

Scottish Hearing Voices Network National Support Service Project Consultation

We are planning to set up a national office to support the development of hearing voices groups throughout Scotland and we have written this proposal and would like to hear what voice hearers from Scotland think about our ideas.

However, we would also like to hear from anyone who is concerned about people who hear voices.

If you make a response we would be grateful if you would let us know whether you hear voices or if you know or work with someone who hears voices and whereabouts you are from (you don't need to be specific, you can just tell us the region or district you live in).

We welcome your comments and views about this consultative document, which is primarily for people who hear voices from Scotland.

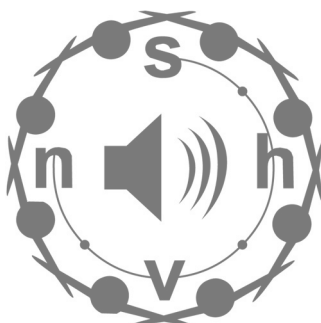
We would be grateful if you would let us know whether you hear voices or if you know or work with someone who hears voices and whereabouts you are from (you don't need to be specific eg. you can just tell us what region you are from).

Please indicate in your response if you would be happy for us to contact you.

If you would like to give your views confidentially, require any further information about the Scottish Hearing Voices Network or if we can assist in any other way, you can contact us [here](#) or write to us at SHVN, 216 - 220 Hilltown, Dundee, DD3 7AU

You can also let us know your views by going to [website version](#) of the consultation paper and filling in the feedback form

We would like to give a big thank you to [Awards For All in Scotland](#) for their generous support in funding this consultation exercise and development project.



A proposal to establish a Scottish Hearing Voices Network National Office and Support Service

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1. Introduction

This is a proposal to establish a national office for the Scottish Hearing Voices Network (SHVN) that has been drafted by members of the SHVN Steering Group and the coordinator of INTERVOICE. It is based on thinking and work carried out by the SHVN over the last few years.

The objective of this plan is to identify the means of establishing a strong presence of hearing voices initiatives throughout Scotland supported by a national SHVN office.

This consultation will assist the SHVN to strengthen this plan that will then be used to negotiate with funding bodies

The 3 month consultation process will start on the 5th July 2008.

2. Issues and needs:

2.1 People who hear voices, like other groups with specific needs and issues can be regarded as a community of interest, not defined by their location on a map, by profession or by socio-economic status. Voice hearers are scattered all over the country, and come from many walks of life. The definition comes out of their specific issue or need arising from hearing voices, making them a broad-based "community of interest".

2.2 People who hear voices experience social exclusion and marginalisation through issues such as their medical diagnoses, behaviour and in some case the consequences of their social and economic

position. For instance periodic incapacitation leads to unemployment, low income status and social exclusion. The consequences of social exclusion are in themselves damaging to self esteem and bad for mental health

2.3 Voice hearers who are overwhelmed by their voices are often surrounded by professionals, who protect, make judgements and decisions about their lives leading in some cases to passivity and loss of self-direction

2.4 Many voice hearers do not talk about their voices leading to invisibility and isolation from other Voice Hearers’.

2.5 There is a social stigma attached to hearing voices, arising from the lack of knowledge and understanding by the wider community of voice hearing. This lack of knowledge leads to mistrust and to further isolation for some voice hearers.

3. Responses

3.1 Our work will be positioned outside of psychiatry:

1. Public meetings, conferences and self-help groups are held as much as possible in non-medical settings

2. We will organise as a network not as a hierarchical organisation.

3.2 We will develop, support and establish self help groups: Because self help groups have been one of the most successful ways to open up discussion about hearing voices, we believe a safe place to talk about voices is important in a society that stigmatises the experience and that has resulted in many voice hearers have to keep silent about their experiences.

3.3 Self help groups can reduce the isolation that people feel and it can be very helpful to talk to other people who share your experience. In England there are over 150 self help groups where voice hearers meet regularly to share their experiences and to learn more about how to cope with their voices. Self-help groups “ideally” meet in the community, led by voice hearers

4. The National Office and Support Service:

These are our aims and objectives for the support service:

Our Aims:

1. Bring together people who hear voices
2. Increase involvement of people who hear voices in the Scottish Hearing Voices Network
3. Improve the quality of life of people who hear voices
4. Address the isolation and withdrawal of people who hear voices
5. Build a sense of community (based on the common interests of people who hear voices)
6. Support individual people who hear voices
7. Support existing self help groups and the development of new groups

Our Objectives:

What will we do?

1. Involve voice hearers across Scotland in the work of the SHVN
2. Help self help groups and local networks to become better organised
3. Establish an interactive website to allow people to share coping strategies, stories, etc.
4. Hold an annual conference
5. Employ 2 workers (1 expert by experience and 1 expert by profession)
6. Provide training and support to self help group facilitators and to other people working with voice hearers

How will we do this?

1. By producing a business plan to enable SHVN to apply for funding for a national office and workers to provide organising support for the network
2. Build skills and capacity for participation and involvement by individual voice hearers including through this consultation

Why do we need a national office?

1. To increase the support to individual voice hearers throughout Scotland, including quantity and quality of mutual support available
2. To reduce the isolation of voice hearers in remote areas
3. To establish support structures to assist local groups to be set up and establish themselves and to support existing and new self help groups:

What will the national office do?

This project intends to develop a National Office for the SHVN staffed by two workers providing a support service to complement and to extend the work of the network

We will seek to help people better understand and cope with their voice hearing experiences by developing new ways for people to participate and work together as experts of experience.

This project will marry the best of “traditional” and “virtual” community development methods and techniques to enable the strengthening and expansion of the SHVN

We believe that by harnessing both the power of traditional community work and by using the internet we can reach more people who hear voices in need of support and further enhance the work of the SHVN by strengthening the self help and peer support groups that operate in Scotland.

The project will help extend the reach and increase the effectiveness of the organisation in delivering low-cost support services. This will be achieved by developing ways of working that emphasise collaboration, mutual support and the sharing of ideas and resources.

Specifically we aim to do the following:

Participation: Establishing an on-line community to provide additional support and information to members between meetings, thereby increasing member participation and strengthening the links between existing self help and peer support groups

Support: Increasing the level and quality of support provided by groups by providing mentoring and training to group facilitators. Mentoring will enable the skills and knowledge of experienced facilitators to be passed on to new facilitators

Development: Providing the means to develop further self help groups (including on-line groups) in areas where no such support exists, particularly in rural communities, by helping to draw together isolated voice hearers and supporting mental health workers

We will undertake the following:

Community based work will include:

- Increasing the level of support available from the national office to the membership by employing two workers (ideally one expert by experience and one expert by profession)
- Supporting, establishing and further developing self-help groups across Scotland
- Increasing the membership of the Network and providing services such as a regular newsletter, information services, publications
- Training services:
For Self Help Group facilitators and providing for their ongoing mentoring and support
For training trainers
- Mentoring
- Outreach services
- Holding an Annual National Conference
- Establishing a Recovery Consultancy Service
- Establishing an Experience Focus Counselling Service

On-line work will include:

Develop of an on-line community centred on the SHVN which includes the following:

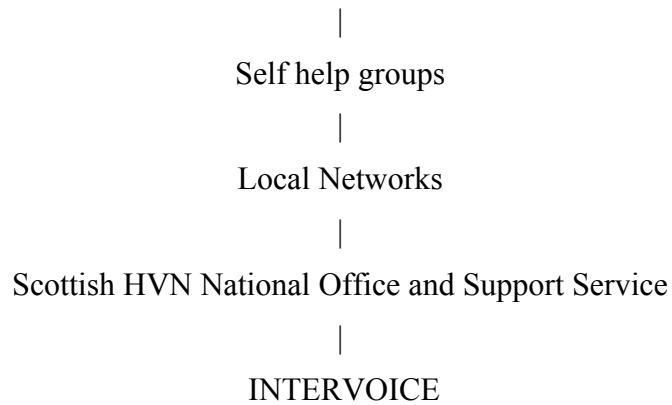
- Peer to peer on-line telephony (e.g. Skype, MSN etc.), to enable no cost/low cost regular one-to-one “mentoring” support for group facilitators and members of the groups;
- On-line conference calls to enable ongoing support between members of real time support groups
– and
to assist in the development of new groups by bringing together potential members to discuss and plan establishing new groups
- Instant chat-rooms to provide moderated live text based discussions between memberships of different self help groups and between self help group members, workers and carers
- Establish a national on-line forum to provide a means of developing support to individuals and other groups concerned with supporting individuals who hear voices
- Increase the knowledge base of the groups and increasing the potential for interactivity between the local groups and the Network national office via on-line information sharing
- The establishment of “My Voices” recovery blogs, a service enabling members to use to keep an on-line diary of their recovery experiences that they can share with their friends and supporters
- The establishment of an accessible website providing the opportunity for a single point of entry to the above services

Key words:

- Facilitating;
- Non-hierarchical;
- Underpinning;
- Encouraging diversity and pluralism

A Person centred structure looking like this:

People who hear voices (working towards empowerment & recovery)



What do you think of our proposal?

If you wish can write about your views on this page and email it [here](#) or send it to SHVN, 216 - 220 Hilltown, Dundee, DD3 7AU

