

Partnership Working

Creating a Stigma Free Region

What did we do?

We have been working with the Moray Wellbeing Hub (MWH) since March 2019, providing them with funding and support to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination in Moray. The funding was awarded to build on the existing work of MWH which was established as a social enterprise early in 2018. The aim of this pilot project is to create a new way of tackling mental health stigma across a whole local authority area.

MWH have trained around 180 active Hub Champions who take part in events, gatherings and training with a focus on mental health and stigma and discrimination. Several Champions deliver mental health training and consultancy services.

Why did we get involved?

To create a stigma free Moray, the MWH wanted to work with See Me to ensure their outcomes matched that of the national stigma programme, and together we are working on Changing Policy, Changing Practice, and Changing Minds.

Like See Me, the project is based on lived experience. It draws that at a local level, through the Hub Champions and at a national level through a wider social movement connected through See Me. See Me and MWH share training and resources to support each other to develop through sharing learning.

How does this fit with See Me's work?



As part of growing the wider movement for change and supporting community led action, See Me engages with community organisations to influence them to take action around tackling mental health stigma and discrimination and exploring what works. Building on the work that has already been done and acting on the recognition that peer support is a key element to the social movement's sustainability, we explored options of working with organisations to grow the movement further locally. The Moray Wellbeing Hub have a slightly different approach to their Champions work, however the outcomes they are striving for are the same, and they are using the most effective model in the area they understand best.

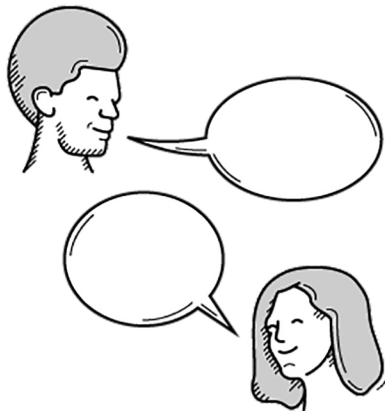
What was the process?

See Me worked alongside MWH to support them to embed and lead on work to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination locally. This included sharing best practice, co-delivering training to champions, sharing tools, resources and training materials, linking up on campaigns, supporting Moray and its champions to have an influence in local decision making and ensuring a focus on reducing stigma is considered.

We also took various opportunities to share the learning with others around Moray's local approach at gatherings, volunteer events, with key partners and via our wider communications. Moray has created a video as part of the partnership that describes some of the key principals of their work and how they ensure people with different lived experiences of mental health are a key asset to the work locally like delivering training, facilitating sessions and organising local events.

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What was See Me's influence?

Partnership working with See Me and other organisations has positively influenced the work of MWH. The Hub Director said that MWH and See Me have a history of positive partnership working. Alongside funding, See Me was willing to support the Hub as an unprecedented initiative where other partners and funders were not. The Director said that working with See Me has broadened MWH peer networks which has allowed it to grow. Local partners felt that being endorsed by See Me was very important for the development of MWH.

See Me supported MWH on a specific piece of policy work, in helping to shape Moray's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Those involved in shaping the Assessment said that the contribution of MWH and See Me in relation to stigma and social isolation had a hugely positive impact on the development of the Assessment. See Me and MWH were invited to attend Moray's Joint Needs Assessment Working Group to influence and building connections for future working.

"They were able to help to counterbalance the numbers with a qualitative view in terms of the importance of mental health and wellbeing. We were able to build that into the strategic needs assessment...so mental health and wellbeing is now a strategic priority." **MWH Partner**

"They're an indispensable resource in Moray, in terms of the whole self-management agenda...without a doubt." **MWH Partner**

"It's [partnership with See Me] so symbiotic, and so useful. They provide a safe harbour, a pantry dish to grow." **MWH Director**

"I think it's made a significant difference, the fact that they're getting supported and recognised by See Me. The funding in a sense validates we're doing something really exciting." **MWH Partner**



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What is the impact?

The positive impact of MWH Hub on individual Champions has been powerful. The Hub Director described the experience for some as 'lifechanging.' Many have experienced improved confidence and self-esteem, quality of life and independence, and gained skills, knowledge and qualifications. Peer support and social contact between those with lived experience and those who may not plays a significant role in achieving positive outcomes for individuals.

"I guess it's recognised as well that one of the empowering things about being a Champion is seeing yourself as an asset." **MWH Champion**

The project has also had a positive impact on local services. Partners of MWH have said that it is now an integral part of the support system in Moray for people seeking support with their mental health. It has been really helpful for those who don't engage well with traditional health and social care services.

"We go into all sorts of exciting and challenging landscapes and that also means we are working very closely between the edges of things, between the boundaries of things...where things can be uncertain and feel quite challenging." **MWH Partner**

The MWH has also had a real impact on the local community. Before the Hub emerged, there was nothing similar in Moray. Celebrating people as assets and supporting them to take ideas forward has empowered individuals and their communities. Partners said that having trained Champions on the ground living MWH values and working in communities is powerful.

"It matters having Moray Wellbeing Hub here on the ground. Being part of communities and actively living values. That's why this works." **MWH Partner**

Partners said that they welcome the Hub's new way of working and see it as a part of the overall strategic planning process in Moray. One said that MWH has challenged the system and supported professionals in the health and social care sector to recognise that there are different ways to tackle poor mental health. Another said that Hub Champions contribute to strategic conversations as equal partners and "bring something different to the table and work with organisations in a more dynamic way...than the statutory or third sector do". And a partner explained when commissioning services in Moray, services are required to employ a proportion of staff with lived experience.

Strong leadership is a key success factor of the Hub's social movement. Champions with lived experience, skills and knowledge drive forward the work of MWH on the ground, facilitated by strong and clear leadership.

It takes time and persistence to break down barriers and encourage health and social care professionals to buy into a new and innovative way of working embodied by MWH. This did not come without its challenges, however many senior figures within health and social care were keen to explore partnership working with the Hub. It is felt that the visibility of the Hub, more so than other volunteer-led organisations, is integral to its success. A partner commented on the fact that MWH works at both strategic and operational levels, which makes it unique.

