



ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009



**Outside the Box
Development Support**

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Registered Office

The Old Toll, Harestanes
Blyth Bridge, West Linton, EH46 7AH

Who we are

Outside the Box is a social enterprise. It was established in 2004 as a source of independent community development support, information and advice to people who tend to be marginalised from their communities and who want to make a contribution.

We work with people who want to start something new or to keep something going. Mostly we work with people who have a lot to contribute to their own situation and to their communities, but who tend to get missed out or find it hard to have their voices heard – such as older people, disabled people and people who experience more than one type of disadvantage.

We also work with people who are based in larger organisations – such as statutory bodies and voluntary organisations – who want to develop the way they engage with the people who use their services or in communities.

This report describes the work we did between April 2008 and March 2009 and how we plan to develop these activities over the next few years.

There is more information about recent and current projects and publications on our website: www.otbds.org.

People involved in Outside the Box

The organisation is registered as a Scottish charity and is a company limited by guarantee.

Five people were directors during the year:

- Lesley Brady, who chairs the Board of Directors
- Tony Fitzpatrick
- Donald Macaskill
- Pat Scrutton
- Chris Taylor.

Anne Connor is the Chief Executive and leads the day-to day work.

During the year we had 4 development workers and an administrator.

What we do

Over the year the work we did fell into 3 main areas.

- Working Towards, which is developing user-led services.
- Promoting and supporting participation by people in what happens to them and in what happens to their communities.
- Raising awareness about and supporting work around equality and diversity.

In all, we worked with over 40 projects across Scotland.



Working Towards

The Working Towards project supports the development of new services that are led by the people who will be using that service.

The work is part-funded by the Big Lottery through a 4 year grant. Working Towards began in August 2008 and will run until 2012.

The benefits in the longer-term will include

- Services that work better for the people who use them, because they are designed around their circumstances.
- Opportunities for people to contribute – through planning for the service, checking out what other people want, being a volunteer or getting paid work in the new services.
- New approaches to emerging problems and to some long-standing issues.

The website has more information about what we did to spread information about the overall project, such as the report from the first events we held in late 2008.

In the first 6 months we worked with over 20 local projects. There is information about some of the local projects on the website. Over the next year there will be reports of what they have achieved.

Working towards

supporting new user-led services



Supported by

The National Lottery[®]
through the Big Lottery Fund



There is also material from projects which bring together people from across Scotland who have an interest in developing new services to address a gap in current provision. Two of these national projects started during 2008-09.

- Stepping Out will raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing for older people and the ways in which peer support and practical services led by older people can support people's health and wellbeing.
- SH Uncovered follows on from a survey Outside the Box did last year in partnership with people across Scotland who wanted to raise awareness of how little support there was for people aged over 25 who self-harmed. People with experience of self-harm are leading the development of more access to peer support and information about keeping well.

Feedback from people taking part in projects

Participants at the Working Towards events identified gaps where they thought more user-led services were needed and the advantages of this approach:

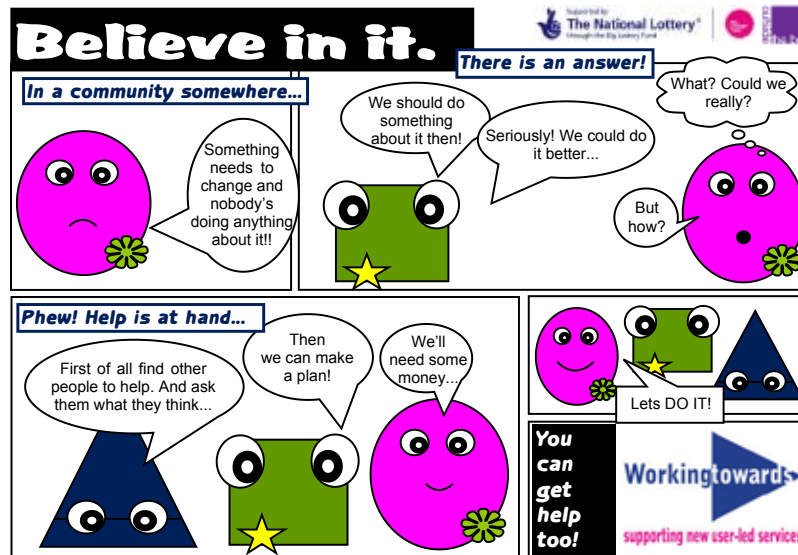
"A service where the people remember what it is like to be a teenager and to be a bit scared."

"A place where you feel welcome and that people like you, not where they see you as someone who needs help."

"A service that starts by giving the kind of support people really want and know helps them to move on. Not just the stuff that professionals tell you that you need."

"Fun stuff that makes you feel good."

"Peer support would be better at helping people to back into work."



Participation

During 2008-09 we developed work that started a few years back and started working on ways to support participation by people who have not had many opportunities to have their say before. Some examples of work around participation are described here and there are more examples on the website.

Our Vote, Our Voice

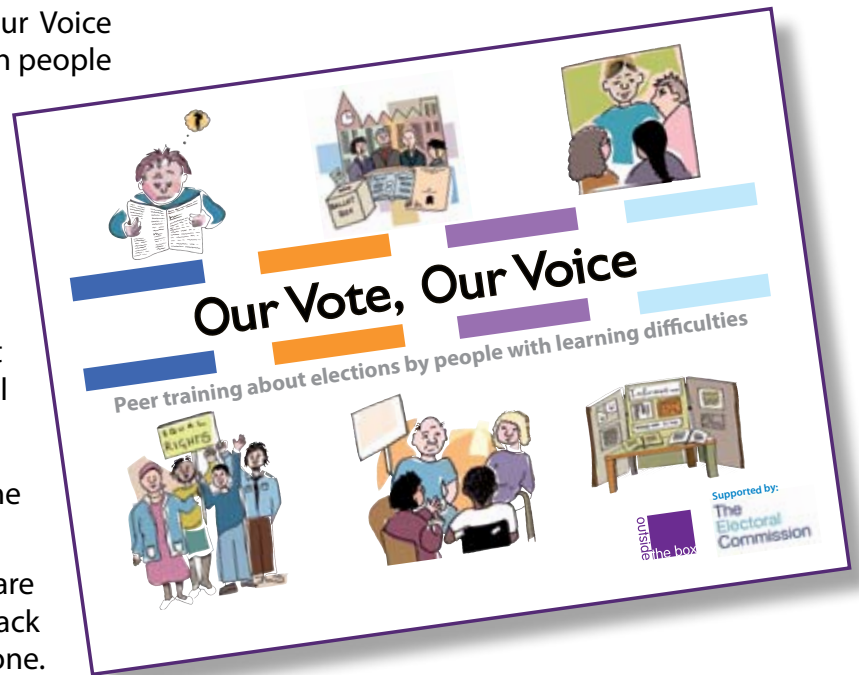
The spring and early summer of 2008 saw the dissemination of the Our Vote, Our Voice resource pack. This was developed with people who have learning disabilities to encourage other people to take part in the electoral process and have more say in their day-to-day lives. The project began in late 2006 and was funded by the Electoral Commission.

In late 2008 we asked people about whether they had found the pack useful and how they had used the material.

- Most of the people who are using the resources have learning disabilities.
- 30% of the groups or people using it are from other situations and the feedback is that the material is useful for everyone.

The resource pack is being used in schools, women's groups, BME groups, mental health groups, by other disabled people and by older people.

- It is used as part of the in-depth support for individual people who can use the materials at their own pace.
- It is being used with groups and for people in other situations to work through on their own.



Feedback from people taking part in projects

This is some of the feedback we received as part of the 6 month follow-up with people who received Our Vote, Our Voice

“Very informative, accessible and useful.”

“Over 1,000 participants have used the material.”

“We worked through it with 3 of the people we support. Each of them feels more positive about making choices.”

“It is one of our essential teaching resources now.”

“We used it to show parents of people with disabilities that their sons and daughters can vote and can become more involved and included in local issues. It helped us explain the type of support we are offering people.”

“For those who were directly involved in putting it together, thank you very much. We now have service users not only aware that they can vote but actively exercising their right to do so.”

Participation and Citizenship

In November we published a report on participation and citizenship for people who have mental health problems. This grew out of work with groups across Scotland, when people described the aspects of participation that worked well for them and some of the barriers.

Civic Engagement and Participation in Decision Making was written in partnership with the Scottish Government, as advice on implementing the participation aspects of With Inclusion in Mind.

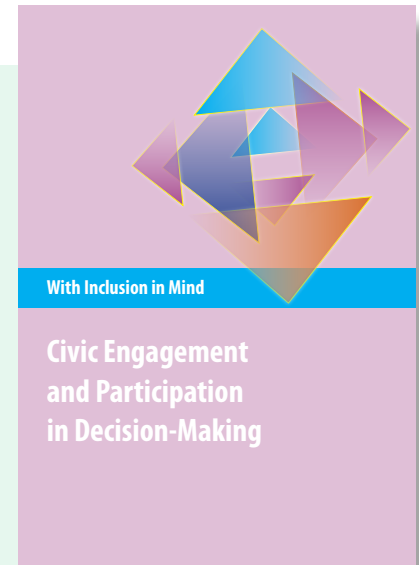
Background to Civic Engagement and Participation in Decision Making

With Inclusion in Mind is the formal guidance to local authorities on how they and their partners can implement sections 25-31 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act, 2003.

The guidance shows how people benefit from access to the whole range of services that local authorities provide or fund – such as libraries, leisure and recreation and education – as well as to services that focus on supporting people who have mental health problems or learning disabilities, or one of the other conditions that are covered by this legislation.

The Outside the Box report is being used by staff in local authorities and by groups led by people with mental health problems to increase the ways in which people contribute to planning within both mental health services and in wider community issues.

The report has links to the policy documents on participation and on mental health and wellbeing, to make it easier for people to know what the context is for participation.



Leading Change

We worked with staff who want to increase the opportunities for the people they support to participate in that service. One example is the Leading Change project. Staff in mental health services in NHS Ayrshire and Arran wanted to review the impact of changes they were making in in-patient care. The evaluation brought together the experiences of staff, of people who received care and of relatives.

The report is being used to show staff in other parts of the service what they can achieve and how people who are quite unwell can be involved in planning their recovery and the care that will help them.

"I have seen a difference since the last time I was a patient here. I feel I have hope and that everyone in the ward gives support to each other."



Participation by people affected by addictions

We began working with groups of people who are affected by addictions. We brought together a report from the first national Service User Involvement conference in Scotland, which was held in Clydebank in September 2008. This includes material from the conference and the lessons identified by the service users and staff involved in planning this first event. The group hope that the report will encourage other people to run service user involvement events in their areas.

"I was blown away hearing the personal stories of the FAST group. They were wonderful. A real inspiration."

Participation by people with learning disabilities

The South West Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership asked us to help them consult with people with learning disabilities who use their day centres, and with their families. We used a range of ways to gather the views of the people who used the day centres, including ways that worked for people who do not use verbal communication and people who need time to work out what they want to say.

After the reports were written and presented to the senior managers and politicians, as well as to the people who used the services, the people at the day centres said they wanted to hold an event that would show people the range of day opportunities for people living in this part of Glasgow. We worked with them to

plan and run an Information Day that would help people see they had choices and show staff what people wanted. We then worked together to publish a report, to show how the planning team had worked together and to encourage more participation by people with learning disabilities.

Feedback from people taking part in the projects

"The poster with everyone's comments about the day centres was very good."

"Everyone deserves an opportunity – make it happen."

"Very good – please repeat it annually."

"I felt good."

"It was great to talk to people."



Some of the feedback from people who came to the event – people who use services, families and staff from a range of services.

Equality and diversity

A lot of the work that we have done since Outside the Box was established 5 years ago has promoted equality and opportunities for disabled people, including people who have mental health problems and people with learning difficulties.

Each year, some of the projects have been with groups of people from the black and minority ethnic communities, where people wanted to talk about their experiences around both their disability and their ethnicity, or wanted to explore forms of support and opportunities that would work well for them.

Promoting equality and diversity is also an aspect of most of the other work we do – for example when we find ways to involve people who get missed from the main consultations and discussions.

These are some examples of work we did over the past year where equality and diversity was a major element.

