

# Staying Connected



Issue 1 Autumn 05  
Update 04/05



## Gavin Russell,

National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being, Scottish Executive

**T**HE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE has for some time been committed to developing measures to address high levels of suicide and depression experienced in Scotland. Suicide rates have increased markedly over the last 30 years, particularly amongst young men. "Our National Health", published by the Scottish Executive in 2001, included an undertaking to tackle Scotland's high levels of suicide, particularly amongst young men.

Breathing Space was established in 2002 as part of the Scottish Executive's response to this trend. It was felt important that a listening, advice and signposting service should be developed to support people experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety – whatever its cause. It was also seen as a key element that the new telephone service should be available in the evening and early hours, as that is a time when worries and problems can seem to build up and become unbearable for some people – and it is a time when many other sources of support are unlikely to be available.

Breathing Space is one of several key delivery vehicles of the Scottish Executive's National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being. The National

Programme, which is part of the Executive's work both on Health Improvement and on Social Justice, has the following *vision: to improve the mental health and well-being of everyone in Scotland and to improve the quality of life and social inclusion of people who experience mental health problems*. Its four overarching aims are (1) to raise awareness and promote positive mental health and well-being; (2) to eliminate the stigma and discrimination which can be experienced by people with mental health problems; (3) to reduce suicide rates; and (4) to promote and support recovery from mental health problems.

Breathing Space was initially promoted in Greater Glasgow and Argyll and Clyde only, and the line itself was provided for the

Executive by The Essentia Group, whose contribution was vital to the early development of the service. I would like to express my thanks to The Essentia Group for their work on Breathing Space.

In 2004 the running of Breathing Space for the Executive transferred to NHS 24, who have developed the service into one which is promoted and available across Scotland. We were particularly impressed with the way in which the Breathing Space team linked with a wide range of stakeholders across the country during the rollout phase in 2004, and by the way in which, as part of the rollout and ongoing publicity, they secured endorsement from a number of well-known individuals such as sports personalities. This is one crucial part of getting across to young people, men

*continued* ▶

## What is Breathing Space?

**Breathing Space** is a free, confidential phone line that anyone in Scotland can call when they are feeling low or depressed and is available to the public every day from 6pm - 2am on  
**0800 83 85 87**  
(Minicom: **0800 31 71 60**).

Breathing Space is aimed particularly, though not exclusively, to young men (aged 15 – 40) who are experiencing difficulties and unhappiness in their lives and aims to provide skilled assistance at an early stage and

prevent problems escalating. Breathing Space also has an important role to play in helping partners, friends and family members concerned about the well-being of the people they care about.

The phone line is staffed by trained specialist advisors who have the relevant experience required to assist callers with their problems. Breathing Space advisors listen, offer advice and signpost callers to agencies in their local area that can help with more specific problems.

in particular, that it is good to talk about your concerns or worries, and in doing so, help to deal with them.

Breathing Space was initially set up specifically to tie in with the Executive's work on suicide prevention, but it can be argued that, as it has developed, it has grown so that it complements all 4 of the National Programme's key aims. We are pleased with the development of the line to date and we

know from anecdotal feedback from some users of the line that it is providing vital support for vulnerable people. We await with interest the formal findings of an independent evaluation of Breathing Space, which is due for completion in early 2006.

I would like to thank the Breathing Space team at NHS 24 for their highly professional work on Breathing Space to date. Breathing Space not only provides an important source

of support for people experiencing difficult times but has also helped to raise awareness of mental health and well-being issues in Scotland. I look forward to the continuing development of the service.

Gavin Russell  
Mental Health Division  
Scottish Executive  
September 2005



**Ron Ellis,**  
Breathing Space  
Service  
Coordinator.

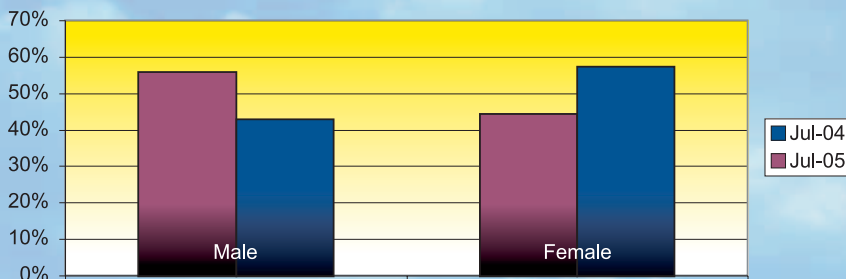
*"I try to fit in a brisk walk wherever I can. Going to a meeting or on my way to meet friends. I find it gets the circulation going and keeps stress at bay"*

## Looking Back

During this last year the primary focus for Breathing Space has been twofold. It was important to raise the profile of Breathing Space and to increase awareness of the phone line across Scotland. Roadshows have taken place in villages, towns and cities around the country, events have been held in schools, colleges, universities, and youth clubs, and audiences have included service users, carers, and health professionals in the voluntary, statutory and independent sectors. Opportunities also arose to run workshops, to speak at conferences and to take part in high profile public events such as T in the Park.

A key focus for 04-05 was to ensure a quality service for all callers to Breathing Space and to this end quality assurance tools were developed and an ongoing monitoring and evaluation process was implemented. The Breathing Space signposting database now holds over 4,000 local and national agencies and work continues to ensure that this is kept up-to-date and that new agencies are added to it on a regular basis.

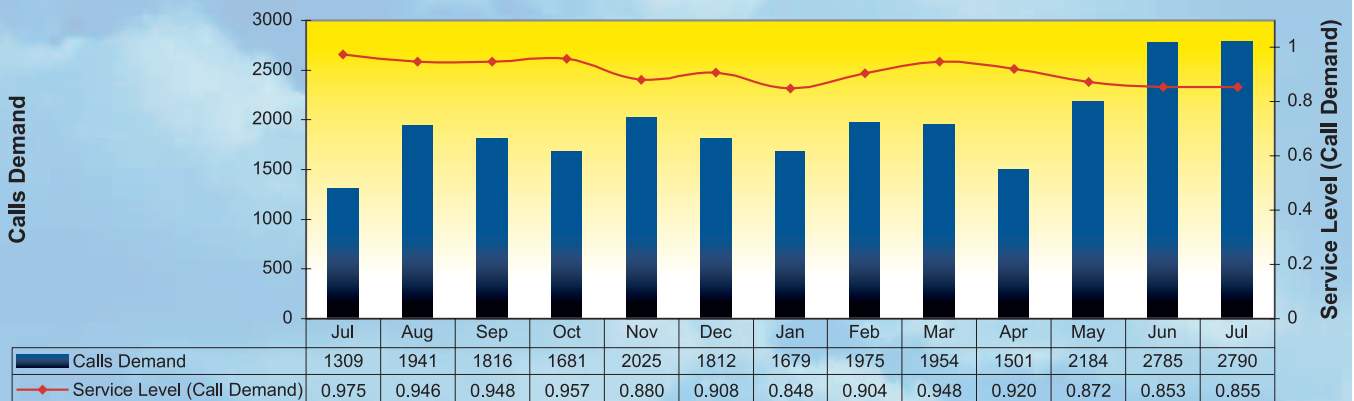
## Gender Summary



	Jul-04	Jul-05	Jul-04	Jul-05
Male	324	313	56%	43%
Female	257	419	44%	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>732</b>		

*In recent years there have been up to around 835 suicides and undetermined deaths per annum in Scotland and nearly 80% of these involve young men. In the last 30 years alone the suicide rate in men has increased by 250%, making suicide one of the most common causes of death amongst this group in Scotland*

