

Annual Report

Events and experiences of 2012

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Neighbourhood
Networks

Annual Report 2012



The year in summary - John Dalrymple (Director)

At the start of the year, on a cold snowy Saturday morning, we planted a tree in a local park to mark the launch of our new Kilsyth network, the seventh in North Lanarkshire. This symbol of new growth was therefore also a mark of the consolidation of our work with **North Lanarkshire Council**, and later in the year our eighth North Lanarkshire network took root in Shotts.

Work also began this year to establish a second Wishaw network, a fresh departure for the organization, seeking to explore with the local authority how best to design a network specifically for young adults in transition from children's services to adult services, from school to work. This has been one of the major themes this year: how to adapt and improve our model of local social networks of mutual support to meet changing demands and fresh expectations – while at the same time retaining the essence of what it is that our Networks have always done best. This is a question we are carrying forward into our work in the new year in **North Lanarkshire, West Dumbarton, Glasgow** and beyond.



This year also saw the storm clouds of “welfare reform” gathering and beginning to cast shadows of genuine fear and anxiety across the lives of many members. Facing intrusive questioning designed to determine if you are “fit for work”, yet given little or no prospect of being supported into a real paid job. Being challenged about the amount of space you occupy in your house, and facing an additional financial cost to protect your right to remain in your own home. These are confusing and belittling experiences that breed insecurity, anger and diminished self-esteem. They test the resilience of the human spirit and have begun to test the resilience of networks, neighbourhoods and communities across the country.

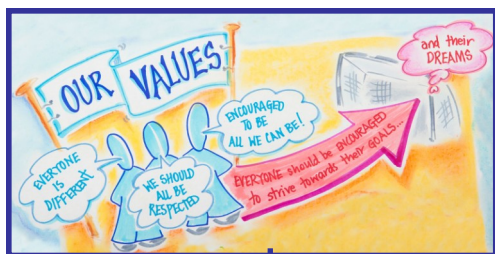


January 2012 - Appraisal season begins

Neighbourhood Networks operates a 360° appraisal system with the whole staff team. This involves the organisation gaining feedback from the members on the service they receive by the organisation, their Community Living Worker and their Network Manager. Each individual staff member will also receive feedback from both their peers and Line Managers. All of this information is then collated and used on an individual with staff to form part of their annual appraisal. In the year 2011 we spent a great deal of time and effort examining this process and through the support of consultant Anne Brooks, made a number of improvements to the existing system.



We agreed as part of this evaluation and review that having a Season for appraisals would be the best way to ensure that it takes place annually and also that both staff and our members become familiar and expectant of this process. In addition to our appraisal system we also set time aside to develop our own set of 'Key Performance Indicators' which would become the focus for monitoring and evaluating our service as well as providing us with annually target areas for us to work on over the forthcoming year.



Although many of our staff have struggled with this system and the way in which they are required to provide constructive feedback to peers, we do agree that the benefits in individual personal and professional development is huge and the system encourages and promotes an openness within the staff team.

February 2012 - Ronald's Story (North Lanarkshire)

Before I started Neighbourhood Networks 4 years ago I lived alone, totally isolated with no friends. The only family that I had was my mother who died last year. When I joined the Network my Mother was in a nursing home and so I had no one to help and look after me, as my Mother was my main carer. I had no Experience of living on my own or looking after myself and so felt totally helpless.



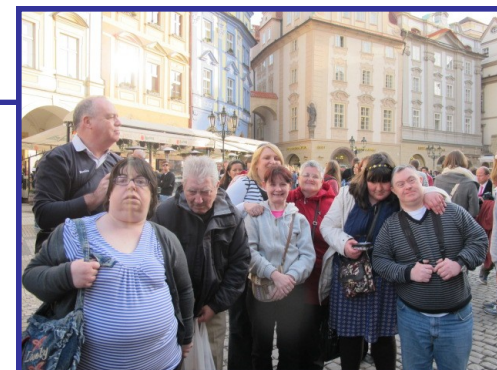
My Community Living Worker, Dorothy has helped me become more confident over the last 4 years. Before I had this support I was extremely anxious and did not want to leave the house. However with the help of my Community Living Worker my life has totally improved in numerous ways. For example I can do a lot more and I am a lot less frightened. I also have met a lot of friends through the Network, which unlike my old friends, do not use me or cause me to get into bother with the police.

The Network has made my life better as:

- I know I can rely on my Community Living Worker and she is there when I need her.
- I have made lots of friends within the Motherwell Network and people from other Networks in Neighbourhood Networks.
- I can manage my money better now.
- I can live more independently on my own and I can now cook and clean.
- My Community Living Worker helped me to join college and I now go to a Drama group.
- I have been on 2 holidays with the Network. I really enjoyed this as it was my first time on holiday.
- I volunteer with my Community Living Worker in an old peoples home, and sing for them which they enjoy.
- I now have a great social life and couldn't live without the Network as it has given me a new lease of life and I am so much happier.

March 2012 - European Events

Over the last year Neighbourhood Networks have been involved in **European learning exchanges** with people from Czech Republic and Slovakia. This was possible through the support of an organisation called 'Diversity Matters' who secured an European grant from the Grundtvig fund. The purpose of the exchanges was for people with learning disabilities to share their experiences of support and care within different European countries (**Czech Republic, Slovakia, & Scotland**).



March 2012 saw the last of our members travelling on the European Exchange visits. The final trip was to Prague in the Czech Republic and members from Neighbourhood Networks and Slovakia joined Czech people in their homes, day centres, activity centres, etc. With the support of interpreters people were able to share their own experiences and compare those with the people from the other 2 countries. This has been a fantastic experience for all our members and many have grown in confidence and esteem since their trip. They have shared those experience

at our annual conference and talked about having a passport for the first time, flying for the first time, being aware of other languages, being aware of different cultures, food, money, and how support differed between the three countries.

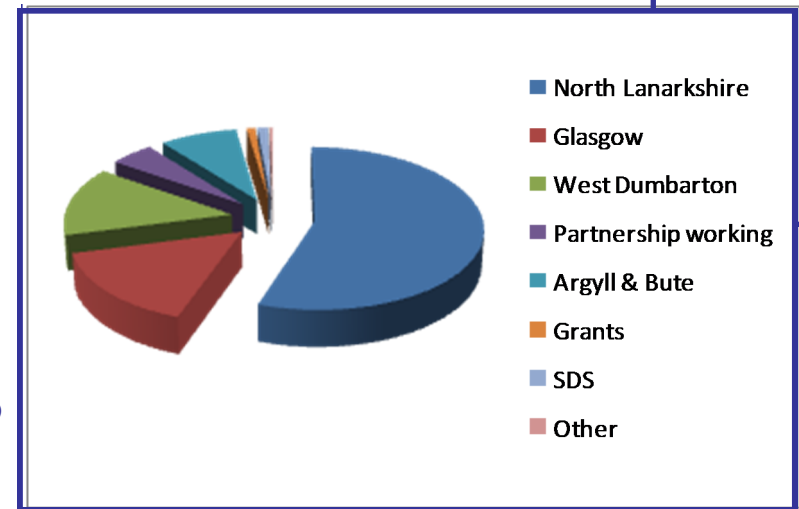
The hope is that Neighbourhood Networks will keep up the contact with the other two Organisations in European and perhaps revisit in the future. Discussions are now taking place with a view to a further application to enable other people to have similar experiences.



April 2012 - Finance and Figures

Finance Report

Income : Year end 31 March 2012 was the most successful year to date for Neighbourhood Networks in terms of income and saw the organisation exceed £500,000 for the first time. We continue to have excellent relations with North Lanarkshire Council which is evident in the level of income received from them and is indicative of the level of commitment they have to preventative services in the area. They have also committed to more networks for the year 2012-13. We continue to work with Glasgow City Council but unfortunately lost our networks in Argyll and Bute but this was offset by new work won with West Dunbartonshire Council and growth in the partnership work with Thistle Foundation.



The final financial position saw a surplus of £25,874, an improvement from a deficit of £-7,532 in 2010/11 and we are forecasting another surplus for this financial year. This provided the organisation with a healthy reserves position of £197,172 at 31 March 2012 of which only £10,232 was restricted.

May 2012 - The Neighbourhood Networks Conference

Every year the Organisation hosts an annual conference. In the run up to this conference we have a committee made up of staff and members who together consult with everyone else in the organisation and make decisions on where the conference takes place, as well as the content and agenda for the day. Although we have a fairly standard format for the day which starts with a summary of the year from the Director, then usually a speaker, followed by workshops, then of course a bit of a party!



Each year the committee is given a budget to work to and this year they managed to strike a great deal with the Glynhill Hotel in Renfrew for the event. The speaker for this years conference was Pauline Nolan, who gave a presentation and discussion around the forthcoming welfare reforms. There was then a number of work shops open to all and people signed up to the ones they thought they would get the most from. These included:

- Looking after yourself - a health & hygiene workshop
- First Aid - short workshops demonstrating resuscitation
- Dates n mates - an organisation that supports people with friendships & relationships
- Money matters - helping people to budget their income
- Benefit changes - an open discussion as follow up from welfare reform presentation
- Fun workshops - Zumba & table games



June 2012 - Andrew's Story (North Lan 2)

Hello my name is **Andrew Rennie**, I have been a member of the **Cumbernauld Network** since April last year. Before I joined the network I had very little structure to my week and spent a lot of time at home not doing very much. The only regular commitment I had was going along to watch Clyde FC, and I like to get to as many games as possible each season.

Since joining the network I have become involved in a number of things, besides meeting up with other network members most Wednesdays for a catch up I have also had the opportunity to enjoy a number of experiences including a few days away to various places, opportunities to get involved as a volunteer helping to keep a section of the National Cycle Network tidy, I have registered for the Saltire Award which recognises the time that I give to volunteering and so far I have managed to achieve my 25 hour award, I hope to continue with this and achieve my 250 hour award.

I am involved in helping prepare this year's **Neighbourhood Networks Annual Conference**; I have learned a lot of new skills from this as well as getting the opportunity to attend a conference in Ayr to allow me to see how a conference is run. I have also had the opportunity to join the newsletter planning group, this group meets every 3 months and takes responsibility for pulling all of the articles that have been put forward by members into something which members will enjoy reading and which is hopefully informative. I am currently in the process of trying to be elected onto **Neighbourhood Networks Board of Trustees**, which has been a very interesting journey that started a few months ago when I attended a 3 day training course, which allowed myself and other people interested in becoming board members the opportunity to explore what this actually involves. I am very excited about the possibility of being on the board but recognise that it is not guaranteed that I will be voted on, as I mentioned I am a Clyde fan so I am used to disappointment!!!



July 2012 - Care Inspectorate



On 30th July 2012 we received an unannounced inspection by the Care Inspectorate. Moira Agolini visited Neighbourhood Networks for the first time and spent a day looking at the service we provide to our Members as well as our policies & Procedures; our planning with people; our process and documentation; and many other areas.

The outcome of this inspection was very positive and overall Moira graded Neighbourhood Networks as

5 - 'Very Good' this was taken from three Quality areas:

Quality of Care & Support

Quality of Staffing

Quality of Management & Leadership

Moira highlighted in her report the following areas:

- **What we do well** - "promote the rights of members to participate in developing, planning and evaluating the service; whole system approach shows a commitment to change at every level from Senior Management to frontline staff. Participation is part of daily practice and not a one-off activity."
- **What we could do better** - "the service must look at the members' support plans and review their procedures including written agreement, consent and risk assessment. There also needs to be some further discussion with members around the terms of people's support and the concept of the service."

Moira also highlighted that there is a great deal of innovative work going on with the Organisation especially relating to member involvement and participation but that as an organisation we need to get better at keeping evidence of such activities and events.

Moira then concluded her report by saying:

"Neighbourhood Networks continues to strive to make sure that vulnerable people are at the heart of their community!"

August 2012 - Board of Trustees

This year we welcomed several new Trustees to our enlarged Board of Trustees:

- Tim Barr, an experienced journalist;
- John Butcher, a social worker and educationalist;
- Charlie Docherty, a recently retired corporate executive;
- Leslie Forsyth, an experienced public sector manager;
- Shalani Raghavan, a government lawyer; and
- Paul Thompson, a specialist mental health lawyer.



Coatbridge Network Member, Ian Arthur, returned to the Board following member elections in May. In the blazing heat of Renfrew in August (!) they all came together for the annual Board retreat with fellow Trustees Mhairi Owens (chair), Graham Scott (treasurer), Marion McArthur, Trish Grey, Michael Kelly, Karyn Kirkpatrick, and Lorna MacDonald. The retreat focused on the organization's future strategic direction and concluded there are strategic opportunities for us to develop our unique social networking model further:

- in the areas where we are currently operational;
- in parts of the country where we are not currently active;
- with groups of people we have not traditionally worked with; and
- by adapting the model to changing circumstances and fresh opportunity.



The Board retreat also initiated a review of the organization's core purposes now resulting in a restatement of

our Vision: “**our network Members are connected to their communities, sharing their skills and talents and following their dreams - together anything is possible**”

and Mission: “**through local networks of mutual support, we will work with people in their neighbourhoods to deliver the support they require to live independently in their own homes, and to contribute to their communities**”

September 2012 - Helen's Story (Glasgow)

My name is **Helen Black** and I live in the East End of Glasgow. My Life has changed a lot since I joined Neighbourhood Networks. I moved into my own flat just before I joined the Network. My Community Living Worker Lauren has helped me with lots of things about managing my tenancy, like paying my bills and sorting out repairs. Lauren has helped me to see that I can do things for myself and I now have the confidence to manage a lot of this myself without any support. I am really proud of everything I have achieved since I joined the Network and know my mum would be really proud of me too.



One of the things I am most proud of is running the 10k this year. Last year I ran the 5k for Charity. My family was worried about me doing this as I used to have some problems walking but I met up with some other members to train and we did it together. It felt so great I wanted to push myself on and run the 10k this year which I did and finished the race, tired but very happy with myself.

This year has been a really busy one for me. I volunteer in a local cafe where I met my fiancée Paul. We have just got engaged. Paul and I have been able to join in some Network events and get along to things in the community that Lauren helps us find out about, like an Art Class at the Cranhill Trust.

I have a personal budget and used some of it this year for extra support from Lauren to go on holiday. This helped my confidence and Paul and I now go away on holiday without any support.

October 2012 - Frank's Story (West Dumbarton)

Frank was introduced to the Network approximately two years ago. At that time he was receiving ongoing support on a regular basis from another service. Frank had a full diary and was kept occupied for much of the week, including weekends. At first Frank was reluctant to make any changes in his support. He was fairly inde-



pendent in some respects e.g. going shopping, travelling around on public transport independently (locally). Frank lived alone and when he first joined the network his main reasons for doing so were to meet new people; make new friendships and to travel independently outwith Dumbarton. He wanted to continue receiving one to one and group support from his other service as this was always facilitated by a dedicated support worker who came at regular intervals. He wasn't sure how the flexible approach Neighbourhood Networks used could work for him. Those who knew him best also expressed concern regarding whether or not network life was the right approach for Frank. It was also reported that he would struggle to say 'no' and that this would result in duplication of service or in Frank withdrawing.

Within months Frank managed to build a good understanding of the support being offered by Neighbourhood Networks and started to utilise the service more and more. We supported him to negotiate in partnership with his other service. He quickly became a regular attendee at network meetings and social events and was keen to share new ideas or try new challenges. Gradually the service he was receiving from the other agency decreased. Frank now receives the bulk of his support from Neighbourhood Networks and has become a reliable and trustworthy member of the group. He will often offer to support Network Manager and other female members by walking them to the bus stop after evening meetings. Frank now travels to and from the office in Glasgow on a regular basis with no support. Those who know him often comment about how confident he has become and how proud he is his achievements.

November 2012 - Staff Training & Development

Neighbourhood Networks values the skills and knowledge of the staff team and pay a great deal of attention to improving on these throughout each year. On an annual basis we have a training strategy which is developed through consultation with the team around the needs of individuals and the organisation. The training strategy includes our focus areas for each of the 4 full staff Joint Development Days that we



This year we have concentrated on the following areas at our Joint Development Days:



Appraisal system evaluation

Celebrating success

Working better with communities

Barriers to the work we do

Gifts and strengths of the team

Neighbourhood Networks 'Vision'

Mental Health awareness - this was a joint training event with staff and members

Outcome training

Appropriate recording

Key performance indicators

As well as a central Training and Development budget each staff member also has their own small individual budget which they can use for individual training needs. We also have many staff carrying out more formal training to meet SSSC requirements and registration.

December 2012 - Angels & Aeroplanes

Early in 2012 a group of members got together to remember one of their Friends, Rosemary Boyle, who passed away at the end of 2011. An idea grew from this space together to host a fashion show in her memory. This was a fitting tribute to a lady who loved colour, clothes and the finer things in life. It was to be called **Angels and Aeroplanes**, two things Rosemary loved and in fact once wrote a song about.



In typical Neighbourhood Networks style this project grew arms and legs with lots of people very excited to be involved in something different that would enable people across Networks and Communities to come together to learn new skills, have new experiences and be seen in a different light.

An application went into the Big Lottery who awarded the organisation a £10,000 Grant Event to put on the fashion show on the **8th of June 2013 at the Briggait in Glasgow City Centre.**

The work for the show has been a huge opportunity for connections and friendships to develop between people in Networks and the communities in which they are based. Lots of people are helping out to make this event happen with each region working on a theme. Every contribution is valued and we hope that everyone who helps to make this happen will be able to contribute a decorated crocheted square to our community blanket that will also be displayed on the day too. Many thanks to Dorothy Gardiner in Govan for her endless enthusiasm for crocheting all the squares!!



2013 - The year ahead!

Neighbourhood Networks is entering its second decade with a history of successful innovation and solid service delivery in many communities across Scotland's central belt.

Our established model provides:

a distinct approach to offering support to disadvantaged people living in isolation at the margins of our communities; a careful balance between ensuring the right amount of support at the right time; a unique match with public policy initiatives which emphasise the centrality and capacity of the person

- the need for genuine partnership and coproduction
- the regeneration of the community the importance of prevention and early intervention
- the need for appropriate risk taking
- the need to maximize outcomes at a time of reduced public spending

But beyond the buzz words and the sometimes jarring jargon we are trying to ensure we remember that what matters most is that people need to be connected to people. That for marginalized and systematically disadvantaged men and women it's the absence of relationships that's often the killer. And it's that fragility of many network members we've been conscious of in more recent months as they face up to the multitude of "welfare" changes being rained down upon them simultaneously and as the cumulative impact of these changes becomes worryingly clear. The year ahead will therefore demand of us greater resilience, greater creativity, fresher thinking, and an unequivocal commitment to stand alongside those members most in jeopardy.



Jaromir Mastalir,
Phd student from **Czech**
Republic spent 5 months
working with us and sup-
ported Drama Workshops



Mary Fraser meets **Jo Mason** (on right)
Chief Exec from an organisation in **New**
Zealand visited us and we now Skype with
them regularly to support them to start their
own Network



Rita Mietola from **Finland** vis-
ited us in Summer to see how
our members lived and what type
of housing they had.



www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org



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