

Creating Hope

Scottish Borders

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2026

Information Bulletin
News / Events
Resources / Training

Upcoming awareness dates:

[World Mental Health Day](#): 10th October

[Challenge Poverty Week](#): 5th – 11th October

[Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival](#): 19th Oct – 8th Nov

[International Stress Awareness Week](#): 2nd – 6th November

[International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day](#): 21st November



NEWS

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY CELEBRATES THE VOICES SHAPING RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

World Mental Health Day on Saturday 10th October celebrates the theme "Lived experiences heard: real voices, real change", highlighting the importance of listening to people whose experiences help shape services, support and communities.

In the Borders, this approach is at the heart of [Borders Recovery And Wellbeing](#) (BRAW), a collaborative network bringing together organisations, community groups and people with lived experience to improve access to mental health recovery and wellbeing opportunities across the region.

Lynsay Laird from Flourish: Mental Health Matters said: "People with lived experience have helped shape BRAW from the beginning. By listening to people's experiences and recognising the strengths, knowledge and ideas they bring, we can create something that is meaningful and useful for our communities. BRAW is about hope, connection and helping people discover opportunities that support their own recovery and wellbeing."

To mark World Mental Health Day, we're highlighting the range of recovery, wellbeing and mental health support available locally. Find out more about BRAW here:

nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/braw

**Borders
Recovery
And
Wellbeing**



COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND 2026 / 2027

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund closes for applications on **16th October 2026**.

Grants of up to **£5,000** are available for community projects tackling isolation, inequality and mental health challenges.

Find out more at the BCA website using this link:

[Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund 2026/2027 | Borders Community Action](#)

BATON OF HOPE – COMING TO THE SCOTTISH BORDERS NEXT YEAR!

We are delighted to share that the Baton of Hope will visit the Scottish Borders on **Wednesday 29th September 2027** as part of its third UK-wide tour. The Borders is one of 21 locations selected from more than 60 applications, bringing this powerful symbol of hope and suicide prevention to our communities.

During each tour stop, the Baton is carried hand-to-hand by local Baton Bearers along a planned route, with community events help in various towns helping to open conversations, challenge stigma and make suicide prevention visible. Baton Bearers may include people who have been bereaved by suicide, people with lived and living experience, and others who share the belief that no one should face their most difficult moments alone. Lisa Sloan who is part of the local After a Suicide Working Group and Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SoBS) is leading the project in the Scottish Borders and is looking for local services, groups, organisations and communities across the Scottish Borders to get involved. If you're

interested in helping with the planning get in touch with Lisa by emailing:

scottishborders@thebatonofhope.org

Could you carry hope? Applications to become a Baton Bearer are open until 31st January 2027. Places are limited and may close early when the allocation for each location is reached. [Find out more and apply through the Baton of Hope 2027 Tour page.](#)

Further information about the Scottish Borders route and local opportunities to get involved will be shared as plans develop.

CREATING HOPE SCOTTISH BORDERS NETWORK EVENT

On World Suicide Prevention Day in September we held a Creating Hope networking event for partners and Creating Hope Award holders. The event included an engagement workshop about the future mental health improvement, suicide prevention, and mental health service delivery plan for the Scottish Borders. A couple of the local [Support After a Suicide films](#) were screened and a question-and-answer session involving the After a Suicide Working Group took place who also provided information about the Scottish Borders Memorial Quilt.

At the event we were delighted to welcome **Eildon Housing** to the Creating Hope Awards Scheme! Eildon Housing is the first housing association to join the awards scheme and we're grateful to all of the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Advocates who are helping to make the Borders mentally healthy and suicide safer.

Getting involved with the Creating Hope Awards is a great way to take action for good mental health. If you'd like to find out more about the scheme or sign up please visit the [Creating Hope page](#) on the NHS Borders website.

