

## Case Studies

### YOUTH WORK AND FOOD INSECURITY

Tackling food insecurity is an ongoing challenge for those who live with the shadow of poverty and low wages. This affects a significant number of children and young people, and puts unacceptable barriers in place to their wellbeing, education and future life path and happiness. YouthLink Scotland has been working with Scottish Government Tackling Food Insecurities Unit to explore the benefit of working with the youth work sector to address the impacts of food insecurity. The pilot involved six projects delivered across the school summer holiday period. These took place in Moray, Dundee, South Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire, Falkirk and Scottish Borders. We look at the practical approach taken in the Borders. TD1 Youth Hub delivered the programme on behalf of the Community Learning and Development Service at Scottish Borders Council.

Young people were identified through the crisis support TD1 workers provided during lockdown and from referrals made by the school pastoral team prior to lockdown. Given the restrictions in place, the programme was delivered mainly online. Activities provided a range of opportunities for young people to develop skills, engage with their peers and improve health and wellbeing. This included STEM sessions, baking, photography and self-care. All young people were offered the opportunity to work towards a Youth Achievement Award or Dynamic Youth Award, to recognise their learning and achievement during the programme. In collaboration with school, TD1 workers will provide ongoing support to allow young people to complete these awards now they have returned to school.

Alongside the activities and group work, all young people were offered one-to-one support via what's app, texts and phone. Each week a food parcel was delivered to participants. This provided food for both the young person and their family, recipe suggestions based on a weekly theme and included any equipment the family needed to cook the meals. Digital poverty has meant some young people do not have a home WiFi connection or access to home technology. TD1 workers sought to overcome these barriers by providing a mobile device (Raspberry Pi). Where it has not been possible to connect digitally, TD1 youth workers continued support by phone or on the doorstep during initial lockdown. Towards the end of the summer programme TD1 workers were able to meet outdoors with those young people who were vulnerable or had struggled with the digital side of the project. Those trusted relationships built with youth workers ensured young people were supported, reducing anxieties and helping prepare for the return to school.

*“Over the period my son has been working with TD1, it has had a phenomenal impact on my son, his confidence and self-belief has increased massively. The support provided by TD1 has been first class and for me as a parent having access to these resources through the food, the STEM kits, the coding project has been so helpful. I would not have been able to provide all these activities to my son. It has also helped him catch up with schoolwork as the coding was something they had been doing at school, but he was struggling. Providing a device and weekly sessions has allowed him to catch up and he is now a lot more confident about the move back to school. I can't thank TD1 Youth Hub enough for all their support to my son.”* Parent of young man, aged 13

*“I have loved doing all the cooking stuff over the summer, I wasn’t really into cooking or that, but over the summer TD1 would drop me stuff to cook with. It was actually really easy as you joined the Zoom session if you wanted to extra help - which I always needed. It was good though as a video was posted online showing you what to do and an ingredients/how to do it sheet was with the pack. I felt really buzzed that I was cooking food which even my parents liked and would eat it too! I even cooked a few times using the same recipe on my own as I was getting really confident with it. I don’t know what I would have done all summer without doing this, was highlight of my week every week!”* Participant, aged 15

*“There’s a lot of young people and families that are very proud and will not actually open up and share that they’ve got difficulties. There’s a lot of affluent areas in Galashiels, but there’s a lot of deprived areas. My worry is that some young people are overlooked, and we wouldn’t necessarily know that there was actually any kind of issues with regards to food in the local community”.*

Teacher, Scottish Borders

*“With shielding, and the delivery of food parcels for shielding, I think that was reducing the stigma of people asking for help, because people were seeing food parcels being delivered in the community”.*

Youth Worker, Scottish Borders

*“I think the good thing is we’ve got engagement, I think the worry was having that time out away from school, with young people not necessarily returning, particularly with attendance being a strong issue within that locality, especially in that postcode area, attendance is fairly poor on the whole. But attendance has been very good from the young people that have been involved in the programme”.*

Teacher, Scottish Borders

*“One pupil really struggles with writing. He doesn’t like to admit that, and he doesn’t like anyone to know that he’s struggling. So that wasn’t really an issue in the project because they allowed the young people to take photos of things, like take photos of the steps that they were doing. So there wasn’t really a pressure to write things down”.*

Teacher, Scottish Borders

*“Forget the programme, the biggest key part here was the relationship that TD1 have got with families in the community... They have got a phenomenal relationship, they’re really well-known, they go over and above for young people. So there was trust there from the parents from the beginning. TD1 had full buy-in and the support, whether that be food, whether that be the activity packs, whether it be online sessions, there was trust there, and that was key”.*

Teacher, Scottish Borders

*“A multi-agency approach was definitely key, it meant that no young people were missed out”.*

Teacher, Scottish Borders

## GREENHOUSE PROJECT

The Joint Health Improvement Team works in partnership with Scottish Borders Council's Community Justice Team to grow a wide range of seasonal produce at a Greenhouse site in Galashiels. Produce is distributed back into the community through service settings and activities that support children and families.

The project has developed incrementally to offer new activities:

- REHIS training & cooking classes with Community Justice Clients
- Live cookery classes in early years settings
- Recipe bags to support home cooking and healthier meals
- Welfare boxes & food distribution during COVID
- Distribution of plants to encourage home growing

### **Produce distributed included:**

Spring onions, onions, leeks, rocket, mint, coriander, sage, rosemary, fennel, oregano, spinach, parsley, basil, cucumbers, sweet peppers, carrots, beetroot, radish, pea pods, jalapeno chilli, rhubarb, courgettes, thyme, cayenne chilli, broad beans, tomatoes, potatoes.

### **Galashiels Early Years Centre:**

The Early Years Centre used the produce to top up 300 food parcels for children and families. Families reported:

- Eating more varied and healthier diets
- Tasting new foods
- Cooking more home-made meals

New partnerships have developed in the last year with:

- Children 1st
- Action for Children
- LINKS Eyemouth

Feedback from all services suggests the produce helped:

- Families to cook healthier meals & grow their own produce
- Services to maintain connections with families

### **Quotes from families & staff confirm the benefits:**

*"Thank you so much for the fresh veg last week, I managed to make a pan of soup and a tomato sauce for pasta. We are currently in rent arrears and struggling to get through the week, your food top ups make a huge difference." (Parent)*

*"Overall I am extremely glad and grateful for the opportunity to work with Mos, the Gala Greenhouse project, and the NHS health Team, I hope the partnership will continue. (EYC Manager)*

*"Being part of this project has been an especially wonderful experience for our service during the lockdown – the fresh vegetables were highly appreciated by the families we support (single mothers especially found it difficult to go grocery shopping, and receiving those herbs and vegetables made their day); it also gave us at Children 1<sup>st</sup> an opportunity to see them and keep connected during times of lockdown, even if just at their doorstep" (Children 1<sup>st</sup> Staff Member)*

## BURNFOOT COMMUNITY FUTURES

Feedback received: Great ideas for making different foods and enjoy making the recipes as some people never cook.

Week commencing	Pick ups	Deliveries	Total	Average daily
23 - 29 March	74		74	15
30 March - 6 April	171		171	34
7 - 13 April	92	12	104	21
14 - 20 April	166	8	174	35
21 - 27 April	131	36	167	33
28 April - 3 May	130	52	182	36
4 - 10 May	110	53	163	33
11 - 17 May	94	49	143	29
18 -24 May	85	52	137	27
25 - 31 May	92	57	149	30
1 - 7 June	95	57	152	30
8 - 14 June	67	60	127	25
15 - 21 June	59	55	114	23
22 - 28 June	82	55	137	27
29 June - 5 July	78	78	156	31
6 July - 12 July	65	56	121	24
13 July - 19 July	37	78	115	23
20 July - 26 July				
Totals so far	1628	758	2386	

We also distributed 50 bags of seed potatoes in April and a further 30 since.

During the period 27 May 2020 to 29 June 2020 the Fareshare and Foodshare Service received produce given from local shops and purchased produce to make various recipe packs and ready meals. Recipes provided totalled 298, benefitting 228 people, with 296 ready meals created. Of the ready meals available 262 had these delivered whilst 1053 recipients collected as part of their daily exercise.

*“Great ideas for making different foods and enjoy making the recipes as some people never cook” “Felt good to get outside and be productive while picking up groceries”*

## MONEY WORRIES APP

Early Steps parents said, “We would love to have our stamp on it and work in partnership with those who are willing to go forward and create this app”.

Good financial health has a positive impact on our overall health and wellbeing. To mitigate the impact of ongoing welfare reform and the wider impact of COVID-19 we developed a Money Worries App.

The App is intended to help people access quality assured information and support to prevent money worries escalating. The App is a digital directory with quality assured national and local information and links to help with:

- Money
- Health
- Housing
- Work

Download the NHS Borders Money Worries App Today.



### Key Outcomes:

- The App
- The App
- The App reflects the voice of parents living in the Scottish Borders
- 55 people signed up as a volunteer to test the App during the testing phase
- The App was successfully launched on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### Launch Week Impact Data:

Media Release & Social Media Asset	Reach	Engagement	Shares
NHS Borders Social Media	10,478	123	28
Scottish Borders Council Social Media	6,353	29	10
CAB Video Clip	4,763	388	14

### Next Steps for the Project Team:

- Generate a series of video clips to increase awareness from a Housing, Health & Work perspective
- Reconnect with partners to confirm launch and build further engagement through conversations



The impact of this programme is measured by:  
**Monitoring** Social Media Data

**Listening** to the **verbal feedback** from users and partners

## SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS – EARLY YEARS CENTRES

### Key aim

To develop new and effective ways of supporting families with young children, so they felt less isolated and had confidence in their ability to manage their families and their own health and wellbeing while attendance at an Early Years Centre was not possible.

### Who are we trying to reach?

The four Early Years Centres supported families with young children in their immediate community. They supported families with access to food to feed their family, information and advice on a range of topics relating to health and wellbeing and managing their children, and practical support outdoors for their own mental wellbeing.

### Outcome 1: **Children will have nutritious hot meals made by their parent**

The single most urgent thing dealt with throughout 2020 was the access to food for families. The deliveries from Foodshare, neighbourly and other local excess food sources became critical for many parents. Single parents with a number of children were initially discouraged and sometimes barred from shopping together by some supermarkets. Unable to leave the house to shop, and struggling with paying for online shopping, the food parcel deliveries were a life line for many families. As restrictions eased and families were able to go out and shop, they were also encouraged to come to the centre door to collect a food parcel, with only those still shielding continuing to have deliveries.

The impact of this service is measured through verbal feedback from families on using the food parcels distributed and the number of families supported.

Over 500 food parcels were distributed in the first fifteen weeks of the lockdown. An average of 10 families per week are still being supported from each Centre.

*“I used the sausages to make meatballs from the recipe on the wee label, the kids weren’t sure at first but they tried them and like them”*

*“The wee yoghurt drinks were good for the kids”*

*“It cooked really quickly and smells so good!”*

### Outcome 2: **Families will have a greater repertoire of easily made family meals that can be made from ingredients provided through food parcel. There will be less waste of distributed food**

Teams became a key way of delivering programmes and meeting up with groups of people and supported healthy eating by giving parents ideas and showing them how to make meals with their children.

The impact of the service is measured through observing parents joining in with, and watching sessions, Verbal feedback and pictures shared on Facebook. Cook-a-Long sessions and Face Book cooking films were very popular with a regular 6-8 families attending the teams sessions live every week, with many more, over 90 views watching the films on Facebook.

*“I have only just started cooking and I have totally enjoyed it but I find cooking very stressful but hopefully the coming weeks it will get easier for me”*

### **Outcome 3: Families will be able to successfully engage with virtual support from The Early Years Centre sessions**

Keeping a connection with individual families was very important, regular contact was kept up through text and phone calls whether this is a simple check in: How are you doing?, a request for a doorstep visit or the delivery of a food parcel, many parents found this the easiest way to keep in touch. Group work was delivered through TEAMS, sessions like Christmas for Less included craft making and keeping safe, and was all delivered on Teams.

The Early years centres also promoted other online support programmes with families able to access, breast feeding and weaning sessions through links on the centre Facebook page. The impact of the service is measured through listening to people and responding to their needs. Verbal feedback on the impact on families and monitoring information shared on Facebook pages. Initially uptake was low, parents were scared of this new way of working and wary of people 'seeing' their houses. Parents also reported that without crèche, trying to engage with sessions while having a toddler in the house was not easy. In response short film clips were made and posted on line. There was a regular level of engagement with a core number of families every week and feedback from these families is very positive.

For some parents access to devices and WIFI were barriers to them engaging, through the Connecting Scotland programme early years centres have been able to support 19 families with access to free devices and mifi so that they could be included.

*"Teams was hard to begin with as I haven't used it before, I wish I could change the settings so I can see everyone and not just the loudest person, but once I got used to Teams I loved it"*

*"I really enjoyed Christmas for Less, I know how to use Teams as I do Cook-Along on Wednesdays. It was nice to chat to folk and not feel judged, the recipes and crafting was really nice"*

*"You have no idea how much this has helped me, it put me in the right mind set for Christmas, and I've made new friends. The gift for the kids at the end was really appreciated too"*

### **Outcome 4: Parents will feel the benefit of regular exercise and will have increasing confidence in their ability to manage simple improvements in their health and well being**

As restrictions eased outdoor sessions booked in advance, enabled the EYCM to meet face to face with one family at a time and parents were encouraged to walk and engage in exercise outdoors. The sessions were popular and quickly booked up. Across the four centres the following have been offered; *Sole Mates Walks, Walk It, Wednesday Wanders, Buddy Walks, Social Strolls*, all an opportunity for fresh air, a bit exercise and a chat. Step challenges were completed in one centre and walks to places of interest were planned.

One EYCM met a parent and child an outside play area for one mum this was her only time outwith her family home. As the weather deteriorated, the EYCM and the parent and child would walk at a local café. Parents welcomed the support of the EYCM in taking their young child into a social space as they were often too scared their child would not behave. For some parents this was their only socialising with another adult in the week.

The impact of the service was measured through spaces being booked and verbal feedback from families.

*“Love my weekly walk” “Enjoy the blether” “It gets me out the house” “I enjoyed having adult conversation” “I started walking a lot more due to the step counting challenge and walks” “I have totally enjoyed Meet and Play on a Wednesday morning as it’s really good fun, I enjoy the activities, I wouldn’t change it for anything else. It’s totally helped me with my anxiety going out and doing things with my family” “I enjoyed being able to get my exercise early in the morning with nice company and being able to chat, it really set me up for the day”*

### **Outcome 5: Parents will receive practical support at Christmas**

Applications were made to a range of different charities and organisations to help families struggling at Christmas and through the winter period. Children received winter coats through an application to Border Children’s Charity and Cash for Kids supported with supermarket vouchers.

Mission Christmas and The Salvation Army gave Christmas presents. The Salvation Army provided food hampers along with an extra bag of Christmas supplies mainly mince pies, crisps and crackers. Local organisation and charities donated books, vouchers, money for craft materials, food stuff and toiletries. Craft bags were made up and available at Halloween, Christmas and Easter.

Managers set up and managed community cupboards and larders with non-perishable food stuff, sanitary products and recycled clothing. Families could request / order from these and either pick up or have delivered.

The impact of the service was measured by verbal feedback, pictures of children in coats and numbers of families supported

Over a 150 families were supported across the four centres with Christmas presents. 15 families were given a £100 ASDA voucher per child to use on gifts, food, clothing etc. 17 children got a new padded winter coat.

*“Thank you so, so much for the gifts for my tow. They are wonderful and a huge help” “Was not expecting that much I genuinely thought it was going to be one little gift I’m a bit emotional”*

### **Next Steps**

Relaunch the Early Years Centres from session 2021/22

- Engage with families in the immediate community to develop support and advice which will have a positive impact on family’s health and wellbeing.
- Develop specific targeted intervention and prevention support sessions based on needs in the community
- Continue to develop the virtual platform, enabling families where ever they are in Scottish Borders, to access support from the centres.

Promote a healthy life style by

- Developing an alternative outside base and planning and facilitating a family learning offer
- Developing opportunities for families to work together such as gardening, cooking and craft
- Listening to parents and facilitating opportunities for parents to improve their own health and wellbeing, both physical and mental.

Empower parents to take responsibility for themselves and their families by

- Engaging parents to develop support networks with each other
- Leading and supporting sessions for others
- Directing parents to learning opportunities to enhance their employability

## **COMMUNITY FOOD HUBS WORK**

In the March 2020 JHIT was contacted to support community assistance hubs responding to the Covid 19 crisis and lockdown. Request made to provide nutritional information and advice for the government food welfare boxes and additional food items offered by SBC.

In May further request was made to support the community hubs with more food related information.

### **Welfare Food Boxes & Additional Food Items**

Nutritional advice and support given included:

- Mapping the government food boxes and additional food items against the Eat well Guide
- Identifying the gaps
- Recommending the alternatives where appropriate
- Advise on selecting appropriate nutritional food items
- Developing appropriate recipes to accompany the welfare food boxes taking into account nutritional value, assumed limited resources and budgeting issues, health literacy and readability.
- Developing the recipes into easy read postcard size resource

Appropriate recipes to accompany the welfare food boxes were developed taking into account nutritional value, assumed limited resources, budgeting issues, health literacy and readability. These were then made into easy read postcard size resources.

E.g. Couscous, Tuna Pasta Bake, Fishcakes, Vegetable Biryani, Potato & Tomato Bake, Vegetable Rice, Tinned Fruit Crumble and Tomato Pasta

The work was reported back to our SBC colleagues with an offer of added input and support if required.

### **Further requested support**

After a short consultation with SBC colleagues it was decided that this information would be based on the experience of staff and volunteers involved in the distribution of food parcels. And who had taken onboard comments and noted patterns of behaviour from clients. This included food waste, food storage and unfamiliar ingredients.

JHIT responded by creating and developing resources and regularly keeping in touch with SBC colleagues, taking on board any further direction or feedback. Information sheets, nutrition leaflets, recipes for different living situations were shared on a weekly basis with SBC community hub colleagues who were able to further distribute inc food projects like the salvation army.

Some resources redeveloped, created and shared inc:

- Govt food box recipes (resent)
- Microwave recipe booklet
- Easy canned food recipes – Bake Beans Quesadillas, Chana Chaat, Easy Minestrone soup, Tuna pasta salad, Chicken rice casserole, Peach layer delight
- Food safety for canned food
- Cooking for one – 15 recipes – Patata Bravas, Bubble & Squeak Patties, Spaghetti hoops, Lemon/Lime roasted sardines, tuna pasta, Carrot & orange soup, Tasty tortilla

wrap, Cheesy beans & sweet corn cakes with salsa, Weekend eggs, Easy minestrone, Pasta in a mug, Make a pizza, Savoury rice, Fruit crumble, Yogurt fruit layer

- Cooking for one from fresh, frozen or canned - recipe tips and ideas
- Top tips to eat healthily
- Healthy hydration
- How to use and store herbs
- Tinned and canned food information sheet
- Tips and ideas for tinned tomatoes

#### Challenges & Success:

The main challenge for this work was the short time frame and turnaround of the information required. All involved had to use their expertise under pressure while responding to other demands of work and changing work environments.

As there was not an opportunity to do the work that would normally involve consulting service users and clients, the work had to develop with assumptions, experience and expertise of all. With limited food items and lack of variety in the welfare food boxes it was exceptionally challenging to put a recipe together and therefore assumptions had to be made on store cupboard ingredients. Although alternative options were given for some ingredients for this reason. No information was available about the additional food items available as this was randomly based on what was available to the Hubs. Once again the recipes were based on general assumptions and observations from Food Hub colleagues on most frequently received items.

