



2009 - 2010 Annual Report

About Outside the Box

Outside the Box is a social enterprise. We provide community development support to people and groups who want to start something new or to make something better.

We are registered as a Scottish charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Five people were directors during the year:

- Lesley Brady, who chairs the Board
- Tony Fitzpatrick, who stood down in October 2009
- Donald Macaskill
- Pat Scrutton
- Chris Taylor.

The development support is provided by staff and a network of associates. We also sometimes work in partnership with other organisations.

What we do

In 2009-10

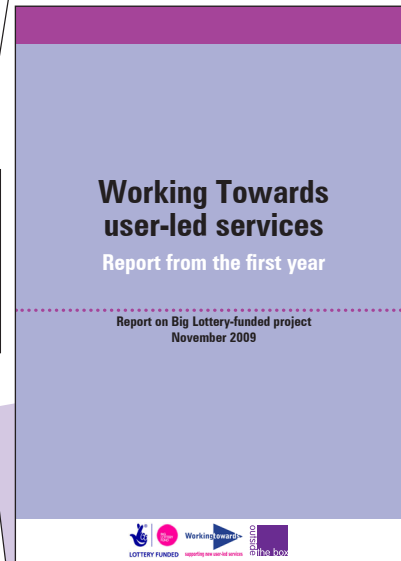
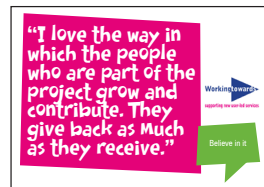
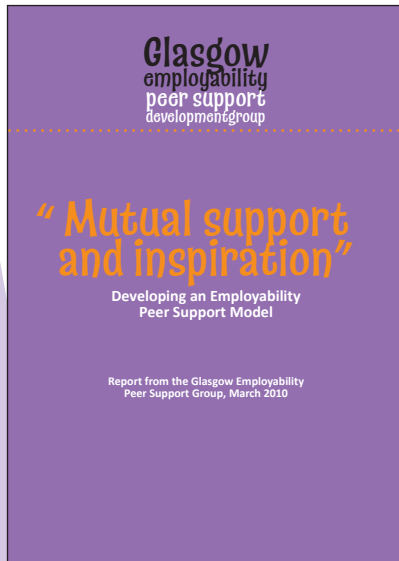
- We worked with over 50 projects.
- We produced 13 reports and postcards or leaflets for a further 4 projects.
- We sent regular updates on the work we do to 3,000 people and know that many of them send this on to friends and colleagues. We usually have around 6,000 people using our website every month to download reports and read about the projects we are working with.

Sources of income

Our income comes from a range of sources.

- We have a grant from the Big Lottery Fund to support the Working Towards project.
- We have contracts and grants with a range of public bodies, voluntary organisations and charitable trusts for specific projects.

We have no core grants to support the organisation as a whole.



How we make a difference

These are examples of outcomes from some of the work we have done over the past year.

Helping people to have a voice

We met with older people living in Lanarkshire who are frail or have additional needs which can make it difficult for them to participate in the usual consultation processes. NHS Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire Council wanted to learn what types of services they wanted and what would help them participate in future consultations. The older people we met made suggestions on ways to improve existing services and low-cost ways to meet gaps in services.

We worked with groups of people affected by alcohol or drug addictions. We identified ways for them to influence local services and strategies on wider matters, such as housing, as well as on the support they get from addiction services.

We worked with voluntary organisations in Edinburgh to gather the views of people who are homeless and using the emergency Care Shelter over the winter of 2009-10. This included arranging interviews with people who do not speak English. One of the points raised by the people who took part was that people who plan services do not usually ask them about their views and experiences.

We updated the information on registering to vote and taking part in elections, and reminded people about the Our Vote Our Voice resources which we published in 2007. Local groups used this to enable more people to feel confident about taking part in the May 2010 General Election.

“Coatbridge Library Talking Books service is wonderful. The staff are very helpful, come out to you, take their time, are interested in you. It would be good if more libraries did this.”

“We could have a Bad Sewers’ Group for people who can’t sew well now. That way, it would be good fun instead of just being about what I can’t do now. And we could teach people who never learned to do things like sewing and knitting.”

Quotes from older people in Lanarkshire

Supporting peer support for individual people and for groups

The Glasgow Employability Peer Support network brings together people who live with mental health problems and staff who work in employability or mental health services. We helped them gather the experiences of people across Glasgow and develop a good practice model. This will help more groups develop good peer support for people who want to move towards getting a job.

We have helped groups led by people who have addictions to network with each other and learn from what other groups are doing.

In October we organised an event to bring together members from some of the groups led by people with learning disabilities that we had worked with. They wanted to get together to find out what other groups were doing and share ideas on issues that they all found difficult. Peer support among the members was already a strong feature of the way each group worked. People got more ideas on ways to get support from other groups led by people with disabilities.

“Mental health difficulties and challenges can isolate you by the very nature of them, so making you lonely. But peer support can challenge this.”

“It gives you confidence to try something new if someone else in the group has tried it and they found it ok.”

“It feeds your soul.” Quotes from Mutual support and inspiration report from the Glasgow employability peer support project

Supporting local projects to grow and have an impact

PAGES is a group of parents of children and young people who have autism and who live in Formartine, which is an area of Aberdeenshire just north of Aberdeen. We helped them gather the views of young people and of parents on what sorts of leisure activities would work for young people and where they wanted these to be located. The report - Field of Dreams - was published in August. In November, PAGES and the Formartine Community Planning Partnership held a joint event to look at ways to take forward the ideas people had raised and engage more local partners in helping them put these ideas into effect. Since then, the wider group has gone on meeting and young people and their families have more opportunities open to them.

We work with Paths for All to give support to local projects they fund around planning for the future and demonstrating the impact of what they do.

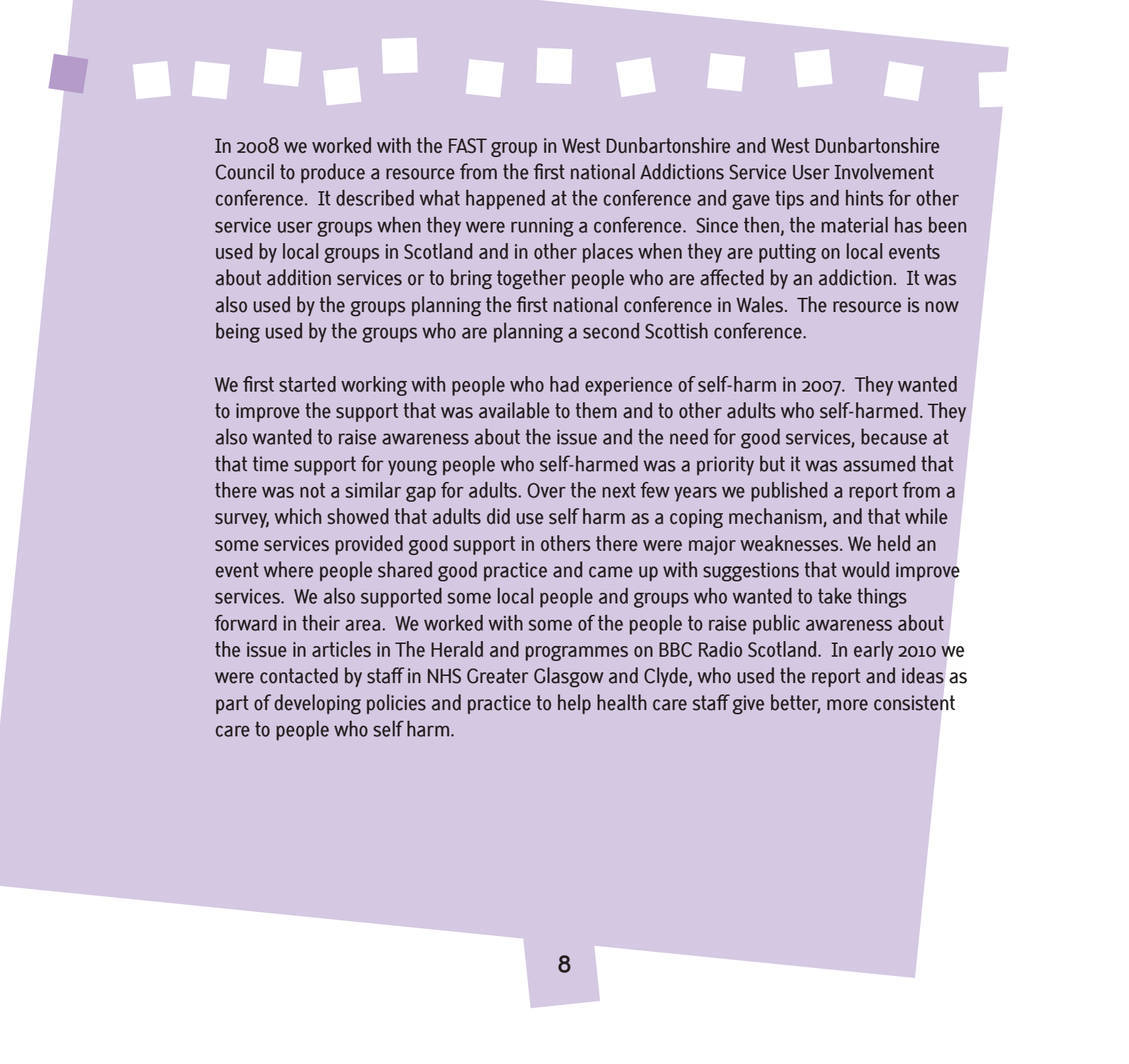
Individual people benefit as the projects and groups grow. For example, we helped a group of lone parents to plan how they could work together to arrange low-cost leisure activities for their children over the holidays. Afterwards, members of the group felt they were more confident and had more skills than they had realised. Some people made changes in their own lives, including looking for paid work or taking on a volunteering role.

