

Being heard

We will be providing weekly briefings on different subjects and themes during the C19 Crisis. Welcome to issue #15

This week we are focusing on the importance of dialogue as we invite you to help us develop our Thrive on Thursday Dialogues sessions. From Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership's citizen survey to the recommendations arising from conversations with Polish men, the PHEW service development and Edinburgh Futures Institute initiating a dialogue on culture and the arts in the city, dialogue and coproduction are the underpinning features.

Thanks as always for all your contributors and to your continuing feedback. Please keep sending us ideas and contributions: linda.irvinefitzpatrick@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

“It is not the voice that commands the story; it is the ear”

Italo Calvino

Thrive **on** Thursday Perspectives, Propositions and Provocations

During such a period of seismic change we need to be talking and listening to each other. It's timely to invite you to help us develop our **Thrive on Thursday Dialogue** series

From Thursday 27 August the Edinburgh Thrive team will be hosting a series of conversations online to discuss the impact of Covid 19 and what it means for our citizens' mental health and wellbeing in Edinburgh. Do we need to revisit some of our priorities that are set out in the Framework and Commissioning Plans? (Both documents can be accessed on our website <https://www.edinburghthrive.com>. Are there different priorities we now need to consider and plan for as a consequence of Covid 19?

We are working on the programme now and are really keen to hear from you on topics and themes you want to see in the Thrive on Thursday dialogues. Please do email with your ideas and thoughts. linda.irvinefitzpatrick@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Edinburgh Culture Conversations

The University of Edinburgh **Culture Conversations** is an online event series bringing together members of the public, artists, academics and cultural leaders to debate how the arts and creative sectors can help society recover from the effects of Covid-19.

People from around the world are invited to take part in a series of online events which will examine how the arts and creative sectors can help society recover from the effects of Covid-19. The Edinburgh Culture Conversations will bring together members of the public, artists, academics and cultural leaders to debate the future shape and purpose of the culture sector.

The 10-week series – hosted by the University of Edinburgh – takes place against the backdrop of Edinburgh’s Festivals not being able to ahead in 2020 in the usual way. The online debates began on **Monday 13 July**, with the first conversation considering the question “How can we keep the Festival spirit of internationalism and inter-culturalism alive?”

Janet Archer, the University of Edinburgh’s Director of Festivals, Cultural and City Events, will chair the weekly conversations which will debate the value of creativity, not only to the arts, but also to society and the wider economy. Members of the public are being encouraged to submit questions during the debates, which will be streamed live. The recordings and transcript will be made available to stimulate further discussion.

Conversation 3 on 3 August will be focusing on **“Have the arts helped communities stay connected and safe in a time of social distancing?”** Some people have felt a profound sense of loss during the lockdown. Has online arts activity helped them retain their sense of community? Is there a longing for shared live cultural experiences, or have people have adjusted to the new normal? The panel includes Jackie Kay CEO and Festival Director of the Edinburgh International Festival and Jan-Bert van den Berg, Director of Artlink

BSL/English interpreters will be available at all events. You can find our more about the series and book places here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/events/festivals/cultural-and-city-events/edinburgh-culture-conversations>

The Peoples Health and Emotional Wellbeing (P.H.E.W.) Space & Broomhouse Hub

Space and the Broomhouse Hub were commissioned by Edinburgh Thrive to conduct a survey with young adults aged 18-25 to explore the issues around access to mental health services in SW Edinburgh.

The survey demonstrated that the most common barriers to accessing mental health support were both lack of confidence and lack of trust in services. The young people felt safer talking to friends and family or using online resources.

Following the survey we supported a small focus group to co-design their own MH support group. These young people identified that the best way to improve their mental health and wellbeing was amongst a group of peers with facilitators they knew and trusted. As part of the co-design the young people involved called it 'The Peoples Health and Emotional Wellbeing (P.H.E.W.)'. In a post covid context, the young people continue to co-design this MH support group, to help reach those who need it and is able to adapt to their needs.

Currently PHEW offers 18 to 25 year olds a safe and friendly online space to make connections with others, develop a better understanding of mental health and wellbeing in a digital group setting, build resilience and reduce social isolation. If a young person has certain barriers to group work, this support can also be offered in a one-to-one setting.

PHEW is currently accepting referrals

For more information contact Jamie@spacescot.org
or Julie@spacescot.org



Edinburgh **Health and
Social Care** Partnership



Want to hear from you.....

The Edinburgh Pact

The Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, responsible for delivering community and bed-based health and social care services for adults in Edinburgh, want to build thriving communities in Edinburgh and embrace the opportunity to create a different type of relationship with residents, communities and organisations across the city.

It's why they are starting a conversation to build the Edinburgh Pact. The Edinburgh Pact will be an agreement between the Partnership and everyone who lives and works in Edinburgh. And the first step is to listen and learn what health and social care means to you.

How can I get involved?

The Partnership want to hear from everyone in their short survey - from dedicated groups of volunteers and people using health and social care services, to people providing key services across the City and our committed Third Sector colleagues.

Please take a few minutes and let us know [what health and social care means to you](#) so that we can make sure it's a service created by the community, for the community in Edinburgh. **The survey closes on 12 August** and is a designed to be an open and accessible to everyone.

You can also find more information on the [EHSCP website](#)

Help spread the word

Please encourage those who you provide care for to participate and help them complete our survey too. And help spread the word to colleagues, Partners and community groups using your networks or social media accounts.

If you're already logged into Twitter, [click here](#) to retweet our post.

