THE SUSTAINABLE HEALER

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

19th - 20th March 2026
Inverness Creative Academy



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Photography: Jake Gilbert@north.westphotography

Welcome

Dear Colleague,

I'm delighted to share the programme for The Sustainable Healer, a space for honest conversation and shared learning for health professionals.

This conference was created to bridge gaps many of us encounter in everyday practice. The gap between what we know matters and what we can realistically deliver. The gap between the future we want for healthcare and what systems can end up producing day-to-day and CPD spaces that offer psychological safety and support, alongside exploring practical tools together.

When uncertainty and complexity rise, care can drift into two familiar patterns. Sometimes we keep "doing to": more tests, more referrals, more interventions — not always because they're likely to help, but because everyone is still searching for answers. Other times, results are "normal", and people are left without a meaningful explanation or a workable plan.

The Sustainable Healer offers a safe, realistic and evidence-informed alternative, helping create a more sustainable middle ground when symptoms don't fit neatly into diagnoses, services or pathways.

The event will bring to life the **Wild-Ness Health Roadmap to Sustainable Practice** through two connected tools. The **12 Habits for Sustainable Practice** are small mindset shifts that build trust, psychological safety and shared power. The **Six-Step Framework** is a practical tool for when certainty runs out, helping people find a way forward, with clinical safety and appropriate review.

You don't have to do this work alone. We hope The Sustainable Healer helps you feel part of a wider community finding more sustainable ways forward.

With warm wishes,
Dr Kath Jones
Founder, Wild-Ness Health

Twelve Habits for Sustainable Practice

Become Aware

1. I question my assumptions
about people, risk, "non-attendance," and "motivation".

2. I name the power I hold
and practise sharing it with care.

3. I notice threat cues
in me, in the system, and in the room (shame, fear, stigma).

Regulate my state

4. I prioritise psychological safety
for the person in front of me and for myself.

5. I slow down to signal safety
tone, pacing, posture, permission.

6. I practise self-compassion and boundaries
so I can stay present and consistent.

Make sense, together

7. I hold symptoms as real
and stay curious about context, adversity, and strengths.

8. I offer non-threatening explanations
that reduce shame and increase hope.

9. I co-create a roadmap and next steps
with choice, consent, and clear safety-netting.

Share power beyond the consultation

10. I do with, not to
supporting agency, capability, and confidence.

11. I design for inclusion
barriers, access, continuity, reasonable adjustments, advocacy.

12. I build connected care
with community partners and protect capacity to sustain it.

SIX-STEP FRAMEWORK

A symptom-based care approach for consultations involving pattern-based presentations

CULTIVATE TRUST & SAFETY

1 Mindset & Habits
Awareness, agency & shared power

2 Widen the Assessment
Recognise triggers & maintaining factors

3 Make Sense of Symptoms
Agree clear, non-threatening explanations

SPARK HOPE & AGENCY

4 Spark Hope
Share relatable real-life recovery stories

5 Build Agency
Choose meaningful, manageable next steps

6 Beyond Healthcare
Support connection to self, others & place

Developed by Wild-Ness Health wild-ness.co.uk

Our Story

The Sustainable Healer Conference 2026 will bring to life the **Wild-Ness Health Roadmap to Sustainable Practice**, a practical and adaptable approach to care for the growing space where symptoms persist, uncertainty is high, and support does not fit neatly into diagnoses, services or pathways.

Wild-Ness Health was born in response to the realities of modern healthcare. It has evolved into a collective of health professionals, creatives, and people with lived experience who share a vision for a more sustainable approach to health, rooted in evidence, shaped by lived experience, and designed for the realities of the NHS.

At the heart of the Roadmap are two connected elements. First, the **12 Habits for Sustainable Practice**, which create a foundation for trust, psychological safety and shared power in the consultation. Second, the **Six-Step Framework**, a repeatable tool for the moments when the usual tests and treatments do not offer a clear way forward.

Together, these tools help people build understanding, reduce threat and shame, strengthen choice and shared decision-making, and develop agency and forward movement over time, so that life can expand again, with or without symptoms, alongside appropriate review and safety-netting.

Emerging evidence suggests structured communication tools in primary care can improve outcomes such as function and quality of life. Building on this, the Six-Step Framework is a consultation tool that was developed in a Highland practice serving 13,500 patients in one of Scotland's most disadvantaged remote communities, during a period of major transition and reduced continuity of care.

Rooted in the Scottish Highlands, these ideas are designed to be learned today and used tomorrow, offering a safe and realistic middle ground when certainty runs out.

The Learning Objectives

From awareness to shared agency & building momentum

Across two days, The Sustainable Healer Conference is designed as a connected learning journey. We move from recognising what's happening, to making sense of experience and uncertainty, and towards shared agency and momentum for change.

By the end of the conference, participants will be able to:

Recognise and articulate the problem

- Name the gap between the healthcare we say we want and what many systems are currently producing.
- Describe two familiar defaults under strain: low-value escalation (harm + waste) and unintended abandonment (alienation + loss of trust).

Make sense of experience, evidence and uncertainty

- Summarise what current evidence suggests helps (and what doesn't) in complex, persistent symptoms and distress, and why uncertainty matters.
- Recognise where patients and clinicians get stuck across primary and secondary care, and what conditions most often support a shift forward.

Develop confidence in change

- Explore how small shifts in practice can benefit patients, health professionals, and the wider system.
- Understand why trust, psychological safety, hope and agency are foundations for recovery and sustainable practice.

Apply practical tools and next steps

- Identify what is within your circle of control: consultation behaviours, language, scripts, team culture, boundaries and relationships.
- Relate the 12 Habits and the Six-Step Framework to your role and context.
- Leave with one next workable step you can use tomorrow.

Build momentum beyond the conference

- Recognise this work is reciprocal: the same conditions that support sustainable practice also make recovery more possible for patients.
- Join a growing movement of health professionals committed to safer, more human, and more realistic care.

Programme - Thurs 19th

9:00-9:25 REGISTRATION

9:25-9:30 WELCOME by Dr Kath Jones

9:30-10:30 THE CONTEXT
Keynote provocations & shared inquiry
Professor Paul Garner, Natalie Berry, Dr Martin Brunet & Dr Rani Bora

10:30-11:15 THE CONNECTION PART 1
Presence, story & glimmers of hope
Caoimhe Keohane & Judith James Davies

11:15-11:45 REFRESHMENT BREAK
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11:45-12:45 THE CONNECTION PART 2
Embodied approaches to recovery
Louise McAllan

12:45-13:45 LUNCH

13:45-16:45 THE CONSULTATION (includes a short break)
The therapeutic relationship in action
Rachel Whitfield, Marc Danbury, Dr Kath Jones & Dr Barbara Phipps

16:45-17:00 OVERVIEW & CLOSE
Dr Kath Jones

18:30-23:00 CONFERENCE DINNER
Bar open 18:30 dinner from 19:30 at the Glenmoriston Town House Hotel

Programme - Fri 20th

9:25-9:30 WELCOME by Dr Kath Jones

9:30-10:30 THE AGENTS OF CHANGE
The voices we don't usually hear, and what they can change
Facilitated by Dr Kath Jones, with artwork created by members of the Alness & Invergordon community.

10:30-11:30 THE CULTURE PART 1
A map & compass for navigating conflict
Jane Gunn

11:30-12:00 REFRESHMENT BREAK

12:00 -13:00 THE CULTURE PART 2
Flourishing spaces: creating the conditions to thrive
Professor Louise Younie

13:00-14:00 LUNCH

14:00-14:15 THE COLLECTIVE PART 1
From Awareness to Agency
Aatqa Arham

14:15-15:15 THE COLLECTIVE PART 2
From learning to momentum
Open dialogue exploring next steps, key asks of the system, and how Wild-Ness Health can support beyond the conference.

15:15-15:30 OVERVIEW & CLOSE
Dr Kath Jones

Speakers

Natalie Berry

Natalie is Senior Adviser to the Chief Executive at The King's Fund and an experienced health and social care policy strategist with nearly two decades in national and local system leadership. Her career spans NHS institutions, health legislation design, and leadership development, reflecting a strong commitment to improving systems and sustainable approaches to care.



Professor Paul Garner

Paul is a British public health expert at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, renowned for his work on systematic reviews and evidence-informed policy. After recovering from post-COVID-19 syndrome using nervous system–informed approaches, he now pursues academic research as an emeritus, collaborating globally to support recovery from persistent illness.



Dr Martin Brunet

Martin is an NHS GP and Medical Educator based in Guildford and is well known for his popular social media content on mental health as @doc_martin_gp. His book on anxiety and burnout, Your Worry Makes Sense, was published this year. He is a freelance teacher on communication skills and mental health and wellbeing.



Dr Rani Bora

Rani is a holistic psychiatrist, coach, author and speaker committed to transforming lives through the mental wealth paradigm. A Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, she has combined clinical expertise with coaching since 2007. Rani focuses on deprescribing, helping individuals move beyond diagnoses and limiting beliefs toward profound, lasting personal transformation.



Facilitators

Caoimhe Keohane

Caoimhe is a yoga teacher, Celtic storyteller and nature conservationist from Ireland now living in the Highlands. Passionate about helping people re-wild themselves, she weaves mindfulness in nature, movement, breath and mythology into her work. She draws on Celtic myths, animals and art to foster deep connection and loves sharing local stories by the fireside.



Judith James-Davies

Judith James-Davies, a retired Secondary Head in her seventies, met Dr Jones in June 2024 while managing chronic pain with high-dose painkillers. After adopting a nervous system–informed approach, she stopped all medication and cancelled a planned knee replacement. Now active in her community, Judith passionately advocates for whole-person approaches to pain management.



Louise McAllan

Louise is a somatic coach supporting recovery from persistent physical symptoms inspired by her own decade-long journey of debilitating illness. Using mindfulness, somatic therapy, pain reprocessing therapy, and emotional integration, she helps people move beyond stress and stories of the mind into the healing wisdom of the feeling body.



