

People's **Stigma Free** Network: September 2026 Flash Report

1st September 2026 Session Highlights:

NLCT guest
talk: working
together to
challenge
stigma faced
by carers

Creating a
Wall of
Wisdom from
members'
experiences of
challenging
stigma

Building
connections
to work
together
towards a
stigma-free
Lanarkshire

Featuring:

NORTH LANARKSHIRE
carerstogether



September Network: Session Snapshot

Core Activities

Guest Talk: North Lanarkshire Carers Together

Explored stigma experienced by unpaid carers and how listening, lived experience and partnership working can help challenge barriers to support.

Interactive Learning: Pathway to a Stigma-Free Lanarkshire

Members reflected on where stigma appears, how they respond and what they have learned. Together, they created a Wall of Wisdom, sharing key messages through Mentimeter.

Networking and Collaboration

Time throughout the session helped members connect across organisations and communities, share experiences and explore opportunities to work together.



22 attendees

10 returning

Profile: lived experience & professionals
(NHS Health Improvement, third sector organisations, Stigma Free Lanarkshire volunteers, Lanarkshire Links members)

Guest Speaker: North Lanarkshire Carers Together

Challenging Stigma Experienced by Carers

Shazia, Equality Worker at North Lanarkshire Carers Together (NLCT), explored how overlapping forms of stigma can make it harder for carers to seek support and feel understood. She highlighted the importance of listening without assumptions, asking “what matters to you?” and working together to challenge barriers.

Karen’s story, previously shared at PSFN and now included in NLCT’s training, illustrated how lived experience can shape practice. NLCT’s wider partnership work has also helped inform NHS Lanarkshire’s new Family and Carer Standards.

Key messages:

- Recognise the different forms of stigma carers can face
- Listen with curiosity and make space for individual experiences
- Use lived experience to inform training and improve support
- Work across organisations to challenge stigma together



Interactive Learning: Pathway to a Stigma Free Lanarkshire

Members created a shared pathway towards a stigma-free Lanarkshire, drawing on their own experiences through three stages:

Recognising stigma

Exploring where stigma appears in everyday life, including workplaces, services, caring roles and community settings.

Reflecting on our responses

Discussing how members had challenged stigma, what held them back and how conversations and peer support could help.

Creating a Wall of Wisdom

Bringing together practical advice: listen without judgement, question assumptions, use respectful language and work together.

Wall of Wisdom

- * Have a conversation that involves Really Really listening!
- * Be confident to speak out against stigma & discrimination!
- * Creating allies to address stigma collectively -
- * Raising awareness that some disabilities aren't always visible.
- * Stigma + discrimination sometimes comes from the places we least expect it

Challenging
language
- respectfully
- right place
- time

stop +
reflect
on language

non-stigma
language
- positive
adaptions

kindness
+ compassion
empathy

- Calling it out
- Educating people
- Lived experience/Social Stories
- Peer Support groups
- encourage attending stigma free events.
- Uncomfortable to call it out but feel better
- Educating yourself
- Working on our own unconscious bias
- Looking at the larger Picture Stigma
- break the cycle
- changing Language

Don't give up
Being listened too helps

Having phrases to say in a situation
to diffuse/calm and show you
have shared a difference of opinion

Networking

Building Connections Across the Network

Time throughout the session gave members opportunities to meet, share experiences and explore ways to work together across organisations and communities.

95% of respondents made at least one meaningful new connection, with 80% strongly agreeing.*

Members valued:

- Hearing different perspectives and learning about other organisations
- Finding opportunities for collaboration and joint projects
- Staying connected through future sessions and shared training opportunities

