



Broker Bites



Your quarterly update from The Community Brokerage Network

Happy New Year!

As we step into 2021 the Community Brokerage Network Board are ringing the changes.

At present the Board is made up of four Directors who have ultimate responsibility for the safe and smooth running of the Community Brokerage Network across Ayrshire while keeping an eye on national developments in social care and self-directed support to make sure our practice maintains a high standard.

We are delighted to welcome a further two Directors, Gillian Ferguson and Alison Guthrie, who will bring their respective skills and experience to the currently virtual table.

In addition, we are delighted to be joined by four Co-Opted Board Members: Dawn Ranson; Kaye Robertson; Heather Fraill and Sandra Campbell.

They will bring the experience and insight from daily practice to the agenda, ensuring we remain rooted in learning from and adapting to the best ways of delivering brokerage in our communities.

It is an exciting new chapter for us all - watch this space!

We hope you enjoy the issue!

The Community Brokerage Network



Our New Board Directors

We've undergone a few changes! As well as appointing some of our current brokers as board members, we've welcomed some brand new faces to our team and can't wait to introduce them to you. To kick things off, meet our new Board Directors, Alison and Gillian.

Alison Guthrie

My name is Alison Guthrie but sometimes friends and colleagues call me Ali G. I live in West Lothian with my husband and work as a Project Manager with Iriss (Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services) a charitable company that promotes positive outcomes for people who use Scotland's social services. I am currently involved with the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) team, embedding the video conferencing tool, Near Me within the Social Service sector and enabling people to attend appointments from home or wherever is convenient.



“I am passionate and understand the importance of seeking out, developing and improving my own and other people’s learning and development experiences.”

My background is in early years, starting as a self-employed child minder, and I realised when my twins were in nursery that I really liked children. As a nursery/school parent helper, I had a lightbulb moment where I began to understand how important my role was and I had the potential to encourage children to learn, progress and develop. Following years of studying, I graduated with my BA Childhood Practice Degree from Edinburgh University in 2011 (a very proud family day).

In all my areas of work I have been very fortunate to work with a number of compassionate, kind and creative people from all life stages and many different organisations. I have a rights-based approach and I value everyone's knowledge and contribution to my work. I am passionate and understand the importance of seeking out, developing and improving my own and other people's learning and development experiences. Most recently I completed the Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills (SIFS) programme, delivered by my ex colleagues from the leadership team within the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). I completed my tenth Open Badge and the Matter of Focus 'Research Impact School: Module 1' about the impact of research.

I really value and am sensitive to the challenges across all sectors and through my work. I have worked in the voluntary sector, local authority, local college and most recently for the SSSC. Within the SSSC I had the opportunity to work with colleagues from both health and social services, The Care Inspectorate and Scottish Government.

I had the privilege to work in and lead on several projects, including: Self-directed Support; Integration of Health and Social Care; Neighbourhood Care (New Models of Care); Palliative and End of Life Care; Carers; Compassionate Care and Personal Assistants. I have also had a leading role in the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare with Childminders, delivered Action Learning Sets and developed resources which help Health and Social Service staff embed their skills and knowledge within their qualifications, to continue their professional learning (CPL) and to support them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outside of work I love walking (locally of course), watching films and reading horror and crime books (most recently I have read 'The Thursday Murder Club' by Richard Osman, which was really funny with a few 'laugh out loud' moments). I am also interested in furthering my skills of clay pottery and plan to undertake a fused glass course later this year (hopefully).

I am really looking forward to joining the Community Brokerage Network family.

Gillian Fergusson

I have been working in health and social care settings for almost twenty years and am passionate about ensuring services and support best meets the needs of individuals and communities.

I studied physiotherapy and began my career working in acute hospitals in Glasgow. I then spent ten years working for various international development organisations and was based in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Haiti, China and North Korea.

Across each of these roles I worked with local organisations and governments with a focus on building sustainable rehabilitation services to support disabled people. This included the development of locally produced children's wheelchairs in Cambodia and the delivery of amputee rehabilitation services in post-earthquake Haiti.



Through this experience I learned skills in relationship building, the importance of understanding local context and ways of working and of involving local people.

On my return to Scotland I worked at the Health and Social Care Alliance, where I supported a number of projects, including a pilot of care opinion in social care settings the development of neurological standards and the delivery of the national Our Voice programme. All projects had the aim of ensuring the voice of lived experience and of the third sector were able to influence the development of both national policy and local services.

“I am passionate about ensuring services and support best meets the needs of individuals and communities.”

My current role is with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, within the Collaborative Communities team. This team works with Health and Social Care Partnerships and other local organisations to explore different solutions to supporting health and well-being, enabling choice and control for people accessing services and support. A key element of this is understanding and developing the role of community and community organisations in working alongside the public sector to provide support that best meets people's needs.

Outside of work I live with my partner and four month old son in Glasgow. I love live music, spending time outdoors and trips to my family caravan on Arran.

Our New Board Members

Now say hello to our recently co-opted board members: Dawn, Heather, Kaye and Sandra!

Dawn Ranson

I have worked in social care settings for about 30 years, having started in administrative positions within statutory organisations. I then took on a number of honorary posts within information technology, information management and performance analysis in relation to Department of Health Statistical returns. In 1996 I undertook the Case Management Foundation Course run by Surrey County Council following my promotion to a Review Officer within the Council. I have worked across various different database collection systems in local authorities and love reporting back information and trends I can see developing.



“I believe in valuing lived experience but providing people with the tools they require to make their approach holistic.”

I worked on SiRD funded projects and co-devised a support planning course for individuals to attend in group settings. I was also involved in two separate projects relating to autism and breaking down barriers for people with various disabilities to lead ordinary lives. During this time I analysed and produced a paper which showed the lack of awareness of H & SCP in relation to people with autism and highlighted the need for more inclusion and involvement with the autism community.

I highlighted the issues relating to the stalling of local autism strategies across three local authority areas and, together with my sister, devised and delivered training for people with autism to better understand their own autism and recognise things like sensory diets, anxiety, cognitive functioning and how these differ and which resulted in my own diagnosis.

I have undertaken various training roles along with training independent advocates, Autism Awareness and supervised and supported staff in my senior management position as Training and Volunteer Coordinator within Advocacy North East. I was Carers' representative on Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board for approximately a year before taking up a role on the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance Committee.

I regularly attended the Cross Party Reference Group for Autism at the Scottish Government and am passionate about citizenship and asset based community development; however, I would like to see more understanding in relation to accessible inclusion in this area.

I have a particular interest in autism and I am a NAS trainer in Autism Awareness for Third Sector and Statutory Organisations. I have also undertaken Adult Support and Protection Training for Trainers. At present I am part of the CBN's SQA Training Team and very much enjoying learning the ropes from the rest of the team.

I am currently working with my peers, who have undertaken the SQA 7 Award in Community Brokerage to set up a Community of Practice (Accredited Brokers Community of Practice), to ensure that standards, principles and values around SDS are maintained and set and that they make empowerment and independent support accessible to all.

My geeky interests are analysing and using performance indications in a way that relates to quality assurance and management information and systems in local authority settings. I also believe in valuing lived experience but providing people with all the tools they require to make their approach holistic, continual professional development, Independent Support in H&SC settings and of course SDS and Person Centred Planning / Personalisation.

In my private life I have my two beautiful terrier boys and love researching the family tree. Family are important to me and I am lucky enough to have an amazing twin sister who helps me to overcome my own barriers to live a more fulfilling life.

Heather Fraill

“Supporting people to maintain their independence had a big impact on my life and I feel privileged to have met so many wonderful people.”



I grew up as a young carer and experienced first-hand the lack of support available for people and the inequalities in care in terms of mental health. As an adult I experienced this again when my father required support and the services were inflexible and did not take into account my father's needs in relation to dementia.

This led me to a career in the care sector and I became a self-employed PA and joined the Care and Well-being CIC in Perthshire. Supporting people to maintain their independence had a big impact on my life and I feel privileged to have met so many wonderful people. They helped me understand the importance of respect, dignity, fairness, safety, independence, equality and freedom of choice. Eventually I become one of the directors of the Care and Wellbeing CIC, which was funded via LEADER, SiRD, SSE and CIF. The care and Wellbeing CIC recently took on GrowBiz for all internal workings, meaning the organisation has been able to focus on growing the membership and currently has 50 care and well-being professionals.

The result has been that small rural communities have become self-sufficient in care when no registered care providers wanted to cover the area. This allowed me to build connections within social work, health professionals, Scottish Government, Inspiring Scotland and various third sector organisations. I have been interested in the national review of care and have concerns about centralisation going forward.

For the last year or so I have worked with Support Choices as a Community worker; an independent SCIO, funded by the Scottish Government SiRD, which was previously a project between Outside the Box and The Care and Well-being CIC. Support Choices provides information and advice around self-directed support and helps people get the care and support they need.

People tell me I am good at networking and a champion of equality issues in care. I am passionate about the importance of personalised care which is outcome based and support the person to live life as they choose, ensuring it is about what is important to them (especially in relation to palliative care and dementia). My work shows the importance I put on collaborative working across the statutory and third sectors in Health and Social Care.

In my spare time I volunteer for Home Start and the local community larger food bank.

Kaye Robertson

I studied Business Studies & Languages at Napier in Edinburgh before moving overseas to become a holiday rep. Initially meant as a stop gap whilst thinking about my long-term plan, I remained in the travel industry for the majority of my career. I worked for TUI Travel for 22 years, enjoying a number of promotions and working for different companies within the organisation. I held a number of senior leadership roles - mostly in Customer Service, Operations and Credit Control - and was fortunate to travel extensively throughout Europe, North America, Mexico, the Caribbean and Asia.

“Having personal experience of the Social Services Assessment process and managing an individual budget for my son has given me an advantage when working with people through the Community Brokerage Network..”

As a board member I was involved in the development of the business strategy and delivering confidential transformation programmes. These ranged from integration and alignment of new acquisitions and outsourcing of key business functions, to organisational restructuring and enhanced technology implementations. I led a team of over 750 staff across multiple global business locations. I also had P&L responsibility

for managing a budget of £5million overhead costs and £7million revenues and was accountable for a monthly debtors ledger and cash collections of circa £12million globally.

In 2015 I left the corporate life and relocated back to Scotland to be able to access a better support network for my son, who was diagnosed with a progressive neurological condition and ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). I joined The Community Brokerage Network as a broker in May 2017 after meeting Anne-Marie Monaghan when she was presenting at The Partners in Policymaking Course (a leadership programme for people or parents of children with disabilities). The aim of the course was to create more social advocates for inclusion in all areas of society. I found the experience immensely rewarding and it changed my outlook on our life in lots of different ways.

The realization that my focus had been selfish and quite materialistic for the majority of my adult life was quite a sobering one. I had been so fixated for many years on earning a good income to be able to provide for us both that I was missing out on so many experiences with my son and I was giving nothing back to society. Halfway through the course I made the decision to downsize my house and rethink my career options.



I didn't want to be forced back into a role that would sustain a lifestyle but not a meaningful life. I wanted to make sure I would be able to have better balance and feeling of personal accomplishment and satisfaction.

Being a single parent raising a child with additional support needs, I understand the tremendous challenges that this presents. Despite my comprehensive business background and assertive personality, when it came to navigating the education and social services systems I found this very daunting initially. Through groups I was involved with, I quickly came to realise that there were so many people in a similar position who lacked the knowledge, understanding or confidence to stand up for themselves or their loved ones. Having personal experience of the Social Services Assessment process and managing an individual budget for my son has given me an advantage when working with people through the Community Brokerage Network.

I am passionate about supporting other families to navigate the system, understand their entitlement and ensure they get the best support and outcome for their loved ones or themselves. I recently joined the Board of Three Sixty, a mental health charity based in South Ayrshire, in a voluntary capacity and I am looking forward to helping them expand the great work they already do.