The feedback from SBC colleagues was positive. However further information and work is required to gauge what worked and what needs to improve so that we are in a better responsive position should such a need arise again.

An email was sent out with the opportunity through our SBC colleagues to feedback. However no response was received directly from projects.

#### Recommendations for future:

- Align all recipes to same format in JHIT
- More info around budgeting
- Nutrition investigation /sheet etc on eating canned food etc
- Videos to support recipes (this was requested but we could not fulfil)
- Basic cooking technique videos etc.
- Take on any opportunity to get feedback from clients in receipt of information
- Liaise with SBC colleagues on gathering more info and best ways to support and respond.

## **COMMUNITY GROWING STRATEGY**

Funding from SBC to LINKS Eyemouth is ongoing via a partnership with BAVS as an anchor agency. This is helping to grow this children & families food network.

### **Case Study for Community Growing Strategy 26/02/21**

**Priority 6: A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active**

#### **Big Eyemouth Eat Better 5 Day Challenge**

The Big Eyemouth Eat Better Feel Better 5 Day Challenge took place over five days in January 2020. The concept of the challenge was simple, to ask parents to challenge their families to try a different vegetable and Eat Better Feel Better recipe each day for 5 days.

Participation data demonstrates the level of community engagement with the challenge:

Total no. of families: 18

Total no. of children: 47

Age range of children: 6 months to 15 years

The Eat Better Feel Better 5 day challenge programme has developed over the last three years and has been strengthened by:

Taking a universal, community led health approach

The role of the LINKS Eyemouth Project Support Worker (who had participated in the first 5 day challenge in 2017)

The use of Social Media to engage and communicate with parents

Less reliance on physical attendance at healthy eating sessions

Provision of incentive foods, with lots of fruit & vegetables (reducing the stigma of free foods)

A full programme evaluation has been undertaken, this clearly shows an increase in the amount of fruit and vegetables that families ate during the challenge. The aim and objectives of the programme were met in full.

Families were positive about the impact of the challenge and level of peer support:

*"It's social, it's sharing and it's encouraging".*

## EYEMOUTH LINKS PROJECT

*“Firstly I would just like to say thank you so much for all your help with funding for the batch cook. It has been a crazy few weeks getting this sorted. We have had a whopping 81 families sign up and register via a registration form. The information we have received is incredible. Today I have paid for the milk from co-op, the 10% lean beef mince from the local butcher. He gave us an amazing deal with 80 packs of 500g at £260. That’s £3.25 per family on meat. 75p cheaper than I thought it would be. I have ordered all the veg from Fresh Choice in Eyemouth. They also gave us a 20% discount and it came to £129. This was delivered to the church today. We are delivering this tomorrow and everyone is so excited about it. We did not expect this to be so big but with this being such a huge need and importance to the local families we have now used the £500 funding. We are doing lasagna this time. I done a Facebook poll and this was what was wanted”.*

## **EARLY YEARS WELFARE BENEFITS ASSISTANT POST Case Study:**

**Case study which illustrates the importance and value of joint working: (may need to anonymise further if it is to be publicly published)**

*I had one particularly satisfying case with the Parental Employability Support Team (PES) last year where a domestic abuse case was referred to me for a benefit check. The claimant involved was an unemployed EU National and therefore unable to claim benefits if she separated from her abusive husband. The PES team were however confident that a part time job could be secured and this would then lead to full benefit cover. The Homeless Team were contacted to check on her entitlement to alternative accommodation and they also agreed to help her. She was therefore advised that she and her children could now escape the abusive relationship with the support of a job, a new home and full benefit entitlement in support. She was delighted and relieved on hearing this news. I have had a number of similar cases in the past where the outcomes were not so positive but with this joined up approach on employment, housing and benefits I now hope for better ones in the future.*

### **COVID example:**

*I was able to alleviate some quite desperate situations during Covid by advising young families about their entitlement to the new Scottish Grants and payments. There were surprisingly quite a number and sums of £600 to £250 were an absolute lifeline to them particularly around Christmas last year.*

## **BERWICKSHIRE HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

There was a successful joint bid between 4 Border RSL's (with Eildon, Waverley and SBHA) to secure 450k of SG Fuel Poverty funding. BHA has a pro-rata share of 72k to help alleviate fuel poverty for our tenants.