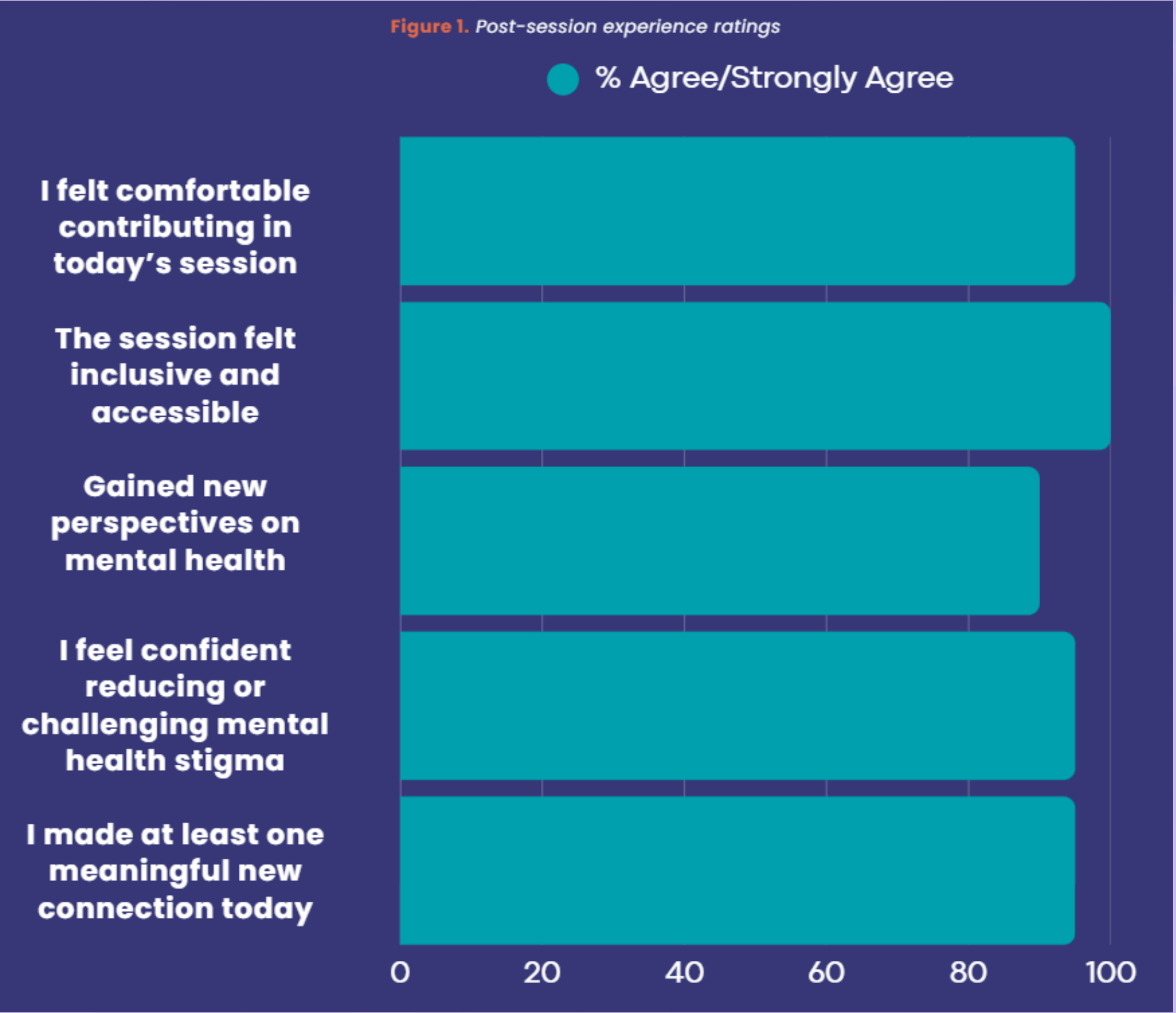
**Based on 20 post-session responses.*



Measuring the Impact: Quantitative Findings

Positive ratings across all five indicators

Based on 20 post-session responses, at least **90%** agreed or strongly agreed with every statement. Four indicators scored **95%** or above, including **100%** for cultural inclusivity and accessibility.



Member Feedback: Qualitative Insight

Connection and collaboration

Members valued meeting people from other organisations, sharing perspectives and exploring opportunities to work together.

Understanding carers' experience

The NLCT guest talk helped members reflect on the stigma unpaid carers can face and the importance of listening and support.

Learning from one another

Members recognised shared experiences and appreciated the knowledge others brought to the session.

In members' own words:

"The opportunities to collaborate & support the important work around reducing stigma in our communities"

"Other people having the same experience as myself"



Future Directions

Strengthen practical learning

Build knowledge and skills for recognising and challenging stigma, alongside discussion and networking.

Respond to members' interests

Explore cultural, disability and substance use stigma, inviting organisations to share their work and training opportunities.

Take learning beyond the session

Share the Wall of Wisdom and invite members to bring back examples of how they have used the learning.

Support ongoing involvement

Follow up interest in volunteering, becoming an SFL Champion and giving future guest talks.



**Stigma Free
Lanarkshire**