

If you need to talk to someone call the following numbers

Samaritans

08457 90 90 90

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87 (6pm-2am)

Monday to Thursday 6pm-2am
Friday - Monday 6pm-6am

Breathing Space is a free and confidential phone-line service for any individual, who is experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to.

NHS 24

0845 4 24 24 24

An online and telephone-based service which can answer your questions about your health and offer advice.

Mental Welfare

Commission for

Scotland

0131 313 8777

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace,
Edinburgh, EH12 5HE
Fax: 0131 313 8778
Email: mwvscot.org.uk

Dementia Helpline

0808 808 3000

The 24 hour Dementia Helpline is a freephone Scottish service for people with dementia, carers, relatives, professionals, students and anyone concerned about dementia.



Become a member of VOX - it's free

There are several benefits to becoming a member of our organisation.

- Our members have a common interest, and we hope to further its cause.
- You will have access to information on mental health issues.
- An opportunity to become involved and an opportunity to influence policy, practice, legislation, services, care, wellbeing and recovery both nationally and internationally.
- You will receive VOX's quarterly magazine.

Membership form

Our membership form can be accessed from the website, or from our office.

For advice or information on any aspect of VOX please contact us at our office at:

VOX - Voices of Experience
c/o Mental Health Foundation (Scotland)
Merchants House,
30 George Square
Glasgow, G2 1EG.
Telephone: VOX: 0141 572 1663
Fax: 0141 572 0246
Email: wmcuslan@mentalhealth.org.uk
or: info@voxscotland.org.uk
Website: www.voxscotland.org.uk

If you would like information on a particular subject to be included in the next newsletter or would like to contribute to it, please contact Wendy using the details above.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in an accessible format, please let us know and we will try to meet your request.

The views expressed by our members in this newsletter are not necessarily the view of VOX.

“let us share our voices of experience in mental health”



VOX

SCOTTISH CHARITY NUMBER: SC010646 COMPANY NUMBER: 361753

VOX Summer Newsletter 2013



Welfare Benefits, awareness of the changes taking place, desire to influence, worry over assessments, Transport, stigmatising attitudes of staff, inconsistency of services, passported benefits.
Disability hate crime, fear of drawing attention to ourselves, don't realise it's a crime, don't know where to report it, consider role of advocacy organisations.

At the VOX Annual General Meeting held in Edinburgh on 10th September 2012, key points emerged about different topics which included the following:

- Appropriate Services e.g. Person centred, flexible, values based, crises services.
- Communication e.g. social media, information sharing, resolving difficulties, removing barriers, how to resolve problems.
- Medication - other options. Shift power dynamics between staff and patient, more openness about side effects and choices.
- Personalisation, role within mental health links and within spending cuts, and worry over what both of these means within mental health.

We have completed our focus group work on personalisation and will be finalising a report over the next few weeks.
We have been asking our members their experiences on the work capability assessment (WCA) and have fed these views back to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and others.
We have chosen the topic of social media and technology as an area where we will find out your views over the next few weeks.
We have started to provide training sessions as requested and will continue to do so for both our group members and individual members.

We have refreshed our good practice guidelines for involving people with mental health problems in planning, policy and development work, and will shortly be sending these round group members for their thoughts.

We are going to be finding out the views of people with a dual diagnosis (e.g. mental health and alcohol problems), and further exploring areas such as domestic abuse so we can find out the views of those who are often under-represented.

Members Poems

Depression – don't give up

Way back in time, before my mind was hurt, my life was fine. But the dark, dark, days are here again, they're never far away, they bring me down, and they hang around, it feels like they're here to stay.

So don't give up, keep fighting through, and don't let those bad feelings take the best of you. You know you can do it, though at times you think you can't.

Talking over what you feel puts you on the right track. Talk to a trusted one, it's a great thing to do. They'll listen to your feelings; they'll help you get on through. There are terrific people who listen through their lives.

You can get over this and when you do, you'll never look back. So open up and you'll find yourself on the right track.

By Linda Milne

DECKCHAIR

Relaxing in a deckchair, lochearn... a summers day worry and anxiety, slowly melt away.

Kingfisher on my fishing rod, pauses for a while then dives to take a minnow, simple pleasures make me smile.

Starting at the butterflies, floating on the breeze listening to the little birds, chirping in the trees.

Feel the rays of sunshine, as they gently warm your skin feel the sense of freedom that comes from deep within.

Sun dips behind the mountain, it's time to light the fire it's eerie when the darkness, silences the choir.

Take frying pan from rucksack, it's time for me to eat fire lit for a reason, not just light and heat.

It's funny at the fishing, even... finger food everything tastes different, great instead of good.

I take to canvas shelter, and folding camping bed elder feather sleeping bag, a coat supports my head.

I awaken early morning, just before the dawn face washed at the lochside, I stretch my arms and yawn.

The fire it needs rekindled, still holds an orange glow little twigs I put on top, bend down and gently blow.

Flames they soon start dancing, and again I hear the choir and soon the smell Of Bacon, Cooking On The Fire.

I Settle Back In Deckchair, In Awe Of Sights Around Heaven Is A Place On Earth, I Know... For That I've Found.

My Watch I Think Is Broken, Your Shoes No Longer Roam Time To Pack My Gear Away, Time For Heading Home.

Deckchair Folded Neatly, As I Take That Weary Road Lochearn... My Little Princess, You Are My Hearts Abode.

©Clenn Merrieles

Awards

Huge congratulations to:

- Paul Anderson for receiving a certificate for recognition of his contribution and commitment as a volunteer with Open Secret.
- Graham Morgan MBE, HUG action for mental health manager is the joint winner of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCP) service user of the year award.
- Francis Fallan has received an MBE for local voluntary work in Lanarkshire. The award was in recognition of his outstanding voluntary work throughout Lanarkshire for many years, helping people with mental health issues, physically disabled, and the elderly.

ROTTING ATTORNS

Policy

Suicide and Self Harm Engagement Strategy

This engagement strategy has been written to support the development of the Scottish Government's new strategy for the prevention of suicide and self-harm in Scotland.

It provides an outline of our understanding and of progress to date. It is not a draft strategy or statement of policy, but is intended to prompt discussion of key issues, with all views and perspectives on the challenge being welcome.

VOX has carried out some group discussions around this discussion paper and will produce a member's perspective on this important topic.

So far a range of views have been expressed including;

- **Self-harm**
- Agreement that seeing self-harm as a response to distress is helpful
- There are other ways we respond

to distress such as heavy drinking and overeating which should also be considered.

- That response needs to be fast and appropriate
- Some staff still have a terrible attitude in relation to self-harm
- That work in schools on self-harm is important

Suicide

- A focus on at risk groups makes sense
- Training to recognise signs is still important
- Crises services are patchy – we need support straight away
- It's not good enough to be put on lists for talking therapies

We will carry out more work to find out your views on this topic and will write a response based on these.

For further information please contact Wendy on 0141 572 1663 or email wrmcauslan@mentalhealth.org.uk

Consultations



<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/12/4986/downloads#res409290>



Children and Families Directorate

Mental Health, Social Media and Technology

Social media is becoming the most used medium of accessing, sharing and creating information for the world to see. Almost everyone uses social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to share and find information about what is happening in the world. It has become the fastest way to consume information. Social media is powerful as it has the power to reach an audience much wider than any other method of distributing information.

VOX held two focus groups one in Glasgow and one in Dumfries to discuss the impact of social media and technology.

Another two focus groups will also be held soon around Scotland.

Some of the issues and ideas that have emerged are:

- Not everyone knows how to use Social Media and technology
- It can be useful in terms of using Social Media and Technology for campaigning purposes. However it can also make a person's mental health worse as people can be victims of cyber bullying and other dangers.
- It is useful to pass and gain information through social media and technology but not everyone has access to a computer or smartphone
- Linking computing with using exercise could be really useful in terms of improving mental health issues.



The role of families and loved ones in care

Here are some of the recommendations that participants in the focus groups have suggested:

- If training could be provided by VOX about social Media and Technology, that would be very useful for people suffering from mental health issues.
- There are APPS that are very easy to use that help to measure moods.
- A resource should be produced

which has a list of 'safe' websites that people can access.

These are just some of the points that were highlighted from the focus groups. Once all focus groups have been carried out, a report will be made available.

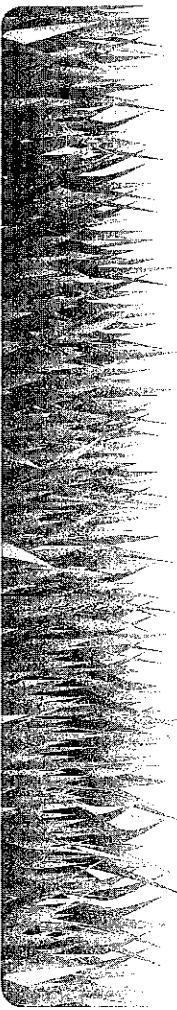
For more information contact Amal on aazudin@mentalhealth.org.uk or 01415721662.

VOX has just carried out some work organising seven focus groups with individuals who have, or have had, mental health problems to find out what they feel is important in terms of the role of families and loved ones in their care. This work has focussed mainly around how they can be supported when they start to become unwell. The findings will help to inform one of the key areas within the Scottish Governments mental health strategy – working more effectively with families and carers. VOX's role is only to focus on the viewpoint of the individual with mental health problems.

We looked at this area from a diagnosis specific point of view and included bipolar disorder, psychosis, and anxiety and depression. We used case studies based on real life situations and questions to help to generate discussions. So far what we have found is that the majority of those who attended do feel as though families

and carers should be more involved in their care. It was felt that clinicians should work together with individuals (when they are well) to identify how best families can be involved in their care. This would include issues such as who in the family can talk to clinicians, what the scope of the discussion should be e.g. identified key symptoms and where involvement would be seen as interfering. The issue was more complicated when it came to psychosis and many felt that there were certain signs that should be taken more seriously, this will be discussed more fully in the main report. We are in the process of writing up the findings from these sessions and should have a full report ready in by the middle of July.

For more information please contact Wendy McAuslan, VOX's Development Coordinator, 0141 572 1663 or email.wmcauslan@mentalhealth.org.uk



VOX Information

Independent Living in Scotland (ILIS)

Independent living means all disabled people having the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens at home, at work and in the community. It does not necessarily mean living by yourself or fending for yourself. It means rights to practical assistance and support to participate in society and live an ordinary life.

The Independent Living in Scotland project (ILIS) is hosted by Inclusion Scotland and works closely with the Disabled People's Independent Living Movement (ILM).

The project involves a wide range of disabled people and their organisations



Independent Living in Scotland
ILIS
Inspire • Involve • Invest

to strengthen and develop the Independent Living Movement in Scotland and to support the involvement of disabled people in shaping the Scottish Government's approach.

VOX's role is to ensure that mental health is part of this movement; we are seeking a representative for this group. If you would like to be involved in this group please get in touch as it would be good to have someone who could continue to represent VOX's members views at this meeting.

<http://www.ilis.co.uk/>

on in the coming year. The following were decided as the most important.

- Get more people involved, use social media and other methods, remember the need to be flexible.
- Influencing Mental Health professionals & General health reports on our views on topics, how to involve people, people and power dynamics.

- Schools awareness raising work/ tackling stigma & discrimination
- The importance of speaking for others, representative role, voice for people who are not members.
- Topic based views, how to develop this area.

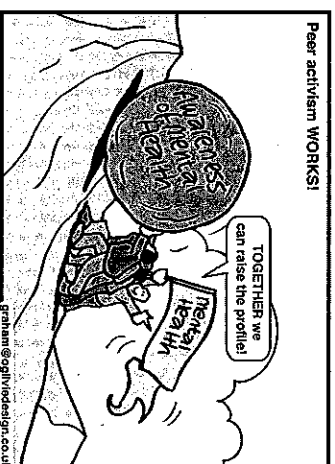
We hope those who attended the development day found it beneficial. If you would like help in facilitating a development day for your group/ project please get in touch with VOX, contact details on the back page.

Aberdeen/ Aberdeenshire – a local voice!

VOX ran an event aimed at giving people with mental health problems a voice on the 23rd March 2013 in the Park Inn Hotel Aberdeen. The aim was to respond to requests which had been made to help build capacity in the area and help to develop a local voice. The day included presentations by Graham Morgan MBE from HUG – action for mental health and John Sawkins, a VOX Director. This was followed by sessions facilitated by Wendy McAuslan, VOX's Development Coordinator. The ideas from the day were captured by the cartoonist Graham Ogilvie.

The key issues which were mentioned included;

- The need for a structure in Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire for those who have mental health problems, so they can influence and be heard.
- The need to challenge stigma and discrimination, and for individuals who have mental health problems to



Peer activism WORKS!

- be involved
- The importance of working together to make a difference
- Labels – do we need them/ do they help?
- Talking to others who understand makes a difference

The event was followed by music from the local band 'no hot ashes'

The final report is being written up, and will be sent to all of those who attended. A meeting date shall also be circulated to provide an opportunity to think through how VOX could provide opportunities for those who would like to get involved and develop a local mental health voice.

Colleague Matched Giving Scheme - Scotland

The Bank of Scotland Foundation Matched Giving Scheme is designed to encourage colleagues from Lloyds Banking Group to get involved in the voluntary sector and to help fundraise or give their time to charities.

We are very grateful to Fiona Law who raised £392.00 for VOX.

Thank you very much Fiona from the VOX team!

BANK OF SCOTLAND
Foundation



Voices Of Experience

GOOD PRACTICE IN INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN DEVELOPING POLICY, PRACTICE AND PARTNERSHIPS - GUIDANCE NOTES-2012

The principle that individuals with mental health problems should be involved in developing policy, practice and as equal partners is now well recognised in Policy and Legislation. Some organisations are more committed to ensuring that this becomes a reality than others. However, most have requested some guidance in this area. Therefore VOX has put together guidance notes of good practice guidelines in service user involvement guidance notes 2007 which has taken into account member's views more recently at VOX's 2012 AGM.

VOX have developed this document to illustrate some of the considerations and requirements which should be taken into account if effective service user involvement is both to become more widespread and if it is to achieve the desired outcomes for all those invited to participate. The refreshed version contains some responsibilities from the perspective of the individual with mental health problems, in addition to some new concepts and slightly more simplified language.

In addition to participating in our own care, treatment and service and system planning, service users are increasingly being considered for "participation in" – by that we mean carrying out – research, training, leadership programmes and many other areas of involvement with people and organisations from both the public and the voluntary sector. Some services users are, or may become, involved as individuals, contributing their own personal experience of mental health problems and recovery, others may give a collective viewpoint.

It is essential that service user involvement and participation is based on empowering the individual to regain more control over their lives, develop their capacity, confidence and self-esteem, allowing and facilitating their participation as citizens in both their own lives, and in helping to contribute positively to improving the lives of others.

For the full document please follow the link

<http://www.voxscotland.org.uk/publications/good-practice-guidelines-refreshed>

Diversity Update

As part of our Comic Relief funded diversity program, VOX have been working in partnership with service user lead and main stream equality organisations to develop a team of community leaders focused on specific areas such as young people, older people and minority ethnic women. A group of 12 community leaders have been receiving a range of training over the last few months in areas such as Asset based community development approaches, introduction to research and understanding mental health. Once the Community Leaders have completed the training they will be recruiting and developing their own planning and action groups and taking work forward. Expect an update from the Community Leaders in the next issues of the VOX newsletter and at one of our annual member meetings.

On other diversity news **Moving Minds V** is currently under development and planned for Thursday the 17th of October, as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival 2013. This will be our 5th diversity and mental health day of event at Kelvingrove Art gallery and Museum, look out for the full program in September.

For more information please contact Mahmud Al-Gailani on 0141 226 9855 or mal-gailani@mentalhealth.org.uk



From May 7th 2013 Scotland will have its first national LGBT helpline. The LGBT Helpline Scotland, provided by the LGBT Health and Wellbeing Centre in Edinburgh, will provide information and emotional support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families, friends and supporters across Scotland. It will operate every Tuesday and Wednesday from 12pm to 9pm on 0300 123 2523.



The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, FRA announces that in early 2014, it will launch the main result report from its EU-wide survey on violence against women.

The survey interviewed 42,000 women from the 27 EU Member States and Croatia, and is the first survey of its kind to systematically interview women about their experiences across 28 countries. It captured women's experiences of gender-based violence - which are a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women. The incidents captured included experiences of sexual, physical and psychological abuse - ranging from 'domestic violence' to sexual harassment at work, and violence perpetrated by strangers. The survey also covered women's experiences of stalking and cybercrime, and asked adult women about their childhood experiences of violence.

At present, FRA is working on the survey results. Initial data analysis illustrates the extent of some of the problems that will be revealed in the full survey findings:

Four in five women did not turn to any service, such as healthcare, social services, or victim support, following the most serious incidents of violence by people other than their partners. This underlines how the true extent of violence remains hidden.

Women who sought help were most likely to turn to medical services, highlighting the need to ensure that healthcare professionals can address the needs of victims of violence.

To read more of the initial data analysis visit:

The Gender, Sexuality and Online Youth Project are looking for people aged 13 to 25 to take part!

The Gender, Sexuality and Online Youth (GSOY) research project looks at the ways that young people use the internet in their daily lives, and the impact this has on their mental health and identities. This is a



project for young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, gender queer or otherwise questioning their sexuality or gender, although however you identify, if you feel that this project is

relevant to you, please get involved! Past research about lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) young people have learned about the struggles and inequalities many experience and the increased rates of mental health problems and other negative experiences among LGBTQ young people. What's missing from this though are the voices of young people ourselves... This project begins with seeing LGBTQ young people as thoughtful members of society who are worth talking to and learning from. I hope to hear positive experiences, negative experiences and everything in between. I'm interested in how you understand yourself - your identity, your gender and sexuality. I'd like to know how you use the internet in your everyday life and how

this affects how you feel about yourself. I am interested in the relationships you have with different people in your life, and what role these play in how you feel.

