

Together Let's Care for your Mental Health this festive season

You're not alone with your mental health. The NHS have a message saying they are here to help you.

NHS 24, Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service are working together to support mental health and wellbeing for people across Scotland ahead of the festive season 2020. After a year like no other for the people of Scotland and our NHS and emergency services, the Together Let's Care for your Mental Health campaign aims to raise awareness of a range of mental health information and services that support mental health.

The three organisations have been working together to develop new ways to support people in mental health distress when they contact the services.

People calling Police Scotland in mental health distress may now be offered access to the NHS Mental Health Hub service. The Scottish Ambulance Service is also able to support some callers through a similar pathway.

Under the banner 'Together Let's Care for your Mental Health' the partners are able to signpost to a range of self-help guides and options for further support. Online information is available for a range of day to day concerns such as anxiety, depression, young people's mental health needs, alcohol, gambling and drug use.

NHS 24 offers a range of online mental health guides through NHSinform.scot as well as the 111 Mental Health Hub and Breathing Space's telephone and web chat services.

Stephanie Phillips, Director of Service Delivery, NHS 24 said: "We are pleased to be working together with Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service to provide the best possible outcomes for people in mental health distress. We know this Festive Season is going to be very different for everyone and many people will feel more anxious than usual. Our online resources are a good place to look for the first steps to support and self-care. If you need help *now* there are a range of services available to you. Our team are here to help those getting in touch with our services with a compassionate response."

Tony McLaren, National Coordinator for Breathing Space said: "We know that this time of year can be a particularly poignant and difficult time for some. This year there will be many people who are facing bereavement, anxiety and stress, perhaps for the first time. Talking about how you feel, and being listened to, can make all the difference. Our Breathing Space advisors are here to listen and respond when you need someone to support you."

Assistant Chief Constable, Police Scotland, Gary Ritchie said: "It is the challenge of all in public service to ensure that when people need help, they get it at the right time from the most appropriate agency.

"This is why we have strengthened our work with NHS and SAS colleagues, to make sure that those callers who are suffering mental ill health can now be referred directly to a qualified health professional. We will never step away from people in crisis where they have nowhere else to turn."

Vicky Burnham, Consultant Paramedic in Dementia and Clinical Lead for Mental Health with the Scottish Ambulance Service,

said: “We have been faced with many different challenges this year as a result of Covid-19 and all key workers have gone above and beyond, providing exceptional care throughout the year during an unprecedented global pandemic.

“With social interactions being limited as a result of restrictions this year, it’s vital that health care providers and emergency services are able to provide additional support to those who require help related to anxiety, depression, young people’s mental health needs, alcohol, gambling and drug use.

“We look forward to working alongside our colleagues at Police Scotland and NHS24 to ensure we continue to provide the very best care to patients across Scotland.”