

ABERDEENSHIRE Wellbeing

Wellbeing Festival 2023 Report



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*Including additional events offered in North Aberdeenshire

Introduction

The Aberdeenshire Wellbeing festival is organised by a festival steering group which is led by Aberdeenshire Public health. The group work with community partner groups and organisations from across Aberdeenshire to provide free community events and activities as part of national mental health week. The aim of the festival is to promote positive mental wellbeing which is an action within the Aberdeenshire Adult Mental Health strategy 2019-24ⁱ

This report highlights the 8th year of the wellbeing festival and will provide feedback from community hosts and participants who took part. Each activity offered linked with the national 5 steps to mental wellbeingⁱⁱ which offered people to feel more connected with others in their community, become more active, be more mindful or learn something new.

Background

Each year the national Mental Health Foundationⁱⁱⁱ share a theme as part of promoting mental health week. This year the festival planning group decided against using the national theme of 'anxiety'. Some hosts felt having this theme may impact on those offering activities if they felt they were not able to show the impact of reducing anxiety for example for those attending

As the wellbeing festival continues year on year the aim is to increase awareness within communities by encouraging more hosts to take part and become part of a wider mental wellbeing network in Aberdeenshire.

Some hosts have been offering events since the festival began 8 years ago and are now part of the festival steering group. Without the ongoing support and willingness of local groups and organisations to offer free events it would not be possible to offer the festival annually.

Summary of 2023 Wellbeing Festival

A total of 125 (166*) events offered during the festival

26 events hosts offering one event only
95 events by 20 hosts offering more than one event
4 large events with lots of partners taking part in one venue
78 hosts provided events or shared information during the festival week
50 hosts' submitted events which were printed in a festival programme ^{iv}

Programmes were printed which included information about every event available and how people could sign up to take part. These were available in local libraries, a downloadable booklet was available on an NHS Grampian landing page^v and a link to access was shared via social media.

Hosts took part from across Aberdeenshire including third sector organisations, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Aberdeenshire library and leisure services, NHS Grampian wellbeing services, community pharmacy, Aberdeenshire mental health and wellbeing services, schools and ranger services, volunteer led community groups, churches and wellbeing providers to name a few. They offered an amazing range of wellbeing events for people to take part in one off small or larger

events during the week in May. In addition volunteers made up a welcome contribution to support many of the events on offer including Police Scotland youth volunteers.

Evaluation feedback was provided by 43 hosts. An additional 28 responses were received from hosts who were part of larger events offered in Banff, Fraserburgh and Mintlaw. Feedback suggest 28% events were targeted towards 65+ age group, 35% for 16-64 age groups with least being offered towards children and young people. An estimated 1000+ people participated across the whole week.

Host provided positive feedback offering single events or being part of bigger multi-partner events. Some of the hosts reported less attendance due to rurality, timings of events. Others felt the opportunity to be part of bigger events helped increase their profile. Some events such as blood pressure checks had higher attendance in 65+ age group than younger adults. Feedback shows need for more evening, weekend events to offer access to those working during the day.

The majority of hosts who responded 53% said their events went extremely well with 2% saying extremely not well. Benefits for hosts included reaching wider audiences, speaking directly with the public, connecting with other groups and raising awareness in the community. Facebook was used by 31% of hosts to promote their events

All hosts were provided with an evaluation template to share with participants. From the estimated 1000+ participants, 210 people provided feedback after attending events. Additional feedback was provided by 15 children and 25 adults who took part in events in north Aberdeenshire, these reported positive feedback and good attendance rates.

Participants shared thanks to hosts in offering these events locally and option of coming along to find ways to support others. Majority 73% of participants were aware of the organisation before attending an event. This highlights a good awareness from those attending but possibly a need to increase participation from those who may have never attended the festival before. Feedback show participants from across all ages but highest attendance 80% were adults between 16 and 64 years of age, 16% were 65+ age range.

