every second month.

It continues as a committed group of six parents, with others attending occasionally. There are plans to increase the membership over the coming months.

Self-directed Support and transitions were among the areas of greatest concern for parents and drove much of the group's activity.

The group was involved in an event with Scottish Borders Council aimed at attracting providers of children's services to the area.

25th Anniversary celebration

We held an event to celebrate our 25th anniversary in December in St Boswells.

Around 50 people attended and enjoyed a trip down memory lane.

They included former and current members, and representatives from our working groups, partner organisations and statutory services.

Guest speakers were Frank Pignatelli, former chief executive of learndirect scotland, and Andrew Lowe former head of social work

at Scottish Borders Council. Borders Voluntary Care Voice was established in 1991 as Borders Voluntary Community Care Forum, in response to the NHS and Community Care Act (1990).

Its main aim was to enable voluntary organisations, people who use services and their carers to influence the community care plans and their implementation.

We continue to work in partnership with Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and others to inform and improve services.



New training room ➡

We secured new premises in Galashiels, on the top floor of the Brothers of Charity offices at Triest House in Bridge Street. It included a new venue for all of our Galashiels-based training courses, which has been in use since January 2017. We will complete the move in 2018.



Live A Life draws to a close

Live a Life, the collective advocacy group for adults with a learning disability, was wound up due to lack of funding.

Members agreed to dissolve the organisation at its AGM in August 2016.

It was also agreed to transfer surplus assets to local groups working with people with learning disabilities in the five areas where Live a Life groups were based.

BVCV had supported the organisation, formerly People First Borders, for many years.



Carers Week event 2016

BVCV evaluation

Figure 8 Consultants conducted an external evaluation of BVCV during the year.

Overall, the balance of views expressed was overwhelmingly positive about the work and leadership of BVCV as a membership organisation in the Scottish Borders.

The evaluation team was particularly impressed by the resilience of the organisation over many years to have grown, developed and

established itself with an excellent reputation across a broad range of stakeholders. This is despite facing several significant organisational challenges along the way.

“The commitment of both the staff and Board within the organisation is evident to all – and was commented upon by numerous stakeholders,” the final report said.

“There is also clear potential for the organisation to expand its role and remit to provide a stronger voice, not just for



service users and carers, but also for and on behalf of the third sector in the Borders.”

The evaluation highlighted the main challenges for the organisation and made a number of recommendations, which we are now working on.

Representing and supporting

We represent the health and social care third sector, or support service users and carers, on a number of planning/strategy groups:

Adult Protection Committee, Autism Strategy Group, Borders Older Person's Planning Partnership, Dementia Strategy Partnership Group, Mental Health Board, Integrated Joint Board, Strategic Planning Group, Eildon & Cheviot Locality Planning Groups, Self-directed Support Project Board, Physical Disability Strategy Group.

Mental health

We secured three-year funding from the Health and Social Care Partnership to continue the existing 14 hours Mental Health Development Worker post.

There continued to be strong attendance at meetings of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum.

There were several requests for members to be involved in commissioning.

We supported user representatives

on the Mental Health Board and the Psychological Services Steering Group. We attended the monthly Mental Health Executive meetings.

The Forum challenged some of the proposals for the changes to the mental health governance structure.

Veterans 1st Point attended a meeting to give the group an overview of their service to support ex-military individuals, including therapeutic support for mental health.

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