



annual impact report

Change Mental Health is a registered charity SC013649.
Company Number SC088179

www.changemh.org

Contents

Overview	3 – 10
Area / Service	
Dumfries & Galloway	11
Edinburgh	13
Fife & Tayside	15
Northern	17
National Advice and Support Service	19
Distress Brief Intervention	21
Suicide Bereavement Support Service	23
Children & Young People's Programmes	25
Adult Support & Protection	26
Looking Ahead	27

annual impact report



who we are

We are Change Mental Health and our vision is a future where no one needs to face mental illness alone.

We're a national mental health charity delivering non-clinical, person-centred support to people affected by mental illness in communities across the country.

Our mission is to deliver the transformational support people need, when they need it and in ways that work for them.

We contribute to transforming society by changing attitudes, challenging stigma and influencing government to ensure a better quality of life for those affected by mental illness and their loved ones.

Courage and Commitment

We face challenges head on and we speak out when we see injustice.

Dignity and Compassion

We recognise human beings as complex, unique and all deserving of love. We reach out to others and show kindness.

Leadership

We innovate. We do the difficult things. We work in and build partnerships with others.

Lived Experience

We are committed to person-centred approaches and meaningful participation.

Integrity

We are transparent, open and honest.

annual impact report



Good mental health support starts early. That belief underpins everything we do.

This year, we've continued to focus on helping people get the right support before things reach crisis point. By offering early, preventative support that is easy to access and centred around people's own goals, we're helping individuals to self-manage their mental health confidently, to live well and stay well in their communities. We know this has better outcomes for people accessing support and reduces demand on more intensive statutory services later.

Our work is shaped by what matters most to the people we support. We take a practical, outcome-focused approach, working alongside individuals to set clear goals and take manageable steps towards them. A big part of this is empowering people to self-manage: building confidence, sharing tools and strategies and helping people feel more in control of their mental health.

Resilience doesn't develop overnight, but it can be built with the right support. Through our services, we help people strengthen their ability to cope with challenges, navigate change, and maintain their wellbeing over time.

We also know we can't do this alone. Strong partnerships are vital. By working closely with community organisations, statutory services, and local networks, we're able to offer more joined-up support and help people stay connected within their communities and peers.

At its core, our aim is simple: to support people to feel connected, capable, and supported in their everyday lives.

This report shares the impact of that work over the past year. It reflects the dedication of our staff and partners, and the trust placed in us by the people we support. We're proud of what's been achieved together and we remain committed to building on this work in the year ahead.

Together, we are building a future where early support, resilience, and community connection are the norm, not the exception.

Coleen Kelly
Director of Services



11,377 people

were supported by
Change Mental Health in
across 35 services



Change Mental
Health has **increased
its support by 13%**
over the last two years
(supporting 10,071
people in 2024).

The expansion of Distress Brief Intervention and the Community Link Worker service contracts have had a significant impact on the number of people we have supported.



annual impact report



Over the year, Change Mental Health continued to provide person-centred, non-clinical support across Scotland, helping people access support at an earlier stage and stay connected to their communities. Our support focused on early intervention and prevention, working with people to set goals, build confidence, strengthen resilience and develop tools to self-manage their mental health.

Numbers of people supported across different areas and services include:

- Distress Brief Intervention (3,661)
- Northern (2,341)
- Children and Young People's Programmes (1,994)
- National Advice and Support Service (1,435)
- Dumfries & Galloway (705)
- Edinburgh (701)
- Fife & Tayside (393)
- Suicide Bereavement Support Service (147)

Our work remains evidence-led and evidence-building, with clear impact across services:

- **98%** of service users "feel believed, respected and heard"
- **80%** of service users "have a sense of achievement through goal setting"
- **81%** of service users "now never access support from accident and emergency about their mental illness".

Additionally, the Welfare Benefits team **secured £693,746 in financial gains** for people. With the Children and Young People team reaching nearly 2,000 young people and educators through resilience and money programmes, they also delivered a well-received pilot for parents and carers.

Both instances demonstrate impact that has been built on strong partnerships and collaboration. This has generated improved links to statutory and local services, clearer referral pathways, and increased awareness of support through targeted learning sessions, including with Police Scotland.

In quality and safeguarding, we embedded improvements across the organisation, enhanced safeguarding training, and introduced SWEMWBS scoring to better evidence the difference our support can make to people's lives. Across Change Mental Health services, **we seen an average improvement of 3.58 points** in mental wellbeing scores, highlighting the value of goal-oriented, resilience-building support for the people we support.

We achieved this while working in a climate of sustained funding pressure, reduced delivery budgets and uncertainty over long-term funding.



I feel...

...satisfied with the
support I received

96%

...safe and accepted

98%

...believed, respected
and heard

98%

*This is an average across all services.

I have...

...a sense of achievement
through goal-setting

80%

...improved mental
health and wellbeing

77%

...resilience to manage
my mental health/illness

72%

*This is an average across all services.





I now...

...don't need to access
A&E about my mental
health/mental illness

81%

...don't need to access support
from the social work team about
my mental health / mental illness

75%

...don't need to go to
the GP about my mental
health / mental illness

69%

*This is an average across all services.

annual impact report



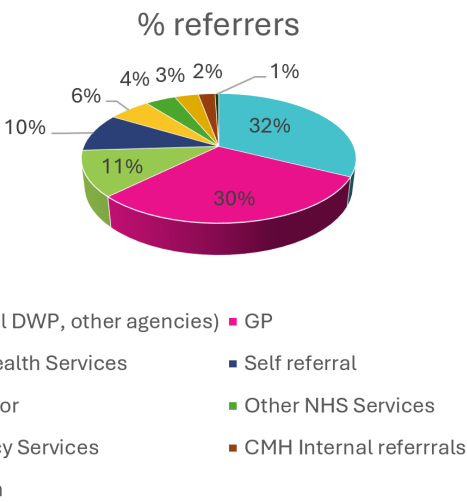
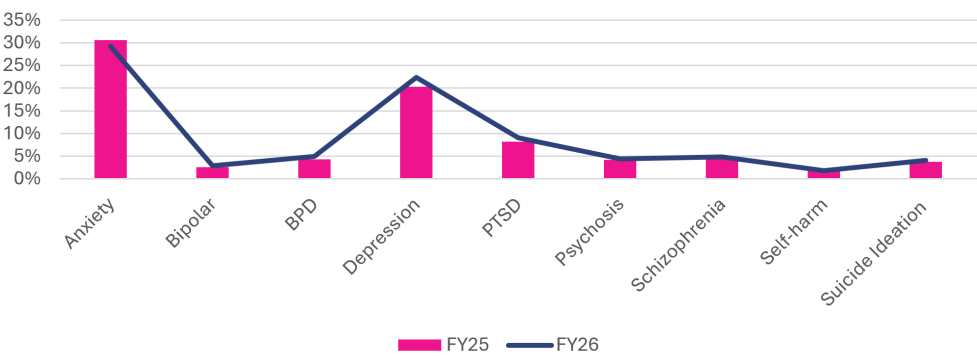
Who we supported

Across the charity, almost half of the people we supported were women aged 35-64 (33%), followed by men aged 50-64 (16%).

Of service users who chose to record their ethnic origin, 62% identified as White (English, Welsh or Scottish). This proportion increased to 88% in Northern services.

Mental illness

Data recorded in our Fife & Tayside, Northern, Edinburgh and Dumfries & Galloway services evidence that the reasons service users access support for their mental illness is consistent with last year.



Our services have several pathways to access support depending on the type of support and how it is commissioned. Offering a variety of pathways means we can provide early intervention and prevention support, leading to more holistic support, promote self-management and continue to build on strong partnerships.

annual impact report



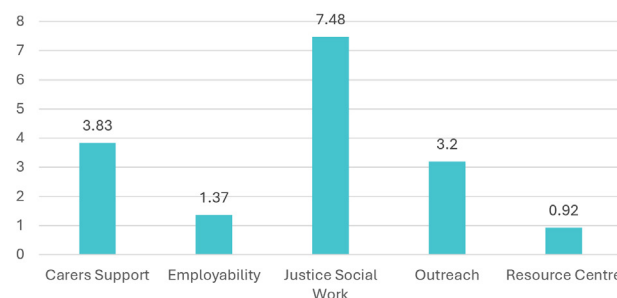
dumfries & galloway

The team provide support across the region with centres in Dumfries, Annan, Castle Douglas, Newton Stewart and Stranraer. We work closely with communities to deliver mental health support to ensure that no one is left behind in some of the most rural areas of the region.

Dumfries & Galloway supported **705 people** across a range of different services: Resource Centres (310), Employability (144), Outreach (181) and Carers (70).

Almost half of referrals into Dumfries & Galloway services were from the Community Psychiatric Nurse (25%), the GP (13%) and Social Work (11%).

Average SWEMWEBS Uplift



96%

feel safe and accepted
satisfied with the support
they received, and believed,
respected and heard

86%

have a sense of
achievement through
goal-setting

84%

don't need to access
A&E services for their
mental illness

Launched in April 2025, the Justice Social Work pilot has delivered strong results. The service helped 22 service users maintain engagement with their Community Payback Orders. The pilot also helps improve access to community mental health support and reduce the risk of custodial sentencing. It has driven positive engagement from the service users, strengthened partnership working with Justice Social Work teams in Dumfries and Galloway, and secured continuation of the service through to the end of March 2027.

annual impact report



"Peer support for me is the most important and valuable resource that I could wish for. Just knowing that you are at the end of the phone means so much to me. Our weekly sessions are so important. We get together either on zoom or in person. Last week when we met for the ancestry meeting has really given me a boost. Being able to do other people's trees has given me a purpose in life. Seeing and hearing the reaction from our extended group makes me feel so happy. I really hope that we can continue with these sessions. The photography group is amazing, and I learn so much."

- a person supported by Carer Support in Dumfries & Galloway

"Outreach support has helped and encouraged me to learn to drive and now I have been able to pass my test which has been a great boost to my confidence. My support worker has always believed in me and without her support I would not have been able to do this."

- A person supported by the Outreach service in Dumfries & Galloway

"I just want to thank you again for all the support from Change Mental Health and the team because since starting my employment almost 6 months ago I feel that I am using the skills that I learned daily."

- a person supported by the Employability Support Project in Dumfries & Galloway

annual impact report



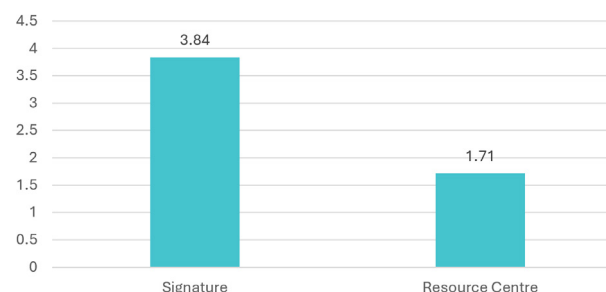
edinburgh

We provide transformational support for people in Edinburgh through a range of services that aim to reduce isolation, promote belonging, and build resilience to develop skills and confidence.

Edinburgh supported **701 people** through Drop-in (213), Counselling (29), Group Work (212), Signature Project (64), Veterans Community Cafe (11) and Welfare Rights (172).

The main referral pathways is through self-referral (67%) and from third sector agencies (14%)

Average SWEMWEBS Uplift



97%

feel believed, respected and heard, safe and accepted, and satisfied with the support they received

82%

have a sense of achievement through goal-setting and a connection to their community

74%

don't need to access A&E services for their mental illness

We worked intensively with the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) to avoid the potential closure or reduction of support. We estimated our support could generate savings of approximately up to £4.4 million for NHS Lothian and the EIJB, through avoided psychiatric-related admissions. This was based on NHS cost data and Stafford Centre survey responses from 640 people, with 80% reporting that use of the Stafford Centre helped them avoid hospital admission. We were successful in avoiding closure or reduction of services and secured an extension to funding through to the end of March 2027. We supported service users and staff through this period of uncertainty while continuing to provide day-to-day support.

annual impact report



"I greatly value the work the Stafford Centre and the Veterans groups do for me that I now have a greater social network of friends that I go out and about with, rather than staying at home. I know I have a space where I feel valued and respected at the Stafford centre and at the veterans groups and I am encouraged to be more open and not hold my problems inside myself but to talk things through. I greatly appreciate the time and effort that the staff have put in with me and others at the Veterans Community Cafe."

- a person supported in Edinburgh at the Stafford Centre and through the Veterans Community Cafe.

"This was the first time in my life that I had been part of a group. Instead of being inside a bubble, I am now outside of it. I used to be quiet, but I am now more confident to speak. I liked the company of the other guys the most, we are all in the same boat. The group was informal and relaxing. I would like to do more groups in the future."

- A person supported in Edinburgh

"It is something that I look forward to on a Monday, regardless of how uncomfortable I sometimes feel. There was a good mix of people, with everyone respecting each other. I wanted to learn how to manage social anxiety. It made me aware that others share similar struggles to myself."

- a person supported in Edinburgh who had never been to any groups before.

annual impact report



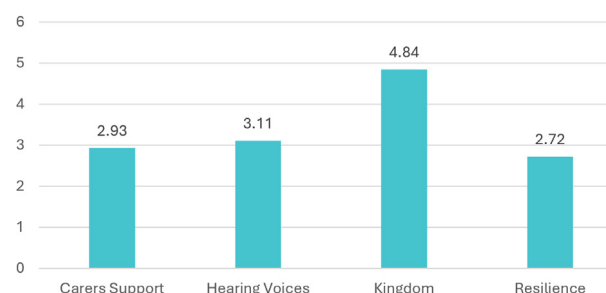
fife & tayside

Fife & Tayside teams work closely with the community across the region, offering guidance, information and a range of support through support for carers and those who hear voices. Resilience support is delivered in the community and to Kingdom Housing Association residents.

Fife & Tayside supported **393 people** through: Hearing Voices Tayside (36), Hearing Voices Fife (78), Resilience Tayside (31), Resilience Fife (72), Carer Support Tayside (53), Carer Support Fife (74), Kingdom (49).

Referral pathways here are slightly different, with 14% of referrals coming from Kingdom Housing Association. 90% of overall Fife & Tayside referrals come from three other pathways: third sector (28%), self-referral (27%) and statutory services (20%).

Average SWEMWEBS Uplift



The Resilience housing project with Kingdom Housing Association has seen an increase in service users from 15 to 49 in year 2. This success has secured more work with the Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) to expand the project in providing essential support and empowering tenants to sustain their tenancy.

100%

feel believed, respected and heard, and safe and accepted

83%

have practical tools for mental, physical, social, emotional and/or financial health

100%

don't need to access support from the social work team about their mental illness

Case study



Mike got in touch with Change Mental Health to get his life back on track following health scares, dependencies and bereavement. He had been struggling to process everything that had happened to him in previous years: losing his wife, going through a cancer journey and addiction to alcohol.

"The catalyst for my mood was when my wife passed away just over six years ago. When she died, that was it. I was totally bereft. I couldn't do anything."

His wife was a source of stability and they had a close bond. With an autistic son and both of them in a complementing caring role, it became difficult for Mike knowing he had to do it alone. Then his auntie died and to Mike, "it felt like the end".

Depression crept in and Mike stopped doing the things he loved. He barely left the house and the only thing that got him outdoors was the gym, but he was drinking a lot at home every day.

Later, he was diagnosed with bowel cancer and underwent successful surgery. **"I felt guilty because I survived. It wasn't fair."**

He reconnected with his son from his first marriage, which gave him unexpected motivation. **"I'd got through cancer, I'd met my son again, but why wasn't I happy?"**

Mike was navigating different support options and the weight was being lifted, but new health problems appeared – breathlessness led to a diagnosis of heart failure, which led to loneliness and drinking again persisted.

"I was still drinking a lot. Every morning I'd say, 'Right, no drink today', and by noon I'd open a bottle. I felt like I was failing every day."

Mike learned about Change Mental Health's Resilience service in Fife through a veterans' breakfast club. It was here he met Barry, a Resilience Outreach Worker. "Barry is great, he just puts you at ease. I wanted the help and I was willing to be helped. He encouraged me not to dwell on things I can't control and concentrate on the positives."