I live in Largs with my son James, who is fast approaching his 16th birthday, my dog and three cats. Before the pandemic, we enjoyed regularly visiting my brother and his family who live in Florida and we are desperately missing the sunshine.

Sandra Campbell

I have been a self-employed broker with Community Brokerage Network since 2014 and a CBN coordinator since June 2018. I do not have a background in social care and was in my late forties when I came to this role, which I enjoy as much today as the day I started.

I was a front line police officer from 1990 but left in 1997 as my husband was also a serving police officer. We had a young child and the shift patterns were not conducive to family life.



Later that year I started a small cottage industry which allowed the flexibility of working around looking after our son and my husband's shifts. The cottage industry soon became a full time business which I ran for the next 20 years.

Through work I have been fortunate to meet people from many walks of life and have learned lessons and skills along the way.

I firmly believe everyone is equal and has a voice which must be listened to; we all have a responsibility to advocate for those who are not being heard.

The role of Broker epitomises my core values and I never underestimate the importance of supporting people to ultimately empower them.

I am a good communicator with a calm, balanced approach and pay attention to detail.

“I firmly believe everyone is equal and has a voice which must be listened to; we all have a responsibility to advocate for those who are not being heard.”

I have completed training in mental health awareness, autism awareness, dementia awareness, child protection, adult support and protection, SafeTalk – suicide alertness for everyone, Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme, Children and Young Persons Act – GIRFEC, Protective legislation, Child Sexual Exploitation, Disclosure Scotland and Learning Disability Training.

In 2020 I completed SQA level 7 in Community Brokerage as part of the first cohort in Scotland.

I have first-hand experience of dealing with much of the above legislation during my time in the Police Service.

When not working, I enjoy spending time outdoors, the natural world, DIY and a good ‘laugh out loud’ comedy.

SCLD: UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities

To mark the United Nations Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December 2020 the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD) invited “key stakeholders” to participate in a “virtual roundtable” meeting about the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) into Scottish law.

Click this link for an easy-read version:

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCRPD\): Easy Read Version](#)



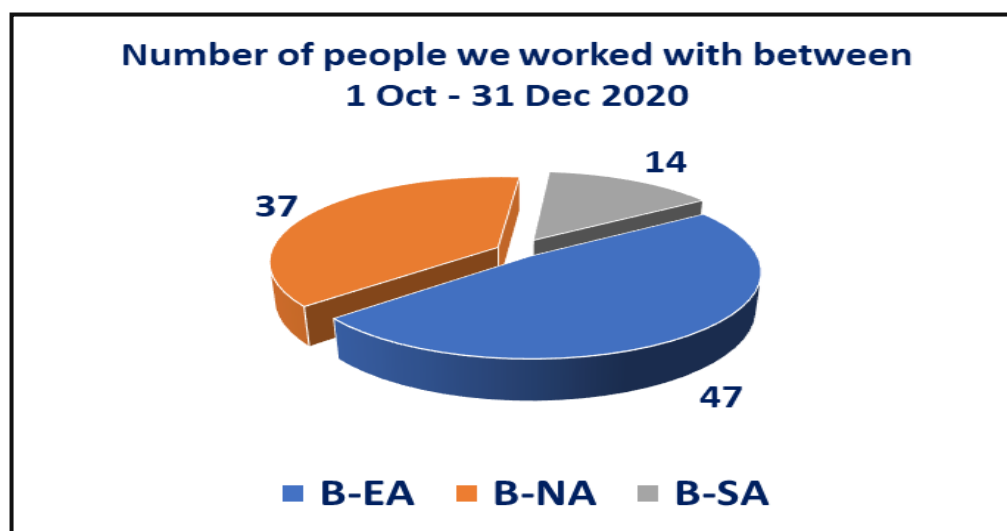
The meeting featured input from the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, The Scottish Human Rights Commission, Pat Graham, Chair of PAMIS, and Charlie McMillan, Chief Executive of SCLD.

SCLD presented their statement on the need for incorporation of the UNCRPD in Scotland and asked attendees to sign in agreement “to ensure that the aspirations and needs of people with learning/intellectual disabilities are met and that individuals are meaningfully involved in the process of incorporation”.

SCLD invite any organisation which supports people with learning/intellectual disabilities to sign up to their statement, which can be found via the link below:

[SCLD UNCRPD Incorporation Statement \(working draft\)](#)

Activity this Quarter



Independent Review of Adult Social Care Published

The Independent Review of Adult Social Care, chaired by ex NHS Chief Executive Derek Feeley, was published on 3rd February.



The review, commissioned by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on 1st September 2020, contains 53 recommendations as to how social care might be organised and delivered differently in Scotland.

One of the main changes proposed would be the creation of a National Care Service on an “equal footing” to the National Health Service both reporting to Scottish Ministers.

We’re delighted and proud to see The Community Brokerage Network highlighted in the report as a good practice example and feel more determined than ever to continue and build upon our current high standard:

“On a similar theme, community brokers across Ayrshire provide information and support to help identify personal outcomes and develop and set up a funded package of support, connecting people to community activities and services. This service is free to the person accessing support: brokers are self-employed, local people who have some personal experience of directing their own support or that of a relative or family member, and now use that experience to help other people. They receive specific training including a new SVQ qualification.”

We also made it into the report's recommendations:

“Recommendation 8 - More independent advocacy and brokerage services, including peer services, must be made available to people to ensure that their voices are heard, and to help prepare for participation in planning and organising their support.”

Following extensive consultation with over 1,000 people, which included recipients of social care, unpaid and paid carers, support providers, unions, commissioners of social care and a range of other stakeholders, the radical overhaul of how social care contained in this report will be debated in the Scottish Parliament.

At the Community Brokerage Network we share the aspirations of this report that people who require social care are able to access it with ease and where they can retain as much choice and control as they wish. Click [here](#) to view a short video presentation about the report.

The Community Brokerage Award

Introducing our very own SQA certified course:
The Community Brokerage Award!

Covering all aspects of community brokerage relating to self-directed support, the course is worth 30 credits at SCQF Level 7 and is comprised of 5 modules, delivered over 9 months.



Comments from past participants...

“This course has enabled me to see how SDS principles and values can be applied to different areas of my own and other people’s lives.”

“My confidence has improved by doing this [course], both personally and professionally.”

“You all did a great job and I’m proud to have been a part of it.”

“I would definitely recommend the award—their presentations have been superb and the support is second to none.”



For more information about the course and details on how to sign up for the next intake, please contact our SQA Advisor and Co-ordinator, Jenny Reekie.

jennyreekie@communitybrokeragenetwork.co.uk

About Us

We are The Community Brokerage Network and we work across Ayrshire, supporting people who receive social care. We help people get the most appropriate and beneficial care possible by providing a broker to assist them, free of charge.



The brokers at the network can help people prepare for social care assessments that may be carried out by their local health and social care partnership or, if this has already taken place, they can help people make the most of any budget or resource that is made available to them through any self directed support option

Regardless of whether a person requires formal support or not, our priority is to help them develop their informal support networks. This can be done by connecting them with relevant activity groups and services available in their community and with people who share their hobbies and interests.

Where a person qualifies for formal support, we can help them make the most of the support and care they receive.

Our Goals

We are funded by the Scottish Government through the **Support in the Right Direction** funding stream. We have three main outcomes:

- To help people and their carers feel more informed, listened to and less stressed.
- To ensure people and their carers can creatively and flexibly plan to achieve personal outcomes, including accessing community assets.
- To ensure people and their carers have increased skills so are better able to manage social care packages.

Inspiring Scotland monitor our work on behalf of the Scottish Government and we send regular performance reports to enable the release of our ongoing funding.

This funding enables us to provide our services free of charge.

To find out more, visit:

www.inspiringscotland.org.uk

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You can also reach us on our hotline: 07769 698 606