

**Show Up:**

**A mental health stigma  
and discrimination  
campaign from SAMH**

**Stakeholder toolkit**

## Overview

Tackling stigma is in SAMH's roots. Back in 1923, Dr Kate Fraser – our founder – challenged the way mental illness was perceived and treated, and it's been a consistent thread running through our work ever since.

While progress has been made in breaking down stigma in recent years – with increasing numbers of people talking openly and honestly about their mental wellbeing – there's still a long way to go.

Mental illness has been sidelined and ignored, in the public discourse and, too often, by the mental health system. That's why we're determined to do more to fight stigma and discrimination, so that people with mental illness are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Our new campaign, **Show Up**, isn't (just) about raising awareness, it is about inspiring action.

Delivered over the next few years, with a phased approach focusing on the areas where change is needed most, we want to help end mental health stigma and discrimination.

**Are you with us?**



**SAMH**  
Scottish Action for Mental Health

## Show Up

In developing this campaign, we spoke to people with lived experience of mental illness. And the same message appeared time and again – when someone is living with mental illness, the world around them can disappear.

It makes people feel less seen, less valued, and less connected at the very moment they need the opposite.

With this campaign, our ambition is for a Scotland that's doesn't disappear when mental illness shows up.

**Call to action: Show Up. Don't Disappear.**

### The campaign

[Show Up](#) is a multi-phased campaign which will run for the next three years.

The first phase is launching alongside our [2026 election manifesto](#) and is focused on mental illness.

We are calling on the next Scottish Government to take urgent action to ensure that people with mental illness are not dying as the result of a healthcare system that too often discriminates against them.

We are doing this through a [public digital action](#) which sends an email to election candidates with our key asks.



## Key messages

- People with mental illness die on average 15 years earlier than the general population because of physical ill-health and preventable diseases which are routinely overlooked or dismissed. This injustice needs to end.
- SAMH is calling on the next Scottish Government to take urgent action to ensure people with mental illness are not dying as a result of a healthcare system that too often discriminates against them.
- Specifically, the campaign calls for people with mental illness to have access to:
  - Annual physical health checks designed specifically to catch those issues which are regularly missed
  - Improved access to tailored healthy lifestyle programmes
  - Action to reduce the disproportionate number of people with mental illness living in poverty, including dedicated employment support and a fair social security system.
- Even as conversations about mental wellbeing have become more common, the reality for those living with mental illness has not changed nearly enough.
- When you live with mental illness, it can feel like the world slowly disappears around you, and this is particularly evident in the healthcare system. SAMH is determined to do more to fight stigma and discrimination, and to show up for people who are living with mental illness.

You can **Show Up** with SAMH by asking your local election candidates to support the campaign.



## Planned activity

### Digital action

In the run-up to the election, we are hoping to galvanise our campaigners, old and new, by encouraging them to contact their local election candidate asking them to support the campaign.

[Take action here.](#)

### Launch day event

We launched the campaign alongside the publication of our 2026 election manifesto on Tuesday 10 March with a media photocall outside of the Scottish Parliament.

Our Chief Executive, Billy Watson, and media volunteer Bryan took part in a giant game of stigma 'Snakes and Ladders' to illustrate the difference that suitable support can make to life expectancy for people with mental illness.

### Campaign webhub

You can find out all about the campaign and keep up to date on activities by visiting our new campaign webhub at [www.samh.org.uk/show-up](http://www.samh.org.uk/show-up)

The webhub contains information about:

- How to get involved and take action
- Practical advice on how to support someone who is living with mental illness
- Guidance on mental health rights
- Information about mental health conditions
- Stories from people with lived experience

## How you can support I

### Take the action

We'd love if you could take the campaign action, and encourage others to do the same.

### Promote the webhub

There's loads of useful information on the webhub, including practical ways to support someone living with mental illness, and information about your rights around mental health.

Please do promote this in any way you can.

### Share on social

Sharing the campaign on your social media channels is one of the best things you can do to support.

Here's some suggested copy for use on social media channels, which you can use as is, or adapt to suit:

We're supporting the Show Up campaign from SAMH, calling for urgent action to address the early and preventable deaths of people living with mental illness. This injustice needs to end. Take action today and join us as we #ShowUpWithSAMH [LINK](#)

You can also [download some graphics here](#).

If you're writing your own copy, please remember to tag us and use [#ShowUpWithSAMH](#)



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## How you can support II

### Editorial copy

If you have a newsletter or regular communication that goes to colleagues, supporters, or partners, we would love you to include the Show Up campaign.

### Here's some suggested copy:

The Show Up campaign from SAMH wants to see an end to mental health stigma and discrimination, so that people with mental illness are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Launched on 10 March 2026, the campaign is drawing attention to the early and preventable deaths of people living with mental illness. They are calling on the next Scottish Government to take urgent action to ensure people with mental illness are not dying as a result of a healthcare system that too often discriminates against them.

Specifically, they want people living with mental illness to have access to:

- Annual physical health checks designed specifically to catch those issues which are regularly missed;
- Tailored healthy lifestyle programmes; and
- Dedicated employment support and a fair social security system, to reduce the disproportionate number of people with mental illness living in poverty.

SAMH is determined to do more to fight stigma and discrimination, and to show up for people who are living with mental illness.

You can join them by contacting your local election candidate and asking them to Show Up with SAMH.

#ShowUpwithSAMH



## How you can support III

### Follow us on socials

To keep up to date on campaign activity, follow us on:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [TikTok](#)

### Share your story

People with lived experience are at the heart of our campaigns, and can bring to life the reality better than facts or statistics ever can.

If you, or someone you support, would like to share their story with us, we would love to hear from them. Stories can help influence the development of future phases of the campaign, or can be shared with our supporters or decision makers to illustrate our messages.

Get in touch with us at [campaigns@samh.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@samh.org.uk) for more information.



**SAMH**  
Scottish Action for Mental Health

# Thank you

By supporting the Show Up campaign, you're helping to end mental health stigma and discrimination in Scotland.

We can't do this alone, and are very grateful for your involvement.

If you want to chat to us about the campaign and other ways you can get involved, don't hesitate to get in touch at [campaigns@samh.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@samh.org.uk)

[#ShowUpWithSAMH](#)



