



## Breathing Space

Marking 20 years of  
mental health support

2024 toolkit

## Introduction

February 1st (Breathing Space Day) marks a significant moment for mental health support in Scotland as the free, confidential telephone service - Breathing Space, celebrates its 20th anniversary.

Launched in 2004, and one of a suite of NHS 24's mental health services, Breathing Space has become a vital lifeline for countless individuals across the country. Available for everyone aged 16 and over living in Scotland, Breathing Space offers a listening ear, practical advice, and essential support during times of emotional distress.

Over the past two decades, Breathing Space has made a profound impact, responding to more than 1.5 million calls, and providing more than 96,000 hours of one-to-one support. This crucial service would not be possible without the unwavering commitment of its dedicated staff, who answer calls day and night, offering non-judgmental support to anyone in need.

## Introduction - continued

We would appreciate your support in raising awareness of Breathing Space and its 20th anniversary celebrations. This toolkit has been put together to highlight the resources currently available and includes:

- Background information on the service
- Useful links
- Key messages
- Campaign assets
- Radio ad
- Social media assets and copy
- Editorial copy

## Background information

- In 20 years Breathing Space has grown from a pilot service in 3 areas to a national 365 days a year service open every evening and 24 hours at weekends.
- In 2004 the service had 10 staff, there are now 50 dedicated staff who work shifts to respond to callers.
- The first ever Breathing Space Day was held on February 1st, 2007. The date was chosen to mark the third anniversary of the launch of the service in February 2004. As lighter days return in early February, we reflect on the importance of looking after our mental health in the darker seasons of the year.

## Background information - continued

- In July 2020 Breathing Space took its 1 millionth call.
- Breathing Space is operated by NHS 24 from two of its centres - at Hillington in Glasgow and in South Queensferry.
- There are now more than 50 'Take some breathing space' benches across Scotland from Dumfries to Golspie in locations as varied as parks, sports clubs, universities, colleges, and train stations. The benches provide encouragement and a safe space for people to sit either alone or with a companion to find their own 'breathing space' and the time to have supportive conversations. By the end of 2024 there will be at least another 10 installed where local communities are promoting positive mental health.

# Mental health services offered by NHS 24

NHS 24 mental health services are available to everyone in Scotland. The services we offer include listening, offering advice, and guiding those needing support to further help if required.



Scotland's health information service [nhsinform.scot](https://nhsinform.scot) has advice on dealing with a wide range of mental health conditions, free courses to help mental wellbeing, videos of those who wish to share their experiences, and information on where to get further help.



Living Life is a phone service that offers support to people in Scotland aged over 16 who are experiencing low mood, mild to moderate depression or symptoms of anxiety through cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).



For anyone feeling distressed, in despair, or suicidal, call 111 day or night. Specially trained advisors or mental health nurses can support and refer to other services if needed.  
No age limit.



Breathing Space is a free and confidential phone and web chat service for anyone in Scotland over the age of 16 experiencing low mood, depression, or anxiety.

## Useful links

 Breathing Space

[breathingspace.scot](https://breathingspace.scot)

### NHS inform

 Mind to Mind

[nhsinform.scot/mind-to-mind](https://nhsinform.scot/mind-to-mind)

 Mental health self help guides

[nhs24.info/mental-health-self-help](https://nhs24.info/mental-health-self-help)

 Mental health services

[nhs24.info/mental-health-services](https://nhs24.info/mental-health-services)

 Online mental health tools

[nhs24.info/mental\\_wellbeing](https://nhs24.info/mental_wellbeing)

## Key messages

- NHS 24 mental health services are available to everyone in Scotland. The services we offer include listening, offering advice, and guiding you to further help if required.
- A friendly voice and a listening ear are just a phone call away. To access Breathing Space Scotland's free and confidential service, call 0800 83 85 87 or visit their website at [breathingspace.scot](https://breathingspace.scot) for online chat and resources.
- Mental health challenges continue to impact many people, and Breathing Space reminds everyone that "you matter, we care."
- If you or someone you know is struggling, it's ok to not be ok. Remember to take some breathing space.





## Campaign assets

A suite of materials has been developed to enable partners to promote the service. These are available to download from our distribution email. For other methods of file download or if different formats are required, please contact NHS 24's [Communications Team](#).



Digital Ad



Social images



Email signature banner



Little books - PDF downloads

## Radio ad

This radio ad was created to reassure listeners that Breathing Space understands how difficult it is to open up. Its call to action encourages those that are struggling with their mental health to contact Breathing Space for support and advice.

