



# SEE ME EVALUATION LEARNING

WHAT WORKS TO TACKLE MENTAL  
HEALTH STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION?  
PHASE 2



# See Me Evaluation Learning

## What Works to Tackle Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination?

See Me is Scotland's national programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination. Tackling stigma is foundational to mental health improvement, because of the barriers it presents for prevention and early intervention<sup>1</sup>. Reducing stigma and the fear of being treated unfairly or differently, creates the best conditions for mental wellbeing, enabling more people to access personalised support, care and treatment that promote recovery. See Me's vision is of a fairer and more inclusive Scotland, free from mental health stigma and discrimination. Much progress has been made in Scotland but there is more work to be done to ensure that stigma and discrimination are addressed as part of a population level mental health approach; within particular settings where they arise; among certain groups who experience the worst forms of stigma; and for those living with severe and long term mental illness.

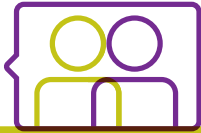
The Mental Health Foundation (MHF) has been See Me's research and learning partner throughout Phase 2 of the programme<sup>2</sup>. MHF evaluates aspects of See Me's delivery as evidenced in the most recent 2020/21 evaluation report, and in a previous suite of **reports** that captured the impact and learning of the programme across Phase 2. The evaluation of the programme has focused on See Me's progress towards outcomes, what works to tackle stigma and discrimination, understanding the mechanisms of change that are successful in reducing stigma and identifying barriers to change to be addressed as Phase 3 of See Me progresses.

This paper presents an overview of what works to tackle stigma and discrimination (the mechanisms of change) drawing on learning from across Phase 2 of the programme. The evidence for each mechanism of change is based on the evaluation of a number of projects and initiatives delivered during 2020/21 across programmatic areas. Each of these projects and initiatives contributes to multiple mechanisms of change, as reflected in each section below.

Details of the methodologies used to collect data, and ethical processes that guided each of the projects, can be found in the main 2020/21 See Me evaluation report. Further discussion about overarching themes emerging across Phase 2 of the programme and detailed recommendations for Phase 3 can also be found in the main evaluation report.

This paper is designed to accompany the See Me evaluation report for 2020/21. It offers focused insight into key themes that emerged from findings across Phase 2 evaluations, in response to the research question: what works to tackle and eliminate mental health stigma and discrimination? A range of emergent themes, identified as integral to tackling stigma and discrimination in the work of the See Me programme, will be presented and discussed. Some of these are well evidenced and have recurred throughout Phase 2 of the programme such as social contact, education and protest (influencing), and others are strategies that have emerged from the learning of the See Me programme.

## Mechanisms of Change



### SOCIAL CONTACT

Social contact is a well-evidenced mechanism for tackling mental health stigma and discrimination as highlighted by previous evaluations of the See Me programme, and other programmes and interventions<sup>3</sup>. Social contact can be defined as direct, personal contact between members of the general public and members of a stigmatised group. Social contact is the challenging of stigmatising attitudes through planned interactions and conversations between people who have lived experience of mental health problems and those who may not<sup>4</sup>. Social contact remains a key underlying approach of the See Me programme, as a successful mechanism of change to tackle stigma and discrimination.

Traditional social contact has been challenged over the last year by physical distancing restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the See Me programme has delivered innovative events and activities during 2020/21 in response to the unique circumstances brought about by the pandemic to continue to create social contact opportunities across the programme.

The **Anti Stigma Summer Sessions** gave See Me, volunteers and partners the opportunity to test a remote social contact model through online events enabling people to raise awareness of mental health issues and share stories of lived experience online. Immediate feedback from those who engaged in the sessions indicated that the approach worked well.

*“Embedding lived experience voices within the event was really successful.”*

**Anti Stigma Summer Sessions survey respondent**

The Voice Behind the Picture is another example of how social contact was used in a remote way, through creative storytelling, in which See Me supported delivery that enabled emerging writers to create monologues about mental health issues that were streamed online. It was reported by participants that the monologues encouraged reflection and discussion about mental health among people who may not otherwise have engaged with such issues before.

In See Me's Workplace programme, the partnership with Police Scotland (N Division) has seen the development of a Health and Wellbeing project delivered by a dedicated post holder who implemented a range of See Me tools and resources to drive forward anti-stigma initiatives with social contact at the core. For example, one Police Officer created a video documenting their journey with mental health problems that was launched on Mental Health Awareness Day 2020.

*"The impact the [Police Officer's] video had was huge. People were talking about it, coming forward... that would never have happened before."*

**Police Scotland (N Division) senior leader**

See Me's long-running **eLearning** training programme is another example of how remote social contact has been used successfully to improve participants' knowledge and awareness of mental health stigma and discrimination in a workplace context. The online programme embeds proxy social contact through lived experience videos, stories and scenarios that are central to the training modules. Hearing others' stories of experiencing mental health problems in the workplace was particularly impactful for participants. Many reported finding these stories engaging and powerful because they were based on real experiences and different perspectives.

*"Excellent, relevant videos with fantastic input from people who have suffered, are suffering, from a mental illness."*

**eLearning post evaluation survey respondents**

During 2020/21, See Me's Communications team created a mental health podcast series as another way to deliver proxy social contact during the COVID-19 pandemic. By sharing experiences of mental health, participants used podcasts to reach a potentially wider and more dispersed audience, increasing knowledge and awareness about mental health problems and using lived experience to provide opportunities for social contact. With the universal challenges of facilitating face-to-face events during the pandemic, finding alternative ways to enable social contact has been vital for See Me.

*"It was great to be asked to be involved to share my story because stories, especially in a podcast... lets other people see that they can achieve things."*

**Podcast participant**

Each of these projects sit within the wider programmatic approach to social contact, addressing the issue of sustained contact and of being part on an ongoing long-term programme.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education as a tool to tackle stigma and discrimination is also a well-established mechanism of change. Education and training continue to underpin each area of the See Me programme as a vital way to raise awareness and increase knowledge about mental health stigma and discrimination, laying the groundwork for taking action to challenge it.

