

**NHS Borders
Public Health Department
Joint Health Improvement Team
Annual Report 2023 - 2024**



Contents

Page 3	Introduction
Page 4	NHS Borders Public Health Department Joint Health Improvement Team (JHIT)
Page 5	Public Health Priorities for Scotland
Page 6	Activities Overview and Data
Pages 7 - 10	Training and Capacity Building
Page 11	Communicating With Our Public
Pages 12 - 14	Priority 1 A SCOTLAND WHERE WE LIVE IN VIBRANT, HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES AND COMMUNITIES
Pages 15 - 17	Priority 2 A SCOTLAND WHERE WE FLOURISH IN OUR EARLY YEARS
Pages 18 - 21	Priority 3 A SCOTLAND WHERE WE HAVE GOOD MENTAL WELLBEING
Pages 22 - 25	Priority 4 A SCOTLAND WHERE WE REDUCE THE USE OF AND HARM FROM ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS
Page 26	Priority 5 A SCOTLAND WHERE WE HAVE SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE ECONOMY WITH EQUALITY OF OUTCOMES FOR ALL
Pages 27 - 29	Priority 6 A SCOTLAND WHERE WE EAT WELL, HAVE A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE
Page 30	Looking Forward / Next Steps





Introduction

The year's Public Health - Joint Health Improvement Team's (JHIT) Annual Report is presented to reflect each of Scotland's six Public Health Priorities and aims to share highlights or insights into the work of our skilled and experienced team members. On that basis not all of our work is presented within the report.

The overall aim of JHIT is to reduce inequalities in health by promoting good health throughout the life stages; building capacity and capability within our communities and workforce and creating a healthier future for all.

We are pleased to include updates in relation to our plans for 2023 - 24 outlined in last year's report including the further delivery of our plans relating to Mentally Healthy Communities and Suicide Safer Communities through community workshops; contributing to national research into understanding parent and carers view about relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) education and re-launching the C-Card condom and ongoing work to support healthy eating.

During the year we were pleased to support delivery of NHS Borders Staff Wellbeing Week through Public Health staff participating in the planning group and also co-ordination and delivery of health improvement activities.

I would like to note the changes within our Senior Leadership Team. Pippa Walls, our Public Health Lead for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention/Wellbeing Service retired in June 2023 and we thank her for her passionate service. We are pleased to welcome Claire McElroy into this role.

This report was written during the process of a Public Health Service Review. I would like to thank all concerned for their ongoing commitment over the year and through this process.

Fiona Doig

Head of Health Improvement/Strategic Lead Alcohol and Drugs Partnership





NHS Borders Public Health Department Joint Health Improvement Team (JHIT)

JHIT is part of NHS Borders Public Health Department and the staff team includes members from both NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council.

Our team is led by the Head of Health Improvement/Strategic Lead Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

We have three lead roles who support their dedicated teams in the following areas:

Public Health Lead for Children and Young People/Child Health Commissioner	Public Health Lead for Mental Health/Wellbeing Service Lead	Health Improvement Lead for Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternal & Infant Nutrition• Child Healthy Weight• Emotional Health and Wellbeing• Children’s Rights• Substance Use Education• The Promise• Child Poverty & Financial Inclusion• Young People’s Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wellbeing Service• Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing• Creating Hope Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Inequalities and Anti-Poverty Work• Food Security, Physical Activity and Diabetes Prevention• Communities• Older People• Sustainable Communities

This work is delivered with the support of our Administration Team.





Public Health Priorities for Scotland

Public Health Priorities

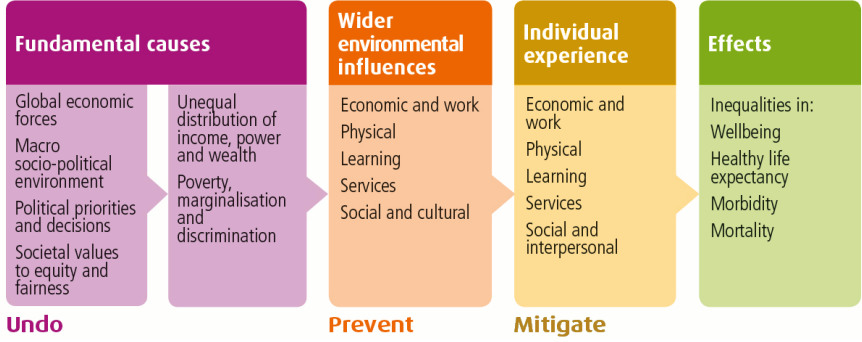
The Scottish Government has agreed a clear set of related and inter-dependent priorities for Scotland which are:

- 1 A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
- 2 A Scotland where we flourish in our early years
- 3 A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing
- 4 A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- 5 A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all
- 6 A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

The agreed priorities reflect public health challenges to focus on over the next decade to improve the public's health.

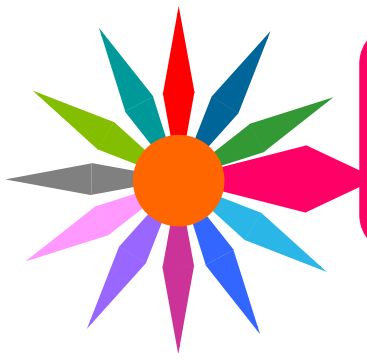


Health inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in people's health across social groups and between different population groups. The gaps between those with the best and worst health and wellbeing still persist, and some are expected to increase due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in the most recent data at the moment the difference in life expectancy in Borders for women in the most deprived communities compared to least deprived is 13.9 years (76.4 compared to 90.3) while for men it is 10.6 years (73 compared to 83.6).



As the diagram shows, significant influences on health inequalities are due to what is referred to as the 'fundamental causes', or 'structural causes' of inequality such as geopolitical, environmental; and income distribution and unlikely to be impacted at a local level. However, at a local level, including within JHIT, we can seek to prevent wider environmental influences such as the impact of planning, for example, safe walking or cycling routes. We can also work to mitigate the impact of inequalities on individuals, families and communities through activities such as training and skills building.





Activities Overview and Data

Walk It

- Walk It Groups **48**
 - Active Walkers **1470**
 - Active Walk Leaders **35**
 - Dementia Friendly Walks **29**
- Information as of January 2024

Healthy Start Vitamins

- Women's **1911**

Vitamin D

- Women's **1038**
- Children's **2952**

Wellbeing Service

- New referrals **1284** (New referral split - Mental Health 58%, Smoking 26%, Lifestyle 16%)
- Average **107** per month
- Consultations **7135**

Quit Your Way Apr 23 - Jan 24)

- Quit attempts **387** (459 in 2022-23)
- Successful quits at 3 months post quit date **81** (121 in 2022 - 23)

Local Delivery Plan - Our LDP target is based on quits in the most deprived 40% of the Borders population (effectively SIMD 2020 1 and 2) rather than all quits.

- Quit attempts **210** (279 in 2022-23)
- Successful quits at 3 months post quit data **38** (80 in 2022 - 23)
- Three month quit rate: **18%** (29% in 2022-23)

Data from NHS Scotland Smoking Cessation System

Money Worries App

- Total downloads **1947**
- Year 3 - 23/24 downloads **320**
- Testing phased - Year 2 - 22/23 downloads **1627**

Breastfeeding in the Borders (BiBs)

- Volunteers **28**
- Seen on ward **100**
- BiBs requests at discharge **301**
- Attendance at groups **638**

Community Food Work (CFW)

- Weaning (virtual & face to face) **103** parents/carers and **3** health professionals
- Early Years Centre summer programmes **42** parents/carers and **72** children
- Other CFW **43** parents/carers and **27** children

JHIT Training

- Participants **395**
- Courses **26**





Training and Capacity Building

The table below presents the range of courses and number of people who attended these across the Public Health Priorities.

Public Health Priority Area	Participants & Courses Offered
1 - A Scottish Borders where we live in vibrant, healthy safe places and communities	Participants - 19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low and Slow
2 - A Scottish Borders where we flourish in our early years	Participants - 65 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solihul • Infant Feeding and Relationship Building • Healthy Beginnings: MAP Training
3 - A Scottish Borders where we have good mental wellbeing	Participants - 247 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Suicide ALERT • Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) • Mental Health Improvement/Suicide Prevention Informed Children & Young People • Six Ways to Be Well • Mental Health Improvement/Suicide Prevention Awareness Session • Creating Hope CPD • Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention - Children & Young People
4 - A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs	Participants (delivered via Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) not included in total on right) - 330 * see footnote
5 - A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all	Participants - 41 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money Guiders Training
6 - A Scottish Borders where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active	Participants - 23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) Elementary Cooking Skills

2023 - 24 Data

395
Individual attendances

26
Courses

+ ADP delivered courses

Compared to 467 in 2022 - 23

* [Link ADP Highlight Report](#)





Training and Capacity Building

Mental Health Improvement / Suicide Prevention Training Highlights

We took a blended approach to training and capacity building which included both online and face-to-face delivery, some sessions delivered were:

- 5 x 2 day ASIST course, we have increased the course participation on ASIST by 78% from 22/22 - 23/24, this has been attributed by one of our team becoming a trainer to deliver

Some feedback from the recent ASIST courses include:

“What an excellent course! The trainers were engaging and created a safe space to really take in the training, The course was intense but I felt supported and cared for throughout. I have learned so much and gained insight and confidence for suicide intervention. The workshop was extremely interactive and the trainers really got the best of the group through role play and encouraging us to speak up. Highly recommended - one of the best workshops I have attended. Thankyou :)”

- Delivery of a number of training sessions to various partners and staff groups e.g. Allied Health Professionals, Live Borders (Training for Trainers), Skills Development Scotland, Borders College, Eildon Housing
- Wave after Wave training commissioned and rolled out by Border Care Voice, this training is designed to promote a compassionate response after suicide bereavement
- Development and delivery of self harm and suicide prevention for young people

Some feedback received from participants include:

“I thought the training was delivered brilliantly. It felt well timed and evenly spread across the morning. Despite being a topic that can evoke various thought and emotions, the delivery meant there were many moments that were jovial and the emphasis on the importance of hope could be felt amongst the room. The trainers worked really well together and I felt they complimented each other as trainers. A really enjoyable training session where I left feeling well informed.”





Training and Capacity Building

Children, Young People and Families Training and Capacity Building Highlights

Breakfast Club Food and Drinks Guidance

SBC identified schools and settings requiring additional resources for breakfast clubs. Scottish Borders Council funding was available to support established breakfast clubs or to start new ones, with twenty applicants receiving funding .

As part of this process it was identified applicants may require support regarding current food and drinks regulations and guidance to ensure suitable foods and drinks were provided.

We developed a Breakfast Club Guide, including relevant regulations and recommendations with examples of suitable foods to offer at breakfast clubs both to fit in with the guidance and in keeping with a health promoting school/ community.

In partnership (JHIT/SBC) offered an information session to all 20 recipients of breakfast club funding to go through the guide, answer questions, and offer support. All applicants received supporting documents.

NES Healthy Beginnings: The MAP of Health Behaviour Change Learning Program

This programme continued to be offered as an early intervention and prevention approach to child health for Early Years Practitioners, covering structuring a behaviour change conversation and using techniques with parents/carers to support healthy lifestyles changes for children and the whole family according to a family circumstance. The training was adapted during 2023 to be delivered successfully in person making it much more flexible to a wider audience. Work also focused on developing coaching support in collaboration with NES. Six Health Visitor colleagues were supported in this first pilot process. A structured coaching program is now available to all early years practitioners who have completed the core program.





Training and Capacity Building

Supporting a Person at Risk of Self-Harm and Suicide - Children and Young People

This is a bespoke half day training session and has been developed and is delivered as a rolling programme, in person. It is supported by guidance for professionals which includes recent national developments in self harm and suicide prevention, and approaches to support. It is aimed at anybody working with children and young people who are likely to have direct and/or substantial contact with those who may be at risk of self-harm or suicide.

The content is drawn from the NHS Education for Scotland Skilled Level packages for Self-harm and Suicide Prevention.

The session covers:

- Facts and trends associated with self-harm and suicide in young people
- Common risk, protective and stress factors related to self-harm and suicide in young people
- An awareness of the impact a sensitive, compassionate approach can achieve when discussing self-harm and suicide (using the principles of Time, Space and Compassion)
- The links between self-harm, suicidal thoughts and trauma informed practice
- Approaches to support including the steps involved in safety planning

Anyone attending this training must first complete the short informed level e-module 'Promoting children and young people's mental health and preventing self harm and suicide' on the NHS 'TURAS' website. The first two courses in March 2024 attracted 14 participants from partner organisations including education.





Communicating With Our Public

Public health messaging can play an important role in promoting health and preventing ill-health by providing people with information in relation to staying well and avoiding health risks. This can help to increase awareness and, potentially support people to make positive health choices.

However, our health is impacted by broader social, economic and environmental factors therefore we need to ensure that our messages focus on solutions and are clear and accessible to the populations we're aiming to reach and do not focus responsibility on individuals.

Throughout this year we have continued to use our Small Changes Big Difference social media to promote positive messages to support wellbeing and routes to accessing support and more information. We develop a monthly planner of key messaging from across the range of public health work and promotion of partners' activities.

We have had support from NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council communication teams to issue press information on a range of topics.

Borders College
MENOPAUSE
Cafe
A safe space to make connections and share experiences
Launch event with guest speaker
MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 10.30-12NOON
TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 10.30-12NOON
TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 10.30-12NOON
MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY 10.30-12NOON
TUESDAY 26 MARCH 10.30-12NOON
TUESDAY 30 APRIL 10.30-12NOON
In the College Restaurant | Free scones and hot drinks available!

DRY JANUARY
by Alcohol Change UK
ARE YOU IN?
Download the free Try Dry app dryjanuary.org.uk

This little test could help save your life.
Quicker, easier test
Bowel screening is for men and women aged 50-74
You'll get a test in the post every two years.
www.nhsinform.scot/bowelscreening
Phone: 0800 0121 833
NHS SCOTLAND Healthier Scotland

GOING THROUGH A STORM OR JUST BEEN THROUGH ONE?
ANDYSMANCLUB are talking groups for men to HELP YOU through these storms.
FIND OUT MORE info@andysmanclub.co.uk www.andysmanclub.co.uk #ITSKAFITOTAL



Priority 1

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE LIVE IN VIBRANT, HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES AND COMMUNITIES

Communities Team

During 2023 - 24, the Communities Team focused their work across three areas of the Scottish Borders – Langlee, Burnfoot and Eyemouth and were also involved in Borders wide health improvement activities.

The team took a collaborative partnership approach to plan and deliver a range of programmes, including:

- Supporting school holiday programmes with a range of activities
- Christmas for Less programmes
- The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) food and health and cooking skills courses
- Promotion and delivery of outdoor activities
- Leadership for Sustainable Communities (Climate Change and Sustainability)
- Continued support for the Eyemouth Gateway to Good Health project, including cycling
- Promotion of Money Worries App
- Wellbeing events

Sustainable Communities

'We all want Scotland to be a place where everybody thrives and has a better quality of life. Vibrant, healthy, safe and sustainable places are key to improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities. The growing threat to public health from the climate emergency increases the need for action. We all have a clear responsibility to respond in a way that nurtures good health for the population and the planet'.

(NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy 2022 – 2026)

Public Health provides leadership for the Sustainable Communities theme of the NHS Borders Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan 2022 - 2026. One of the actions outlined in the plan, aimed at building community resilience is to work with our partners, including Public Health Scotland, to understand the risks to each area and different population groups.

The Climate Change Health Impacts Scottish Borders report was published in March 2024 and contributes to our understanding of the potential impacts on health that are expected as a result of climate change, from a local Scottish Borders context.



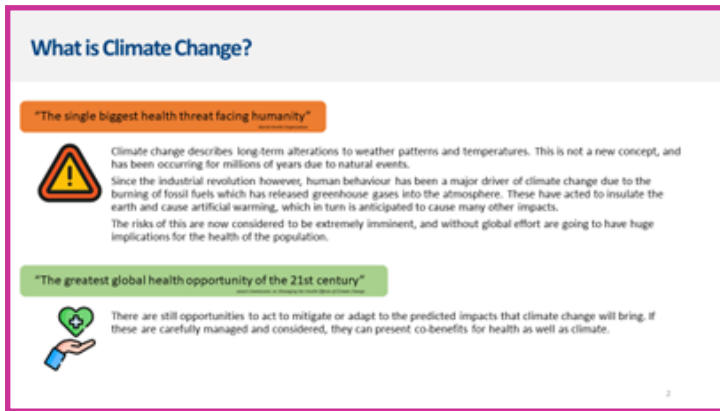


Priority 1

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE LIVE IN VIBRANT, HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES AND COMMUNITIES

The report can support partners and community groups to talk about the impacts on health as part of wider climate change conversations.

The next stage is to engage with partners and communities, particularly those who work in areas or with groups where health inequalities are highest, to use the evidence base to inform work to mitigate and adapt to climate change.



Safe Walking and Wheeling to School and Nursery in Eyemouth

During the reporting year some of the work started as part of the Eyemouth Gateway to Good Health, Whole Systems Approach (WSA) came to fruition. The WSA project identified a number of improvements that would support safe cycling, these included areas for proposed cycle racks and the need to identify areas for a public bicycle repair stand. Safe storage of people's bikes was a consistent concern when working with the Eyemouth Primary School and wider partners.



Throughout the process of consultation, areas were identified where cycle racks and a cycle repair tower would be of most benefit to the community and tourists in Eyemouth. The Communities Team worked collaboratively with SBC Traffic and Road Safety Department to develop a plan for the installation of this equipment in 2023.





Priority 1

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE LIVE IN VIBRANT, HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES AND COMMUNITIES

In addition to this, land permission caused an issue for one Nursery which initially prevented them from being able to install cycle racks next to their premises. However, a collaborative approach between Scottish Borders Council, the Communities Team and the Nursery resolved this matter and SBC were able to adopt a small area of land to install the cycle racks on. Purchase of equipment through grant funding enabled the nurseries to take children out for bike rides.





Priority 2

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE FLOURISH IN OUR EARLY YEARS

UN Convention in the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 42 - Everyone Should Know About Children's Rights

NHS Borders Public Health is committed to ensuring all children, young people and their families have their rights valued and respected. We do this by providing the very best in evidence-based practice that supports prevention opportunities. Our staff is highly trained and appropriately skilled in the provision of projects & services. We aim to provide support to all parents, carers and guardians to make the decisions in the best interest of a child.

We strive to ensure children young people and families are treated with dignity, feel valued and heard. Services and projects have either adopted or in the process of adopting rights-based approach to ensure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. We aim to continue to take forward measures that improve children's wellbeing.

Promotion and awareness work continued in 2023 on Children's Rights and The Promise supporting article 42 of the UNCRC Incorporation Bill which is now the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

On behalf of NHS Borders, JHIT contributed to the Scottish Borders Children's Rights Report 2023. Highlighting the breath of children's services that use a rights-based approach to services provided to children, young people & their families incorporating the articles of the UNCRC themed on:

Provision - Protection - Participation - Promotion

JHIT supported the national development of the UNCRC knowledge and skills framework and in collaboration with partners on behalf of Scottish Government conducted a survey with NHS Borders staff to feed into national findings on staff development needs. A survey was conducted in person and online as well wide distribution with support from NHS Borders Coms and had the support of the Training & Education Board.

Over 170 staff responded to the survey. Additional questions helped gather a picture of training and support needs more specific to the Board. A report with recommendations is in development to help draw up specific actions.





Priority 2

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE FLOURISH IN OUR EARLY YEARS

UNCRC 4 Guiding Principles



Childrens Images designed by Freepik

Articles 2, 3 and 6 Free Vitamin Distribution

Between April 2023 and March 2024 a total of 5901 bottles of free vitamins were distributed across the eligible population which includes all pregnant and breastfeeding women and all children under 3 yrs. These were provided through developed pathways with colleagues in community and hospital midwifery, health visiting, NHS Borders dental reception and direct orders to JHIT. Key messages were shared through all staff channels and social media.

A review of the free vitamins distribution and its reach has been conducted to identify further opportunities, gaps and reach. Oral health colleagues gathered feedback on current awareness of the free vitamin and entitlement from families and parents during routine visits between March 2023 and June 2023. The feedback will be included in the wider review report and will inform steps going forward.

Key Messages

Healthy start vitamins are available for all pregnant women. Each vitamin tablet contains folic acid, vitamin C & vitamin D, supporting a pregnant woman's general health. Additionally these vitamins lower the chance of babies having spinal problems, help the body's developing soft tissue and bones.

Vitamin D supplements in adults supports the health of bones & teeth whilst in infants and children helps bones and muscles to develop properly.

Infant formula is fortified with vitamin D, formula-fed babies or mix fed babies should not be given a vitamin D supplement until they are having less than 500ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day.





Priority 2

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE FLOURISH IN OUR EARLY YEARS

Article 12 - Respect the Views of the Child **Youth Engaged Listen to Learn (YELL) Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy**

NHS Borders Public Health is committed to ensure all children, young people and their families have their rights valued and respected. As part of a multiagency approach for children and young people services in the Borders, the Children and Young People Planning Partnership (CYPPP) identified a need to develop a youth Participation and Engagement Strategy as part of its subgroup of planning and building capacity.

This Project, otherwise known as Youth Engagement Listen to Learn (YELL) is being co-produced with young people in the Scottish Borders, giving young people the opportunity to lead in the creation of a strategy that will outline how adults and/or organisations should be working with children and young people, to involve them in decision making and have their voices heard.

The YELL group meet every Monday and are supported by NHS Borders Health Improvement Team and Scottish Borders Council to design, launch and promote the strategy, as well as engage other Young People in the Borders to hear their views and opinions.

ABA Feed Research Trial



NHS Borders are taking part in a national research trial, ABA-Feed. The study is a large UK-wide, randomised control trial, testing out a new way of supporting first-time mothers with feeding their baby called the 'ABA-feed intervention'.

The ABA-feed intervention starts when a woman is around 30-weeks pregnant. The Infant Feeding Helper arranges to meet the woman before she has her baby. The purpose of this meeting is for the Helper and the woman to get to know each other and to discuss how the woman is thinking about feeding her baby. At this meeting the Helper develops a 'Friends and Family' diagram with the woman to explore what support the woman has available to her, and also gives the woman a leaflet outlining the support available in the local area.

Once the baby is born the Helper texts or calls the woman to see how she is getting on, daily for the first two weeks, and then less frequently until the baby is 8 weeks old.

During 2023 - 24, NHS Borders had 5 active volunteers supporting women in this trial. A total of 52 mothers were recruited into the trial, 31 onto the intervention arm of the trial and 21 into usual care. Recruitment ended in February 2024 with the trial closing in April 2024; we await the results expected later in 2024.





Priority 3

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE HAVE GOOD MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental Health Improvement / Suicide Prevention



Creating Hope in the Scottish Borders has been developed by the multi-agency Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention Steering Group; taking a Public Mental Health approach.

Work in 2023 – 2024 has focused on programme 1 and 2:

- Promoting mental health and wellbeing
- Preventing suicide and self-harm

Work that has informed some these programme areas include:

- Targeted work
- Communication, engagement and awareness raising
- Training

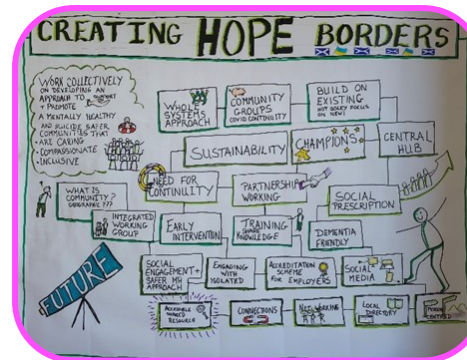
Targeted Work

Multi agency workshops and conversation cafes have formed the development of Mentally Healthy and Suicide Safer Communities and built on the concept of 'thriving', connecting up across the children's, young people's and adult's programmes, putting in place the building blocks of a social movement that will nurture positive environments within communities, create hope, empower people to thrive and contribute to building a 'wellbeing society'.

This themed 3 main ideas:

- The need for a better directory to enhance connectivity and information sharing
- The need for better public visibility – something like a brand or award scheme
- Working in partnership better, networking and shared training and resources

From these workshops and further working groups to develop around the better public visibility formed "Creating Hope Awards in the Scottish Borders" which we have spent time developing in partnership with the mental health improvement and suicide prevention steering group.





Priority 3

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE HAVE GOOD MENTAL WELLBEING

The fifth annual Memorial Event for People Bereaved by Suicide took place at Haining House, Selkirk in November 2023, the event was well attended and was supported by Quarriers, SOBs, Samaritans and Breathing Space.

We marked Suicide Prevention Awareness Week in September with several activities linked to the international theme 'Creating Hope Through Action', these included an information and awareness stand with Police Scotland at the Galashiels



Transport Interchange; 'Creating Hope' and 'Be Suicide ALERT' training sessions with the Recovery Forum, Eildon Housing and the NHS Borders Allied Health Professionals team; and, a 'Hopeful Steps' walk which over 50 people came along to.

Working in partnership with the Scottish Borders Council "What Matters Hubs", we developed "What Matters Information Station for Mental Health and Wellbeing", starting in Kelso and Galashiels we provided a drop in service once a month to help people find out more about sources of support, information about self-care and links to early intervention and recovery of mental health.

Communication, Engagement and Awareness

In Partnership with the After A Suicide Working Group and NHS24 a new 'Breathing Space' bench was fitted at the Cloutie Tree at the Haining House in Selkirk this was launched on 24th May. The bench is located where the annual memorial event for people bereaved by suicide takes place. The bench provides a special place to pause, breathe, and embrace nature.

The After A Suicide Working Group is group of people with lived experience of bereavement by suicide. The group is not a support group, but offers members the opportunity to use their lived experience to contribute to the local suicide prevention action plan. The group has spent time in 2023 developing a series of videos which will provide information to people who have been bereaved by suicide and will be launched in 2024.

Time, Space and Compassion principles were advocated and weaved through training delivered across the Scottish Borders including GP surgeries. This is an approach launched nationally. This is a person centred approach to suicidal crisis and has been developed by people and services who regularly come into contact with people experiencing suicidal crisis. The approach promotes the principles of trauma informed practice.





Priority 3

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE HAVE GOOD MENTAL WELLBEING

3 Dads Walking, Walk of Hope 2024; we joined 3 Dads Walking as they made their way through the Scottish Borders, promoting the ongoing work within the Scottish Borders. The 3 Dads who lost their daughters to suicide have raised more than £1 million for PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide.

We were pleased to participate in the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival in 2023 with the theme 'Revolution' and supported a day of free relaxed and creative workshops, music and live performances at the Corn Exchange. The day included uplifting music and art workshops led by Health in Mind, Health in Harmony Choir, the NHS Borders Arts Therapies Team and was hosted by Live Borders Arts & Creativity Team.



Adult Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Funding

We have been a key partner in the allocation of round 3 Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. In round three, £15 million was available to community organisations across Scotland for 2023 - 24 with £319,680 allocated to the Scottish Borders. The Fund was open to projects supporting those aged

16 and over and has a strong focus on prevention and early intervention. It aimed to help tackle the impact of social isolation, loneliness and mental health inequalities made worse by the cost of living crisis.

National Suicide Prevention Creating Hope Action Plan – Borders GO-LIVE Event

We hosted the GO-LIVE event for the "Creating Hope Together" strategy and action plan. Joined by various partners, Scottish Government and COLSA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities). The Borders was chosen in recognition of the work done locally by partners on suicide prevention including developing our own local action plan.

The new National Delivery Lead for Suicide Prevention Scotland was presented and the organisations leading the outcomes for the national Strategy were also announced – they included Samaritans, SAMH, Penumbra, Change Mental Health and Public Health Scotland.

We presented our local plan and how this links to the national plan as well as hearing from various partners across the Scottish Borders and their involvement within the local work.





Priority 3

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE HAVE GOOD MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental wellbeing is about both feeling good and functioning effectively, maintaining positive relationships and living a life that has a sense of purpose. It is shaped by our life circumstances, our relationships and our ability to control or adapt to the adverse circumstances we face. Good mental health improves outcomes in education, employment and health and benefits individuals, families, communities and society.

Healthy Relationships

C-card

We continue to deliver the condom distribution C-card service for young people between the ages of 13 - 25 in partnership with colleagues in both the NHS, SBC and third sector. There are 68 distribution points throughout the Borders and a short training session is available for those who want to sign up to deliver the service, new staff, and those who want a refresher. This is delivered on our behalf by colleagues from Youth Scotland and in this year 24 participants have attended.



“The Chat”

This research is a Scotland wide project and has been commissioned by a group of Health Boards: NHS Borders, NHS Grampian, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Tayside and NHS Eileanan Siar (Western Isles). “The Chat” is a conversation with parents and carers about where, what, when, why and how

children and young people learn about relationships, sexual health and parenthood – it aims is to establish what support parents need to ensure they can, in turn, support their children and teenagers to develop healthy relationships and seek appropriate support when they need it. The first part of the research took place during 2023 - 24 in the form of in depth focus groups with 153 parents and carers participating. The information gained during these focus groups has informed a wide reaching survey for the second part of the research, which will be completed with recommendations in session 2024 - 25.

Trusted Adult

A Service Level Agreement has been drawn up to enable our partner organisation YouthBorders to deliver a programme of awareness raising about the role of the trusted adult in ensuring healthy emotional development of our children and young people. This will be an ongoing piece of work over the next 2 years (2024 - 2026).





Priority 4

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE REDUCE THE USE OF AND HARM FROM ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

Wellbeing Service

The service provides evidence based, early interventions to support lifestyle change to increase physical activity, reduce weight and eat healthily, quit smoking and improve emotional wellbeing.

Along with advice and support the advisers will provide resources, signpost and refer to other services that will be of benefit to the patient for additional support. These may include LIVE Borders, NHS Borders dietetic service, community groups and many more.

Referrals

The Wellbeing Service is embedded into primary care and operates across the Borders.

We received 1378 new referrals from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 1284 new referrals.

The reduction in referrals can be seen from the change from Tier 2 delivery to Tier 1 delivery within Emotional Wellbeing. Since the end of 2023 we have continued to promote the services and build stronger relationships with other services to refer in.

The Service has met with all GP practices in July and August, informing of changes within the services and promoting relationships. The service has been invited to present several team meetings both within NHS Borders and external, this has increased the visibility of the service and increased referrals from out with our usual referrals.

Feedback

Care Opinion is an online platform which allows people to share their experiences of using our service in a safe and simple way. We use these stories to help inform service improvements. Care Opinion builds on our existing patient feedback methods. A number of patients used Care Opinion over the last year to leave feedback on our service; **one of these comments is below:**

“Over 4 months ‘adviser’ not only listened to and validated a lot of feelings she also gave me the tools I needed to move into a much more positive headspace about my situation. I have become more accepting of the situation, more self compassionate, self advocating, less guilty and less anxious, all through working with ‘adviser’. My time with her has undoubtedly helped my mental health and will continue to do so now I have the tools and strategies in place to help myself.”





Priority 4

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE REDUCE THE USE OF AND HARM FROM ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

Our staff use a wall of feedback for any feedback given to the service direct to the adviser or through our evaluation methods.

Some comments received include:

“All the tools we've spoken about and you have sent me by email have been so helpful and made a big difference. I can't thank you enough, you've helped me so much”

Emotional Wellbeing

Tier 2 to Tier 1 Support - Within the year there were changes in our service for emotional wellbeing and we no longer offer Tier 2 support for patients for their emotional wellbeing. These patients are supported by Renew Service with whom we maintain a close relationship and who provide us with coaching sessions on a quarterly basis. Our advisers continue to support patients at Tier 1 level of emotional wellbeing, ensuring early intervention. The service has spent time informing all services throughout the Borders of the change and continue to work with referrers to improve early referrals to support patients.

Peer to Peer Reflective Practice - Advisers have spent time in the last year involved in reflective practise training to allow them all to learn skills to lead peer to peer reflective practise sessions and support the team with referrals.

Macmillan - We have been working closely with Macmillan Cancer and attend their Health and Wellbeing Events twice a year to provide information on how to help anxiety, along with promotion of the service and information on how to self-refer.

Tobacco Smoking Cessation

In order to improve quit rates across the Borders, we have been focusing on the following key areas;

Smoking in Pregnancy - We now have an established Smoking in Pregnancy (SIPs) group of advisors, who continue to provide specialist support to pregnant women across the Borders. Through this group, we have developed strong links with the Family Nurse Partnership and Health Visiting teams and have continued to develop our relationships with maternity services too. We are currently in the process of expanding our access to Badgernet across the team to improve both the referral process and patient experience.

Vaping - The previous report highlighted an increase in e-cigarette use. We have been working alongside the children and young people's health improvement team to support the development of the Vaping Action Group and Vaping Action Plan aimed specifically at children and young people.





Priority 4

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE REDUCE THE USE OF AND HARM FROM ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

Through this work we have established strong links with school nurses and have so far delivered one presentation to Berwickshire High School resulting in two referrals for vaping cessation. This work is informing our work with our adult patients.

Smoking Cessation Governance – We have identified a problem with our data uploading from EMIS to the national database and are piloting direct entry with an aim of improving this.

The Tobacco Control Group was reinstated post Covid, with the first meeting held in September 2023. A second meeting was held in February 2024. The membership and Terms of Reference for this group is currently under review and regular meetings and action planning will comment later in 2024.

A drive to work closely with other regions in Scotland has continued to develop, particularly in light of the Tobacco and Vaping Framework published in November 2023. NHS Borders now has representation at both the National Smoking Cessation Coordinators Network (meeting monthly) and the Scottish Smoking Cessation in Pregnancy Group. This ensures we develop and standardise our tobacco and vaping policies alongside the national picture and in alignment with other health boards.