## Breathing Space Call Activity & Access Service Level



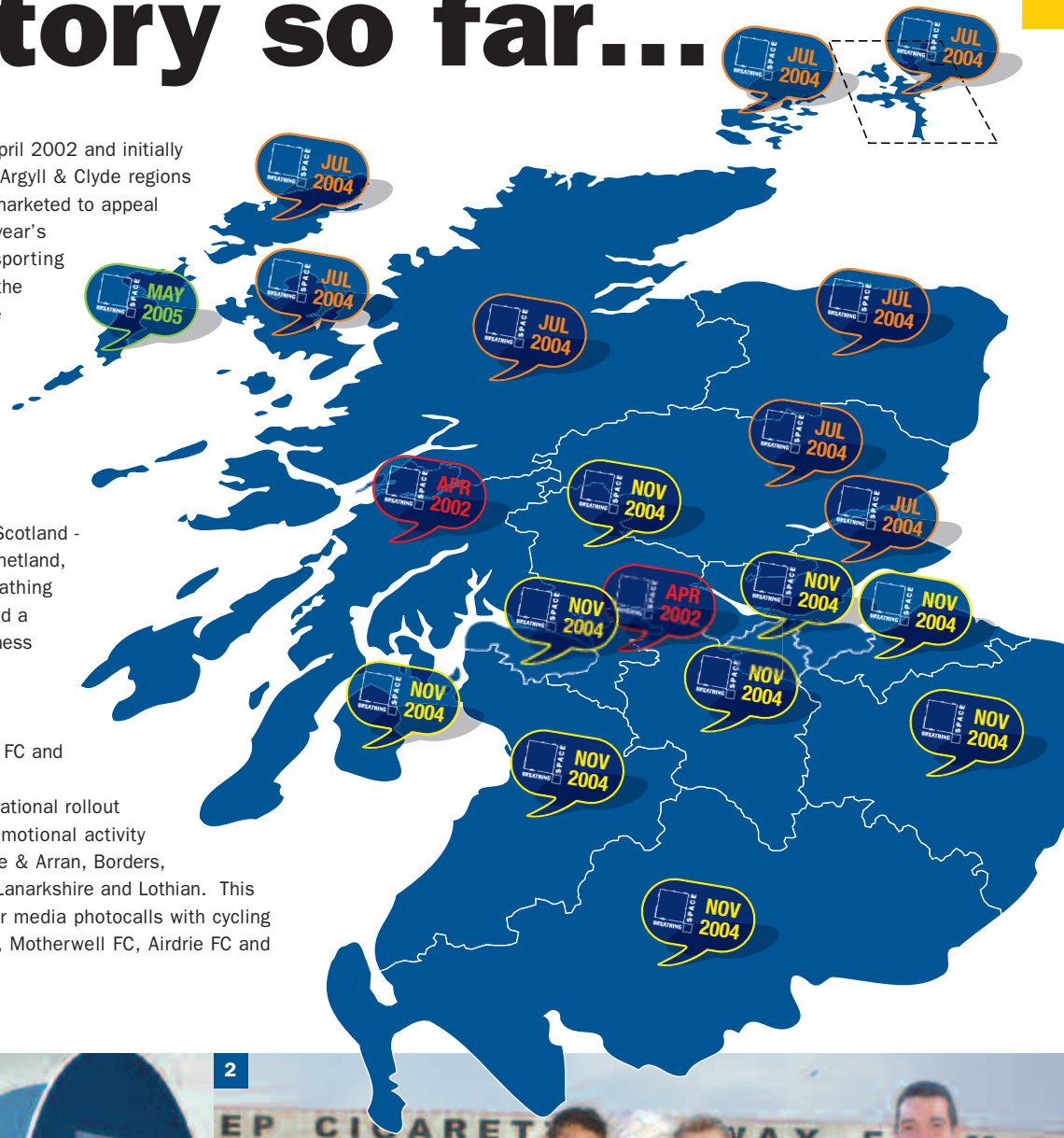
Call Demand: July-04 1309 | July-05 2790

# The story so far...

**Breathing Space** was launched in April 2002 and initially piloted in the Greater Glasgow and Argyll & Clyde regions until 2004. The service has been marketed to appeal particularly to young men and last year's roadshows enlisted the support of sporting legends who helped us drive home the point that we all need to take some breathing space and speak about negative feelings before they get out of hand.

In July 2004 Breathing Space embarked on a further phase of promotional rollout which saw the phone line's advertising campaign extend to the 'North' of Scotland - Fife, Grampian, Highland, Orkney, Shetland, Tayside and the Western Isles. Breathing Space took the high road and hosted a series of roadshows to raise awareness of the phone line amongst local service users and agencies. Media photocalls enlisted the support of Aberdeen FC, Inverness Caledonian FC and Scottish Folk Band Capercaillie.

Breathing Space completed full national rollout in November 2004 by extending promotional activity to the 'South' of Scotland - Ayrshire & Arran, Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth Valley, Lanarkshire and Lothian. This second phase of activity saw further media photocalls with cycling legend Graeme Obree, Dumfries RC, Motherwell FC, Airdrie FC and Falkirk FC.





**Tony McLaren,**  
Breathing Space  
Service  
Coordinator.

*"I am lucky to be able to take the children on their bikes to the park, while they have a go on the swings I can have my 'breathing space' with some rest and relaxation...it's simple, fun and keeps me young!"*

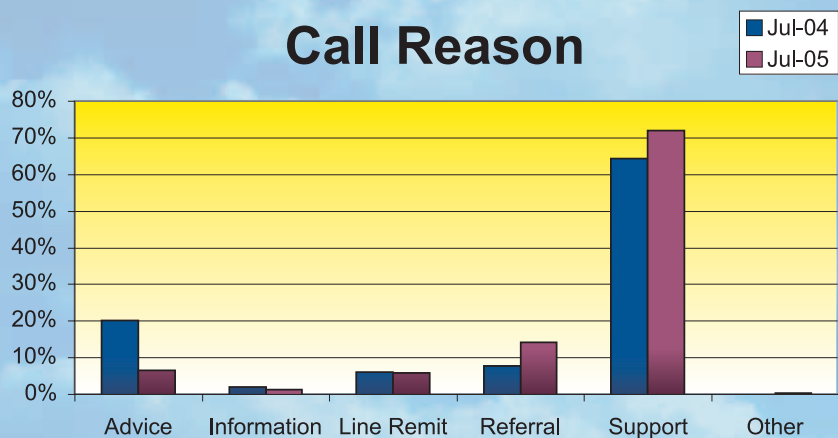
# Looking Forward

My first year in post as Service Coordinator has been a varied and exciting time and as the calendar year draws to a close there are several projects now coming to fruition. In particular, our new website launches in October 2005 – [www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk) - the site will provide information about a range of mental health issues which may affect people on a day to day basis, with particular emphasis on how to get help and self-help. But the work doesn't stop there - we are exploring development of an emailing and SMS service as an extension of our telephony service and are looking at integrating our referrals information database onto the site, making it a unique resource accessible to all.

