

Borders
Care
Voice



Involving you to improve
health and social care



Annual Report 2023-2024

Chair's Report

This has been a year of consideration and change. The landscape we now operate in is very different to that of 2019 pre-pandemic. Workforce shortages and staff wellbeing challenges in health and social care continue. This has a domino effect on the performance of the system, but most importantly on the experiences of our members in trying to access the support and treatment they need, or for the third sector, in helping to deliver that support.



We have also noticed a sea change in how people want to engage. The idea of attending 'meetings' or anything too formal seems to be off putting for many, perhaps feeling less confident in social situations, but also making different choices about how they spend their time since the pandemic. At the same time, a positive trend of increasing community-based activities means the diaries of many are full.

Borders Care Voice has also been affected by these forces, and it has been challenging to achieve all our goals with lower capacity in our small team. Health and social care organisations, mainly in the form of social care providers, have found it more difficult to get their staff to attend the Learning Network's training programme due to rota shortages. Members who require extra support to be at sessions have also found this harder to source, either due to changes in the support offered, or staffing issues.

Despite that, we have taken on new work. Our Local Citizens Panels Development Worker started early in the period. We relaunched the panels at a conference organised by one of our members, Streets Ahead, during Learning Disability Week. We went on to hold our own 'Reboot' event for the panels in September and then began our first official round of meetings across the Borders.

We completed our series of short films on Borderers – Dementia Voices, which are now being used by social care providers, including SB Cares, to help train staff. We also partnered with Greenspace Scotland to deliver the Remembering Together project in the Borders, co-designing a new memorial tartan to recognize the Covid-19 pandemic, in which health and social care and the people it supports played such a significant role in our region.

In 2024-2025, we will be adapting how we engage with people and refreshing our working groups, co-designing them with members and aiming to diversify the range of voices heard. We aim reach out to our partners who also support lived experienced voices to ensure that we work collaboratively to combine our power. We must work hard to support collaboration not competition in our sector.

I would like to give thanks to our main funders at the Health and Social Care Partnership, as well as those who kindly donated to our work this year. Special thanks to our members, as individuals - including those with lived experience, and unpaid carers who give their time and share their experiences to help improve health and social care for others. I'd also like to thank our organisational members as providers of vital support and connection in our communities, who go the extra mile to support our work and make a difference. Those members who form our Board, including those who are about to join us – also need recognition for their extra time and commitment. Lastly, we thank the inspiring staff team who have continued to worked through significant challenges this year and have remained committed throughout. We are a broad church which needs all its supporters – so we hope you can stay with us into 2025 and beyond.

Dr Jane Douglas
Chair

Hearing the voice of Lived Experience

Being Heard: Dementia Voices



Borders Dementia Working Group: We facilitate this group for people with a diagnosis of dementia and unpaid carers who care for someone with dementia. The group is also supported by the Dementia Nurse Consultant and Alzheimer Scotland staff.

We completed the **Dementia Voices** project and funding phase, with all 7 films now complete. They can be viewed here:



Some feedback on the videos:

Hearing the openness and willingness to share their own personal experiences will help to reduce fear and ignorance. It shows people living with dementia as people.....wife, partner, worker, community member, etc. instead of the label 'person with dementia'.

I feel emotionally connected, thoughtful, enlightened and informed. I found the videos to really portray the reality for people and the loved ones of people living with dementia.

Clear and accurate information for people, particularly around post-diagnostic support and how this is accessed

Being Heard: Dementia Voices

We shared the Dementia Voices films with colleagues in SB Cares, the in-house care provider at Scottish Borders Council, for use in their staff training.

"Having shared with some of my management team we can see these being a fantastic training opportunity to social care staff."



