



Dear

Thank you very much for asking for more information about HUG.

HUG is a network of people from across the Highlands who have all experienced mental health problems. We campaign to improve the rights, services and treatment of people with mental health problems, raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues, the lives we lead and challenge stigma.

This pack contains:

- o A HUG leaflet, explaining who we are and what we do
- o Our latest newsletter and report
- o A questionnaire to find out how you would like to be involved
- o A selection of HUG postcards
- o A membership form
- o A list of ground rules for our meetings

I hope that you find this interesting. If you haven't already asked to be put on our mailing list as a new member and wish to be, then please fill in the form and send it to us.

Membership

Membership is free, and open to anyone who has experienced mental health problems who lives in the Highlands. Other people who are interested in our work can also go on our mailing list.

Involvement

We are very happy when people are interested in getting involved with HUG. The way in which you would like to be involved is entirely up to you. If you would simply like to receive our mailings then that is great, however there are many different ways you can get more actively involved if you wish, for example:

- o Coming to HUG branch meetings
- o Writing articles and poems for our newsletter and poetry/arts magazine
- o Keeping us informed of issues via email
- o Taking part in our mental health awareness training
- o Taking part in making training and educational DVD's
- o Educating young people about mental health issues
- o Volunteering in the HUG office to support our work

If you want to get more involved then do fill in our questionnaire as it is a very useful way of finding out the interests of new members. We try to get back to people as soon as possible after we receive a completed questionnaire, however life can sometimes be hectic and it may take a little time to respond – if you have not heard from us for some time then do please phone us or drop us an email.

Meetings

We will add your name to the branch of HUG which is nearest to your home and you will be sent dates of our round of meetings which are held every three months. At these meetings we up-date our members on the work we have been doing on their behalf, discuss topics of interest to us and find out any local issues that we need to act on.

If you cannot attend meetings but would still like to raise issues with us or find different ways of giving voice to your experience then there is the 'Friday Forum' held at the HUG office in Inverness. These are informal, fun (but often hectic) meetings where some of our more active members gather to discuss issues and change the world!

You may also like to contact us in writing, by phone or email to get your views and experiences across.

If you are still a bit unsure about getting involved then do give us a call and we will try to meet up with you first of all so that at least you have a familiar face to see when you come along.

Once again thanks for your support in HUG. It is great to know that you are interested in our work. Being involved in HUG is often very rewarding but please don't feel any pressure to do more than you are ready to – we welcome and value all levels of support ranging from casual interest to busy activism.

You may like to look at our website (www.hug.uk.net), which has lots of information about HUG, our branches and the work that we do.

Very best wishes:

Graham, Emma and Heidi

Graham Morgan, Emma Thomas and Heidi Tweedie

Feeling Welcome

In HUG we are keen to be as welcoming as possible to any new members whatever their background.

We want to create a warm hospitable and friendly environment. In order to do this we know that all of you, our members, will have backgrounds that involve more than just the experience of mental health problems and that we need to do the best we can to make everyone feel comfortable.

To make sure people are happy with their involvement we have a number of groundrules for meetings to ensure we respect each other. In all our work we will do our utmost to stop discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, sexuality, disability, ethnicity or cultural or religious background.

In order that we can be as sensitive as possible to you, our membership, we try to make it easy to join in with us so, for instance, our offices are physically accessible to people with mobility problems, we can provide our information in large print to people with a visual impairment and for those who struggle with groups of people we are more than happy to try to meet individually or to communicate by phone and e.mail.

If any of you, as members, feel that you need any adaptations or discussion about how you can feel as much a part of the group as anyone else then do feel free to speak to any of our workers. They will do the very best they can to respond to any concerns you have.

Ground Rules for Meetings

- Confidentiality – the things we learn about each other within HUG should not be shared if they identify a particular individual.
- Everyone should have an equal chance to speak.
- We need to respect people's different opinions, beliefs and outlooks on life.
- We have a right to feel distress and anger due to our experiences but we must be careful about the effect this may have on other people.
- The issues that we discuss can sometimes be difficult and evoke painful emotions – we all have a responsibility to provide a supportive and safe environment.
- It is ok for people to enter and leave the meeting at any time.
- Comments which are disrespectful to people (on grounds of race, sexuality, gender, beliefs, age, illness/disability) are not acceptable.
- Be aware of the appropriateness of the language that we use e.g. use of jargon and swearing.
- It is important to remember that people have very different (often contradictory) experiences and perceptions of mental illness, and this diversity is one of the strengths of HUG and the voice that we give.
- We should try to be understanding of behaviour due to our illness (for example pacing the room or making sudden movements).

HUG Membership Form

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Mobile phone:

I am happy to receive HUG info by text message (i.e. about meetings in my area)

Unless otherwise stated we will use email as your main correspondence, please ensure that this is written clearly to prevent returned emails (using email addresses is part of our Green policy to save paper).

