

outside  
the box

# Outside the Box

Annual report 2012-2013

# About the annual report

This report shows the work we did at Outside the Box during 2012-13.

Outside the Box is a small voluntary organisation which helps people to change their world.

Each year writing an annual report feels a bit odd for us. We began in 2004 and since then we've worked with hundreds of projects and thousands of people. Most of the work we do begins with the people we know. They ask us to help them make changes. They also help us see gaps where things could be better in their community and usually in other places too, which often leads on to new projects and working with other people. But all this usually takes time and doesn't always have a tidy beginning or end within a particular year. In this report we've described topics that ran through a lot of our work over the past year. However most of this began earlier and much of it is continuing over the next few years.

Writing an annual report is also good for us. Like everyone else, we need to pause and reflect from time to time. When we look back over previous annual reports we remember people and local groups which have developed or moved on over the years. We see issues and ideas which seemed challenging and on the margins at that time. Now, they are accepted as the normal way to do things. It is good to be reminded that change happens and that people can make a difference.

There are also people and issues which mattered before and are still struggling to be heard, such as some people with support needs having the level of control they want in their lives. It is also important to be reminded why people work to make the world a fairer, more welcoming and more nurturing place.

This report tells you what we've done. We hope it also gives you ideas about what you can do. If there are ways we can work with you or topics we can tackle together, then please get in touch. That way, in a few years we'll be writing 'There was a fabulous project where we worked with other people and achieved great things. It began when .....

## About the organisation

Outside the Box provides community development support to people and organisations when people want to make changes but experience difficulties. We help them make the changes happen.

These are the aspects of what we do and how we work that differ from most other organisations providing this sort of consultancy support.

- We are led by values and principles that underpin the work.
- We build people's skills and capacity in as many ways as possible – so how we do things as well as what we do.
- We are flexible about the type of people with whom we work. They include individual people, informal community groups, voluntary organisations and public bodies.
- We work with people in lots of different circumstances, including people with disabilities, older people, young people, people who have experience of being homeless, people who are facing money problems, people who are in touch with the criminal justice system, and people who live in a local area and want to make it better for the people who live here.

We don't expect that the issues people raise or the problems they want to deal with will be neat and tidy, or fit into a single policy, or will get dealt within a predictable timescale. We work with issues which are a bit of a guddle because that's what real life is like.

We are based in Glasgow but work all over Scotland. We have links with some organisations and networks in other parts of the UK and often share ideas and experience with them. We also have people from all over the world using our resources and learning from the projects we've worked with.

**“People in Canada and Australia have seen the DVD we made and have told us what it means to them. It is helping people there who have a brain injury and their families know that there can be life after a brain injury. We set out to give a message of hope and encouragement to other people in West Dunbartonshire and maybe other parts of Scotland. Now we're helping people on the other side of the planet. Wow.”** Member of Brain Injury Experience Network

**“Well, to be honest, I didn’t believe that I would be able to do some of the things myself rather than just coming to meetings. There’s life in the old dog yet!”** Wisdom in Practice participant

We have 5 members of staff in the core team at Outside the Box. We also have associates and sessional workers who work with us on particular projects. Sometimes we work in partnership with other organisations where that is the best way to get the work done.

We are a Scottish charity and a company limited by guarantee. There are 5 people who were trustees during the year: Pat Scrutton who chairs the board, Lesley Brady, Alun Evans, Donald Macaskill and Chris Taylor.

The funding for the work comes from grants and contracts for specific projects. We do not have any core funding for the organisation. The sources of our income this year included:

- Big Lottery Fund.
- Comic Relief small grants through Foundation Scotland.
- Hollywood Trust.
- Scottish Government Self-directed support capacity building programmes.
- Scottish Government Equalities Unit.
- Voluntary organisations, NHS and local authority teams across Scotland.

## About the work

Each year the work we do covers a wide range of situations and issues. But there are patterns or trends on what we do. Some of them – such as people having a voice – are there each year. Others are significant parts of our work for a few years, and then settle down. A current example is people influencing the new law and practical arrangements to enable people to have more choice in the social care they use.

This section highlights some of the themes that have run through work over the past year and shows how various projects reinforce and extend the impacts of other projects.

### Developing and supporting user-led services

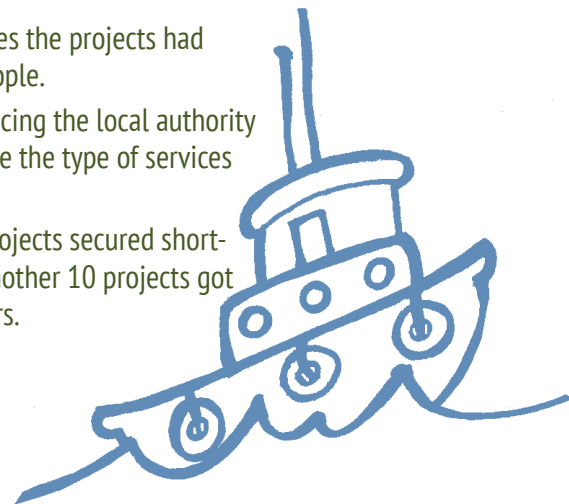
For the past 5 years or so we have been doing more and more around user-led services.

- These are practical services which benefit many people.
- They are led by the people who use the service, or by people in similar situations.
- Often they have a strong peer-support focus.
- They cover lots of types of services: care and support, helping people be part of their communities, creating more leisure opportunities, and more.

5

We completed a 4-year project to develop user-led services, especially those led by disabled and older people. Working Towards was part-funded by the Big lottery Fund.

- We supported 80 projects – 68 local ones and 12 which helped people in several areas across the country.
- We gave advice and practical support to 681 people who took on leading roles to get the projects underway or keep them going.
- Our target was to have 30 projects delivering a service. By the end of 2012, 43 projects were doing this.
- Around 12,000 local people were benefiting from the activities the projects had started and the services have the potential to reach more people.
- 49 projects achieved their aims in other ways, such as influencing the local authority or another voluntary organisation and getting them to provide the type of services people wanted.
- We helped with finding money for some of the projects. 28 projects secured short-term grants to get them started – totalling over £260,000. Another 10 projects got on-going income, totalling £140,000 a year for at least 3 years.



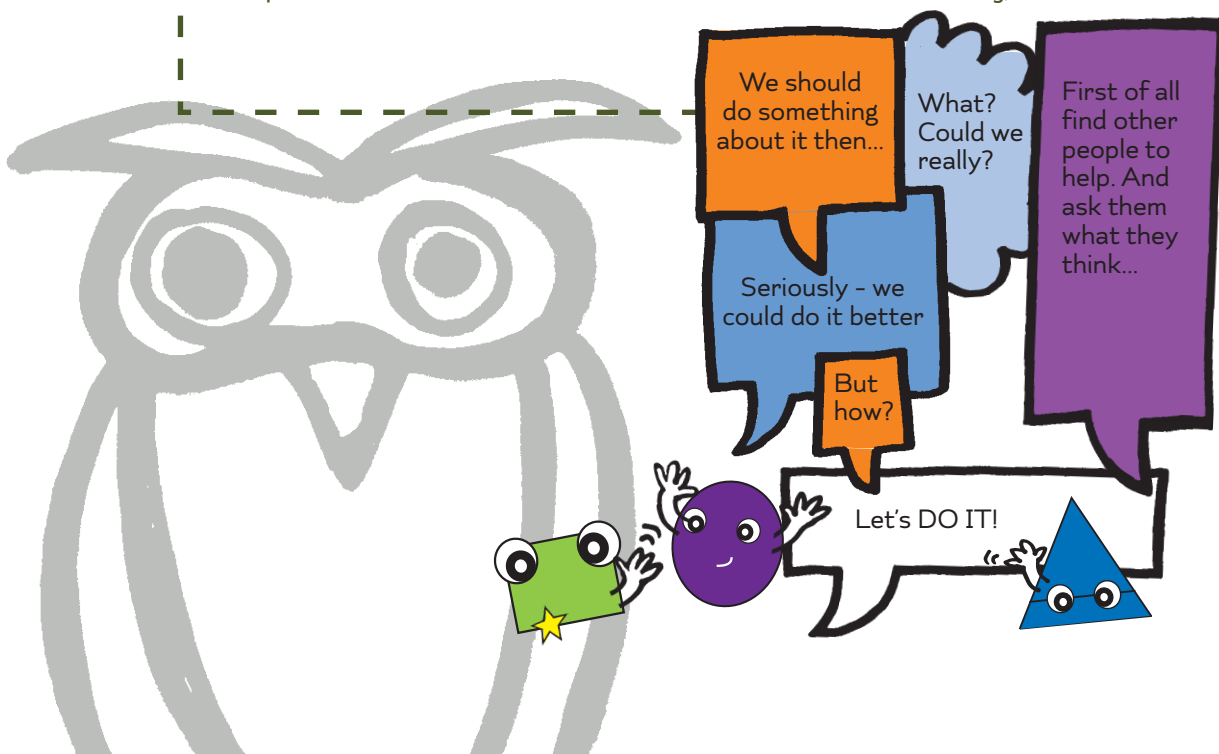
We learned a lot from the Working Towards project about what helps this sort of project succeed, what sorts of difficulties they can run into, and what makes these outcomes more likely. The report is Tugs helping Supertankers and it is at: [http://www.otbds.org/assets/uploaded\\_files/project/WorkingTowardsTugsHelpingSupertankers1.pdf](http://www.otbds.org/assets/uploaded_files/project/WorkingTowardsTugsHelpingSupertankers1.pdf)

**“Be a tug, not a supertanker! Tugs can help supertankers to change course.”**

**“A place where you feel welcome and that people like you, not where they see you as someone who needs help.”**

Wisdom in Practice is one of the main developments from Working Towards. It is taking the ideas and the approach, but focussing on helping people to develop services that are led by older people.

- The project began in April 2012 and is funded by the Scottish Government Equality Fund.
- We are in touch with people and groups across Scotland.
- Local projects we have worked with include an Asian Women’s group, people who want to develop peer support for people affected by bowel or bladder continence problems, and groups creating activities to promote older people’s physical and mental wellbeing.
- We are gathering examples and useful resources from other parts of the UK.
- We held an event in March 2013 which brought together people with an interest in developing more opportunities and services that reflect the interests and contributions of older people.
- We are working with groups which are developing activities that are focused on men, such as men’s sheds.
- We have more events planned for the coming year.
- Reports from Wisdom in Practice are on the website at [www.otbds.org/wisdom](http://www.otbds.org/wisdom)





Last year we described in the annual report how we were working with women in rural areas in the south of Scotland to plan for a project to support the development of community-based activities for mums and their children. The aim was to support women's wellbeing, create more opportunities for them and their families, and contribute to sustainable inclusive communities.

- We got funding for work in 3 areas: West Wigtownshire in Dumfries and Galloway, rural parts of South Lanarkshire and various locations across Scottish Borders.
- Work got underway in all 3 areas and is continuing.
- People from the 3 areas get together to share experiences of developing groups led by mums and learn about ways to tackle the issues that are getting raised.
- Some of the groups that are already getting started include younger mums in West Wigtownshire, several new mother and toddler groups in smaller villages, expanding an existing group for mums of twins, buggy walk groups and a network of women from other countries who live in Scottish Borders.
- We are working on an employment resource, to help mums who want to get back to paid work have more options.
- We are also planning a DVD to help show what it is like for mums who live in rural areas, and especially isolated locations, and what the benefits of this type of peer support can be.



We are working with several smaller projects, where people want to develop peer support or other user-led services. These include:

- Women who are moving on from domestic or sexual violence.
- People looking for help in managing money and financial matters.
- Community music groups.
- A recovery-focussed drop-in.

**“It’s reassuring to know other people have the same difficulties that we have, and that they are still cheerful.”**

**“It’s good to be able to learn from other projects: find out what works and what people wouldn’t do again.”** Wisdom in Practice participants

### **Contributing to policy and practice on self-directed support**

Self-directed support is the way in which people choose how to organise the social care and support they get. Many people have heard of direct payments, where people get the money from the local authority and then employ their own personal assistants or get a support provider to deliver the care they want. At the end of 2012 a new Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament. This introduces additional, more flexible ways for people to organise support. The result will be to give more choice and more control to older people, disabled people and others who have support needs.

Outside the Box is working to help people understand what the new arrangements can mean for them. We want as many people as possible to be able to use the new opportunities to get the type of support that will give them a good quality of life.

- We are gathering the experiences and suggestions of people who have used social care services and support, to help other people who are new to this plan ahead and get the information and advice they need.
- Voluntary organisations have asked us to help them with advice and learning support, to develop their staff’s skills and develop new ways of working.



- We are working with other organisations to feed into the work of the Scottish Government team and influence the implementation arrangements for the new Act.
- We developed plans for a new project in partnership with Scottish Care, to create more information for older people. This is getting under way in summer 2013.

The Getting There project brings together smaller user-led support providers.

- We gather examples from other places.
- We share experience and learning through a network and a few groups taking part in joint sessions.
- We have produced reports and resources to help any user-led group get ready for the new arrangements.

The report from the first year and other materials are at [www.otbds.org/gettingthere](http://www.otbds.org/gettingthere)

**“How do we take a step back to think about people and their lives first, before we think about care services and what they do? The starting point should be: what can help anyone in that situation?”**

**“Local authorities tend to see SDS in terms of the way services are organised now, rather than understanding the full potential this opens up. In particular they are not seeing SDS the way we and other user-led service providers see it. It feels as if we are waiting for other people to catch up with where we are in our thinking.”**



## Helping people to have a voice

All the work Outside the Box does is aimed at enabling people to be heard. Some projects have this as their main focus. These are some of the ways we have worked on over the past year.

- We are supporting people to feed in to formal decision-making processes when the NHS and/or local authority want to hear the experience of people who use services or carers.
- We are helping organisations develop service users' participation throughout the work they do.
- We carried out independent evaluations for community projects.
- We helped groups raise awareness about issues that affect their members or the people they support.
- We are supporting groups of people to influence policy issues at national level.

We have been doing more on digital inclusion and ways to use social media.

- The Mind Waves project has developed. This uses social media as one way for people to share stories about positive aspects of mental wellbeing. The project was nominated as a finalist in the Technology for Good awards and we gave presentations as part of Social Media Week and at a Be Good Be Social workshop. You can see the stories at [www.mindwavesnews.com](http://www.mindwavesnews.com)
- We also produced a report which looked at what we had learned from the project and where the achievements and challenges are. This is helping NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, which has funded this development stage of Mind Waves, think about how the project can develop in the future. You can read the report at [www.otbds.org/mindwaves](http://www.otbds.org/mindwaves)
- Social media is a big part of the Mums project. Several groups have developed a group Facebook page as another way for women to keep in touch with each other, for example. We are developing training on ways to use social media and keep everyone safe.
- Digital inclusion is emerging as an important issue in Wisdom in Practice. We are looking at ways to support people across Scotland who want to develop more ways for older people to make use of the opportunities that the internet and new forms of communication can open up for them.

10



The Brain Injury Experience Network (BIEN) brings together people living in West Dunbartonshire who have had a brain injury. We worked with them on a DVD which shows their experiences of moving on after their injuries and working together as a peer support group. You can see more at:

Since then we have worked with the group and staff in the West Dunbartonshire Acquired Brain Injury Service to disseminate the DVD and tell more people what BIEN have done. This has included:

- A launch of the DVD – complete with red carpet, glamorous outfits and speeches (well, it was the world premiere).
- Sending copies to other ABI services and voluntary organisations.
- Giving presentations to staff teams in the local area.
- Showing a short clip on the public information screens in all the Health Centres, Council offices and other locations in West Dunbartonshire, to raise awareness about brain injury and its impacts among the public.
- Visiting other groups led by people who have had a brain injury and places where people are thinking of setting up a group.
- Going to international and Scottish conferences about brain injury and encouraging the Managed Clinical Network for Scotland to do more around patients' perspectives.
- Telling other people how to make their DVD – what process works for people who have had a brain injury and find it difficult to concentrate for a long time or get tired very easily.

11

**“We worked as a team when we made the DVD and now we’re working as a team to spread the word.”**

**“It’s all of us saying we’re here. It is raising the profile of people who have a brain injury.”**



We fed in the experiences of people to the Scottish Government's development of strategies on preventing suicide and minimising people's use of self-harm. This included people in situations who had been overlooked in previous discussions about suicide and self-harm, such as older people and people with learning disabilities.

We also helped groups which had a range of experiences to feed in their own ideas and views, and helped them find ways of doing this which felt positive for the people involved.

We helped voluntary groups organise their own events to raise awareness about suicide and/or self-harm. They have used the discussions to bring people to work together on practical developments for people in that area as well as to get a stronger response to feed in to the Scottish Government's formal Engagement process.

For several years Outside the Box has hosted Shared Strengths, which is an informal network of people who have an interest in raising understanding about adults' use of self-harm as a way of coping. We worked with a small team of people from Shared Strengths to organise an event about self-harm. Over 80 people came from across Scotland and many more people wanted to come – so we're looking at regional events, or a bigger venue, or both, for next year. We are now putting together a report to help people who came to the event take the ideas back to people in their local areas.

12

**“Thank heavens for today. It was hard but good to talk about the difficult stuff.”**

**“Awesome Day. It would be great to have an annual event with different topics relating to self harm each year and to share good practice.”**

**“It is good to feel that Government is listening to us now, that our views and our voices matter.”**



We are working with MEAD – the Minority Ethnic Access Development project in Perth.  
We are gathering people’s experiences of getting access to services and identifying ways for people from the range of ethnic minority groups to have a voice.

The issues that have come up include:

- Language barriers – what individuals have to do to overcome these.
- Access to interpreting services when people are using public services in.
- Opportunities to volunteer.
- People’s experiences around employment.
- Supporting people’s mental wellbeing.
- Being part of the local community.
- Keeping active and access to sports.
- How people from different faiths and communities get access to mainstream services.
- Ways to publicise what MEAD does, especially for people who have come recently to the area as migrants.
- How people want MEAD to develop.

**“I am really happy [to help]. If you need my hand then I can do that.”**

**“When English is not good enough, you need to have an interpreter for doctor or dentist so as to translate what is in the heart. The interaction can be very hard without that.”**

**“There is no Muslim graveyard in Perth so people have to make regular visits to the graveyard in Dundee when they want to visit family graves each week.”**

# Future plans

During 2012-13 we reviewed the areas we work in and our plans for the next few years as part of updating our business plan.

These are topics where we want to develop work that we currently doing:

- Work with families, including fathers and grandparents and parents who have additional needs or disabilities.
- Working with older people to develop ways change the ways older people are perceived, to influence services and get the support they want.
- Tackling issues that affect mostly women.
- Developing user-led services and sharing learning around the craft of creating and sustaining them.
- People influencing the support they get, including making best use of self-directed support.
- Promoting social inclusion by helping people feel and be part of their communities and building the capacity of communities.
- Financial inclusion and digital inclusion.



We are keen to work with people and groups which share our values and want to work in our sort of flexible way.

We are also keen to work in partnership with different organisations and informal groups.

“It made a big difference, just having that wee bit of help to make us think of all the things that we could do and decide what it was that we really wanted to concentrate on.”

**Our office is at  
Unit 23  
150 Brand St  
Glasgow G51 1DH**

**0141 419 041  
admin@otbds.org**

**You can get copies of our reports and more  
information about our work on the website:  
[www.otbds.org](http://www.otbds.org)**