Questionnaire UK COVID-19 Inquiry: Module 2 and 2A - Rule 9 Request to Support in Mind Scotland Reference: M2/M2A/R9R/SMS Please provide the following information:

Note Support in Mind Scotland is now known as **Change Mental Health**

1. A brief overview of the history, legal status and aims of the organisation or body. Please explain whether the work of the organisation or body is UK wide, or is instead confined to Scotland only.

Change Mental Health is a Scottish registered charity which was established in 1972, previously known as the National Schizophrenic Fellowship Society Scotland and Support in Mind Scotland.

Our vision is a future where no one needs to face mental illness alone. Our mission is to provide transformational services for people, ensuring that everyone has access to the support they need, when they need it and is a way which works best for them.

Change Mental Health only supports people in Scotland.

2. A brief description of the group(s) which the organisation or body supports or represents.

Change Mental Health is a mental health charity that supports people and communities affected by mental illness and their carers. We support around 1800 individuals every week.

Further to that our distress brief intervention programme has supported 4500 people in crisis since 2017.

3. A brief overview of the work of the organisation or body in supporting or representing the relevant group(s) between January 2020 and April 2022 as it relates to the response to Covid-19 of the (i) UK Government; and/or (ii) Scottish Government.

(i) Change Mental Health runs the National Rural Mental Health Forum, which has organisations across the UK involved. We ran online information and collaboration seminars throughout the crisis. To date since Spring 2020 we have held 38 meetings with around 3000 attendees – see www.ruralwellbeing.org/past-events for past presentations and information.

These seminars covered many aspects of mental health, wellbeing, research, best practice, addressing stigma, promoting collaboration, feeding into public policy etc.

(ii) Change Mental Health has 13 building locations in Scotland, where those with mental illness go to for support. During the Covid Crisis, those building plus our national offices were closed due to legislation and to avoid spread of the coronavirus to those we support.

During that crisis when Scottish Government advice or legislation was to not meet in buildings, Change Mental Health supported our service users remotely via telephone, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp and other remote methods.

Change Mental Health expanded its Scottish Government Distress Brief Intervention Programme to wider areas of Scotland, to support those experiencing distress.

Change Mental Health runs the National Rural Mental Health Forum, which has organisational membership from the third, public and private sectors. There are around 230 membership organisations. During the Covid Crisis the Forum was unable to meet in-person and therefore held online meetings. Due to the uptake of online conferencing and the increase in interest in tackling mental health, the Forum held online seminars and to date since the crisis has held 38 such meetings with around 3000 people registering to attend, thus increasing its impact. See Appendix 1 for list of Forums held

4. A list of any articles or reports the organisation or body has published or contributed to, and/or evidence it has given (for example to UK Parliament Select Committees or Scottish Parliament Committees) regarding the impact on the group(s) which the organisation or body supports or represents of the response to Covid-19 by (i) the UK Government; and/or (ii) the Scottish Government.

Change Mental Health is also involved in public policy, using evidence and research. The following research we were involved in.

RuralCovidLife Research 2020, Generation Scotland/University of Edinburgh - Research about coronavirus (COVID-19). Created to understand how COVID-19 measures have affected the health and wellbeing of people living in rural Scottish communities. Change Mental Health (then known as **Support in Mind Scotland co-authors** (Jim Hume), with Generation Scotland/University of Edinburgh) -**see appendix 2 for list of authors** https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2020-12-17_rcl_summary_report_final_1_0.pdf

Further Out - The Scottish LGBT Equality Report 2020 The report details how social inequalities, prejudice and discrimination as well as a lack of access to inclusive and equalities competent services can have a detrimental effect on wellbeing and mental health. As well as presenting statistical data, the report shares the qualitative experiences of individuals living rurally gathered between 2017 and 2020.The report also makes clear that the disproportionate effect of the Covid 19 Pandemic has heightened health and social inequalities and placed this minority group living rurally at an even higher risk of poor mental health. https://www.equality-network.org/resources/publications/policy/further-out-scottish-lgbt-rural-report-2020/

Marginalised Communities Report 2021, Support in Mind Scotland This research undertook both quantitative and qualitative questioning, with a focus on open-ended

questions to allow participants the opportunity to explain their experiences and allow the research to truly shed light on how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected their mental health and wellbeing. The report conclusions and recommendations will support a collaborative approach from the NRMHF and partners to address the issues identified. The report conclusions indicate a mix of broad rural infrastructure issues and the tendency for people to seek support at a 'hyper-local' level.
https://ruralwellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Marginalised-Rural-Communities-Support-in-Mind-Scotland-1.1.pdf

From origins to opportunities – a desk review of social prescribing in Scotland Royal Society of Edinburgh/Support in Mind Scotland, 2021
Published by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in partnership with Support in Mind Scotland, this duly calls for decision-makers in Scotland to adopt a social prescribing approach to healthcare as a priority. The report states that non-medical approaches could alleviate pressure on the NHS and other public services in the wake of Covid-19, if community partners are adequately resourced to deliver tailored support across Scotland.
https://www.rsecovidcommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/A-Desk-Review-of-Social-Prescribing-from-origins-to-opportunities.pdf

Mental Health, Scotland's Transition and Recovery. Scottish Government 2020 (developed from the stakeholder groups that Change Mental Health are involved in)
https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2020/10/mental-health-scotlands-transition-recovery/documents/mental-health-scotlands-transition-recovery/mental-health-scotlands-transition-recovery/govscot%3Adocument/mental-health-scotlands-transition-recovery.pdf

Further research below that we were not directly involved in, but of relevance.

TeenCovidLife – Research on the Impact of Covid on Young People living in Scotland 2020, Generation Scotland/University of Edinburgh
https://www.ed.ac.uk/generation-scotland/what-have-we-found/latest-news/teencovidlife-one

CovidLife – Impact of Covid on the People of Scotland 2020. Generation Scotland/University of Edinburgh (35,000 respondents)
https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2020-05-15_covidlifesurvey_report_final_web.pdf

Effect of Covid on Teenagers Mental Health – The Mental Health Foundation 2021
https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/about-us/news/teenagers-mental-health-under-severe-pre

ssure-pandemic-continues-new-research?bbeml=tp-EbFsTopOv0SfkgIhAgzciA.joIDacdF0h
k20kFlk8DtZ6Q.rB6rahkOJLECnggYU9baToQ.lgHC66uSs7kScM7PezcnU3Q

5. The view of the organisation or body as to whether the group(s) it supports or represents was adequately considered when decisions about the response to Covid-19 were made by (i) the UK Government; and/or (ii) the Scottish Government. Please also explain the reasons for the view expressed by the organisation or body in this respect.

(i) UK Government's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs held regular stakeholder group meetings to hear views of issues arising and to give information to us. These meetings are ongoing and during the crisis were regular, which helped get the voice of those we support heard at UK Government level.

(ii) Scottish Government Mental Health and Rural Directorates both held regular stakeholder group meetings which are ongoing and were regular during the Covid Crisis to which we attended, in order to hear about arising issues, address them and inform us of work happening. These helped get the voice of those we support heard at Scottish Government level and in different directorates.

Change Mental Health had to change overnight its methods of supporting our service users and their carers. We also had to change the way that we supported and managed our staff to online methods.

Scottish Government provided digital equipment for 72 individuals, without digital equipment, from our service users to help get them online, as part of a national programme.

We agreed with Government's decision to not allow in person support due to the danger to vulnerable people of being infected by the Coronavirus. The majority of those we support were continued with their support online, but there were some who did not want online support and therefore were we concerned if they did not engage in new methods of support.

6. Whether the organisation or body raised any concerns about the consideration being given to the group(s) which it supports or represents with (i) the UK Government; and/or (ii) the Scottish Government, when those governments were making decisions about their response to Covid-19. Please provide a list of any such correspondence or meetings with (i) the UK Government; and/or (ii) the Scottish Government, including the dates on which the body or organisation wrote or such meetings were held, to whom the correspondence was addressed or with whom the meeting was held, and any response received from the UK Government or the Scottish Government, addressing such concerns.

As mentioned prior, Change Mental Health (then Support in Mind Scotland) was invited and took part in regular meetings with UK Government's DEFRA, Scottish Government's Mental Health Directorate and Scottish Government's Rural Directorate.

These meetings were online, and concerns raised verbal throughout the crisis.

7. A brief summary of the views of the organisation or body as to any lessons, if any, that can be learned from any consideration which was given to the group(s) that the organisation or body supports or represents by (i) the UK Government; and/or (ii) the Scottish Government when they were making decisions about their response to Covid-19.

Change Mental Health believe that Government's should consider the support that is needed during times of pandemics, in that not all areas of Scotland and the result of the UK have equal access to broadband and mobile services or can afford them. During the Covid Crisis online means were the only methods of supporting vulnerable people and therefore broadband and/or mobile services should be available for all, not just those who can afford them or who live in areas that are served well with these services. Scotland's land mass is defined as 98% rural by Scottish Government and services are poorer or non-existent in some areas. Further to that, cost of IT equipment is an issue for some living in deprivation and this should be considered now in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Appendices

Appendix 1, List of National Rural Mental Health Forum Online Seminars held

Wednesday the 20th of April 2022, 11am to 1.30pm
Mental Health and Money Advice Service (MHMAS): Improving financial well-being in rural communities, Scottish Recovery Network: Making Recovery real in Rural Scotland and the 'Rural Community Engagement Project'

Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Click to view the Scottish Recovery Network's presentation

Wednesday 2nd of March 2022, 11am to 1pm
National Rural Mental Health Forum Seminar: Isolation Plus, a powerful tool to identify communities' needs – ASTROSAT and Big Energy Savings Network, with Citizens Advice Scotland.

Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Thursday 27th January 2022, 11am to 1pm
National Rural Mental Health Forum – Mental Health Stigma and Mental Health Literacy in Young People, The Highland Carers' Support Service and NHS 24 Breathing Space "Take some Breathing Space"

Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 24th of November 2021, 11am to 1pm
SSEN: *You're Not Alone – help is hand during an emergency*, and See Me Scotland
Click here for the slides for this seminar

Thursday 28th of October 2021, 3pm to 5pm
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands: Mairi Gougeon MSP, Suicide Prevention in the Water Environment, and Carers Trust Scotland
Click here for the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 13th Oct 2021, 11am – 1pm
Citizens Advice Scotland, and Alcohol Focus Scotland
Click here for the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 22nd Sept 2021, 11am – 1pm
Support in Mind Scotland, Public Health Scotland and Scottish Community Development Centre – The Winter Lockdown Project film: "You're on Mute!", and *COSLA: Suicide Prevention Action Plan & the Needs of Young People and Children*
Click here to view the slides for 'You're on Mute!'
Click here to view the slides for the Suicide Prevention Action Plan

Wednesday 18th August 2021, 11am – 2pm
Minister for Mental Health: Kevin Stewart MSP, Social Security Scotland, and Species on the Edge
Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 23rd June 2021, 11am – 1pm
FROG: Showcasing lived experience, and Competition and Markets Authority
Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 9th June 2021, 11am – 1pm
Samaritans, and LGBTI visibility and equality in Scotland
Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 26th May 2021, 11am – 1pm
Scottish Tech Army, and ALLIANCE Lived Experience Forum
Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 12th May 2020, 11am – 1pm
Children's Parliament – Year of Childhood, and Spring Social Prescribing
Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 28th Apr 2021, 11am – 1pm
National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group update, and Royal Society of Edinburgh/NRMHF Social Prescribing research
Click here to view the slides for this seminar

Wednesday 24th Mar 2021, 11am – 1pm
Modern Gambling and Mental Health, and Bipolar Scotland
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 17th Feb 2021, 11am – 1pm
Research on Marginalised Communities and COVID-19, and the Camerados movement
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 3rd Feb 2021, 11am – 1pm
RuralCovidLife research results, and Mental Welfare Commission
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 2nd Dec 2020, 11am – 1pm
Farmers' mental health & the ALISS programme
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 18th Nov 2020, 11am – 1pm
Samaritans' report on self-harm in Scotland, and Social Security Scotland
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 11th November 2020, 12 noon – 2pm
Women and Problem Gambling & Talk Money Week
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 28th October 2020,11am – 1pm
Young People's Mental Health in Rural Scotland and Young Carers' Wellbeing
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 14 October 2020, 11am – 1pm
Devolved Benefits Advice and Rural COVID experience research
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 23 September 2020, 11am – 1pm
Mental Health in Scotland's Polish Community, Mental Health Training and Unmet Mental Health Needs
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 9 September 2020, 11am – 12.45pm
LGBTI+ Inclusion in Rural Work, Life and Leisure
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 26 August 2020, 11am – 1pm
Reducing gambling harm, and better debt advice
Slides for this seminar available at a later date

Wednesday 12 August 2020, 11am – 1pm
Peer Support, Savings and Later Life with Mental Health
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 23rd July 2020, 11am – 1pm
Mental Health Training & Financial Wellbeing
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Wednesday 7th July 2020, 11am – 1pm
Resilience Education, rural support networks and improving financial wellbeing of children and young people
[Click here to view the slides for this seminar](#)

Appendix 2, Co-Authors of RuralCovidLife, Impact of Covid-19 on Rural Scotland

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