

These are extraordinary times...

The Coronavirus pandemic threatens the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities both directly, through infections and illness, and indirectly, through the disruption to our everyday lives. Many of the things that usually keep us well (socialising, exercise, hobbies etc) are limited by changes necessary to limit the spread of the virus.

As emergency responders, statutory and volunteer, you may be in frontline of the national response to COVID19, and so it is essential that look after yourself and each other as best you can. Never has our hashtag #staysafestaywell been more appropriate.

Wholetime responders

Those of you working for the ambulance, fire and police services will be trying to keep our essential services running when staff numbers are depleted because of illness or the need to self-isolate. If you're at work you may be overwhelmed with the volume of work to be done, both COVID and non-COVID-related. If you're at home you may feel guilty or frustrated that you're not helping your colleagues and the public. Whichever it is, please pace yourselves and use the advice below to cope with the situation you're facing.

Volunteer responders

Your usual responding role is likely to be limited as you follow the guidance limit your social contact and/or stay at home. This is likely to be hard for a group who want to help others so please remember that self-isolating is also about helping your community and saving lives. When the pandemic is over you will be available again to offer hands-on help.

If you are still active in your communities during the pandemic please pace yourselves and stay safe. Observe the guidance on physical / social distancing and hand-washing and please don't work more than 3 days without a break of at least 24 hours away. You will be able to help people for longer if you pace yourself.

Social support is still going to be the thing that gets us through these challenging times. Never before has it been so true that we need to keep talking to each other and listening but now we will be doing it in new ways, through video-calls, group chats and perhaps virtual choirs!

Keep in touch with your responder colleagues, as well as your loved ones. **Stay safe and stay well.**

Helpful links

There are many sources of support circulating on social media and many excellent local support networks forming, but below are some links to official sources of information and support that may be of help over the coming weeks and months.

For general information and advice:
NHS COVID 19 pages:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus#overview>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For information on what you can to help your community:

<https://www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/helping-in-your-community/>

For information on how to cope with worry and stress and how to access support:

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28063/coronavirus-covid-19/psychosocial-support-and-wellbeing>

<https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-and-your-mental-wellbeing>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources/>

For the younger generation:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

For the older generation:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

To talk to someone in confidence

<https://breathingspace.scot/>

A little video that may be helpful for explaining why we need to take the precautions we are being asked to take:

<https://youtu.be/BtN-goy9VOY>