

# Support for people in custody with mental health issues



People in custody will be able to receive support for mental health issues through a pilot project launched by Police Scotland.

The organisation has joined forces with Breathing Space, Scotland's mental health telephone service, run by NHS 24.

The free, confidential phone service for adults aged 16 years or over currently receives more than 8000 calls per month from people in distress.

Now those who suffer from symptoms such as low mood, anxiety or depression will be offered access to the service while they are in police custody.

Chief Inspector Amanda O'Byrne, from the Criminal Justice Services Division, said: "The care and welfare of people in our custody is a priority for Police Scotland.

"We want to do more to provide access to services that go

beyond the time spent in custody and help people to move on with their lives in a more positive way.

“Although usually perceived as negative, time spent in custody can be used as a positive platform to give people the opportunity to receive guidance and support that they may either not have considered or been aware of previously.

“Working in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the Custody Healthcare Team we can provide the same support afforded to persons in the community, whilst working towards the recommendations in the Scottish Government’s Mental Health Strategy.”

Breathing Space complements the work of other support agencies which are endeavouring to reduce the suicide rates in Scotland.

It is managed by NHS 24 and delivered from contact centres in Clydebank, Cardonald and South Queensferry. The service is staffed by trained advisors who listen, offer advice and provide information.

The service is accessed by calling freephone 0800 83 85 87 and operates Monday to Thursday 1800hrs – 0200hrs and Friday 1800hrs through to 0600hrs on Monday morning. Breathing Space can also be accessed through the contact Scotland-BSL interpretation service.