

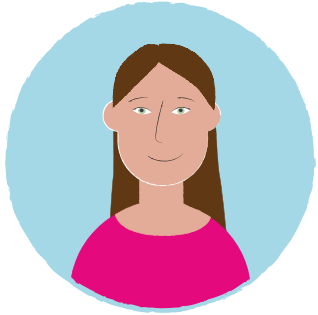
# Strategy 2021-24



for Scotland's mental health

[samh.org.uk](http://samh.org.uk)

# WELCOME



Hello, I'm Emma and I'm a part of the Workplace team here at SAMH.

I am the voice of our 2021-24 strategy animation, which sets out our plans for the next three years.

If you haven't seen it already, you can watch it [here](#).

I'm so proud to be part of SAMH, because I see first hand dedication, and a desire to make Scotland a better place for people with mental health problems.

Every day, we have teams reaching people all over the country.

We are also always thinking ahead. And so, we have a lot planned for the next three years.

The next stage in our journey means we will be able to reach more people than ever before.

Whether that's by being there when you need support, at the first time of asking, helping people to have open conversation around mental health or supporting more employers to build brilliant, safe places to work.

The last 18 months have been really hard for us all, but we hope that brighter days are coming.

I know that SAMH will be there for all of us, every step of the way.

We Won't Wait is the story of our new strategy, and so I hope you will find this document helpful to understand where we are going.

At SAMH we'll continue to make sure that we can be there for anyone who needs us.

I'm looking forward to being a part of that journey.

**Emma Manley**  
Workplace Services Manager, SAMH

## At SAMH we believe:

- ➡ People create change when they are supported, empowered, confident and respected
- ➡ Good mental health is only possible when we have choice and hope
- ➡ Anyone who asks should get help fast

# WHERE WE ARE

SAMH is here for Scotland's mental health. We have been ever since we were formed, almost 100 years ago.

Our evolution is set to continue, as you will see in our new strategy, We Won't Wait.

Over the last strategic period we've tested innovations, reshaped services, and made progress on key campaigns.

We also know from partners and people who use our services, that we are trusted, and seen as a leading mental health organisation in Scotland.

Our community services are at the heart of everything that we do. From therapeutic horticulture, to supported accommodation and employability - we reach thousands of people every day.

In 2019 we launched our new and improved SAMH Information Service to provide people with accurate and accessible information on mental health.

We've led on pioneering projects using the power of sport to reach new groups.

For example, The Changing Room engages football fans in their middle years, at professional football clubs to encourage positive conversations around mental health.

We stand up too.

We empower people with lived experience of mental health problems, by listening and learning from them.

This enables us to explore solutions, and develop services centred around people.

Through campaigning and direct engagement with decision makers, we've driven real results.

There's an awful lot more to do, not least as we recover from the pandemic. We believe SAMH is in a strong place to play our part.



**At SAMH we will always:**

- ➔ Be there for people, where and when they need us
- ➔ Promote good mental health
- ➔ Campaign to end stigma and discrimination
- ➔ Challenge inequality

# SAMH IN NUMBERS



**9,141** people were supported through SAMH community services in 2021



**5,000** people have received support from the SAMH Information Service in 2021



In 2021, our digital information resources were downloaded **34,096** times



Our dedicated coronavirus mental health information hub was accessed **76,534** times in 2021



Thanks to our partnership with jogscotland, by 2020 **1,000** Jog Leaders received mental health training



Our 2021 Scottish Parliament election campaign influenced promises made by each of the major parties



Our e-learning teacher resource 'We All Have Mental Health' was accessed by **12,510** people



In 2021, we delivered 393 workplace wellbeing sessions engaging **4,350** participants



**83%** of people trust SAMH, according to recent brand research



# WE LISTEN

## How we've built our strategy

Statistics and figures help to paint a picture of mental health in Scotland. But to develop our plans for the next three years we've taken a deeper dive, to really understand what needs to change.

Central to this strategy is lived experience.

People who live with mental health problems are all too often not heard. It's vital that their voices and experiences are embedded into everything that we do.

That's why we've asked people what they think of SAMH, what they need, and what we need to do more.

It's important that the views of our staff are included too. They provide valuable insight into the realities for people living with mental health problems.

There is a lot of work to be done, to fulfill our ambition for Scotland's mental health.

This engagement has really shaped the direction we are going, and has allowed us to focus on a series of key priorities.

### What we've been doing

Over the last year we have undertaken over 7,000 engagements. This has included:

- ➔ The largest ever review of our brand. This gathered views from service users, staff, supporters, stakeholders, Trustees and the public. We examined our key priorities now and in the future, trust in what we do and people's motivation to support the cause
- ➔ Consultation events across Scotland speaking to people about the issues affecting them
- ➔ A series of staff forums hearing from the frontline about what matters most to the people we support



# NOW MORE THAN EVER

## A pandemic recovery for everyone

The last 18 months have been really tough for us all.

It's created so much uncertainty and changed how we all live our lives. Sadly, many of us have faced unimaginable loss too.

What we also know is that the pandemic impacted those with existing mental health problems, to a significant degree.

Demand for mental health information and support was also at an all time high, and it became harder than ever to put our wellbeing first.

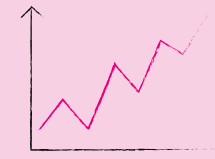
But here's the thing, long before the pandemic the Scottish mental health system was under strain. Now more than ever we need to see change.

Yes, better days are coming, but good mental health is only possible when we have choice and hope.



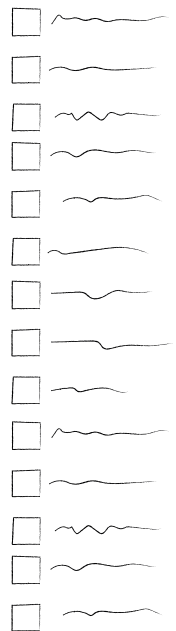
## FORGOTTEN?

Our research showed that almost half of people with mental health problems in Scotland felt they did not get care or treatment because of the pandemic.



## Increased demand

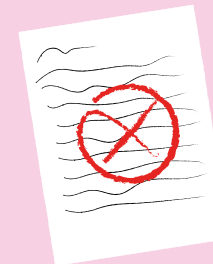
Over the course of the pandemic, the SAMH Information Service saw a significant increase in demand, with almost 1,500 additional callers compared to the previous year, close to a 50% increase.



## Indeterminate waits

One in five adults wait more than 18 weeks for support.

The Scottish Government standard states that 90% of people should start their treatment within 18 weeks of referral to psychological therapies. In 2021, no territorial NHS health boards met that standard.



## Rejected referrals

Almost one in four young people are rejected when they ask for help.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are under strain. Targets set by the Scottish Government are consistently missed, meaning many families get turned away, or wait months to access support.

# WE WON'T WAIT

## Our 2021-24 strategy

Too many promises and a pandemic later, thousands of people are still being left behind.

Simply put, it is not good enough.

So here's the deal. We won't wait.

We are stepping up, so that SAMH can reach everyone who needs us.

Yes, we will challenge inequalities, because people with severe and long term mental health problems live much shorter lives and this is unacceptable. Scotland needs a proper mental health service, and we'll hold decision makers to account.

We value the power of partnership, and so will continue to work collaboratively by learning from others and sharing too.

Our approach to care and support will be redesigned to better support people and communities to recover.

