



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Older Generations Not Getting The Mental Health Support They Need**

PEOPLE over the age of 65 are less likely to receive support for their mental health, according to findings by a new project.

The Age in Mind project looks at how people aged over 50 are affected by mental health stigma and discrimination.

They have found that the support people received for their mental health can decrease once they reach 65. Participants in the project say they have less access to psychiatrists and specialist nurses, and worry about losing places at mental health support services.

They say the chance of being referred for psychological therapies decreases, and for those who acquire their condition after the age of 65, benefits designed to compensate for the additional costs relating to living with a disabling condition, can also be denied.

To bring attention to this they are holding a reception at the Scottish Parliament today/tomorrow (THURS 26), supported by Labour Party MSP Jackie Baillie.

Age in Mind is led by the Scottish Mental Health Co-op, and is part of See Me's programme of work aimed at ending mental health stigma and discrimination.

They have created networks of people across Scotland who have their own experience of mental health conditions, and others who support them in tackling discrimination and stigma.

Over 160 people with lived experience of mental health problems, and over 50 organisations which support people with their mental health needs have taken part in focus groups, interviews and questionnaires to establish what discrimination people have faced, and where work needs to be done.

As well as the event at the parliament they are approaching a number of health service leaders to discuss current issues.

Dianna Manson, 68, from Edinburgh, who trained as a doctor but was never allowed to practice due to her schizophrenia diagnosis, said: "If you're older and have a mental health problem you are not seen as a priority by the system."

Michel Syrett, chair of the Project Management group, and a member of the local networks which are seeking change has said: "People have the same mental health treatment needs the day after their 65th birthday as the day before.

"They have spent their lives contributing to society and it therefore unjust that they face discrimination in the services they are offered and are at a financial disadvantage in terms of the benefits they are eligible for.

"With significant public policy attention rightly being now focused on the needs of young people with mental health problems, we need to highlight the fact that people over 65 are equally deserving of parliamentary consideration.

"We hope that the reception will bring this issue firmly into MSPs' line of sight."

David Delaney, chair of the SMHC said: "We can see the impact that mental health stigma and discrimination can have over many decades on people's self-esteem. We need to learn from their experiences so that we do not replicate them, but rather show ourselves to be a caring and understanding society and relegate stigma and discrimination to the past."

See Me director Calum Irving said: "People experiencing mental health problems need help and support quickly, no matter what their age their mental health should be taken seriously. People should be assessed on their needs, not on their age.

"The Age in Mind project is developing a picture of what stigma and discrimination can be like for older generations in Scotland."

## **ENDS...**

To find out more about this event or about Age in Mind's work, contact the project's facilitator, Angela Dias on 01786 451 203, or [angela.dias@actioninmind.org.uk](mailto:angela.dias@actioninmind.org.uk) or SMHC representative Helena Scott on [Helena.scott@actioninmind.org.uk](mailto:Helena.scott@actioninmind.org.uk) or 01786 451 203

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. See Me is Scotland's National programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, enabling people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

**We do this by:**

- Mobilising people to work together and lead a movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination
  - Working with people to change negative behaviour towards those with mental health problems
  - Ensuring that the human rights of people with mental health problems are respected and upheld
2. Follow See Me on Twitter @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/seemescotland, <http://seemescotland.tumblr.com/>, <https://medium.com/@seemescotland>, or at [www.seemescotland.org](http://www.seemescotland.org)
  3. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief
  4. We work in partnerships with VOX, the Scottish Mental Health Cooperative and the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival to bring about a meaningful change in behaviours.
  5. Age in Mind does not focus on Dementia but on conditions such as depression, Anxiety, bi-polar, psychoses etc