Key activity:

- ✓ We worked with the Dementia Nurse Consultant, and by representation the Borders Dementia Strategy Group, to finalise the **Borders Dementia Strategy** for publication in 2024-25, pending approval by the Health & Social Care Partnership. Our vision is embedded in the document and has played a fundamental role in the action plan which will follow. **To view the Strategy, scan the QR code opposite.**
- ✓ We continued to link with **Scottish Dementia Working Group** and the **National Dementia Carers Action Network** by inviting them to our meetings either remotely or in person
- ✓ Some of our members attended the Scottish Government's **National Care Service** engagement sessions on Advocacy & Rights and the Charter of Rights and contributed their views and experiences. The Scottish Government were pleased with the range of feedback received.
- ✓ Some of our members also shared their lived experiences in other joint planning groups such as the **Eildon Day Services working group**.
- ✓ We supported the Dementia Nurse Consultant to engage with people with protected characteristics alongside a diagnosis of dementia to complete the Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment for the Borders Dementia Strategy.
- ✓ We began moving our monthly meetings across at least 4 areas of the Borders in 2024 – Tweeddale, Teviot, Central and Berwickshire. We began with Peebles in January. Berwickshire and Teviot will follow later in 2024.
- Fact Finding**
- ✓ Members wanted to know more about **Self-directed Support** and met the Encompass project 'Get Ready for SDS'. Some members used SDS to get involved in a small trial of pooled budgets to support daytime activities. In addition, members invited SBC Adult Social Work colleagues to find out more about their rights regarding health and social care support, what **care charges** they may face, and which options they may have for **residential care and supported accommodation**.



Being Heard: Learning Disabled Voices

Local Citizens Panel - Reboot

Co-production is the purpose and methodology of the Local Citizens Panels (LCPs). We are commissioned to facilitate the panels by the Health & Social Care Partnership to ensure that the voices of learning disabled adults (14+) and their family carers have a meaningful role in shaping services and play an active role in their communities across the Borders.

The appointment of Eileen Prior as Development Worker in April 2023 marked the start of work to progress the reboot of the panels.



In collaboration with a small working group of panel members, the first task was to review and update the guide for members. Not only were there practical changes to be made (for instance four meetings per year in each locality as opposed to five), but the emphasis also needed to change. The Health & Social Care Partnership brief to Borders Care Voice was to ensure the independence of the panels, making them responsive to the needs of members rather than those of the services.



About Local Citizen Panels



While work on shaping the new About LCPs guide went on, the task of spreading the word about the reboot of panels kicked off. The working group, together with the Development Worker and the whole Borders Care Voice team, planned an event designed to tell the story of the Local Citizens Panels and secure active involvement of participants in planning their future work.

Building on its established network and relationships with statutory and third sector partners, we promoted the Reboot event widely across the Borders.

In partnership with Streets Ahead, the LCP Reboot took place in September 2023 at the MacArts venue in Galashiels, attracting people with lived experience from all over the Borders. Service providers and other professionals also took part.

Being Heard: Learning Disabled Voices

The event included the first screening of two short videos produced by Sandy Devers, Chief Executive Officer at Streets Ahead. They featured interviews with LCP members, who talked about their experiences, how important the panels are, and how they have generated change in the past.

As well as an active day identifying priorities for the coming year, sharing social time, and having lunch, attendees were able to select from an activity in the afternoon provided by specialists, to have fun, get active and re-connect. The Boccia and Seated Yoga sessions were a great hit.

Thanks to Sandy for playing a key role in the event by leading discussions, playing the bagpipes and co-ordinating the Keys to Life Choir's participation. And thank you to all Keys to Life members who took part - it made the event incredibly special.



Being Heard: Learning Disabled Voices

LCPs in Action

Local Citizens Panels are once again a feature in the five Scottish Borders localities, each meeting four times per year:

- Berwickshire (meeting in Duns and Eyemouth)
- Kelso and Coldstream
- Hawick and Jedburgh
- Galashiels and Selkirk
- Tweeddale (meeting in Peebles)

The disruption of Covid-19 changed the lives of many members, creating a 'new normal' as supports and services often looked quite different to how they were pre-Covid. Employment, volunteering, social and sporting activities and groups, as well as health and social care services, have often changed. The health, confidence and social connections of individuals were negatively affected. Individuals and organisations that were a regular feature of peoples' lives had changed.



Contacting former members and encouraging new ones has been a significant part of our focus over the year. We built connections with the range of third and statutory sector services and providers who work with learning disabled adults and their families. We aimed to enlist their help in spreading the word about the Panels and encouraging people to get involved.

 **Do you live with a learning disability, or care for someone who does?**

Do you want to have your say about 

 • What works for you?
• What does not work well?
• What would you like to change?

