

Borders Carers Centre Background Information

1. **Borders Carers Centre** is the only support service in the Scottish Borders locality dedicated wholly to the provision of support services to unpaid carers and our robust, flexible service is provided by a committed and adaptable team who work tirelessly to ensure that carers have access to the right services at the right time and that they have a strong voice both at national and local level.

The Borders Carers Centre (BCC) provides holistic person-centred support services to carers over the age of 18 years throughout the Scottish Borders. We currently have 5000 carers registered with our services and are actively working with 600 plus carers with diverse caring roles from parent carers to older carers caring for a loved one living with dementia.

As well as providing direct support to carers in the form of advice, information, and emotional support we are also commissioned by Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to complete Carers Support Plans. Under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2018 every carer has a right to a personalised plan to identify what is important to them.

2. **Demographics:** The Scottish Borders is a medium-sized council area in terms of population size but in a much larger geographical area than average for a Scottish Local Authority, giving it a unique set of challenges. The population of Scottish Borders was 116,020 in 2021. The 65-74 age group is growing the fastest and the over 75s age group is also increasing rapidly which will have important resource implications for the next 15-20 years.

The numbers of pensioners will continue to increase, as the older working-age population reaches retirement age. Overall, the Scottish Borders is considered to have a more demographically fragile population than the Scottish average, due to its combination of population loss in certain areas and its rapidly ageing population throughout the region. This creates a higher proportion of older people who are financially and physically dependent on an unequal number of working-age people. The 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020) shows that 6% (9) of the 143 neighbourhoods (data zones) in the Scottish Borders are within the 20% most deprived in Scotland.

3. **Geography:** Within the Scottish Borders there is no city or conurbation that forms a central focal point. Hawick (13,500) and Galashiels (12,300) are the main towns. The other large towns are Duns, Jedburgh, Melrose, Selkirk and Peebles. Over two thirds of the population live outwith Gala and Hawick and one third live outwith settlements of 1,500. (Scottish Borders Council Website). There are buses between the main centres of population and a train line between Tweedbank/Galashiels and Edinburgh. Public transport in general is scarce in the more rural parts of the Scottish Borders.

4. **BCC background:** The Princess Royal Trust Borders Carers Centre was set up in 1995 under a tri-partite agreement between The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Borders Regional Council and Borders Health Board. Each partner provided one third of the funding for a period of three years and the Carers Centre was managed by The Borders Voluntary Community Care Forum. In 2012, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers merged with Crossroads (England & Wales) and a new organisation was formed called Carers Trust, the Borders Carers Centre is a Network partner of Carers Trust, but remains a separate entity.

Since 2012 the Borders Carers Centre has carried out Carers Assessments (now Carers Support Plans) on behalf of the local authority and HSCP and our organisation has grown exponentially since 1995, moving from a small single office building in Roxburgh Street to our much larger premises in Brewerybrig in 2007. Following the Covid epidemic in 2020/21 the BCC moved to a hybrid model of working which allowed staff to work their hours from both home and office, in agreement with their line manager.

5. **Additional information:** The Borders Carers Centre shares the definition of unpaid carer as recognised by the National Carers Organisation and the Scottish Government: "Unpaid Carers are people who provide unpaid care: giving help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability, or problems relating to old age." This development plan is intended to lay out briefly and concisely the aims, objectives, and work plan of the Borders Carers Centre over the next five years. The plan has specific and measurable outcomes built into it to assess our effectiveness and to enable us to track our progress via the Carers Support Plan and on-going carer surveys.

The Board of Trustees now employs a Manager with current responsibility for over 13 members of staff and two volunteers. Oversight and responsibility for strategic direction, fiscal management, and governance compliance lies with the Board of Trustees. BCC delivers and reports on its core services to Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), as well as to a diverse range of independent funders and donors for our other activities. BCC remains a network partner of Carers Trust Scotland and is also a member of Coalition of Carers in Scotland, Carers Scotland, and Shared Care Scotland.

We pride ourselves on strong collaborative and partnership working with both statutory and third sector agencies and represent unpaid carers in Scottish Borders strategically at both local and national level.

We are members of the Carers Workstream which sits under the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) and includes the HSCP partners and unpaid carers to ensure that carers have a strong voice in the design and delivery of services. We also have our own independent Carers Forum called Carers First, which meets on a regular basis to discuss issues, identify gaps and to inform decision makers. BCC welcomed the Carers Act Scotland (2018) and we have aligned our services with the provisions within the act and have taken on

a role within the locality to ensure that carers rights are recognised and upheld.

We offer telephone, video, face-to-face, home visiting and peer group support sessions at our Centre or via community settings; completion of Carers Support Plans, provision of a therapy voucher scheme, emergency cards, a free counselling service, respite, social and training opportunities, advocacy, information, advice, on-going emotional support, signposting, and access to funding for crisis, essential equipment and breaks from the caring role.

We strive to ensure in all things that carers are at the centre – we include, we listen, we deliver.