Lifestyle

Weight Management Service – The Wellbeing Service is now able to offer support to patients currently awaiting specialist input from Borders Weight Management Team (BWMT) Tier 1 and 2. Our advisers provide evidence-based interventions to support patients in making positive changes to their lifestyle in regards of healthy eating and weight management while on the waiting list for BWMT.

Physical Activity – The service continues to promote all forms of physical activity through holistic approach at the appointments with patients whether their reason for referral is emotional wellbeing, smoking or lifestyle. Wellbeing advisers are mindful of promoting physical activity at all levels and continue to refer patients wishing to become more active, to LIVE Borders Health programme as well as local community-based walking groups supported by Walk It. Our advisers are aware that some individuals prefer use of NHS activity apps and will encourage patients to use them.

Cancer Screening - Our advisers actively encourage patients to be aware of cancer screening programmes, in particular pregnant patients to take part in cervical cancer screening.





Priority 4

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE REDUCE THE USE OF AND HARM FROM ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

A short list of 'Things to do when you get home' is shared with them and checking with GP eligible screening is one of the points. It is evidence based that mentioning screening within other important things, like registering the baby's birth will increase uptake of cervical cancer screening.

Tobacco and Vaping Action Plan

Following the launch of Jenny and the Bear, a programme rolled out to all P1 pupils on the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, national and local data highlighted concern regarding the use of vapes in Children & Young People in the Scottish Borders.

The long-term effects of vaping on our health are not fully understood, this has also been reflected locally with partners having expressed concern over the lack of key messaging around vaping; lack of reliable and consistent information that is being used across all key partners and a need for a clear media approach.

In response to this, Public Health alongside key partners are developing an action plan in line with the [National Tobacco and Vaping Framework: Roadmap to 2034](#) to reduce the use of vaping and smoking in young people.

The action plan has a clear rights-based approach focused on youth participation and engagement, education, and media, working closely with national partners ASH Scotland.



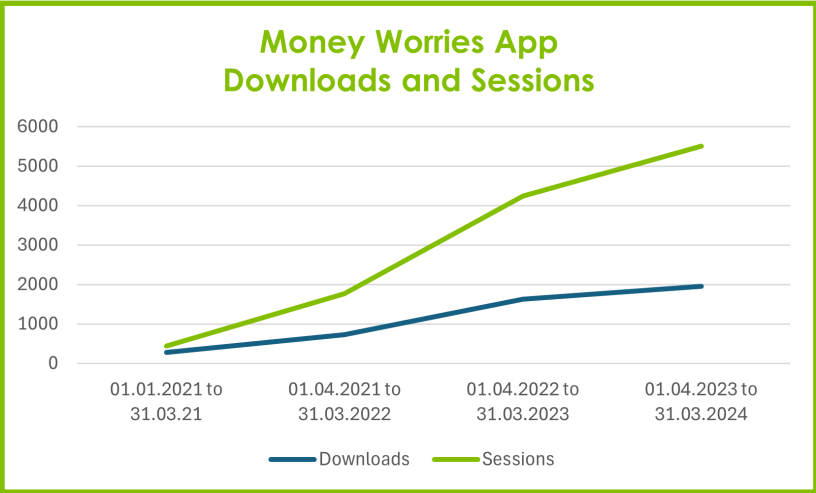


Priority 5

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE HAVE SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE ECONOMY WITH EQUALITY OF OUTCOMES FOR ALL

NHS Borders Money Worries App

NHS Borders have continued to work in partnership to build on the successful development of the Money Worries App. The App is a digital directory with links to national and local sources of help with: Money; Health; Housing and Work. The App has become an integral part of team promotions across community settings and staff continue to raise awareness of the App and encourage “real-time” download.



Ongoing promotions and engagement with partners and communities has led to a good number of downloads in 2024 and continued engagement beyond the home page amongst existing and new users with a notable number of screen views.

During this reporting year there was an ongoing technical issue which meant that people were unable to download the App to android phones. We have since resolved that and we now have a total of 1947 downloads since the App was launched in 2021 and over 5500 ‘sessions’ where people have used the App. The App is updated regularly with new information from a range of services and reviewed annually to ensure the information is correct and current. The App has attracted an average on the Apple App store of 4.3.

Money Guiders Training

A wide range of statutory and third sector colleagues attended the training and report the positive learning including increased confidence in providing money guidance and advice and signposting for further support.

“I make the most of every engagement, ensuring my knowledge of e.g. benefits is updated as this is constantly changing. I encourage staff in my service setting to attend this training to ensure they can offer holistic health and wellbeing support too” (Training Participant, Borders Addiction Service)

We have also supported the national evaluation of MaPS Money Guiders Training and delivered a session within the Scottish Money Guiders Network.



Priority 6

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE EAT WELL, HAVE A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Children, Young People and Families Team

Community Food Work

Community Food Workers (CFWs) work with 0 - 18 year olds and their families, in a range of settings and deliver nutrition sessions on a variety of topics such as:

- Eating well for growth and development (all ages and stages including weaning)
- Cookery skills and cooking on a budget
- Healthy breakfast, lunch, snacks and family meal ideas, recipes, tips and advice
- Fussy eating
- Drinks awareness
- Food, mood and well being

CFWs develop resources, signpost, and actively promote and support communities to eat well, be active and feel good. CFWs offer training and support to staff working with children and young people to enable them to continue supporting families to eat well.

'Super Snacks on a Budget' sessions were developed and delivered in Early Years Centres to raise awareness of the variety

and benefits of providing low-cost nutritious snacks in comparison to pre-packaged, high-cost, sugary snacks. To address the cost of living as well and increase knowledge of the positive impact on the growth and development of children.

"Learning how to make quicker snacks and trying to be more prepared. Nice to have a taster as well"

"Enjoyed interaction with food and other children"

A wide variety of practical food activities were delivered as part of the Summer programme within Early Years Centres to increase parent/carer confidence and skills to enable them to prepare and provide low-cost, quick and easy, nutritious snacks and family meals at home with their child(ren).