Please tick:

I would like to join HUG as a member

I would like to support HUG's work and would like to receive publications. (For those who not have personal experience of a mental health issue or do not wish to become a member). If a professional please detail your role: _____

Please return this membership form with the Equality Monitoring and HUG Involvement Questionnaire to:

HUG
Highland Community Care Forum
Highland House
20 Longman Road
Inverness
IV1 1RY

Email: hug@hccf.org.uk

The information that you provide will be kept confidential and will only be seen by the HUG team, trained volunteers and administration staff; all of whom strictly abide by a confidentiality agreement. **If you have concerns about this please let us know.**

HUG Involvement Questionnaire

This questionnaire gives you the opportunity to indicate what you would like to get involved in with HUG. There is no pressure to become involved - we have a range of members who come to occasional meetings as well as others who do lots and lots with us. All levels of involvement are hugely welcomed and valued.

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Please tick all that apply:

Awareness Raising

- Participate in user-led mental health awareness training (e.g. to GP's, nurses, students)
- Participate in educational work with young people (e.g. in schools)

DVD / Media

- Giving personal testimony on DVD. *This can be done anonymously if desired.*
- Assisting in DVD productions (e.g. planning groups, creative ideas,)

Website Development

- Updating the website
- Providing articles/stories/artwork for the website

Reviewing Policy and consultation reports

- Friday Forum** – based at the HUG office in Inverness.

Representing HUG at meetings, workshops and conferences

- Nationally
- Highland
- Locally

Creative Expressions

- Taking part in the HUG Creative Writing Group (meets every two weeks in Inverness)
- Other creative work, eg photography, music (please let us know of any specific interests/skills you have)

- E-mail bulletin** – receive information updates
(Please provide your email address above)

- HUG volunteering** – being involved in volunteering to support our office based work (E.g. mailings / typing up evaluations / organising resources) supervision offered.

Please note: if you are interested in becoming involved in HUG work, or representing HUG, full support will be given, including all reasonable involvement costs, for example travel, food, accommodation, and childcare. (Please contact a member of the HUG staff for more details)

I am interested in sharing my experience of and / or commenting on...

Please tick all that apply:

- Anxiety and stress
- Self-harm
- Suicide
- Depression
- Bipolar disorder / manic depression
- Schizophrenia
- Eating disorders
- Schizo-affective Disorder
- Personality disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Brain Injury
- Alcohol /drug misuse
- Autism / Aspergers Syndrome
- Other disabilities - Please detail.....

- Talking treatments (e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapies)
- Medication
- Recovery
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Alternative therapies
- Self Help

Other Please detail.....

- Treatment in the community
- Treatment in hospital
- Detention / being sectioned
- Police and the judicial system
- Care Programme Approach
- Psychiatrists
- Nurses
- GPs

- Rurality and geographical isolation
- Housing / Homelessness
- Peer Support
- Religion and Spirituality
- Employment
- Benefits and Welfare
- Families and carers
- Education (e.g. School / College)
- Advocacy
- Being a young person
- Being an older person
- Sharing Positive Experiences
- Racial and cultural issues
- Transport

Any information gathered will be used for HUG purposes only and your name will not be passed onto any other person or organisation without prior consent.

Please return completed forms to:

HUG
Highland Community Care Forum
Highland House
20 Longman Road
Inverness
IV1 1RY
Email:hug@hccf.org.uk

Equality Monitoring

As part of our funding we are required to ask new members to complete this standard NHS form. This form is **voluntary** and **anonymous**. By completing this you are helping us to ensure that we reach a diverse range of individuals in the Highlands.

Please return this to:

HUG, Highland Community Care Forum, Highland House, 20 Longman Road,

Inverness, IV1 1RY

Email: hug@hccf.org.uk

Disability

Do you have any of the following (conditions) lasting 12 months or more

Long term illness		Learning disability		Visual impairment	
Physical disability		Learning difficulty		Hearing impairment	
Mental health condition		Prefer not to answer		Other	

Ethnicity

Scottish		Gypsy Traveller		Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish, Caribbean British	
English		Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish, Pakistani British		Black, Black Scottish or Black British	
Irish		Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British		Mixed or multiple ethnicity	
Welsh		Bangladeshi /Bangladeshi Scottish/Bangladeshi British		Polish	
Northern Irish		Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British		Other ethnic group...	
British		African, African Scottish or African British		Prefer not to answer	

Faith/Religion

Buddhist		Hindu		Sikh	
Church of Scotland		Jewish		Other religion/ faith.....	
Roman Catholic		Muslim		None	
Another Christian		Pagan		Prefer not to answer	

Gender

Female		Male		Other		Prefer not to answer	
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Sexual Orientation

Bisexual		Gay Man		Other.....	
Heterosexual		Gay Woman		Prefer not to answer	

Age

Under 16 years		16-24 years		25-34 years	
35-44 years		45-54 years		55-64 years	
65-70 years		71 years and over		Prefer not to answer	

