



# 2019 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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## Linking to the National Performance Framework

This year we have used our Annual Report to highlight our actions and outcomes against the National Performance Framework. The framework measures Scotland’s progress against the national outcomes the Scottish Government has set for the whole country.

### Framework

The framework is for all of Scotland and aims to:

- create a more successful country
- give opportunities to all people living in Scotland
- increase the wellbeing of people living in Scotland
- create sustainable and inclusive growth
- reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress

### Values

Its values are based on an approach to:

- treat all people with kindness, dignity and compassion
- respect the rule of law
- act in an open and transparent way



To do this, it uses ‘national indicators’. These indicators give a measure of national wellbeing. They include a range of economic, social and environmental indicators.

This framework has enabled us to clearly relate the work we do back to Scottish Government outcomes and show how we can support these at a local community level.

We will continue to strive to work with partners and improve our data capture internally. This is to allow us to highlight the work we do at a community level with our networks and evidence how this contributes to the bigger national picture.

We have globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy



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Cost Benefit Analysis

We have had a significant focus on both sustainability and growth in Neighbourhood Networks over the last year. Early in 2019 we worked with Taylor Nisbett and Wylie Bisset to develop an independent cost benefit analysis of the work of Neighbourhood Networks and to demonstrate the potential for local authorities to save the public purse by adopting the preventative flexible approach of peer support Networks.

In partnership with both **North Lanarkshire** and **East Lothian Council**, a document was produced that evidenced significant amounts of both qualitative and quantitative data that overwhelmingly makes the case that Networks are both successful in meeting outcomes for people but also saves finite and over-stretched public monies.

Networks are both successful in meeting outcomes for people but also saves finite and over-stretched public monies.



A headline figures in this report is the potential for Local Authorities to save up to £270,000 per Network by adopting this model to engage with vulnerable adults.

We have used this evidence to engage with Local Authorities who currently fund Networks as well as engaging with new areas.

Potential for Local Authorities to save up to £270,000



In 2019 we also saw the organisation develop and grow into to other 2 other local Authority Areas, Falkirk and North Ayrshire who commissioned networks in Denny/Banknock and the Garnock Valley respectively.

The means Neighbourhood Networks works across 9 local authority areas and spans the central belt of Scotland from Coast to Coast.

- North Lanarkshire
- Glasgow
- East Lothian
- Mid Lothian
- East Renfrewshire
- West Dunbartonshire
- South Lanarkshire
- Falkirk
- North Ayrshire

taylorisbet

Wylie Bisset





We are open,  
connected,  
and make  
a positive  
contribution  
internationally



## International Connections

Over the years Neighbourhood Networks has hosted lots of visitors from abroad who have been interested in the work of the organisation. This includes Australia, The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Holland. This also includes Community Connections in New Zealand who started a network there a few years ago.

Most recently our connections in Finland have borne fruit in this country as they have just started developing network approaches there.



