



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 22/05/2018

Crofting Federation welcomes government funding for rural mental health

The Scottish Crofting Federation has welcomed the announcement that Scottish Government will continue to support the National Rural Mental Health Forum with a grant of £50,000.

"Mental health is something we don't talk enough about," said Patrick Krause, chief executive of the Scottish Crofting Federation, "and perhaps especially so in rural communities. Yet our mental health is of course just as significant to our well-being as our physical health. The National Rural Mental Health Forum (NRMHF) has been raising awareness of mental health issues with great success and it is good that this work is recognised and supported by the Scottish Government."

The NRMHF is an umbrella body for organisations, including the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF), keen to raise awareness of mental health issues in rural Scotland. The recent annual meeting was addressed by Maureen Watt, Minister for Mental Health, and Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity. Scottish Government have pledged to support the work of the NRMHF to the tune of £50,000.

"Rural people have specific challenges that affect mental well-being," Mr Krause continued, "including lack of access to services, transport, provision for support groups and people living isolated, sometimes lonely, lives. But on top of that there is still a stigma regarding mental health. We don't like to talk about it or to ask for help when suffering mental ill-health. We all get knocks which, for some of us, will lead to what would clinically be called mental illness such as depression. Without help this can lead to a relatively minor illness deteriorating and becoming a more serious problem. Mental welfare is no different from physical in this respect; early intervention can pay dividends.

"The work of the NRMHF is to encourage a wider acceptance that mental health affects us all and that bringing it out into the open will lead to healthier people and healthier communities. The Forum is also active in pressing national and local government to improve provision for dealing with this. People want to connect before their mental health crisis occurs - locally in "low-level", non-clinical settings. Shorter waiting times and mobile outreach to all parts of Scotland are also crucial to prevention," Mr Krause added.

END

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Notes to editors

- A picture of the forum members is attached.
- The National Rural Mental Health Forum's website is at: www.ruralwellbeing.org