Motivated by the support, he decided to tackle his drinking. **"One day, I just decided to stop. From that moment, I've never had a drink. I don't want one. I feel great."**

He began going to the gym again and build structure into his days. Barry also helped him manage his anxiety with simple coping strategies. **"Just writing a letter lifted years of stress."**

With time and support, Mike has accepted that his wife is no longer there. He continues to visit his son in Wales and has reignited his hobbies, including genealogy and photographing headstones for Find a Grave. **"It keeps me going. People message me with gratitude. That makes me feel useful and keeps my brain going."**

When asked what advice he'd give others, Mike said: **"Talk to people. Don't keep it in. You've got to do something. You can't just sit and wait. I'm not where I was a year ago. I'm better – and that's something."**



annual impact report



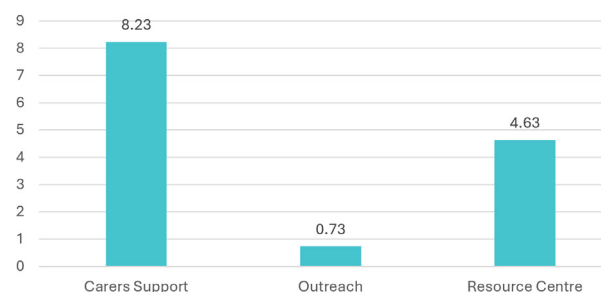
northern

Change Mental Health provides support across the Northern region, working closely with communities. Support is provided through the Community Link Worker service based in GP surgeries, resource centre group work, outreach and Carer Support.

Northern supported **2341 people** through the Community Link Worker service (2169), resource centres (84), Carer Support (76) and outreach (12).

The CLW service accounts for 93% of total service users in Northern, with 100% of referrals from GPs. Elsewhere, it comes from third sector, CPNs, self-referral, CMHT and other sources.

Average SWEMWEBS Uplift



100%

feel believed, respected and heard, safe and accepted, and satisfied with the support they received

92%

have a sense of achievement through goal-setting

92%

don't need to access support from A&E about their mental illness

We identified that internal information-sharing sessions between the Community Link Worker and Outreach & Resource Centre teams would significantly improve the service user experience. By supporting a more person-centred, holistic approach across Northern services, this work helped ensure that service users could access the full range of support they needed at that time they needed it and move smoothly between services. Internal referrals from Community Link Workers to Carer Support, Outreach and Resource Centres now account for 9% of all referrals.

annual impact report



“I can’t believe the different in my mental health from when I was first referred till the time of discharge. I am even cracking on with clearing out my house now that I have the clarity and support I needed and this is further helping me through the process.”

- A person supported in Northern

“It feels good when you use the skills (Decider skills and Anxiety Management) to help manage a stressful situation and it works.”

- A person supported in Northern

“I had to deal with a family situation that before coming here, I would not have been able to manage. I used the skills I have been taught and I coped very well; in fact I supported my sisters.”

- a person supported in Northern

annual impact report



national advice and support service

Our National Advice and Support Service provides support across Scotland for mental health and money worries. With an experienced team of advisors, they can support with benefits checks, application completion, grants, and debt advice.

The National Advice and Support Service supported **1435 people** while securing £693,746 in financial gains. This is an average financial gain of £4,540 per person. 70% of people were supported with information, signposting and emotional support, and 30% with money worries and finance.

When people are awarded a benefit claim, they may also be entitled to a back payment for that benefit. This is classified as a one-off gain, the highest of which are Adult Disability Payment (£17,477) and Universal Credit (£14,171).

Clients felt their mental wellbeing had increased an average SWEMWBS uplift of 2.34 during their support.

The team promoted the service internally and externally to improve financial management outcomes for more service users. They met with Change Mental Health teams across the country to better understand each other's services, increasing internal referrals for financial support. This local insight also helped the team better support clients from their first call by signposting relevant Change Mental Health services in their area and explaining how to access them.

100%

feel believed, respected and heard, safe and accepted, and satisfied with the support they received

100%

have resilience to manage their mental health and illness, practical tools for mental, physical, social, emotional and/or financial health, and the knowledge, skills and confidence to self-manage their mental health and illness

75%

don't need to access support from Community Psychiatric Teams and A&E about their mental illness

Case study

When Thomas first reached out, he said he was at the point where he felt he couldn't keep going like this, trying to survive in a town that was breaking him again and again. He remembers sitting alone in silence wondering "what the hell I'm doing here existing".

Thomas lives in a rural Highland town where childhood trauma is tied to his surroundings, making daily life distressing. In rural Scotland, finding trauma-informed support is especially difficult, with long waits and limited services. His 110-mile commute worsened his health and left him feeling stuck without options.

Through trauma-informed conversations, the National Advice and Support officer helped Thomas apply to the Accessible Priority Housing Register and sourced psychiatric evidence confirming complex trauma. He was also supported to apply for Adult Disability Payment (ADP), despite initial reluctance. Thomas said it was the first time professionals were "not just listening, but doing something", and that this active support felt like someone was finally "on my side".

Thomas was awarded priority housing points and now has a strong chance of relocating to a safer area where he can rebuild. He has re-engaged with trauma support and plans to start private therapy using his ADP award. He now feels a genuine shift: "hopeful" and able to imagine recovery.

"It's the first real change I've seen in 35 years of struggling. I finally feel I have a real chance to change a major issue in my life. This feels like a genuine shift towards a better outlook."

"The advisor was my rock. From the point of being contacted by him, his constant support and reassurance gave me a lot of confidence in a very low period following the death of my partner. His logical thinking and support in reapplying for additional benefits has turned my life around, and I will be forever grateful for all his support and encouragement."

- a person supported by the National Advice and Support Service

"Thank you for your texts and all your help. I'm now in groups and being supported, so I'm very grateful for all your help. You have been so helpful. I'm now in the Stafford Centre and Contact Point, so I'm so grateful."

- a person supported by the National Advice and Support Service

national advice and support service

Providing clear, practical and impartial information, advice and support for people affected by mental health and money issues

Open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm (closed for lunch between 12.30 and 1.30pm)



advice@changemh.org



0808 8010 515



[www.changemh.org/
advice-and-support](http://www.changemh.org/advice-and-support)



distress brief intervention

Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) is a 365 days a year service for people experiencing mental distress, aiming to reduce the pressures on frontline staff. It is a self-management programme with face-to-face or virtual appointments to deliver connected, compassionate and effective response to people in distress.

Change Mental Health supported **3661** people through DBI (an increase from 2772 the year before), and is the lead agency in four areas: Highland (1562 supported), Dumfries & Galloway (1163 supported), Argyll & Bute (549 supported), Western Isles (105 supported) and other areas (282 supported).

Key feedback from Client evaluations

The Clients were asked to rate their experience of support and level of distress with their referrer (Level 1) and end of their support with Distress Brief Intervention (Level 2). The overall median level of distress at Level 1 (referral) was 8. This was reduced to 4 points by the end of their support with Level 2 provider (Distress Brief Intervention).

Change Mental Health were selected to participate in in a 'Test of Change' pilot programme in response to recommendations from the most recent evaluation.

The pilot provides follow-up support at three and six months after individuals have been discharged from the service 583 clients said yes to take part out of 865 referrals.

This has been an exciting and valuable period for Distress Brief Intervention, contributing to the development of the pilot and working in close partnership with Distress Brief Intervention Central, the University of Glasgow and LifeLink.

Median Distress Rating at
Level 1

8



Median Distress Rating
End Level 2

4



Improvement
Points

4

“I’d like to express my heartfelt thanks for the incredible support I’ve received through Change Mental Health over the past two weeks, and to share just how impactful my experience with DBI has been. They been nothing short of exceptional. Their thoughtful guidance, practical strategies and empathetic approach have equipped me with tools that I know will carry me confidently into the next chapter of my life. They offered such a great range of techniques to explore, always tailored to what I needed in the moment, and I genuinely don’t know what these past two weeks would’ve looked like without their support.”

- a person supported by Distress Brief Intervention

“Just to share some positive feedback from a client who I referred recently. They have found Distress Brief Intervention input invaluable during a really difficult time in their life. I was worried about them before I went on annual leave a couple of weeks ago. They are extremely grateful for the help and advice they had from DBI and they have been using all of the strategies that were explained to them. I have seen them today and there is a noticeable difference in them from 4 weeks ago. Thank you for all you do for people who are struggling.”

- feedback from a referral partner

annual impact report



suicide bereavement support service

The Suicide Bereavement Support Service (SBSS) is for anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide in Highland and Argyll & Bute, offering confidential one-to-one support. The team help people navigate the complex emotions felt after a suicide and can also help with practical things like talking to GPs, the police or the procurator fiscal's office.

Change Mental Health supported **147** people through SBSS.

37% of people supported self-referred into the service, with Police North (12%) and third sector (10%) totalling 60% of the referrals to make up the top three referral pathways.

People supported felt their mental wellbeing had increased an average SWEBWBS uplift of 4.4 points during their support.

The service partnered with different organisations and agencies across Highland through the 'After A Suicide' sub-group. The project focused on improving the communication and support provided and available following a suicide, both to those directly bereaved by a suicide and those who are impacted by a suicide. It looked to minimise wider suicide risk and to improve mental health outcomes for those bereaved by suicide. It raised awareness and educated individuals, workplaces and communities on how a loss to suicide can have a wider impact.

100%

feel believed, respected and heard, safe and accepted, and satisfied with the support they received

79%

have resilience to manage their mental health and mental illness, and improved mental health and wellbeing

86%

don't need to access support from A&E about their mental illness

annual impact report



"I cannot thank the service enough. The support I received has been lifesaving and means so much to me. It helps to know there are people there who understand and can help you get through tough times. Thank you."

- a person supported by the Suicide Bereavement Support Service

"I'd like to thank SBS for helping me get through my son's suicide and grief, listening to me and helping me through the worst time in my life."

- a person supported by the Suicide Bereavement Support Service

"I am really grateful for the support I have had. Grief has got no time limit when it's going to come on or what days are good and bad and without having this support I don't know how my days would be. This is a brilliant service well worth while thank you for all the help you provide."

- a person supported by the Suicide Bereavement Support Service

children and young people's programmes

The Children and Young People team offer three programmes: Bloom, Your Resilience and Me & Money. Together, these programmes support young people to build knowledge, confidence and practical tools to look after their mental health, develop resilience and understand the link between money and wellbeing.

The Children & Young People's Programmes collectively supported **1994** people; 1892 young people and 102 teachers and youth workers. Per programme:

- Bloom: 856 young people were supported and 45 teachers were trained
- Your Resilience: 137 young people were supported and 57 youth workers were trained (NB: this support is provided in youth centres with smaller group sizes than schools)
- Me & Money: 899 young people were supported.

What difference did we make?

Children & Young People are asked to rate their experiences of participating in and understanding from the workshops. The results evidence the hugely successful benefits of these programmes for young people, teachers and youth workers.

Evaluation

- **96%** liked the workshop content.
- **93%** of teachers and youth workers confirmed they felt better able to support others with their mental health after attending a workshop.
- Young people's understanding of how to look after their own mental health rose from 46% at baseline to **86%** post-programme.
- **71%** had a stronger understanding of what impacts resilience.

The Children and Young People team delivered a pilot resilience programme for parents and carers in Fife and Tayside that was incredibly well received. By providing resilience support to parents and carers they feel more confident in having conversations with and ability to support their Children and Young People.

annual impact report



Looking ahead

Change Mental Health has an exciting year ahead, focused on expanding services, driving innovation, improving early access to support, and strengthening quality and impact.

What we will do

Expanding our services

We will continue developing local and national services, including Hearing Voices support, community-based services and practical, non-clinical support. Building on our work in Fife & Tayside, and with the Fife Housing Association Alliance, we will explore expanding this model to new areas to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and help people sustain their tenancies.

Innovation

We will explore new approaches that improve access, personalisation and outcomes, including talking therapies, employability support, expanded suicide prevention and support for physical health as part of self-management.

How we will do it

Early diagnosis pathways

Working with partners, we will develop clearer pathways from diagnosis to timely community mental health support.

Quality assurance

We will embed our Quality Assurance Framework, establish our first Community of Practice, strengthen self-management support through training and resources, and share best practice across the organisation.

Lived and living experience

We will work with people we support and our staff to improve the service user experience, using data and feedback to strengthen how people access and experience our services.

Impact

We will strengthen how we measure outcomes, helping people recognise their progress while building the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to live well in their communities.

Staff development

Our new Learning Management System will provide consistent learning across Change Mental Health, strengthening staff knowledge, confidence and professional practice.



Change Mental Health is a registered charity SC013649.
Company Number SC088179

www.changemh.org