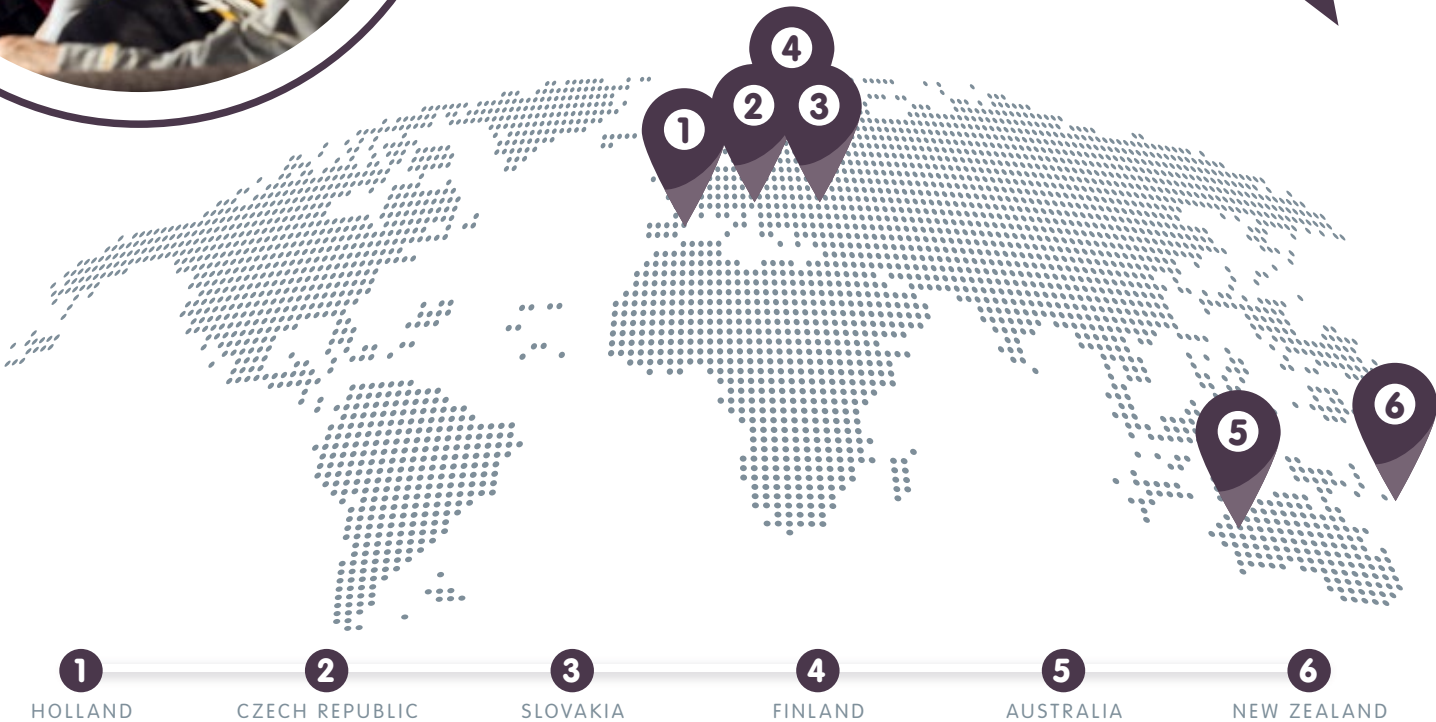
Neighbourhood Networks has been a priceless partner when new living and housing solutions have been developed in Finland for those who have moved from institutions to their own homes.

We have been cooperating for several years by getting to know Neighbourhood Network's work in Scotland, inviting representatives of the organisation to Finland and keeping in touch by teams and e-mail.

Neighbourhood Networks has played a major role in the fundamental transformation of institution-centric thinking and operating models. It has required reflexive cooperation, in which we Finns have learned to think and act in a new way. We have realized that it is not so much a matter of building services but of creating connections between people.

Third, we have received a concrete model from the Neighbourhood Networks to create a new way of life and tools and forms to start new networks to support people.

**Niina Sillanpaa and Susanna Hintsala,**  
FAIDD



# We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities wealth and power more equally



# 3



## Coin Recognition Work

Money Management is one of the outcomes that members work towards at Neighbourhood Networks. This is to help individuals build up their confidence when handling money which will enable them to live an active, fulfilling and independent life in their local community.

We quickly realised that to be able to understand budgets and how they work it is important to have basic coin recognition skills. Some members across the different Networks were unable to identify coins and their value. To help protect members and build up their confidence with handling money we have brought things back to basics and started teaching about the value of money and how to work out change.

**They feel more confident and if they need some extra time to count out their money at the till then that's ok. It is important not to feel rushed.**



We teamed up with Money Advice Scotland who helped put a training package together which we could deliver across all the different regions. We focused on counting money, what information is held on a bank card, savings and how to shop about for best value.

**moneyadvice**scotland  
Scotland's Money Charity



We have started our own Coin Recognition road show where the different regions have been taking part in the training. The feedback from members, parents and carers has been valuable. The biggest piece of feedback from members is they feel more confident and if they need some extra time to count out their money at the till then that's ok. It is important not to feel rushed.

When we run the training sessions it is something that members ask for again as they like to practice their new skills. What is even better is the peer support that takes place, it happens naturally and members who have stronger number skills step up to the plate to help others which has been fantastic in boosting everyone's confidence. We will continue to deliver this training and empowering individuals to be confident and independent when handling their own money.



We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe



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## Political Engagement

In Neighbourhood Networks we firmly believe that we can all be involved in making where we live, work and socialise a better place. In fact this is one of our core values. In 2019 we developed some significant partnership work to embed this further into experiences and practices.

In Spring we had input from the Scottish Parliament Community Outreach team. They came to talk at a Quality Street forum for members and staff about ways that the people of Scotland can engage in their parliament to exercise their rights to have their say and have influence. This led to an interesting visit and tour of the Scottish Parliament.



We firmly believe that we can all be involved in making where we live, work and socialise a better place.



Later in the year East Lothian members also worked with Community Outreach Team to develop a workshop on Political Engagement which was delivered at the Festival of Citizenship.

Members shared their stories of being heard and making a difference in their communities and encouraged other workshop attendees to do the same. We hope to revisit this work in the year ahead.

We grow up safe  
and respected so  
that we reach our  
full potential



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## Travel Training

We have invested organisational resources to develop Travel Training in the organisation over the last year. This is a key to independence for many young people leaving school and beyond and is an area for growth in the future for Neighbourhood Networks.

Here is an aspirational story from the parents of one of our members Stuart describing the impact of developing these skills can have on someone's life.



### Stuart's Story

When my son's Job Coach at North Lanarkshire Supported Employment suggested that he would benefit from joining Neighbourhood Networks, I was a bit uncertain whether it would be good for him.

Stuart has struggled all his life with socialising, low confidence & self-esteem and independent travelling due to his anxiety. Since joining the Wishaw 2 Neighbourhood Network in the summer of 2019, he hasn't looked back, in fact the transformation has been absolutely astonishing.

Stuart has new found confidence, he is chatty & outgoing, has made new friends and doesn't think twice of jumping on the bus and travelling by himself.

He is out and about now happy and confident and most importantly, I know he is safe with the rest of the group. The staff are incredible and so understanding. We definitely made the right decision, the Network is the best thing that has happened to him.





We are well  
educated, skilled  
and able to  
contribute to  
society



## Digital Champions

Over the past year, with support from SCVO, Neighbourhood Networks has been supporting staff and members to upskill digitally and to become Digital Champions. Digital Champions have the skills and knowledge to be able to offer support to others to get involved and be safe online. This fits perfectly with our ethos of peer support, being able to support our own members to develop their own skills so that they, in turn, can then help others in their local communities.

Little did we realise how important this work would become at Covid 19 took hold!

We worked with Irene Mackintosh, Director of Mhor Collective, to support our Digital Champions work, and were delighted when she highlighted our work nationally on how Neighbourhood Networks are keeping inclusion at the heart of a shift to digital.





Advice for SCVO from Irene Mackintosh,  
Director of Mhor Collective

"Coronavirus is highlighting something we've known for a while: digital inequality and social inequality are inextricably linked. There's research a-plenty to evidence this. In the context of coronavirus, we've seen fantastic examples of supporting people in this new, tricky situation. Kitchen disco anyone? Coffee, art, and a supportive catchup with kids in tow?

What we are seeing now across the third sector is the most incredible drive to respond and improve the situation as best we can for people who need that help the most. Inclusion and accessibility are forefront of all of these discussions: as soon as we think of widening digital participation stuff, we immediately hit big challenges.

## How do we make the shift to digital fair?

Not everyone has a device. Or WiFi. Not everyone can use a device, even if they have one. We know that certain groups of people are more likely to face challenges: people who are older, people who are struggling financially, people with additional support needs, carers, cared for, in fact, many of the groups we are used to supporting offline, in a face-to-face environment, because digital is a barrier for these groups, rather than an enabler.

Social inclusion work always relies on human connection, and digital inclusion is no different. It is always about understanding, listening to people, and creating person-centred approaches in the work that we do. Neighbourhood Networks is a research partner in my work with UWS on digital inequality.



**Social inclusion work always relies on human connection, and digital inclusion is no different. It is always about understanding, listening to people, and creating person-centred approaches in the work that we do.**

They're a social inclusion organisation supporting vulnerable adults, many with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health issues to live an active, healthy life, safely, within their own homes and fully involved within local communities.

Members are active in networks, learning life skills, becoming more independent, whilst spending more time with friends and becoming less reliant on paid support. Pre-coronavirus, this was all done with brilliant staff, meeting members in the real world and doing amazing things. Learning and having fun together.

They're now thinking about how to do this digitally. From experience, they know that members love a wide, varied range of activities: from bingo to bowling, from cooking to craft. Staff are looking at which digital spaces members already use, and then thinking about what might work best, embarking on staff upskilling, support and fast-moving experimentation.

This approach means that members will already be in a familiar digital space, and are more able to transfer skills. Staff are supporting this, at distance, often by phone, taking it a wee bit at a time, recognising when folk have had enough, and when it's time to stop with the digital and revert to chat. This is because they recognise these needs in the 'real' world- when it's time to move away from learning and head to fun.

## Getting to grips with tricky issues

Some members have parents and carers who are worried that those they love might be more at risk in a digital environment, perhaps due to issues such as intellectual disabilities. Indeed, some staff are also worried about this risk.

This is common in work with 'vulnerable' groups, and research shows that this can impact on individual digital participation. So, one of the first pieces of work Neighbourhood Networks is undertaking is to offer a facilitated digital discussion for parents and carers to express concerns about digital participation, and for the organisation to reflect on how to provide support and inclusion in a really difficult context. There's no perfect, risk-free model, but in the same way that we choose to crossroads, despite the risk of being hit by a car, we can look at informed, managed risk-taking in the digital environment.

Staff are also supporting members in dealing with information, and vitally, misinformation. This is a significant issue for everyone during the pandemic, but especially for people with additional support needs, who may struggle with both literacy and digital literacy.

Misinformation is primarily spread through social media, even inadvertently by well-meaning family members, and this can have a damaging and destabilising effect. It's vital that digital inclusion work recognises the impact of the 'infodemic', signposting people to 'safe' information sources, helping them understand what's going on.



**Neighbourhood Networks are also addressing digital accessibility. They know that many members have additional support needs, and that there's no 'one size fits all':**

## Accessibility is for everyone

Neighbourhood Networks are also addressing digital accessibility. They know that many members have additional support needs, and that there's no 'one size fits all': digital tools have to fit people's needs. One tool can help in lots of different situations: accessibility tools don't just help people who really need them, but make things better for everyone.

An example is the microphone button that pops up on Google, or on your touchscreen keyboard. That wee button can help people with visual impairment access speech-to-text; it can also help people with literacy issues by scribing, and can be dead useful for everyone, speeding up messaging no end.

It's amazing, however, how many of us haven't used that microphone button yet. It's a tiny thing, but with huge application. Another easy wee trick is using screen readers: did you know that just by adding ChromeVox to your Chrome browser, you can make the computer read the whole screen to you? True story. And think of the possibilities!

Staff members we've worked with in digital champion training with Mhor Collective often ask for support with accessibility tools, but these tools are actually incredibly simple, and it's more an issue of experimentation and practice. Neighbourhood Networks will be working with staff to help build confidence in tools like these, and build them into everyday use.

Neighbourhood Networks absolutely excels at fun. And creativity. And not taking themselves too seriously all the time. This helps in this bananas situation we are all in. It's okay to learn together, to work out new ways of doing things. This is what the organisation has always done, and now they're doing these very things, digitally. It's an approach that will help us all."