During 2020/21, Community Champion training was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) training in schools using What's on Your Mind (WOYM) concluded. Instead, there has been an emphasis on skills development of participants who took part in projects delivered and supported by See Me's Social Movement team during 2020/21. For example, the Anti Stigma Summer Sessions offered learning and skills development opportunities for those who attended. When asked what their motivations for participating in the Anti Stigma Summer Sessions were, several reported that they wanted to learn about and apply strategies for tackling mental health stigma and discrimination in their workplaces and professions.

**The Voice Behind the Picture** also provided participants with a skills development programme during lockdown. Project participants who took part in the evaluation said that they benefited from refining their creative writing skills in a supported and safe space. The project structure, offering a flexible combination of live and recorded workshops and one-to-one sessions facilitated learning for participants. Some participants had never written about mental health before and appreciated the opportunity to try it. In addition to developing their writing, participants highlighted other

skills they gained through the project including skills in using online technologies, editing and performance skills.

*"I learned so much from it at a time when I needed it."*

*"Now I'm more familiar with technology."*

***The Voice Behind the Picture Project participants***

The Workplace programme continues to offer education and training opportunities in different forms. The eLearning programme is a valued education tool that engaged more than 2,330 participants over Phase 2<sup>5</sup>. Participants develop their knowledge, awareness and understanding of mental health, stigma and discrimination through a series of six online modules. Pre and post questionnaires and the programme evaluation survey demonstrated that the majority of participants (98% or over) found the training content informative. Survey data showed that participants' knowledge and awareness increased after the training in different areas such as understanding of employee rights, the impact of stigma and discrimination on people within the workplace and the importance of stigma reduction to developing mentally healthy workplaces.

The Education and Young people programme is underpinned by education as a key mechanism for tackling stigma and discrimination. The programme aims to improve mental health literacy and skills development to increase confidence, self-esteem, help seeking behaviour and skills and knowledge to effectively challenge stigma and self-stigma among young people. Initial findings from the evaluation of the new

See Me *Toolkit* in schools support previous findings that See Me training in schools does increase confidence amongst trained senior pupils. Levels of mental health literacy increased, and the new online training and self-directed PDF workbook is supporting and empowering senior pupils to challenge stigma in their school communities and engage fellow pupils. Social contact is a core and successful element of the *Toolkit* training in schools.

The delivery of the *Toolkit* has been particularly important during the time of a global pandemic, when poor mental health among young people is increasing and likely to continue to increase in the wake of COVID-19. Educating senior pupils and teachers builds the capacity of school communities to identify and take action to address mental health and reduce stigma and discrimination. The school *Toolkit* is designed to increase knowledge, understanding and skills development. The training creates opportunities for participants to meet people and build relationships with others in the school, to build collective understanding and create a sense of peer involvement and engagement. The development of peer support networks is essential for learning, as well as for future implementation in schools. Peer engagement and support is a key feature of education in the See Me programme and has been successfully achieved in the last year, despite a necessary switch to online delivery. In fact, early indications suggest that for some, online delivery may in some instances be preferable and enhance confidence and connection with peers.

*"I enjoyed the online aspect."*

**S6 pupil, *Toolkit* pilot participant**



## INFLUENCING AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Protest, most often seen in the form of influencing in the See Me programme, and partnership working have evolved as key mechanisms for tackling mental health stigma and discrimination. As part of See Me Scotland's refreshed strategic direction that sees less focus on direct delivery towards building the capacity and expertise of partners to take action, influence change, partnership working at all levels to tackle stigma and discrimination has never been more important.

Building the capacity of others to take action through training, resource sharing and collaboration has been seen to be effective in raising awareness of stigma and discrimination, understanding what action is required and where, facilitating and leading change and demonstrating progress and impact.

See Me's strategic partnership with Police Scotland (N Division) is a good example of working with and influencing an organisation at Divisional (rather than team or department level) to gain greater traction. Senior leaders emphasised the importance of the partnership with See Me for progressing this work. Key elements of success include access to See Me's expertise, objective support and advice, its ability to hold senior leaders from the Division to account, a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership based on respect and access to See Me's tools and resources. It can be challenging for organisations to acknowledge the existence of issues such

as mental health stigma and discrimination proactively and openly. Senior leaders credited the partnership with See Me as a means by which to support them to do this.

*"We need to show a bit more humility about our level of knowledge of understanding and, actually, it's working in partnership in a different sort of way, where we're not having to take charge of it, which is what we tend to do."*

**Police Scotland (N Division) Senior leader**

Another example of strong and impactful influencing can be found in See Me's collaborative relationship with Law Society Scotland. Working in partnership with the membership body to embed a commitment to reducing stigma and discrimination within the legal profession is an approach designed to influence at the highest level and to achieve scale and scope that would not be possible through working with individual organisations.

In its Health and Social Care programme, See Me has significantly strengthened strategic partnership working and influencing work. The impact of most of this work in the past year can be seen in the successful establishment of several new partnerships and the continuation of existing ones, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. See Me has worked strategically with partner organisations at a time when these organisations have been bearing, and will continue to bear, the highest burden of the pandemic. See Me has worked alongside these partners in a flexible way, supporting them to adopt elements of the **Mental Health Inclusion Suite of Resources** and to support them in their efforts to ensure inclusive mental health care. Many partners have engaged with the

tools but have been unable to deliver due to the pandemic; others have faced barriers to delivery which See Me has helped them to overcome, to ensure the advancement of a mental health inclusion agenda:

*"There's so much we need See Me support with, and guidance...Despite ongoing changes and difficulties, See Me are still there and willing to help. They are always there to support".*

**Strategic Partner Lead in HSC, anonymous**

An example of influencing and partnership working within Health and Social Care include See Me's involvement in the strategic board responsible for developing the Tayside Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy: **Living Life Well**. See Me engaged in a strategic and collaborative approach to a system-wide, complex care issue in partnership with the NHS, local authorities, service users, carers, families and other third sector organisations, to develop the strategy and to embed commitment and action to reduce mental health stigma and discrimination.

