

Partnership Event to celebrate the launch of the Western Isles Distress Brief Intervention Service



Organisations across the Western Isles came together in June to celebrate the launch of the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) programme which looks to build and provide connected compassionate support, helping Western Isles locals with crucial mental health support when they need it the most.

The Scottish Government Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) programme is a world first, starting as a pilot and now being rolled out across Scotland with the Western Isles as one of twenty Health & Social Care Partnerships with the programme already live.

The DBI Western Isles service, which started earlier this year, is for anyone aged 16 and over – where assessed as appropriate by trained staff - and has two closely connected parts, offering a service for people experiencing distress.

NHS Western Isles has commissioned this service through the Integrated Joint Board and the the Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

Level 1 in the Western Isles sees front-line colleagues, such as the Police, Emergency Department staff, Paramedics, GPs, and the Community Mental Health Team, trained to ease a

person's distress. Where assessed as appropriate, and with the person's agreement, they can then be referred to the DBI level 2 service, with the promise of support within 24 hours. In addition, anyone over 16, from anywhere in Scotland, including the Western Isles can also be referred to DBI if they contact NHS24, where DBI is appropriate.

Level 2 in the Western Isles is provided by Change Mental Health which is a third sector mental health organisation whose staff are trained and who contact the person within 24-hours of referral and provide around 14 days of support. DBI staff provide a compassionate response to the person in distress, problem solving support, support with wellness and distress management planning, which helps in both the short and longer-term, as well as connections to other agencies for additional support where appropriate.

Visiting the Western Isles, national programme manager with colleagues from Change Mental Health spent some time offering training to be able to open up new pathways of referrals for partners.

NHS Western Isles also hosted an open day at UHI for partners to be able to come along to hear about the local work around DBI from the practitioners working on the ground.

Speaking on his visit to the Western Isles Kevin O'Neill, said: "It has been fantastic to spend a few days, hearing about all the impressive work that is taking place across Western Isles in support of the communities' mental health, including DBI.

"I pay the highest tribute to our partners across the Western Isles who have shown outstanding commitment, collaboration and innovation to build connected compassionate support, that meets the needs of this very remote and rural island(s) community.

"We welcome Western Isles to the growing DBI community, which has already supported over 90,000 people across Scotland. We look forward to continuing to work and learn together with the aim of providing the best connected compassionate support possible to the people of the Western Isles."

Nick Fayers, Chief Officer of the Western Isles Health & Social Care Partnership (pictured bottom right with Angela Grant, Outer Hebrides Alcohol & Drug Partnership Co-ordinator), who have overseen the Western Isles DBI development said: "It has been a pleasure to have the DBI National Team, Change Mental Health and the local partners at our open day to establish our DBI service and I am extremely grateful to everyone involved. DBI is a valuable addition to the mental health support services available in the Western Isles. The programme plays a key role in ensuring that individuals experiencing distress are given a compassionate, caring and timely response."

