



This Knowledge Digest summarises information about '[Scotland's Distress Brief Intervention Program](#)'.

This program is recommended (rec. 19.3) as a model to decrease burden on police and ambulance, who all too often are the people mentally distressed people turn to, to develop a 14-day support program by the Mental Health Royal Commission (2021).

The Distress Brief Intervention Program consists of two parts:

1. Distressed individual present face to face or online to a *specialty trained* front-line staff member (GP, police, paramedic). They ease their initial distress and promise follow up within 24 hours if the person wants further support.
2. Further face-to-face support is provided within 24 hours of referral by a commissioned and trained third sector staff – known as a recovery practitioner.

### **The recovery practitioner**

A recovery practitioner works with the distressed person – face to face or over the phone – by listening and offering compassionate and close support. They do intensive problem-solving with the person and offer and link them to via a series of interventions that provide everyday support, and long-term help specially tailored to the unique situation of the person.

In other words, they support them at the right time, with the right professionals.

### **Background**

The Distress Brief Intervention approach emerged from the Scottish Government's work on the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health strategies. Early evidence of success led the Scottish Government to establish a pilot DBI programme (November 2016 to March 2021) in four sites across Scotland.

The Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) programme is now being expanded and developed as a nationwide response for people presenting in distress.

**Aim:** To provide a framework for improved inter-agency co-ordination, collaboration, and co-operation across a wide range of care settings, interventions and community supports towards the shared goal of providing a compassionate and effective response to people in distress.

**Partnerships:** A large and far reaching national and regional distress collaboration between: Telehealth (111), Health and social care providers, Police and Ambulance, Universities & Researchers and third sector partners.