

VOX Newsletter June 2011

VOX Conference and Annual General Meeting

The 2011 VOX Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 29th August 2011 in the newly refurbished Grand Central Hotel, Gordon Street, Glasgow from 10.00am until 3.30pm.

"When I began to dream again"

When I began to dream again
Everything became a glowing orb of possibility
Hanging like a ripened fruit, waiting to be picked
To be reached for and deliciously enjoyed.
Horizons became wide, open and illuminated,
Luring my eager gaze constantly.
My freedom to cover many meaningful miles
Where before they had been so empty.
I savoured each milestone.
Slowly I made my dreams a reality,
Letting each precious drop of water
Be absorbed into the vast Arizona desert of my previously parched existence.
I craved each life-enhancing trickle
As gradually my vista became a lush meadow
Full of colourful wonder
Where I could stroll for hours
In the knowledge that my grass had never been greener...

By Lorraine Nicholson

VOX Board Members Profiles

Gordon Johnston

Gordon Johnston is 46 and has worked in the public and voluntary sectors, including managing a community development organisation, co-ordinating National Lottery and European funding and working in several urban regeneration initiatives in Glasgow. Gordon was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2007, has been active in mental health organisations since and is currently the Chair of Bipolar Scotland. Gordon is a keen writer and is working on a series of psychological thrillers as well as being a frequent blogger and is Editor Scotland for a national music website.

James McDermott

Firstly I am a physically disabled person and also a Mental Health Service User who has access to ongoing support from Mental Health Services. I have spent the last 32 years of my life working in a Local Authority and Private Sector, 27 Years in local authority as a Senior Advisor to the Senior Management Team and Directorate and staff and the last 5 years employed at Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living pioneering Independent Living using the Social Model via the disability movement.

My years of Employment has afforded me the opportunity to build up a special interest and knowledge on Self Directed Support, Direct Payments and Individualised Budgets and last but not least a wealth of knowledge on the Independent Living Fund. I am an experienced Trainer on all of these subjects, currently I am formalising joint training with my Associates on Welcome Recovery Action Planning and Self Directed Support. No other Mental Health service user or Mental Health organisation apart from the above is offering or providing this training and development opportunity.

I am a Mental Health Foundation Policy Panel Member.

Member of Scottish Recovery Network Ambassador for Mental Health {Via ILiS and GDA.} Mental Health Champion on Self Directed Support with Penumbra. Member of Glasgow Disability Alliance. Member of the Glasgow City Council, Physical Disability Consultation Group.

I got involved with various Mental Health organisations to lift the profile of Mental Health and to establish routes to increase the take up of Personalisation through Self Directed Support.

I want one day to end the stigma, discrimination and inequality that is very prevalent towards people with Mental Health. I will do so by continuing to create an affirmative model of Mental Health that will insist that Mental Health service users are treated as equal citizens in our communities and that we will all have the same respect, rights and opportunities as any other citizen, with human rights legislation we have the right to live as free and independent lifestyle as any other citizen.

John Sawkins

I previously worked with Highland Users Group (HUG) and Advocacy Highland. I have had my recovery story published with Scottish recovery Network (SRN) and contributed to See Me anti-stigma campaigns as a media volunteer. I recently contributed to the judging of the See Me Writing Competition. Now that I am living in Aberdeen, I participate in the RGU social science service user meetings. As a diagnosed bipolar, I have participated in studies conducted by the University of Melbourne, as well as a joint study by Cardiff and Birmingham Universities. I attend, on behalf of VOX, as a service user representative, meetings organised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists both in Edinburgh and London, and this allows me, along with my colleagues, to raise important issues brought up by our members. I have spoken at meetings in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and St Andrews on mental health issues.

Donna Banks

Donna has a lived experience of mental illness and as the manager of a service user led organisation she works closely with her board of directors. She has knowledge of business plan development, report writing, legal responsibilities in relation to running an organisation and policy and development skills.

Donna believes in the aims and objectives of VOX and wishes to support the organisation by sharing her knowledge, experience, skills and abilities within the mental health field and also in governance. She believes that VOX should develop strong foundations within the service user communities and individuals with a lived experience of mental health issues to ensure that it is the collective voice of the Scottish people.