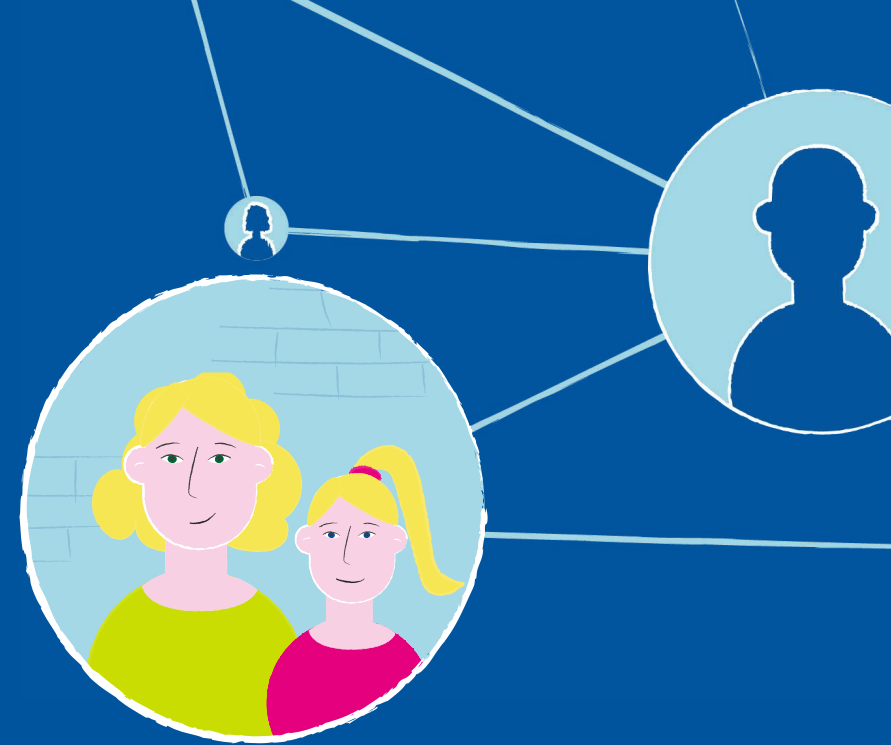
We will speak out and help you to do that too, because talking can - and will - save lives.

We are going to help Scotland's employers create brilliant, safe places to work.

Stigma has no place in our society. We'll campaign relentlessly to ensure that we're all on the same side when it comes to mental health.

We'll also help people to see for themselves that the power of physical activity and sport is unbeatable.

And we're ready to step up for our children and young people like Olivia, who should be able to get help when they need it.



## Olivia and Siobhan's story

"Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was just one obstacle after another. They didn't keep us updated throughout the referral process, and we were refused access to the service twice.

"If someone had spoken to Olivia at the beginning, recognised that she was in severe emotional distress and triaged her to the right place...we could have all been saved two years of hell."

-Siobhan, Olivia's mum



## Lawrence's story

"Just before the start of lockdown I was due to have my appointment with my psychiatrist but I hadn't heard anything.

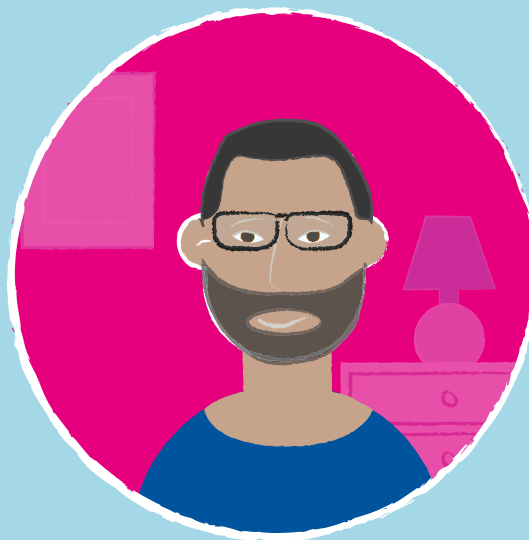
"I chased this over the phone and was told it had been cancelled and I would receive a letter, but that never arrived.

"At this point I had also been on the waiting list for counselling for almost a year."

The majority  
of Scottish workers

# 51%

believe that their  
employer could do more  
to support mental health

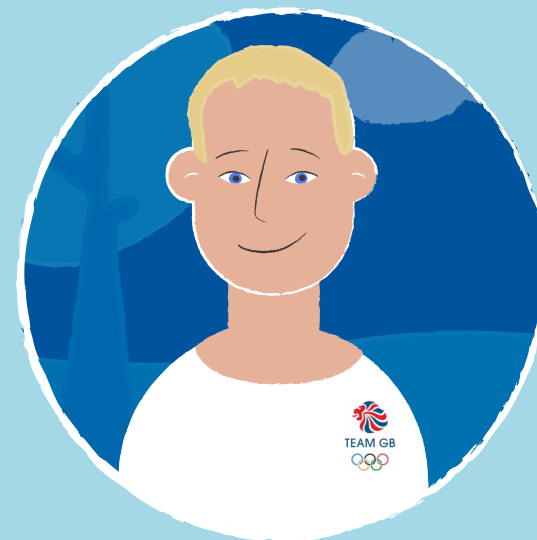


## Imran's story

"After my suicide attempt, someone actually came to my hospital bedside to offer me support. I couldn't believe that I had to end up in this state for someone to finally take notice.

"With help from SAMH, I slowly and steadily started to build up my self-respect, self-confidence and self-esteem.

"Now I have the greatest family, the greatest job and the greatest life I ever thought I could have. My confidence is so high and I now feel there is nothing that is beyond my reach."