“Participation created good feelings, achievement, friendship, cooperation” “Children activities – it was a family friendly event with lots of activities for children. They were keen to join in whilst some adults were less eager or were busy with their children and so couldn’t leave them to attend adult activities” “Well done to all involved with the organizing” Hosts comments

“Looking for tips on how to deal with my daughter and my own anxiety” “Visiting with family as well as seeing what happens in Banff as I moved in a few months ago” Participants comments

** Additional hosts were included in the online version of the programme who missed the initial submission deadline*

Feedback from hosts providing events

Host feedback

All host and participants evaluations were shared by email and using QR codes on Facebook. Hosts agreed to complete and share a link with all participants to complete after each event as part of being promoted in the wellbeing programme.

Events in Aberdeenshire

Number of events per area in Aberdeenshire^{vi}	2023	2022	2021	2020 Virtual event	2019
North	42	22	22		66
Central	59	43	31		71
South	58	31	49		72
Shire wide events	7	2	0	18	0
Total events offered per year *Additional 41 activities included in 2023 online programme	166*	106	91	18	209

The table above provides a breakdown of number of events in each area of Aberdeenshire. Data for previous years has been included to show comparison. There were additional events which were not included in the final programme due to submission deadlines but were included in online downloadable booklet.

43 out of 50 hosts (86%) completed the shire wide evaluation survey, compared to 13 in 2022. Feedback from hosts show majority of events were offered face to face, which has increased year on year since the pandemic

Face to face	40
Online	2
Hybrid	2

The estimated number of participants provided by host feedback suggests total numbers attending face to face events was 1597. Hosts offering online activities reported 26 people attended but there were only a small proportion of options for people to attend online.

Some larger organisations such as Aberdeenshire libraries, the ranger service and Live Life Aberdeenshire provided multiple activities across the shire while other smaller groups offered one or more in different communities. Some groups provided events on each day of the week e.g. Stonehaven MenShed and The Foyer. Four larger events brought together multiple partner groups/organisations in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Mintlaw and at Haddo House.

*Including additional events offered in North Aberdeenshire

In Kemnay lots of groups worked together to setup “Kemfest” by offering their own mini festival the week before the wellbeing week with some offering events as part of the main festival also.

Hosts were asked to submit information for the festival booklet on who their target age group was for each event on offer.

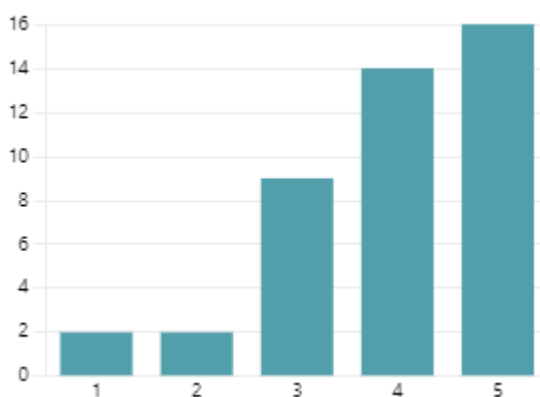
Target audience of events provided by hosts during the festival week

Under 5 yrs.	6
Over 5 to 16 yrs.	11
Over 16 to 24 yrs.	22
Adults (25- 64 years)	38
Older Adults 65 and over	31

This highlights the range of options available for adults was much higher than for children under 16 or in early years (0 to 8 year olds). In North Aberdeenshire there were 15 specific events offered towards younger children which have been evaluated separately to the shire feedback.

Hosts were asked on a scale of 1 to 5 how well did the event/ activities reach your target audience(s) 1 being not really and 5 very well

Average Rating 3.93



When asked if they were targeting more than one age group and whether one activity was more successful than others the host responses included:

“Promotional stand – allowed people to browse and chat informally. Excellent networking opportunities and very successful in terms of outcomes”

“Younger age group may have been working”

“Open session not really successful – location too rural?”

“Restorative yoga class had more participants who wanted to do something to release stress and tension”

“The Saturday event had more children, perhaps because it was in the morning versus the evening”

“Over 65s made up the majority of our participants – would be great to bring more people in younger age groups in for blood pressure checks”

“Our event was aimed at families. However, there were limited activities available for young people at the end. Although this was due to the limited opportunities available within the area!”

“Children activities – it was a family friendly event with lots of activities for children. They were keen to join in whilst some adults were less eager or were busy with their children and so couldn’t leave them to attend adult activities”

Other comments highlighted success due to more specifically targeted activities for long-term health conditions and others reported attendance from a wide range of ages as not age specific event.