Hearing Different Voices

The Hearing Different Voices project explored ways to gather the views of people who were unlikely to be part of discussions that were happening across Scotland about ways to

support people's mental health and wellbeing.

We met with 3 groups of people:

- Young women who are mums
- Migrant workers from the Polish community
- Men who are unemployed.

The people taking part told us about their experiences and views around a wide range of issues as well as about what would help support their mental health and wellbeing. In each case, this was the first time anyone had asked them about these matters.

"Friends don't understand what it's like when you have a baby. You can't just drop everything to meet up with them like before. So you end up on your own. It's lonely."

"I have two small children and was given a top floor flat. My oldest child is 2 years old, and I have been told that I will not be eligible for another house until he is 10. I have 8 years of carrying bags, prams and children up three flights of stairs."

"People we know would never think of using services in Scotland if we became unwell. The only option is to make sure you are surrounded by family and friends."

"It's hard enough being unemployed. It's worse if you face discrimination because of your appearance or age or anything."

"We'd like to tell people in the health service about how to improve things. Young mums use lots of services for themselves and their children and we have ideas. Can they come along and ask us here, where it is convenient and there is good child care?"

"Create more opportunities for people involved in the different strands to meet together on a regular basis."

"Share what we are doing and learning with people working on any aspect of disadvantage and discrimination. Draw on each other's experience and expertise to get better support for the people we care about."

"The involvement of communities is the missing link."

Participants at the event

Mind the Difference

Mind the Difference looked at the links between mental health and wellbeing and other circumstances for people in each of the equalities strands: age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexuality.

The first part was an event that brought together people who were part of organisations or teams focussing on one topic or aspect of people's identity or lives.

The second part was publishing a report that brought together ideas on how to strengthen the links and to share all the useful resources that the teams know of. It also looked at wider policies and resources that can help people get fair access to the support they need.

Participation by people from Black and minority ethnic communities

Over the past few years we have been working with groups in Glasgow and in Edinburgh where people are working to raise awareness about mental health needs of people from the Black and minority ethnic communities, and to offer people good support and care. This included women's groups and a group led by men from minority ethnic communities who are interested in mental health and wellbeing.

In 2008-09 three of the groups in Edinburgh came together to share what they had been doing. We worked with the groups to produce a report – Finding Strength from Within. This builds on earlier work and shows what everyone thought would create opportunities for people who experience mental health problems and their families. It also has suggestions for actions

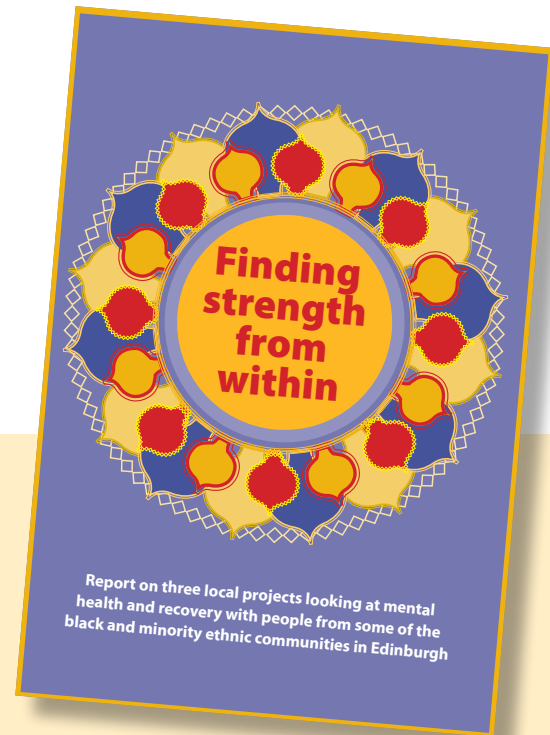
the wider BME communities can take and that mental health and other services can take.

Many of the issues raised by the people who took part in this project were the same as those raised by people from the majority community in Scotland when describing their experiences around mental health and wellbeing, use of services and recovery. People also talked about other issues that had not been identified in other work about recovery.

"I have realised that I am recovering from the discrimination as much as I am recovering from the mental health problems."

