



A – Z Introductory Guide to Health and Social Care in Scotland

Improving Mental Health and Well-Being

Brief description

The Scottish Executive's National Programme to Improve Mental Health and Well-Being works *to improve the mental health and well-being of everyone living in Scotland and to improve the quality of life and social inclusion of people who experience mental health problems.*

This work forms a key part of the Executive's work on health improvement and on achieving greater social justice, by working to address inequalities in mental health and to close the opportunity gap experienced by people with mental health problems. The National Programme aims to encourage a wide range of policy and practice areas and sectors to integrate consideration of mental well-being issues into their own work. This "mainstreaming" is intended to achieve greater understanding, commitment and action to improving mental health and well-being in other areas of public policy and practice.

Background

There are considerable challenges facing Scotland in relation to mental health, mental health problems, attitudes to mental ill-health and suicide. For example:

- One-third of all consultations to GP practices are as a result of psychosocial problems (Mental Health Foundation 1999);
- Around one in four Scots will at some time in their life experience a mental health problem severe enough to adversely affect their day to day life (World Health Organisation 2001);
- Nearly half of people said that if they had a mental health problem they would not want others to know about it (Well? What do you think? The Second National Survey of Public Attitudes to Mental Health, Mental Wellbeing and Mental Health Problems, Scottish Executive, 2004);
- 40% more per head of population is spent on prescriptions for anti-depressants in Scotland than in England (ISD Scotland 2002);
- The suicide rates in Scotland are significantly higher than those in England (GROS 2004,5; plus Office for National Statistics);

- People living in the most deprived communities in Scotland are significantly more likely to commit suicide than those living in the most affluent communities (unpublished analysis by ISD Scotland);
- Over 40% of individuals claiming Incapacity Benefit do so as a result of a mental or behavioural disorder (Department for Work and Pensions, 2005); and
- Mental ill health accounts for 14% of certified sickness in the UK, translating into an estimated loss of approximately £3.5 billion (International Labour Organisation, 2000).

Despite this, the evidence is that good mental health is essential to our overall health, to our sense of physical and emotional well-being, and is inextricably linked to our physical health. Without good mental health and well-being, our ability to choose, act on, and maintain a healthy life-style is severely limited. We also know that, when people are more aware of mental health and mental illness, they will be more likely to seek early help for mental health problems. This in turn increases the chances of a positive prognosis and recovery.

Key Aims of the National Programme

The 4 key aims of the National Programme's work, and their principal delivery vehicles, are as follows:

1. **Raising public awareness of mental health and mental illness and promoting positive mental health and emotional well-being.** Principal delivery vehicle: NHS Health Scotland. Health Scotland is a key implementation body for the first aim of the National Programme. Health Scotland's ongoing mental health improvement work includes:
 - Scotland's Mental Health First Aid: a training course being delivered across Scotland, aimed at improving the general public's awareness and understanding of mental illness:
www.healthscotland.com/smhfa/
 - Promoting Mental Health - Raising Awareness: a training course aimed at increasing local capacity to deliver mental health improvement;
 - A programme of work to build capacity in mental health improvement evidence and evaluation:
www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk/researchcentre/specialist/mhevidprog.cfm
 - Work to develop a core set of indicators for public mental health:
www.phis.org.uk/info/mental.asp?p=bg
 - Development and distribution of a variety of resources:
www.healthscotland.com/publications/index.cfm

For further details on all of the above and Health Scotland's other work on mental health improvement contact NHS Health Scotland on 0131-536 5500 or visit www.healthscotland.com

2. **Ending the stigma of mental ill health and the discrimination which people with mental health problems can encounter.** Principal delivery vehicle: “see me ...” Campaign. “see me” promotes the message that stigma and discrimination due to mental ill health is unacceptable, wrong and must end. “see me” is a high profile campaign which challenges media approaches to reporting mental health issues and encourages individuals to tell their stories and share their experiences in the media and in communications across Scotland. “see me” has developed, and will continue to develop, links with partners in the health, social care, private and voluntary sectors in order to achieve effective local action to tackle stigma and discrimination. For more information, contact the “see me” team on 0131-624 8945 or visit www.seemescotland.org.uk
3. **Preventing suicide and helping people cope with the aftermath of suicide.** Main delivery vehicle: “Choose Life” National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing Suicide. Each Local Authority area now has an agreed local suicide prevention plan and a named local “Choose Life” Co-ordinator. A key aspect of implementing “Choose Life” at local level is the development of local partnerships across health, social care, voluntary and other sectors. National partnerships to ensure long-term sustainable infrastructures for suicide prevention are also being developed - for example, with the Samaritans in Scotland, Childline Scotland and the Scottish Prison Service. For more information, contact the “Choose Life” Implementation Team on 0141-240 7790 or visit www.chooselife.net
4. **Promoting and supporting people’s recovery from mental illness.** Main delivery vehicle: Scottish Recovery Network (SRN). The SRN works to raise awareness of recovery from long-term mental health problems and to develop better understanding of what helps promote recovery across communities. The Network shares ideas and practices based on evidence gathered in Scotland and learned from other countries. For more information on the work of the Scottish Recovery Network, call 0141-240 7790 or visit www.scottishrecovery.net

The National Programme also funds the “Breathing Space” telephone listening, advice and sign-posting service that is targeted principally, but not exclusively, at young men suffering from low mood or depression. It is available nationally on 0800-838 587. “Breathing Space” is run for the Scottish Executive by NHS24 and, at the time of writing, receives some 2,000 to 2,500 calls per month. Breathing Space has access to a database of statutory and voluntary agencies and has regular contact with health, social care and voluntary agencies to keep the database updated. Callers can be signposted to relevant services in their own locality. For more information, contact Tony McLaren on 0141 225 0099 or visit www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

Amongst the National Programme’s 6 priority areas for action, key target areas are: improving mental health and wellbeing in employment and working life; and improving the mental health and well-being of children and young people. You can find out more about the aims and target areas by visiting the Programme’s website www.wellontheweb.net

Mental Health and Wellbeing in Employment and Working Life

The National Programme has funded Scotland's Health at Work (SHAW) to establish a mental health programme as a core part of its work. SHAW's National Mental Health Development Officer works with local SHAW teams and others to promote workplace mental health initiatives; encourage people with mental health problems or mental illness to retain their jobs or return to work; and to increase recruitment of people with mental health problems or mental illness. This work involves linking with partners from a wide range of sectors, including health and social care.

For further information on promotion of mental health and well-being where people work, contact Nina Goodlad, Scotland's Health at Work, 01224-558 527 or visit www.shaw.uk.com

Children and Young People

The National Programme funds "HeadsUpScotland", the National Children and Young People's Mental Health Project. This Project has been established to support the implementation of the Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) Report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Scotland. The focus is on achieving an integrated approach to promotion, prevention, care and treatment for children and young people. For more information about "HeadsUpScotland", you can visit the Project's website <http://www.headsupscotland.com/> or contact Anne Clarke on 0141-221 9439 or e-mail anne.clarke@drs.glasgow.gov.uk

The National Programme also funds work being taken forward by the Health Promoting Schools Unit to support the development of emotional, mental health and well-being in schools. This work is being taken forward to support primary and secondary schools across Scotland to address emotional, mental health and well-being as a key component in becoming a health promoting school. For further information, please contact Jo Kopela on 01382-443 684 or e-mail j.kopela@ltscotland.org.uk

Arts, Culture and Mental Health

The National Programme is providing support funding to the Scottish Arts Council for an arts and mental health initiative. A National Arts and Mental Health Worker is now in post to help develop the programme. The aim is to raise awareness of mental health issues through arts and cultural activities and events; and to support people's recovery from mental illness through engaging with the arts. For more information on this strand of work, contact Paul Murray at the Scottish Arts Council on 0131-226 6051.

Promoting Wellbeing and Social Development for People with Mental Health Problems

In relation to the priority action area of improving local services, sections 25 to 27 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 place a duty on Local Authorities and their agency partners, including Health Boards, to provide services for people with mental illness that are designed to promote their well-being and social development. These include:

- Social, cultural and recreational activities;
- Training for people who are over school age; and
- Assistance for people over school age in obtaining and sustaining employment.

Local Authorities across Scotland have been working with a range of partners to review current provision and consider its relevance in relation to its role in rebuilding confidence, focusing on recovery and maximising social inclusion. Many areas are redesigning services and using available and new funds to offer people the chance to gain new skills and increase participation in activities, including moving on to training, voluntary and paid work.

There is also now a growing interest from regeneration schemes, colleges, jobcentres, sports and leisure providers and other mainstream agencies who wish to engage and involve people with mental health problems or illness.

For more information on Local Authority functions and mental well-being, contact Mark Dunlop, Scottish Executive Mental Health Division on 0131-244 5224.

Other relevant material

The National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-Being has published a number of documents which readers may find of interest. These include a three-year action plan (2003 to 2006), published in 2003; an annual review, published in 2004; and several editions of *Well?*, the magazine of the National Programme. All of these documents, and links to the various delivery vehicles and other relevant agencies, can be found via the National Programme's website www.wellontheweb.net