In See Me's Education and Young People's (EYP) programme, strategic partnership work continues to go from strength to strength. For example, See Me works in partnership with the North Ayrshire Mental Health Operational Group (MHOG) that was established in February 2019 to embed action to address mental health stigma and discrimination as part of a wider approach to improving mental health within education in North Ayrshire. The MHOG is comprised of multi-agency partners and representatives from the health, education, third and social care sectors, that facilitates a coordinated approach in the local authority.

Across settings, most prominently in schools and workplaces, there is evidence that action to tackle stigma and discrimination is more effective if considered as a core part of a wider mental health improvement approach, which requires ongoing and sustained commitment.

*"It can't be people working in silos – education, CAMHS, community services etc. [The MHOG] can get ideas off the ground because there's a team there ready to engage. You can plan, implement. See Me are part of it and it's an eye-opener for other services".*

**Schools Lead, North Ayrshire MHOG**

## LEADERSHIP

Leadership has emerged as a theme in previous See Me evaluations, as an important facilitating factor when looking to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. See Me has built on the strength of influential leadership through its initiatives and interventions as a way in which to change attitudes and behaviours towards people living with mental health problems, across programme areas.

Leadership has emerged as important at a number of levels in tackling stigma and discrimination. Strategic leadership and influence that demonstrates commitment to anti stigma work can encourage wider buy in. Strong leadership is required to coordinate and progress a coherent anti stigma approach, and leadership at delivery level is essential to drive forward action to achieve stigma reduction.

In the Workplace programme, See Me's partnership with Police Scotland (N Division) demonstrates how senior leadership commitment and buy into mental health initiatives are key to encouraging high levels of engagement in a workplace that can be culturally resistant to open discussions about mental health. Senior leaders within N Division initiated the health and wellbeing partnership with See Me and showed visible engagement to creating a mentally healthy culture from the outset. Senior leaders actively participated in the various campaigns and initiatives implemented by the Health and Wellbeing Project Officer to send a message to the wider workplace. They recognised that their involvement in the project would encourage staff and officers at all levels of the Division to take part.

*"It was important to show personal commitment, leadership and encourage one and all to be open and talk about their mental health."*

**Police Scotland Pass the Badge survey respondent**

See Me's partnership with Law Society Scotland (LSS) further illustrates how senior leadership commitment can create momentum and add weight to campaigns and initiatives designed to improve mental health in the workplace. The LSS senior leadership team publicly advocates its partnership with See Me, for example through publishing its See Me in Work **survey findings** and **action plan** and took a leadership approach to implementing the Pass the Badge campaign. This involved senior figures within the organisation launching Pass the Badge on World Mental Health Day 2020 with a series of **blogs and**



**videos** sharing their stories and personal experiences of mental health, to encourage others within the profession to get involved. This created a sense of legitimacy and support for wider staff participation. Focus group discussions with members of the **LSS Wellbeing Steering Group** revealed that coordinated and visible leadership involvement in the campaign was intended to ensure that all member organisations and employees would be able to participate and engage. They agreed that the elimination of mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace is reliant upon appropriate and strong leadership to carry forward an agenda of mental health and wellbeing with reducing stigma and discrimination at the core.

*"Our chief exec, senior leadership team level and our president...they have been very supportive and well invested in it, which is very helpful. It's really helped having a very vocal president this year on the issues around mental health, stigma and discrimination."*

**LSS evaluation interviewee**

The 2020/21 See Me evaluation found that culture is often tied closely to leadership. For example, See Me's partnership with Police Scotland (N Division) has been driven forward by senior leaders within the organisation, supported and guided by See Me, to develop a 'caring culture'. Senior leaders involved in the partnership recognised that leadership helps to build culture. They acknowledged that it is the responsibility of leaders to develop a culture that empowers all staff to be instrumental in creating a health and wellbeing environment; in which all feel comfortable to talk about mental health and

supported to speak out and access help if needed.

Work with senior school leaders has demonstrated that leadership in education is an essential part of driving the cultural shift required to gain support for anti-stigma activities taken forward by schools.

Senior leaders from the Law Society Scotland highlighted that the legal profession has work to do to break down cultural barriers to tackling mental health stigma and discrimination. Active engagement from the Law Society Scotland senior leadership team in the **Pass the Badge** campaign and other anti-stigma activities helped create an environment whereby a more supportive culture could continue to develop. Some evaluation participants indicated that high engagement levels from senior staff were important in helping to tackle prejudices that existed in the culture of some firms, where staff perceived that only younger people experienced mental health problems or talked about mental health.

*"I've heard it characterised, 'It's all just a millennial thing. They can't be bothered doing anything.' It's nothing to do with that...it's not just the millennials that are having problems with this."*

**LSS evaluation interviewee**



## PEER BASED APPROACH

### Key definitions

*Peer based approaches* are based on the assumption that behaviour is socially influenced and that behavioural norms are developed through interaction<sup>19</sup>. A peer led approach is commonly, although not exclusively, found in education interventions.

*Peer support* is when people use their own experiences to help each other. There are different types of peer support but they all involve both giving and receiving support, for example sharing knowledge, providing emotional support, social interaction or practical help<sup>20</sup>. Peer support is focused on individual strengths and works towards individual wellbeing and recovery<sup>21</sup>.

*Peer leadership* is where a person or people with lived experience of mental health problems work collaboratively to initiate change where it is needed, in communities, services and systems. Peer leaders help build and sustain a powerful sense of community and often represent underrepresented group, creating for them a platform and voice<sup>22</sup>.

See Me adopts a peer based approach to its work to equip people with the knowledge and skills they require to contribute to, support and lead anti-stigma activities in Scotland. A peer led approach is significant in the context of stigma and discrimination because it describes the help and support that people with lived experience of a mental health problem can give to each other, which varies in type, but always based on shared personal experience and empathy<sup>6</sup>.

Peer support and peer leadership are cornerstones of See Me interventions and closely aligned to education as a core mechanism of change. Lived experience is embedded into programmes of work in order to inspire individuals to take action at grassroots level to tackle stigma and discrimination.

