

# Connecting Voices: Exploring Networks in Independent Advocacy



## SIAA Members Conference 2025



### Goal and Purpose

We wanted to understand key sector networks and strengthen connections between member organisations. With The Carnegie Trust, we worked to make the conference inclusive, providing extra support for members in rural and remote settings.

### Our Attendees

37 attendees from 20 member organisations - including chief officers, team leaders, trustees, and advocates - travelled from across Scotland, from as far as Stornoway!

### Ideate to Advocate

Dr Will Shepherd highlighted the role of creativity in independent advocacy, then brought ideas to life in an interactive ideation workshop. We loved hearing laughter in the room!

### The Carnegie Trust Research

Dr Mo Yan and Yingru Li shared ongoing research with a key message: independent advocacy in Scotland restores voice and credibility by tackling epistemic injustice.

Their work explores sector challenges and opportunities - more findings coming soon!

### Partnership Working

Members collaborate widely: with each other and with external organisations, bodies, and professionals - for learning, awareness-raising, signposting, and representing Advocacy Partners' voices. Insights from these discussions are informing SIAA's Quality Project.

### SMHLR - Next steps

Three years after the Scottish Mental Health Review, we explored priority areas to focus on in our policy and influencing work.

### What we learned:



- A smaller group size works best for discussions - less is more.
- Academic partnerships add real value to the sector.
- Fun and lighthearted moments matter.
  - Members deeply value opportunities for connection.



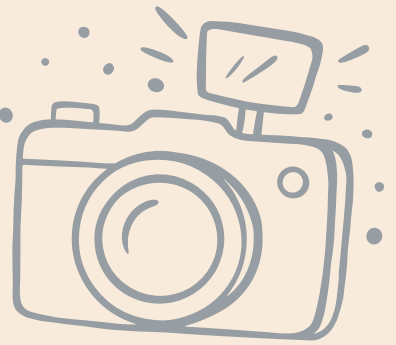
### Next time

We want to engage more of our membership and are considering a series of smaller regional events to reach everyone.

What do you think?



# The Day in Pictures



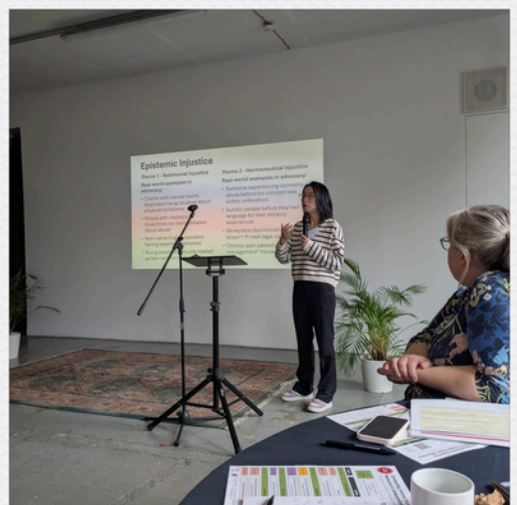
**Attendees had plenty of opportunities to collaborate at their tables.**



**Mo made the most of every opportunity to connect with members.**



**Suzanne did a fantastic job emceeing!**



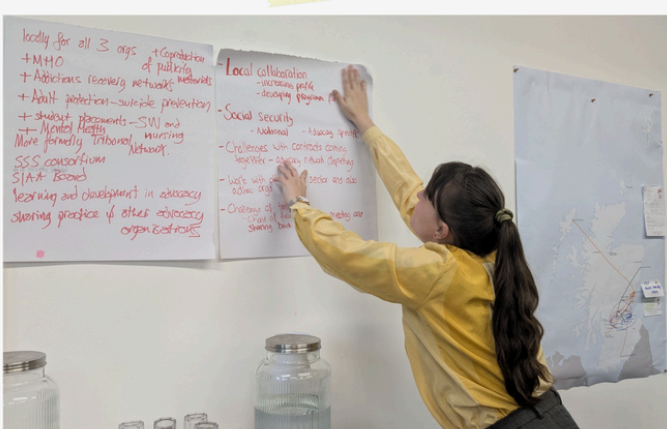
**Yingru walked us through the key themes of their ongoing research.**