Facilitators (cont)

Rachel Whitfield



Rachel is an experienced Consultant, Coach, Trainer and a volunteer co-chair of the Collaborative on Fatigue after Infection consumer advisory group inspired by her own recovery from chronic fatigue. Rachel runs a successful consultancy business based in Bristol which specialises in supporting individuals and teams during periods of significant change.

Marc Danbury



Marc is a professional actor who has worked in film television and theatre including parts in Poldark and Casualty. He also acts, writes and facilitates role play and forum theatre in business management and sales training as well as teaching performance associated skills.

Dr Kath Jones



Kath is an NHS GP in the Scottish Highlands and the founder of Wild-Ness Health. Her work focuses on symptom-based consultations beyond diagnosis, when certainty is limited. Wild-Ness Health is a mission-led collective of health professionals, creatives and people with lived experience, offering practical CPD and wellbeing events, attracting national recognition over the past three years.

Dr Barbara Phipps



Barbara is an NHS GP who runs a community based chronic pain programme in Edinburgh. The programme, which she developed over 5 years ago, is a collaboration between the NHS and voluntary sector. Barbara also teaches at the University of Edinburgh on the MSc Clinical Management of Pain and is Deputy Director of Year 5 at Edinburgh Medical School.

Facilitators (cont)

Jane Gunn



Jane is a former city solicitor turned full-time mediator with 30 years' experience advising global leaders and businesses during crises and conflicts. She has spoken at the United Nations, The White House and European Commission. A former president of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Jane is the author of three acclaimed books, including The Mole and The Mountain.

Professor Louise Younie



Louise is a GP and Professor of Medical Education at Queen Mary University of London. She specialises in creative enquiry methodologies that humanise medicine. Co-chair of the Royal College of GPs' Creative Health Special Interest Group, her 'Flourishing Spaces' programme won the 2024 QS Global Education Award (silver) for nurturing wellbeing and purpose.

Aatqa Arham



Aatqa Arham is a final-year medical student at Cambridge passionate about Medical Humanities. She combines clinical training with research in history, literature and public health. Her work explores therapeutic landscapes and social prescribing, including a community allotment project, focusing on how community assets and arts foster healing and patient agency.

Practicalities

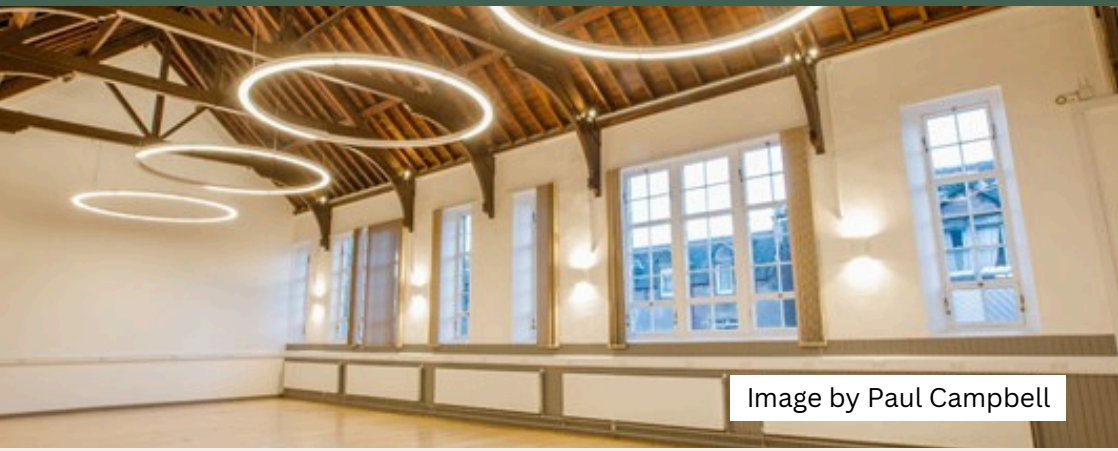


Image by Paul Campbell

The conference takes place at Inverness Creative Academy, followed by dinner at The Glenmoriston Town House Hotel. Both venues are a short walk from Inverness train station and a 10-mile drive from the airport.

What to expect

- Registration from 9:00 to 09:25. Refreshments and lunch included.
- You will be provided with a blank notebook and pen on arrival.
- The programme includes gentle, optional movement. Everything is adaptable. Please come wearing whatever you are comfortable in.
- Conference dinner at Glenmoriston Town House Hotel (smart casual)
- Dietary requirements will be catered for.

Booking and further information

Visit wild-ness.co.uk/our-conference/ or email info@wild-ness.co.uk.



The Purchase



Image by Pat Campbell

Two-day conference. Lunch + 3-course dinner included. Tickets £449

Discounted B&B rates are available at Glenmoriston Town House Hotel (email sales@glenmoristontownhouse.com). Return travel on the Caledonian Sleeper or flights to Inverness are available from UK cities. Scan the QR code for a travel and accommodation guide.

Book here: wild-ness.co.uk/our-conference/

SCAN ME