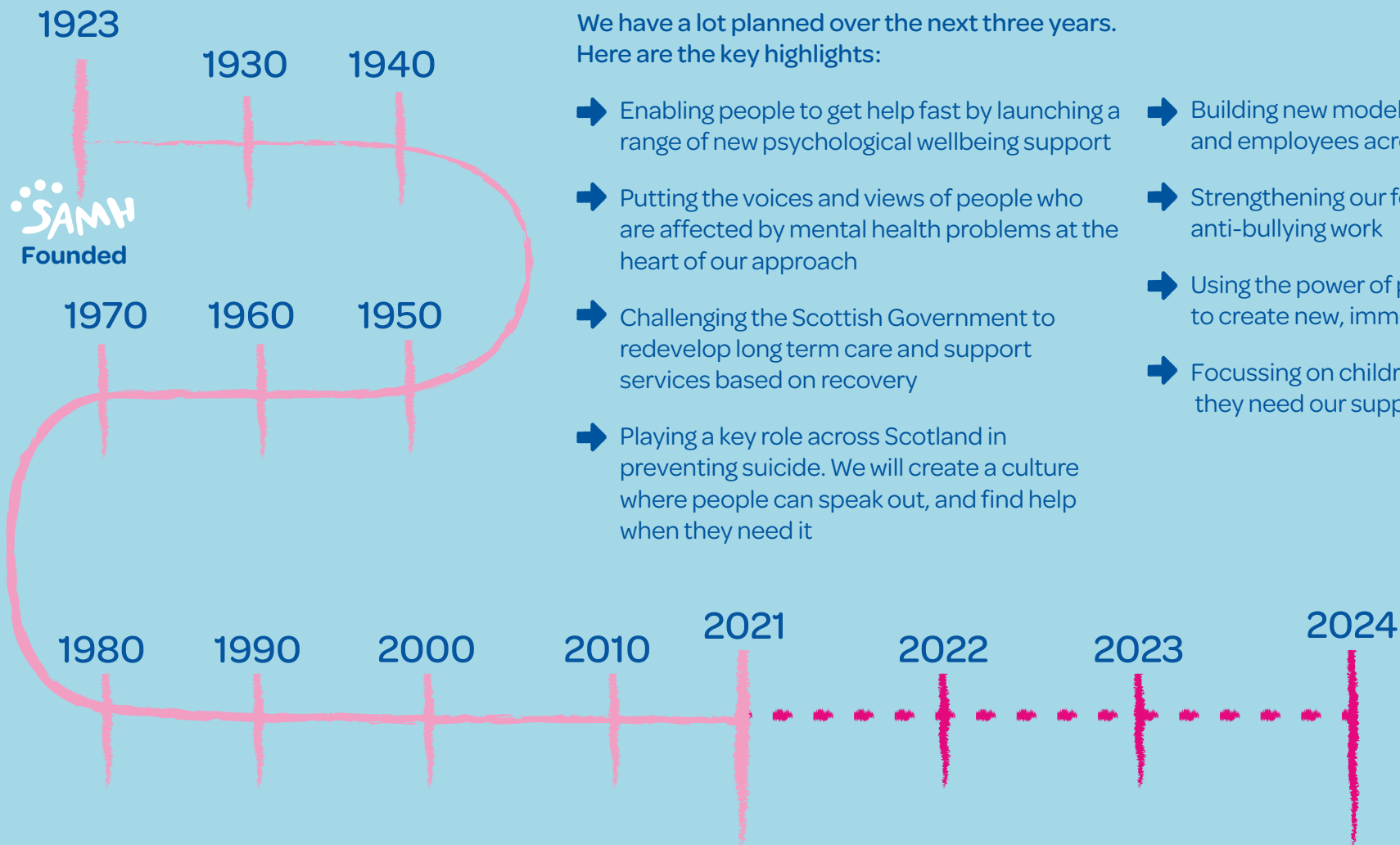


## We work together

In 2019 with the help of our Ambassador, Sir Chris Hoy, we launched a strategic partnership with sportscotland.

Our aim is to build a lasting infrastructure of mental health awareness and support for sporting organisations. By 2021, 400 Active Schools Co-ordinators have been trained in how to have a conversation about mental health.

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US



We have a lot planned over the next three years.  
Here are the key highlights:

- ➔ Enabling people to get help fast by launching a range of new psychological wellbeing support
- ➔ Putting the voices and views of people who are affected by mental health problems at the heart of our approach
- ➔ Challenging the Scottish Government to redevelop long term care and support services based on recovery
- ➔ Playing a key role across Scotland in preventing suicide. We will create a culture where people can speak out, and find help when they need it
- ➔ Building new models to support employers and employees across the country
- ➔ Strengthening our focus on anti-stigma and anti-bullying work
- ➔ Using the power of physical activity and sport to create new, immersive programmes
- ➔ Focussing on children and young people; they need our support more than ever before

# TRIED, TESTED AND TRUSTED

SAMH CEO, Billy Watson



I'm proud that for almost a century, SAMH has been there for Scotland's mental health.

However, the last 18 months have possibly been the most challenging times we can remember.

Even before the pandemic, Scotland's mental health system wasn't working for many thousands of people.

As you've read in the stories we've shared, many people face endless waiting times, and thousands of families are left with nowhere to turn.

We will continue to stand up and speak out. But now it's time for more.

The next three years will be pivotal for Scotland's mental health recovery, so we've designed our new strategy to be the most ambitious we have produced in a generation.

Many of you know who we are and we want to make sure that we can support you and others in your communities even more in the years ahead. That means we will work tirelessly so that everyone should be able to ask once and get help fast.

In the face of a mental health emergency, we're stepping up, so that SAMH can reach everyone that needs us.

**We Won't Wait.**

A stylized, handwritten signature of Billy Watson in white ink. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style, with the first letter 'B' being particularly large and prominent. It is positioned below the text 'We Won't Wait.' and above the printed name and title.

Billy Watson  
Chief Executive, SAMH

# References

Public Health Scotland, [CAMHS in Scotland: Waiting Times; Quarter Ending 30 June 2021](#), 2021

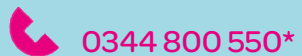
Public Health Scotland, [Psychological Therapies Waiting Times: Quarter ending 30 June 2021](#), 2021

SAMH, [Demand for mental health information doubles during pandemic](#), 2021

SAMH, [Forgotten? Mental Health Care and Treatment During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#), 2021

SAMH, [Research finds work more stressful since start of pandemic](#), 2020





SAMH is the Scottish Association for Mental Health, Scottish Charity No. SC008897.

Registered Office: Brunswick House, 51 Wilson Street, Glasgow G1 1UZ.

SAMH is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland No. 82340

\*The SAMH Information Service is open 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays). Calls charged at local rates, charges from mobile telephones vary considerably. If you need to speak to someone urgently, or require a listening or crisis service, please visit [samh.org.uk/seekingsupport](https://samh.org.uk/seekingsupport).