

What recommendations did you make?

- There is evidence of effective programmes, and it is available to people who have access to information systems. We have to get better at finding ways of sharing it.
- People working in the field should be supported to evaluate and write up their work, so that it can have a wider audience
- Commissioners and funders should insist on a systematic approach to planning, and the necessity of evaluation, when considering applications for funding
- Information-gathering for a database such as this might be more successful if done on a personal interview basis



HeadsUpScotland
National Project for Children and Young People's Mental Health

Database Development Project

What is HeadsUpScotland?

The purpose of HeadsUpScotland is to make a major contribution to the activity already underway in Scotland to improve the mental health and well-being of children and young people. It isn't just about children and young people who are having mental health difficulties; it is about improving the mental health of ALL children and young people. Mental health is an integral part of life and attention to mental health promotion, prevention and care should be integral to all agencies working with children and young people.

Thank you to everyone who took part.

Nan Newall

Ayr, 2006

What was the project?

It was about gathering information from across Scotland on initiatives related to children's and young people's mental health so that information about effective programmes could be made available on an electronic database.

Why?

People working in this field have strong networks, but everyone benefits from a wider sharing of information.

Why is that important?

Mental health is an integral part of overall health, and promoting it is relevant to everyone. The first few years of a child's life are important for later development, and the mental health of young people is crucial to their adolescence and later adult life.

What did you do?

The idea had come from hearing about work that was already being done in Europe, and we worked closely with colleagues in The Netherlands to test their database in Scotland. We felt that this would allow us to be linked to a system that was quality assured, and that the good work that was happening in Scotland would have a wider audience.

What were the important steps?

We had 100 days spread over a year, so we had to be strict about time. Because we were using the European template we had to find the right tone for Scotland, and we had to be clear about the criteria we would use for including programmes on the database. We had to give people enough information to help them with the template, without overloading them. Finally, we had to find ways of distributing it across Scotland.

What happened?

We had 11 submissions, reasonably spread across Scotland, and a mix of programmes.

A lot of work is going on – why do you think the response was so low?

This was not an in-depth research project, so we offer suggestions rather than definitive answers.

- The database asked for a lot of information, and busy people don't always feel that filling in templates is good use of their time.
- Some had recently completed similar work for another project, and didn't want to do it again.
- The timescale was short, and with longer time, we could have discussed it more widely and in more detail.
- People don't always see the value in evaluating and writing up their work – so it isn't disseminated to a wider audience.
- They don't always value their work, or think that other people might want to know about it.
- They don't always see the benefit of looking up a database for information - they would rather talk to people
- Europe is a bit far away and people didn't identify with the European part of the project