



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Tackling Loneliness and Mental Health Stigma in the Highlands

TACKLING the loneliness associated with mental health is the focus of an event in Inverness.

See Me, the national programme to end mental health discrimination, is inviting people from across the Highlands to join them to look at how communities in the region can improve the lives of people who live there.

A YouGov poll of 1004 Scottish adults, commissions by See Me ,revealed that 35% of Scots have either experienced stigma or discrimination because of their mental health, or know someone close to them who has.

The fear of how people will react if they are struggling can lead to people withdrawing and become increasingly isolated and lonely.

To help change this See Me are keen to speak with people who have experienced mental health problems, to see what difference belonging to a connected community which supports each other can make.

They will be using what they learn to inform their response to the Scottish Government's consultation, A Connected Scotland - its strategy to ensure communities are empowered and connected, and that everyone is able to participate and experience wellbeing.

Benjamin McElwee, the policy and practice officer for See Me, said: "We think there is real potential to enhance social connection and encourage supportive relationships with others, to improve health and wellbeing in communities.

"On the other hand social isolation and loneliness can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing, so it's important we work to tackle stigma, bringing communities together."

The event will take place on Friday April 13, from 12.15pm-3pm at the Spectrum Centre in Inverness. You can sign up at, communityconversationinverness.eventbrite.co.uk or call 0141 530 1111.

ENDS...

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1004 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 20th - 24th October 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Scottish adults (aged 18+).
2. 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
3. Follow See Me on Twitter or Instagram @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/seemescotland, or at www.seemescotland.org
 4. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief

