“Rural mental health: reporting people’s experiences from across rural Scotland”

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Dr Michael Spencer, Quantitative Data Analyst, SRUC
1. **Aim:** Find out how people with mental ill health experience rural life

2. **Approach:**
   a. Online/offline survey in August 2016
   b. Opportunity for people to tell us their experiences and share their ideas
   c. Targeted geographical areas over 4-week period using social media and networks
Geographical location of 343 responses
Gender and age of respondents

Gender by Age Category

- 75+ years
- 65-74 years
- 55-64 years
- 45-54 years
- 35-44 years
- 25-34 years
- 18-24 years

Female
Male

Count
Count
Employment status

Count

In paid employment, self-employed or on govt training
Unable to work
In full-time education
Doing something else, e.g. voluntary work
Retired

Employment Status
Occupations

- Financial Business/Office/Management
- Health and Social Care
- Other Industry
- Other
- Third Sector, Charity, Community
- Agriculture
- Education
- Public sector/Government

Count
1. Respondent’s self-reported mental health issues
14. Do you suffer from any of the following issues related to mental health and wellbeing? **Please choose all that apply.**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Generalized anxiety disorder</td>
<td>[ ] Anorexia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Social anxiety disorder</td>
<td>[ ] Bulimia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Phobias</td>
<td>[ ] Binge eating disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Depression</td>
<td>[ ] Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Bipolar disorder</td>
<td>[ ] Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Schizophrenia/psychosis</td>
<td>[ ] Stress response syndrome or adjustment disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Dementia</td>
<td>[ ] Suicidal thoughts and feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ ] Self-harming behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are currently experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings please seek help. You can call Samaritans on 116123 (freephone), you can contact a trusted health professional.
## Top 5 response categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Postcode areas</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Number of responses per self-reported mental health issue, per postcode area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeenshire (AB21-56)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forfar, Glamis, Kirriemuir (DD8)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway (DG1-DG16)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlothian &amp; East Lothian (EH16-EH34)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstrie (FK11)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Lewis (HS1 &amp; HS2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Harris (HS3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Barra (HS9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands and Moray (IV2-IV63)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East and South Ayrshire (KA6-KA27)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland (KW1-14)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orkney (KW15-17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife (KY2-14)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire and Argyllshire (PA7-PA76)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perthshire (PH1-11)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland (PH26-50)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Borders (TD2-TD14)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shetland Islands (ZE1-ZE3)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>296</strong></td>
<td><strong>197 (67%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-reported issue by gender

- Depression
- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Social anxiety disorder
- Self-harming behaviour
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Bipolar disorder
- Phobias
- Binge eating disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Anorexia
- Schizophrenia or psychosis
- Stress response syndrome or...
2. Respondent’s location and barriers
Remoteness and actual geography

Do you consider yourself to live in a remote area?

- Remote Rural
- Accessible Rural
- Remote Small Towns
- Accessible small Towns
- Other Urban Areas
- Large Urban Areas

Percent

YES | NO
Distance to mental health facility?

Where is your nearest mental health service facility?
Public transport as a barrier?

In your opinion, would you say that public transport can often act as a barrier to receiving the proper care needed to manage your ill mental health?
In your opinion, would you say that public transport can often act as a barrier to receiving the proper care needed to manage your ill mental health?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Ill-Health Conditions</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suicidal thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-harming behaviour</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized anxiety disorder</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social anxiety disorder</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers represent respondent counts
3. Community support and openness
Community: support & connections

- Good banter
- Supportive, close
- Smaller, personal community
- Strong community links
- Feels safe, home
- Close communities
- Close friends
- Caring community
- Familiar
However – more complex picture:

As someone with a mental ill health, do you think you live in a supportive community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Yes, my community is completely supportive towards me</th>
<th>I get some help, but they could help me more</th>
<th>No, my community is not supportive of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However – more complex picture:

If an urgent but non life-threatening issue arose regarding your mental wellbeing, do you think you could rely on members of your community to assist you? Please don’t include any medical service providers or carers when you think about your answer.
Openness?

Do you feel you can be open about your mental health problems in your community?
4. Respondent’s messages
If you could change ONE THING about mental health services in rural Scotland, what would that be and why?

1. Create ways to connect before personal crises occur (low-level, non-clinical, informal, through trusted people and networks).
2. Close to place of need (including mobile services, outreach, particularly on islands).
   • Recognising significant stress of travel to appointments.
3. Mental health care mainstreamed within NHS; parity with physical health care.
4. Focus on children and young people (particularly self-harm) and reduce waiting times.
What KEY MESSAGE do you want to tell policy-makers to help you manage your mental ill health in a rural setting?

1. It is an invisible illness – made more invisible by being rural and remote.
2. Listen to, and respect, service users.
3. Mental ill health does lead to death – it is a serious issue.
4. Shorter waiting times to see specialists.
5. Support low-level contact outwith hospital environments, close to communities
   • To make the invisible visible...
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