

All Aboard!



Platform 1 (1st Edition January 2023)

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Cargo and Connections

Welcome to the first edition of the **Mental Health Information Station newsletter**. We are a partnership of NHS and 3rd sector (voluntary) organisations in Edinburgh who aim to provide information easily accessible and individualised to any person, relative or carer to help improve and maintain good mental health and stability.

You can find us on:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthInformationStation/>

and access a wealth of online resources on our NHS Lothian web page:

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/mentalhealthinformationstation/Pages/Mental-Health-Conditions.aspx>

Timetable

We are based in Edinburgh city centre at Walpole Hall, St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Palmerston Place, Haymarket EH3 7EN every Thursday. Anyone aged 16 or over can drop in between 10.30am and 3pm.

We also provide a telephone call-back and emailing service on Thursdays.

Email Mentalhealthinformation@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk.

Our Approach

Mental health is not just the responsibility of medics and their allies. We take an evidence-based holistic approach observing that there are many factors that affect our mental well-being and many solutions.

Crew

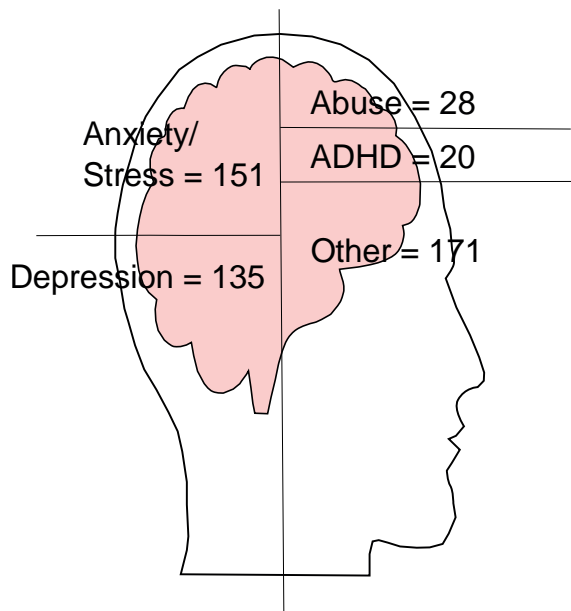
We are not a clinical service but have mental health clinicians available to talk to, including occupational therapists and a mental health nurse. Our other weekly 'crew' include All In Edinburgh staff (employability specialists), Volunteer Edinburgh personnel, a volunteer doorman, a volunteer floor manager, support OT's and an information officer.

Passengers and Destinations

We keep informal information about our visitors, enquirers and main advice. We don't take names unless there is a legal need in cases of risk. This helps inform us about the needs of the population and gives an idea to managers, influential people and to potential visitors about the scope of contacts and of our advice.

Here's an example of our data collected over the last year.

- From January to November we had 436+ interactions which means that we were averaging around 40 per month.
- On top of this we had visitors wanting to know about the service and people accompanying the person visiting.
- Visits to Walpole Hall account for approximately 70% of our interactions the rest being made up of telephone calls and emails.



Issues discussed

These are wide and varied. People will often come with a given label for their mental health issues and/or with their situational problems. The top 2 mental health labels are anxiety (151) and depression (135). The next 2 most frequent single diagnoses are complex trauma including abuse (28) and ADHD (20).

All the other mental health symptoms and diagnoses make up the other 117. In this group Carers and relatives = 20 interactions. Isolation and loneliness = 42 interactions. Volunteering = 25 wanted more information. Counselling = 15 wanted more information. Homelessness and benefit problems = 15 interactions.

Advice given

The signposting and advice we provide also is varied. As we mentioned before, our mental health is helped by many variables, and it is recognised that sometimes one small adjustment in people's lives can change things enormously.

For example, joining a football team or starting to volunteer can lead to increased motivation and/or social contacts and can literally change people's lives. Small changes in our internal dialogue, in other words our thoughts, can also be worked with to help us be more able

to bounce back from adversity and handle our own behaviour. For example when feeling down, we might stay in bed, procrastinate and attach to our negative thoughts.

CBT (cognitive behaviour therapy) even in a self-help form, can also help us to step back from the thoughts and modify our behaviour to help our mood. We give out information about self-help measures such as this with some respected websites and 1:1 services.

We can advise after a conversation with our mental health professionals on whether this kind of help is appropriate.

Often we may think getting professional talking or drug therapy is the solution when it could be much simpler than this. In the above pie chart you can see a brief summary of the top advice categories we have given in the last year.



Sources of Visitors

We have the majority of our interactions after a person has seen their GP. Other big sources of our visitors are the internet, mental health colleagues and support workers in the voluntary sector. Time spent on these interactions vary but can be up to an hour for many, even more if emailing someone after a verbal session. Often also there can be 2 or more interactions in the same visit. For example, a common visit can lead to someone speaking to an NHS practitioner, followed by **All in Edinburgh** and then **Volunteer Edinburgh** after this.

Partner in the Limelight

All In Edinburgh

This is a first of a series of personal features about one of our crew. In this edition we are featuring the very lovely and experienced Elaine from The Action Group which is a partner in 'All in Edinburgh' who work with 3 other organisations to provide employability support to people in Edinburgh who have barriers to employment due to mental health and other disadvantages.

What brought you into your job Elaine?

I've been in the job for 21 years. I was only planning to stay in it 6 months originally too! Before that I was a nurse, and my idea was to return to nursing. It's too late now! I trained in psychiatric and general nursing in the late 70s and early 80s and worked in a military hospital in Hanover, Germany. I also worked with new parents in Homestart. I have been working in my role as employment adviser in lots of venues and situations and have recently developed close connections with foodbank visitors.



Elaine with her pups.

Could you talk about a couple of good examples about people you have worked with?

'I worked with a young man who has autism. He had been working in a job he hated, having got it through a relative. His dream was to become an engineer. He had never done any formal interview nor made applications before and felt he couldn't sell himself well. I worked with him over a few months to apply for an apprenticeship, going over what to say and (what to leave out!) in interviews. He has now got himself a 4 year apprenticeship with a big Edinburgh company to learn to be a maintenance engineer and is on track to earn about £21,000 per year in his final year'.

How and why did The Action Group start?

'The Action Group has been going over 45 years and was originally formed by parents of people with learning difficulties who campaigned for resources and services for their loved ones because there were none, nada, nothing at all back then. They also campaigned for the closure of Gogarburn Hospital and the right for the patients to live in the community as part of the community. Over the years The Action Group developed into a service provider as well as campaigner and is about "No barriers - for all of life" and the people we support continue to be right at the centre of everything we do.'

'Real Jobs is a service provided by the Action Group as part of the All In Edinburgh Consortium. It is a supported employment service for people who live in Edinburgh and have a long-term health condition (including mental health) or have a disability; and are looking for help to get (and keep) a paid job. I have been working in my role as employment adviser in lots of venues and situations and have recently developed close connections with the foodbanks to work in partnership with them to offer services to their foodbank customers. I also really value the opportunity to work in partnership with the MHIS and offer support to some of the people who visit for advice or signposting.'

Thanks Elaine!



Anxiety and Depression

Often these two mental health labels are put together and they are indeed experienced together in the same person. Some might say one often leads to the other and they feedback to each other, but they can also be experienced on their own. They can also be featured in other recognised mental health conditions, such as personality disorder, bipolar disorder and complex post-traumatic stress disorder. They can be seen in neuro-divergent people, such as those with ADHD. Anxiety features in obsessive-compulsive disorder and in those coming off substances to name a couple. In fact, no-one escapes anxiety in new and challenging situations until an unhelpful way to handle it is mastered. Habitual avoidance of situations, using substances or other people to cope can put off or even increase anxiety and make our world a restricted place. Depression can come as a result of that restriction amongst other causes.

One of the solutions is to find a cause and work on that. However, there can be multiple causes that merge together to result in the anxiety and depression and so it can be best to go for the multi-pronged solutions that we at MHIS advocate.

For many people tension and mood disturbances are lifelong or recur so having a different relationship with or attitude to the symptoms and signs can make a difference. Sometimes once we have experienced anxiety and depression, we go on guard for the symptoms returning, as we might with any event that felt terrible, and this stops us enjoying the moments we have. We are triggered by anything that vaguely feels like what we experienced before, and we can get despairing at this. Health anxiety is a good example of this. Having the attitude that bad emotions will pass, as will good ones, can help. Also using 'opposite action' (a CBT technique) in certain situations to act despite the way we feel can help us push through the negative thoughts that can have us restricting our lives unnecessarily.

Peer Support and more

There is peer support available in Edinburgh in the form of Health in Mind's Anxiety and Depression support group that runs once a week in person and also online at present. More information is available here. <http://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/>

We have our own educational videos with cartoon characters to illustrate the processes of the mind and body in response to triggers, with follow-ups discussing the principles of CBT and mindfulness. Called 'Anxiety, Stress and Related Conditions' and 'Jake does CBT with a little Mindfulness' on our resources page on NHS Lothian site: <https://weare.nhslothian.scot/mentalhealthinformationstation/mental-health-information-resources/>

Here are some of the other websites we recommend with self-help advice.

- Explanation of the conditions on MIND website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- Our own Depression information sheet at MHIS which includes app resources: <https://weare.nhslothian.scot/mentalhealthinformationstation/wp-content/uploads/sites/102/2022/12/MHIS-Anxiety-Information-Resources.pdf>
- Decider Skills can be learned in Edinburgh via Thrive welcome teams. Here is their website: <https://www.thedecider.org.uk/>
- Self help guide for anxiety by psychologists from NHS inform: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-help-guides/anxiety-self-help-guide>
- Self-compassion to help with poor self-image often present in depression: <https://self-compassion.org/>
- Medication information about anti-depressants: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/tests-and-treatments/medicines-and-medical-aids/types-of-medicine/antidepressants>

Looking outside the 'medical box' and refocusing on changing aspects of our lives could also help, hence the enormous amount of community resources we have information about. Come and see us for an expert chat!

Focus on the Community

In this edition we feature information about arts, crafts and creative activities in Edinburgh. We are lucky enough at MHIS to have access to up to date information about many sources of arts and crafts, which can be very useful to handle our mental health. Here is a link to our guide page, created in collaboration with the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership.

<https://www.edinburghhsc.scot/connecthere>

There are lots of interesting entries in the Connect Here Directory. Here are some appealing examples: **Scottish Poetry Library**, **Ageing Well Programme: Photography in Meadowbank Sports Centre** and **'The Forget Me Notes'** singing group.

Scottish Poetry Library www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk

The Library is a unique national resource and advocate for the art of poetry, and Scottish poetry in particular. Its mission is to bring people and poems together, aiming to transform people's lives through exciting experiences and creative engagement with poetry.

Ageing Well Programme: Photography in Meadowbank Sports Centre

Meadowbank Sports Centre 139-143 London Road, Edinburgh EH7 6AE T: 0131 458 2260

Opening Hours: Fridays 10am-12pm. (every 2nd Friday the group is out and about at various locations taking photographs). E: active@edinburghleisure.co.uk

Their photography group are not experts, but keen self-taught amateur photographers who enjoy taking photographs and trying to improve their skills. All that participants need is their own digital camera, mobile phone and access to a computer. Group members are on hand to help participants to get the best pictures they can and show how to edit on Windows 8 upwards. All abilities welcome.

Focus on the Community

'The Forget Me Notes' singing group in Edinburgh

T: 0758 889 4587 E: admin@forgetmenotes.org.uk W: <https://www.forgetmenotes.org.uk>

There is no criteria for joining the choir other than you like music. The choir has been built upon dementia-friendly values and is inclusive of all. It aims to offer people a good social meeting place, challenge the stigma of dementia and create a sound that people enjoy listening to. 3 different ways to join them:

ZOOM Choir

The Zoom choir takes place every Monday at 4.00pm (join from 3.45pm for tea and chat!). If you would like to join us please email or phone us and we will let you have more details. When able to meet face to face again, the Forget Me Notes choir will meet every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 7pm, at: The Salvation Army Hall, Gorgie Road, Near Saughton Gardens.

Choir in the park

Our choir in Saughton Park takes place fortnightly on a Thursday. During the winter months we are in the glasshouse at 1.45pm. The choir session ends with tea and hot chocolate. We will be there:

Thursday 19th January; Thursday 2nd February; Thursday 16th February; Thursday 2nd March; Thursday 16th March

Forget Me Notes Choir

Where it all started! Our Forget Me Notes Choir meets fortnightly on a Thursday at 4.00pm at the Salvation Army Hall, Gorgie Road, Edinburgh EH11 2RT. The next sessions will be:

Thursday 26th January; Thursday 9th February; Thursday 23rd February; Thursday 9th March ; Thursday 23rd March

These are fun times together, with lots of laughter as well as singing!

Late Train

No one is a burden! If you are in a mental health crisis and need immediate support, you can call your GP or, if they are closed, call NHS 24 on 111.

Edinburgh Crisis Centre T: 0808 801 0414 - Helpline open: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

E: crisis@edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk W: www.edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk/

National Helplines:

Papyrus – Prevention of Young Suicide T: 0800 068 4141 Open: 9am – midnight every day of the year (Weekends and Bank Holidays included) W: www.papyrus-uk.org

Samaritans Scotland T: 116 123 - Helpline open: 24 hours a day

E: jo@samaritans.org W: www.samaritans.org

Breathing Space Phone line T: 0800 838 587 - Helpline open: Mon to Thurs: 6pm to 2am; Fri 6pm-Mon 6am W: <https://www.breathingspace.scot/>

CALM (Campaign against living miserably) web: <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

Helpline: evenings 5-12 midnight 0800 585858

Last Stop this Issue

Keep in touch! Visit and subscribe to us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthInformationStation>

And keep an eye on our NHS Lothian resources page:

<https://weare.nhslothian.scot/mentalhealthinformationstation/mental-health-information-resources/>

