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Joint news release from Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders

New art installation unveiled

Visitors to the Borders General Hospital in Melrose are being encouraged to take the time to engage with an impressive 72 canvas collage mural which has been unveiled at the hospital.

The installation is the work of service users who attend creative groups and the 1in4 Art Group, one of a number of groups which have been running for several years as part of Gala Resource Centre, the mental health day service jointly run by Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders.

It replaces the 'Jigsaw Mural' which has been on display at the hospital for the past six years.

Based on the themes of recovery, hope, enablement, integration, participation and involvement, the artwork aims to challenge traditional stereotypes around mental health issues and replace them with a more positive and optimistic image. It takes the form of 72 individual canvases which combine to create a larger collage. The installation has an added dimension in that behind every fourth canvas is the image of a well known personality who themselves have been affected by mental illness, with one of the most well known being Stephen Fry. Viewers can engage interactively with the piece by being able to move each canvas, the idea being to challenge people's pre-conceived ideas of who may be affected by mental illness.

Artists who attend the 1in4 Art Group do not follow one single model of art therapy but are instead encouraged to see art as a therapeutic activity and a means of self-expression. They experience a relaxed, supportive and creative atmosphere at the group where friendships quite often form. Inspiration is often drawn from well known artists like Van Gogh, Jackson Pollock, Claude Monet, Mark Rothko, Richard Dadd and Edvard Munch, all of whom experienced mental illness and found solace in their work.

Andrew Lowe, Director of Social Work said: "The name of this art group – 1in4 – is derived from the statistic that one in four people will be affected by mental health issues at some point in their lives. Mental illness is all around us but this doesn't mean that opportunities in life should be hindered or limited as a result. Working on people's strengths and abilities rather than taking a negative view of the illness is the way forward. This is a hugely impressive piece of work by a group of people who are working to do just that and I would encourage anyone visiting the hospital to make the time to experience their artwork."

John Raine, Chair of NHS Borders added: "We are thrilled to receive this amazing mural. A lot of work gone into it and it really is an interesting piece of art work, with lots of meaning behind it. We have placed it in one of the busiest spots in the hospital so that it is somewhere people can really take time to stand, admire and engage with it. I know that staff and visitors will get a lot of pleasure from it for a long time to come."

Notes to Editors

The Gala Resource Centre provides a safe, therapeutic and recovery based programme for people experiencing challenges with their mental health with health and well-being initiatives, creative opportunities and other activities being offered.

For more information, contact the SBC Corporate Communications Team on 01835 826632 or communications@scotborders.gov.uk or NHS Borders Communications Team on 01896 8255 89



Pictured L-R Gordon Jack and Steven Hogg