

In this edition of the newsletter you will find:

- An **update** on Scottish Social Networks Forum
- A summary of the conference “**Social Networks – Evidence and Potential**”
- Information on two organisations playing their part in supporting positive social networks - **Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland** and **Neighbourhood Networks**
- **Amber**, a new mediation service launched this month.

This newsletter will be coming out a little more regularly than in the past and certainly at least quarterly. The aim will be to give brief information and flag up where you can get more. If you have trouble accessing any of the information mentioned or if you have ideas or contributions for future issues, please contact me or Joanne. Cheers **Lesley** (Lesley Stenhouse, Forum Co-ordinator)

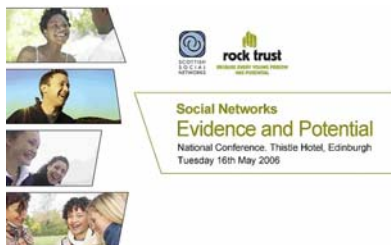
## Update

First, **welcome to Joanne Bennett** who will be building up the database to ensure you hear what's happening, building up a map of who is doing what where and developing the website. Over the coming months Joanne may be in touch to update the information we have about you and your organisation.

If you haven't visited the website recently ([www.scottishsocialnetworks.org](http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org)) you will find that there is a lot more there. So please go and have a look now (well after you've read this newsletter). If you have information or a link you think should be included then please e-mail Joanne with the details at [info@scottishsocialnetworks.org](mailto:info@scottishsocialnetworks.org). The long term aim is to have a “map” which you can access of projects and organisations involved in or interested in supporting individuals develop positive social networks.

The National Programme for **Improving Mental Health and Well-being** are supporting Scottish Social Networks Forum recognising that positive social networks are a crucial component in improving mental health and well-being, developing strong healthy individuals and communities as well as reducing homelessness. Positive social networks impact at every stage in an individual's life and are particularly important for those at risk of social exclusion. They are a key component in the strategy to prevent homelessness and in the prevention of mental illness linking in turn across the wider social inclusion agenda. [www.wellscotland.info](http://www.wellscotland.info)

## Social Networks – Evidence and Potential



The objective of the conference was to:

- present the evidence on how positive social networks can prevent and resolve homelessness,
- highlight the links to the wider social inclusion agenda and communities,
- share best practice from Europe, the UK and Scotland and consider how best to realise the wider potential.

Speakers and delegates from home and abroad gave a wide perspective on how social networks can create healthy communities as well as ideas and personal experience of what we can do to bring this about. There was so much on that, even if you were there, you will not have been able to cover it all. But if you go to the website <http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org> you can get an overview of the day and catch up on the sessions you wished you could have fitted in!

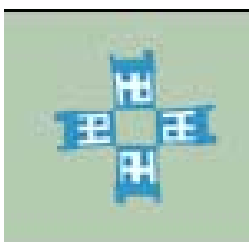


**Counselling and Homelessness** - Relationship breakdown which is so often quoted as the cause of homelessness is the kind of issue that prompts many of the people who see counsellors to seek help. Counsellors use the relationship between practitioner and client as a means by which to help people improve relationships with others – repair social networks and help to prevent and resolve homelessness. Counselling contributes to the capacity to build social networks.

In a recent evaluation of a youth counselling service, service-users described a key impact of counselling being to help them repair and improve relationships with parents and others. For many, learning to trust the counsellor was a first step towards rebuilding trust with others. This strengthening of connections between young people and other family members helped to ensure that unsettled circumstances at home did not result in homelessness. For the fuller information, research references, case study and contact details see:

[www.scottishsocialnetworks.org/pdfs/Counselling%20and%20Homelessness.pdf](http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org/pdfs/Counselling%20and%20Homelessness.pdf)

People wishing to find a counsellor can find lists of names and contact details of individual counsellors and counselling organizations in Scotland on the website of COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk).



**Neighbourhood Networks** is modelled on the principles and practices of KeyRing, a well-established English company, who pioneered the model of 'Living Support Networks' to support individuals who are labelled with a learning disability to live in their own homes. This model of developing social networks can be used to support the reintegration of other excluded groups into the local community

A Living Support Network consists of nine network members and a Community Living Worker recruited locally to support individuals in their own homes – all within walking distance of each other. The networks provide four main levels of housing support: - 1. Flexible Housing Support; 2. Mutual Support; 3. Community Connecting and 4. A quick response. The proximity of the Community Living Worker means that we are able to intervene prior to a crisis.

Neighbourhood Networks is currently providing a service for people labelled with a learning disability but their aims and objectives are to work with local communities to support and empower more people across Scotland that would want to benefit from this flexible model of support. For more information and contact details see:

[www.scottishsocialnetworks.org/pdfs/Neighbourhood%20Networks%20rev.pdf](http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org/pdfs/Neighbourhood%20Networks%20rev.pdf)

**amber** **Amber** is a mediation service for the use of young people (16-21) and their families – people who are having trouble getting along, some of whom may be at risk of becoming homeless. It was launched in Edinburgh this month. Edinburgh Cyrenians and SACRO have teamed up to develop Amber which is funded through the City of Edinburgh Council's Homelessness Strategy. For more information contact [amber@cyrenians.or.uk](mailto:amber@cyrenians.or.uk) or visit [www.cyrenians.org.uk](http://www.cyrenians.org.uk)



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