 Activities
 Transport
 Services
 Access

Join a Scottish Borders Local Citizens Panel and have your voice heard! Age 14+

 01896 757290
lcp@borderscarevoice.org.uk
facebook.com/BordersCareVoice

Posters and flyers were produced and shared widely within networks and with community, health and local authority venues in the area. A new private Facebook group was set up to share information with LCP members. In early 2024, flyers were created for each locality group giving details of dates, times and venues for meetings during 2024.

At the Reboot event we identified priorities for the LCPs to focus on as they started work again. The Development Worker also ensured that the topics panels had highlighted before the pandemic were not forgotten, bringing them to meetings to check if they remained priorities.

Being Heard: Lived Experience Voices - Mental Health

We co-facilitate the bi-monthly Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum (MHWF) with one of our lived experience representatives. The Forum is for anyone who is interested in co-producing adult mental health services, including unpaid carers/family members.

● Issues raised by members with Mental Health services during the year: ●

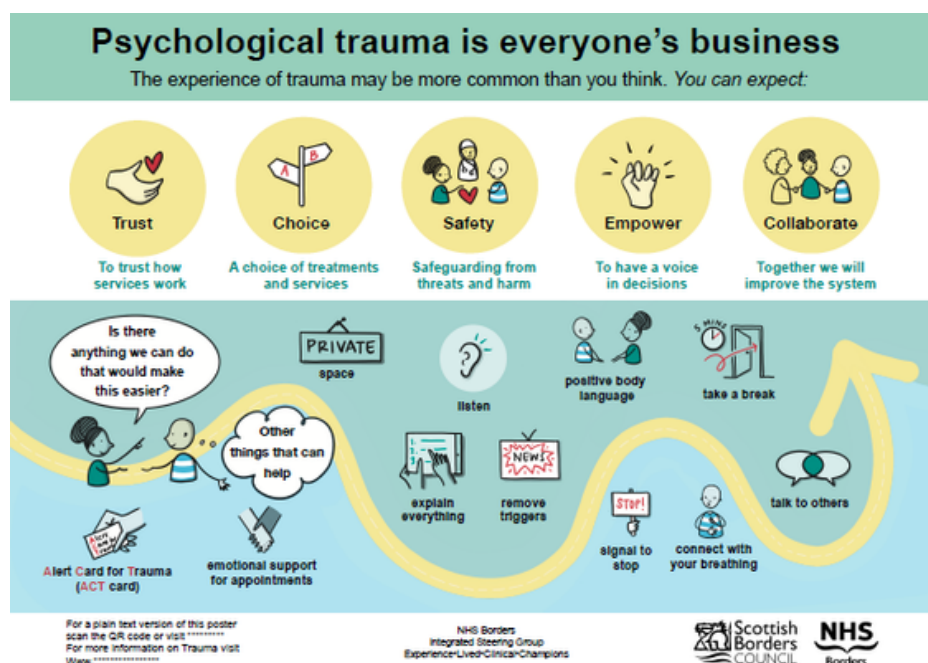
- Long waiting times for psychological services and the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT), and lack of communication and signposting to alternative supports within these lengthy waits.
- Significant challenges faced by people with suspected ADHD in trying to access diagnosis, care and treatment from secondary mental health care.
- Challenges accessing ADHD medication and confusion on the proposed National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT) Pathway / Pilot in the Borders and confusion about its' status in terms of their eligibility for mental health secondary care services.
- Raised a request to have people with lived experience involved in work by Mental Health services to review and refresh clinical pathways.

Key activity / achievements:

- ✓ Amended the Forum's structure to remove formal office bearer roles, meaning that facilitating the meeting and representing the group externally can be shared by members and is less daunting for people with lived experience.
- ✓ Supported the engagement of people with lived experience of poor mental health in the qualities and impact assessment for SBC's social prescribing project.
- ✓ Followed up on findings from our work on the pathway for people with a personality disorder with NHS Borders, helping to redesign and improve the pathway.
- ✓ Mental Health Development Worker arranged to have information about the Forum added to mental health service patient letter templates.
- ✓ People with lived experience formed an interview panel for the Mental Health Service Managers role.
- ✓ Positive Networking: Mental Health Development worker visited a range of services including We Are With You (Borders), Rape Crisis, Borders Community Action (TSI), Borders College, BANG, What Matters Hubs, NHS senior nurses and Works+ to promote the forum.
- ✓ Gathered mental health journey case studies from members for the commissioned service review.

Being Heard: Lived Experience Voices - Mental Health

- ✓ Started the review process for the Coproduction Charter.
- ✓ Wrote to the Health and Social Care Partnership / Mental Health Services on the challenges faced by people with ADHD symptoms who were removed from the secondary care waiting list in 2022.
- ✓ We then pursued a response to ADHD Pathway letter, raising the difficulties faced by people seeking support with ADHD type symptoms. We supported members to meet with the Mental Health Executive Quad to discuss concerns about the decision to remove people from the waiting list for an ADHD assessment.
- ✓ Completed co-design of the “5 key things to be trauma informed” poster with the NHS Psychology service, which will be displayed in health settings.



- ✓ Developed info/resource packs for the reps.
- ✓ Started a monthly MHWF steering group to guide the work of the Forum
- ✓ Had input into each of the CMHT's Recovery and Wellbeing Courses to promote the Forum as a next step for people leaving CMHT.
- ✓ Developed two Microsoft Forms: “Lived Experience Involvement Request” to share with professionals and a “Request for Action” form for members of the public.
- ✓ Completed the support of mapping commissioned services: development of the Creating Hope webpage, MH info station resource at What Matters Hubs and updated the MH information resource with the Joint Health Improvement Team.

Being Heard: Lived Experience Voices - Mental Health

- ✓ Made links with several other local lived experience forums: Drug and Alcohol Partnership, Rape Crisis and Survivors Unite. Possibility of a lived experience network in future to ensure a diverse range of voices available for involvement requests.
- ✓ We set up Mental Health and Wellbeing walls at Borders College and the Focus Centre in Galashiels to encourage engagement with the Forum.



To find out more and join our lived experience groups, please scan here

Progressing the Equalities and Human Rights Agenda

At the end of the last reporting period, the Health & Social Care Partnership approved a new governance and reporting framework to ensure it complied with equalities legislation, including the publication of a new equalities outcomes mainstreaming framework. We actively supported this process and continued to do so via the Equalities and Human Rights sub group of the Health & Social Care Partnership. We also worked to support the embedding of good practice via impact assessments and provided a link to people with protected characteristics in our membership for engagement on various proposals.



Being Heard: Third Sector Voices

We worked with our partners at Borders Community Action (Third Sector Interface - TSI) to facilitate representation within the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) at various levels including the Integration Joint Board (IJB), as well as hearing their voices and engaging through health and social care themed Third Sector Forums, and the newly formed Third Sector Leader's Network.



Integrated Workforce Plan and Implementation Plan



This Board was established after publication of the HSCP Integrated Workforce Plan (IWP) (2022) to oversee and guide its implementation. We sourced additional third sector representation for this group from providers - also connecting to the Learning Disability Providers Forum via their Co-Chair.

The Board discussed priority work areas and recruitment to its workstreams, for which were sought leads from the IWP board.

In June, the group established its programme plan priorities (mainly mapping) and work to improve partnership working on international recruitment. We and third sector providers requested that the training mapping be done in an online format hoping to improve responses and collation.

Work to re-establish the **Learning Disability Providers Forum**

Unfortunately, due to changes in Scottish Government funding, the LD Providers Forum lost its facilitation support from ARC Scotland. The Forum was clearly highly valued by both providers and commissioners, so we engaged in discussions to look at alternative funding models and carried out a survey of provider members to ascertain their support for these. A final subscription model was chosen, and it is aimed to relaunch the Forum, still facilitated by ARC Scotland - with some resource support from the HSCP in 2024/25.

Being Heard: Third Sector Voices

Mental Health Providers Forum

At the start of the period, the Providers Forum assessed a request from HSCP commissioners to explore better partnership working. The group agreed number of topics for future development sessions: and to hold 2-3 sessions per year as development workshops where both commissioners and members attend for open dialogue. Such topics would include:

- **Commissioning strategy and relationships**
- **Multidisciplinary team working** (the MH service also invited providers to get in touch to link into statutory meetings)
- **Outcomes monitoring**
- **Training and practice share from the Third Sector i.e. person centred language.**

The Providers Forum also agreed to initiate a membership refresh, ensuring that as many relevant organisations were invited as possible. We widened the providers forum membership to include a range of new providers relevant to mental health related services:



In Autumn 2023, the Forum wrote to Scottish Borders Council in relation to the impact of the charging policy on access to Penumbra's Mental Health Housing Support service. Providers were concerned that people with poor mental health, including those with severe and enduring mental health illnesses, were refusing the service due to the costs involved. SBC were not able to remove the charge as it is applied to all housing support services as mandated in the COSLA guidance. But they responded that many people could be supported by improved use of free personal care legislation, requiring social work input. The providers will continue to monitor the progress and impact of this approach going forward.

