

# **‘Thrive Edinburgh’ to Explore Mental Health Issues Across the Capital**

Organisations across Edinburgh have joined forces to start an open and honest conversation about the future of citizens' mental health.

Inspired by similar initiatives across the globe and building on the early findings of the Capital's [2050 City Vision](#), Thrive Edinburgh launched with a citywide conference last week (Friday 29 November) at the National Museum of Scotland.

The event brought over 150 people together including speakers from Thrive New York and Thrive London to share new ideas and discuss mental health initiatives with an ambition of nurturing people in Edinburgh's wellbeing.

Spearheaded by the city's Lord Provost and the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, Thrive Edinburgh aims to draw on – and plug into – the ongoing work of the Capital's city vision, poverty commission, community plan and city region deal. It will bring the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS, third sector and academia together to build upon existing work.

The Lord Provost Frank Ross has been appointed as Chair of Thrive Edinburgh. He said: "It's well known that Edinburgh offers a fantastic place to live and work with a quality of life that is second to none. Boasting more trees per head of population than anywhere else and with 1 in 3 people acting as a volunteer, our Capital is one of the greenest and most caring cities in the UK.

"Added to this, employment and educational opportunities are high. It's an ideal environment for wellbeing but when you

scratch beneath the surface, there are still too many citizens who aren't receiving the help they need.

"Perhaps this is down to stigma, modern city living or that help can be hard to access. With an ageing population, loneliness can be a major issue while others might not realise they're struggling or know where to turn. It's time we got to the root of mental health in Edinburgh and to do this, we need to join forces as a city.

"Just last week I met with WHALE Arts, the Pilmeny Development Project and North Edinburgh Arts – organisations which do an incredible job supporting people through difficult times – and I want to see us take a closer look at the initiatives we're already undertaking. We need to map out what we have in place so that we can collaborate further."

Following the conference, the Lord Provost will chair a new mental health assembly to explore ways of improving opportunities to support people in the Capital. With representatives from a cross-section of leaders from the city's public services, academic institutions, voluntary and private sector, the assembly will start meeting three times a year.



## Thrive Edinburgh

The launch of Thrive Edinburgh follows a decision by the Edinburgh Community Planning Partnership in June 2019 to establish a mental health assembly and annual conference on mental health and wellbeing. The initiative seeks to provide a springboard for Edinburgh to become a world-leader in providing preventative measures for those experiencing negative emotional and mental health issues.

Judith Proctor, commenting on behalf of the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, said: "Poor mental health is an important public health challenge and improving the wellbeing of the population is a national priority. Edinburgh is held in high regard for its commitment to mental health initiatives and is often looked to as a place of best practice.

"We have a chance to build on this by collaborating with charities, universities, companies and schools. We can be truly world leading if we work together. Following the conference, recommendations will be made to the assembly detailing a programme of actions and activities."

Discussion at the Thrive Edinburgh Conference centred around four guiding principles developed by other cities which have adopted a Thrive model of mental health work, outlined below.

### **1) Changing the conversation, changing the culture**

Mental health is everybody's business. It should be infused into a society's core functions including housing, education, culture, health and justice, and when people need help or support there should be recognition of the importance of relationships between people receiving health and social care services and the staff delivering them.

### **2 ) Using and creating evidence and data to drive change**

This involves listening and working with all stakeholders in a society, including academic institutions, to identify and address gaps, improve programmes and create a truly equitable

and responsive mental health system, by drawing on a wide range of evidence and creating an inquiring culture which builds evidence from practice.

### **3) Partnering with communities**

Listening and learning from each other, making the invisible visible, focusing on social networks, connectivity and relationships with kindness and respect through active co-production.

### **4) Acting early**

Creating a city where every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community. Our ability to thrive as human beings and as a city is closely tied to our mental health.