**With humor and energy, Will inspired creativity and kept the room buzzing!**



**"Scottish or Nottish" Quiz Winners**





**Double function of your insights: data for projects and wall decor!**



## Bank of Ideas

**Attendees  
generated these  
under Will's  
direction**

 TITLE: OPEN MIC / COMEDY NIGHT  
FOR OUR PARTNERS



Concept Idea:

Benefits:

- 1 Place people to share their experience
- 2 no judgement
- 3 Reducing Trauma.

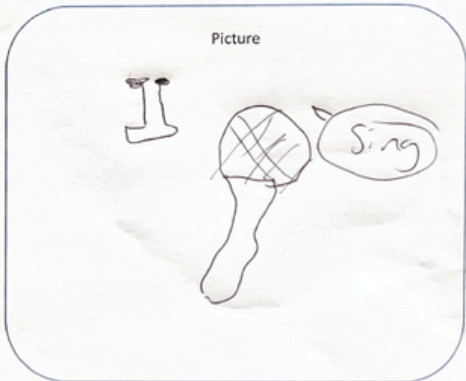
Key target market: Anyone with a story.

Problem Solved:


Safe space, people to share experience not alone

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Picture



The diagram is enclosed in a rounded rectangle. It depicts a person from the waist up, facing left. The person's head is a circle with a cross-hatch pattern. A speech bubble to the right of the head contains the word 'Sing'. Above the person's head is a small, simple drawing of a microphone on a stand.



TITLE: SUPERvision


Concept Idea: An AI, supervision tool THAT SUMMARIZES SUP  
with only joyful words of validation

Benefits:


- 1 POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT
- 2 WIDEN ACCESS TO SUPERVISION
- 3 FEELS U RETAINED

Key target market:  
MANAGER / SUPERVISOR


Problem Solved:  
STAFF MOTIVATION & EFFECTIVE  
LEARNING



Picture



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 TITLE: *Laughing our socks off*

Concept Idea: *Team trips to comedy clubs*

Benefits:

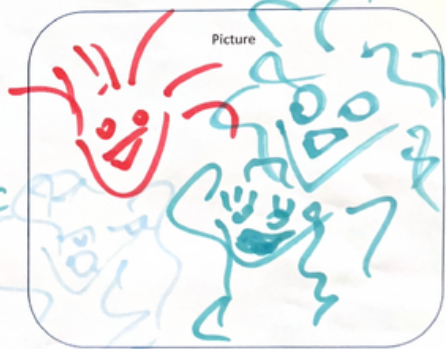
- 1 Team will relax and be more productive
- 2 Service will not be as slow due to higher productivity
- 3 Staff can be paid more leading to greater staff retention
- 4 Better results for AEs

Key target market:



Board  
Funders / Commissioners

Problem Solved:

*Miserable staff!*

 Picture

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 TITLE: SAS Advocacy 

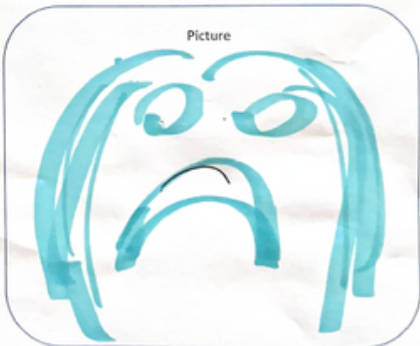
Concept Idea: SAS Advocacy - whole team approach

Benefits:

1. Quicker response.
2. Wider talent pool
3. More people supported

Key target market:  
People in crisis

Problem Solved:  
People waiting in fear



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**TITLE:** JUGGLING CHANGE

**Concept Idea:** USING CIRCUS SKILLS TO ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACCEPT LIFE WITH CHANGES  
HAVE MORE CHOICE CONTROL THEIR LIVES

**Benefits:**



- 1 RESILIENCE
- 2 INCREASED CONFIDENCE
- 3 INCREASED CHOICE

**Key target market:** YOUNG PEOPLE GOING THROUGH TRANSITIONS

**Problem Solved:**

Picture

A hand-drawn illustration of a stick figure juggling five balls. The figure is positioned at the bottom left, with its arms raised and hands open as if catching or throwing a ball. There are five circles representing balls in the air above the figure, arranged in a parabolic path from right to left.

 TITLE: 

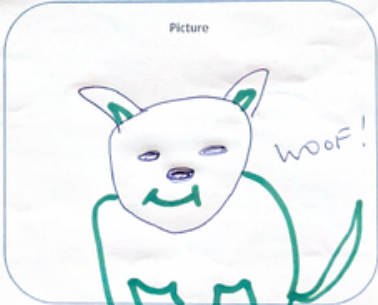
Concept Idea: puppy petting prior to each team meeting.

Benefits:

1. Calm mindset
2. Team building.
3. Increase enthusiasm

Key target market: Staff team

Problem Solved: low team meeting turnout, low morale.

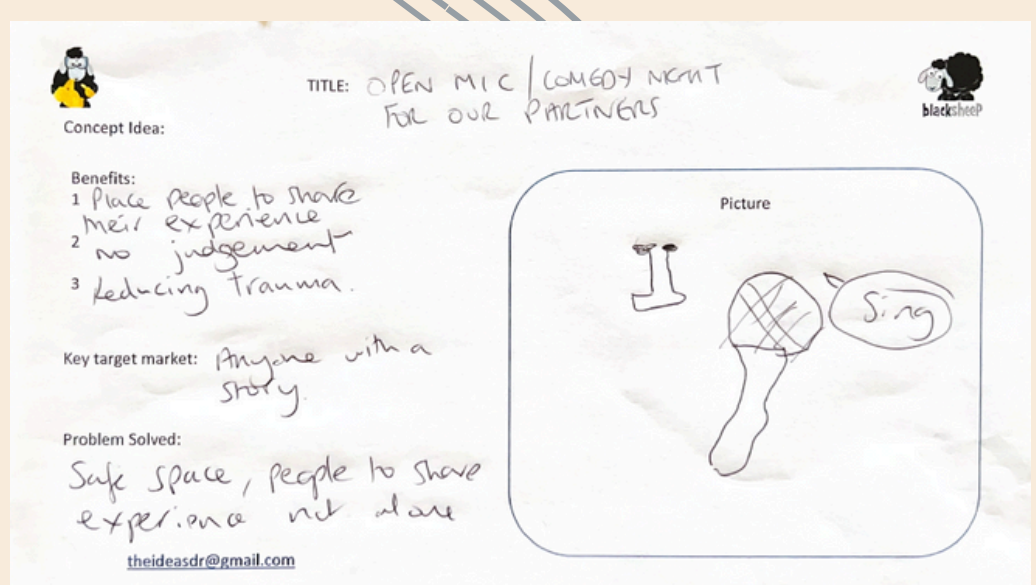