Remembering Together: Marking the Covid-19 pandemic

At the start of the reporting period, the artists commissioned to co-design a local memorial for the pandemic shared their proposal following phase 1, where they engaged with Borderers from across the area and gathered their experiences and creative ideas. Their proposal was to create a Borders Together tartan, woven in the region. Phase 2 would involve talking to Borderers about meaningful colours they associate with their experiences in the pandemic to come up with tartan designs. This phase was funded at £100k to cover all production costs and fees. We continued to connect the artists, 2Destination Language, to appropriate community groups and care services.

The artists requested better connection with the care sector, so we facilitated connections and, with partners, helped to arrange engagement sessions in local social care organisations. This led to two final designs being created, and Borderers were invited to choose their favourite via engagement sessions and online voting. At the end of 2023, the final design was chosen. We also supported decision-making on small grants available to community organisations and artists to carry out creative activities inspired by and using the tartan.

The tartan will be launched early in 2024-2025, with a range of funded community-based activities to mark the new tartan. We will also be displaying it in our offices, in cooperation with Brothers of Charity who we share premises with.



Sector Workforce Development and Training

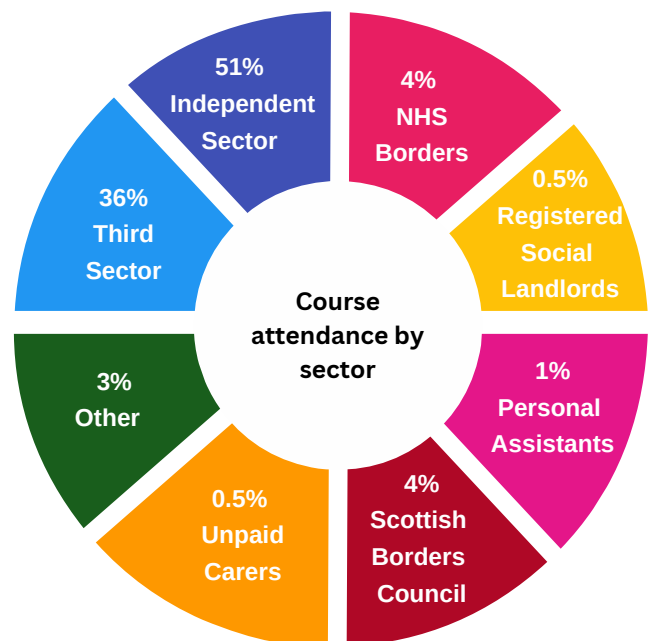
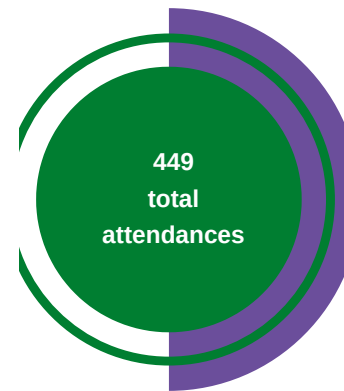


Borders Care Learning Network continued to deliver its training free of charge to people working and volunteering in health and social care in the Scottish Borders, including unpaid carers. We still offered some of our training online, but most of our courses returned to in-person delivery.

We continued to delivered **Scotland's Mental Health First Aid** (SMHFA) sessions in May, June, September, December and February. In January, we were commissioned to deliver this training in-house to staff at Berwickshire Housing Association.

