

For attention of -

Gregor Henderson  
National Programme for Improving  
Mental Health and Wellbeing  
Scottish Government

18/03/2008



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## Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland

With reference to the consultation documentation and guidance notes issued in November 2007, I submit a response on behalf of East Lothian Council with regard to 'Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland'.

East Lothian Council welcomes the publication of this document and the opportunity to comment on important changes with regard to the future direction for mental health improvement for the next 3 years.

East Lothian Council has worked with its partner organisations to distribute information and promote dialogue about the mentally flourishing paper. We had good representation at a NHS Lothian event, representation at the 2 National events and we also held a local 'Towards a Mentally Flourishing East Lothian' event attended by 30 people.

Local focus has been about promoting the message that there can be no good health with out good mental health and also focusing on the fact that mental health can be improved just like physical health. There has also been a focus on discussing and explaining the dual continua model and the promotion of good mental health for all (those with and with out mental illness). There seems to be a strong local willingness to take this agenda forward.

Though acknowledging the need to shift emphasis from predominately national support activity to local actions we would wish to highlight the success of those national actions and the benefits the work of the National Programme has brought to mental health and wellbeing development. The focus on national issues such as stigma and recovery has had major local benefits. There is a concern that without the national focus on mental health issues some of the recent good work could lose its focus and profile. There is also no doubt that the specific funding attached to Choose Life has been a major factor in its success and implementation. This was a recurring comment at our local discussion day.

We have tried to address your three key questions during our discussions:

1. What shared objectives and actions for local delivery should be made for 2008-11 that would be deliverable, measurable and valuable?

The range of responses to this question produced very similar suggestions to those in the main consultation document. There are many common factors relating to what helps individuals flourish that need to be enabled in their communities. Factors such as good medical care, access to leisure facilities, work life balance, arts and culture activities, affordable housing, space and outdoors, emphasise the range of factors and potential for a wide range of agencies to impact on mental health.

All of these would fall in the 6 suggested actions:

Locally it was felt there is good work being done but we need to focus on issues such as:

- Improving mental health promotion and awareness
- Improving parenting skills
- Improving coping skills at an early age
- Mapping existing services
- Promoting / developing Local Area Coordination
- Addressing deprivation
- Multi agency training
- Promoting Recovery
- Engaging people in what is available in their communities

The issue of measurement / value is more difficult. There needs to be more focus on outcomes for individuals. There was also agreement that there needs to be much more service user involvement in measuring services. There was a suggestion that a user rating should be included in the way restaurants and accommodation is graded.

2. What national supports would help you to meet these objectives and actions?

- Evidence of what is known to work is very helpful in informing service development.
- Financial Resources
- National level campaigning / awareness raising
- Continuation of web based resources
- Literature and published information – including leaflets posters etc
- Opportunities to bring people together, conferences etc.

3. How can progress be tracked and performance assessed?

- Some of this can be done by outcome measurement, and use of any tools such as WEMWBS that are available.

- Many local population statistics with regard to health, home ownership, income and mortality rates may indicate a more 'healthy' community. Also factors such as levels of leisure facility usage, factors relating to community engagement e.g. volunteering, youth clubs / youth activity, library usage, use of community buildings may all relate to how vibrant and mentally enabling a community may be.

These are just a range of issues that were raised during the engagement process, which was in its self an enabling activity.

With the development of Community Planning comes an opportunity to ask the 'mentally flourishing question'. Hopefully we can rise to this challenge and communicate the message of the importance of good mental health and sharing this agenda with all partners.

Paul Noyes  
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On behalf of East Lothian Council