



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **PICS TO FOLLOW THIS AFTERNOON**

#### **For Immediate Release**

### **OVER 1000 People Walked a Mile for Mental Health**

OVER 1000 people took part in walks across Renfrewshire today/yesterday (WED) as part of Mental Health Awareness Week.

The Walk a Mile events were arranged by Renfrewshire Anti Stigma Alliance (RASA), to get people in the area talking about mental health.

It is part of an effort by See Me, the national programme to end mental health discrimination, to show that it is okay not to be okay, and that people can speak about mental health.

The theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week is Surviving or Thriving and the walk aimed to show that mental health shouldn't hold anyone back from living a fulfilled life.

The Walk a Mile campaign was created by activist Chris McCullough Young and See Me, based on his walk around the edge of Scotland, where he spoke to everyone he met about mental health, to change attitudes one conversation at a time.

The events bring together groups who normally meet at times of stress and crisis, such as health care staff and those who have experience of mental health problems, to help break down barriers that may exist.

There has been a significant rise in the number of people seeking treatment for mental health conditions. They currently account for a third of all GP appointments in Scotland.

The recent mental health strategy stated that only one in three people who need help for their mental health actually receive it.

Across Renfrewshire schools, workplaces, health care staff and members of the public are taking part in the walks, with the main walk at Fountain Gardens in Paisley.

Stephen McLellan of RAMH (Recovery Across Mental Health) said: "We hope that people have found an incentive to talk about mental health through the connections they have made today.

"The strength that people have shown by taking part along with the visibility mental health issues have received recently gives a tremendous boost to understanding recovery in mental health."

Calum Irving, See Me director, said: "Stigma and discrimination ruins lives. One of the best ways to change how people think and behave is to make mental health a topic in day to day conversation, rather than a taboo subject people don't want to talk about.

"Having thousands of people walking across Renfrewshire having these positive conversations is a great demonstration of the change we want to see."

**ENDS...**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **The main walk at Fountain Gardens in Paisley begins at 12.30pm**

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.

