



# Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group Newsletter Spring 2024

*This newsletter is produced by NHS Highland - Health Improvement Team, on behalf of the Highland Community Planning Partnership (HCPP) Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group*

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# WHAT'S COMING UP?

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- Diabetes and Stress
- Mindfulness and Stress
- Mental Health Awareness Week and Green Health Week
- The Big Hoof - The Highland Ride
- GET INVOLVED participate in this years Mental Health and Arts Festival
- Inverness OpenArts - Art-for-wellbeing April - June schedule
- Spread the Word!

**Short of time?** Jump to the topic you're interested in by clicking the square symbol at the bottom right.

Just remember to come back when you have time to find out all about the great work going on across Highland.

## But first - Taking Care of You



**If you or someone else is experiencing mental distress and you are worried about your own or someone else's immediate safety:**

- Call 999 or go straight to A+E immediately.
- If you are calling for someone else, try to establish the person's, name, contact details and location

**If the crisis is not life-threatening but you are concerned for your own or somebody else's mental wellbeing:**

- Advise them to call NHS 24 on 111 or speak to their GP. The route into formal mental health services is through a GP surgery.
- If someone discloses to you that they are already being supported for their own mental health, it's useful to link them to where they are currently receiving support

### **Important Support Line Numbers and Links**

- [NHS 24](#) on 111
- [Samaritans](#) on 116 123
- [Breathing Space](#) on 0800 83 85 87 (6pm Friday – 6am Monday & 6pm – 2am on weekdays)
- [Shout](#) by texting 85258

- [Mind to Mind](#) website

### [Highland Mental Wellbeing Website](#)

Let us know how we're doing in our quick website survey!



This website is a list of services, information and training around the subject of mental health and wellbeing.

[Highland Mental Wellbeing – A collection of resources to support mental wellbeing \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

Take the chance to complete our online survey to give us feedback on the website.

[Download the FREE Prevent Suicide Highland App](#)

An information resource and safety planning/discussion tool for the whole community



Available for both Android and iPhone



If you need urgent help with suicidal thoughts call:  
Samaritans on 116 123 or  
Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87



# Stress Awareness Month April

## Little by Little, a Little Becomes a Lot

Stress Awareness Month has been running since 1992 and this year the theme is #LittlebyLittle

The aim is to highlight the big impact of small actions, even the smallest steps taken each day towards self-care and stress reduction can lead to significant improvements in mental health over time.

Lots of helpful tips and resources can be found at [The Stress Management Society - From Distress to De-Stress](#)



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- *Connect with someone. Are they okay? · Are you okay? · Check in with your support network · Connect with someone new · A sense of belonging and community can help reduce feelings of loneliness*
  - *Go outside*
  - *Get moving*
  - *Be mindful*
  - *Breathe deep*
- *Prioritise sleep. Make small steps to improve your bedtime routine. Wind down before bed by minimizing your screen time, make your bedroom a 'tech-free' zone, create a clean and restful environment, jot down what's on your mind and set it aside for tomorrow, avoid caffeine after 4pm*
  - *Practice mindfulness*

## Diabetes and Stress

One of the lesser-known relationships with stress is diabetes. Stress is not a cause of Diabetes, however there is what is called a *bi-directional relationship* between stress and Diabetes.

Stress makes it harder to manage any long-term condition, including diabetes. Worry about glucose levels can cause more stress, change how we eat, impair good quality sleep, and all this may be on top of other stressors we face in life. So, it can be helpful to find ways to manage stress and there are effective ways to manage stress that fit in with our lifestyles.

For more information about stress and diabetes, visit [Stress and diabetes | The impact on your wellbeing | Diabetes UK](#) and NHS Inform [What to do if you are struggling with stress \(nhsinform.scot\)](#)

### What help is available in Highland?

You may be eligible for one-to-one Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for Diabetes sessions available online, so that you can get personalised support to find - and maintain - ways to manage your stressors. [Cognitive behavioural therapy for diabetes | NHS Highland \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#) - Speak to your GP or Diabetes Specialist to get referred.

A final word from the CBT team at NHS Highland:

"A final word on stress... experiencing stress is not a reflection of our inability to cope, or there being a deficit in our skill set. Stress is something that we endure, more so in the modern world in which we live. How we respond to stress though, is something that we *do* have influence over. Let's share some ideas, try out some strategies, and work together to reduce the impact of stress. The theme of this year's Stress Awareness Month is **#LittleByLittle** so the invitation to you is to make a small change towards improved wellbeing."

## Interested in Trying Out Mindfulness?



Attend Free Mindfulness Sessions Across Highland with **Highland Mindfulness Group**  
Highland Mindfulness Group are a charity based in Highland with a variety of online and in-person options for those interested in getting the benefits of Mindfulness.

Mindfulness can help with stress, anxiety, depression, isolation and chronic pain while supporting people to become more resilient. It has the power to change lives regardless of background, gender, age, employment status, physical and mental health.

Try it out with free drop-in sessions on Zoom on:

- **Every week day morning from 8.30am – 9.15am (with a guided meditation practice and sometimes mindful movement)**
- **Sunday afternoon with a guided practice from 4pm – 4.30pm**
- **Weekly Tuesday evening drop in sessions from 7pm – 7.30pm**

[WHAT'S ON! | Highland Mindfulness Group](#)

### **GOLSPIE & PORTMAHOMACK**

Please book your free place for the following free sessions by emailing us on [highlandmindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:highlandmindfulness@gmail.com).

- **Slow Down Saturdays in Golspie with Val Gale.** Free monthly mindfulness sessions at the YMCA building in Golspie. Beginners welcome. Over 18s only. Spring dates to be confirmed soon.

### **INVERNESS MEETINGS (fortnightly on Thursdays 10.30am – 12.30pm)**

Our fortnightly drop in meetings are open to anyone and will continue on 7th and 21st March, and 4th April. (Sorry there will be no session on 18th April). These sessions consist of silent and guided meditation practices, and informal discussions to provide an opportunity for participants to talk about their mindfulness practice. The sessions are led by various facilitators including Rhona, Diana and Catherine.

Beginners welcome. Pre-booking is not required. Please bring anything you need to be comfortable – blanket, cushion, meditation stool, and something to drink if you wish. Please park on the forecourt in front of the Chapel if possible. These sessions are free but we welcome any donations.

Awareness Weeks in May

# Mental Health Awareness Week



Mental Health  
Foundation



13 - 19 May 2024

Theme: Movement

## Mental Health Awareness and Green Health Week

This year's theme for Mental Health awareness week is "Movement: Moving more for our mental health". This awareness week happens at the same time as Green Health awareness week, so why not use the benefits of nature and move more outside.



## "Movement: Moving more for our mental health".

Being active is important for our mental health. But so many of us struggle to get enough exercise. We know there are many different reasons for this, so this Mental Health Awareness Week we want to help people to find moments for movement in their daily routines. Going for a walk in your neighbourhood, putting on your favourite music and dancing around the living room, chair exercises when you're watching television – it all counts!

Key resources for these awareness weeks are

[Mental Health Awareness Week | Mental Health Foundation](#)

[Welcome to Think Health Think Nature - Think Health Think Nature](#)



## The Big Hoof



A fantastic example of including movement outdoors is The Big Hoof.

From 19th - 24th May, the Highland ride will be focussed on two suicide prevention charities: James Support Group and Ewen's Room. Participants are encouraged to walk and ride with The Big Hoof horses, Sasha and Istia, as we celebrate the magical landscape of the West Highlands.

Join them at any point in their journey from Corrou Station House, Lairig Woods, Garilochy, Strathan, Glenfinnan and Polloch.

Go to [The Highland Ride — The Big Hoof](#) for full details



# OCTOBER 2024 - In/Visible SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FESTIVAL HIGHLAND

## Mental Health and Arts Festival- Call for Participation

The theme for this year's Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) in October will be "In/Visible".

SMHAF Highland is a collaboration between local groups and organisations coming together each year to plan a programme of events to promote engagement in activities which can benefit mental wellbeing, challenge stigma and raise awareness. Last year's events included live music, nature walks, art exhibitions, film screenings, pet therapy, art workshops, mindfulness taster sessions, 'Walk a Mile' and much more.

SMHAF would love to get even more community groups, schools and local charities involved from across the Highlands. Monthly meetings are held in preparation. The next meeting is 26th March at 1pm. To get involved contact, find contact details on:

[SMHAF Highland \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.smhafhighland.wordpress.com)

SMHAF are looking to put on some events around Mental Health Awareness week and are happy to be contacted if you'd like to be involved.

## Inverness OpenArts: (Free) Art-For-Wellbeing Sessions, April- June



Inverness OpenArts is back for another block of free Art-For-Wellbeing sessions across Inverness. Run by Wasps (Workshops & Artists Studio Provision Scotland), Inverness Openarts is a pilot project, currently funded until June 2024, working towards removing social and financial barriers to creative opportunities.

The project delivers weekly artmaking sessions, facilitated by local artists trained in mental health first aid. The artists work to create a supportive and non-judgemental atmosphere in which participants are free to use the wide range of art materials to make and do projects of their choosing, and/or be guided to learn particular techniques and artistic mediums. This frees people to to develop their creative skills and interests at a pace that suits them while building confidence in a supportive social environment.

All sessions are available for drop-in and take place across different venues in Inverness, the sessions are open for anyone to attend.

Dates and times of the upcoming sessions can be found at [Inverness Openarts: April - June Sessions | Eventbrite](#)

We've had **45** responses to our 4 surveys over the past year (Jan 2023 - Jan 2024).

The following percentages reported that attending openarts sessions made a significant (from moderate - very large) positive impact on their ...

SOCAL CONFIDENCE **91%**

SELF-ESTEEM' **91%**

OVERALL SENSE OF WELLBEING **98%**

## Mental Health Delivery Group



### Mental Health Delivery Group (MHDG) Structure



2 - Mental Health Delivery Group new structure

This is the new structure of the Mental Health Delivery Group. Each part of the diagram will have an action plan in how we can deliver on the overall vision for the Mental Health & Wellbeing Delivery Group which is:

**“People in Highland will benefit from good mental health and wellbeing”**

To achieve this vision, the main priorities of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Delivery Group are:

- Early Education, Prevention & Personal Resilience
- Tackling Stigma & Employers Attitudes
- Working & Responding Together
- Inclusion Intervention & Peer Support

For more information on the Mental Health Delivery Group, visit:

[Mental Health | Highland Community Planning Partnership \(highlandcpp.org.uk\)](http://highlandcpp.org.uk)

The MHDG is one of 5 thematic sub groups of the Highland Community Planning Partnership (HCPP). The overarching aim of this group is that **all people in Highland will benefit from good health and wellbeing.**

The [Highland Community Planning Partnership](http://highlandcpp.org.uk) brings together public agencies, third sector organisations and other key community groups to work collaboratively with the people of Highland to deliver better outcomes.

Feeding into the HCPP are 9 local community planning partnerships **and** the 5 regional thematic sub groups which are:

- mental health and wellbeing (MHDG)
- community safety and resilience



- infrastructure
- community participation and dialogue
- poverty reduction.

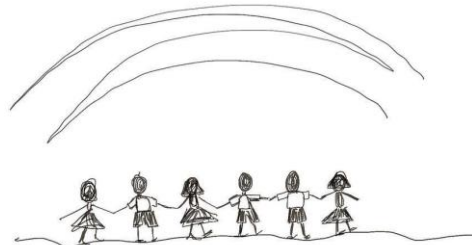
Bipolar Scotland also have support groups available in Highland - online and face to face groups available. Find the latest dates at: [Support Groups – Bipolar Scotland](#)





Spread the word via this newsletter!

The MHDG would welcome the views of people from across Highland, who are interested in improving the mental health and wellbeing of people in their local communities.



*together we can do so much -*

©EN.

**We aim to have this newsletter released quarterly, if you have anything you would wish to include in our next newsletter, e.g. services you wish to highlight, exciting local initiatives that other areas may wish to replicate, please contact us by emailing:**

[nhsh.healthimprovementtraining@nhs.scot](mailto:nhsh.healthimprovementtraining@nhs.scot)