



Spring 2026 Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group Newsletter

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The longer days, (hopefully) warmer weather and emergence of colour in our natural environment can all help to lift our mood and improve our mental wellbeing. Getting outdoors more often and spending time in nature can help to maximise the positive effect on mood, energy and wellbeing that Spring can bring.

We shouldn't feel pressured to change but Spring provides a unique opportunity to take notice of our natural surroundings and the changes taking place as nature emerges from its Winter slumber. Doing this can help us to feel calmer, more connected and improve our sense of wellbeing.

In this edition of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group newsletter, you will find information about work that is going on across Highland and a range of resources available to support people with their mental health and wellbeing. It's also not long until Mental Health Awareness Week (11th to 17th May) when the theme is 'Take Action'.

Therefore, to take action, please feel free to share this information with friends, colleagues and family to help spread the word about what is available in our area.

Cathy Steer, Chair of the Mental Health Delivery Group

Mental Health Awareness Week 2026



1 - Mental Health Awareness week poster

ACTION

For Yourself

For Someone Else

For All Of Us

Mental Health Awareness Week takes place on **11–17 May 2026**, and this year's theme from the Mental Health Foundation is a clear and motivating call: **ACTION – for yourself, for someone else, for all of us**. The theme encourages each of us to take small, practical steps

that support mental wellbeing and strengthen our communities. Whether it's reaching out, checking in, or seeking support, every action contributes to better mental health.

In this Spring newsletter we will showcase the great resources and support happening across Highland.

To find out more on the Mental Health Foundations week of awareness scan the QR code on the poster image or click here through to the website. [Mental Health Awareness Week | Mental Health Foundation](#)

Updated Mental Health and Wellbeing Printable

Signposting to mental health & wellbeing resources

Help in a crisis

The following advice is intended for **crisis situations** which happen only rarely. A mental health crisis is when someone feels their mental health is at breaking point and they need urgent help and support.



If you are concerned that you are, or if you feel that someone else is, in immediate danger call **999**. If you are calling for someone else, try to establish the person's name, contact details and location.



NHS 24

NHS 24 Mental Health Hub. The NHS 24 Mental Health Hub is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on 111.

111

You can contact NHS 24 if you're:

- feeling distressed
- in a state of despair
- suicidal
- in need of emotional support

The route into formal mental health services is through a GP. If someone tells you they are already receiving mental health support, encourage them to reconnect with their GP surgery.

Most mental health concerns are not emergencies. If you or someone you are supporting has concerns about mental health, the GP should be the first point of contact

Support, advice and resources can be found at:



SAMARITANS

Samaritans - **116 123**
Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
(calls are free and do not show on a phone bill) For more information, please visit the website www.samaritans.org/



BREATHING SPACE

Breathing Space - **0800 83 85 87**
(Monday to Thursday 6pm – 2am; Friday 6pm to Monday 6am)
For more information, including alternatives to using the phone to speak to someone, please visit the website. www.breathingspace.scot/



Mikeysline

Mikeysline - Text-based support. Sunday to Thursday 6pm to 10pm, Friday and Saturday 7pm to 7am
Text: **07786 207 755**
WhatsApp: **01463 729 000**
Also available on Wechat – Messenger – Twitter. For more information, please visit the website. www.mikeysline.co.uk/



James Support Group

James Support Group
07563 572 471
(24 hour helpline)
Email: support@jamesupportgroup.com
Or send a message via the website - www.jamesupportgroup.com



Highland Mental Wellbeing

www.highlandmentalwellbeing.scot.nhs.uk
A collection of resources gathered by NHS Highland to support mental wellbeing.

Prevent Suicide Highland App

This easy to use app helps you safety plan should you ever find your self in distress, feeling hopeless or suicidal in the future.





The app is available on Google Play for Android devices and the Apple App Store for iPhone and iPad.

2 - Image of collection of Mental Health Resources

Support, advice and resources can also be found at:



Ewen's Room - 01967 401130
Provide counselling for
12 - 25 year olds
Website - www.ewensroom.com



National Scottish Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline - 0800 027 1234
WhatsApp or Text - **07401 288595**
Website - www.sdafmh.org.uk/en/



Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland (RASASH)
Call us for support on **03330 066909**
Text us on **07451 288080**
Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 1-5pm
Website - www.rasash.org.uk



Rape Crisis Scotland
Call: **08088 0103 02**
Any day between 5pm – midnight:
Text: 07537 410 027
Email: support@rapecrisisScotland.org.uk
Webchat: www.rapecrisisScotland.org.uk



LGBT Helpline Scotland
0800 464 7000
Tuesdays, Wednesdays &
Thursdays (12-9pm)
Sundays (1-6pm)
Website - www.lgbthealth.org.uk



Childline - 0800 1111
Talk anytime on the phone
and find more support, online chat
& counselling via the
website - www.childline.org.uk



Cruse Scotland
Bereavement Support
CRUSE Bereavement Care Scotland
0808 802 6161
Mon - Fri 9am - 8pm,
weekends 10am - 2pm
Online Chat via the
website - www.crusescotland.org.uk

Worrying About Money App
NHS Highland has developed a free mobile app to provide financial support for anyone with money worries.
The app is free and available on Google Play for Android devices and the Apple App Store for iPhone and iPad.






The Highland Overdose Prevention & Engagement App
The Hope App is a source of information for people with drug and/or alcohol problems, and their families and friends, that helps prevent overdose and encourages engagement.
The app is free for Android devices and the Apple devices






Befrienders
www.befriendershighland.org.uk
A small voluntary organisation working to improve the lives of people who are lonely and isolated and have experience of mental ill health; memory difficulties or dementia and carers.

TURAS | Learn <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot>
A series of videos promoting children and young people's mental health and preventing self harm and suicide. Each video is approximately 5 mins in length.

This resource has been produced by the Highland Community Planning Partnership Mental Health & Wellbeing Delivery group, contact via this email admin@highlandcpp.org.uk

3 - Image of collection of Mental Health Resources

An updated Mental Health & Wellbeing Support printable is now available, bringing together the latest crisis contacts, helplines, and support options across Highland. The updated layout makes it quick and straightforward for people to find the help they need — especially those who **don't have digital access** and rely on printed information. While the poster provides clear, essential contact details, **additional information, resources, and digital tools** can be found online.

The Highland Mental Health & Wellbeing website and associated apps offer a wider range of guidance and support: ➡ www.highlandmentalwellbeing.scot.nhs.uk

This update helps ensure everyone, regardless of how they access information, can reach the right support at the right time.

[Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#)

[Breathing Space is a free confidential service for people in Scotland. Open up when you're feeling down - phone 0800 83 85 87](#)

[Home - Mikeysline](#)

[Home | James Support Group](#)

[Home - Ewen's Room](#)

[Home - Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline](#)

[RASASH | Rape & Sexual Abuse Service Highland](#)

[Rape Crisis Scotland | Working to end sexual violence](#)

[LGBT+ Helpline Scotland: extended support and access](#)

[Childline | Free counselling service for kids and young people | Childline](#)

[Home : Cruse Scotland](#)

[Welcome to Befrienders Highland](#)

[Home | Turas | Learn](#)

Trauma Informed Practice with the Badenoch & Strathspey Green Health Network -the value of taking shared learning sessions outdoors!



4 - Trauma informed principals, safety, choice, collaboration, empowerment, trust and culture written on stones sitting on the forest floor at the base of a tree.

Experience of trauma can impact the way we think, feel and interact with the world around us, our bodies might continue to react after the trauma has passed. Connecting with nature supports health and wellbeing, helping us to relax, better cope with stress and deepen our sense of connection, to ourselves, to others and to the more-than-human world. Spending time in the natural environment can help us to recover. The Badenoch & Strathspey Green

Health Network brings together health professionals, third sector partners and many nature-based practitioners who recognise the healing potential of working with people and nature. With many learning sessions taking place online we decided to try something different. Whilst we recognise the important accessibility benefits of online sessions, especially in rural areas like Highland, we know there are additional benefits to stepping away from the laptop, meeting in person and being outside! With this in mind we worked together to explore the value and practicality of blending trauma-informed learning with nature connection.

The local hall and nearby woods in Boat of Garten offered an ideal setting. We covered what trauma-informed practice is, along with key concepts and principles. Using grounding activities outdoors, we explored ideas such as the window of tolerance for emotional regulation. The metaphor of a passing storm helped illustrate how we move between emotional states and opened discussion about the impact of trauma. Our “trauma tree” was a real tree in the woods, and a brief sit-spot meditation in the sunshine offered a moment of quiet connection and highlighted the importance of self-care.

