



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 MONDAY JANUARY 27TH

National Mental Health Campaign Launching at the National Portrait Gallery

THE NATIONAL Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh is set to host this years' Time to Talk day, with a gig, a VR experience and a mental health art tour to get people talking about mental health.

Time to Talk day, on February 6th, aims to get everyone in the country talking about mental health, to stop people from feeling isolated when they are struggling.

This year See Me, the national programme to end mental health discrimination, have teamed up with the Gallery to encourage people to talk about mental health in a setting where people normally whisper.

They have a choir performing as well as a number of singers. People will also get the chance to get a better understanding of what it can feel like to experience anxiety, through virtual reality. There will also be an art tour around the gallery which is designed to get people talking about their mental health.

See Me want to see people across Edinburgh joining them at the gallery, after they carried out research revealing nearly a quarter of people in Edinburgh don't feel comfortable talking openly about their own mental health.

A Censuswide survey of 313 people in Edinburgh and Lothian found that 23 per cent are not comfortable speaking about their own mental health. However this is lower than the national average, of 29 per cent.

Wendy Halliday, See Me interim director, said: "Mental health and art have always been closely linked. Art is used as a way to express our feelings, whether it is on a canvas, captured in a photo or sung in a song, it helps us relate to our emotions. It's also used in

therapy for people who are struggling with their mental health and can improve wellbeing for all of us.

“But it can be much more than that, it can start conversations and tell stories that change the way we think and behave when it comes to mental health. We are all speaking much more about mental health, and hearing more and more how important it is to tackle mental health stigma, and art can do that.

“So we are bringing together art and mental health at the National Portrait Gallery, to host the UK’s biggest anti-stigma campaign of the year, Time to Talk Day, and we’d love to see as many people come down as possible.”

Janet Smyth, deputy head of learning & engagement (health & wellbeing) at the Gallery, said: “We are delighted that the Scottish National Portrait Gallery will be hosting the launch of Time to Talk Day; a campaign that asks us to be open, direct and honest about talking about our mental health, wellbeing and sense of self.

“We hope that when people visit and take part in our programme of activities at the National Galleries of Scotland that they will think of art as part of a conversation that connects a viewer to the maker, a conversation that can cross time, place, cultures and age and have us consider what it is to be human – on good days and bad.

“We are looking forward to welcoming everybody to the Gallery, a public space that offers a chance to pause and reflect or to participate in all sorts of events and activities, to connect, to think and, most importantly, to talk.”

The event will run from 11am until 2pm, in the Great Hall at the National Portrait Gallery. Find out more at www.seemescotland.org.

Time to Talk Day is jointly run by See Me, with their partner programmes, Time to Change in England, Time to Change Wales, Change Your Mind in Northern Ireland and See Change in Ireland.

ENDS...

NOTES TO EDITORS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

NICK JEDRZEJEWSKI [Communications Manager]

0141 530 1049/07710 387 517

Nick.jedrzejewski@seemescotland.org

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 or Instagram @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/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. Time to Talk is a UK wide campaign, led by Time to Change in England, See Me in Scotland, Time to Change Wales and Change Your Mind in Northern Ireland.

¹Survey of 2,005 respondents in Scotland, including 1,181 respondents who experience or have experienced mental health problems. Carried out by Censuswide 07.08.2019 – 16.08.2019.

