



End mental health  
discrimination

**PRESS RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 ON 5/3/2020**

*PHOTOCALL AND INTERVIEWS WITH GAIL PORTER, SEE ME VOLUNTEERS, AND STAFF  
AVAILABLE AT DYNAMIC EARTH, EDINBURGH, AT 1.30PM TODAY, MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>.*

**PICS FROM MARC TURNER TO FOLLOW THIS AFTERNOON**

*Pre-recorded interview with See Me director Wendy Halliday for radio use can be  
[downloaded here](#)*

**Improvements Found In Public Perceptions Of Mental Health Problems, But More  
Than Half Of People Experiencing Mental Health Conditions In Scotland Still Face  
Stigma And Discrimination, According To New Study.**

MORE than half of Scots (56 per cent ) who have struggled with their mental health have been stigmatised or discriminated against because of it.

The new study, released today (THURS) found that people in Scotland are most likely to experience stigma and discrimination from those closest to them, from friends, family and work colleagues.

However there are signs of improvements, with 79 per cent of respondents saying they think public perceptions of mental health problems have improved over the past ten years.

The poll of over 2000 people, carried out by Censuswide for See Me, the programme to end mental health discrimination, is part of the most extensive research into mental health stigma in Scotland for over five years.

See Me have been joined by TV presenter Gail Porter, who recently released a documentary about her mental health journey, to call for people across Scotland to be confident in recognising stigma and discrimination and knowing how to take action when they see it.

See Me said that with one in three people in Scotland experiencing mental health problems, and more than half of those facing stigma and discrimination, that nearly a million people in Scotland could be treated unfairly when they're struggling.

It also highlighted the difficulty people experience in getting help, with GP practices being the most common place that people say they face stigma and discrimination.

37 per cent of those surveyed, who hadn't experienced mental health problems themselves, also said they had witnessed stigma and discrimination happening.

The poll also found that 27 per cent of respondents would not want a person who has a mental health problem to take care of their child and one in ten (11 per cent) would not be willing to have a relationship with someone with a mental health problem.

However 85 per cent believe it is possible to have a mental health problem and live a meaningful life.

Gail Porter said: "While I was enjoying a successful career on television, I was experiencing serious mental health illness, but at the time there was still a real stigma around the subject so I had to smile and carry on as normal. Hiding it like this just made things worse.

"In those days, the media often labelled people 'mad' or similar derogatory terms, there was a stigma and discrimination around mental health that could quickly destroy your career.

"These days, It's great that mental health is something that is talked about more openly and positively and the stigma has been reduced significantly but I think there's a long way to go."

The Mental Health Minister, Clare Haughey, said: "It is encouraging that 79% of people who were surveyed think that public perceptions of mental health problems have improved in the last 10 years - and that over half of respondents would feel confident to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination, especially when they have been the recipient of such stigma themselves.

"Whilst we can't establish direct cause and effect in relation to such improvements, I am confident that See Me's work has played a significant part in these positive changes in public perception, along with complementary awareness-raising action by other partners such as Breathing Space, NHS Health Scotland, and the Scottish Recovery Network.

"See Me's survey also shows some negative findings about fears around mental ill-health. These findings are sobering and they reaffirm that, despite strong progress in

improving public perceptions of mental health problems, there is still much to be done to tackle associated stigma and inequality.

“We will continue to work with See Me and other partners to build on the positive achievements so far, and See Me will use the findings of this survey to help inform the continuing development of their work in this area.”

Today (THURS) along with the new study See Me are releasing a new digital resource, the Journey of a Social Movement, which is designed to help people to see how they can tackle stigma and discrimination, by showing some of what See Me, its volunteers and partners have been doing over the last five years.

The most recent evaluation of the See Me programme, carried out by the Mental Health Foundation Scotland, has also been published, demonstrating the impact from See Me over the last three years.

Wendy Halliday, See Me interim director, said: “Our research shows that 55% of people feel confident to challenge stigma and discrimination, but we need that number to be much higher, so no one is treated unfairly when they’re struggling.

“We need you to make a difference today. Knowing what to say and do isn’t easy, so we’ve released a brand new resource, the Journey of a Social Movement, where you can see how people like you have been challenging stigma and discrimination in their communities, with their friends and family, in their workplaces, at school and in health care.

“Start your journey today by visiting <https://report.seemescotland.org/>.”

### **Full research**

- **55% of people feel confident to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination**
- **79% of people think public perception of mental health problems have improved over the past ten years**
- **33% of people think that discrimination faced by people with mental health problems has stayed the same or got worse**
- **85% of people in Scotland believe it is possible to have a mental health problem and live a meaningful life**

### **However**

- **56% of people with a mental health condition have experienced stigma and discrimination**

- *People most commonly experience stigma and discrimination from the people closest to them (friends, work colleagues, immediate family). The most common place people experience stigma and discrimination is in GP practices*
- **Of the people who haven't experienced mental health problems, 37% have witnessed mental health stigma or discrimination**
- *The most common areas this has been witnessed include; on social media, in schools, the media and on public transport*
- **27% would not want a person who has a mental health problem to take care of their child**
- **One in ten (11%) would not be willing to have a relationship with someone with a mental health problem.**

**ENDS...**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Extra Quotes from See Me volunteer Liam Rankin, 50, from East Kilbride:** "I worry about the reaction I'm going to get when I tell somebody about my mental health and my diagnosis. As soon as you mention that word schizophrenia you see a negative reaction. People aren't willing to ask you a question to try and understand exactly what the actual condition actually is. They would rather just prejudge you on what they think they know, which is basically discriminating against you stigmatizing against your mental health. You're scared to tell people because of the reaction you get that reaction. You go home and you're the one that's sitting there suffering"

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.
2. Research from Censuswide, 2,005 respondents in Scotland, including 1,181 respondents who experience or have experienced mental health problems.
3. The stats relating to 27% and 85% represent people saying they either strongly agree or somewhat agree with this statement

4. The stat relating to 79% represents people who think public perceptions of people with mental health problems have improved either a lot or improved a little over the past ten years.
5. The stat relating to 11%, said they somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, 'would you be willing to have a relationship with someone with a mental health problem.
6. 55% was people who said they feel very confident or fairly confident to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination.
7. Follow See Me on Twitter or Instagram @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/seemescotland, or at [www.seemescotland.org](http://www.seemescotland.org)
8. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief

