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## About Men's Health Forum Scotland

Men's Health Forum Scotland (mhfs) is a charity whose aim is to improve the health and well-being of men in Scotland.

## Why does Scotland need mhfs?

Research highlights the increase in male-specific cancers, and the growing prevalence of coronary heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Male life expectancy is low, health service use is low, suicide rates among men are very high and rising, violence between men and against women and children is common.

In short the health and well being of the Scottish male could be much improved.

The pressure our society exerts on men to conform to its expectations of masculinity play a large part in shaping their health and well being too. The desirable male ideals of being strong and independent run counter to seeking help from our health services to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

## Is it all bad news?

A recent increase in activity targeting the health and well-being needs of men demonstrates a change in attitudes and knowledge across the health service and the voluntary sector. Agencies are working towards:

- getting men to think more about their health
- encouraging service providers to target men more effectively
- addressing the social factors that impact on men's health, including issues to do with masculinity and gender

## Where does mhfs fit in?

The Men's Health Forum Scotland exists to:

- ensure government policy supports the development of these initiatives
- support and resource the efforts of those working to improve men's health
- share knowledge and information on what works
- challenge the social influences from, for example, the media and institutions that impact negatively on men's health

By doing this, we will achieve sustainable and co-ordinated progress across the country.

We work to improve the health of Scotland's men by bringing together and working with the widest possible range of interested people and organisations. We support the development of local and national networks by organising themed seminars, training and the initiation of demonstration projects throughout Scotland.



## Our objectives

Using an inclusive and co-operative approach, we will promote men's health and well-being through:

- raising public and personal awareness of men's health issues
- challenging stereotypes surrounding men and developing understanding of men's changing roles in society
- identifying and establishing positive policies relating to men's health
- fostering communication and respect for and among men
- recognising the mutual benefit in working with women's interests and concerns

## What we can do for you

Through our relationships with NHS and voluntary sector health providers we have built up a high level of knowledge and experience of successful working practices, and the processes involved in making these happen. We also gather information on resources that encourage men to develop an active interest in their health.

## Our services include:

- consultation, including policy and service development
- research on key issues, such as health service use and young male suicide
- training, for example, about MOTs
- partnership working
- information, including a database, regular newsletters and updates on key men's health topics
- resources, such as posters and leaflets
- seminars and conferences