

These are extraordinary times...

These are extraordinary times. The Coronavirus pandemic has threatened 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) have been limited by changes necessary to limit the spread of the virus.

As emergency responders, statutory and volunteer, you may have been 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.

The National Wellbeing Hub www.promis.scot has been set up to help people providing health and social care to others find the support they need to stay well. Please check out the website for information, advice and resources.

Wholetime responders

Those of you working for the ambulance, fire and police services have been keeping our essential services running when staff numbers may have been depleted because of illness or the need to self-isolate. If you've been at work you may be exhausted by the volume and pace of work, both COVID and non-COVID-related.

If you've been at home you may have been feeling guilty or frustrated that you're not at "the frontline" helping your colleagues and the public. Please continue to pace yourselves and use the advice below to cope with the situation you're facing.

Volunteer responders

Your usual responding role may have been limited as you followed the guidance limit your social contact. This is likely to have been hard for a group of people who want to help others so please remember that by self-isolating and/or maintaining social distance you are helping your community and saving lives. As we move into new phases you will be available again to offer hands-on help.

If you are have remained 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 probably need a break by now. Remember, 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/>

Finding help for you

The Scottish Government has set up the National Wellbeing Hub (www.promis.scot) to provide advice, support and information for health and social care staff and unpaid carers. It includes tips on how to look after yourself, where you can access practical and emotional support and advice for managers. Many of the resources will be relevant to you.

To talk to someone in confidence:

NHS 24 Mental Health Hub - Tel: 111

Breathing Space - Tel: 0800 83 85 87
<https://breathingspace.scot/>

The Wellbeing Hub www.promis.scot also includes information on other helplines that may be available to you.

