



STANDING UP  
FOR SCOTLAND'S  
**MENTAL  
HEALTH**



**SAMH Local Councillor Guide**

# MENTAL HEALTH IN SCOTLAND



**It is estimated around one in four people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.**



**Around one in 20 people experience suicidal thoughts.**

This equates to around 273,000 people which is enough people to fill Hampden five times.



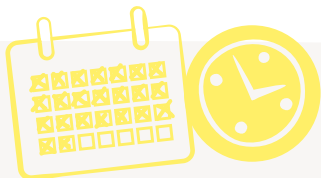
**Two people die by suicide every day.**

In 2020, 807 people died by suicide in Scotland.



**People living in the most deprived areas in Scotland are twice as likely to experience a mental health problem**

and are nearly 4 times more likely to die by suicide than those in the least deprived.



# 16.34%

of adults in 2021 had to wait longer than four months for their first appointment with psychological therapies.

In the same year, **just over a quarter**

# 26.71%

of children and young people had to **wait over four months** for their first appointment at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

**Just under a quarter** (23.44%) of children and young people were **rejected from support from CAMHS**.

**One third** of Scottish adults **do not meet the moderate or vigorous physical activity (MVPA) guidelines**. Adults who do meet the guidelines have higher mental wellbeing than those who don't.

**Over a third of the Scottish workforce has been diagnosed with a mental health problem.**

## ABOUT SAMH

Around since 1923, SAMH currently operates over 60 services in communities across Scotland. These services together with our national programme work in See Me, respectme, suicide prevention, sport and physical activity; inform our policy and campaign work to influence positive social change.

Whether it is through our national campaigns, our policy work or our service delivery, we are active in your local area. We are also a reliable source of policy and statistical information on mental health.

You can use this resource to find out how we are supporting people and for key mental health statistics in Scotland.

If you would like information about mental health in your local area, please contact

**PublicAffairs@samh.org.uk**  
**or call 0141 530 1080.**



# SAMH'S LOCAL MANIFESTO

For far too long, people with mental health problems have been struggling to cope without the right support.


SAMH is calling on every local authority to stand up for their area's mental health by ensuring they have a well-evidenced mental health strategy in place that puts people with lived experience at its centre and delivers the following:

## PERSON-CENTRED COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT FOR EVERYONE

At SAMH, we hear every day about the challenges people face accessing care and treatment for their mental health. In Scotland, about one in six adults need to wait longer than four months for their first appointment with the NHS, but some will need to wait even longer. By working with NHS Boards and Integration Authorities in your local area, you can expand psychological wellbeing support within the third and voluntary sector.

People consistently tell SAMH they value peer support highly because of the way it helps them to build trusting relationships with someone who has been through what they have. This can be key to someone's mental health recovery and is especially important for people who may not have personal support networks.

**As a local councillor, you can work with Health and Social Care Partnerships to commission mental health peer support services in your area to increase the provision of this type of support.**



Many people with mental health problems receive vital support from social care providers like SAMH. Social care in Scotland is generally viewed positively; however, people in our services told us they have experienced a number of barriers to accessing it, including complicated application processes and a lack of choice in support available. These are issues which we hope to see addressed in the new National Care Service, with good local mental health at the heart of it. In the meantime, we're urging local authorities to work with integration authorities to take a long-term and strategic approach to commissioning now, which ensures decisions are based on people's needs, social care contracts are offered on a five-year minimum basis and third sector organisations are involved in the design of services.

Community Link Workers (CLW) play a vital role in connecting people to support for their mental health that's available locally, including social prescribing opportunities, psychological wellbeing services, debt advice and employability support. With funding from the Scottish Government, integration authorities determine how and where CLWs are used.

**You can work with integration authorities to ensure there is a Community Link Worker available in every GP surgery in your area.**





## COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Too many young people experience barriers to accessing support and treatment for their mental health through the NHS due to long waiting times and high levels of rejected referrals.

The support CAMHS provides is important, but it shouldn't be the only option. We want to see more support available in the community to ensure more children and young people get connected to local support as soon as they need it.


In the 2022–23 Scottish Government budget, £30 million was allocated to local authorities for new local Community Wellbeing Services for children and young people aged 5–24.

**With this investment, you can work with integration authorities to expand and enhance community-based support for children's mental health and include sustainable funding of these services in your local financial plan.**



The introduction of school counselling in all secondary schools has been a positive first step to expanding local support. However, we know from our work in schools that there have been problems accessing these services due to the demand for counsellors outstripping capacity.

**As a local councillor, you can ensure school counselling services are adequately resourced to meet demand.**








## SUICIDE PREVENTION PLANS AND BETTER SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE IN DISTRESS

On average two people a day die by suicide in Scotland.


In 2020 alone, 805 people lost their life to suicide. While suicide affects all communities, we know that particular groups are at increased risk. Men are around three times more likely to die by suicide than women, and suicide is also strongly linked to poverty. Working with local partners, local authorities can produce an evidence-based local suicide prevention plan that brings together the expertise of agencies with a role in reducing suicide with the voices of people with lived experience of suicide.