Taking part is confidential. There are lots of ways to take part: you can choose to answer questions online, to have a chat on Skype, to do a diary project (which can use art, music, creative writing, websites, video and other media) or a short online observation period. These experiences will form an online multimedia resource aimed at young people and organisations that work with them.

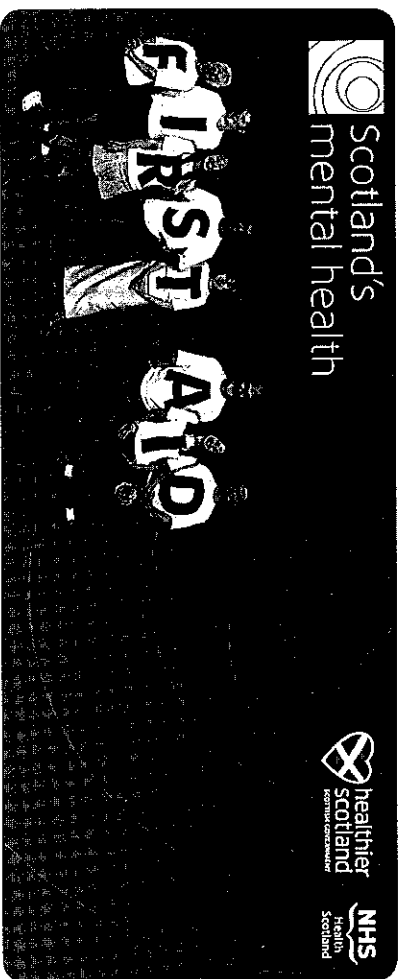
If you would like to know more about taking part, visit the website <http://www.gsoy.org.uk> or email Jenny at info@gsoy.org.uk



Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)

There is a new Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS), which replaces the EHRC helpline. EASS is there for individuals from anywhere in Great Britain who need more expert advice and support on discrimination than is available from local organisations. As well as explaining what rights and remedies you have under discrimination legislation, the service can help guide you on informal resolution or mediation to solve a problem; or help you find an accessible legal service, establish whether you are eligible for legal aid, or if not, prepare and lodge a claim on your own account.

The EASS can't provide representation in court, or give advice on proceedings once a claim has been issued. The service isn't available for the use of solicitors or other professional advisers. Their contact phone 0800 444 205 or visit



SMHFA

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) was first developed in Australia by Betty Kitchener and her husband Professor Anthony Jorm. Like most brilliant ideas it came about in a very ordinary way. Betty and Tony were walking their dog one day when they realised that there was no mental health equivalent of physical first aid. This germ of an idea led to an internationally recognised programme of simple steps that can be used to help a person in distress.

In 2003 Betty Kitchener brought the course over to Scotland and trained a number of instructors who then piloted the course throughout Scotland.

Such was the enthusiastic response to the Australian course that the formerly named Scottish Executive funded the development of a Scottish course based on MHFA principles.

In 2004 Scottish materials were developed and the National Training Team was commissioned to begin training instructors from all over Scotland.

In 2005 – 2008 the National Training team took the course to England www.mhfaengland.org/ and Wales www.mhfa-wales.org.uk/ and helped train each country's National Training team. They were also involved in training for a cross border pilot initiative using

MHFA in Northern Ireland and Eire.

In 2007, after a very successful independent evaluation, the process of updating the original materials was begun to reflect feedback in the evaluation and changes in mental health knowledge.

In March 2009 the new materials were launched and all current instructors went through a refresher course on the use of the new materials.

Currently there are over 300 SMHFA instructors in Scotland and more than 40,000 people have attended the training.

For more information visit <http://www.smhfa.com/>

Scotland's mental health first aid: young people

NHS Health Scotland is developing a new mental health first aid course for adults supporting young people aged 11-17.

SMHFA: young people is part of a suite of Mental Health First Aid courses run in countries all over the world, including Australia, England and Wales. It builds on the huge success of SMHFA in Scotland, and uses similar intervention skills.

We are adapting the course for a Scottish audience, to include:

- a new DVD
 - a blended approach of online or workbook learning materials
 - workbooks and participant's manual
 - new content about self-harm, cyber bullying and eating disorders
- The 'training for trainers' course will be available in early 2013. The first participant courses will run in spring 2013.

SMHFA: Young people - progress so far

Course ready for delivery
Develop the 'train the trainers' course
Trainers' materials
Learners' materials
Participants' manual
DVD

KEY

- = complete
- = in progress
- = planned

General information and news

Mental Health is composed of two dimensions: mental health problems and mental wellbeing (positive mental health).