“

"So - how're you doing?"

"I'm fine."

It's like a knee-jerk, isn't it? "I'm fine." A lot of us hide behind 'fine' don't we? 'cause it's tough to say when we're not fine

But Breathing Space can help.

They can help you open up when you're feeling down - they're there to listen, whether it's on the phone, or over web chat.

So if you hide behind fine, be kind to yourself - search Breathing Space, Scotland.

”

kindly voiced by Ricky Ross



## Examples of social media text

Are you experiencing low mood, anxiety or distress?

If you need to talk, NHS 24's Breathing Space service is there to listen. Get in touch on the phone or webchat for mental health and wellbeing advice.

- 0800 83 85 87
- [breathingspace.scot](https://breathingspace.scot)

Join us today in saying [#HappyBirthdayBreathingSpace!](https://twitter.com/hashtag/HappyBirthdayBreathingSpace)

2024 marks 20 years of NHS 24's Breathing Space phone line providing a listening ear to the people of Scotland and offering advice for better mental health and wellbeing.

- 0800 83 85 87
- [breathingspace.scot](https://breathingspace.scot)

If you need to talk, Breathing Space is there to listen.

Managed by NHS 24, Breathing Space is Scotland's free and confidential phone and webchat service for anyone aged 16 or over.

If you need some Breathing Space call 0800 83 85 87 or visit [breathingspace.scot](https://breathingspace.scot)

## Editorial - version 1

### Celebrating 20 years of Breathing Space

(insert organisation's name) is proud to support Scotland's national mental health service Breathing Space and celebrate its 20th anniversary.

Breathing Space is a free and confidential phone and web chat service for anyone in Scotland aged 16 and over experiencing low mood, depression, or anxiety. Part of a suite of mental health services delivered by NHS 24, Breathing Space launched in 2004 and has grown to become a vital lifeline for countless individuals across the country. Available for everyone aged 16 and over living in Scotland, the service offers a listening ear, practical advice, and essential support during times of emotional distress.

Over the past two decades, Breathing Space has made a profound impact, responding to more than 1.5 million calls, and providing more than 96,000 hours of one-to-one support. This crucial service would not be possible without the unwavering commitment of its dedicated staff, who answer calls day and night, offering non-judgmental support to anyone in need.

Tony McLaren, National Coordinator, Breathing Space, said:

"For twenty years, Breathing Space has been a beacon of hope for people struggling with their mental health.

"We are incredibly proud of the difference we've made in supporting individuals and families across Scotland. Our commitment to providing accessible, confidential, and compassionate non-judgmental support remains unwavering, and we look forward to continuing to be a vital resource for many years to come."

- To access Breathing Space Scotland's free and confidential service, call 0800 83 85 87 or visit their website at [breathingspace.scot](https://breathingspace.scot) for online chat and resources. //ENDS

## Editorial - version 2

### Open up when you're feeling down

If you're feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope with the challenges in your life, you're not alone.

Breathing Space is a free, confidential service that provides support to people who are experiencing distress in their lives.

Part of a suite of mental health services delivered by NHS 24, Breathing Space can help by providing:

- Telephone support: 0800 83 85 87
- Web chat: [breathingspace.scot](https://breathingspace.scot)
- Digital resources: online information, exercises, and tools to help manage low mood, depression, or anxiety.

Services are available weekday evenings between 6pm and 2am and over weekends, from 6pm on Friday until 6am Monday morning.

Breathing Space advisors are skilled at getting those contacting the service to chat about their worries, and can help address a wide range of concerns, including mental health difficulties, low mood, family and relationship issues, grief and loss, and anxiety related to work or personal life.

People getting in touch are not required to disclose their name or personal information, ensuring a confidential and non-judgmental space.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, remember 'you matter, we care.' Breathing Space is here to help. //ENDS

## NHS 24 social media channels

Content highlighting Breathing Space Day and Breathing Space 20th anniversary celebrations will be featured on NHS 24's social media channels throughout the year.

We would be grateful if you could share any content promoted by NHS 24 on your own social media channels, and please remember to tag us in any of your own posts!



[Facebook](#)



[YouTube](#)



[X \(Twitter\)](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[Instagram](#)

## Contact

We are grateful for your support. For assistance with Breathing Space's partnership and engagement programme, including information on Breathing space benches please contact the Breathing Space Co-Ordination Team on - [breathingspaceresources@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:breathingspaceresources@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk)

If you have any questions or need help with the Breathing Space campaign resources, please contact NHS 24's Communications Team - [hqcommunications@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:hqcommunications@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk)