

**Outside the Box Annual report
2014-15**

About Outside the Box

This is a description of what we did over the past year and the difference our work has made.

Outside the Box provides development support to people who want to make a difference in their communities. We are a small, independent charity and aim to work as a social enterprise.

We began in 2004 and over the past 11 years have learned about the issues that affect the thousands of people and hundreds of groups with whom we've worked and about what sorts of community development support work best in different situations.

There are themes that run through our work:

- Creating inclusive communities
- Enabling people to have different conversations
- People having more control in their lives
- Creating strong, sustainable groups.

We want to thank all the people who helped make the work happen: people in community groups, volunteers who work with us and in the projects, and the workers at Outside the Box and our partners.

Creating inclusive communities

People come to us about community issues, especially those that affect people who feel they are on the margins or that they don't have a voice.

We listen and reflect on what lies behind the problems people and groups are facing.

We aim to help build stronger communities as well as tackling the current problem.

Wisdom in Practice supports groups led by older people when they want to increase the practical support available to older people in their community.

We work alongside older people who feel left out or that they are falling between the cracks. This includes older people in the BME communities and older LGBT people, as well as people who have dementia, people who don't get out much, and people who live in care homes.

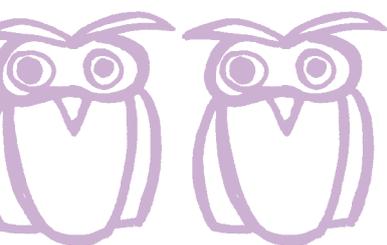
Over the past year we worked with community groups across Scotland to raise the issues that were important to older people.

We produced a series of Hints and Tips with practical advice to help older people make their communities and services more inclusive.

The tips also show other people - such as workers in public bodies and mainstream community groups - how to feel more skilled and confident in welcoming a wider range of people. They have examples from the groups with whom we worked, showing how people do make a difference.

Wisdom in Practice is supported through a grant from the Scottish Government's Equalities programme. One of the benefits has been the links with the other projects that focus on equalities issues. We have learned from the suggestions they have offered and hope we are helping raise their understanding of the issues that affect older people.

There is more at the dedicated website for this project:
www.wisdominpractice.org.uk



"I have been involved in this group for years. I may have dementia now but I can still contribute."

"The tips showed us that it was easier to include people than we had assumed – practical, achievable steps and more confidence that we are on the right lines."



We're Here Too was a series of events that brought together people who are interested in older people who live in care homes and others who have higher support needs being more included in their communities.

We heard about places where people are doing this and came up with suggestions on ways to extend this to other places and services.

We are now planning a follow up event in autumn 2015.



MUMS SUPPORTING MUMS

Mums Supporting Mums is a network of small groups led by mums who want to enjoy each other's company and get a bit of practical and emotional support. It has benefited lots of mums, dads and grandparents living in rural parts of Scotland, as well as giving young children more company and opportunities to make friends.

Most of the groups are in rural areas. Over the past year the parents have been building on links with other people in their locations as part of sustaining strong local communities. Examples include:

- Working with other groups to raise funds for each other, such as sponsored buggy walks
- Being part of an alliance looking at taking over the running of an old school as a community resource
- Helping other groups get started
- Being part of the committee that looks after a village hall.





Digital Inclusion is a big issue for people who don't have easy access to equipment and the internet, or who don't have the confidence to be involved.

We found out what type of learning or other support older people want to enable them to have more skills and confidence around digital inclusion.

We're encouraging older people to use the technology and gain the benefits it can bring.

We're showing groups and services in touch with older people what they can do to help more people be digitally included.

We've produced tips to help people providing training and on-going support around using the internet and social media to tailor what they do to reflect the priorities and circumstances of older people.

We worked with groups of people with mental health problems to develop a resource to enable members and people in similar circumstances to be digitally included. This includes a description of the of the main barriers that people described and practical suggestions on how to tackle each difficulty.

"It can be a route to keeping existing friendships and making new friendships. There are people you come across on forums or at support groups and then we talk on the phone or chat online."

"It opens the world so you don't feel so isolated."

Enabling people to have different conversations

We enable people to be visible and heard, particularly people who feel they are forgotten.

We show people how they can use the processes and opportunities that are already there.

We influence policy through our knowledge, experience and activities on the ground.

Permission to Dream brought together people from different roles and places to look at how the new Self-directed support arrangements could be made to work for people who have mental health problems.

We heard that there were concerns and questions around how SDS would work for groups providing care and support to people with mental health problems and for people who were looking for support.

- We contacted other organisations with an interest in this area and we worked together to move things on – groups of people who use mental health services, care providers, advocacy and advice projects, NHS and local authority teams.
- We held events where people could talk about what was worrying them, hear how other people were tackling this and come up with new ideas.
- We encouraged people to stay in touch.
- We found examples from other places and helped people get in touch with them.
- We built in ways for people to take part through social media, including training for people to be community reporters.
- People then used the reports from the events to move on their own conversations with other people in their local areas.

There is more information at www.gettingtheresds.com/permission-to-dream



“It changed the relationship with the Mental Health services in a good way. We knew more about SDS than they did. Getting some of the workers along to the Permission to Dream events has been very positive, as they came back and shared what they had heard with colleagues.”

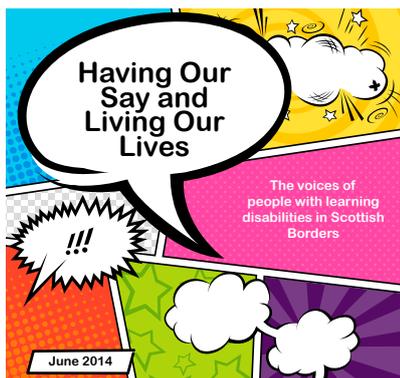
We help **independent participation** projects get established and plan for their future.

Make it Happen is the forum for older people in Falkirk and district. It began with a base at Outside the Box. It has continued to flourish and now has its own constitution, bank account and income. The range of issues that people are raising covers facilities for everyone in their local areas as well as services aimed at older people.

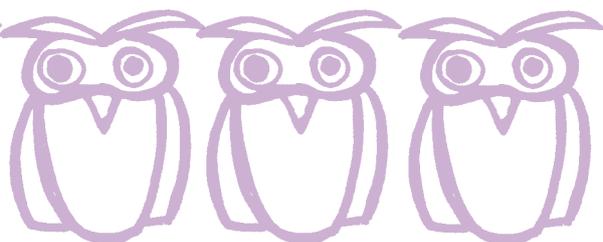
Angus Voice is a new route for people with mental health problems in Angus to feed in their views and experiences to the NHS and Council. It will also be taking on issues such as raising awareness and mental well being and tackling stigma.

People First Borders is the collective voice for people with learning disabilities living in Scottish Borders. They wanted to look at what they had achieved and the future direction they should take. We helped with asking members what they wanted to do, with looking at the options for future priorities and possible income sources, and with showing more people what the group was achieving.

Tomorrow's Women Glasgow is an innovative multi-agency centre in Glasgow, working with women with complex needs who are involved in the Criminal Justice system. It is part of the Community Justice Authority in Glasgow. We are working with the women and staff at the project to develop ways for the women to contribute their views to the development of this service and on other issues that affect them. The learning from the work with Tomorrow's Women is informing service user involvement in other parts of the CJA in Glasgow and contributes to the development of co-produced services.



“There are changes to care going on and many decisions are being made about people with Learning Disabilities. The group gives a voice to people when they’ve not been told the reason for decisions that are being made.”



“It feels as if the Council is now listening to what we say.”

*“It has spurred me on to ask questions about service user involvement at every integration event I attend.”
(Feedback after a We’re Here Too event)*

We're Here Too brought together people from lots of different places, types of organisations and roles. It also made participation by older people with higher support needs one of the main topics for the conversations.

Wisdom in Practice Hints and Tips included a set on participation, co-production and effective partnerships. These are helping lots of people find ways to improve how they talk to other people and work together to make things better for people in that area.

We also produced a series of Wisdom in Practice discussion papers that opened up topics that people told us they were finding difficult, or didn't know how to take forward. They made it easier for people to start their own conversations.

People having more control in their lives

We provide the tools so people can do things for themselves. We empower.

We make complicated things simple.



Young parents - mums and dads who are aged under 21 - have been part of the Mums Supporting Mums network of peer support groups.

They told us how difficult their lives can be as young parents.

- They have all the challenges that other parents do, plus all the problems that affect young people such as trying to finish their education and look for their first jobs.
- They often have fewer resources than most other parents do - less money, less likely to have their own home, and fewer friends and other community supports to help them.
- Sometimes it's because other people don't understand their situation and sometimes it is about the attitudes and judgements that people make about teenage parents.

This year we worked with young parents in the western part of Dumfries and Galloway. We developed support that focussed on their circumstances and was planned and led by them.

"I think this is a brilliant idea, it's what I really need and for a lot of people I know."

"I don't get to make decisions for the kids, everybody else does that for me."

"It's good to see young parents who are getting on well with their lives and doing a good job bringing up their children."

- We developed a peer support group of young mums and organised sessions for young parents on topics such as balancing access to work and their options for childcare.
- We looked at how to raise awareness among other people of the strengths and abilities that young parents have.
- Our sessional workers included 2 young women who became mums when they were teenagers.



Over the Fence is a website designed for and with people who are just starting to use social care services and other supports to get on with daily life. We've been working on this for the last few years and were pleased to see the website launched and benefiting many more people.



"Great resource. Sharing other people's stories makes it seem more real."

"This has made a huge difference for my mum and for me. She's feeling much more in control of her life now."

"The examples and tips guiding us through the process have opened up a lot more choices and avenues than I thought I had."

Circles of Support build strong, adaptable networks of people who all help support someone when they need extra help or encouragement. We worked with community groups to develop tips on how to set up a Circle of Support, especially for people with dementia, other older people who need more support, and for their family carers.

"Really helpful – the tips are easy to understand and practical. We've got our Circle going and it makes sense to both mum and dad as well as to the rest of us. They know what is happening and know it is what they want, even when mum forgets what they decided. Such a great idea."

Creating strong, sustainable groups

We make change a positive experience for people. We make the process safe for those involved.

We make opportunities for people to learn and know they are contributing.

Getting There brought together smaller voluntary organisations that provide peer support and other services. Most of the groups are led by the people who use their services, which brings challenges alongside their many strengths.

We helped groups get ready for the introduction of the new Self-directed support arrangements and plan the future directions they could take.

The project was due to end in early 2015 but there was an opportunity to apply for funding to continue it. We all decided not to continue the project – the groups were feeling strong and ready to continue the work themselves.

Outside the Box will continue to host the website that has all the resources and examples from the project, so other groups can continue to benefit. We'll also be following up on issues that emerged as new opportunities and priorities, such as the development of micro enterprises.

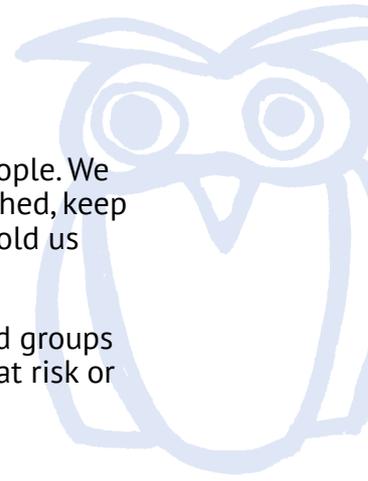
You can see the final report from the project at <http://www.gettingtheresds.com/getting-there-resources/>

"The Getting There publications are great. The posters came at just the right time, when we were all feeling fed up about SDS not delivering what we had hoped. Here were people who were cheerful as well as giving practical suggestions!"

"I didn't want to get anyone into trouble. I thought I might make things worse. But now I know what to do."

"Finding out what it is like in other places was very helpful."

"Being part of Getting There has given those of us who use services a lot more confidence."



Wisdom in Practice gave support to groups led by older people. We produced more practical resources to help groups get established, keep going and be confident about tackling problems that people told us were a worry.

One example is the tips on keeping people safe, which showed groups what to do when they were worried about someone who was at risk or who they thought was being harmed.

*“Tips on partnerships are great
– better communication with
colleagues in other teams as well
as with community groups.”*

Looking ahead

These are topics where we want to develop our contribution.

- Working with older people to challenge the ways they are perceived and supported in their communities as well helping them develop shaping the support they want.
- Promoting social inclusion by helping people feel and be part of their communities and building the capacity of communities.
- Developing user-led services and sharing learning around the craft of creating and sustaining these activities and the overall approaches.
- People influencing the support they get, including making best use of self-directed support. From 2015 on, this is especially people who have had few opportunities to have such choices, such as people who experience homelessness and people in touch with the criminal justice system.
- Work with families, including dads and grandparents as well as mums, and parents who have additional needs or disabilities.
- Practical approaches to increase financial inclusion and digital inclusion for people who are getting left behind.

Income

During 2014-15 we received grants and contract income from a range of sources.

We want to thank all the organisations and people who supported our work.

- Big Lottery Fund
- Dumfries and Galloway Council – LEADER programme
- Falkirk Reshaping Care for Older People Change Fund
- Glasgow Community Justice Authority
- Holywood Trust
- NHS Borders
- Paths for All
- Scottish Borders Council – LEADER programme
- Scottish Borders Housing Association
- Scottish Care
- Scottish Government Equalities programme
- Scottish Government Health grants programme
- Scottish Government Self-directed support capacity building grants programme
- Seton Care and Berwickshire Housing Association
- South Lanarkshire Council – LEADER programme
- Voluntary Action Fund
- Other voluntary organisations



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