Contextual factors that are associated with mental health can operate at the individual, community and structural level.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) is a scale that measures adult mental wellbeing, based on responses to 14 questions. It has also recently been validated for use in teenagers aged 13 years and over. WEMWBS runs from 14 (the lowest level of wellbeing) to 70 (the highest). In 2010, the mean WEMWBS score for Scottish adults aged 16+ was 50.2 for men and 49.6 for women. The mean life satisfaction score for



The Scottish Public Health Observatory
"Working to improve Scotland's health and reduce health inequalities"

Scottish adults aged 16+ in 2010 was 7.5, on a scale of zero (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Levels of life satisfaction have not changed significantly since 2002. In 2004, 8.3% of children in Scotland aged 5-15 had a clinically recognised emotional or behavioural mental health problem.

In 2000, prevalence of neurotic disorders in the Scottish population was around 141 cases per 1000 adults.

Women had a higher prevalence than men for all neurotic disorders.

Adult mental health and its associated contextual factors in Scotland have seen much stability over the last decade, with a promising level of positive change and only a small, but important, number of negative trends. Mental health and its context is distributed unevenly across the Scottish adult population, with inequalities evident for age, gender, deprivation and socioeconomic status.

Participate in shaping Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights



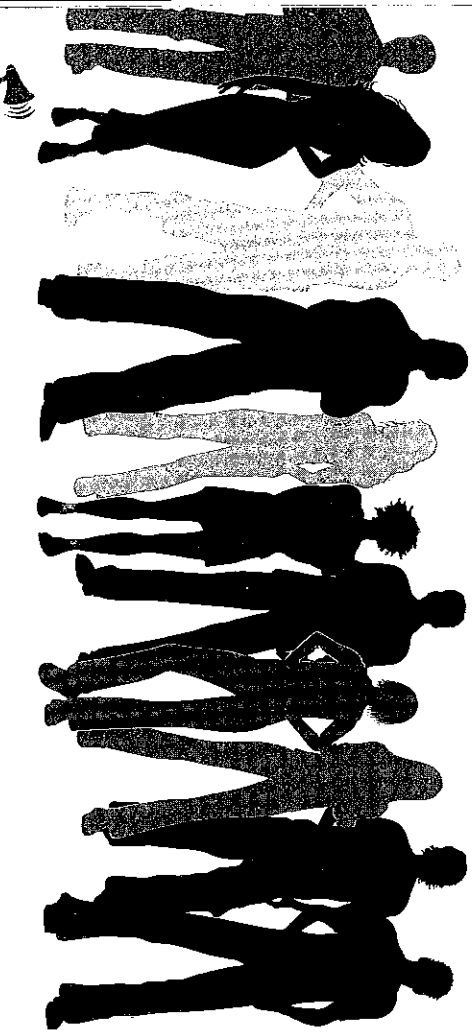
The Scottish Human Rights Commission has published *Getting it Right? Human Rights in Scotland*, a report summarising the findings of a three year scoping project. The report reveals that whilst Scotland has made notable progress, it can do better. Scotland has a relatively strong legal and institutional framework for human rights, and some examples of positive strategy and policy directions in service delivery. However, the actual outcomes for people are often inconsistent, and there are other 'gaps' which should and can be filled.

The publication coincides with the launch of a participation process to help shape Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights. The Action Plan will be a negotiated roadmap to address the gaps and replicate good practices in the realisation of human rights in Scotland. National Action Plans for Human Rights are recommended by the United Nations and Council of Europe and have led to advances in the realisation of human rights in Nordic and Commonwealth countries. The process in Scotland has received endorsements

from the UN and Council of Europe Commissioners for Human Rights.

All of those with an interest in the promotion and protection of human rights in Scotland are invited to take part in an inclusive participation process in response to the following questions:

1. Based on the evidence presented in the report "getting it right? Human rights in Scotland", or your own experience, what do you consider to be the most urgent human rights issues which should be addressed in Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights?
 2. What specific and achievable actions do you consider would best address the concerns you identify in your response to question 1?
- You can read *Getting it Right? And take part in shaping Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights* on our website: www.scotishhumanrights.com/actionplan



Monitoring Poverty And Social Exclusion In Scotland 2013



The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's sixth study of poverty and social exclusion in Scotland highlights a huge rise in unemployment for under-25s, and stark and growing health inequalities.

Using the latest Government data, it assesses a wide range of indicators including unemployment, education, and health.

The research, carried out by the New Policy Institute, shows that:

- Since 2008, the number of under-25s who are unemployed has almost doubled to 90,000.
- Among those without dependent children, there was a rise in the number living in low-income, working families from 125,000 to 150,000
- The number of people working part-time, who want a full-time job, has risen from 70,000 in 2008 to 120,000 in 2012.
- A boy born in the most deprived 10 per cent of areas has a life expectancy of 68 – 8 years below the national average and 14 years below boys born in the least deprived areas.
- Since 2008, the number of under-25s who are unemployed has almost doubled to 90,000. They are the only age group for whom unemployment has grown in the last two years.
- The number of people working part-time who want a full-time job has risen from 70,000 in 2008 to 120,000 in 2012. This has led to a rise in the number of people working part-time, while the number working full-time has fallen. Over the last decade, the proportion of people claiming an out-of-work benefit has fallen across Scotland from 17% to 15%. The largest falls were in Glasgow and its surrounding areas, where the rate was and remains highest, now standing at 22%.
- Health inequalities in Scotland are not only stark but growing. A boy born in the poorest tenth of areas can expect to live 14 years less than one born in the least deprived tenth. For girls, the difference is eight years.
- Rates of mortality for heart disease (100 per 100,000 people aged under 75) are twice as high in deprived areas as the Scottish average.
- Cancer mortality rates in the poorest areas (200 per 100,000) are 50% higher than average, and have not fallen in the last decade, while the average has fallen by one-sixth.

To see the Summary report click on this link <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-exclusion-scotland-summary.pdf>



Growing Up – helping young people with disabilities to flourish

Believe in children
Barnardo's

On Wednesday 20 February, Beechgrove Garden's Jim McCall celebrated the launch of a new and unique service for young people in Dundee with additional support needs.

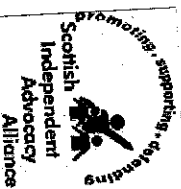
The service offers skills training in horticulture and utilises horticultural therapy to aid the development of the trainees, aged from 18 – 25 years old. The programme will give the young people a recognised industry qualification; work experience and skills that could lead to further education or to employment, as well as a lifelong interest in horticulture.

On successful completion of the course Trainees will receive a Certificate from the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, The Barnardo's Certificate In Horticulture as well as access to the Scottish Qualifications Authority Dynamic Youth Awards. All Certification is externally verified by qualified horticulturalists or educationalists.

For more information regarding all aspects of the service please contact:

John Davidson, Development Worker at the Growing Up Service 14 Dudhope Street, Dundee DD1 1JU. Telephone Number: 01382 224 924. Email: john.davidson@barnardos.org.uk

Map of Advocacy across Scotland 2011-12



Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
Map of Advocacy provision in Scotland is delighted to announce that the 2011-12 edition

of our on-line publication 'Map of Advocacy across Scotland' is now published. This document provides statistical information on advocacy provision in Scotland for the 2011-12 financial year.

The map can be accessed through <http://www.siaa.org.uk/content/view/190/111/>
Telephone: 0131 260 5380 Fax: 0131 260 5381
Email: enquiry@siaa.org.uk



Strategic Working groups

This section is a chance to read about some of the work that VOX's members are involved in as well as our partners.

VOX & The Royal College of Psychiatrist

Both John Sawkins & I sit with the Colleges Executive Committee in Edinburgh which meets 4 times a year and we give them a Service User perspective on issues relating to the College in Scotland. In addition we are both involved with the Colleges Service User Forum (SUF) which meets 5 times a year in London. This forum is a group of 30 'activists' from around the UK and again goes to influence the direction of the College and its members. I was privileged to be elected Chair of this Forum in January this year for a term of 3 yrs. As Chair, I now have a place on 'Council' which is the governing body within the College and is chaired by the President. I also sit with the Central Policy Committee of the College while John sits on the Special Committee for Professional Practice and Ethics. Between us, this allows Service Users and VOX to have an influencing voice within Scotland and the UK and ensures that their thinking & direction is taking into account Service Users varied collective views, a position which can sometimes mean we are putting two (or more) sides of the coin at once.

Dougie Pickering – VOX Director

My work of the "Special Committee on Professional Practice and Ethics"

On applying to join this committee, based in London, I had in mind such issues as "conflict of interests". This did indeed figure quite prominently in our first meeting in April 2013, but it extends not just to financial situations, where psychiatrists now have to declare any payments and inducements from drugs companies, but also compromising situations, where the client is known to / related to the psychiatrist; equally, NHS versus private practice, conflicting belief systems, academic interests and legal complexities have to be acknowledged.

Similarly, results of research conducted by a member of the Royal College must be made public, irrespective of whether they show the product in a favourable light or not. Colleagues were offered a wide range of vignettes, where professional boundaries might risk being breached, and this applies very much to younger psychiatrists who have grown up with social media and have to learn not to divulge personal or in some cases confidential information about their patients.

