

Mental Wellbeing, Social Isolation and Loneliness in Rural Scotland

20 February 2019



#SCVOgathering
@VHSComms @ScotRuralHealth



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Mental wellbeing, social isolation and loneliness in rural Scotland

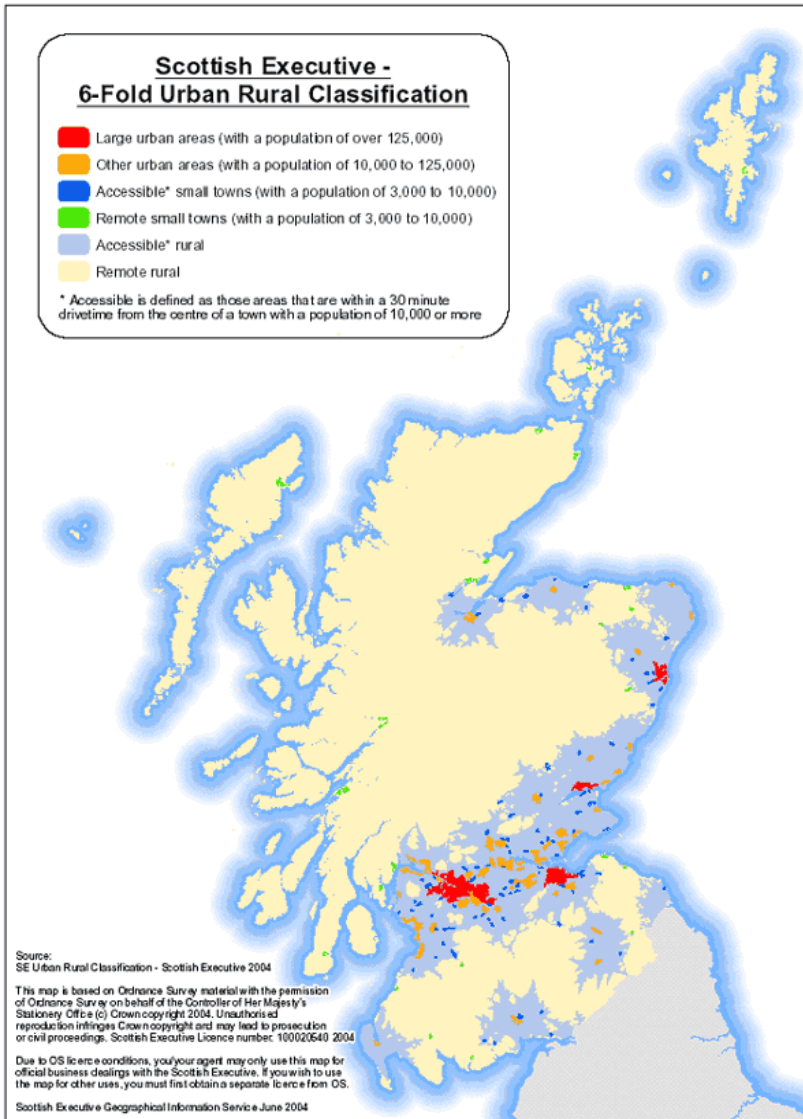
Karen O'Hanlon, Business Development Manager



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- Large urban areas (with a population of over 125,000)
- Other urban areas (with a population of 10,000 to 125,000)
- Accessible* small towns (with a population of 3,000 to 10,000)
- Remote small towns (with a population of 3,000 to 10,000)
- Accessible* rural
- Remote rural

* Accessible is defined as those areas that are within a 30 minute drivetime from the centre of a town with a population of 10,000 or more





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Rural Health USPs



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- Ageing population
- Chronic disease
- **Mental health**

- Recruitment and retention of health and care workers
- Integration of health and social care
- Sustainability of service and cost effectiveness

- Increasing use of technology and reduction in travel
- Shifting towards a model of 'co-production'
- Ensuring community voices are heard

Rural Mental Health

- Access to services
- Stigma
- Isolation and Loneliness
- Suicide Prevention



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Rural Mental Health



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- **Access to services**

- Right service at the right time
- Access to appropriately trained healthcare professionals
- The connectivity challenge – digital & transport

- **Stigma**

- About mental health generally
- Accessing services

- **Isolation and Loneliness**

- Can effect people at any age, the young and older people are particularly vulnerable
- Recognised link to wellbeing and health



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Rural Mental Health



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- **Suicide**

- Rates of suicide and number of deaths are too high
- Lack of high quality accessible support services – unmet need
- Can effect people at any age, the young and socially isolated are particularly vulnerable
- People working long hours in remote locations, sometimes largely on their own, may also require support
- Social elements e.g. poverty, lack of ambition, low aspiration are all contributing factors
- Frequency of suicide exacerbates feeling of suicide in some and may have a normalising effect