AUTISM AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Autism Rights Group Highland and the Highland Users Group have produced a joint report on Autism and Mental Health, to read the full report please click on here [Autism and Mental Health \(joint report with ARGH\) - March 2011](#)

WHAT IS ARGH (AUTISM RIGHTS GROUP HIGHLAND)?

ARGH is run by and for autistic adults in Highland; we joined together to form a group with the aim of improving the lives of autistic people. The founders of ARGH were inspired to start a group to fill a gap: groups existed locally for people with mental health issues and people with a learning disability but there was nothing exclusively for autistic people. We were the first group of our kind in the UK and are still the only one in Scotland; independent from any other body we are self-governing and self-funding; a group controlled entirely by autistic people to promote the rights of autistic people.

We want to show people that autistic adults are autonomous; we want to speak for ourselves and we want to change the presumption that we need others to speak for us.

We feel that coming together as a collective makes many individual voices stronger; by working together one person's weaknesses are overcome by another's strengths, we believe that everyone has something unique to offer and something to gain by working in this way. These are principles that we want to see reflected in wider society.

Through offering training we inform service providers about what autistic people really experience, this is a way to improve services for all autistic people.

We hold meetings for members, produce a newsletter, campaign for improved services and challenge discrimination as a group and as individuals in our daily lives. "Nothing About Us Without Us" is really important to us because all too often we feel that people do things "for" and "to" us rather than allowing us to take the lead and live our lives in the way we choose.

We have a member's only online message board that links autistic people across Highland. This means that no matter where in Highland someone lives they can access a safe autistic space to talk to other autistic people. Many autistic people benefit from meeting others whether online or in real life. It can be of great support to meet others who have similar experiences or who may be more able to understand you because of the shared experience of being autistic. For more information on membership and meeting details please email: kb@arghighland.co.uk www.arghighland.co.uk

WHAT IS HUG?

HUG (Action for Mental Health) is a network of people who have experience of mental health problems.

At present HUG has approximately 400 members and 14 branches across the Highlands. HUG has been in existence now for 15 years. Between them, members of HUG have

experience of nearly all the mental health services in the Highlands. HUG wants people with mental health problems to live without discrimination and to be equal partners in their communities. The Highland Users Group has recently produced a number reports on homelessness, poverty and current mental health issues in the highland area, these reports can be accessed here:

- [Homelessness and Mental Health - January 2011](#)
 - [Poverty - April 2011](#)
 - [Current Issues in Mental Health - Summer/Autumn/Winter 2010/11](#)
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Principles into Practice Awards

NATIONAL AWARD FOR SANCTUARY PROGRAMME



A partnership programme involving VOX has won a top Scottish award for their work with asylum seekers and refugees.

The Sanctuary programme, developed by the Positive Mental Attitudes (PMA) initiative based in East Glasgow, with support from a number of external partners including VOX, picked up the “Respect for diversity” prize from the Mental Welfare Commission’s Principles into Practice Network.

Sanctuary has the twin aims of addressing stigma and discrimination experienced by asylum seekers and refugees, and also to deliver training programmes to help improve staff awareness of this community’s mental health needs.

This includes a DVD produced by specialist film-maker Diversity Films which tells the stories of six asylum seekers and refugees living in Glasgow. The film won a highly commended award at the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival.

Neil Quinn, Sanctuary Lead, said: “With Glasgow hosting increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees over the last few years, developing a programme of work to understand and improve the mental health of asylum seekers and refugees became a priority for us.

“We built effective partnerships with a range of national organisations to help secure the expertise to help us deliver this piece of work.

“The Sanctuary programme is innovative on a number of different levels, with good reach within local communities through the peer led community workshops and a high quality film capturing the narratives of asylum seekers and refugees which has informed a tailored training programme for staff within the NHS and other services.

“The award reflects the strength of the partnerships as well as the innovative nature of the work and provides a spotlight on this very important issue.

Peer led research involved more than 100 contributors who identified how pre-migration trauma as well as poverty, racism and the stress of the asylum process impacts negatively on mental health.

Stigma and discrimination within these communities often leads to a reluctance to seek help.