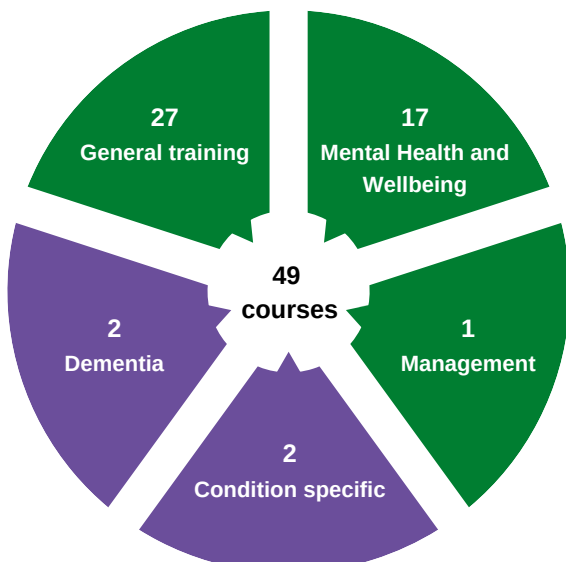
Following the successful pilot of **Wave after Wave** training, and with the agreement of the course developers, we decided to add this to our core programme. We ran the course in April, June, August, September and January. The aim of this training is to ensure that all staff, peer supporters and volunteers meeting individuals bereaved by suicide understand the complex nature and impact of a suicide bereavement. It also helps them to provide a compassionate and empathetic response, whilst being aware of the impact of their work on their own wellbeing. In response to demand, we also offered in-house sessions to NHS Borders staff.

During the year, we were commissioned by Berwickshire Housing Association to deliver our **Introduction to Leadership** course. This is a 2-day course with an emphasis on improving soft skills, such as communication and empathy, which enables better teamwork and progressive relationships with those involved in a care environment. We ran 2 sessions and trained over 20 staff.



A Scotland's Mental Health First Aid session in progress

Sector Workforce Development and Training



Average uptake of training 64%

- Overall, how would you rate this training? **4.82 out of 5**
- Do you feel the training objectives were achieved? **4.81 out of 5**
- Do you feel your knowledge of the subject has improved? **4.73 out of 5**



To view and book our latest training programme and find out more about BCLN, scan here



Some course feedback

Informative and interesting. Very factual.

Further knowledge on signs of harm, neglect and abuse and how to effectively / properly deal with the situation.

Understand trauma better and know how to help, how to approach people with traumatic experiences.

Much more understanding and therefore confidence in principles of first aid. Excellent training.

More understanding in how to approach situations and people. How better to support staff through supervision, the importance of reflection and self-awareness.

Good information and very good trainer. Chance to speak up and interact with others.

I thought it would mainly be CPR, but I learned about a wide variety of First Aid training.

Was in depth knowledge about palliative care and everything (a lot) of what can be experienced as part of this.



Mental Health, Mental Wellbeing, Suicide Prevention



Mentally Healthy and Suicide Safer Communities

Help us to design a new scheme for the Scottish Borders

Conversation Café

Tuesday 14 November 2023

10.30am - 2pm

(Lunch will be provided)

Focus Centre, Galashiels

An opportunity to get involved in shaping plans to recognise, support and promote mentally healthy and suicide safer communities that are caring, compassionate and inclusive.

This is part of the 'Creating Hope in the Scottish Borders' Action Plan for mental health improvement and suicide prevention.

Representatives from the Joint Health Improvement Team will be attending.