# We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone

## Employer Benefits



## Fair Work and Business

During 2019 Neighbourhood Networks was delighted to achieve our accreditation as a Living Wage employer. Living Wage accreditation celebrates employers that choose to go further than the government minimum and research shows that paying the real Living Wage helps businesses recruit and retain better staff and has tangible benefits:

## Employee Benefits



## Staff Council

Neighbourhood Networks also have a Staff Council to directly involve our wider staff team to improve communication across the organisation, to increase the involvement of staff in all aspects of the organisation's work and to increase trust between those responsible for governing and managing the organisation and those employed within it.

The Staff Council recently carried out a staff survey to measure staff opinions on a number of key issues including our values, benefits, communication, training, having fun at work and if they would recommend Neighbourhood Networks as an employer.

The Staff Council identify issues raised within the survey and work on those. From the previous staff survey this has led to changes such as improvements to paperwork and form templates, localised team building days and opportunities to bring us all together as a team.



## Our Recommendations





# We are healthy and active



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## Encouraging Activity

A key outcome for Neighbourhood Networks is about supporting our members to improve their health and wellbeing, and a major way to do this is through the promotion of exercise.

Throughout 2019 we organised a walking challenge for all of our networks, encouraging networks to organise walks locally each week and to record their time spent together as a network walking.

We ran the same challenge for our staff team, again encouraging our staff to walk more, and we introduced lunchtime strolls for those based at our Head Office each Monday as a good way to start off the week. Each month, staff and networks submitted their walking total for the month and we had a league table to encourage some competitive spirit.

**The day was a tremendous success with over 100 members joining in from networks across Scotland.**



Our walking challenge for 2019 culminated in a large sponsored walk event in the June, with three levels of walk provided for different abilities as well as fun day activities at our Glasgow office base. The day was a tremendous success with over 100 members joining in from networks across Scotland. It had been agreed that any sponsor money raised from this event would go to directly support a Members Ball in the Autumn, as many members had highlighted that they didn't get the opportunity to have a big formal night out.

With over £2500 raised from the sponsored walk, we were able to provide a heavily discounted evening of entertainment for our members across the Country. With a red carpet welcome, three course meal, band and DJ for the day, our members had a fantastic time, many learning new skills by organising transport to the hotel, some staying overnight, and others pushing their boundaries by attending such a large social event. This is an event our members are keen to make a tradition!

We value,  
enjoy, protect  
and enhance  
our environment



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## Getting Outdoors

Over the years our network members have really enjoyed being involved with their local environments, with many networks regularly undertaking local litterpicks, nature walks and conservation activities.

Our Annual Reports over the last few years have highlighted our work with some of our partners on this, including The Conservation Volunteers and Cumbernauld Living Landscapes, especially with their Wild Ways Well project which promotes just how good being connected with nature can be for our mental health.

**especially with their Wild Ways Well project which promotes just how good being connected with nature can be for our mental health to feel rushed.**



This year we decided that our Central Staff team would partner with The Conservation Volunteers for our team building activity and we had a wonderful day exploring the hidden Cumbernauld Woodlands.

Our day including making a shelter and safe camp fire, a sensory loss experience developing trust in the team, wild craft activities, making soup, as well as finding out about the fauna and flora of the woodland, which was particular beautiful as it was Snowdrop season.

We ensured that we followed the Outdoor Code of 'Leave No Trace' as we packed up to think about how we could share our new skills with our network members.



**We are creative  
and our vibrant  
and diverse  
cultures are  
expressed and  
enjoyed widely**



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## **William Miller**

### **Life before Neighbourhood Networks**

I lived at home with my mum, as her health deteriorated over the years I became her main carer, while I did enjoy looking after my mum I was lonely and my only friends were people from the church, my main enjoyment was reading books, I am a keen reader and can read up to 3 books in a week, I believe I should be in the Guinness book of records if only I had kept count!

### **My Journey with Neighbourhood Networks**

I have been with Neighbourhood Networks for 3 and a half years, when I first joined, I had no friends, no social life and made very little use of community resources and I was extremely shy. My Community Living Worker Marie spent time getting to know me before introducing me to members of the Bellshill network.

I was feeling excited at the thought of having friends my own as I really haven't had someone I could call a friend, other than people from the church. When first being introduced to members, I must admit I was feeling excited and nervous but with the support of my Community Living Worker and a gentle phase into the group made it a bit easier, I started meeting with members weekly.

Time was spent putting my support plan together with all my hopes and dreams for the year ahead, I had something to look forward to, I now had goals in my life and choices to be made.

As time moved on I now I had people in my life who I could call my friends, I started sharing my skills and knowledge around travelling with members. I also received peer support around travelling further afield, I can now travel to all areas.



**Time was spent putting my support plan together with all my hopes and dreams for the year ahead, I had something to look forward to, I now had goals in my life and choices to be made.**

There was no stopping me now! I was now meeting with other members from surrounding areas, and members from further afield networks, attending various social activities and events, people who I once seen as members are now my friends. I have been working on my cooking skills at the skill developing night, I am now able to prepare myself a hot meal, and I will continue to work on my skills in this area.

After a year of being with the network, I was feeling good and more confident within myself, I was in a happy place; finally a life I could call my own. I started to think about putting myself forward as candidate for the board, I discussed this with my Community Living Worker and it was agreed I still had some work to do before putting myself forward.

The next step was to take on the responsibility of the role of Network Representative for Bellshill and while I was feeling anxious, I was also excited, but with the support and encouragement from my Community Living Worker I was able to overcome this, and started to look forward to the 'net rep' meetings.

I enjoyed taking part in discussing the various topics and issues and sharing my thoughts and opinion, this contributed to building on my confidence and self-esteem. I then got involved in the promotion of Neighbourhood Networks, I enjoyed sharing my journey, on one occasion I gave a short talk to fifty students at Stirling University, it was from here I went from strength to strength.

Time had moved and so had I. The time had come for me to start thinking about putting myself forward as a candidate for the board, my Community Living Worker felt the same, and reminded me just how far I had come.



**I wouldn't have been able to achieve my goals and outcomes without Neighbourhood Networks and the support of my Community Living Worker Marie who has been there every step of the way**

After completing the governance training, I put myself forward as a candidate for the board, and I am delighted to write I was successful and was looking forward to my first board meeting, unfortunately due to the Lockdown the meeting went ahead through Zoom, I really enjoyed the experience. The chairman's feedback back on my contribution was very positive.

Lockdown

I was looking forward to going on holiday with a member in the middle of June, this was cancelled due Covid 19, yes, I was disappointed, but I have every faith it will happen sometime in the future and when it's safe to so.

I have developed my skills and knowledge on the use of social media, I have joined the variety of activities such as bingo, cooking skills, mindfulness training, choir singing, drawing sessions, karaoke, laundry skills, discussion on health and wellbeing.

I can spend up to three hours a day and more on WhatsApp with my friends, sometimes it is just chit chat and being supportive to one another when moods are low. I honestly don't know how I would have coped without social media and group video calls.

Last year my mum passed away this was a very sad and difficult time for me, my brother lives down South, but he was there to help me plan and arrange the funeral, there were some issues he helped me address before returning home. My Community Living Worker stepped in and gave me support and guidance on issues that I needed support with and still does it to this very day.

I have come along so far since joining Neighbourhood Networks, I have developed as a person, I now have goals and plans and most importantly, I have friends who I can share them with.

I wouldn't have been able to achieve my goals and outcomes without Neighbourhood Networks and the support of my Community Living Worker Marie who has been there every step of the way, and for believing in me when I have doubted myself. I really do not know where I would be today without Neighbourhood Networks, I have a bright future and lots to look forward to.





