



**Stigma Free
Lanarkshire**



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Lanarkshire Taking the Lead in Tackling Mental Health Stigma

PEOPLE and organisations from all over Lanarkshire are coming together to tackle mental health discrimination.

Lanarkshire Recovery Network's successful anti-stigma partnership already includes almost 500 pledges of support from community groups, churches, NHS Lanarkshire, North and South Lanarkshire Councils, North and South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnerships, local businesses and national anti-stigma organisation See Me.

From 26th to 29th September there will be a renewed focus on tackling mental health stigma and discrimination in health and social care settings, to give staff an increased awareness and understanding and to make sure the treatment of people with mental health problems is as good as it can be.

Hairmyres Hospital is leading the way with activities including a number of teaching sessions, guest talks for staff and an information stall. The new Distress Brief Intervention programme, which looks to make sure that people in crisis get the right support immediately, will also be highlighted.

To finish off the week, on Friday 29th September, staff and patients at the hospital will be joined by other health and social care providers and service users in Lanarkshire for a Walk a Mile event.

So far thousands of people have taken part in Walks across Scotland, bringing together health professionals, carers, people with lived experience of mental health problems, students, or anyone who cares about tackling mental health discrimination, to break down barriers as they walk a mile in each other's shoes.

Jim Smith, from Stonehouse, has experience difficulties with his mental health through his adult life. He is helping out at the event for See Me, and said: "It's a great thing to be happening."

"In my experiences, I have been brushed aside and ended up in intensive care because I wasn't taken seriously because of my mental health. There are a lot of brilliant staff, but many of them are too stretched when it comes to mental health."

Linda Findlay, associate medical director of the South Lanarkshire Health & Care Partnership, said: "I am excited to be involved in Hairmyres Hospitals Stigma Free Lanarkshire Event. T

"This is the first of its kind in Lanarkshire (and possibly in Scotland), where mental health stigma is being tackled on an acute hospital site through a collaboration between local user and carer organisations, See Me and local health care staff. Together we can make a difference."

Calum Irving, See Me director, said: "We all have mental health and it impacts on every aspect of our lives, including where we live, learn, work and receive care, but when we struggle with our mental health we often face stigma and discrimination."

"So it's fantastic to see the continued work which makes Lanarkshire one of the real leaders in tackling stigma."

"Health and social care is a vital area for us, and one where people say they still face negative attitudes. To have the NHS board so involved in this month shows how important it is for everyone that we get mental health right."

ENDS...

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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
 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.