Autumn 2005 also sees the advent of a new TV, Radio and Press advertising campaign to help increase awareness of the service within remote and rural communities across Scotland so it won't be long before we are on the road again!

Call Reason	Jul-04 Volume %		Jul-05 Volume %	
Advice	101	20%	82	7%
Information	10	2%	16	1%
Line Remit	30	6%	72	6%
Referral	39	8%	178	14%
Support	323	64%	902	72%
Other	0	0%	3	0%
	<b>503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1253</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Call Reason



- 1 Inverness Caledonian FC kick start Highland launch
- 2 Head start for Breathing Space at Motherwell FC
- 3 Dumfries RFC get in a scrum over Breathing Space
- 4 Graeme Obree puts pedal power behind Breathing Space launch in Ayrshire
- 5 Willie Miller gives support to Breathing Space
- 6 Falkirk FC get things moving at Falkirk wheel

*"I want to say a big Thank You to you all for the excellent time, help and support you have given me over the past year. It is gratefully appreciated and has helped me during very difficult times. I always feel 10 times better after you have listened to me when I call. Keep up the excellent work and give yourselves credit for the amount of people's lives that you have enriched."*

# 'Sorted Not Screwed Up!'

**Aberdeen Foyer provides a holistic support package for socially vulnerable young people.**

**Jamie Patterson said:**

"Our in-house mental health and well-being initiative called 'Sorted Not Screwed Up!', helps complement the skills, knowledge and support provided by other Foyer staff when supporting young people. However, crises aren't limited to times when support staff are around. Therefore, having a range of services such as Breathing Space is a valuable option for those individuals who wish to speak to someone later in the evening; often a time of isolation. Having a listening ear by a trained individual can help those in need get through a difficult time, until further support can be accessed."



**Jamie Patterson,**  
Community Health  
Team Manager,  
Aberdeen Foyer.

*"It's important for me to fit something into my day that I enjoy doing, such as playing the guitar, going to see a film or going for a run in the park - this helps put aside any current stressors and can also help get some perspective on any difficulties I'm experiencing"*

# In the Headlines





### Calls Recieved

**"30,000th  
\*call to Breathing  
Space received on 9th  
August 2005"**

*\*Since 1st February 2004*



### Website Hits

**12 months  
July 2004 -  
end June 2005:  
18,107 visits**

# Thank you

There are so many wonderful individuals and groups who have helped us spread the word about Breathing Space over the past year. We'd love to name you all but would need another 6 page report! To all who have supported us during 04/05 we'd extend a very warm THANK YOU from all the team at Breathing Space.

## The work continues...



Breathing Space regularly hosts information sessions across the country and takes part in key events throughout the year in Scotland. If you would like to find out how your agency can work with Breathing Space please contact Ron or Tony.

An ongoing focus is to ensure that our contacts database is up to date and we would ask that you contact Janice Malone to ensure your agency contact

details are up-to-date.

Breathing Space continues to promote awareness of the phone line in Scotland. Our media advertising campaign will continue across Scotland. October 2005 will see the launch of our website- [www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

An evaluation of the Breathing Space phoneline will be published in Spring 2006. For further information please contact Ron or Tony.



Look out for the next issue of 'Staying Connected' in the Spring of 2006. To ensure that you receive your copy and are added to our mailing list please contact Janice Malone.



## Contacts

**Ron Ellis**  
Service Coordinator  
Tel: 0141 225 0099  
Mobile: 07790 842 436  
[ron@breathingspacescotland.co.uk](mailto:ron@breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

**Tony McLaren**  
Service Coordinator  
Tel: 0141 225 0099  
Mobile: 07796 941 956  
[tony@breathingspacescotland.co.uk](mailto:tony@breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

**Janice Malone**  
Support Officer  
Tel: 0141 435 3901  
Mobile: 07810 507 266  
[janice@breathingspacescotland.co.uk](mailto:janice@breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

**Geraldine Scott**  
Communications & Marketing  
Assistant  
Tel: 0141 435 3901  
Mobile: 07766 431 953  
[geraldine@breathingspacescotland.co.uk](mailto:geraldine@breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

[info@breathingspacescotland.co.uk](mailto:info@breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

**Anyone can get depressed  
It helps to get some breathing space**

**0800 83 85 87**

[www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

