



Tony McLaren
National Coordinator





NHSinform.scot

Quality assured health info:
Mental Health Self-help guides
Mind to Mind/ Surviving Suicidal Thoughts

111

Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP)

Urgent care for mental health e.g. distress

The Living Life logo features the text 'Living Life' in a blue cursive font with an orange underline.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapists

Self-refer by calling 0800 328 9655 – mild/moderate
Appointment-based phone support over 4-6 sessions
Open 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday

What is Breathing Space?



Free, confidential phone and webchat service for anyone 16 and over living in Scotland

People call for a variety of reasons including low mood, anxiety, depression



Our advisors come from a range of mental health, counselling and social work backgrounds

Breathing Space advisors are there to listen, offer support, advice and signpost when appropriate



Call reasons

Relationships

Isolation/ loneliness

Anxiety

Bereavement and loss

Stress

Suicidal thoughts
and self-harm

How do you access?



0800 83 85 87

Available 24 hours at weekend
(6pm Friday - 6am Monday)

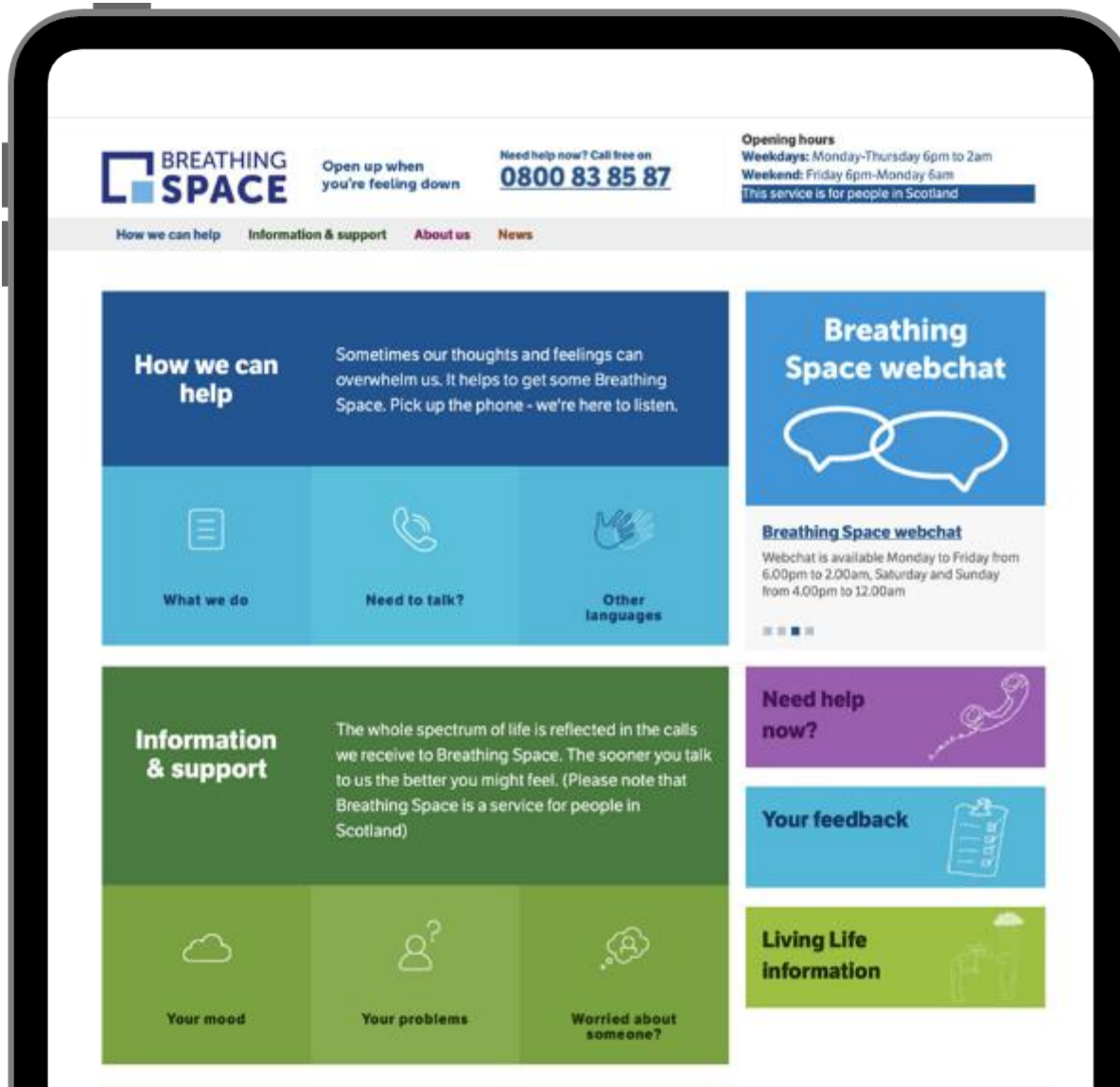
6pm - 2am on weekdays
(Monday - Thursday)



**Free to phone from a
landline and any
mobile phone network**

**The phone
number will not
show up in
telephone bills**

Webchat - www.breathingspace.scot



Opening Times:
Monday - Friday: 6pm to 2am
Saturday/Sunday - 4pm to midnight

Webchat lets you message our specialist advisors in real time, as an alternative to phoning us

Support in hours



GP surgery



111



PAPYRUS
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE



HOPELINE247
0800 068 41 41

Up to age 35

When life is tough,
we're here to listen



SAMARITANS

Call us free 24/7 on
116 123
samaritans.org

Random Acts of Kindness

“

“I felt genuinely like I could talk through the issues on my mind and now feel a lot better and have some clarity on how I’m feeling and how to go about a few of my issues”

”

“

“I am so blessed and humbled to have been given such compassion and understanding over the duration of my calls. Two members of the helpline, C and L have really been supportive over the last few months and their way of speaking and communicating to me over the phone has made me feel extremely heard and understood”

”

“

“I just want to say that breathing space, both webchat and phone service, had been invaluable to me in times of emotional crisis.”

”

Breathing Space then and now

THEN

National service launched Nov 2004



Opening hours 6pm to 2am



Targeted at men



Phone service



10 staff



Top reasons for calling

- Anxiety/stress
- Loneliness/isolation
- Relationships
- Suicide/self harm

Website launched in 2005



NOW

14K call demand/month



500 webchats/month

Opening hours 6pm to 2am and 24hrs at weekends



60/40 Women/Men



Phone and Webchat service



50 staff



Same top call reasons

Part of suite of NHS 24 mental health phone and digital services



Coordination Team



'Take Some Breathing Space' Bench Initiative

- » **Welcoming spaces**
- » **Sit and take some breathing space**
- » **Time for listening and talking**
- » **Showing kindness and compassion**



Benches throughout Scotland c.100



- University of Edinburgh
- Edinburgh Waverley Station
- Musselburgh Golf Club
- Stirling Train Station
3/02/2026
- Kaimes School
- CALA Homes Developments x 8 - Falkirk
- Troon Esplanade
- University of Strathclyde x 8
- Glasgow Central Station
- Trinity High School, Renfrewshire
- South Lanarkshire
- North Lanarkshire
- Falkirk Train Station
- UHI Inverness
- Golspie, NHS Highland
- Springfield Properties Developments
- Dundee & Angus College
- Falkirk Sensory Centre
- Fife College
- Dumfries & Galloway College
- Borders College
- Borders General Hospital
- Newcastleton
- Burnfoot
- West Dumbartonshire
- Berwickshire Housing Association
- Robertson Group Developments
- FDAMH

Benches throughout Scotland



Over 65 benches installed across Scotland.

Health Boards: 13

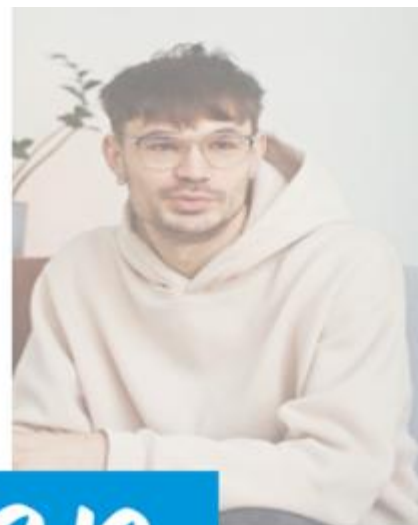
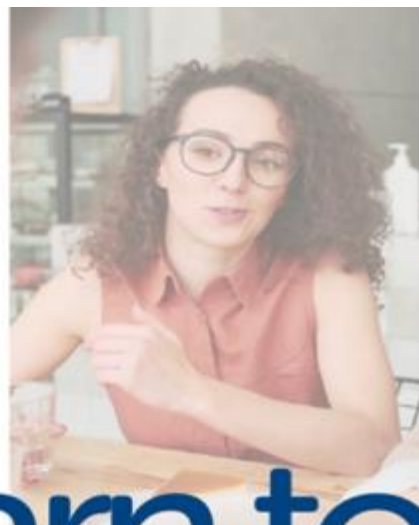
Local Authority Areas: 27

Islands: Isla and South Uist

Furthest North: Golspie, Scottish Highlands

Furthest South: Newcastleton, Scottish Borders

Breathing Space Day 01/02/2026



Learn to *listen*



This Breathing Space Day, let's focus on the power of **listening:**

- » **Pay attention:** Remove distractions and focus on the person speaking.
- » **Listen without judging:** Make it safe for them to share their thoughts.
- » **Show you understand:** Repeat what they said to confirm you understand.
- » **Acknowledge their feelings:** Recognise their emotions and experiences.
- » **Use body language:** Nod and smile to show you're listening where appropriate.
- » **Be patient and allow for silence:** Let them talk at their own pace without rushing.
- » **Ask open questions:** Encourage them to talk more.
- » **Offer support, not solutions:** Sometimes, just listening is the best help you can give.

How you can get involved:

Suite of materials to help enable individuals and organisations to raise awareness of the service.

Available to download from our website:

www.breathingspace.scot/information-support/resources/



NHS 24 Resources:

There are various leaflets about NHS 24 services, available in BSL, 11 other languages and easy read/large print.

These are available to download, and hard copies can be requested from the website:

<https://www.nhs24.scot/publications/leaflets/>

Accessing the right mental health care from NHS 24

Anyone can experience a mental health issue, at any point in their life. You do not have to deal with these problems alone.

NHS Inform At nhsinform.scot you will find information, guides, and video stories to help look after your mental health and wellbeing.	GP Practice Your General Practice (GP) can offer talking therapies, local services, prescribe medicines or online courses. If needed, they can refer you to another professional.
Breathing Space Support for people who are experiencing distress in their lives. You can contact Breathing Space on 0800 81 81 87 or the website service at breathingspace.scot 24 hours, 7 days a week (9am Friday to 8am Monday) (Monday to Thursday) 24 years and over, living in Scotland.	111 For urgent mental health support, phone 111, day or night. No age limit.
Living Life Assessment for a short series of telephone appointments with a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist. Call 0800 328 9655 Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm, 25 years and over, living in Scotland.	999 or A&E If a life is at risk, call 999 or go to A&E.

If you are unsure what to do, find out at: nhsinform.scot/mental-health-support

Helping you find the right care

A guide to our services

NHS 24

Images of NHS staff in call centers.

Caring for someone

NHS 24 provides a range of services to support carers

Images of carers and a call center agent.

Many people do not recognise themselves as carers. A carer is anyone who is unpaid for their caring and looks after a friend, family member or neighbour due to old age, physical or mental illness, disability or addiction. There is no minimum amount of time you need to support someone for you to be considered a carer.

Moving forward



Continue to:

Provide time, space and compassion to people experiencing difficulties with their mental health

Work in partnership and engage with communities across Scotland, with a focus in the **Forth Valley**

Guided by Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (EDIA)

What's coming up this year?

70th Breathing Space bench

time
space
compassion

Thank you!

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For information on the benches or
any further queries, please contact:

breathingspaceresources@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk

