

Creating Hope in the Scottish Borders

Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention



Information Bulletin – News / Events / Resources / Training

Issue 30: December 2023 / January 2024

Upcoming awareness dates:

[Brew Monday](#) - 15th January

[Red January](#) - all of January

[Breathing Space Day](#) – 1st February

NEWS

MEMORIAL EVENT FOR PEOPLE BEREAVED BY SUICIDE

The fifth annual memorial event for people bereaved by suicide jointly organised with the After a Suicide Working Group and supported by the Samaritans, Quarriers and Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) took place on 18th November at the Cloutie Tree at the Haining in Selkirk. The event was led by Sharon Rossi an interfaith minister and there were songs from the NHS Borders Health in Harmony choir as well as a poetry reading from Tracy Harvey. The event provided an opportunity to remember those who have been lost to suicide and to connect with others who have faced a similar situation. The Cloutie Tree stands as a permanent memorial for people to visit whenever they wish. **Directions to and more information about the Cloutie Tree and support after a suicide can be found by clicking [here](#).**

NEW SERVICE FOR MENTORING PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY

A social enterprise called the Wise Group has received Scottish Government funding to provide a new service in the Borders, aimed at helping people to break the cycle of poverty through 'Relational Mentoring'. The new mentors in the Borders can provide long term support and also have access to additional support services such as counselling, home energy advice, training, skills and employability support. To be eligible, people being referred must be currently in (or at risk of) fuel poverty, live in the Borders and be willing to take part.

For further information email Katy Leigh at katy_leigh@thewisegroup.co.uk

LET'S BEAT THOSE WINTER BLUES IN RED JANUARY

Red January is a nationwide movement for mental wellbeing. As a nation we're less active in the winter, something that's often linked with lower mood, energy, and increased depressive symptoms.

RED January was started to provide everyone with a free and inclusive way to boost their activity levels and wellbeing. You can take part as an individual or with a team – you can sign up for free or choose to take part in fundraising for local movement and mental health projects around the country.

Take a step forward for yourself and others, [sign up to RED January](#) today.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO BE A WALK IT WALK LEADER?

If Red January inspires you to become more active, why not think about signing up to become a Walk It Walk Leader? The course helps you to gain the skills and confidence to lead safe, short local health walks – maybe your group or organisation could even start up a new Walk It walk for your participants or colleagues! Walk It is the Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders walking project.

The next course is on Tuesday 13th February 2024, 10.30am – 2.30pm in person at SBC Training Rooms and is free to attend.

If you are interested or require further information contact Denise Carmichael on 01835 826 702 or email denise.carmichael@scotborders.gov.uk

EVENTS

Tuesday 5th December 14:00 – 16:00

NETWORKING BLETHER – Chirside Community Centre

Meet with other local community groups, charities and social enterprises for a networking session, with presentations and Q&A sessions from Firstport/Just Enterprise and Sustainable Selkirk.

To register click [here](#).

Friday 22nd December, 1.00 – 3.00pm at the Focus Centre, Galashiels

MAKING A DIFFERENCE CHRISTMAS EVENT

The community is invited to a warm and welcoming Community Hug and Fundraising event. The event is hosted by the Focus Centre user groups, Borders Recovery Café, Works+ and Borders Additional Needs Group. The Joint Health Improvement Team will be there along with all of the family friendly festive activities – bouncy castle, face painting, dance workshop, raffle, crafts and free winter giveaways.

Various dates

HEALTH IN MIND GROUP WORK AND WORKSHOPS

Health in Mind's groupwork programme offers a safe and comfortable environment to learn more about wellbeing, reflect and consider new possibilities for the future. There are a range of different programmes from art and music to personal development and relaxation. At the moment there is a 'Winter Wellbeing Hamper' course running which explores ways to stay well over the winter.

Find out more about the group programme here: [Health in Mind | Groups and Workshops in the Scottish Borders \(health-in-mind.org.uk\)](http://health-in-mind.org.uk)

Health in Mind also has their [Listening Spaces](#) running throughout the Winter which are safe spaces where you can explore your mental health recovery. These run both online and at locations across the Borders.

Monday 15th January

SAMARITANS BREW MONDAY

The third Monday in January is sometimes referred to as 'the most difficult day of the year' but this is a myth. At Samaritans they say there's no such thing as 'Blue Monday' – we all have our good days and our bad days, and those aren't for the calendar to decide. This campaign says it's time to stop this myth about Monday being 'blue' and instead start a conversation over a brew! Reach out and connect with family, friends, colleagues and loved ones.

Find out more information about hosting your own Brew Monday by clicking [here](#)

1st Tuesday of the month, 6:30 - 8:30pm, Old Gala House

SURVIVORS OF BEREAVEMENT BY SUICIDE LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP

Contact the local Co-ordinator on 0770 4691 111 or email scottishborders@uksobs.org

Mondays - 7-9pm at Gala RFC

ANDY'S MAN CLUB

Andy's Man Club is a peer to peer support group for men (aged 18+) who have either been through a storm, are currently going through a storm or have a storm brewing in life. Andy's Man Club meets every Monday from 7pm (excluding English Bank Holidays) at Gala RFC Hospitality Suite (to the right when you enter through the gate). Find out more at <https://andysmanclub.co.uk/>

RESOURCES

COPING AND PROTECTING YOUR WELLBEING OVER WINTER

Some of us can struggle with our mental health and wellbeing during the colder months and in the run up to Christmas and New Year. It's ok to feel like you're struggling. To help, SAMH has put together [winter themed tips to protect your wellbeing](#), based on the '5 Ways to Better Wellbeing'.

The shorter days and darker evening can have an impact on mood and energy. Some people may experience Seasonal Affective Disorder which is a type of depression that comes and goes in a seasonal pattern. Here are some tips to help you beat the winter blues:

- **Get outside at lunchtime, even if only for 10-15 minutes** - starting and finishing your day in the dark will have an impact on how you feel.
- **Take a daily vitamin D supplement** – the reduced light over winter makes it harder for our bodies to get the vitamin levels that we need
- **Try and engage in regular exercise**, preferably outdoors and in daylight
- **Prioritise sleeping well** - being well rested should help with energy levels and mood
- **Make time for doing things you enjoy**, or maybe try a new hobby!
- **Say 'no' to some things if you need to** - you may need to manage your energy differently in the winter and it can be hard when more socialising is expected around the holidays.

You might also find these links helpful:

[Sleepio app to help with sleep](#)

[NHS inform: more tips for beating the winter blues](#)

[NHS inform: Seasonal Affective Disorder](#)

Eat Well and Feel Good over Winter!

Eating well, being active and keeping hydrated is really important for our physical and mental wellbeing – though it's sometimes harder to maintain healthy habits at this time of year. Help is on hand with our 'Eat Well and Feel Good' booklet which is filled with simple, nutritious recipe ideas which are budget-friendly. There are many ways that foods can affect how we feel, just as how we feel has an influence on what foods we choose. Eating a healthy varied diet and enjoying our food helps to improve our mood and maintain our energy levels.

Download the booklet here: [Eat-Well-Feel-Good-booklet-Nov23.pdf \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

Need help?

If you're struggling to cope over the winter or know someone who might be struggling, keep these contacts handy in case they're needed.



0800 83 85 87

Helpline: evenings and Weekends

www.breathingspace.scot



Text SHOUT to 85258

24/7 text service

www.giveusashout.org



116 123

14/7 Helpline

www.samaritans.org



Digital support community

24/7

www.togetherall.com



NHS 24 Mental Health Hub 111

Urgent support 24/7

www.nhsinform.scot



0800 068 41 41

Hopeline247

www.papyrus-uk.org

NEW NATIONAL SELF HARM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

A new strategy has been launched by the Scottish government, the first of its kind in the world, with the aim of tackling stigma and better supporting people who self-harm or have in the past. The Scottish government has invested £1.5m in the new strategy which aims to build national support services, improve data-sharing and evidence-gathering, and deepen the compassionate understanding of self-harm.

[Self Harm Strategy and Action Plan](#)

TRAINING

SEE ME MASTERCLASS - Turning the tide on mental health stigma and discrimination

12th December 2023, 11:00-12:00

NHS Education for Scotland and Public Health Scotland are hosting a masterclass led by See Me, Scotland's national programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, exploring the impact of mental health stigma on access to and experience of healthcare. The 1-hour online session, which will be hosted via MS Teams, provides the opportunity for those working and supporting mental health within their roles to hear a range of views from the See Me panel of experts by experience and healthcare leaders.

To register click [here](#) (registration closes 3rd Dec)

APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING (ASIST)

29th and 30th January 24 – Masons Hall, Eyemouth - click [here](#) to book

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training ASIST is a 2 day intensive, interactive and practice dominated course, aimed at enabling people to spot the risk of suicide and provide immediate help to someone at risk of suicide. In the same way that skills are needed for physical first aid, ASIST develops the skills necessary for suicide first aid.

To book onto the next course or for more information email health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk

SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - SKILLED LEVEL

All dates are in-person at Scottish Borders Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells

- Wednesday 24th January 2024: 9.00am - 1.00pm
- Tuesday 30th January 2024: 1.00pm - 5.00pm
- Wednesday 6th March 2024: 9.00am - 1.00pm
- Thursday 14th March 2024: 1.00pm - 5.00pm
- Tuesday 11th June: 1.00pm - 5.00pm
- Thursday 13th June: 9.00am - 1.00pm

This is a bespoke half day training session facilitated by Health Improvement Specialists from the NHS Borders Public Health Team. It is aimed at anybody working with children and young people who are likely to have direct and/or substantial contact with those who may be at risk of self-harm or suicide. The content is drawn from the NHS Education for Scotland Skilled Level packages for Self-harm and Suicide Prevention.

The session covers:

- Facts and trends associated with self-harm and suicide in young people;
- Common risk, protective and stress factors related to self-harm and suicide in young people;
- An awareness of the impact a sensitive, compassionate approach can achieve when discussing self-harm and suicide (using the principles of Time, Space and Compassion);
- The links between self-harm, suicidal thoughts and trauma informed practice and;
- Approaches to support including the steps involved in safety planning.

Anyone attending this training must first complete the Informed Level e-module 'Promoting children and young people's mental health and preventing self-harm and suicide' on the NHS 'TURAS' website.

Email health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk to register for one of the dates at SBC HQ:

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING INFORMATION

There are now two catalogues available on the Wellbeing point that set out the training available at the Informed, Skilled and Enhanced Levels of the Knowledge and Skills framework for Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention, one for adults and one for people working with children and young people. **You can download the Adults catalogue (PDF) [HERE](#) and the new Children and Young People's catalogue (PDF) [HERE](#).**

LIVING WORKS START SUICIDE PREVENTION MODULE self-directed learning (60 – 90 mins)

This online course is a good introduction to learning suicide prevention skills, from the provider of the ASIST course. LivingWorks Start teaches you to recognise when someone is thinking about suicide and connect them to help and support. Using a four-step model to keep someone safe from suicide, you will have the chance to practice your skills with simulated conversations. Links to safety resources and support are available throughout.

To register for a licence email health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk

GET IN TOUCH

This information bulletin was produced by Charlotte Jones, Health Improvement Specialist (Mental Health and Suicide Prevention) and Steph MacKenzie, Health Improvement Specialist (Mental Health) Joint Health Improvement Team, Public Health.

If you'd like to join our mailing list or talk to us about any of the news, events, resources or training above, you can get in touch with us by emailing health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk



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VISIT NHS BORDERS WELLBEING POINT
Find out more about improving your wellbeing
at www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/wellbeingpoint

VISIT NHS BORDERS SUICIDE PREVENTION HUB
Find out more about suicide prevention resources at
www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/suicideprevention