Following the research 10 peer educators were drawn from asylum seeker and refugee community organisations and 25 workshops were held attended by several hundred people.

The DVD “Inside stories”, funded by the NHS Mental Health Partnership’s training group was integrated into a training programme, based on the specialist knowledge and expertise within the Sanctuary group, and has already been delivered to more than 100 NHS staff and 12 more courses are planned.

The partners are NHS Health Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council, Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture, Mental Health Foundation and Voices of Experience (VOX).

Focus ARBD, a new collective advocacy group for Scotland.

Focus ARBD is a new national collective advocacy group of and for people who have alcohol related brain damage.

Focus ARBD’s aims are to

- raise awareness and understanding of ARBD nationally and locally
- promote information which provides clear messages about how ARBD can be avoided

- help to improve services for people with ARBD
- tackle stigma
- influence public policy

ARBD is the name given to a range of physical and cognitive disabilities which result from heavy long term use of alcohol. These can include difficulties with balance and co-ordination, loss of short term memory and loss of the ability to acquire new information. ARBD often goes undiagnosed. There are specialist services in some parts of Scotland and not in others. The quality, range and access to services varies a lot. People who have ARBD face many challenges in their daily lives and are often marginalized and isolated. Some people in their 40's and 50's end up living in care homes – sometimes for the rest of their lives. And there is stigma and discrimination.

A small group of men and women, determined to change things, has formed the steering group for Focus ARBD. The group meets every 3 weeks in Glasgow. It's still very early days but plans are in place to produce the first newsletter this summer. The newsletter will be in DVD format and will introduce the steering group and Focus ARBD's plans.

A big priority for the steering group is to build up a network of members (people who have ARBD) across Scotland. Reaching people is very difficult. It generally depends on advocacy workers, professionals and members of organisations such as VOX telling people with ARBD they know or work with about Focus ARBD and, if needed, supporting people to get in touch with us. Steering group members are also very keen to go out and meet with people in different areas.

Joyce Mouriki of VOX met with the group earlier this year and gave us a lot of helpful information about VOX and the experience of growing a new national membership organisation.

Focus ARBD is funded for this year by the Mental Health Division of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Community Foundation.

Sally Dick and Chris Vickerman of Infusion Co-op support the group and, as Focus ARBD is not a constituted organisation yet, Infusion Co-op holds the funding. One of the most urgent jobs is to secure funding for next year and beyond.

Please contact Sally or Chris if you would like to join Focus ARBD or would like more information or would like us to meet with people with ARBD in your area or for any other reason!

Contact Chris or Sally by phone or mail: Sally Dick ☎ 07917 324615 email sally.palm@blueyonder.co.uk
 Chris Vickerman ☎ 07917 283760 email cvickerman@blueyonder.co.uk
www.infusioncoop.org.uk

Spending Cuts Surveys

The last two years has seen significant cuts to public sector spending affecting the social care funding across Scotland. These changes may have a significant impact on the lives of people living with a mental health condition, particularly in relation to quality of life, mental health and well-being and recovery.

Mental health organisations (including: VOX, HUG, Bipolar Scotland, ACUMEN, Stirling Users Network, Scotia Clubhouse, Mental Health Network (Greater Glasgow), and Peer Support Fife) have launched a survey to gather evidence from across Scotland on the extent of spending cuts and how they impact on the services people receive, and whether the spending cuts have resulted in negative social outcomes affecting people's mental health and recovery. In order to get as big a response as possible I would be grateful if you could look to promoting the questionnaire through your contacts, publications, website or social network pages.

The relevant links to survey are: Direct Weblink:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YQFVNYQ>

Facebook link:

<http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.surveymonkey.com%2Fs%2FXNP3XHB&h=790ce>

Or Copy and paste the HTML code below to add your Web Link to any webpage:

`Click here to take survey`

A full report will be published and made available on the Voices of Experience website at www.voxscotland.org.uk later this year.

VOX Member Agnes Houston in Canada

Agnes Houston was privileged to represent the Scottish Dementia Working Group at the Alzheimer's disease International Conference in Toronto last month



She gave two presentations and gave a showing of their new training DVD at the conference and would like to say that the Scottish Dementia Working Group was quoted in a lot of presentations at the conference and is becoming world renown for their campaigning and making change.

Her Daughter Donna who accompanied her also gave a talk and she said she was proud to hear the accolade the group received

The highlight for Agnes was being able to meet others from all over the world with a diagnosis of dementia share their commonalities "Dementia does not care what nationality you are, we are all the same facing similar challenges and a lot of people I met have been diagnosed for over

the 10 year mark WOW! So I came home with hope in my heart and proud to be Scottish”

MIND the Mental Health Charity, has released the following statistics.

Right now, 1 in 6 workers is experiencing depression, anxiety or stress and costing the UK economy £26 billion each year.

Businesses can save money by creating a mentally healthy workplace. [Sign up](#) to our campaign to receive guides and advice.

Reduced productivity

Employees who remain in work without the support they need cost UK businesses up to £15.1 billion a year.

Lost working days 70 million working days are lost every year due to mental ill health, with 10 million working days directly caused by work-related problems.

Recruitment

Staff turnover as a result of employees leaving their jobs due to mental ill health costs £2.4 billion.

Employment Tribunal Judges

VOX Administration Officer John Steel, along with Gordon Johnston, VOX Director and David Atiyah, former VOX Director, attended the Employment Judges’ Equality Awareness Training day at the Balbinnie Hotel in Markinch Fife, on Thursday 21st April 2011 and gave a presentation on the VOX organisation. As a result of this presentation there is a possibility of VOX being invited to consult with the Tribunals Judiciary to produce information on the VOX website about the Employment Tribunal system and how it operates. This could be helpful and provide a degree of reassurance to people who have mental health issues and wish to bring an Employment Tribunal claim.

VOX Competition

In the lead up to our annual general meeting in August we will be running a competition. We are looking to produce a new VOX pop up stand and would invite suggestions from members as to the content. The competition is for the best painting or photograph and accompanying caption (no more than 20 words) that would represent VOX as a collective service user movement.

The winner and runner up will be selected by VOX board of directors and presented with a limited VOX T-Shirt at the Annual General Meeting in August 2011. Please send your entries either by post to the office or by email to jsteel@mhf.org.uk to arrive no later than Friday 24th June 2011.

An end to age discrimination

The Banning Age Discrimination consultation was launched on 3 March. It sets out how this provision in the Equality Act 2010 will be implemented by health and social care organisations. Having no exceptions to the ban, means that from April 2012, any use of age in decision-making will need to be objectively justified if challenged.

This requirement will also apply to organisations that provide goods or services to, or on behalf of, NHS and social care organisations. It is the final part of the Act to be implemented.

The consultation seeks views on how the ban on age discrimination will be implemented across Government and, in relation to health and social care, the potential impact of having no exceptions to the ban. The aim of having no exceptions is to allow harmful uses of age to be challenged in the courts by anyone who feels they have been discriminated against, while allowing beneficial uses of age – for example, age-appropriate services – to continue. The consultation is available at <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/Default.aspx> and the Department of Health is seeking views from across the community, including people of all ages and people working in relevant industries.

Scottish Mental Health Service User Research Network

The Scottish Mental Health Service User Research Network Steering Group is recruiting members who have an interest in service user research to attend meetings of the Steering Group. These meetings are held on average every 6 weeks and are held at venues in various parts of the central belt. There is a particular need for more involvement by service users for the steering group. Should you wish to attend or become involved please contact the VOX office on 0141 572 1663 or email: jsteel@mhf.org.uk

VOX Over 50's Coffee Morning Group

The next meeting of the over 50's coffee morning group will be held on Monday 6th June 2011 at 10.30am in the Winter Gardens, Peoples Palace, Glasgow Green Glasgow. New members will be made very welcome. The topic for conversation this month will be the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival 2011. Some members of the group made significant contributions to last year's festival and it is hoped that they will further contribute this year. The theme for this year's festival is "Memory and Dreams" If you would like to be involved in the coffee morning group please contact the office on 0141 572 1663 or by email: jsteel@mhf.org.uk

Falkirk Service Users and Carers Reference Group Report

Annual Report 2010 – 2011

We are a Group of people who use or care for people who use Falkirk mental health services. Our monthly meetings offer friendship, mutual support and the opportunity to discuss issues which will help to improve mental health services.

