

Scottish Bereavement Networking:

A lifeline for those providing support during the Pandemic

Background

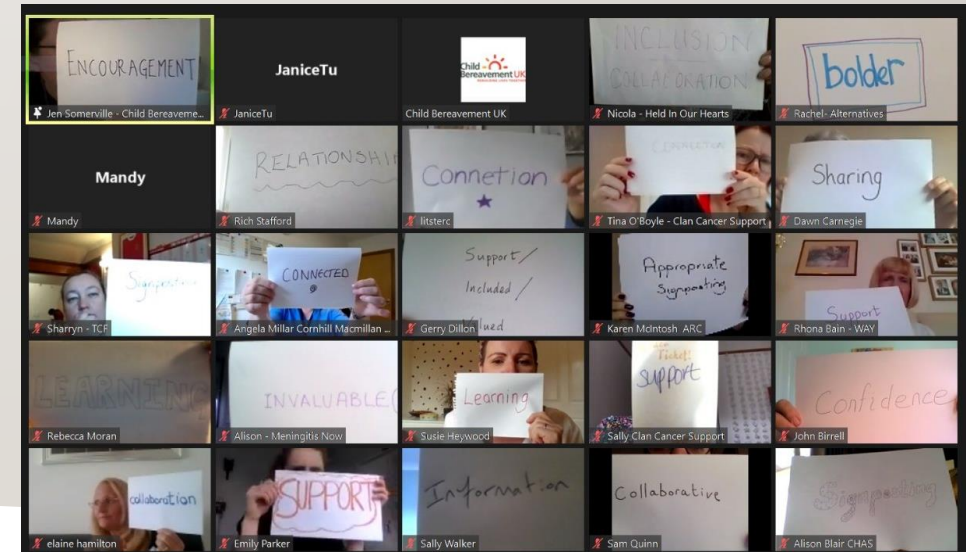
Since 2013, Child Bereavement UK has been funded by the Scottish Government to improve Bereavement Provision in Scotland. This project has two main strands – education and networking.

The aim of networking is to support a more joined up and co-ordinated approach to bereavement care across local areas in Scotland.

The ethos of the Networking groups is to develop trust, encourage collaboration and break down silo working and develop a culture of mutual support and shared learning. The network groups are in the local bereavement community and operate for that local community. They are not run by one single organisation.



‘How would you describe the benefit of your local network in one word?’