**COSLA has developed guidance to support the development and delivery of local suicide prevention plans, which we would urge local authorities to make use of.**



The Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) model is a local programme being rolled out nationally which supports people experiencing distress. Through the programme, frontline responders, such as the police, provide initial support to someone in crisis or distress. Following this initial contact, a trained professional from a third sector provider, like SAMH, will provide personalised support within 24 hours. This model is currently being piloted in four areas in Scotland with a national service available through NHS24.

**We're calling on local authorities to develop a DBI service in partnership with the NHS and third sector in your area.**








## ENSURES THE RIGHTS OF THOSE RECEIVING COMPULSORY MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Mental Health Officers (MHO) are specially trained social workers who provide important safeguards when someone needs to receive compulsory treatment for their mental health. Under current mental health law, doctors seeking to detain someone in hospital for their mental health should seek the consent of an MHO. However, fewer than 50% of emergency detentions received MHO consent in 2020–21 meaning that many people are being deprived of their liberty without the safeguard of MHO consent.

In 2020, 23 out of Scotland's 32 local authorities reported a staffing shortfall in available MHOs.

**As a local councillor, you have responsibility over recruitment, training and retention of MHOs and can work to address workforce gaps as a matter of urgency.**







## IMPROVES ACCESS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

At SAMH, we recognise the positive impact of physical activity on mental health and wellbeing.

Even small amounts of physical activity can help to reduce stress and symptoms of depression, while also boosting self-esteem. However, in Scotland, one third of adults don't currently meet the daily guidelines for moderate or vigorous physical activity, and people with mental health problems tend to be less active than those without.

Under Scottish law, local authorities have a responsibility to provide recreational and sporting opportunities to residents. From running leisure facilities to funding local sporting organisations, you can champion the power of physical activity and sport in your area.

Originally launched in 2018, SAMH launched Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport which aims to improve equality and reduce discrimination for anyone with a mental health problem. In particular, it seeks to ensure there is no barrier to engaging, participating and achieving physical activity and sport.

Over 400 sporting organisations across Scotland have signed up to the Charter pledging to develop inclusive policies and practices to ensure a positive and welcoming environment for all. In May 2022, we launched the next step of the Charter by creating new materials and resources designed for clubs and community organisations to support people with mental health problems into sport.

**You can ensure your local authority is signed up to Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport and make signing the Charter a condition for local organisations receiving local funding or leasing locally run leisure facilities.**






## INCREASES MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Despite progress made in recent years, we know that stigma and discrimination continue to exist in some communities, schools and workplaces.


In research by Scotland's anti-stigma programme, See Me, only 40% of people surveyed would be willing to speak to their manager or HR department about their mental health. More needs to be done to support people to be mentally healthy at work and in education.



**As a local councillor, you can ensure all local authority staff, including school staff, receive mental health training to help create a mentally healthy workplace.**

Suicide prevention training is an essential tool in tackling stigma around suicide, providing people with the tools to talk confidently about suicide and empowering people to intervene when they are concerned someone is at risk. Training packages licensed in Scotland, such as ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and safeTALK, have strong evidence bases showing they are effective. The Scottish Government has committed to double the number of ASIST and safeTALK trainers, but we need to ensure training is offered across our communities in areas that target those most risk at suicide. People living in Scotland's deprived areas are three times more likely to die by suicide.

**Local authorities can provide local funding opportunities for mental health and suicide prevention training.**





You can read our full local manifesto and find SAMH's most up to date policy documents at [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)



# SAMH SERVICES

SAMH is Scotland's mental health charity. We're here for your mental health and wellbeing by providing local mental health support and always accessible information. We listen to what matters in each local community, and campaign nationally for the changes that make the big and little differences in life. Now more than ever, we need to make change happen.

**To find out about the services we have available in your local area, visit [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk) or email [PublicAffairs@samh.org.uk](mailto:PublicAffairs@samh.org.uk)**

We also run national mental health services which help people across the country including:

- ◆ **The SAMH Information Service** provides information and support on mental health. Whether you're seeking support, are looking for more information for you or someone you love, or just want to have a chat about mental health, we're here.

Talk to the team on 0344 800 0550 or email [info@samh.org.uk](mailto:info@samh.org.uk) – we're open 9am – 6pm, Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays).

- ◆ **Time for You** is an online and virtual mental health support service, providing help for frontline workers across Scotland during the pandemic. Time for You offers access to three different levels of mental health support for workers affected by the pandemic, ranging from self-help resources, to access to talking therapies with psychologist trainee PhD students. Key workers can register for the service on the SAMH website.



## CONTACT SAMH

You can read about our campaigns and find out more about our work at [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk).

We welcome you to contact the Public Affairs team if you would like any further information about the work we do at SAMH, facts or statistics on mental health, or to arrange a meeting.

**Please direct all enquiries to:**  
**[PublicAffairs@samh.org.uk](mailto:PublicAffairs@samh.org.uk)**  
**0141 530 1080**

## ABOUT US

Around since 1923, SAMH is Scotland's national mental health charity. Today, in over 60 communities we work with adults and young people providing mental health social care support, services in primary care, schools and further education, among others. These services together with our national programme work in See Me, respectme, suicide prevention and active living; inform our policy and campaigning work to influence positive social change.

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for Scotland's mental health

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