It has been another busy year for the people who represent the Group in Falkirk, Forth Valley, at the University of Stirling and Nationally. Membership attendance at our meetings has risen from an average of 9 people per meeting to 18 people per meeting – in spite of the weather!

Our headline figures show that the Group was represented at 130 meetings and events last year.

In Falkirk Members of the Group attended and took part in 52 meetings and events including Falkirk Mental Health Planning Group, Falkirk Mental Health Awareness Week 2010, hosted focus groups for a Scottish Government Evaluation and helped set the Mental Health Agenda for the Scottish Parliamentary Elections 2011.

Across Forth Valley Members of the Group have attended and took part in 51 meetings and events ranging from Forth Valley Mental Health Delivery Plan Group, Forth Valley Integrated Care Pathways Project Board and hosted the Forth Valley “see me” Stakeholder Engagement Workshop.

At the University of Stirling Department of Social Work Members of the Group attended and took part in 14 meetings and events including Student Induction Day, Student Training and played leading parts in the Training DVD The Way We See It

Nationally Members of the Group have attended and took part in 13 meetings and events including the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Mental Health, the Care Commission Involving People Group and the Scottish Recovery Network National Gathering 2011.

The coming year will present everyone with challenges – but opportunities as well. We hope to help establish a Falkirk Older Persons Group to be involved in the planning, commissioning and evaluation of mental health services for older people.

No decision should be made about us without us!

Martin Fraser, Chairperson.

Further information can be obtained from Eddie Kelly: Service Users and Carers Involvement Support Worker: Ring 01324 671609 or email eddie.kelly@fdamh.org.uk .

Scotia Clubhouse

The Clubhouse Model is an international model of recovery from mental illness. There are around 425 Clubhouses throughout the world; Scotia Clubhouse actively promotes partnership working between members and staff.

Scotia Clubhouse started off as a steering group in 1996 and the first Scotia Clubhouse was located in Lilybank in 1998, they moved to larger premises at the Templeton

Business Centre in 1999 and remained there for two years. Over the next seven years they moved from Bridgeton to Dennistoun and back to Bridgeton in 2008, to their present home in the old David Dale College Building at 157 Broad Street, Glasgow G40 2QR.

Scotia Clubhouse provides the opportunity for people to be involved in meaningful activity during the day. It is “not a drop in centre” or “therapy” but uses a “work ordered day” which assists people to structure their time and plan their own recovery. The criteria for membership is; having or recovering from Mental Illness and be aged 16 or over. Attendance at the Clubhouse is totally voluntary and without time limits and its success depends on the ability to inspire partnerships between members and staff.

If you wish to find out more about Scotia Clubhouse and the Clubhouse Model of Recovery please contact 0141 551 5047 or email: info@scoticlubhouse.org.uk to book a tour, or your support worker can phone on your behalf. Scotia Clubhouse is administered by Glasgow Association for Mental Health.

The Scottish Quiz

- 1 What is 'The Royal Mile'?
- 2 How long is a Scots mile?
- 3 What is a 'Munro'?
- 4 Who were Burke and Hare?
- 5 What is the meaning of Holyrood?
- 6 Of what county is Dumbarton the county town?
- 7 What is the Great Cumbrae?
- 8 How many players are there in a shinty team?
- 9 What great Scottish disaster occurred in 1879?
- 10 'I'll meet you at the Shell.' Where is that?
- 11 Can you list the Scottish universities in order of age?
- 12 Here are a number of place-names associated with particular foods. The list of foods opposite them has been jumbled. Can you set the correct food after each place-name:
 - A Forfar cheese
 - B Loch Fyne cake
 - c Edinburgh bannock
 - D Dundee smokies (smoked haddock)
 - E Selkirk kippers (or herring)
 - F Arbroath rock
 - G Dunlop bridies
- 13 Where would you find a cairn erected to the memory of John Cobb?
- 14 What are the ingredients of a haggis?
- 15 Where is 'doon the watter'?
- 16 From what historical event did the town of Portobello derive its name?
- 17 What is a clachan?
- 18 Which Scottish university has an annual historical procession called the 'Kate Kennedy Procession'?
- 19 What is a 'salmon ladder'?

- 20 Which saint's symbol is used on the flag of Scotland?
- 21 Which is the patron saint of Glasgow?
- 22 2 doits = 1 bodle, 2 bodles = 1 plack, 40 placks = 1 merk
What is being reckoned in this table?
- 23 In what Scottish village is Pontius Pilate reputed to have been born?
- 24 What is the oldest building in Edinburgh?
- 25 Where would you find: A- Devil's Point and Angel's Peak?
 B- Hell and the Elysian Fields?
- 26 Why is Scotland Yard so called?
- 27 What is Mons Meg?
- 28 How does John O' Groats get its name?
- 29 Where is the Kitchener Memorial Tower?
- 30 Who owns the foreshore in Scotland?
- 31 Which is the oldest tree in Scotland?
- 32 What and where are the Elgin marbles?
- 33 How many lakes are there in Scotland?
- 34 Who was 'The Scottish Hogarth'?
- 35 Who wrote a piece of music known as Fingal's Cave?
- 36 When was the Forth Bridge opened?
- 37 What is the national emblem of Scotland?
- 38 Who is Auld Hornie?
- 39 How large is a Scots pint?
- 40 Where did President Eisenhower of the United States have a residence in Scotland?

Answers

1. The streets leading from Holyrood Palace to Edinburgh Castle: Canongate, High Street, Lawnmarket, Castlehill, Castle Esplanade.
2. 1,984 yards.
3. A mountain included in Munro's Tables of the mountains of Scotland over 3,000 feet.
4. Resurrection men or body snatchers in Edinburgh in the early nineteenth century
5. Holy Cross
6. Dunbartonshire. The town is spelt with an m, the county with an n.
7. An island in the Firth of Clyde between the Ayrshire coast and the Island of Bute.
8. Twelve.
9. The Tay Bridge disaster.
10. The 'dead' shell erected as a collecting box after the First World War in Central Station, Glasgow, and famous as a place of rendezvous
11. St. Andrews, 1411, Glasgow, 1451, Aberdeen, 1494, Edinburgh, 1582.
12. Forfar bridies, Loch Fyne kippers or herring, Edinburgh rock, Dundee cake, Selkirk bannock, Arbroath smokies, Dunlop cheese.
13. The shore of Loch Ness near the point at which he lost his life while attempting to break the world's water speed record.
14. A sheep's lights, liver and heart, beef suet, onions, oatmeal, the whole seasoned with salt and black pepper and cooked in a sheep's stomach.
15. Down the Clyde, usually at one of the holiday resorts favoured by the citizens of Glasgow.
16. The capture of Portobello by Admiral Vernon in 1739.

17. A small village.
18. St. Andrews University.
19. A series of artificially stepped pools which enable salmon to by-pass a dam. There is a famous one at Pitlochry.
20. St. Andrew.
21. St. Kentigern, also called St. Mungo.
22. Old Scots coinage.
23. Fortingall, Perthshire.
24. St. Margaret's Chapel in Edinburgh Castle, circa 1090.
25. A In the Cairngorms
B The Old Course, St. Andrews.
26. Old Scotland Yard occupied the site of an old palace belonging to the King of Scotland and the name was transferred to New Scotland Yard.
27. A famous old cannon in Edinburgh Castle.
28. A Dutchman, John de Groot, is said to have had a house there, octagonal in shape and with a door in each side, so that the eight branches of his family should not quarrel over precedence.
29. Orkney, off which Kitchener was drowned.
30. The Crown (except in Orkney and Shetland where some is privately owned).
31. The Fortingall Yew, Perthshire.
32. The collection of classical sculptures assembled by the seventh Earl of Elgin and now in the British Museum.
33. Two. The Lake of Mentieth and Press mennan Lake, East Lothian, the latter formed by damming.
34. David Allan, the artist.
35. Mendelssohn
36. 1890.
37. The thistle.
38. The Devil
39. About three pints imperial measure.
40. Culzean Castle, Ayrshire.

<http://www.fife.50megs.com/scottish-quiz2.htm>