# We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination



# 11

## Human Rights

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life. Neighbourhood Networks received training from Outside the box on Human Rights. The central team and Network Managers took part in the training. It was a really interesting session as we got to talk about how Human Rights plays a part in the work Neighbourhood Networks does every day with the communities we work in.

We looked at our existing ideas around human rights and looked at areas where human rights are not always upheld, and what we can do in our work to challenge that.

**Examples of human rights include:**

1. the right to life
2. the right to respect for private and family life
3. the right to freedom of religion and belief

The Charter of Rights echo's the work that Neighbourhood Networks already does, and it is something that we will continue to strive to promote in members and their local communities.

Our Network Managers are trained to deliver Human Rights workshops, teaming up with Outside the Box to bring this out to all the regions where we are based and get the local community involved. By doing this it will help not only members but the local community to recognise what their Human Rights are and by coming together their voices can be heard to make the communities they live in a better place.



**Neighbourhood Networks have developed their own charter of rights which focuses on:**

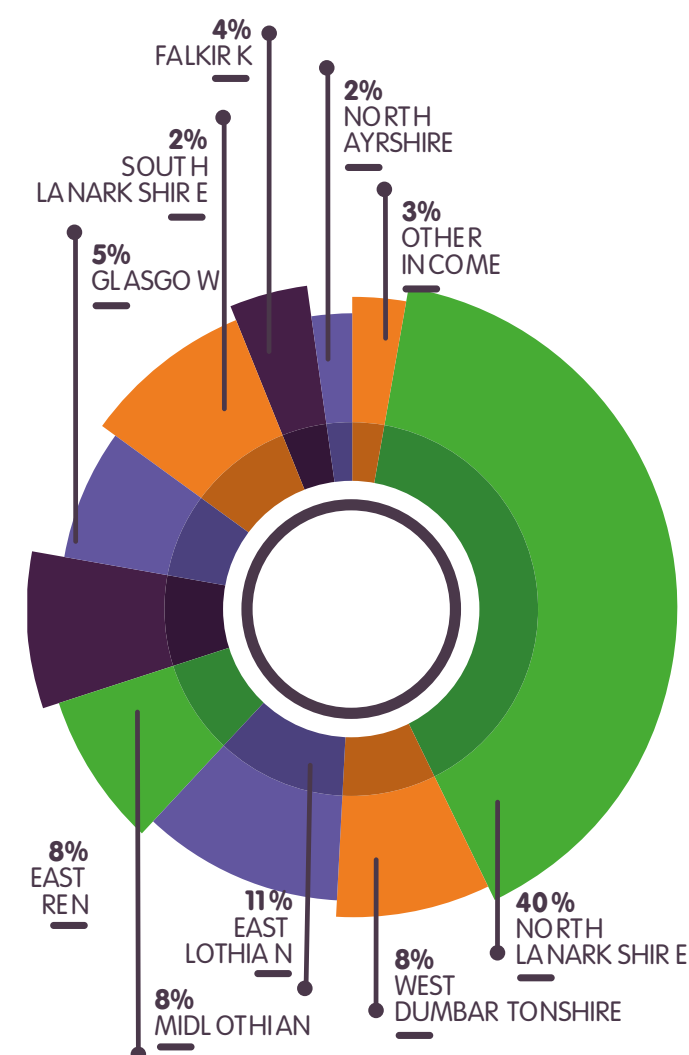
- Empowerment
- Sharing skills Knowledge & Learning
- Promoting independence
- Healthy balance of rights and responsibilities
- High aspirations
- Self-determination
- Creating connections
- Cultural transparency & Accountability
- Peer support
- Participation



# Our Finances 2019/20

**3% increase in income from £848k to £873k**

We had a challenging year however the full staff team pulled together to deliver a service which was appreciated by our Members. Local authorities across Scotland continue to recognise the merits and cost benefits of our peer support model and invest in our service. We saw a 3% increase in income during the year ended 31 March 2020 to £873k from £848k in the previous year.