Developing peer driven community based social movements and local leaders to challenge stigma and discrimination are important for delivering impactful initiatives that can raise awareness of issues unique to them and hold institutions and the general public to account. Social movement continues to underpin the programme and a peer led approach manifests in different ways.

The Social Movement team designed the **Anti Stigma Summer Sessions** in 2020, in a way that empowered volunteers and supporters with lived experience of mental health problems to lead and co-facilitate online events that used a range of creative methods to encourage conversations about mental health during the pandemic. The events were intended to support participants to share their own stories and journeys with mental health. Participants<sup>7</sup> involved in the 2020/21 evaluation on the whole agreed that this peer led approach worked well. Some of those who engaged in the events felt that the approach made events more relatable.

**Pass the Parcel**, a project also delivered by a See Me volunteer and supported by the Social Movement team was developed based on a peer-to-peer approach. Participants involved in the evaluation<sup>8</sup> reported that the project gave them an autonomy that enabled them to create and tailor their own parcels and use them to reach people in a range of ways. This meant that the project was very much directed by those taking part and that they were able to identify who might benefit from receiving a parcel, as well as offer informal peer support. Having the freedom to lead a practical activity was emphasised as being a key strength of the project, as it meant that participants felt very engaged and could directly see the impact of their involvement and the difference they made.

**The Voice Behind the Picture** initiative aimed to create a community of peers with common interests and passions during the pandemic. As well as resulting in increased social connections at a time when social interaction was limited, the project lead encouraged a peer led approach. Participants reported that sessions were delivered a way that enabled the writers to form relationships with each other, which they described as a community. Participants used this community for peer support – sharing advice and learning – during the course of the project.

*"It felt rewarding, the ripple effects of kindness."*

**Pass the Parcel participant**

**Feniks' research** supported by See Me's Social Movement team, **adopted a peer research methodology**, by recruiting a male Polish researcher to better connect with male participants and achieve higher levels of engagement in the work. This worked well

because cultural norms suggest that Polish men are more likely to talk to other Polish men about personal issues, than women, as reported by the Feniks' project lead. The project lead<sup>9</sup> added that Polish communities on the whole have little trust in the Government, central agencies and institutions such as the NHS. Therefore, having a peer researcher carrying out data collection was reassuring and encouraged participation.

*"I don't think they would tell so much with a female..."*

**Feniks project lead**

A peer-to-peer approach is one of the underpinning mechanisms of change in the Education and Young People (EYP) programme used to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. Specifically, a peer led approach has been one of the defining features of EYP programme delivery and particularly evident in the implementation of the *Toolkit* in schools<sup>10</sup>. See Me Youth Workers and Youth Champions delivered the first module of the *Toolkit* training online to pilot schools during the pandemic. This included hosting peer-led online learning and check-in sessions alongside completion of core learning by senior pupils, as well as a closed Facebook page where senior pupils could engage in online conversations, information sharing and Q&A sessions with Youth Workers, Youth Champions and their peers.

This peer-to-peer approach is fundamental to the schools training; it gives young people autonomy and a sense of ownership over their learning. It also creates a sense of community, between Youth Workers, Youth Champions and senior pupils and among the senior pupils themselves. Beyond the

immediate training, the intention of the *Toolkit* is that senior pupils will then go on to implement the training and take forward action in their own school communities using a similar peer-led approach. The training encourages them to work with trained fellow pupils to engage their peers in conversations and activities designed to eliminate mental health stigma and discrimination.

Trust is a defining characteristic of the peer-led approach in schools and has been discussed in previous See Me [evaluation reports](#). Senior pupils taking part in the training developed trust in the See Me Youth

Workers and Youth Champions and felt more confident to engage freely, without the constant oversight of teachers. This was equally, if not more important, with online delivery in 2020/21. Youth Workers and Youth Champions generated and maintained a peer-led, trusting community remotely and established a rapport through the training. Importantly, a peer-led approach also facilitates peer-to-peer engagement and support within the See Me youth community, giving Youth Workers and Youth Champions collective responsibility, enabling them to make the training and delivery their own.



## INCLUSION

See Me promotes mental health inclusion and facilitates projects and initiatives that create safe and social spaces in which people can share stories and experiences and build connections while talking about mental health. Evaluation learning tells us that sustained change is best achieved where cultures and conditions are created to support inclusion. This approach also involves using inclusive language around mental health and a focus on hope and recovery. The themes of inclusion and creating connections have taken on increased significance during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people struggle with the challenges of physical distancing, which can impact on their support systems and result in increased isolation. Throughout 2020/21 See Me has delivered projects and initiatives that were

designed to give participants a sense of belonging and connection despite COVID-19 restrictions.

The See Me Social Movement team delivered a range of projects and events during 2020/21 that participants reported felt inclusive and gave them the opportunity to connect with others around mental health, which was particularly important given the pandemic. For example, the [Anti Stigma Summer Sessions](#) provided safe spaces for participants to discuss mental health issues with event facilitators and peers. The online format provided a different forum for encouraging conversations about mental health. The sessions provided an opportunity for participants passionate about challenging mental health stigma and discrimination to come together virtually with the lack of face-to-face opportunities. This was also an opportunity to explore remote social contact, where people with lived experience of mental health problems came together online with people with no direct lived experience, to challenge assumptions and prejudices.

**Pass the Parcel** was a project delivered by See Me in 2020, which participants reported gave them the opportunity to engage in a practical initiative with a focus on connecting with others to generate conversations about mental health. The project provided a way for participants to engage with others and to be able to show from a distance to friends and family that they cared. Participants stated that Pass the Parcel felt more interactive and they had enjoyed reaching out to people in a different way. Other projects delivered during the pandemic, such as the **Voice Behind the Picture**, also created supportive, virtual communities for people during what has been a challenging time. Participants reported that the peer support element of the project helped to reduce loneliness during the pandemic, manage their mental health and feel part of a community.

