

## General information and guidance for both awards

This guidance document contains:

- Background about the scheme and awards
- What the scheme aims to do
- Benefits of joining for groups and organisations
- Key points about each of the awards
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Detailed criteria for each award in the Appendix

### Background

A new action plan was agreed by the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership in 2023, called '**Creating Hope in the Scottish Borders**'. This is linked to the national suicide prevention strategy 'Creating Hope Together' and the national strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Two key areas of action in the local plan are 'Mentally Healthy Communities' and 'Suicide Safer Communities'.

The Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention programme in the Scottish Borders is hosted by the NHS Borders Public Health Team, which runs this scheme. There is a multi-agency partnership group which oversees the programme that includes NHS Borders, Scottish Borders Council, Borders College, Police Scotland, Live Borders, Berwickshire Housing Association, Eildon Housing Association, SBHA and Third Sector organisations such as Samaritans, Borders Care Voice, Health in Mind and We Are With You. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum and the After A Suicide Working Group both play an important role in guiding our work with their voices of Lived Experience.

Following our engagement work, it was agreed that we would develop a new voluntary scheme for mentally healthy and suicide safer communities, with awards to recognise the efforts of local groups and organisations. Many local groups and organisations are already active and readily engaged with supporting mental health and looking out for each other, however, the fact remains that many people are still struggling with their mental health and suicidal thoughts and collectively we are seeking to do more to nurture positive environments and create hope within our communities. 'Hope' is identified as a key feature of suicide prevention and we can all contribute to creating hope by being caring, compassionate and inclusive.

The Creating Hope scheme is open to any group or organisation in the Scottish Borders that wishes to sign up to show that they are committed to being a mentally healthy and suicide safer community. Membership of the scheme is reviewed annually with training refreshed every three years.

There are two awards in the scheme:

1. **Creating Hope Award** – this is the foundation level award that includes committing to good mental health practice in your setting, having designated mental health advocates in your group or organisation for promoting good mental health practice, creating a supportive environment, putting in place some 'Informed Level' training and signposting to support.
2. **Creating Hope Champions Award** – this is the enhanced level award that includes the above criteria plus creating a safe space, adopting the Time, Space and Compassion principles, having designated suicide prevention champions and putting in place some 'Skilled Level' training.

**The Creating Hope Scottish Borders scheme aims to:**

- Engage local groups and organisations in promoting good mental health;
- Nurture positive environments within communities and create hope;
- Enable our local communities to have a clear understanding of suicide and its prevention, and be able to respond in helpful and informed ways when support is needed;
- Connect people to the information and support they need to be mentally healthy and suicide safer;
- Recognise, support and promote mentally healthy and suicide safer communities that are caring, compassionate and inclusive.

**By joining the Creating Hope scheme you can make a big difference!**

By signing up to the scheme you will be raising awareness of mental health and suicide prevention and demonstrating that you are caring, compassionate and inclusive. This can help people to feel more comfortable and safe. Seeing the posters displayed in your locations will communicate that your community is supportive of mental health and can help to start conversations, challenge stigma and normalise talking about mental ill health and suicidal thoughts.

By committing to the award you can access training, knowledge and skills for your staff and volunteers – you'll also have access to a wider support network of likeminded groups, organisations and professionals. Your local community, your staff and volunteers will know you are committed to their wellbeing - they will know that you are committed to being a mentally healthy and suicide safer group or organisation, which may encourage more people to use your service or get involved with your group.

By being prepared to support the conditions for good mental health and to connect people to support if they are struggling, your group or organisation will be demonstrating that it is caring, compassionate and inclusive – which may just make a big difference to someone's life, it may even save a life.

**What you have to do to get the award**

By joining the voluntary award scheme you are agreeing to support the aims of the scheme and to take the following steps to raise awareness and support the scheme in your group/organisation/premises:

1. Ensure all staff and volunteers (as appropriate for your organisation) are aware of the scheme and have read the 'Information for staff and volunteers' document provided as part of the pack;
2. Display the 'Ask for HOPE' posters and certificate of commitment in your premises (if appropriate). The logo is also available for display on members' websites.
3. Make a pledge and demonstrate that you meet the criteria for one of the two awards.

## Criteria for the awards

	<b>Criteria for 'Creating Hope Award'</b>	<b>Criteria for 'Creating Hope Champions Award'</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Demonstrate good mental health practices</b> Participating groups and organisations are able to demonstrate that they are committed to the following practices that promote good mental health.	<b>Demonstrate good mental health practices</b> Participating groups and organisations are able to demonstrate that they are committed to the following practices that promote good mental health.
<b>2</b>	<b>Signposting – support information available</b> Make sure that signposting information is available so that support can be readily accessed	<b>Signposting – support information available</b> Make sure that signposting information is available so that support can be readily accessed
<b>3</b>	<b>Designated 'Advocates' for promoting good mental health and wellbeing</b> We'd recommend having at least 2 -3 Advocates if possible (depending on size of group/organisation)	<b>Designated 'Advocates' for promoting good mental health and wellbeing</b> We'd recommend having at least 2 -3 Advocates if possible (depending on size of group/organisation) AND <b>Suicide Prevention Champions</b> We'd recommend having 2 -3 Champions if possible (depending on size of group/organisation)
<b>4</b>	<b>Informed Level training and awareness</b> Named Mental Health and Wellbeing Advocates to complete the Informed level e-learning module and watch the relevant Trauma Informed Practice video	<b>Informed Level training and awareness</b> Named Mental Health and Wellbeing Advocates to complete the Informed level e-learning materials AND <b>Skilled level training</b> Named Suicide Prevention Champion(s) to complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the 2 day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and</li> <li>the relevant Trauma Informed e-learning module</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Supportive Space</b> Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the principles of Time, Space and Compassion and can respond and signpost effectively.	<b>Safe Space</b> Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the principles of Time, Space and Compassion and are confident in using them. Consider where supportive conversations take place (this might be a physical space in your location)

## Collecting feedback and evaluating the scheme

We want the Creating Hope scheme to work well for our citizens of the Borders and for the groups and organisations participating in it, and we want to support the members. To help with this we have two simple online surveys that can be used to collect feedback about the scheme:

1. A survey for groups and organisations to give feedback on joining and using the scheme and also about the processes and paperwork involved. This can be used at any time by groups and organisations. [CLICK HERE](#) to fill in the Member's Feedback survey.

2. A survey for citizens and representatives from our Lived Experience forums to give feedback about a group or organisation that is a member of the scheme. To help with improving the scheme we will try to pass on any feedback that mentions your group or organisation. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the survey.

If we receive repeated negative feedback from the citizen survey we will contact you to discuss. In situations where repeated negative feedback continues, we reserve the right to remove groups or organisations from the awards scheme. If your group or organisation decides it can no longer participate in the scheme please let us know by emailing [health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk) and remove the certificate / posters.

In addition to the questionnaires, there will be feedback cards that you can fill in and post to us. The Scottish Borders Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum is also available as a way of providing feedback, either in person at their regular meetings or through the local representatives. The Forum can be contacted by via the Mental Health Development Worker at Borders Care Voice by telephoning 07546 709994 or emailing [lynsay@borderscarevoice.org.uk](mailto:lynsay@borderscarevoice.org.uk)

We will also carry out an annual survey of members so that we can find out about the impact the scheme has had.

### **Promotion**

We will include all award holders in a list on our website. On the sign up form you will be asked to agree to your group or organisation being included on our website so that we can promote groups and organisations that are members of the scheme.

### **FAQs please see the Frequently Asked Questions for more information about**

- What to do if someone is in immediate crisis or having suicidal thoughts
- Clear process in place for support
- Clear guidelines and boundaries for staff and volunteers

### **Contact us**

If you need any further information or have any queries about the Creating Hope Awards please contact:

Joint Health Improvement Team (Public Health)  
Scottish Borders Council Headquarters  
Newtown St Boswells  
TD6 0SA  
Email: [health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk)  
Tel: 01835 825 970

## Appendix – what is expected for each criteria

<b>Criteria for ‘Creating Hope Award’</b>	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Demonstrate good mental health practices</b> Participating groups and organisations are able to demonstrate that they are committed to the following practices that promote good mental health.</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b> There are ten practices that we would expect groups and organisations to put in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be open and honest and treat people with kindness, compassion and understanding</li> <li>2. Promote respectful, trusting and non-judgemental relationships</li> <li>3. Promote inclusive, approachable, welcoming and friendly environments</li> <li>4. Be aware of ways to protect and promote good mental health and wellbeing – ‘Ways to Be Well’</li> <li>5. Be aware of the causes of poor mental health such as poverty, trauma and isolation</li> <li>6. Challenge stigma by being willing to talk sensitively about mental health, mental ill health, self-harm and suicide</li> <li>7. Challenge inequality, prejudice, discriminatory language and behaviour</li> <li>8. Have zero tolerance of bullying, threats, violence and abusive behaviour</li> <li>9. Be suicide ALERT</li> <li>10. Be aware of where to get further help and support</li> </ol> <p>These are covered in the Informed Level e-learning training materials. We ask each award member to think about and consider what this looks like for their group or organisation and whether any changes need to be made.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Signposting – support information available</b> Make sure that signposting information is available so that support can be readily accessed</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b> Copies of a signposting leaflet will be provided when joining the scheme. Groups and organisations should familiarise themselves with the content and make the leaflets available in a prominent place so that they are readily available if needed.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Designated ‘Advocates’ for promoting good mental health and wellbeing</b> We’d recommend having at least 2 -3 Advocates if possible (depending on size of group/organisation)</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b> To be an Advocate you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Informed level training and provide a copy of the completion certificate to the scheme organisers</li> <li>• Watch the relevant Trauma Informed Practice video</li> <li>• Be familiar with ways to support good mental health and wellbeing - see ‘Ways to Be Well’ leaflet in the information pack</li> <li>• Be familiar with support procedures and signposting leaflet</li> <li>• Have a way of identifying yourself as an Advocate (e.g. by wearing a Creating Hope pin badge)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Informed Level training and awareness</b> Named Mental Health and Wellbeing Advocates to complete the relevant Informed Level Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention e-learning module and watch the Trauma Informed Practice video.</p>

	<p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a group or organisation applies to join the scheme, the links to the online training materials will be sent to them. You will need to specify which of the modules and videos are most relevant to you.</li> <li>• All Advocates should complete the training and email a copy of their completion certificate to <a href="mailto:health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk">health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk</a></li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Supportive Space</b> Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the principles of Time, Space and Compassion and can respond and signpost effectively.</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups and organisations are expected to display the ‘Ask for HOPE’ poster so that anybody who needs help knows how they can ask for it in a way that is discreet.</li> <li>• Staff and volunteers are encouraged to take the time to have supportive conversations – whether this is with customers, patients, peers or colleagues – to do signposting. This may include liaising with and signposting to a nearby member of the scheme who has Suicide Prevention Champions who are ASIST trained and able to provide a Safe Space.</li> <li>• Ensure that all staff and volunteers use compassionate approaches and responses (whether they are named advocates or not)</li> </ul>

<b>Criteria for ‘Creating Hope Champions Award’</b>	
1	<p><b>Demonstrate good mental health practices</b> Participating groups and organisations are able to demonstrate that they are committed to the following practices that promote good mental health.</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b> There are ten practices that we would expect groups and organisations to put in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be open and honest and treat people with kindness, compassion and understanding</li> <li>2. Promote respectful, trusting and non-judgemental relationships</li> <li>3. Promote inclusive, approachable, welcoming and friendly environments</li> <li>4. Be aware of ways to protect and promote good mental health and wellbeing – ‘Ways to Be Well’</li> <li>5. Be aware of the causes of poor mental health such as poverty, trauma and isolation</li> <li>6. Challenge stigma by being willing to talk sensitively about mental health, mental ill health, self-harm and suicide</li> <li>7. Challenge inequality, prejudice, discriminatory language and behaviour</li> <li>8. Have zero tolerance of bullying, threats, violence and abusive behaviour</li> <li>9. Be suicide ALERT</li> <li>10. Be aware of where to get further help and support</li> </ol> <p>These are covered in the Informed Level e-learning training materials. We ask each award member to think about and consider what this looks like for their group or organisation and whether any changes need to be made.</p>
2	<p><b>Signposting – support information available</b> Make sure that signposting information is available so that support can be readily accessed</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b></p>

	<p>Copies of a signposting leaflet will be provided when joining the scheme. Groups and organisations should familiarise themselves with the content and make the leaflets available in a prominent place so that they are readily available if needed.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Designated ‘Advocates’ for promoting good mental health and wellbeing AND Suicide Prevention Champions</b></p> <p>We’d recommend having at least 2 -3 Advocates and 2 -3 Champions if possible (depending on size of group/organisation). These can be the same people who complete both levels of training.</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b></p> <p>To be an Advocate you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Informed level training and provide a copy of the completion certificate to the scheme organisers</li> <li>• Watch the relevant Trauma Informed Practice video</li> <li>• Be familiar with ways to support good mental health and wellbeing - see ‘Ways to Be Well’ leaflet in the information pack</li> <li>• Be familiar with support procedures and signposting leaflet</li> <li>• Have a way of identifying yourself as an Advocate (e.g. by wearing a Creating Hope pin badge)</li> </ul> <p>To be a Suicide Prevention Champion you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the 2-day ASIST training</li> <li>• Complete the relevant Trauma Informed e-learning module</li> <li>• Provide copies of the training completion certificates to the scheme organisers</li> <li>• Be familiar with how to respond using the principles of Time, Space and Compassion</li> <li>• Have a way of identifying yourself as a Champion, e.g. by wearing a United To Prevent Suicide pin badge</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Informed Level training and awareness</b></p> <p>Named Mental Health and Wellbeing Advocates to complete the relevant Informed Level Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention e-learning module and watch the Trauma Informed Practice video.</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a group or organisation applies to join the scheme, the links to the online training materials will be sent to them. You will need to specify which of the modules and videos are most relevant to you.</li> <li>• All Advocates should complete the training and email a copy of their completion certificate to <a href="mailto:health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk">health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Skilled Level training</b></p> <p>Named Suicide Prevention Champion(s) to complete the 2-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and complete the relevant Trauma Informed Practice e-learning module.</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a group or organisation applies for this award, they will be sent an email with two links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A link to access the relevant Trauma Informed Practice e-learning module;</li> <li>✓ A link to register for the 2-day ASIST course.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ASIST training normally takes place in person in Galashiels and other locations around the Borders. There may be a wait of up to three months for a place on the course to become available.</li> <li>• The group or organisation is expected to be able to release participants from their duties for two consecutive days to take part in the ASIST training. The training is FREE for all participants to attend, but no financial support is available from the scheme to provide cover for attending this training.</li> <li>• All Champions should complete the ASIST training and the relevant Trauma Informed Practice e-learning module and email copies of their completion certificates to <a href="mailto:health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk">health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk</a></li> <li>• Many people in the Borders have already completed the ASIST training. If that is the case with your group or organisation, and the training has been undertaken within the previous three years, we will accept these participants as Champions if they can provide us with a copy of their completion certificate as above. The training should be refreshed every three years.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Safe Space – Time, Space and Compassion</b> Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the principles of Time, Space and Compassion and are confident in using them:</p> <p><b>What is expected of groups and organisations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and volunteers are encouraged to take the time to have supportive conversations – whether this is with customers, patients, peers or colleagues</li> <li>• Consider where supportive conversations can take place. Depending on circumstances this may be on the telephone or by a messaging platform or this might be a physical space in your location.</li> <li>• Ensure that staff and volunteers use compassionate approaches and responses.</li> <li>• Ensure that staff and volunteers are trauma-informed.</li> </ul>