



Befriending
Networks

Annual Report 2012-2013

Our vision is of a society in which high quality befriending support is accessible to all in need and its importance in reducing social isolation, promoting wellbeing and building community cohesion is recognised.

Chairman's Remarks

Research has shown that the detrimental effect of loneliness on human health and well-being is greater than well-known risk factors such as obesity and is as damaging as cigarette smoking. Compared to people with good social connections and friendships, 'disconnected' people are more likely to have high blood pressure, become disabled, go into cognitive decline and develop dementia, and feel depressed and suicidal. The good news is that the research evidence is reaching and influencing individuals and organisations across the whole of society. In government, among health and social care professionals, in the third sector and in public at large, there is increasing awareness of dangers and destructiveness of loneliness ... and increasing recognition of the potential of befriending to reconnect lonely individuals to the world around them. As Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister of Scotland noted in our *Befriending Manifesto* for the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary Election:



"We all need support and friendship, regardless of circumstances. But where do people turn when friends and family are simply no longer there, or can't help us through a difficult time, or need all our care and attention and can't give us any in return? Thank goodness for befriending projects, who help fill the empty spaces where care, support and a listening ear need to be."

Unfortunately, it's also a challenging time for befriending, as services face funding cuts and threats of closure as a result of continuing difficult financial conditions and ever more stringent implementation of austerity measures. Despite these difficult conditions, the projects that constitute our membership continue to serve a wide range of vulnerable client groups. To you all I express my admiration and gratitude for the excellent services you offer and the compassionate way in which these services are delivered. I am also delighted to be able to express publicly my profound thanks to the staff of Befriending Networks, for the quality of the expertise, training, information resources and general support that they provide to our members; and to my colleagues on the Board for their valuable contribution to strategy and oversight of the organisation.

I am optimistic about the future of befriending and Befriending Networks. I believe that there are genuine opportunities for growth (increasing our membership, particularly outside Scotland) and for influencing public debates (and policy) on the importance of enhancing the connections between individuals, their local communities and the wider society

If you are a member of Befriending Networks, I would like to thank you for your involvement and support. If you are not yet a member, I would like to invite you to join our organisation. You will find that your own project will benefit greatly from the quality of services and resources that Befriending Networks has to offer, and from the spirit of collaboration and mutual support among our members.

Steve Platt



Chief Executive's Report

2012/13 has been a year of change for Befriending Networks:

From April 2012 we received a three year funding boost from the Scottish Government Mental Health Division towards our activities in Scotland, which was more than welcome, particularly as our five year support from the BIG Lottery was to come to an end in August.



A grant from the Voluntary Action Fund in August 2012 meant that, for the first time, we had a recruitment process for volunteers to support us with some of our work. This has added a different dimension to our team and we are really grateful to those volunteers that have stuck with us, and added such value to our work.

The cessation of funding from the BIG Lottery meant that the Quality in Befriending Award was no longer subsidised, and we introduced a fee for this service. We are confident that QiB represents good value for money and have had positive feedback from members who have successfully completed the process. We will shortly be coming up to the QiB three year mark, and consequently look forward to reviewing the process during the coming year.

In October 2012 our longest-serving staff member, Information Officer Sam Rospigliosi, moved on. We miss her quirky sense of humour, her encyclopaedic knowledge of which befriending service does what where and with whom, and her revelations of today's bargain from the local charity shop, where takings have doubtless plummeted since her departure.

November 2012 saw the first ever Befriending Week; a celebration of befriending activity and an opportunity to raise awareness of the issue of loneliness. We approached this week with some trepidation and a budget of zero: however, our member befriending services really embraced the concept, submitting pictures, stories, poems and quotes for our Befriending Week website, and clearly using the scant resources we made available to promote their services across the country. The event was well publicised in local newspapers, online news and some local radio stations, and befriending coordinators used the week to celebrate their activities, thank their befriending volunteers, and raise awareness locally. Our conference on the subject of 'Loneliness' at the end of Befriending Week 2012 was given a fillip by the last minute addition of Esther Rantzen as an opening speaker. We are inspired by the positive response to Befriending Week from the network and beyond, and will endeavour to carry on the tradition for years to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Befriending Networks team, Board members and volunteers for their tireless work over the last year, and also to our membership for their inspirational stories, willingness to share learning, knowledge and experiences, and commitment to tackling loneliness.

Liz Watson

Training

2012 / 13 was an extremely busy year on the training front. In terms of scheduled courses, we delivered four complete runs of the nine-module Vital Skills in Befriending course in the year – in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Leicester. We also delivered the four modules of our Vital Skills in Management and Leadership for Befriending course in Glasgow, and offered two brand new complementary skills courses in Reminiscence Skills for Befriending in the 2012/13 period.



We also designed and delivered 15 bespoke courses to members and partners on the following topics: training for trainers, child protection and safeguarding for befriending services, understanding loneliness, evaluating the impact of befriending on confidence and self-esteem, mental health awareness for volunteer managers and developing a befriending service.

As a result of a training partnership with Elizabeth Finn Care, Befriending Networks members also had the opportunity to attend one of seven free Turn2Us Income Maximisation workshops which were hosted in Edinburgh, Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Inverness.

Another important development this year has been the creation of a team of new volunteer assessment consultants – made possible by funding from the Voluntary Action Fund – to work in collaboration with the Training Officer in the assessment of submissions to the SQA accredited Vital Skills in Befriending Certificate.

Finally, in conjunction with our member hosts (who generously provide free venues and refreshments) we organised and facilitated a total of 23 Common Ground networking meetings in the following locations: Elgin, Stirling, Glasgow, Kirkcaldy, York, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Perth, Falkirk, Aberdeen, Leicester, London, Kilmarnock, Dundee and Inverness.

Sandra Brown

Quality in Befriending

It has been a busy year for Quality in Befriending: 12 organisations submitted an application (18 projects), out of which 8 organisations (12 projects) achieved the QiB Award: Epilepsy Connections; Children 1st bfriends East Lothian, bfriends South Edinburgh and bfriends Wester Hailes/North Edinburgh; Transitions Towards Tomorrow Befriending Service - Alcohol and Drug Support South West Scotland; South East Befriending Service - Aberlour Child Care Trust; The Broomhouse Centre Youth Befriending and Elderly Befriending; Greater Glasgow & Clyde Heart Failure/COPD Support Service - Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland; Befriend a Child; Renfrewshire Befriending Youth Scheme. Two projects are in the process of submitting extra evidence to attempt to upgrade their award to Excellence, and 7 other applications were also assessed: 6 are due to submit extra evidence, 1 was assessed as requiring a resubmission. Three further projects registered for QiB during this time. Registrations were suspended for several months during summer 2012 in order to develop electronic (rather than paper-based) application materials and to introduce the new charging structure.



Projects that register for QiB are asked to rate themselves before and after the process: after completing QiB, coordinators felt that their knowledge, the strength of their project and their ability to produce live evidence had increased in 81% of the areas covered (in the other 19% they felt there had been no change).

Completing QiB raised our standards of practice.

Support from BNS was excellent.

Getting feedback and recommendations was excellent. We have already taken the comments on board and have adjusted the practices in the areas mentioned.

Although a lot of work it was well worth the effort to ensure the practices and procedures of our Organisation met the standards required of QiB. Advice was on hand from BNS if needed not only through their website but also by telephone. It is also good to have the QiB Logo on our paperwork so that all current and future stakeholders are aware that we have met the standard.

Martha Lester-Cribb

QiB Certificate Presentation: 2012 BNS Conference



Membership

Following Sam's departure, Information and Membership have been combined in Alison's new role as Members Services Officer, and she is now responsible for the new-format quarterly newsletter.

On the membership front, it's great to see that we finished the year with more members than at the start and with a lot more new members having joined than in the previous year. It's a shame that we lost a number, too, but the overriding reason for not renewing membership is financial and this is probably not unexpected in these times of austerity.



New members 2012-13

Scotland	41	56%
England, Ireland, Wales	31	43%
Rest of the world (Australia)	1	1%
Total	73	

Members at 31 March 2013

Scotland	159	73%
England, Ireland, Wales	57	26%
Rest of the world	3	1%
Total	219	

Members at 31 March 2013 by client group (%):

Generic	4	Ethnic Minority	8	Offenders/Ex-offenders	1
Care Leavers	1	Homeless	2	Older People	19
Carers	18	Learning Disabilities	12	Physical/Sensory Impairment	5
Children & Young People	10	Lone Parent Families	1	Sexuality/Gender Identity	1
Drugs/Alcohol	3	Mental Health	11	Special Health Condition	4

Alison Chapman

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2013

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	31.3.13 Total Funds £	31.3.12 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	21,192	91,783	112,975	123,192
Investment income	137	-	137	108
Incoming resources from charitable activities				
Training/Network	34,672	-	34,672	31,498
Total incoming resources	56,001	91,783	147,784	154,798
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Costs of generating funds				
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold & other costs	4,345	3,353	7,698	10,982
Charitable Activities				
Training/Network	21,455	87,980	109,435	142,813
Governance Costs	630	450	1080	900
Total resources expended	26,430	91,783	118,213	154,695

Funders

We would like to extend a huge thank you to our funders for their support:

- The Scottish Government
- BIG Lottery Fund
- Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland
- The Cruden Foundation Ltd.
- Nelson Gilmour Smith & Co.
- Souter Charitable Trust
- Voluntary Action Fund



We exist to:

Provide a high standard of information, training, resources, quality development and consultancy in relation to befriending

Raise the profile and understanding of befriending and its role within a continuum of social care provision

Support the delivery of high quality befriending services

Maintain an effective and supportive network among our constituent members

Board Members 2012-13

Steve Platt (Chair)	Neil Mathers (to April 2012)
Elaine Smith (to Nov 2012)	Liz McLeish (to Nov 2012)
Kay Barton	Maureen O'Reilly
Paul Okroj	Jenny White (from June 2012)
Alison Moore (from Nov 2012)	Fiona Couper (from Jan 2013)



Esther Rantzen – Nov. 2012