"Less responsibility. Too many people in our community, and probably other communities as well, take on a lot of responsibility – looking after their family, running a business, keeping in touch with family in Pakistan and spread far across the world. We don't ask for help. Sometimes we need to say 'no' or 'not just now' for our own wellbeing. But that is not what we have learned."

"Many men from BME communities don't understand mental health in the way that people mean it here. And we don't know what the services are – befriending, counselling, support, community mental health teams. So just giving someone information about a service is not going to encourage him to go along."



"From a men's service point of view, I think it was really nice and informative to mix with some women who were prepared to share their stories with us."

"[our communities can help by] not being ashamed or afraid to understand and begin accepting us for who we are."

How we do the work

We try to take the same overall approach to all the work we do

The approach is based on our values:

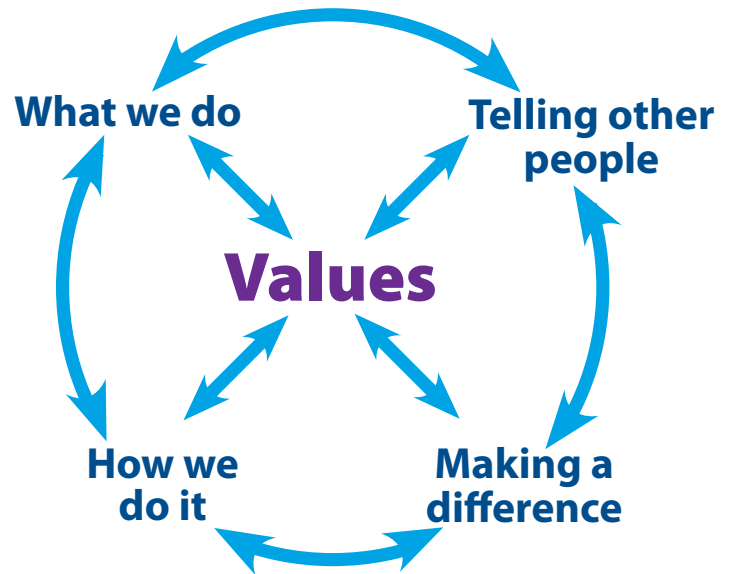
- Promoting equality and diversity
- Promoting people's strengths
- Including people in all stages of the work
- Creating opportunities for people to share their skills and experiences

How we work

This influences how we do the work.

Examples are:

- Using accessible forms of communication
- Where and when meetings happen
- Working in partnership with local groups
- Making opportunities for people to learn new skills and to take on roles where they show other people and themselves what they can do



Feedback from people who took part in projects

At the events to launch the Working Towards project the speakers were people from local projects who have taken on this sort of work before.

"I enjoyed listening to the passion and enthusiasm of others."

"I enjoyed the chance to hear other people's ideas and to share methods for developing those ideas."

"The speakers were inspirational."

We have asked people who are involved in local participation groups to be co-trainers.

Feedback from people who took part in projects

"The best bit was working on the stalls and giving people leaflets."

"We liked working together."

"We would like to invite more community groups next time."

What members of the team who planned the Information Day in South West Glasgow said about being part of it.

"This is David. I go to SHOUT. SHOUT is a group run by me and other people with learning difficulties in Arbroath. I have been going to SHOUT for a long time. I enjoy SHOUT. I met Gloria when she came to SHOUT. We get on well with Gloria and we have fun. I like her coming to our group. I understand what happens in the group more. I am more confident about speaking. Gloria got us to have small groups where we all get a turn of speaking. I like that very much."



We share the learning from the work we do wherever possible.

- We tell other people about the work we do with local projects – for example by putting the completed reports on our website if the project is happy with this. That way, other people get to read about what happened and can adapt it to make changes to their situation.
- We send round regular updates to a large number and range of contacts.
- We present material in ways that will reach all of the target audiences and encourage people to act on what they have learned.
- We use postcards and leaflet to raise awareness about the issues as well as to tell people what a report says.

"Beautifully presented & would capture interest of people. Very relevant information and suggestions."

Feedback on Our Vote Our Voice

The Outside the Box website

We have an average of over 46,000 hits on our website each month. People are using the site every day of the year and at all times of the day and night.

Our website is now used regularly by people in over 40 countries all over the world. After the UK, the places where people are using our material most often are Canada, Australia, Russia, Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand and the United States of America.