To book your place:
01896 757290

admin@borderscarevoice.org.uk

Scottish Borders

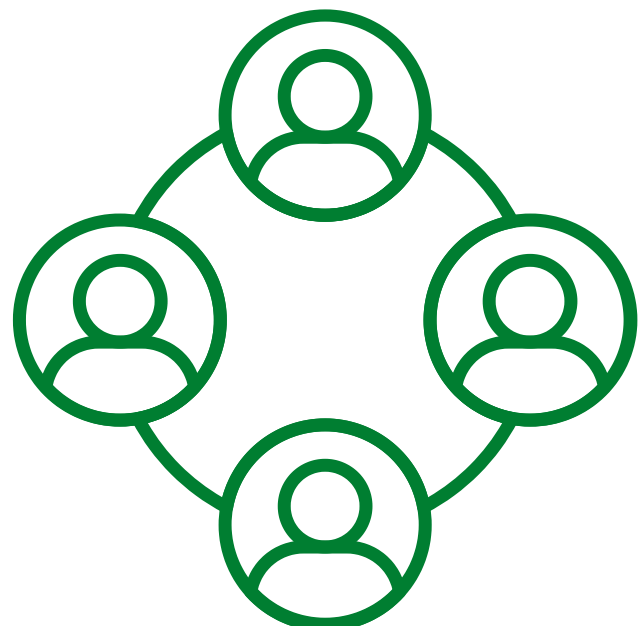


Co-designing a Mentally Healthier Community Award

We held a Conversation Café in November in Galashiels, to gather input on plans to design a new scheme to recognise, support and promote mentally healthy and suicide safer communities. It was part of the Creating Hope in the Scottish Borders Action Plan for health improvement and suicide prevention. Representatives from the Joint Health Improvement Team helped to facilitate the discussion.

Supporting Peer Support

Following on from our successful AGM in September, we held discussions with interested organisations to look at formalising a peer support collaborative and began planning an event for May 2024 to ask peer supporters what they need and what the priorities of the collaborative should be.



Internal developments



Amy Cruickshank began her work with us at the beginning of March in the BCLN Administrator role. Amy has a background in social care and brings lots of useful contacts and experience. Welcome Amy!

We were sad to say goodbye to Ellen de Groot, our BCLN Administrator who left in September and was with us for over 12 years. Ellen had a wealth of knowledge and connections with providers as well as our trainers and is much missed by the team. We wish her all the best in her new role.



Kelvin Beattie, one of our independent trainers, retired in March. Kelvin has been with the Learning Network from around when it began, in 2010. Over the years he delivered Infection Control, and Dementia Skilled training, but was probably best known as our Moving & Handling trainer. Kelvin was a well-loved trainer with huge expertise, and we miss his twinkle and canny sense of humour. Happy Retirement Kelvin!

Annual General Meeting 22/23



We held our AGM in September at the Focus Centre in Galashiels. The theme was the Power of Peer - we realised many of our members are involved in this across adult health and social care and we invited some organisations to share their work and good practice. there was also an opportunity for third sector organisations to have an information stand and promote their work in peer support.

The following Trustees were elected:

Jane Douglas, Individual Member

Marc Bremner, Individual Member

Sandy Devers, Individual Member

Kelly Brown, QME Care, Kelso, Corporate Member.

Our members

A Positive Start CIC
Alzheimer Scotland
Bavs
Berwick and District Friends of Dementia
Borders Carers Centre
Borders Citizens Advice Consortium
Borders Independent Advocacy Service
Borders Samaritans
Borders Talking Newspaper
British Red Cross
Brothers of Charity Services (Scotland)
Carr Gomm Borders
Central Borders Citizens Advice Bureau
Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland
Cheviot Youth & Insight Youth
ConnectWell
Cyrenians
Dynamic Community Fusion
Eildon Housing Association
Encompass
Garvald West Linton
Friends of Dovecot Court
Garvald West Linton
Headway Borders
Health in Mind
Interest Link Borders
Nature Unlimited
Nomad Beat
Outside The Box
Peer 2 Peer Mindfulness Ltd CiC
Penumbra Borders
PMH Borders
QME Care
Royal Voluntary Service (RVS)
Scottish Borders LGBT Equality
Scottish Borders SDS Forum
Stow Cycle Hub CiC
Streets Ahead Borders
Survivors Unite
The Physiotherapy Trust
This Kind Space CIC
Trust Housing
Victim Support Scotland
We Are With You



Our Trustees

Dr Jane Douglas, individual member (Chair)
Kathryn Peden - Central Borders Citizens Advice Bureau (Co-Vice Chair) (resigned September 2023)
Marc Bremner, individual member (Co-Vice Chair)
Kelly Brown, QME Care
Sandy Devers, Individual Member

Our Staff

Jenny Smith, Chief Officer
Kathleen Travers, Depute Chief Officer
Nicola Glendinning, Office & Finance Administrator
Lynsay Laird, Mental Health Development Worker
Ellen De Groot, Learning Network Administrator (until September 2023)
Amy Cruickshank (from March 2024)
Eileen Prior, Local Citizens Panel Worker (from April 2023)

Triest House, Bridge Street, Galashiels TD1 1SW
01896 757290
admin@borderscarevoice.org.uk
www.borderscarevoice.org.uk



Membership total for 23/24 was 89 members