Many of us will be familiar with the Hippocratic Oath's requirement to "first do no harm", but psychiatrists are also bound by the Oath of Maimonides which states, "May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain." Psychiatrists must support the "least restrictive" principle, look to the patient's physical health and discuss openly with the patient alternative treatments and procedures. I have found the committee most welcoming of contributions from service user and carer representatives, however potentially controversial our comments have been.

John Sawkins VOX Director

Users and Carers Tribunal Group

I attend this group which meets at different venues across Scotland to get the views and opinions of as many service user and Carer organisations it can, and/or individuals as it can, to help gauge what the main concerns of those who use the tribunal services and those who care for them are.

Given the different ways of how such services are delivered within local authorities across Scotland this method has proven to be a very useful and productive method, of both hearing from service users and their carers direct, about the services and where improvements can be made, but also listening to the experiences of those affected directly.

Frank Fallan VOX Vice Chairperson

Mental Health Strategy

My name is Beth Hamilton and I have recently taken up a 2 year secondment with Scottish Government to take forward the commitments identified in the Mental Health Strategy 2012-15. I am predominantly focusing my work on the Key Themes and look forward to working with the wider mental health stakeholders around Involvement, Recovery, Peer Support, Stigma, Rights and Employability. My most recent post involved integration of all elements of mental health and I hope to use this direct experience in working to make the Strategy a reality.

The VOX network is an integral part of the engagement in making the Mental Health Strategy document a live issue and making the impact we all want in moving forward to improve mental health in Scotland. There are now a number of groups convened to take forward the individual commitments highlighted in the Strategy and I will keep you posted over the next two years how it is going. VOX is represented on these groups. I look forward to working with you all over the next few years.

Beth Hamilton

Adult Support and Protection - Service User Involvement

This group focuses on Service User and Carer involvement in relation to adult support and protection committees. There is a need provide a coordinated national resource that will assist agencies and practitioners to protect adults at risk of harm.

VOX is shortly going to attend the first meeting of this group, and it is expected that we shall be looking at how we can ensure that service users can have national input into developing guidelines and ways forward on this important topic.

Please contact Wendy for further information Tel: 0141 572 1663
Email: wmcAuslan@mentalhealth.org.uk

Psychological Therapies

In 2011 the Scottish Government set a new access target. It states that by December 2014 everyone who receives a referral for Psychological Therapies will be treated within 18 weeks. Work to achieve this is being overseen by an Implementation And Monitoring Group made up of representatives from Government, Health Boards and VOX, as the service user voice.

For many, the use of prescription drugs will continue to form a part of their journey to recovery, but this should not be the only approach to treating mental health conditions. Widening access to psychological therapies is therefore an important step in increasing choice for service users – something we would all support.

The Group that I attend monitors work towards meeting the target across the country which is a demanding target given the current state of public finances. But this is not just a numbers game. We are committed to providing high quality treatment that meets patient needs, and not simply ensuring that an appointment of some sort is offered to tick the box.

Gordon Johnston VOX Director

Mental Health Cross Party Group

My name is Joyce Mouriki and I am the chair of VOX's board of directors. I attend the mental health cross party group on behalf of VOX. The group acts as a forum for assessing the implications for people with mental health problems and their carers of any relevant proposed legislation which may impact upon them. The group also aims to raise awareness and understanding of mental illness and mental health and wellbeing. It promotes the rights of people with mental health problems and their carers, and help to ensure that the experience and views of these groups inform the political process. Finally, the group campaigns to reduce the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems and work to improve public understanding of mental health issues. An example of some involvement I have had in this group has

included delivering a presentation last September on our members' views on the mental health act.

Some of the points I raised included the fact our members have felt that advance statements are still too weak, and can be overridden easily. The lack of information on the role of the named person, and serious concerns over the 'default named person'. It was felt that having access to advocacy services is extremely helpful, however, members feel resources are stretched and inconsistent across the country. Members welcomed some of the proposed changes including the ability to opt out of having a 'named person', and cutting down in the number of hearings. For further information on this presentation, or on the cross party group please contact VOX's offices, telephone 0141 572 1663 or email jsteel@mentalhealth.org.uk

Scottish Patient Safety Programme – MENTAL HEALTH (SPSP-MH)

The SPSP-MH is a four year programme with an overall aim of reducing the harm experienced by individuals in receipt of care from mental health services, with a focus on adult psychiatric inpatient units (and forensic inpatient units) including admission and discharge processes. One of the main objectives of the SPSP programme is the creation of a knowledge network to allow NHS Boards to share good practice and also provide an outlet for staff within mental health services across NHS Scotland to have a focal point for this area of work. VOX have been involved in a range of ways to try and ensure the experience of those who have or have had mental health problems is heard and integrated into practice. Please contact the VOX's office for further information.

Wendy McAuslan VOX Development Coordinator