*"It was like a virtual hug, someone cares."*

**Pass the Parcel participant**

*"It was a really supportive community. It has been the highlight of lockdown for me."*

**The Voice Behind the Picture participant**

See Me's Communications team ran a number of campaigns during 2020/21 including digital **Pass the Badge** and **Time to Talk Day**. Time to Talk Day aims to equip people with the materials and resources they need to start conversations about mental health, and challenge stigma and discrimination. In taking part in the campaign people can share messages of encouragement and support, with the aim of showing people struggling with their mental health that they are not alone. The campaign

has inclusion at the centre, and by enabling connections between people around the topic of mental health, people felt less isolated and more able to challenge self-stigma and stigma and discrimination.

*"There was a strong sense of identity and connection."*

**Time to Talk Day survey respondent**

More specifically, Police Scotland (N Division) adopted a version of See Me's Pass the Badge campaign designed to encourage staff at all levels to share experiences of and connect around mental health. Inclusion was one of the most frequently referenced themes in the Pass the Badge survey by respondents, and some highlighted that the campaign encouraged a more open culture. Participants and the Health and Wellbeing Project Officer from N Division who initiated the campaign, highlighted that Pass the Badge was successful in bringing staff across stations in the Highlands and Islands together virtually. For example, the Health and Wellbeing Project Officer created a collage of images shared as part of the campaign and circulated to all stations, which in turn created a sense of community among colleagues. This simple act sparked conversations and reignited connections between staff who do not see each other often, due to the rural geography of the area and more recently to the COVID-19 pandemic. This instilled feelings of *"being part of the team"*.

*"I thought it was a great notion, that everyone could get involved in and it was a nice way to share and be inclusive."*

**Police Scotland (N Division) Pass the Badge survey respondent**

## Creating the conditions for change



### INTERSECTIONALITY

See Me is a complex and multi-layered programme with a mission to end mental health stigma and discrimination. It combines a range of person-centred principles and approaches to influence cultural and behavioural change at national, local and community levels. Achieving equality of human rights and understanding genuine diversity and inclusivity, for people living with mental health problems, alongside recognising the value and power of that lived experience, emerged as strong themes through the evaluation. These themes represent part of a wider vision to create the optimum conditions for change.

Set in the context of inclusive cultural change, See Me challenges intersectional stigma and discrimination through targeted programmes of work. Intersectionality refers to 'systematic patterns of interrelated stigma and discrimination that people face due to aspects of their identities or social circumstances, such as race, ethnicity, economic status, gender, age, sexual orientation or disability<sup>11</sup>'. The need to understand and tackle intersectional issues resulting in dual and multiple stigma, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has underlined the need to do more to address the stigma experienced by specific groups that is amplified in different settings and communities.

Some of See Me's intersectional work was paused during the pandemic partly because the face-to-face format that works most effectively with groups representative of the protected characteristics was not possible to deliver, and partly due to lack of access to and confidence using communication technologies.

An example of intersectional work undertaken in 2020/21 can be found in See Me's partnership with Feniks, an Edinburgh based Polish charity. Feniks' most recent **research** looks at the relationship between the high suicide rate among Polish men living in Scotland and the mental health stigma and discrimination they experience. The research showed that levels of self-stigma are high among Polish men, as is the stigma they experience from within and outwith their own community. This intersects further with cultural stereotypes, gender roles, domestic abuse, isolation and lack of support, and the widely held belief that Polish men do not "talk about their feelings", as reported by the project lead.

The research encouraged discussions about the mental health of Polish men and other minority ethnic communities living in Scotland that are harder to identify and reach partly because they are white. See Me formed a network of professionals with an interest in the research and that interact with minority ethnic communities including Polish people, to discuss the research findings and how to take forward some of the recommendations.

The partnership with Feniks and subsequent working group, initiated conversations about how the inequalities highlighted in Feniks' research could be tackled and what this tells us about inequalities faced by other minority ethnic groups. Looking at these issues through the lens of stigma and discrimination added another dimension to the multiple barriers faced by Polish men including poverty, low paid jobs and unemployment.

The network events led by See Me have brought people together and facilitated discussion of the issues and actions that can be progressed to address intersectional stigma and discrimination.

*"One solution could be to invest in more mental health training for professionals – there is currently no counselling training around culture, race, ethnicity etc. Students don't get that at university. Education and training are essential."*

**Feniks evaluation interviewee**



## HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

See Me champions a human rights-based approach that empowers people by helping them to understand and claim their rights, and by increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling these rights<sup>12</sup>. A human rights-based approach is intrinsic to the programme and See Me embeds the **PANEL** principles in its work, to support the implementation of a rights-based approach in practice. The underpinning principles of a human rights-based approach is consistent with the evidence base that tells us what works – social contact, protest and education. If this ambition is achieved and human rights are realised, people would not experience mental health stigma or discrimination. When people are empowered to claim their rights and treated with dignity and compassion irrespective of their mental health, they can better make decisions about the things that affect them.

See Me and partners developed the **Rights for Life** Declaration and Change Agenda in 2015, based on the views of hundreds of people with lived experience. The Declaration is a statement of the rights of people affected by mental health problems in Scotland. More recently See Me has been directly involved in subgroups for the independent review of the Mental Health Act and in the First Minister's **Advisory Group** on Human Rights Leadership that includes economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. This has enabled See Me to continue to offer lived

experience perspectives and also influence the development of related papers and national guidance.

Within the programme, laying the groundwork for enabling people to understand and claim their rights in relation to mental health can be found in See Me's **eLearning** programme. The training modules contain educational content enabling participants to explore rights and good practice in relation to mental health at different stages of the employment journey, including during recruitment, when in work and when returning to work following a period of ill health. Rights in relation to disclosing a mental health problem to an employer and the rights and responsibilities of employers to make reasonable adjustments for people with lived experience of mental health are set out. The evaluation of the programme across Phase 2 consistently demonstrates that the knowledge and awareness of participants about their rights in relation to mental health problems increased because of the training.

See Me's Health and Social Care programme takes a mental health inclusion perspective that is underpinned by a human-rights based approach. See Me advocates for people to be included in decisions regarding their own health and works with partners to ensure that this ethos is embedded in learning and practice. The success of this approach can be seen in the work See Me carried out on the **Early Intervention In Psychosis Engagement Project**. The goals of See Me and Supporting Minds were aligned and See Me facilitated conversations about inclusion for those with lived experience of mental health problems. **Support in Mind** highlighted the importance of the human rights implications of its work with See Me.

If people with psychosis have a delay in accessing treatment, they are more likely to have compulsory treatments and this can make relationships with services more difficult; with stigma reduction in early intervention and rapid access, there is a greater chance that individuals can take more of a leading role in their own care.

*"...it fit very neatly...with what See Me want to do in terms of challenging... and allowing people to have more participation and involvement... and more of an active role in their treatment".*

**Engagement Project Worker, Support in Mind**



## Toward programme sustainability

See Me has been working towards creating greater scope, scale and sustainability during Phase 2. This is being delivered through refining existing and developing new tools and resources that can be tailored and adapted to suit the diverse needs of target groups. The aim is to expand programme reach and create sustainability by ensuring that anti-stigma materials and resources are accessible, appealing, flexible and user friendly. See Me's tools and resources include exploring different methods of engagement such as digital channels and arts-based initiatives.



### TOOLS AND RESOURCES

See Me has developed a range of tools and resources designed to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. The focus on creating anti-stigma tools and resources has arisen from the need to ask people to address stigma and discrimination and ensure they have the skills and capacity to do it.

Making tools and resources accessible to partners to implement within their own programmes of work means that See Me can achieve greater scope and scale of anti-stigma work in a somewhat controlled but less resource intensive way. See Me provides practical expertise to support the use of its tools and resources, encouraging others to tailor and apply them in their own environments. Through monitoring and evaluation See Me can learn what works and why, in different environments, enabling sharing of learning and rolling out of practice.

In the Workplace programme, a range of tools and resources have been adopted by organisations with a desire to reduce stigma and discrimination at work. **eLearning** continues to be one of the most frequently used resources by organisations engaged with See Me, and evaluation consistently demonstrates improved knowledge and awareness of issues around stigma and discrimination and what works to challenge them.

In a project specific context, See Me's partnership with Police Scotland (N Division) is a good example of work that has tried and tested a range of tools and resources, to explore their impact in a controlled environment, with guidance from the See Me in Work team. This is an example of how See Me can support organisations to adapt and tailor its tools and resources to achieve specific outcomes based on evidenced need. Tools and resources that have been adopted for use within the N Division health and Wellbeing project include the **Power of Okay** and **Time to Talk Day** materials and resources, **Pass the Badge** and **eLearning**. A separate evaluation of the impact of this work will be produced to align with the end of the project in January 2022.

See Me's Communications team drives forward the development of See Me's digital tools and resources. For example, a Scotland-wide digital **Pass the Badge** campaign was run during the first UK lockdown of the pandemic, and the See Me podcast series was launched shortly after. The national Time to Talk Day 2021 campaign saw materials and resources adapted by See Me for use in the context of physical restrictions. This demonstrates the flexibility of See Me's

tools and resources and the ability of the organisation to respond quickly to unprecedented circumstances. Both digital and physical resources were created for the campaign and well received by those who used them.

*"I always refer to SeeMe resources they are informative colourful, and easy to read. As they say a picture is worth a thousand words."*

**Time to Talk Day survey respondent**

Health and Social Care is another programmatic area that has successfully embedded resources including lived experience videos into training materials (*Mental Health Inclusion Suite of Resources*). This resource has been piloted within key areas of work, including work with **Moray Wellbeing Hub** (MWH). MWH plans to work in partnership with the local authority to pilot the resource within the health and social care workforce. This strategic approach is essential to achieve reach and sustainability of resource delivery and to overcome capacity issues that result from direct delivery by See Me. The resource has been well-received and implemented by partners, and thoughtfully developed to reflect the needs and challenges faced by efforts to eliminate stigma and discrimination in health and social care settings. The materials are flexible and responsive to the needs of the practitioner, setting or organisation. They can be adapted and taken forward without the need for additional input from See Me.

See Me tools and resources have been used effectively within the Education and Young People (EYP) programme. They have proved essential for sustainable delivery which has been evident in the past year with the

introduction of the See Me *Toolkit*. In 2020, See Me designed and piloted a *Toolkit* for the delivery of mental health literacy and anti-stigma and discrimination education in schools. See Me built on the successes of its previous face-to-face delivery in schools, to develop a more sustainable and pupil-led training resource that has retained the core principles of social contact and lived experience. The *Toolkit* allows senior pupils and teachers to direct their own learning, as well as guiding them on taking action. It requires less direct contact time from See Me and supports the teachers and pupils to work together – giving them the resources that they need to learn and implement change in schools and to establish and progress an anti-stigma and discrimination agenda.

*"I can foresee that when pupils are being given that independent level of learning and are taking responsibility for their own learning, they actually become more confident in actually making changes themselves and embedding change and moving forward."*

**Schools Lead, North Ayrshire MHOG**

## DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

See Me has extensive experience of engaging audiences and target groups through digital technologies using a range of online campaigns, tools and resources. See Me has been refining and testing digital engagement methods in different formats and contexts throughout Phase 2 of the programme. In 2020/21 digital engagement became the most important method for delivering See Me's core messages, stories of lived experience and existing and new interventions with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning from the evaluation suggests that campaigns are effective when targeted at specific communities and groups and work best as part of a broader settings-based approach.

See Me's Social Movement team facilitated a number of initiatives during 2020/21 that offered people the chance to engage with anti-stigma events digitally. These included the **Anti Stigma Summer Sessions** that were delivered using Facebook Live. Feedback from participants suggested that session content was delivered in a way that worked well in an online format, breaking down complex issues into manageable pieces of information. Some participants who did not consider themselves to be overly comfortable using technology prior to engaging in the sessions, agreed that the events were accessible and straightforward in terms of taking part. Participants also highlighted that the events overcame barriers related to rurality and geography and lack of time.

The **Anti Stigma Summer Sessions**, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, afforded See Me the opportunity to continue

to learn and develop best practice for online events in the future. While some people might prefer face-to-face contact, social restrictions are likely to be in place – in some form – for some time. Therefore, it is valuable to explore the different platforms and technologies that provide a range of engagement opportunities for people and compare these for effectiveness and impact.

*"I don't use tech a lot and I wouldn't say I was comfortable, but I can and will sign up and take part as I live in a remote area".*

**Anti Stigma Summer Sessions survey respondent**

**The Voice Behind the Picture** was another project delivered during 2020/21 that used digital engagement as the method by which to engage participants during the pandemic. This worked well for most and participants enjoyed the flexibility of attending recorded and live project sessions. While some writers were unfamiliar with the technology at first, they became more adept as the project progressed. As with other initiatives delivered remotely during 2020/21, the digital project format had certain benefits that were highlighted by participants. Some writers based in remote and rural areas of Scotland reported that they would not have been able to take part in a face-to-face project for practical reasons including time and travel. Participants also felt that because people could take part from all over Scotland this increased the diversity of the project.

The online screening of the **Voice Behind the Picture** monologues was highlighted as successful by participants and audience members. The remote format of the screening meant that family and friends

could more easily attend. Some audience members reported that they might not have attended a screening in a theatre. One participant with a social anxiety disorder said that the online screening worked well for them. Others agreed that it felt safer and more comfortable watching their work being screened from home, than it would have done at an in-person event. In practical terms, having the work screened online meant that it had the potential to reach a bigger audience. People had the flexibility to watch the live screening or view at a different time that suited them, therefore opportunities to engage with the monologues were maximised.

*"...so where the screens may seem like a disadvantage, it was actually an advantage for me, because as much as I love the theatre, going to the theatre is very stressful for me."*

***The Voice Behind the Picture  
participants***

The See Me Communications team delivered a range of digital engagement initiatives during 2020/21. These included **Pass the Badge, Time to Talk Day** and the **See Me podcast series**. A national Pass the Badge campaign was launched in March 2020 that coincided with the first UK lockdown. During the multi-platform campaign, survey respondents used different platforms to participants, including Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

The See Me podcast series was launched during lockdown in 2020. Most participants reported that podcasts were an effective method of remotely sharing stories about experiences of mental health. As the structure of a podcast comes in the form

of an informed conversation between different actors, it allowed participants to discuss and explore mental health stigma and discrimination from a lived experience perspective in a natural way, providing both authenticity and clarity over issues that may be challenging for an audience to explore on their own.

See Me's Time to Talk Day campaign has always involved a digital engagement element, but in 2021 this became more important due to COVID-19. Time to Talk Day saw See Me develop a wide range of **digital resources** to enable people to take part in the campaign and to spread the message. Campaign survey respondents were positive about the online campaign and received encouraging feedback from those to whom they delivered activities and interacted with as part of the campaign<sup>13</sup>. Some commented that the online campaign was fun, generated high attendance at online events and encouraged conversations about mental health. A few were nervous about the new format of the campaign and found it challenging, but ultimately worthwhile. All Time to Talk survey respondents in 2021 reported that they would take part in the campaign again.

## ARTS-BASED ENGAGEMENT

See Me has had a long relationship with the arts as a mechanism by which to tackle stigma and discrimination, including being a key partner of the **Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival** (SMHAF) which was established in 2007. Evidence shows that the arts can be used to challenge stigmatising attitudes and behaviours associated with mental health<sup>14</sup>. Over the last two years of Phase 2, See Me has explored the relationship between the arts and mental health stigma and discrimination further. See Me works with partners to look at different ways the arts can be used to reduce mental health stigma and what components of stigma (knowledge, attitudes and behaviours) the arts are helping to challenge<sup>15</sup>.

SMHAF is a long running example of how the arts can be used as a tool to raise knowledge and awareness of and tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. SMHAF supports the arts and explores how engagement in the arts can help prevent mental ill health, and support people with lived experience of mental health problems to stay well. The festival uses creative methods to engage people who might not otherwise participate in discussions about mental health.

A briefing paper produced by See Me<sup>16</sup> in 2020 tells us more about how the arts can be used to challenge mental health stigma, partly informed by evidence from SMHAF and more broadly from research studies carried out internationally. This tells us that art that is created to challenge stigma must be produced collaboratively with people with lived experience in a meaningful way<sup>17</sup>. This research advocates a social contact approach,

and the SMHAF 2020 evaluation confirms that art that focuses on the lived experience of a person who has experienced mental health problems can be more effective in tackling stigma. Additionally, SMHAF evaluation participants in 2020 described the most important elements of an arts based approach for them, in terms of tackling stigma and discrimination. These included educational and signposting resources, discussions about artworks through panels and Q&A sessions, and resources to support long term change<sup>18</sup>.

The See Me Social Movement team delivered a number of arts based initiatives during 2020/21 to build on its experience in this area and expand the use of the arts in tackling mental health stigma and discrimination. These included the **Anti Stigma Summer Sessions** which were described by participants as enjoyable, interactive and effective, allowing difficult subjects to be addressed in an accessible way. **The Voice Behind the Picture** is another arts-based project that was supported by See Me in 2020/21 that provided a unique chance for emerging writers to engage in a form of artistic expression to communicate personal stories about mental health. For some, this was an opportunity to support others who might be struggling with their mental health. For others, the project empowered them to support their own mental health. The writing process was also described as empowering, cathartic and as improving confidence and self-esteem, highlighting the positive impact that the project had on participant wellbeing and on publicly talking about mental health.

## CONCLUSIONS

- See Me has responded well to the exceptional challenges that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last 18 months has reinforced the importance of tackling stigma in its different forms such public, structural and self-stigma. Adaptations in programme delivery and methods of engagement have ensured that while some work paused, much continued. See Me found opportunities among the challenges, testing new and innovative delivery approaches and gaining insights into online and digital engagement methods to raise awareness, promote learning, reach new audiences and continue to encourage conversations about mental health and challenge stigma and discrimination.
- As Phase 2 of See Me drew to a close in 2020/21, the projects and initiatives delivered and supported during this period provided deeper insights into the mechanisms of change that work to tackle stigma and discrimination. The key themes in this paper represent some, but far from all, of the scope and influence that See Me has in settings across Scotland. These build on the evidence base that tells us which mechanisms are emerging as significant factors in particular environments, and in what combination; to advance See Me's ambition of eliminating stigma and discrimination in Scotland.
- Well evidenced mechanisms of change including social contact, and education and training, remain core to changing behaviours around stigma and discrimination. More is understood about the power and value of lived experience involvement beyond sharing stories, in influencing and directing change in policy and practice, through volunteers and ambassadors who are the catalysts for anti-stigma programmes and interventions.
- Throughout Phase 2 of See Me we have seen additional change mechanisms emerging as critical to creating the conditions for change, including senior and peer leadership, strategic influencing and partnership working. This paper also highlights innovative approaches to tackling stigma and discrimination, such as arts-based initiatives and digital engagement. Each of these themes and approaches are underpinned by principles of intersectionality and a human rights-based approach.
- New learning that has emerged over the last year of the programme has been around greater insight gained into the impact of media and the arts on tackling stigma and discrimination and the power of digital engagement which has been crucial during the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The potential of remote social contact has been explored and tested with some success. Further, peer led anti-stigma work has been facilitated. A cascade model of learning as seen in the *Toolkit* was trialled remotely and received positively (initially in schools in North Ayrshire) and a greater focus on providing opportunities for informal skills development with a focus on stigma and discrimination has been evident.

- Consolidating See Me's tools and resources, in the form of the DIY portal will support and advance the work of See Me in Phase 3. The portal will widen accessibility to See Me resources which should increase reach and sustainability of anti-stigma initiatives. Partners will have greater variety of choice meaning that they can select and adapt tools best suited to specific needs. See Me might consider how learning from new approaches, including that gained in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, can be taken forward into Phase 3 of the programme. Existing and new audiences (who may not otherwise have engaged) who participated in the 2020/21 evaluation expressed the positive benefits of engaging online.
- Increasing the scale, scope and reach of See Me lies in its specialised interventions and approaches, such as influencing, partnership working, capacity building and cascade training based on social contact. It equally involves diversifying volunteers, beneficiaries and audiences that could be maximised by providing both in person and online participation opportunities. Outreach opportunities focused on those harder to engage could be further considered by See Me and partners, particularly with a focus on new settings, communities and priority population groups. The importance and value of the social movement to extend programme reach is recognised as essential, empowering and equipping more people to act in their own environments and settings to challenge stigma and discrimination where they arise, through authentic social contact that supports change over time.
- Above all, See Me's success in Phase 2 has come from an unwavering commitment to lived experience led storytelling: providing opportunities for people who experience mental health problems to share their journeys with mental health and advocating for those who may not be in the position to share their lived expertise. Combined with empowering people at all life stages and in different environments to translate their passion to bring about change into action, and with a renewed focus on building the social movement, See Me has the potential to have greater impact in Phase 3 than ever before.

## Endnotes

- 1 <https://seemescotland.org/media/10241/see-me-strategy.pdf>.
- 2 See Me Phase 2 began in November 2016 and ended in March 2021.
- 3 Other relevant UK and Irish programmes that promote social contact to reduce mental health stigma include Time to Change England, Time to Change Wales, Change Your Mind in Northern Ireland and See Change in Ireland.
- 4 See Me Cross Cutting Themes: Three-year programme evaluation (November 2016-October 2019), Mental Health Foundation (p. 13).
- 5 Between November 2016 and February 2021, 2,330 eLearning participants completed a pre training questionnaire, 865 completed a post training questionnaire, and 489 participants completing the eLearning evaluation survey.
- 6 **Peer Support, Leadership and Service User Involvement – International Mental Health Collaborating Network (imhcn.org)**.
- 7 Refer to the main See Me evaluation report (2020/21) for details about the evaluation of the Anti Stigma Summer Sessions, methodologies and findings.
- 8 Refer to the main See Me evaluation report (2020/21) for details about the evaluation of Pass the Parcel, methodologies and findings.
- 9 Refer to the main See Me evaluation report (2020/21) for details about the partnership between See Me and Feniks, methodologies and findings.
- 10 Refer to the main See Me evaluation report (2020/21) for details about the EYP Toolkit pilot evaluation, methodologies and findings.
- 11 <https://seemescotland.org/media/10241/see-me-strategy.pdf>.
- 12 <https://seemescotland.org/media/10241/see-me-strategy.pdf>.
- 13 Refer to the main See Me evaluation report (2020/21) for details about the Time to Talk Day 2021 survey and findings.
- 14 [https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/61902/1/Aldam\\_AJPR2017\\_Lessons\\_from\\_a\\_national\\_mental\\_health\\_arts\\_festival.pdf](https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/61902/1/Aldam_AJPR2017_Lessons_from_a_national_mental_health_arts_festival.pdf).
- 15 [https://seemescotland.org/media/10106/research\\_using-the-arts-to-challenge-mental-health-stigma\\_cm-281020.pdf](https://seemescotland.org/media/10106/research_using-the-arts-to-challenge-mental-health-stigma_cm-281020.pdf).
- 16 See Me Summary Evidence Review: Using the Arts to Challenge Mental Health Stigma and the Impact on the Audience, C McArthur, 2020.
- 17 Twardzicki 2008; Koh and Ahrimpton 2014; Knifton et al. 2009; Rodgers 2017.
- 18 Refer to the main See Me evaluation report (2020/21) for details about the SMHAF evaluation, methodologies and findings.
- 19 **A peer-led approach to promoting health education in schools: The views of peers (scielo.org.za)**.
- 20 **Peer support | Mental Health Foundation**.
- 21 **Peer Support, Leadership and Service User Involvement – International Mental Health Collaborating Network (imhcn.org)**.
- 22 **Want a more inclusive culture? Consider the power of peer leadership (chieflearningofficer.com)**.





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