



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Thousands of Young People Fear Being Judged, Rejected and Isolated if They Tell Someone about a Mental Health Problem**

THOUSANDS of young people across Scotland have said they fear the consequences of speaking about their mental health.

To change this, the Scottish Government has today made three commitments; to ensure reducing mental health stigma is the core of everything they do, creating environments where young people can trust adults and giving young people tools to describe how they feel.

The findings came from the FeelsFM campaign, by See Me, the national programme to end mental health discrimination. They created an online jukebox, which used emojis to create playlists for young people based on how they're feeling, while finding out their opinions on mental health, stigma and discrimination.

See Me received over 5000 responses from young people aged 12-26 and hundreds more via FeelsFM activities held by schools and youth groups for children aged 8 upwards.

They found young people worry that if they tell someone they're struggling with their mental health they will be judged, rejected, isolated, embarrassed or treated differently or unfairly as a result. They also worry they will not be listened to, believed or taken seriously by adults if they did raise an issue.

Sally Nimmo, 24, from Stonehouse in South Lanarkshire, first struggled with her mental health when she started university, and found it difficult to talk about what she was going through.

She said: "I didn't really know what was happening to me so couldn't talk about it. I hadn't really heard about depression and anxiety, I just knew I didn't feel good and it led to me dropping out of university.

"After that I started to work. I faced a lot of stigma and discrimination there which was really challenging.

"This led to me being off sick because of my mental health. When I went back I wasn't treated the same way. All my work was taken off me because they thought I couldn't cope, but that made me feel worse as I was just sitting about doing nothing."

Sally applied to go back to university, and although things have improved with how people react to her mental health, there are still challenges.

She added: "I've been told to leave my anxiety at the door, and that I needed to learn to start coping with my mental health if I wanted to get a job when I left university. That's really difficult to take.

"Mental health isn't something that you can just take control over, and when people aren't supporting you it makes it ten times harder.

"I've felt like I've been treated differently to others because of mental health."

Today the Mental Health Minister Clare Haughey said that the Government would make changes so children and young people grow up free from stigma and discrimination.

She said: "Feels FM has been the largest conversation we have ever had with young people in Scotland on mental health. The success of the campaign speaks for itself, with over 5,000 young people taking part and using the power of music to describe how they feel.

"We have listened very carefully to what young people have told us through Feels FM, and we are setting three aspirations based on their feedback. We will put reducing stigma at the heart of everything we do.

"We will work to create an environment where all young people are able to trust an adult to listen sympathetically, appropriately, and without judgement. And we will work to give young people the tools to be able to describe how they feel."

See Me published the findings of the campaign today at an event at Reeltime Music in Motherwell, where the young people who took part in the campaign there are now planning on putting on a gig to get people talking.

See Me director Calum Irving said: "We want a stigma free childhood for all of Scotland's young people. So we are delighted to see the Scottish Government making this commitment today to ensure that reducing stigma is at the core of everything they do.

"This means creating environments where young people can have open and honest conversations, with people they trust, who won't treat them unfairly."

**ENDS...**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

- 1. Photocall Info – We will have interview opportunities available with young people speaking about their experiences, the Mental Health Minister and See**

**Me director Calum Irving and Education Manager Laura Sharpe. Pics will follow from Marc Turner.**

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](http://www.seemescotland.org)
  4. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief