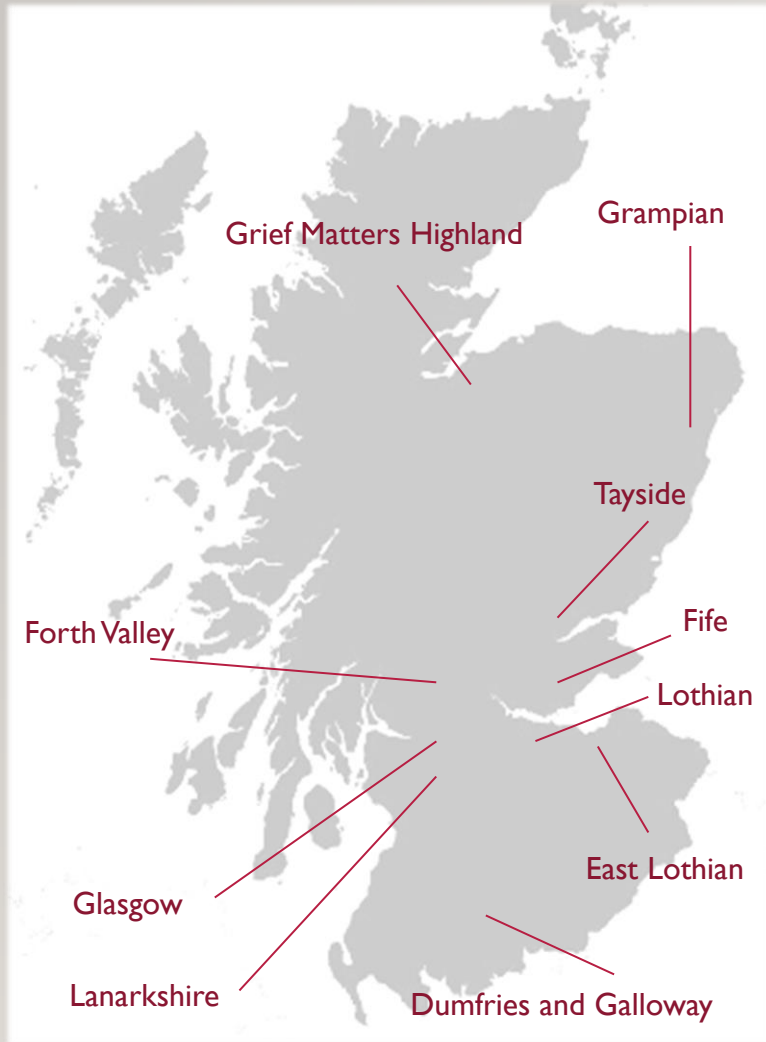


Challenges of the Pandemic

At the end of 2019 Local Networks had been meeting on a quarterly basis in 6 different areas of Scotland. There had been a total of 14 network meetings throughout the year.

At the end of 2020 Local Networks had adapted and expanded to meet the need of local communities working with bereavement. Meetings remained local but met online and met more often to manage the speed of change that was being experienced across the bereavement sector due to the pandemic. There were 51 local bereavement network meetings in 8 different areas of Scotland in 2020.

By the end of 2021 there will have been 60 local bereavement network meetings across 10 areas of Scotland.



“I find them very useful for knowing about local service providers, what services offered as well as different priorities, projects, and training on the go. Over lockdown the inter agency support happening within the networks has been hugely valuable on many levels!”

“It's a relaxed space to share information and support each other during very challenging times for all.”

“It has been great to gain perspective, to feel part of a wider network and to hear more about the work of other similar organisations. It feels as though clients will be much better served when we are all working together and they can be signposted to the right place for them.”

From Local to National



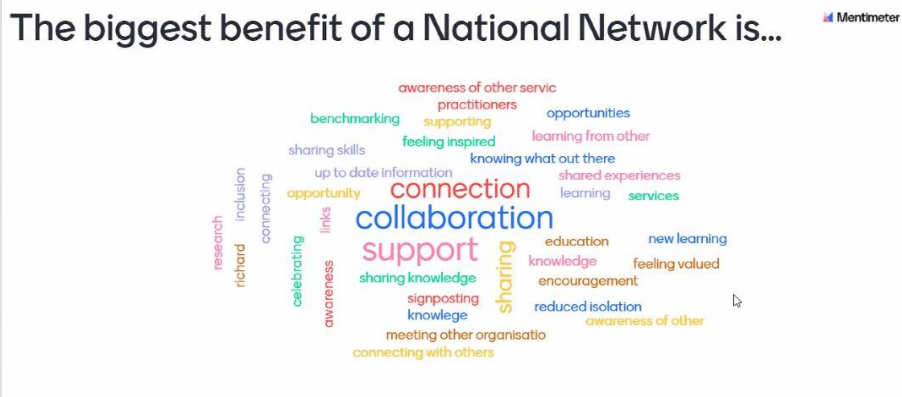
In September 2021 we brought the networks together for the first time for a National Networking event. This event had three themes:

Education. Connection. Celebration

One thing I will take from these 2 mornings is...



“A place to update, share and explore with other like minded charities. It has been an invaluable platform to share the supports we offer which in turn hopefully helps those needing our care”



“I have found it to be a supportive environment which has enabled me to learn from colleagues who have been generous enough to share their experiences and ways of working and this has hopefully led to positive outcomes for our service users”

“I think this group is such a useful network, it feels like a very mutually encouraging type of networking where everyone values what each other do. Sometimes networking can feel more like competing which I don't like.”

This event was planned and delivered with partners from the local network groups and was informed by emerging trends, discussions and feedback from local network meetings.

The network's recent online event encouraged people with a passion for improving bereavement initiatives and workforce wellbeing from across Scotland, to come together, to connect, learn and celebrate individual and collective achievements.

Towards a better future

Local and National opportunities to meet across the time of the pandemic has allowed:

- More joined up working
- Mutual support
- Learning
- Better knowledge of local and national organisations
- Improved signposting
- Breakdown of silo working
- Collaboration
- Knowledge Exchange
- Partnership Working
- Better pathways of support
- Identified need and filled gaps

“These Networks are brilliant to know what services are out there and how they are providing services at a local level”

“I think having the group is very necessary in helping to get information about bereavement advice and support out to the community and have enjoyed attending the meetings both online and face to face.”

Something I would like to see in future networks is...



Future aspirations:

- Further development of established local networks
- Establishment of local networks in areas not already covered
- An annual National Network event
- Establishment of National Network mailing list for knowledge exchange across Scotland
- Continued and extended partnership working with local and national organisations across Scotland
- Continue to build a more bereavement aware culture