NEW DAWN NEW HOPE GATHERINGS

The New Dawn New Hope gatherings were held on Sunday 13th September 2026, at the close of Suicide Prevention Awareness Week, in Walkerburn and at Coldingham Bay. Organised with the After a Suicide Working Group and supported by NHS Borders, the early-morning gatherings offered welcoming, reflective spaces for people affected by suicide to come together, remember loved ones, connect with others and share a message of hope. Alongside other awareness-week activity, they contributed to a local commitment to reducing stigma, remembering those who have died and creating hope.

SoBS SCOTTISH BORDERS MEMORIAL QUILT

The SoBS Scottish Borders Memorial Quilt is a shared project offering people affected by suicide a gentle and personal way to remember someone who has died. People living in the Scottish Borders are invited to create an individual fabric square in memory of their loved one. Each square can be made personal through colours, words, images or other meaningful details, and will become part of a collective quilt honouring lives, memories and connections across our communities. You do not need to have sewing or craft experience to take part, and support and guidance are available. If creating a square feels right for you, please contact Freda Douglas for an informal conversation and more information about how to get involved.

For more information contact Freda Douglas:
fredasobs@yahoo.com Tel: 07704 691 111



BIPOLAR UNFILTERED – NEW ‘LUNCH AND LEARN’ SESSIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Bipolar Scotland is putting on a new, free, series of introductory sessions for people working or volunteering in communities to build their understanding and awareness of bipolar. When people think about bipolar, they often think about mood swings, highs and lows, or periods of mania and depression. But there is much more to living with bipolar than this. These interactive online sessions lift the lid on some of the things that aren't always talked about. Lived experience insights are woven throughout, helping to give a more personal and meaningful understanding of what bipolar can look and feel like in everyday life.

Dates and links to book are listed in the events section of this bulletin.

For further information email: Training@bipolarscotland.org.uk

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING



During September we gained 40 new ASIST trained caregivers in the Scottish Borders with training taking place in Galashiels and Eyemouth. These caregivers are now more willing, ready and able to support people who are having thoughts of suicide to help them keep safe.

We also delivered safeTALK training to Youth Borders members which resulted in those attending signing the Trusted Adult Charter, to find out more about the Trusted Adult Charter contact Fiona Waterston: fiona@youthborders.org.uk



EVENTS

Tuesday 17th November – 7.30pm, Heart of Hawick

HOW TO LET COMEDY LIGHT UP YOU LIFE

A NIGHT OF LIVE COMEDY AS PART OF THE SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FESTIVAL

'How to Let Comedy Light up your Life' is the final performance from participants of a series of workshops designed to help people discover that finding the funny in life can help raise confidence and improve mental health and well-being. The workshops have been lead by Scottish comedian Jojo Sutherland who has worked with attendees to show them the benefits of talking about their problems through comedy and that laughter is the best medicine.

It's live comedy on a Tuesday night, there may be nerves and cold feet, it might get messy, but it will certainly be a laugh!

FREE TICKETS are available by emailing artservice@liveborders1.org.uk

In partnership between Live Borders Arts & Creativity and Stand Up and be Counted, Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership and Creating Hope Scottish Borders.

Tuesday 17th November, 7-9pm

MacArts, Galashiels

MUSIC FOR ABSENT FRIENDS

You are invited to an evening which is part of Scotland's festival of storytelling and remembrance where there will be songs to sing, music to listen to and memories to share.

Supported by Rory Campbell, Music Therapist and Bereavement Co-ordinator at NHS Borders' Margaret Kerr Unit, this event is open to anyone (aged 14+) affected by loss or grief. Doors open at 6.30pm, entry is free, 14/15 year olds should be accompanied by an adult. Bring an instrument if you would like. For further information email rory.campbell@nhs.scot



Various dates

BIPOLAR UNFILTERED – NEW 'LUNCH AND LEARN' SESSIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Bring your lunch and join Bipolar Scotland for an open conversation about bipolar.

All sessions are 12pm – 1pm.

Register using the links below:

- **Thursday 29th October:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bipolar-unfiltered-lunch-learn-tickets-2001382392612>
- **Thursday 19th November:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bipolar-unfiltered-lunch-learn-tickets-2001453933593>
- **Tuesday 15th December:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bipolar-unfiltered-lunch-learn-tickets-2001453962680>
- **Wednesday 20th January:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bipolar-unfiltered-lunch-learn-tickets-2001454004806>

HEALTH IN MIND GROUPS

Health in Mind has recently updated its group workshop programme and has a variety of courses starting from October, including:

- **Ways to Wellbeing, GALASHIELS** (10 weeks) – starting on 8th October
- **Stress Management, KELSO** (4 weeks) – starting on 22nd October
- **Stress Management, ONLINE** (4 weeks) – starting on 22nd October
- **Anxiety Management, EYEMOUTH** (5 weeks) – starting on 19th November

To find out more about the workshops and make a booking please visit [Health in Mind | Courses and Workshops in the Scottish Borders 2026](#)

INFORMATION STATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING at the WHAT MATTERS HUBS

- HAWICK - Thursday 8th October, 10am – 12:30pm, Heart of Hawick café
- DUNS - Tuesday 13th October, 12 noon – 2pm, Fare Share Café, Murray Street, Duns
- PEEBLES - Wednesday 14th October, 10am – 12:30pm, Costa Coffee, Peebles
- KELSO - Wednesday 21st October, 10am – 12:30pm, Mayfield Garden Centre, Kelso
- GALASHIELS - Wednesday 28th October, 10am – 12:30pm, ASDA Café, Galashiels
- DUNS - Tuesday 10th November, 12 noon – 2pm, Fare Share Café, Murray Street, Duns
- PEEBLES - Wednesday 11th November, 10am – 12:30pm, Costa Coffee, Peebles
- HAWICK - Thursday 12th November, 10am – 12:30pm, Heart of Hawick café
- KELSO - Wednesday 18th November, 10am – 12:30pm, Mayfield Garden Centre, Kelso
- GALASHIELS - Wednesday 25th November, 10am – 12:30pm, ASDA Café, Galashiels

Drop-in service with Health in Mind where you can find out more about the advice, information and support available to help with mental health and wellbeing. **Find out more** [HERE](#)

1st Tuesday of the month, Galashiels

SURVIVORS OF BEREAVEMENT BY SUICIDE LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP

For more information contact the local co-ordinator on 0770 4691 111 or email scottishborders@uksobs.org

Mondays - 7-9pm

ANDYS MAN CLUB

Andys Man Club is a peer to peer support group for men (aged 18+) who have either been through a storm, are currently going through a storm or have a storm brewing in life. Andys Man Club meets every Monday from 7pm (excluding English Bank Holidays).

- Gala RFC Hospitality Suite (to the right when you enter through the gate), Netherdale, Nether Road, Galashiels TD1 3HE
- Vale of Leithen Social Club, 2 Leithen Crescent, Innerleithen, EH44 6JL

Find out more at <https://andysmanclub.co.uk/>

AFTER A SUICIDE WORKING GROUP

Have you or someone you know lost a family member or friend to suicide? If you feel ready and able to contribute to improving the support and information available to others going through a similar experience, come and join the After a Suicide Working Group. The working group is made up of people with lived experience of bereavement by suicide. It is not a support group, but it offers members the opportunity to use their lived experience to contribute to the local suicide prevention strategy.

For more information email: health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk

Various dates

BORDERS IN RECOVERY GROUPS

Borders in Recovery runs weekly Recovery Cafés in Galashiels, Eyemouth, Hawick and Peebles, open to anyone over 16 years and in recovery from substance use or supporting someone who is (friend/family). The cafés offer a free hot meal, peer support, meaningful activities, socialisation opportunities and health and wellbeing activities as well as many other leisure and personal development opportunities. Borders in Recovery also have a Weekly Music Group on a Tuesday and Recovery Coaching Training is available. There is also a Whatsapp group and SMART meetings in Peebles and Gala including a Womens SMART meeting in Gala. **To find out more click** [HERE](#).

RESOURCES

FIREARMS LICENSING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

In the last newsletter we reported on a new partnership in Scotland to build awareness and understanding of health and wellbeing in relation to firearms licensing – the Scottish Firearms Mental Health Awareness and Support Partnership.

The vision of the initiative, led by Chief Inspector Bruce Crawford of Police Scotland's National Firearms and Explosives Licensing (NFEL) team, is for certificate holders in Scotland to feel safe and supported to report changes in their mental health and wellbeing, contributing to the prevention of suicide within the community. Supporting the partnership are a host of mental health and rural organisations, agencies and charities.

Firearms certificate holders may be worried about saying you are not feeling OK but the key message from Police Scotland is to come forward early and seek support. Every concern is handled in a supportive and understanding way and they do not want people to be afraid to seek help.

This page on the Police Scotland website explains the support available, and the responsibilities that firearms certificate holders have if they have mental health concerns.

[Firearms licensing mental health awareness and support - Police Scotland](#)

CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK

As Challenge Poverty Week is in October we thought we would share the 'Ways to Be Well' web page with ideas, resources and signposting to help manage money worries. There is a well-evidenced correlation between poverty and mental ill health - worrying about money can affect our mental wellbeing and can be extremely stressful. Our ability to manage money can also be affected by a mental health issue.

For links to support and useful websites and Apps, please visit: nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/creating-hope/ways-to-be-well/manage-money-worries/

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH STRESS

Stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure. Pressure turns into stress when you feel unable to cope. As November features International Stress Awareness Week, we are sharing the NHS Inform resources for stress. These can help you to recognise the symptoms of stress and offers ways of helping to manage stress including breathing and relaxation exercises and advice on keeping a stress diary. There is also a link to the free, 8 week online course 'SilverCloud' for helping to manage stress, anxiety and depression.

Find out more from NHS Inform [HERE](#).

Anyone working in health and social care can also access Scotland's [National Wellbeing Hub](#)

One of the new resources on the hub for staff is the 'Staying Well Toolkit' which can be downloaded as an editable PDF directly [HERE](#)

SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE THIS WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

For World Mental Health Day, the **YoungMinds** website can be used by schools, youth groups, families, and community organisations to access practical activities, raise awareness, share trusted information, and encourage open discussions about mental health. Its resources can help young people understand their feelings, build resilience, know where to seek support, and reduce the stigma often associated with mental health difficulties.

[YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | Young Minds](#)

TRAINING

TRANS AWARENESS TRAINING FOR ORGANISATIONS

Thursday 19th November - 10am – 12.30pm

Online (via Microsoft Teams)

Price: £30 per person

The training will have a specific focus on trans young people's experiences and will include the following:

- Refresher of language and terminology, policy and legislative frameworks relating to people who are transgender
- Practical tips and considerations to support both staff and service users
- Data from LGBTYS research and other reports framing transgender young people's experiences, obstacles and barriers when accessing services in Scotland
- Interactive elements including breakout room activities for reflecting and sharing best practice

Please click [here](#) to fill in the registration form and book your place.

BORDERS CARE LEARNING NETWORK

Borders Care Learning Network is part of Borders Care Voice and delivers mental health training throughout the year. Upcoming courses at their Galashiels training venue include:

Monday 5th October 10am – 3pm	Peer2Peer training Exploring peer support
Monday 2nd November 10am – 3pm	Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention Informed Level training
Monday 9th November 10am – 3pm	Navigating Anxiety Understanding types of anxiety and impact. Self-Management strategies.
Monday 7th December and Monday 14th December 9.30am – 5.30pm	Scotland's Mental Health First Aid Certificated by Public Health Scotland Must attend both days

Download the full copy of the Borders Care Learning Network training programme [HERE](#) (PDF)

To book one of the above training courses click [HERE](#) (opens Microsoft booking form)

APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING (ASIST)

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training ASIST is a 2-day intensive, interactive and practice dominated course, aimed at enabling people to spot the risk of suicide and provide immediate help to someone at risk of suicide. In the same way that skills are needed for physical first aid, ASIST develops the skills necessary for suicide first aid.

To be added to the distribution list to be informed when future course bookings go live please email:

health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk

MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE TRAINING

Thursday 22 October 2026: IN PERSON COURSE (09.00 - 14.00)

NHS Borders, Rushbank, Newstead.

Registration Link: [Book course for Newstead - In Person - 22October 2026](#)

Thursday 05 November 2026: ONLINE COURSE (09.00 - 14.00)

Online via Microsoft Teams

Registration Link: [Book online course - 05 November 2026](#)

Further details of local Mentally Healthy Workplace Training for Managers is included within this collection of workplace health and wellbeing resources:

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/Ytg2OFWEcvfH7QrU?ref=Link&loc=mysways>

SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - SKILLED LEVEL

All dates are IN-PERSON at Scottish Borders Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells

- **Thursday 22nd October:** 9am – 1pm
- **Thursday 19th November:** 9am – 1pm
- **Thursday 4th March 2027:** 9am – 1pm
- **Thursday 20th May 2027:** 9am – 1pm

This course 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.

Anyone attending this training must first complete the Informed Level e-module 'Promoting children and young people's mental health and preventing self-harm and suicide' on the NHS 'TURAS' website.

Email health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk to register for one of the dates at SBC HQ

SELF HARM NETWORK SCOTLAND TRAINING

The Self-Harm Network Scotland, run by Penumbra, has free training opportunities about self-harm:

- **1-hour Self-Harm Awareness Session** - for anyone in Scotland who is interested in learning more about self-harm. This includes professionals, parents, carers and loved ones. It is delivered in a webinar/seminar style with a presentation and time at the end for questions.
- **3 hour Self-Harm Awareness Training (for professionals)** – covers the underlying reasons for self-harm and gives information, tools and resources that can be used to support people who self-harm.

To find out more and book click [HERE](#)

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING DIRECTORY

Borders ADP has a training directory for 2026-2027 – you can download the directory from [this page](#) on the NHS Borders website.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING INFORMATION

There are two local catalogues available that set out the training available:

Download the Adults catalogue (PDF) [HERE](#)

Download the Children and Young People's catalogue (PDF) [HERE](#)

TOWARDS BETTER OUTCOMES: REDUCING MENTAL HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND HELPING TO PREVENT SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE – NEW E-LEARNING MODULE

NHS Education for Scotland and Public Health Scotland eLearning module "Towards better outcomes" is designed for learners across sectors and settings who have direct and/or substantial contact with people who are at risk of mental ill health, self-harm or suicide. The new module builds on the knowledge and skills developed through the "Ask, Tell, Respond" resources and promotes rights-based approaches, with a focus on Time, Space and Compassion (Scottish Government, 2023). This is an excellent module that provides a thorough overview of mental health inequalities. There are two units in the module – allow a good couple of hours to work through them (progress can be saved if you do one unit at a time).

To access the module click [HERE](#)

MONEY GUIDERS INDUCTION TRAINING

Money Guiders training is provided by the Money and Pensions Service and is aimed at those working in Health and Social Care with an interest in learning about first level money guidance to support good conversations and signposting. The training is free; you will receive a City & Guilds Qualification and digital achievement badge on completion.

Dates available:

- **08/10/2026 14:00 Thursday**
- **14/10/2026 10:00 Wednesday**

The online programme is made up of six foundation modules that can be completed on a self-directed basis and over a timescale that works best for you. For more information and to get involved click [HERE](#)

GET IN TOUCH

This information bulletin was produced by Steph MacKenzie, Health Improvement Specialist (Mental Health), Charlotte Jones, Health Improvement Specialist (Suicide Prevention) and Kelda Pearce, Health Improvement Specialist (Mental Health & Suicide Prevention for Children & Young People) Public Health Department, NHS Borders. If you'd like to join our mailing list or talk to us about any of the news, events, resources or training above, you can get in touch with us by emailing

health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk



For our updates on Facebook please follow [NHS Borders Small Changes, Big Difference](#)



For our updates on Instagram please follow [@small_changes_nhs_borders](#)



CREATING HOPE WEB PAGES

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What if... asking about **suicide** could save a life?

SuicidePrevention.scot

Suicide Prevention
Scotland