"The food fun day was a great day for our children to try new food and great ideas for making normal food more fun"

"More ways to encourage my wee ones to eat healthier"

"The food day gave me ideas for making a sandwich more exciting and exploring child's name creativity, I'd have never considered this otherwise"





Priority 6

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE EAT WELL, HAVE A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Training was offered to all Early Years Centre managers to support them with providing families with a nutritious breakfast/brunch during the School Summer Holidays.

Additional training to increase cookery skills for the staff and managers was provided for one Centre enabling them to deliver future cookery sessions to parents.

Specialist nutrition sessions are delivered including sessions with Post Natal Depression Borders which offers peer support and increases participants confidence, knowledge and skills in cooking healthy family meals.

"Learning how to make quicker snacks and trying to be more prepared. Nice to have a taster as well"

"Enjoyed interaction with food and other children"

Fussy eating resources are being developed for pre-school and primary-aged children to help address issues around fussy eating and to support parents and carers to encourage and offer a wide variety of nutritious foods.



High School Transitions

The "Good Fuel for High School" programme was delivered by the Fit4Fun, Children, Young People and Families Team in June 2023 and was offered to all high schools.

Sessions delivered to P7 pupils as part of their high school transition days aimed to support their health and wellbeing and enable them to make their own informed food and drink choices. The session's topics supported and informed pupils on how important it is to make healthy food and drink choices and how this can affect their growth, learning and behaviour.

Feedback from pupils and teachers who participated in the programme was very positive. Pupils engaged well with the sessions and found the practical activities most enjoyable. They also liked being able to ask questions. Pupils gained valuable knowledge and skills required to make informed food and drink

choices in the future, as well as learning the importance of good food and drinks for their health and wellbeing.

3 high schools took part with 19 classes and 532 P7 pupils attending the sessions.





Priority 6

A SCOTLAND WHERE WE EAT WELL, HAVE A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Partnership Work with Borders Community Action

Funding Application Development to Include Food and Drinks Criteria

In partnership with Borders Community Action, criteria and guidance was developed to ensure all future funding requests from applicants who plan to provide food and drinks as part of their funding are providing nutritious food and drinks. The criteria and guidance were in line with current regulations, general healthy eating principles and avoided providing food and drinks high in sugar, fat and salt.

As a result, application forms were amended to include new criteria and information. This is a positive step forward in influencing the wider food environment and supporting people to stay well.

Paths to Health - Walk it

NHS Borders, Scottish Borders Council and Paths for All conducted a survey of Volunteer Walk Leaders and Walkers between February and March 2024 to understand the difference the project has made to this well-established

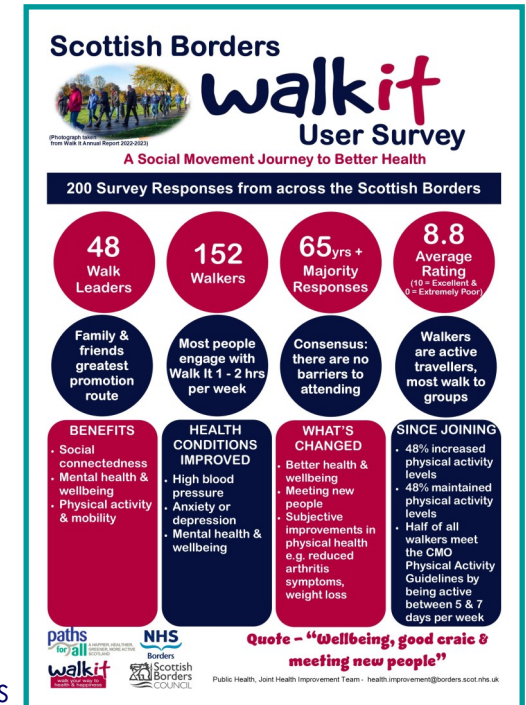
Network. We used Microsoft Forms and offered a mixed methods approach to ensure the survey was accessible to everyone with the option of responding via a QR code, website link and paper questionnaire.

Headline Data reflects:

- 200 Survey Responses
- 48 Walk Leaders & 152 Walkers
- The greatest number of survey respondents are 65+, with almost a quarter of all responses being 75+
- Top Engagement Route: Family & Friends

Walkers reported improvements to a range of health conditions, in particular, high blood pressure, anxiety & depression, mental health and weight.

Walkers also reported on what had changed for them since joining Walk It, survey responses reflect the social impact with the top response being meeting new people.





Looking Forward / Next Steps

During 2024 - 25 we will continue to build on our progress reported during the year. We will be working closely with partners in the Children and Young People's Leadership Group and Networks to take action to support services to respond to the incorporation of the UNCRC.

We will be developing new ways of working for our Wellbeing Service including being part of the pathway for Long Covid support; supporting a 'waiting well' programme for people awaiting treatment and piloting group work for specific areas of work.

We will launch our Creating Hope awards which engages local groups and organisations in promoting good health and nurturing environment. This will enable our local communities to develop their understanding of suicide and its prevention and, importantly, be able to respond in a helpful and informed way when needed.

We will be taking a leadership role within the work to develop a Borders specific Good Food Nation Plan, bringing the evidence of what supports good food and health to the table alongside partners.

We are anticipating that during 2024 - 25 we will review how we work in partnership with the wider Public Health Department while undertaking a Service Review. This Service Review is taking place within the financial constraints faced across the public sector including NHS Borders which are likely to impact on our team.

The review process will allow us to reflect on the outcome and impacts of our interventions and look ahead to developing a service ready to support our community in the face of challenges including climate impact, poverty, emotional health and wellbeing and supporting the Health and Social Care Partnership through effective prevention work.

Need to contact us

@ health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk



01835 825970



Joint Health Improvement Team, Scottish Borders Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA