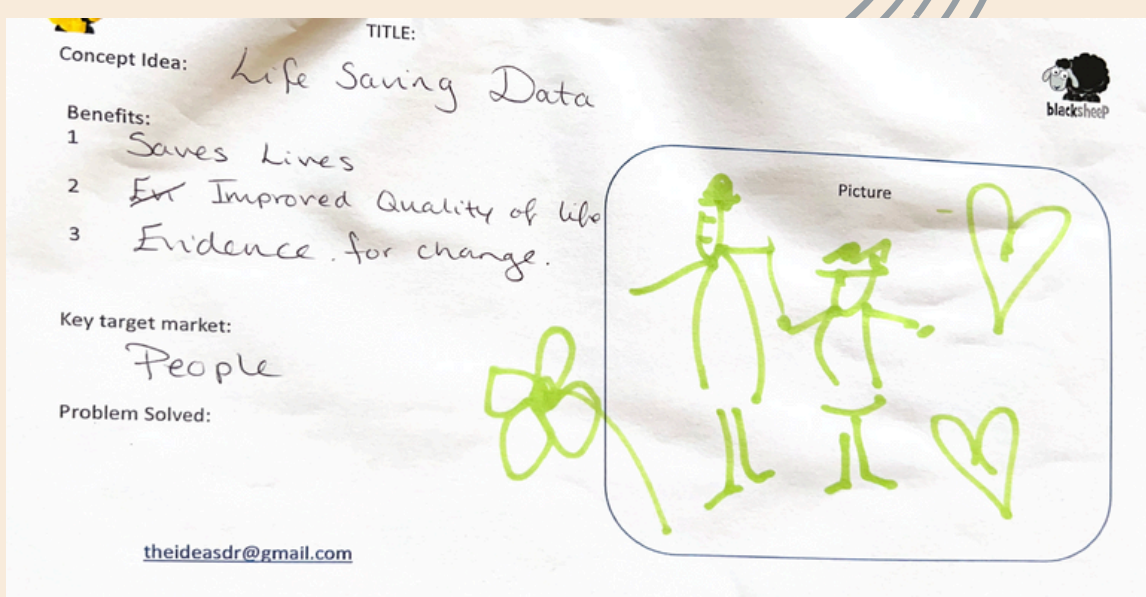
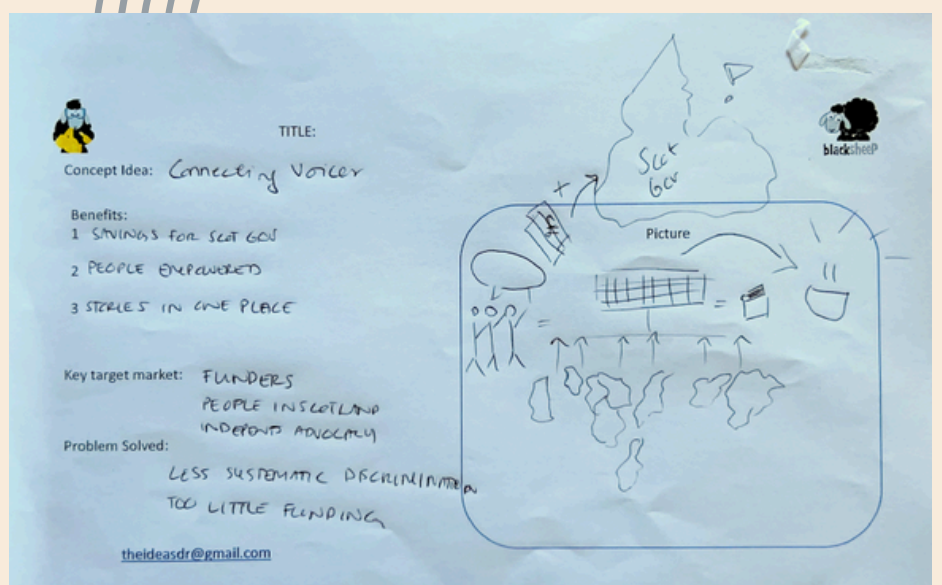
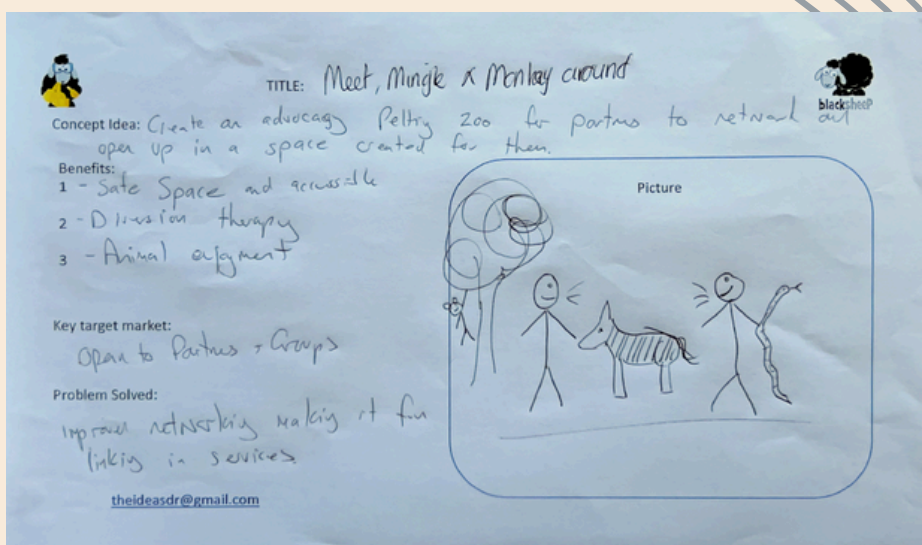
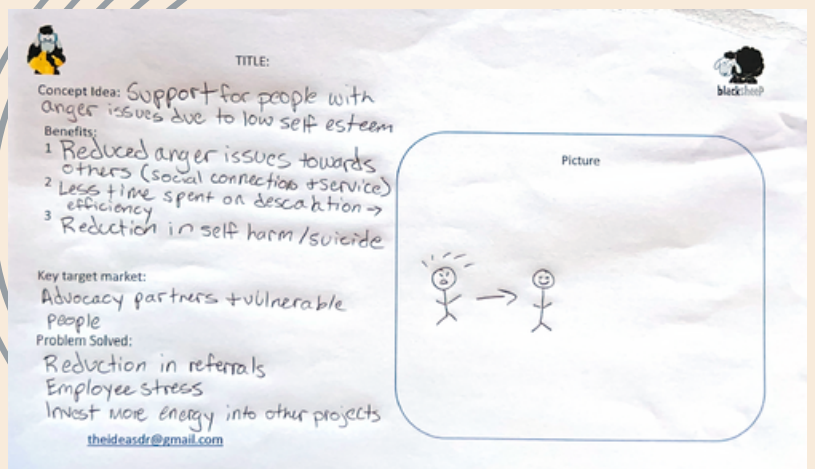
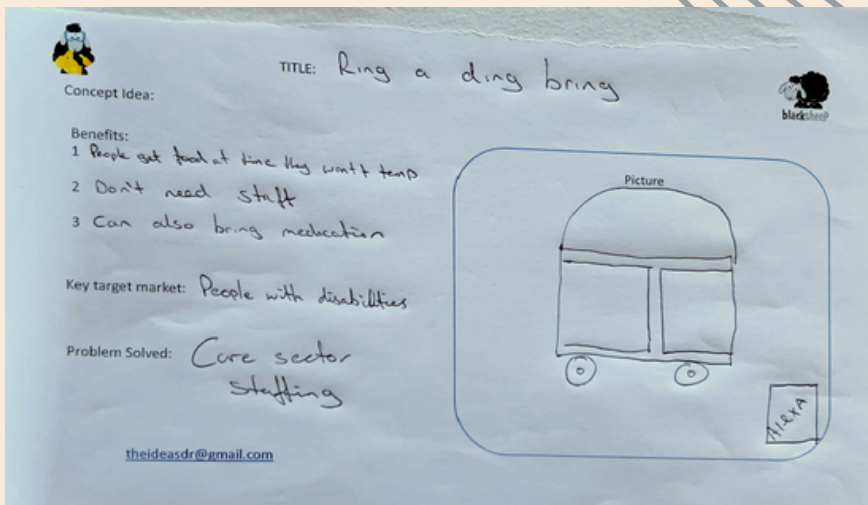


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# Bank of Ideas

Attendees generated these under Will's direction



**We're grateful to everyone whose support brought this conference to life:**

**Dr Mo Yan and Yingru Li with The Carnegie Trust, co-sponsors of the conference**



**Dr Will Shepherd**



**Civic House in Glasgow**



**Parveen's Canteen**



**And a special thank you to all our Attendees.  
See you next year!**