TACKLING STIGMA AND PREVENTING SUICIDE FOR POLISH MEN IN SCOTLAND



On July 23rd SeeMe and Fenicks at the , It's Okay to Talk, event launched the new research report *Mental Health & Suicides Among Polish Men in Scotland*. (Kopeć, P and Czarnecka, M 2020)

This research is a follow up to *A review of suicides in Polish people living in Scotland (2012-2016)* conducted by Fenicks and NHS in 2018 which showed that the level of suicides among the Polish men in Scotland was nearly twice as high as among the Scots. The aim of this research was to explore **Polish men's mental health stigma and barriers to help-seeking that lead them to suicide**. Through focus groups and a questionnaire the authors explored the main problems that impact the well-being of the Polish men's in Scotland; the stereotypes around masculinity and help-seeking; sources of support they would be likely to use.

The research shows that Polish men living in Scotland are reluctant to seek help in relation to mental health problems either from people around them and from specialists. The participants suffer from loneliness, homesickness and difficulties in creating meaningful friendships with other men whether Polish or Scottish. Often entangled in the stereotype of a self-sufficient and hard-working Pole, they felt pressure to succeed and to focus their life on work, which isolated them even further. The 'I can handle it by myself' and 'don't want to bother others' attitudes refrained them from reaching out for help.

Family is, traditionally, a main source of support for the Polish men in Poland (Czarnecka, 2019). However, those living abroad could not count on the relatives' support. Parents living in Poland were found inadequate due to not understanding the reality of the men's life in Scotland. A Poland bound family was also of not much help in case of financial problems. This was explained with the differences in currencies and income levels. Only a romantic partner and less frequently friends were seen as a source of help. This, however, put single and isolated men in a great disadvantage. Despite the general reluctance to use any source of institutional support, whether coming from the NHS or the third sector organisations, about 40% of the participants were keen to see a psychologist. Many wished those services were more accessible and available in Polish.

Language and cultural barriers, seen by the researchers as a lack of cultural flexibility or competences, impacted their adaptability to the Scottish society and system. Only a fraction of the respondents would ask their GPs for help in case of the mental health problems. This was further explained as the lack of awareness of how the Scottish health system and the third sector operate and an inability to present the problems in a right way or to talk about emotions at all.

The Recommendations

The authors set out a number of recommendations.

- Designing an awareness-raising campaign targeting Polish men living in Scotland to initiate a social conversation about their mental health. It is essential to equip them in the necessary phrases that could be used to tackle the social stigma of a male mental health.
- Raising awareness of the available sources of support both in the NHS and through organisations like Samaritans. They should reach to Polish men in their workplaces and Polish social media with information in Polish on how to contact them and how these organisations can help them.
- Creating an information brochure in Polish explaining how the health system in Scotland works. This could be also extended to cover different spheres of life in Scotland such as financial system, law, culture, history etc.
- Change in the national policies such as mental health strategy to distinguish Polish ethnicity as a separate category of a minority which would allow designing actions and strategies tailored to the characteristics of this group.
- Create local socialising opportunities for Polish men both within their community (where the language barrier exists) and within the wider international environment. Those initiatives should be focused on some physical activities such as sport, art or DIY which would allow Polish men to spend time with each other by doing something together. Actions like Men's Shed could be a good example but they shouldn't be linked too much with support or psychological organisations. There is a risk that they could be influenced by the negative perception of these organisations by Polish men due to a mental health stigma.
- Conducting more research on Polish men's mental health deepening some of the findings from this report, such as men's behaviour in male groups and impact of the toxic relationships on their wellbeing or the reception of the different forms of psychological support (i.e. telephone support) by Polish men.

The authors are calling for a more proactive approach in reaching out to the Polish community in Scotland to tackle a social isolation as well as a lack of awareness of the services.

Edinburgh Thrive will be considering and discussing these recommendations within the context of our Building Resilient Communities and Addressing Inequalities workstreams.

You can access the full report at

<https://seemescotland.org/media/9868/feniks-polish-men-in-scotland-report-2020.pdf>

5 ways to wellbeing whilst staying at home during the Coronavirus



1 Connect

It can be stressful being at home continuously, so keep your spirits high by reaching out to your connections; send a text or even video call.

<https://www.ionos.co.uk/digitalguide/online-marketing/social-media/skype-alternatives>

2 Be Active

Whether it's by stretching out or becoming your own personal trainer, staying active will keep your mind and body healthy.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-51959557/coronavirus-the-green-goddess-returns-with-self-isolation-fitness-tips>

3 Keep Learning

Our brains love to learn, so keep them engaged and challenge yourself to read a book, work on some puzzles or even try out a new recipe.

<https://www.classcentral.com/collection/ivy-league-moocs>

4 Give

Give some time to listen and help those around you, even the smallest act of kindness can improve your mental wellbeing.

<https://www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/volunteer/covid-19-faqs>

5 Take Notice

Take notice of your surroundings and practice some mindfulness, making sure that you keep a comfortable space to relax.

<https://www.headspace.com>

Many people could be feeling more isolated and lonely over the coming weeks, so if you are feeling distressed, in a state of despair, suicidal or need emotional support, the following organisations can offer support:

Breathing Space
0800 83 85 87
Mon-Fri (6pm-2am)
Sat-Sun (24 hrs)

Samaritans
116 123
Mon-Sun (24 hrs)

The Silver Line
0800 4 70 80 90
For over 55
Mon-Sun (24 hrs)

Edinburgh Health and
Social Care Partnership