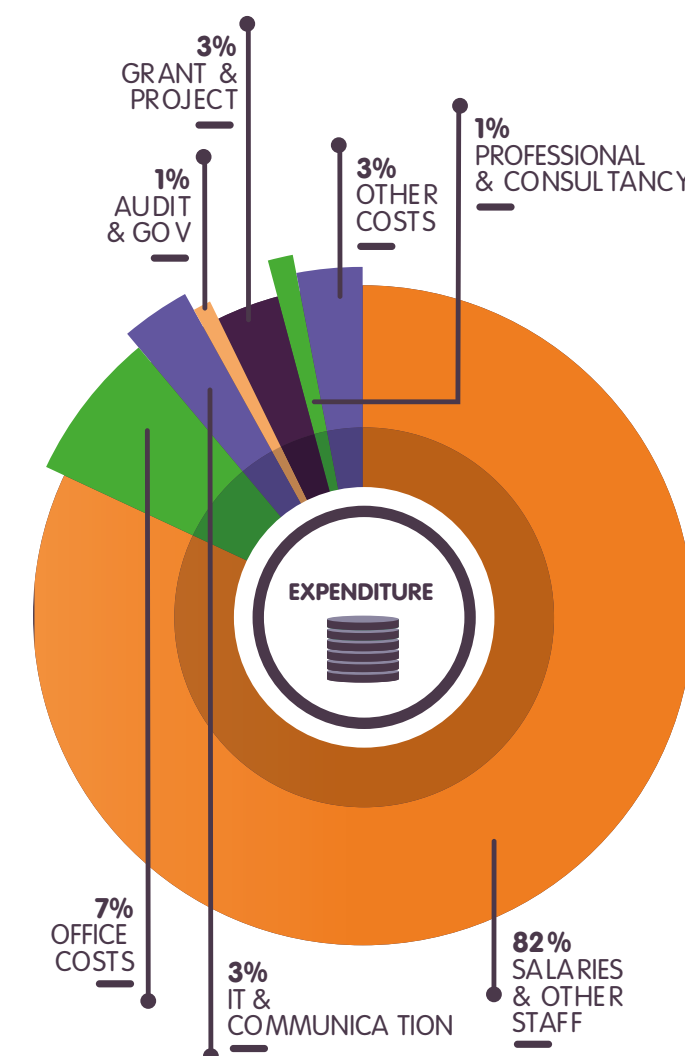
## Where our income came from...

The majority of our income is from local authorities throughout central Scotland. North Lanarkshire Council have the highest number of networks contributing 40% to our total income. Midlothian and East Lothian network contribute 19% of our income with Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire contributing 7% and 8% respectively.

We secured funding from The Big Lottery, The Robertson Trust and the local Council to pilot two networks in South Lanarkshire contributing 9% to our income and we started new networks in Falkirk and North Ayrshire contributing 4% and 2% respectively. We raised over £6k from fundraising and donations, the majority from the sponsored walk and went towards the Members Ball.

## Where the money is spent...

Our biggest asset is our dedicated staff team and salaries continue to be our biggest expenditure equating to 82% of our total spend (2018/19: 80%). Total expenditure for 2019/20 was £839k, an increase of 3% on the prior year. Other expenditure includes Network costs, office costs, IT, communication, equipment, governance, audit fees and project costs.



## Financial position at the year-end ...

Increased income and prudent spending during the year resulted in a £27k surplus, taking our reserves position to £427k of which £422k is unrestricted. This represents close to 6 months running costs and is within the OSCR guidelines. The financial outlook for 2020/21 continues to be challenging. Despite all our forecasting and planning at the start of 2020 nothing could have prepared us for COVID19. We feel we are robust enough to cope with the challenges ahead thanks to the amazing team of people we have throughout the organisation and a healthy balance sheet to see us through.



# Thank You

We would like to extend our thanks to all of the contributors to this report, our staff team, our funders, local authority partners, supporters and most importantly to our members who show us that 'together anything is possible'.

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