Conversation Café volunteers at Gatherin event in May 2023

Hosts were asked how well they thought their event / activities went

The majority responded extremely or somewhat well.

Extremely well	23
Somewhat well	15
Neutral	3
Somewhat not well	1
Extremely not well	1

Hosts were asked the benefits for them in offering events as part of the Wellbeing Festival?



The benefits have been collated under the five national ways of wellbeing which were promoted as part of the festival.

Some of the comments crossed more than one of the themes.

Making connections 40 host (20 – North feedback) *
Learning something new – 9
Being more active – 5
Being more present - 4
Giving to others – 71 (28 – North feedback) *

Two hosts said they had not had any participants and one reported no benefit from offering an event

Comments from hosts on the benefits of being involved in the festival.

“Raising awareness of the Festival and increasing participation in the festival to organisations and groups”

“Was a great networking activity and raised our team profile in the area”

Raising awareness of the annual wellbeing festival to organisations and groups”

“Promoting positive mental wellbeing”

Hosts were asked if they felt their events may have contributed to participants' mental wellbeing, a selection of host comments have been shared.

“Mental health resources, signposting”

“Encouraging and supporting people to explore and learn about the services on offer in the area in a social setting encourages participation and reduces stigma in a way that cannot be

successfully achieved virtually or through the single dimension of a poster, proactively reaching out to people”

“I think they will feel rested and reconnected”

“Participation created good feelings, achievement, friendship, cooperation”

“As the project is about the lived experience of wellbeing in the natural world, our open mic sessions featured poetry on the same theme. We provided opportunities for people to share their own experiences of wellbeing in the natural world, to give their poetry voice, for the first time in one case, and the first time in decades in another, and for an 11-year-old to have his poetry shared with an audience of adults”

“Find out about things they could benefit from coming along to improve their mental wellbeing”

Further feedback shared by hosts

11 respondents (28%) answered **people** for this question. ...



Hosts were asked how they promoted events.

Own organisation/group Facebook page	35
Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival Facebook page	26
Local posters	21
Shared Wellbeing Festival leaflet	23
Other	6

Other hosts sent information via email lists/existing networks word of mouth, local newsletters, schools group call, local nurseries, local pharmacies, through library and joining other open day sessions. Deveron FM and Mearns FM radio also shared information about the festival and interviewed some hosts who took part in events in North Aberdeenshire.

Events were publicised using various methods with hosts asked to tag their events to a new Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival Facebook page ^{vii}



Marr cooking event

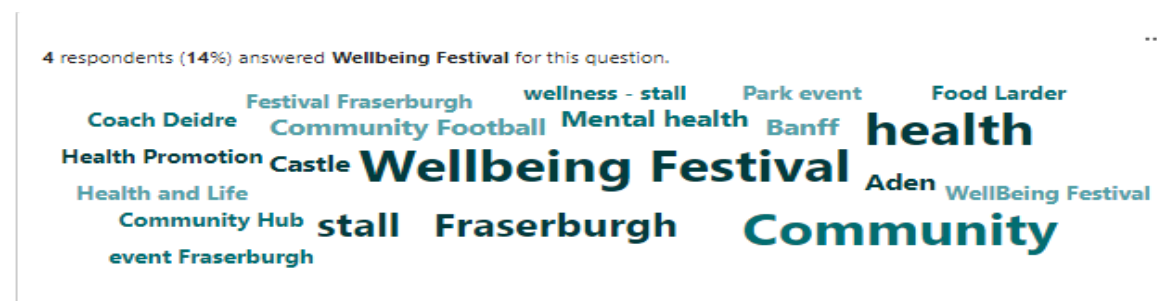
Hosts were asked if their involvement in the wellbeing festival may have helped increase their profile with residents in their community

People asked for more information about the activities/ information your group provide	37
Picked up an information leaflet about the activities/ information your group provide	28
Signed up to join in with future activities that your group provides	13
Other	4

Other hosts said it had encouraged someone to become a new volunteer, one said there had been no benefit



There were three large events held in North Aberdeenshire which 79 hosts attended and provided feedback after the festival ended. Their feedback includes information not included in the original shire wide evaluation. This table gives a flavour of some of the activities provided in these larger events.



North Shire host feedback** Additional feedback from larger events held in North Aberdeenshire

Some of the feedback from comparable questions have been added where possible in the main host responses section of this report.

Of the 28 hosts who responded 71% (20) said they were not aware of the Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival prior to their involvement this year. The remainder had seen the festival promoted via Facebook, had been involved in planning the festival previously or had discussed it with a community health improvement officer working in public health.

Feedback was from 11 hosts providing activities at the Vinery event in Banff, 13 from event held in Fraserburgh and 4 from Aden Park event in Mintlaw.

When asked why they became involved in any of these events' community was the common answer from 28 responses provided. See table of common themes.



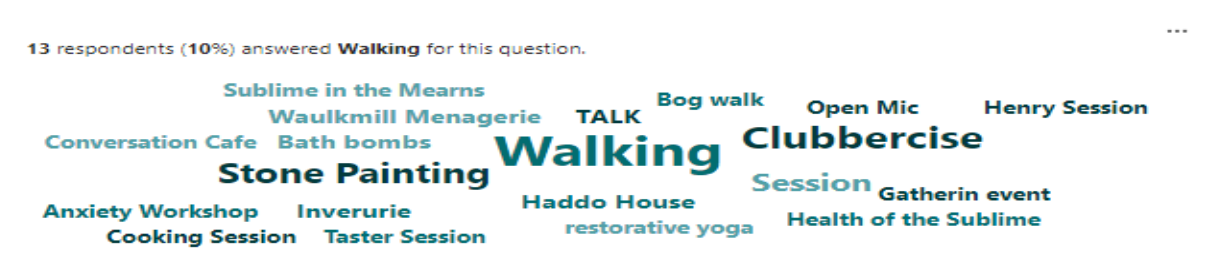
The final section of Host feedback relates to Mind yer Mind^{viii} an Aberdeenshire Mental wellbeing campaign promoted through Aberdeenshire community planning partners.

Hosts were provided with information and links to Mind yer Mind website where community resources could be downloaded and shared. The national 5 ways to wellbeing are part of Mind yer Mind resources and were shared within the main festival programme as reminders for people on how to manage their wellbeing.

Hosts were asked if they shared the Mind yer Mind resources included in the festival programme to participants attending events; 17 said yes, 26 said no

Participation feedback

A total of 131 participants responded and shared which event they attended. Below is an image of highest responses. Haddo house and Inverurie were large events which may be why these are highlighted.

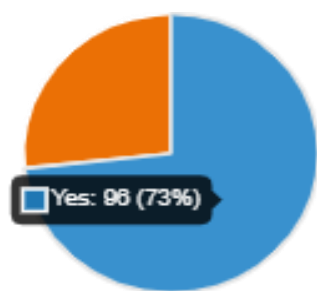


Participants were asked to which organisation provided the event

Some of the larger events such as Conversation Café were more common responses but many of the single event organisations were also highlighted.

Participants were asked how aware they were of the event or group before attending the activity.

96 (73%) reported they knew about the group offering this event before attending with 35 saying they were not.



Participants were asked where in Aberdeenshire did, they attend the event?

The difference between areas relates to how many participants actually took part in feedback within each area. Central shows higher due to two large events being held in that area but North also had three larger events which were reported through a separate evaluation

North Aberdeenshire (Banff & Buchan or Buchan)	32
Central Aberdeenshire (Garioch or Formartine)	68
South Aberdeenshire (Marr or Kincardine & Mearns)	23
Online	9



Participants were asked if they attended themselves or if they were supporting someone else and these were broken into age groups.

The majority 101 attended events on their own Feedback shows number of adults supporting children and carers supporting adults

Supporting a child under 5 years of age	10
Supporting a child or young person under 24 years of age	11
Supporting an adult 25 to 64 years of age	21
Supporting an adult over 65 years of age	2

Participants were asked why they chose the events and some comments have been shared below

“Wanted to improve my mental wellbeing”

“To get out of the house and it really did help seeing the animals”

“I was interested in finding out about the group, it was a convenient time for me, and I felt meditation would be a good skill for me”

“Service user chose these activities”

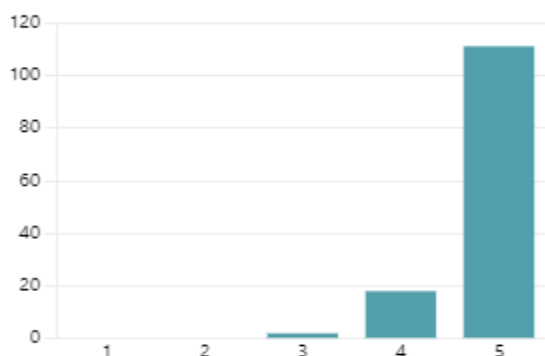
“Child suffering from anxiety”

“Looking for tips on how to deal with my daughter and my own anxiety”

Common themes identified by participant comments highlight some of the five national ways of wellbeing; being more active, learning something new, connecting with others

Participants were asked to rate the event they attended

Between 1 and 5 (1 being okay to 5 very good)



Average rating 4.83

Participants were asked what the benefits were in taking part in the event

Here are some of the comments shared

"Gave me an hour to become more aware of my body and to quieten my busy mind"

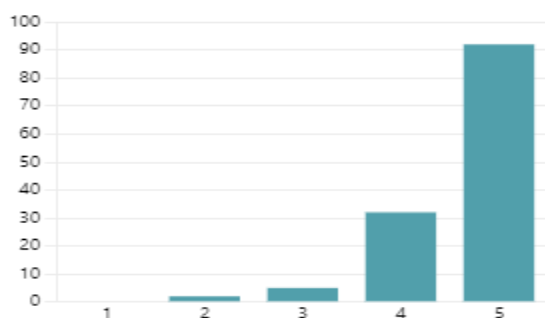
"Meeting new inspirational people, sharing their stories, talking about the emotions and feelings of certain life experience"

"We got to meet other people who live in the area whom we didn't know, we had a laugh worked as a team to make lunch and enjoyed it and really enjoyed the walk to get there and back we loved it"



Participants were asked how likely they may take up this activity on a regular basis.

(1 being not very likely to 5 very likely)



Average rating 4.63

The following numbers show how participants became aware of the event(s)

Group or organisation Facebook post	25
Wellbeing Festival Facebook post	41
Local poster	9
Word of mouth	39
Other	44

Others said they heard through their library, or at a conversation café they attend, Aberdeenshire voluntary Action or by email notification.

Breakdown of ages of participants attending activities

Under 16 years	1
Between 16 and 24 years	3
Between 25 and 64 years	106
Over 65+	21

The overall feedback of ages relates to the range of activities offered per age group by hosts. The adult age range of 25 to 64 was the highest reported target age group from hosts when they submitted their events. There were a total of 15 children who gave feedback from an event held in North Aberdeenshire.

Mental Wellbeing resources

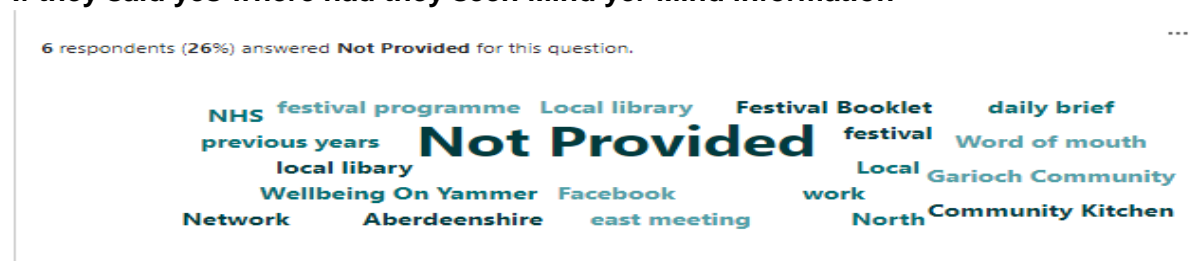
As the festival aims to promote positive mental wellbeing participants were asked if they were aware of Mind yer Mind an Aberdeenshire campaign to support mental wellbeing.

Were they were aware of the campaign or the resources before today?

24 said yes they were aware

77 Said No and 29 said maybe

If they said yes where had they seen Mind yer Mind information



Participants reported the various places they had seen Mind yer Mind above



Follow up feedback 3 months after festival

Participants were asked if they would be willing to be contacted again 3 months after the festival by Public Health to ask if they had continued the activity after today.

