



# CASE STUDY

## Supporting Staff Wellbeing Through Yoga

### IDENTIFYING THE NEED

The East Ross Integrated Care Team includes 12 social work staff who often face significant pressures in their roles. Social work can be demanding and emotionally challenging, and in the Highlands these challenges are compounded by geographical remoteness. Staff also noted the rising cost of fuel inhibiting social contact outside work.

COVID-19 had further intensified the strain: many staff had worked from home, some lived alone, and 70% of the team had contracted COVID themselves.

The need for a positive outlet to support both physical and mental wellbeing was clear. Staff themselves identified yoga as a gentle and inclusive form of exercise that everyone could participate in, regardless of age or ability.

### THE CHALLENGE ON THE GROUND

The dedicated team had, at times, struggled with stress and reduced opportunities for social connection. Finding a group activity that could fit into the working day, encourage participation, and provide therapeutic benefits for both body and mind was essential. Just as importantly, we wanted to show staff that their wellbeing mattered and that they were valued and supported in the work they do.

### HOW WE RESPONDED

In 2024, a small grant from the Charity enabled the team to receive a series of yoga sessions during working hours. Staff were consulted beforehand, and yoga was chosen as the most suitable activity to help manage stress and promote wellbeing.

Classes provided:

- A regular, structured opportunity to take a short break from work
- Gentle physical exercise accessible to all abilities
- A relaxing, therapeutic environment focused on reducing stress

### THE CHANGE WE ACHIEVED

- **For Staff:** The sessions had a direct positive effect on wellbeing. Staff reported feeling more energised after yoga and valued the dedicated time for self-care. Feedback from participants included:



*"Time out just for me!"*

*"I never get time for a lunch break and this is one day that I take time to get away from work".*

*"I feel so relaxed!"*



- **For the Team:** Taking part in a shared activity improved morale and camaraderie, creating a stronger sense of connection across the team. The classes reminded staff they were valued and supported, boosting motivation in their demanding roles.
- **For Service Users:** Although indirect, the impact on service users is clear. Staff who feel calmer, more energised, and better supported in turn are able to provide higher-quality care and support to the people and families they work with.



### THE JOURNEY AHEAD

The yoga sessions demonstrated the value of even small-scale wellbeing projects for staff. Challenges included variable attendance due to workload demands, but feedback overwhelmingly showed the benefits of the initiative and a desire to continue classes.

Investing in staff wellbeing not only supports employees but also strengthens the quality of care and support delivered across the community.