

## Thoughts on the use of the Edinburgh Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund



CAPS Independent Advocacy asked the people who attend our mental health collective advocacy groups in Edinburgh, what their thoughts were about the best use of the new funding. People welcomed the approach to mental wellbeing rather than “healing mental ill health”

People said what was needed was:

- Respite – chance for people and groups to get away.
- Collective advocacy for people with ADHD and for autistic people.
- Fun things to do – everything is so hard and heavy and people want something to make us laugh.
- Places to be – no cost, no pressure social spaces where people can hang out with friends, make new friends, get out of the house. People don’t have money to go to cafes, drop-ins require referrals and forms and have criteria, and often insist on activities.
- Befriending that connects like-minded people.
- More opportunities like Outlook, maybe run through a voluntary organisation – short educational courses to learn new things, be creative, do exercise.
- Menopause peer support – it is a difficult time for people’s mental health and being around others going through it can make the experience a bit easier.
- More informal peer support related to the arts e.g. improvisation comedy classes and live music (both watching and playing).
- Sports coaching/exercise which enables meeting people and being outdoors in nature. e.g. cycling, tennis
- More collective advocacy opportunities because people said being involved in them was good for their mental wellbeing.
- Peer support groups for people with mental illnesses in general and for people with personality disorders, in particular.
- Informal friendship groups or buddy schemes. There was an idea to create buddy schemes to accompany people to medical (or other) appointments.
- Access to green space and gardening opportunities.

- Building digital skills to tackle digital exclusion.
- An online space where people could build community. People mentioned structured conversation and support online, but also just creating an online space where you could pop in for a chat. This could be more accessible than a physical space (but they flagged obvious concerns with moderation/safeguarding)
- Outdoor activity LGBT groups – focusing on ‘green prescriptions’
- Yoga LGBT (There was one in the past with LGBT Health & Wellbeing and Edinburgh yoga)
- Support group (social even) for transgender people going through the medical transition stage.
- General physical safe spaces for more vulnerable people in the community; targeted towards non-binary and trans people, people of colour etc.
- Employability sessions/support for non-binary and transgender people.
- Training for staff in mental health organisations about LGBT issues.
- More support for LGBTQI+ homeless people / people estranged from families etc. Especially transgender people who have bureaucratic issues relating to name/ gender on legal documents. For example, transgender women may not be able to access women’s shelters / organisations due to this.

To find out more about CAPS Independent Advocacy and the collective advocacy projects we offer, please visit our website

[www.capsadvocacy.org](http://www.capsadvocacy.org)

November 2021

CAPS is a Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation. Scottish Charity number SC021772