

## Community Benefit Gateway case study: Dunrossness Central Public Hall supported to run their South End Menopause support project

### What is the Community Benefit Gateway?

The NHS in Scotland spends considerable amounts of money on goods and services every year.<sup>1,2</sup> Asking suppliers to deliver ‘community benefits’ as part of their NHS contract, is one way that the NHS can deliver wider social, environmental, and economic benefits to an area.<sup>3</sup>

The ‘**Community Benefit Gateway**’ (CBG) is an online portal which allows NHS suppliers to identify how they can support a local community in Scotland. The portal – developed by National Services Scotland – works in two steps:

1. Third-sector organisations in Scotland identify and upload requests that would benefit their local community and reduce inequalities. These are known as community ‘needs’ within the system.

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<sup>1</sup> NHS National Services Scotland. ‘Annual Procurement Report 2021-2022’. Available at:  
[www.nss.nhs.scot/media/3492/nhs-nss-annual-procurement-report-2021-22.pdf](http://www.nss.nhs.scot/media/3492/nhs-nss-annual-procurement-report-2021-22.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Public Health Scotland ‘Scottish Health Service Costs’. Available at:  
<https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/scottish-health-service-costs/scottish-health-service-costs-high-level-costs-summary-2020-to-2021/>

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government ‘Community Benefits in procurement’. Available at:  
[www.gov.scot/policies/public-sector-procurement/community-benefits-in-procurement/](http://www.gov.scot/policies/public-sector-procurement/community-benefits-in-procurement/)

2. As part of their contract with the NHS, suppliers can then view local community 'needs' within the CBG portal and, where appropriate, contact the third-sector organisation to offer support. These are known as suppliers' 'bids' within the system.

The **CBG** portal aims to encourage initiatives, such as work placement opportunities, volunteering, professional advice, conservation activities, etc.

This case study sets out an example of how a community organisation has been supported through the CBG.

## About the organisation that received support

In operation for over a century, Dunrossness Central Public Hall is a vital and vibrant multi-purpose community hub in the southern part of Shetland. The hub hosts a range of projects, activities and services used by different groups, including the South End Menopause support group. The support group, established in 2021, provides a safe and supportive space for women to share their experiences when managing the mental, physical and social challenges connected with perimenopause and menopause.

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'I experienced the benefits of having someone with whom I could ask some awkward questions, and when I lost that support, that left me a little bit thinking "who do I talk to now?", and that is what inspired me to set up the drop-in menopause peer support group.'

(Wendy Hand, Founder of South End Menopause)

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## About the community benefit that was delivered

In March 2022 Dunrossness Central Public Hall uploaded a community 'need' to the **CBG** to help the South End Menopause project to continue supporting women locally.

The organisation reported that their experience in using the CBG was positive and very easy, and they found the support offered by Alpha Solway extremely good.

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‘When we started the pilot, there were probably 27 ladies coming along, showing the need for this type of support. I always wanted to make the space available and accessible for women at free cost, so there are no barriers to anybody coming along. I had a chat with the NHS supplier [Alpha Solway] which was really good. I explained what we were doing, the aim of the project, some of our main priorities, and they were very keen to support us.’

(Wendy Hand, Founder of South End Menopause)

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**Example of some of the resources available for the South End Menopause support group members**

## Impact

As result of the support provided by Alpha Solway, South End Menopause have widened their assistance to women in different parts of Shetland and now offer a

diverse range of resources during their meeting sessions. There have been good levels of engagement from the community and the group are now linking with local businesses to widen the therapeutic offer to participants.

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'We started off in the most southern hall in Shetland, so for a lot of people it's inaccessible. [As a result of the support] we can [now] hire other venues and provide refreshments, and [we] have developed a thematic programme with specific topics (e.g. bleeding issues, brain fog). We've acquired a small library with menopause self-help books, a subscription to Menopause Matters and yoga mats. We link with two local therapists that deliver monthly sessions on relaxation, Indian head massage, Reflexology, meditation and coping mechanisms. We have also linked the local GP surgery, and they've come along to discuss different topics.'

(Wendy Hand, Founder of South End Menopause)

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## A further note on impact

Menopause is a natural biological event that women and some transgender men, non-binary people, intersex people, and people with variations in sexual characteristics, may experience,<sup>4</sup> marking the end of the menstrual cycle. In the months or years leading up to the menopause (perimenopause), some women may experience a number of signs and symptoms (e.g. hot flushes, vaginal dryness, muscle aches and joint pains, mood changes and sleep problems)<sup>5</sup> affecting them physically and emotionally to varying degrees. For many women, menopause can be a sensitive

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<sup>4</sup> NHS inform 'Menopause'. [www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/womens-health/older-years-around-50-years-and-over/menopause-and-post-menopause-health/menopause](http://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/womens-health/older-years-around-50-years-and-over/menopause-and-post-menopause-health/menopause)

<sup>5</sup> NHS England 'Symptoms – Menopause'. [www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/)

discussion topic which might lead them to feelings of embarrassment,<sup>6</sup> anxiety and leave them unable to talk openly about their symptoms.<sup>7</sup>

Peer-led spaces, like South End Menopause, have a significant positive impact on the wellbeing of communities by creating safe and non-judgemental environments for women where they can go and feel supported and connected while overcoming menopause-related challenges.

Additionally, this case study reflects on how the input from a national NHS supplier (in this case Alpha Solway) can have a ripple effect – beyond the organisation that is receiving the community benefit themselves – and contribute to community wealth building by supporting local businesses (in this case local therapeutic services).

For more information on the Community Benefit Gateway visit:

[www.nss.nhs.scot/procurement-and-logistics/sustainability-information-for-suppliers/access-our-community-benefit-gateway](http://www.nss.nhs.scot/procurement-and-logistics/sustainability-information-for-suppliers/access-our-community-benefit-gateway)

Access the portal here: [https://nhsnss.service-now.com/community\\_benefit](https://nhsnss.service-now.com/community_benefit)

Translations and other formats are available on request at:

[p hs.otherformats@p hs.scot](mailto:p hs.otherformats@p hs.scot) or 0131 314 5300.

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<sup>6</sup> Bell JA, Garlick D, Stevens C. 'It's time to talk about the M word'. BDJ Team. 2022;9(4):24–6. doi: 10.1038/s41407-022-0893-z. Epub 2022 Apr 14. PMCID: PMC9008374. Available at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9008374/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9008374/)

<sup>7</sup> UK Parliament. 'Menopause and the workplace. First report of session 2022-23'. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/report.html#heading-0>