41 said yes

89 said no

31 of those who said yes provided their contact details. The remainder did not include their details. Public health had 9 responses to this follow up request.

Five of the 9 said they had continued to attend an activity they had tried during the festival and 4 said they had not. Some of the comments as to why they had or had not continued to attend an activity.

"I am still using the information to help me to eat healthy. I am still making healthier food choices"

"I still follow the eat well plate"

"I find Yoga very good and very relaxing. It calms me down."

"No local class"

The benefits they have found in continuing to attend activities were as follows:

I feel more connected to others	3
I learnt something new	4
I am more physically active	2
I feel like I give to others	1
I feel more aware of my needs	3
The activity helps my mental wellbeing	6
other reasons	4

Other comments *"better healthy eating"* *"Healthy Eating"* *"It relaxing me"*



Social Marketing of the festival

A new Wellbeing Festival Facebook page was created so all information for new and existing hosts could be viewed and ongoing promotion could be promoted on the page. Social media guidance was shared with each host to help promote their events by tagging the festival Facebook page.

The Wellbeing Festival planning group hosted a student from Robert Gordon University to support social media marketing as part of a volunteer placement. Social marketing helped to keep momentum of the festival and aided tracking post activity. Public health supported the student with branding and management of social media posts.

The majority of followers on the Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Facebook page were 35-44 age group or 45-54 years with 92.7% women and 7.3% men. Social media posts were also shared on the North, Central and South Public Health pages to show local events happening in each area.

Facebook promotion showed a 101,707 reach between April and end of May 2023. 81 Posts were published with 587 new followers. There were 6,597 visits to the Facebook page. Top performing posts included sharing the final version of the downloadable programme which reached 10,240.

As in previous years the Big Partnership were funded to provide additional marketing directly on the Aberdeenshire festival page. The Big Partnership ran a short advertising campaign by running web traffic advert to direct users to the Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival landing page. The advert showed a short video produced by NHS Grampian showed visual images of previous activities provided during the festival via Facebook and Instagram between 3rd and 21st of May.



The Big Partnership reported 78,113 users reached, 407,273 impressions, 5,388 link clicks with an average cost of £0.20 per click. By providing this additional marketing this drove interest of 5,388 link clicks to a landing page where the programme could be downloaded. Positive engagement showed 477 post reactions, 23 post comments and 59 post saves.

Here are some of the comments shared from participants from the Festival Facebook page

“What an extremely well, varied, thorough and broad reaching put together events programme”

“Plenty of fabulous activities going off in Banff and Macduff. Focusing on the future and at the Vinery”

“Love this, this should be a monthly thing”

“Just back from the New Pitsligo bogland walk- fascinating and fabulous (but so glad I wore my wellies” 😊

Feedback from Public Health teams in North, Central and South Aberdeenshire

Public Health coordinators in each administrative area of Aberdeenshire engage and work with local groups to encourage their participation and involvement. Many of these relationships have come from years of working in communities and getting to know what is on offer or could be offered to support positive mental well-being.

Comments shared by Public Health coordinators feedback below:

South: *“from their Mood Food event in Ballater they have now changed what they serve”*

“Awareness of the festival is really good, and that most partners are aware of it. The smaller events are not reaching many newer people”

North: *“the yoga event in Buchan was successful and she saw participants sign up for future classes”*

“There was a one-day event and ... does not feel it will be something that we will have the capacity to do moving forward”

Central: *“due to amount of work in planning and progressing the festival each year it was challenging to manage day to day public health work in addition to planning and attending other events”*

“It is a huge benefit to meet new hosts who may have not been involved in previous years and to have opportunity to engage with participants attending local events”



The Public Health team volunteers who supported the Haddo House Gatherin event

Conclusion

Total participation during the festival cannot be confirmed as some hosts who provided numbers may have been reporting from larger multiple agency events. Participation by the public increased while number of hosts reduced but attendance suggests the events offered were what people wanted to attend. Participation feedback has risen 77% compared to 2022 report which estimated 362 attendance. Participation rates in 2022 were much lower due to low evaluation responses from hosts and participants.

There was a reduction in number of hosts offering events from 93 in 2022 to 78 in 2023 but number of events provided increased by 23%. 53% of hosts said their events went extremely well and making new connections was the biggest benefit in taking part.

There were less events offered for children and young people and 65+ age groups. The timing of the festival is a challenge for schools as it falls in middle of an exam period for some young people and although events were offered to reduce stress there is a need to do more to try and reach younger age groups as part of promoting positive mental wellbeing in all age groups.

Feedback suggests there were less young children participating but responses relate to adults providing children's feedback.

The spread of activities in Aberdeenshire saw an increase in North and Central but reduction in South. There was less attendance in some rural events and more events were offered during the day compared to weekend or evening events.

Having a dedicated Facebook page helped with shire wide promotion and hosting a student for social marketing helped manage some team capacity but may need to review options to support marketing, capturing events and promoting ongoing.

The public health team agreed to follow up with hosts who offered events in each administrative area to thank those who provided free events and gather feedback for future festivals.

Having a live online programme [Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival \(nhsgrampian.org\)](https://nhsgrampian.org) helped ensure any changes to existing activities could be maintained which was needed.

Aberdeenshire live life offering the programme within libraries helped in providing physical copies and some were also distributed in local cafes.

Developing the Aberdeenshire festival is a team effort working with multiple hosts who sit on the shire planning group and this helps plan the festival.

Admin support is required in managing submissions, answering queries, collating information for producing programme etc., The festival is a large piece of work in Public Health and takes up a large proportion of work time in promoting, marketing, hosting events and social marketing . This can impact on other work priorities but the increase in community involvement and new partnerships shows the festival produces a lot of positives in building relationships across organisations.

Funding the festival and local groups who may need funds to put on regular events long term needs to be considered. Aberdeenshire voluntary action provided funding to some groups who had applied through the national community mental health funds and community planning groups also provided some funding.

The Aberdeenshire planning group have agreed to look at offering the festival over a month rather than one week. This is to try and give the public more opportunity to try different activities in other areas. Social media comments suggest a need in Moray and Aberdeen city to host a Grampian wide festival.

Recommendations

Identify ways to record total participation more effectively and manage submissions to collate data more effectively. Administration support needed to support the festival from planning to collation of evidence

To look at options to reach children and young people and 65+ age ranges and those who have not attended the festival before.

To bring in more local groups to shire planning group for 2024

Review methods for collating submissions and reviewing final draft of programme before publication

Recommendations from RGU student was to have more collaborators and influencers. Introduce videographers from the university as part of future placements to help monitor social media activity and engagement with online analytic tools.

Offer online and offline events to increase participation to people who may not be willing to attend face to face events.

Wider promotion of the festival to larger audiences and continue to promote the new Facebook page posting content relating to mental health, wellbeing

Share previous year's festival events and successes. Use more interactive posts such as polls, use of relatable hashtags to improve visibility.

Increase communication of the festival using social media and local networks

Reach individuals/groups who have not attended the festival by offering more evening and weekend events

Build more awareness within schools, families and offer activities for all age groups

Review need for hosting a Grampian wide festival in 2024 and consider hosting festival over a whole month to increase capacity for people to attend activities

To identify ways to make the festival more sustainable

Review findings with planning group and share final report with partners and hosts

A huge thankyou to everyone who has contributed to making the Aberdeenshire Wellbeing festival happen each year and to all who took part either as a participant or as a host offering free events.

References

ⁱ [Adult Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2019 - 24 \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/adult-mental-health-wellbeing-strategy-2019-24)

ⁱⁱ [5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/5-steps-to-mental-wellbeing)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Mental Health Awareness Week | Mental Health Foundation](https://www.mentalhealthfoundation.org.uk/mental-health-awareness-week)

^{iv} [Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival \(nhsgrampian.org\)](https://www.nhsgrampian.org/aberdeenshire-wellbeing-festival)

^v [Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival \(nhsgrampian.org\)](https://www.nhsgrampian.org/aberdeenshire-wellbeing-festival)

^{vi} [Areas and towns - Aberdeenshire Council](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/areas-and-towns)

^{vii} [\(1\) Facebook](#)

^{viii} [mind yer mind](#)