Our Response

- Establish a new Ecosystem for the Highlands & Islands

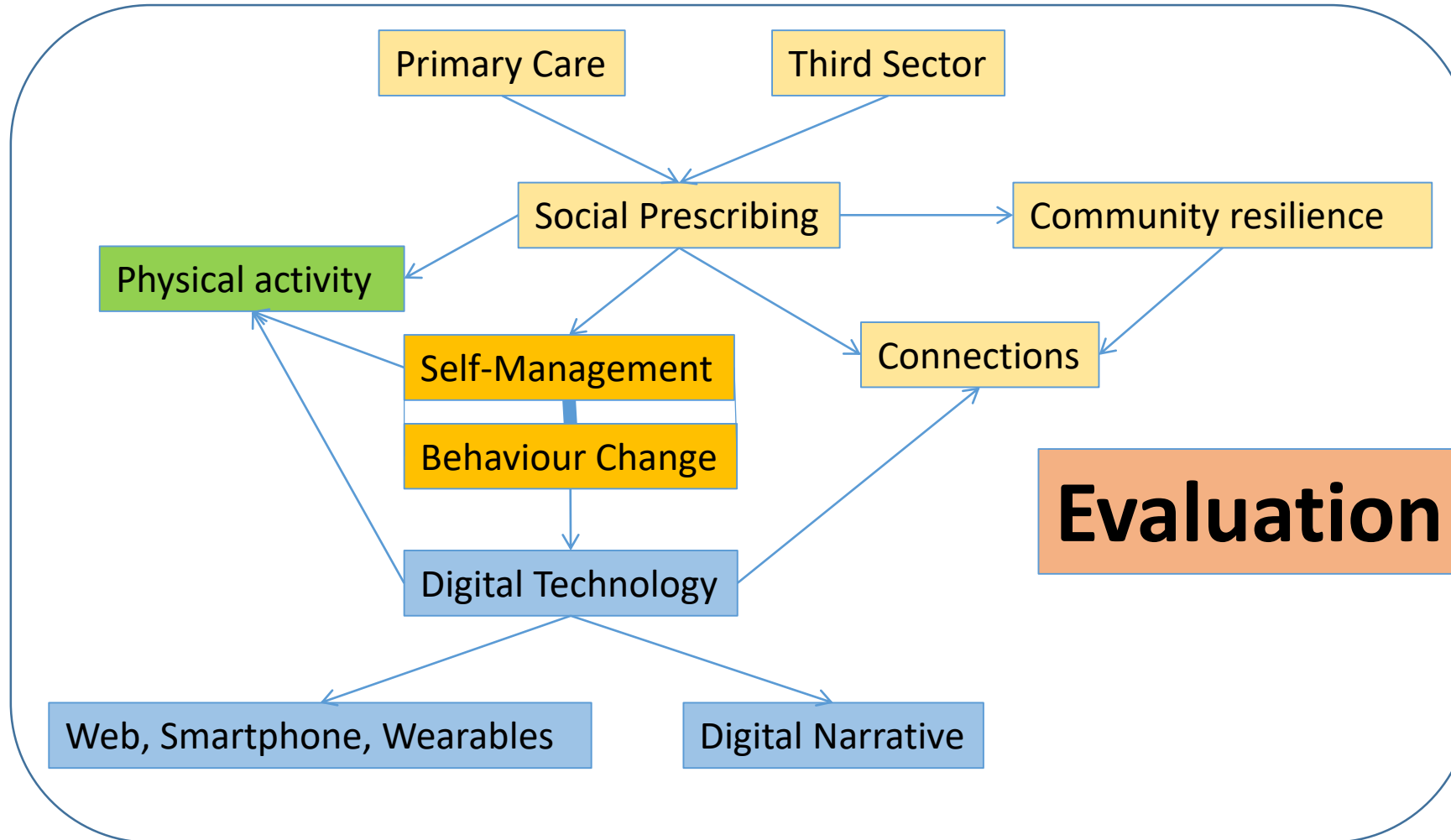
The Ecosystem will bring together a community of multi-sector stakeholders interested in developing and delivering a joint agenda around **rural mental health and active healthy ageing**. We'll seek to collaborate, identify and address some of the key gaps/challenges, and ensure that we are 'bid ready' for opportunities as they arise.

- Creating a consortium to bid to upcoming Innovate UK call on rural active healthy ageing
- **International Conference in Inverness – 12th/13th August**
- Lobby for new funding to tackle isolation and loneliness in rural Scotland
- Brokerage; information; links to relevant websites & organisations; useful resources, toolkits; research; and crucially become 'bid ready'





Mental Health Themes



Innovate UK





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Community Resilience



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- Empowering individuals
 - Collective action to increase own and others resilience
 - Come together to identify and support vulnerable individuals
 - Responsibility for promotion of resilience
- Benefits
 - Increase inclusivity and cohesion
 - Reduced health impacts

Connecting people to non-medical sources, community resources:

- Self-Management
- Person-centred, tailored
- Ownership

Sign-posting:

- Social/cultural/environmental resources
- Reduce inequalities



Digital Health

- Explore emerging digital technologies to improve mental health outcomes
- Digital Narrative Approach: DNA
- Film, TV, Computer games - narrative strategies engaging participants in health behaviour change and therapeutic interventions
- Virtual Reality
- Social Prescribing

- Vehicle for informal and formal collaboration amongst partners interested in our themes & rural and remote healthcare more generally
- Working Group established – calls every 6 to 8 weeks
- Themes are rural mental health & active healthy ageing
- Meetings quarterly in Inverness
 - 25 Feb – healthy ageing/Innovate UK opportunities
 - 13 May – mental health stigma & discrimination – young people/workplace
 - 12/13 Aug – International Rural Mental Health Conference
 - 7 Oct - tbc



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