We closed with small-group discussions in the woods, surrounded by trees and birdsong, reflecting on safety, trust, collaboration, choice, culture and empowerment. Early feedback was very positive, especially about the benefits of weaving outdoor elements into shared learning, one participant said, ‘a major plus was having the session outdoors and in the woodland, it was great to spend time in nature instead of learning at a desk.’ Many thanks to everyone who joined the pilot session and to the Badenoch & Strathspey Green Health Network for funding and refreshments.

For more information please contact;

Helen.Perkins2@nhs.scot or Kate.thomson@nhs.scot from the NHS Highland Health Improvement Team

The [Think Health Think Nature](#) website hosts a range of nature connection resources and a directory of services in your local area.

Mikeysline – A Day With Hive On The Road (North)



At Mikeysline, our second Hive on the Road has recently begun visiting more remote parts of Sutherland and Caithness, offering one-to-one support and listening to the personal stories that shape everyday life. Time spent on the road creates space to step away from routine and truly hear what people are experiencing.

During a recent visit to Lochinver, a small village in the Assynt area of Sutherland, one conversation in particular stood out. After a one-to-one session with Charlotte Butler, HOTR Development Manager, a community member shared:

“Sitting down outside of my personal universe kick-started a process of getting support and unpicking the good and the bad. Until then, I felt like I was spiralling, but now I feel that I’m more orientated.”

It’s a powerful reminder of the impact that reflection, connection and being truly heard can have.

By the end of that conversation, one small but meaningful step had emerged: dusting off old photographs from a time when they were a keen photographer and beginning to organise them into albums. One of those photos is shared here - a glimpse into an earlier chapter and a reminder that even small actions can help us move forward.

Days like this highlight the true value of being out in communities, listening and learning. Even brief conversations can help people feel more grounded and supported - and that in itself makes the journey worthwhile.

Community Connection in Action: Hive on the Road in Stratherrick and Foyers



6 - Image of Mikeysline HIVE Van

In rural communities, meaningful change often begins with simple, consistent presence. In the rural area of Stratherrick and Foyers, the Hive on the Road project delivered by Mikeysline is demonstrating just how powerful that presence can be. This community-based initiative has been making a quiet but profound difference across the area, giving time and creating space with compassion.

As one local partner from the Boleskine Community Care Hub explains:

“Our community is a rural, largely older population where conversations around mental health haven’t always come easily. Having Kirsty visit The Hub once a month has helped to change that in a really gentle, meaningful way. By simply being present and approachable, Kirsty has normalised conversations around mental health. Over time, people have felt more comfortable talking openly, without it feeling like a ‘big deal.’ This has allowed us to offer invaluable support in a way that feels natural, respectful and truly rooted in the community. The difference her presence has made cannot be overstated.”

That gentle, relationship-led approach is echoed by the Midweek Minglers group:

“Through Kirsty, Mikeysline brings a real sense of warmth and reassurance to our community. She has a lovely way of lifting people’s spirits, and her visits are always something we genuinely look forward to. Kirsty is friendly, approachable and easy to talk to, and she really listens. Knowing she comes regularly and that there’s someone there for a wee chat if worries or anxieties are bubbling away brings a lot of comfort and means so much to our community.”

In communities like Stratherrick and Foyers, where stigma and isolation can be barriers to seeking support, the Hive on the Road shows that prevention doesn’t always start with big campaigns — it often starts with a conversation, a familiar face, and a trusted space.

By embedding support directly within the heart of the community, this work is helping to normalise conversations, reduce isolation, and strengthen the protective connections that keep people well.

Why Mental Fitness Sessions in Primary Schools Matter for Our Young People



7 - Image of School Classroom

Supporting the mental health of children isn't just a compassionate choice, it's a strategic investment in their development, resilience, and future wellbeing – it's why Mikeysline's Mental Fitness Sessions in primary schools are so vital.

The charity's Development Manager, Jemma Galbraith, explains: "Our young people benefit enormously from learning small, positive actions that enable them to take to control when big emotions start to rise to the surface. By helping children build age-appropriate coping skills, we're equipping them with practical tools that not only reinforce empowerment but allow them to take ownership of their emotional wellbeing early in life."

Mikeysline's sessions involve team members visiting local primary schools, teaching useful strategies that young people can harness when experiencing emotional distress in challenging environments.

Jemma says "Children thrive when they feel supported, valued, and connected, especially in the classroom. These sessions normalise conversations about emotions, teach empathy, and encourage peer support - fostering a culture where children look out for one another and understand the power of kindness and inclusion."

Mikeysline's Mental Fitness Sessions aren't just a helpful addition to school life – they're a critical part of shaping emotionally healthy futures for our young people. By nurturing self-awareness, strengthening social support networks, and contributing to system-wide mental health improvement, these sessions represent meaningful progress toward a healthier, more resilient Highlands.

“Improving youth mental health is not only about individual change, it’s about everyone coming together to create an open narrative around mental health and breaking down the stigma attached to it.

By supporting primary schools through our sessions, we’re helping lay the foundation for a generation better equipped to navigate challenges with confidence and compassion.”

Mental Health Delivery Group In person event – Action for All in Highland

On 11th November members of the Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group plus associated steering group members were invited to attend an in person planning afternoon to review and revise our current workplan.

It was also attended by a wide range of different services and providers in the area who were able to promote the service they provide in a marketplace setting.



8 - Image of Banners at Mental Health Awareness day

The Highland Mental Health Delivery Group consists of an overarching group that receives reports and brings representatives from the nine steering groups as well as other relevant partner representation together. This is the MHDG co-ordination group. There are an additional nine steering groups that consider specific themes or groups and consist of services and organisations that are involved in that specific area of work. The diagram below gives a visual outline of what this looks like.



9 - Image of Mental Health Delivery Group Structure

During the event we had time to reflect on our current activity and to review how to best develop to ensure that we are meeting defined priorities across Highland.

The results were then discussed at our most recent MHDG meeting as well as at the various steering groups.

Our 4 areas that were highlighted include:

1. Resilience – what is it and what is the role of the MHDG in supporting it. How can the partnership support work at both local and regional level in supporting building capacity and community and service resilience.
2. Communications – we have a Communication and Engagement group and they support the development of this quarterly newsletter amongst other things but is there more focussed work that we need to do around this to ensure that people know where to find information and that it is accessible.
3. The Voice of Lived Experience- our members are already involved in lots of work around this so our first task is to gather this information to ensure that we know where it is being captured and how it can be used to influence or impact on the work of this group
4. Data – we have a group looking at this but are we making best use of the available data to inform our actions and priorities. If you are interested in being involved in any of this or want to comment on it then we would love to hear from you. Email: nhsh.healthimprovementtraining@nhs.scot

Role of the Mental Health Delivery Group

The MHDG is one of 3 regional sub groups of the [Highland Community Planning Partnership](#) (HCPP). The partnership brings together public agencies, third sector organisations and other key community groups to work collaboratively with the people of Highland to deliver better outcomes.

Other regional groups:

- [Poverty Reduction](#)
- [Community Safety and Resilience](#)

Aim: All people in Highland will benefit from good mental health and wellbeing.

This multi agency group is chaired by Cathy Steer, Head of Health Improvement NHS Highland and is committed to

- Sharing best practice, ideas and resources, avoiding duplication of effort
- Act as a coordinating group for delivery of the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention priorities including the Creating Hope Together in Highland action plan.
- Developing an action plan that reflects identified need as highlighted via services from people with lived experience and from data provided both nationally and locally
- Ensuring the people around the virtual table represent the range of activities and services from communities across all [9 local community partnership areas](#).

Highland Change, Loss & Bereavement Booklist in local or school libraries operated by High Life, or use BorrowBox to borrow online.



The poster is for CLB Highland and features a tree logo with the text 'CLB Highland www.clbhighland.com'. It includes a QR code and the text 'Stories have power... These ones gently help us to make sense of loss and change. Explore more on our website (Scan here)'. Below this, it says 'Find the Highland Change, Loss & Bereavement Booklist in local or school libraries operated by High Life, or use BorrowBox to borrow online.' The booklist is presented in an open book format with two columns: 'Borrow in the Library' and 'Borrow Online'. The bottom section says 'Find out more about the Highland Change, Loss & Bereavement Group and our wider Booklist on our website: www.clbhighland.com (for children, young people and families)'. Logos for The Highland Council, highlife, Highland Community Planning Partnership, Crocus Highland, and The Archibald Foundation are at the bottom.

CLB Highland
www.clbhighland.com

Stories have power...
These ones gently help us to make sense of loss and change.
Explore more on our website (Scan here)

Find the Highland Change, Loss & Bereavement Booklist in local or school libraries operated by High Life, or use BorrowBox to borrow online.

Borrow in the Library	Borrow Online
• The Invisible String • Badger's Parting Gifts • The Huge Bag of Worries • Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine • Mum and Dad Glue • There May Be a Castle • Dustbin Baby • I Have a Question About Death • Red Chocolate Elephants • A Handbook of Children's Grief	• The Memory Trees • Badger's Parting Gifts • The Invisible String • Dustbin Baby • A Monster Calls • When I'm Gone • I'll Take Care of You • Butterfly Brain • Let's Talk about When Someone Dies

Find out more about the Highland Change, Loss & Bereavement Group and our wider Booklist on our website:
www.clbhighland.com
(for children, young people and families)

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

highlife
na gaidhealtachd

Highland Community Planning Partnership

Crocus Highland

The Archibald Foundation
We're here for you

Change, Loss and Bereavement working group in Highland led by Highland Council and working with other partners in Health, Social care and Education as well as Archies and Crocus are pleased to announce that, following a successful bid to the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme, we have provide all 44 public and 16 school libraries within the High Life Highland network with [physical copies](#) of ten carefully selected books that explore themes of change, loss, and bereavement. These titles include: *Red Chocolate Elephants, There May Be a Castle, Dustbin Baby, The Invisible String, Badger's Parting Gifts, I Have a Question About Death, The Huge Bag of Worries, Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine, Mum and Dad Glue, and A Handbook of Children's Grief.*

In addition to the physical collection, a digital selection of titles is also available via [BorrowBox](#), thanks to the support of the High Life Highland Libraries team. These include *The Memory Trees, Badger's Parting Gifts, The Invisible String, Dustbin Baby, A Monster Calls, When I'm Gone, I'll Take Care of You, Butterfly Brain, and Let's Talk About When Someone Dies.*

Stories can play a vital role in helping children make sense of these experiences, offering comfort, normalising grief, and supporting emotional wellbeing in a way that is accessible and age-appropriate.

Our existing [CLB Booklist](#) continues to be a key resource and will be recommended alongside the newly funded titles. What sets the CLB Booklist apart is its broader focus, not only on bereavement, but also on the many forms of change and loss that children and young people may experience, such as family separation, moving home, or transitions in care. This makes it a unique and inclusive tool for supporting emotional wellbeing.

Kooth



11 - Kooth Logo

We are really sorry to inform you that from 01/04/2026 Kooth will no longer be available within Highland. We greatly appreciate all the support in signposting young people to our platform, without your help we could never have reached so many young people. Last year alone, we provided nearly 1,400 hours of support, without waiting lists or referral. We wish you all the best in your endeavors.

Species on the Edge: Supporting Wellbeing Through Nature and Creativity



12 - Drawing of butterfly



13 - Hand crafted butterfly

Improved wellbeing is both a motivation and an outcome for many adult learners. At Brora Learning Zone, improved wellbeing is a central objective of our latest social enterprise project. *Species on the Edge* demonstrates how creativity, connection and conservation can come together to support people's wellbeing, confidence and sense of purpose.

Many of the learners involved are referred through community mental health services with the express intention of supporting their recovery. The project provides a supportive, welcoming environment where participants can build routine, develop skills and reconnect — with themselves, with others and with the natural world.

Through creative workshops, learners research and “champion” two coastal wildlife species that are currently under threat in the Highlands. Using digital tools to gather photographs and information to inform original artwork and written content for greetings cards and merchandise which are then sold to generate funding for future learning projects. This

process encourages focus, teamwork and creativity, while gently building digital, communication and enterprise skills.



14 - Drawing of Butterfly



15 - 2 People on the computer smiling

Alongside the indoor creative work, participants benefit from time outdoors. The project includes plans to develop a small butterfly and bee garden at Brora Learning Zone, giving learners hands-on opportunities to garden, work collaboratively and experience the therapeutic effects of being in nature. In May, the group will take part in a coastal butterfly walk to look for the rare Small Blue as it emerges — an activity that combines light physical movement, fresh air and shared achievement.

The conservation theme is delivered in partnership with the wider *Species on the Edge* initiative, and learners are contributing by raising awareness of 18 vulnerable coastal species. Their artwork will form part of a public exhibition, and some merchandise will be stocked by Historylinks Museum's gift shop. Some proceeds will help fund plants for the new wildlife garden and sustain the social enterprise through the production of seed cards, bee hotels and other environmentally friendly products.

For some learners, involvement also contributes towards Adult Achievement Awards, providing formal recognition of their progress.

By placing wellbeing first — and using conservation and creativity as the vehicle — this project shows how community-based initiatives can foster resilience, build confidence and create meaningful connections, while also making a positive contribution to the local environment.

Trish Matthews

Co-ordinator, Brora Learning Zone