The pages on the website that people used most often over this year are Our Vote Our Voice – this material is being used a lot internationally as well as by people in the UK.

Other topics that got a lot of use over this year are

- Self-harm: the reports and people using our site to get access to other resources and sources of information.
- The stories by people with learning difficulties about getting work and being included in their communities.
- Materials about participation – reports, posters and practical sources for staff to engage with the people who use their services and for individual people to help them become more involved.

Making a difference

We try to ensure that the work we do makes a difference to people's lives.

Feedback from people who took part in projects

The questions on the Graffiti Wall at the South West Information Day asked people what they will do next.

After today I will

- ***Tell my friends and family about the things I have seen*** (61 people)
- ***Think about what I saw today*** (58 people)
- ***Try something new*** (47 people)
- ***Find out more about the things I liked*** (45 people)

Feedback from people who took part in projects

The Journey is a resource for people who have an acquired brain injury and their families. We worked with the Brain Injury Experience Network in West Dunbartonshire, to gather their experiences and identify their suggestions for practical steps people can take to make it easier to recover from and live with an acquired brain injury.

The people who took part in the project told us how they had enjoyed it and how important it is to be able to use their experience to help others.

The group gave one of the key presentations at the annual conference of the Scottish Head Injury Forum.

The resource pack is now being used by staff in services across Scotland. Health care and social work staff have given copies to people who have a brain injury and their relatives at all stages of people's journeys. Staff are also thinking about how they can enable the people with brain injuries they support and the families to contribute their experiences and views.

"When I came to the conference and said who I was, people already knew about me because they had read my story in the report. I'm a celebrity."

"It is so clear - what it says and how it is presented. It has been so easy for us to use the tips and hints in what we do as a team and for the families we support to use it themselves. And it encourages us to work with our patients and their families as partners. I can't think of any other resource that can do those things."

Feedback from people who took part in projects

"The report is beautiful. It makes me think that what we all said is important and we are being treated with respect."

"I have enjoyed being part of this project. It is good that people can be involved at their own pace and in ways that suit them."

"It helps to hear what other people say - really good. I know it's not just me."

"I am happy to be involved in this special day. I also have enjoyed telling people about my family, my situation, socially and health wise. I like to be involved with other minority people, and enjoy sharing our talks. That way I can get help and support from the authorities. Thank you all for organising our meeting today." [Graffiti wall comment, translation from Arabic]

Feedback from people who were part of the Finding Strength From Within project

Ways in which work with one project leads on to other topics

In 2007 we began working with women who self-harmed and wanted to get more and better support from themselves and for other people in similar situations.

We carried out a survey to gather people's experiences and ideas on what could help. It was on-line and completely anonymous. But we know from what people told us that the responses came from women and men living all over Scotland, and their ages ranged from their 20s to people in their 60s.

We have continued to work with local groups who want to look at extending access to peer support, and at raising awareness about the issue to help both people who self-harm and their families and friends feel less isolated.

We heard how this was something that affected people in the LGBT communities. We also heard from people working with the men to plan what further work will be most helpful.



Sources of income

During this year our income came from a range of sources.

- We received a grant from the Big Lottery to support the Working Towards project.
- We had the last stage of the grant from the Electoral Commission for the Our Vote, Our Voice project.
- We received grants from the NHS and local authorities for specific projects.
- We earned income from contracts with a range of public bodies and voluntary organisations.

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

We want to thank all the people and organisations which have awarded us grants or contracts.

Our priorities for the coming few years

As in previous years, we want to continue to build on the work we have done 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.
- Working in partnership with people who are affected by addictions.
- Raising awareness of the needs of men who experience domestic abuse and of women and men who experience domestic abuse within a same-sex relationship.
- Exploring innovative ways to provide support and services to people, especially supports that enable people to have more choices and opportunities.
- Exploring more and different ways to tackle issues around equalities and diversity.

Where to reach us

Our office address is

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Email: admin@otbds.org

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

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People and organisations which provide us with services

We get design support for our publications from

The House
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We work with Albi Taylor, who does graphic facilitation with us and provides graphics for our reports

Albi Taylor
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Our auditors are

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