

# Neighbourhood Networks



## Introduction

Neighbourhood Networks is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity in Scotland. Neighbourhood Networks are also registered with the Care Commission to provide housing support services. Our work is person-centred with our values firmly rooted in enhancing diversity, creating greater social justice and personalised services ensuring that every person is able to lead the life of their choice to become all that they can and want to be. We were officially launched in May 2001 and have seen significant growth, developing support networks throughout Scotland in Argyll and Bute, North Lanarkshire and Glasgow.

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.

In a recent study carried out by Sue Rawcliffe and Gerry Hassan it was emphasised that support networks were connecting people within their neighbourhoods and local communities. In this study "Staying Human - respect, values and social justice" it was concluded that

"Each network has developed its own particular focus and way of working. They do not develop overnight and involve the long slow process of relationship and community building. Their impact is already seen in the increased confidence and self esteem of Network members throughout the country and the roots that are being developed within their local communities" (Page 59).

## How it works

A Living Support Network consists of nine network members and a Community Living Worker. We recruit Community Living Workers from the area of the networks to support nine individuals who live in their own homes within walking distance of each other. The Community Living Workers are supported by a Network Manager who manages three Networks. The Community Living Workers are well connected people in their community having local knowledge to develop robust supports for network members. Support is provided individually or in groups. The networks provide four main levels of housing support: -

1. Flexible Housing Support – Support with practical tasks to maintain tenancies. This includes housing support tasks such as: where to get good value shopping, how to fill in forms, budgeting and advice on bills, home repairs, mediation, writing letters, home security and keeping safe.
2. Mutual Support – We build on the strengths, gifts and skills of the members. Although members are not expected to be friends our experience is that strong friendships and relationships are developing for people who otherwise may have never experienced this important element of ordinary life.
3. Community Connecting – By linking into local neighbourhood activities and facilities to ensure that members feel that they are integrated within their local communities.
4. A quick response – We provide a quick response to any needs for additional or specialist support. The proximity of the Community Living Worker means that we are able to intervene prior to a crisis.

Our 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.

### **Who do we support?**

Neighbourhood Networks is currently providing a service for people labelled with a learning disability who: -

- ❖ Have moved from group homes
- ❖ Are living with carers, particularly older parents
- ❖ Are isolated in their current accommodation
- ❖ Are homeless
- ❖ Are at risk of long term admission to hospital or institutions

### **What can we do for you?**

Drawing upon the Homelessness Task Force Final Report (Scottish Executive 2002) it was emphasised that local authorities are now required to ensure that there are appropriate support packages in place for individuals who are at risk of homelessness and for individuals who are homeless during their resettlement period. The Task Force identified mediation, befriending and mentoring as the key components to building and rebuilding social networks for individuals.

Neighbourhood Networks have a strong focus on the above areas and mainstream this support throughout each and every network. Neighbourhood Networks provides services that are high quality, strategically planned and cost-effective. Neighbourhood Networks has shown that the living support networks are sustainable; they offer continuity and long term commitment to people who may not have experienced this before. Individuals who use our service are less likely to be isolated and are less vulnerable in a crisis because of the strength of the network and the flexible support of the Community Living Worker and other network members. The networks make a long term commitment to people with the focus being on creating supportive social networks. People are more likely to make real connections by accessing resources in the community.

If you feel this model of housing support could benefit the people you support or you feel that you can support Neighbourhood Networks, then please contact Neighbourhood Networks, Unit G6, Festival Business Centre, 150 Brand Street, Glasgow, G51 1DH or telephone 0141 314 0026.

### **Ekta Marwaha Rai**

Development Manager  
Neighbourhood Networks  
Unit G6, Festival Business Centre  
150 Brand Street  
Glasgow  
G51 1DH  
Mobile : 07917584600  
Telephone : 0141 314 0027  
Fax : 0141 314 0026

**Ekta Rai [ekta@neighbourhoodnetworks.org]**

[www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org)