“I saw a quote from me in the report. You’ve no idea how good it made me feel knowing that someone listened to me and how my experience is now benefitting other people.”

“We are working now with other groups. Before we thought we had to do everything on our own. Usually it just didn’t get done because we were all so tired and deflated. It feels as if we are getting more support now, both as a group and for ourselves and our families.”

Having a wider impact

Outside the Box has now been working with people and groups for 6 years. We are now seeing ways in which the work we do is having an impact beyond the initial project or local area. Sometimes the wider impact happens over several years and sometimes the ideas or experience is taken up by other people quite quickly.



In 2008 we worked with the FAST group in West Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire Council to produce a resource from the first national Addictions Service User Involvement conference. It described what happened at the conference and gave tips and hints for other service user groups when they were running a conference. Since then, the material has been used by local groups in Scotland and in other places when they are putting on local events about addiction services or to bring together people who are affected by an addiction. It was also used by the groups planning the first national conference in Wales. The resource is now being used by the groups who are planning a second Scottish conference.

We first started working with people who had experience of self-harm in 2007. They wanted to improve the support that was available to them and to other adults who self-harmed. They also wanted to raise awareness about the issue and the need for good services, because at that time support for young people who self-harmed was a priority but it was assumed that there was not a similar gap for adults. Over the next few years we published a report from a survey, which showed that adults did use self-harm as a coping mechanism, and that while some services provided good support in others there were major weaknesses. We held an event where people shared good practice and came up with suggestions that would improve services. We also supported some local people and groups who wanted to take things forward in their area. We worked with some of the people to raise public awareness about the issue in articles in The Herald and programmes on BBC Radio Scotland. In early 2010 we were contacted by staff in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, who used the report and ideas as part of developing policies and practice to help health care staff give better, more consistent care to people who self-harm.

We worked with the Scottish Recovery Network for several years to support local recovery networks that brought together people who lived with mental health problems and others who wanted to promote a recovery approach. We developed practical advice on how to start and sustain networks and how to promote the ideas around recovery - including drawing on people's lived experiences. There is a set of resources and a series of posters which people can download from the website and use themselves. Since then, the benefits of a recovery-focussed approach have been included in the Scottish Government's strategy on services for people who have a drug addiction. The materials and ideas from the earlier work with people who have mental health problem are now being used to make a difference for people in different circumstances.

Working Towards is a large project running over 4 years, where we are supporting the development so services that are led by the people who use them. It is part-funded by the Big Lottery Fund. This year we produced a paper that describes the national policies that relate to the promotion of user-led services. There is also a report from the events we held in Aberdeen and Glasgow to introduce the project - and where people came up with lots of ideas on ways to use this approach to improve opportunities for people in their areas. Since then, people have used the ideas from the Working Towards project as part of their plans for different ways to develop services, especially in situations when fresh ideas are needed.

Our priorities for the coming few years

Our priorities are very similar to those we have had for several years, as we want to continue to build on the work we have started with people and groups, and to respond to the issues that people tell us are important for them.

Working in partnership with people who are homeless and with people who are affected by addictions.

Helping people to identify innovative ways to provide services that enable them and others in similar situations to have more choices and opportunities in their lives.

Exploring more and different ways to tackle issues around equality and diversity.

We also want to develop the way we deliver our own work.

Doing more work in partnership with other organisations that share our values and complement what we do.

Extending the range and numbers of people and organisations who know about our work and can use the material we produce.

Where to reach us

Our office address is
Unit 23
Festival Business Centre
150 Brand Street
Glasgow
G51 1DH

T. 0141 419 0451
Email: admin@otbds.org

Copies of most reports and information about the projects are on the website: www.otbds.org

Our registered office is
The Old Toll, Harestanes, West Linton, EH46 7AH