Financial Inclusion: the total benefits gains for the year 2020/21 is £1,004,805 - a significant increase of income for BHA customers, especially in such a challenging year for so many.

Continued roll out of 'BeWell', a pilot wellbeing & mental health tenancy support service between BHA and Penumbra.

Distribution of £25k of SG Covid-19 Recovery funding to support communities recover from the pandemic.

Piloting use of HACT social value tool highlight impact of community activity and value from money in SFHA report.

Most activities are continuing online across our many community partner organisations where possible with further emphasis on providing localised support in this new period of lockdown. Online and other non-contact supports are likely to continue for the foreseeable future with digital lending library devices supporting access to online groups for some people. Supporting Communities Funding and Covid-19 Recovery Funding (CRF) secured via SFHA have been distributed in partnership with BAVS to the following community groups:

- Berwickshire Swap
- Allanbank Creative Hub
- Horse Time
- Splash
- Eat, Sleep Ride
- BAVS (neighbourhood bus / digital workshops for village halls)

<https://www.berwickshirehousing.org.uk/news/local-groups-benefit-from-communities-recovery-fund/>

BHA staff have made a number of direct referrals to Horse Time and the workshops are now full with a small waiting list to fill any vacancies that may arise. BHA has also been in discussion with Public Health Scotland and Horse Time to highlight partnership working that may feature in a national trauma case studies project.

'Let's Get Digital Berwickshire' is well underway with 50 devices purchased and 45 now distributed to people in the community via partner organisations. A handover to BAVS has been agreed from mid-May to enable the project to expand and be sustained through recent TNL funding secured by BAVS. This will include a mobile facility and workshops in village halls to promote digital skills. It is hoped this project can provide a working template for future Border-wide digital developments with SBC and Connecting Scotland.

BeWell is now engaging with around 12 tenants experiencing a range of mental health and other support needs. Most are regularly engaging with support offered however some will take longer due to fluctuating mental health conditions and substance misuse issues. Agreements to repay rent arrears, tenancy management and providing comprehensive support with other services are some of the positive outcomes achieved so far. Penumbra have welcomed the ability to provide services flexibly as some people have required more intensive support at times.

BHA has remained part of the Berwickshire Community Assistance Hub which is now moved from 'recovery' to 'response' mode due to new lockdown restrictions. CAH activity remains low, reflecting that most people are managing with local reliance groups and community larders well stocked to support as necessary. However, this may change rapidly especially if online deliveries are unable to keep up with demand. BeFriend are now attending a similar weekly forum tailored to individual and case specific responses.

BeFriend staff and volunteers are currently visiting people, outdoors and walking with some people, in line with Covid guidance. Current guidance indicates indoor visits can resume from 17<sup>th</sup> May.

BeFriend also recently helped support older people in Duns with afternoon tea delivered to homes with a small contribution from the Community Initiatives fund.

<https://www.berwickshirehousing.org.uk/news/bha-supports-duns-senior-citizens-club-with-easter-treats/>

BHA is working in partnership with other Border services to promote and improve mental health and wellbeing through several projects. BHA is an active member of several forums has widely promoted positive mental health messages through our social media channels. The installation of a 'Breathing Space' bench in partnership with the Springfield Group and NHA 24 is a recent example of BHA's commitment to raising mental health awareness and adding value to our estate environment. This was featured as part of national Breathing Space Day on 1<sup>st</sup> February through a promotional video and BHA press release:

<https://breathingspace.scot/news/2021/its-national-breathing-space-day/>

<https://www.berwickshirehousing.org.uk/news/breathing-space-bench-offers-place-for-reflection/>

A further Breathing Space bench is planned for the Community Garden in Duns and BHA will look to install further benches as a visible and permanent commitment to supporting mental health and wellbeing.

### **Hygge**

The HYGGE programme is now underway in Eyemouth delivering seasonal groups online to around 30 local people. Originating from Scandinavia, the Hygge programme is an activity-based group focusing on aspects of wellbeing and mutual support. This group suspended its spring season programme due to Covid-19, however SCF funding has expanded reach via online support to promote wellbeing and maintain connectedness. The newly developed Hygge@home programme will continue to expand its membership across the community and pilot the use of the short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale to measure change before and after participation. The group is now a constituted organisation that remains a BHA tenant led innovation.

### **Allanbank Arts- Creative Hub**

Allanbank Arts- Creative Hub are creating a network using social media platforms to support adults and young people who struggle with anxiety, including young people with disabilities affected through isolation or anxiety by Covid-19. Activities include production of 5/6 YouTube videos featuring artists and their work; delivery of art and craft materials to all participants and group and one-to-one zoom calls with participants and their families where possible to enjoy a "live" studio experience. Allanbank will work with up to 15 people to build resilience, a sense of community and ongoing connections should further periods of lockdown occur. For more information please see:

<https://www.berwickshirehousing.org.uk/news/support-for-allanbank-arts-creative-hub-resilience-project/>

### **Abundant Borders**

Abundant Borders teaches people to grow food in a sustainable way through training courses, workshops and supported learning in the network of community food gardens to address food insecurity at fundamental levels. Restrictions put in place in March meant that the community gardens (two of which are owned by BHA) were closed to visitors and volunteers and all training courses and workshops were suspended. Abundant Borders subsequently moved all training courses on-line and with courses on Sustainable Growing. To date, over 350 people have joined the on-line courses and there have been thousands of downloads of course material. SCF funding will allow further expansion of on-line courses with a new 'seed circle' 7-module course. This attracted 45 new participants and is likely generate several longer-term outcomes that will increase participation and engagement when restrictions are eased.

### **The Learning Space**

The Learning Space is an independent resource that works with Scottish Borders Council Education and Social departments for around 30 young people within the Berwickshire area. The project is expanding access and infrastructure of its outside Nature Space by extending their current garden area and creating a calm nature and nurture wildlife space where the young people can observe and engage with nature, plant and use fruit, vegetables and herbs and build empathy and respect for the wildlife around them. The Learning Space currently have several young people who find it extremely challenging to be part of any organised social event that would give them this experience, however, through building upon positive relationships they will be able to offer these experiences to them. SCF funding has accelerated activities to allow more young people access to walks in the woods and to local nature areas which may otherwise be a challenge. In addition, new partnerships have been formed with local groups attracting more interest and volunteers.

### **Splash**

Splash is a dynamic community project in Eyemouth that is working in partnership with local volunteers to deliver a food and wellbeing project in the Community. The service has enabled people in the community to ease back into day to day life due to the impact of Covid-19. During the pandemic Splash have worked in partnership with Eyemouth Response Team, East Berwickshire Food Bank, Eyemouth rotary, Links Eyemouth and local businesses. Over 70 volunteers have helped provide food items, meals, shopping, support phone calls and delivery of prescriptions to people in isolation and those struggling with food poverty; something which has been highlighted over the course of the pandemic. Over 50 families receive regular food support and over 1,000 grocery bags have been distributed.

In addition, Splash are an active partner organisation for 'Let's Get Digital Berwickshire' supporting people to get online via the digital lending library. This is will support their ongoing commitment to reducing social isolation for vulnerable people.

### **Berwickshire Swap**

The result of the Covid-19 pandemic will mean there will be many more children in poverty in the future. This BHA tenant led community enterprise project will produce 50 Emergency Clothing Parcels to children in the Berwickshire area on referral through BHA, health visitors, social workers, schools etc. Each clothing parcel is packed up as a gift for the children with a full 7-day wardrobe for each child including, "new in packaging" pants and socks. The clothing for these parcels comes from swap items stored between swaps (except pants and socks), these clothes will be washed, dried, and ironed by volunteers. In addition, the project will offer 15 re-usable cloth nappy packs to parents to try before they decide to cloth

nappy their child. Social media has helped promote this resource with over 3500 views and local schools and other groups have been directly contacted. BHA is currently looking at providing no cost storage facilities for this new start up community project.