

Hello

On 21st May the Scottish Government published a route map advising us of how we emerge from Lockdown and move onto the 1st of the 4 Phase plan. SPS will remain at the forefront of the drive to support and advise Scottish Government in implementing and maintaining necessary changes to our way of life. Please keep up to date by regularly checking Sharepoint and staff messages.

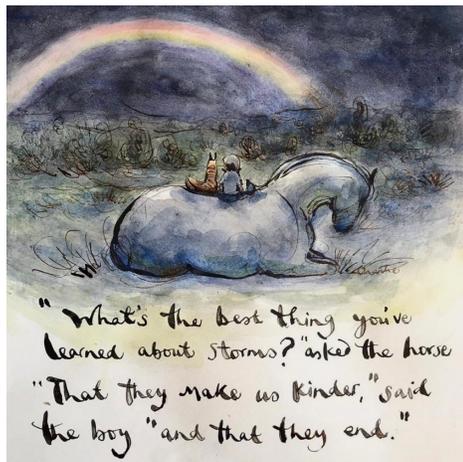
From now, many more sectors will begin to get back to work in one fashion or another and more and more people will be out and about enjoying our fabulous Scottish early summer! The main messages remain in place though to help us all stay safe.

- You and your household can meet another household out of doors, but to a maximum of eight people
- You must not meet with more than one household at a time - and not more than one household per day
- Need to stay two metres away and avoid touching the same surfaces
- If the distance travelled is so far you need to use someone else's bathroom, "don't go"
- Wash hands regularly and maintain cough and sneeze etiquette

There are also new protocols for testing for Covid-19 and you will have heard of the Government's **Test & Protect**, so please familiarise yourself and your family of these new sets of procedures. SPS has its own advice [here](#).

We are not out of the woods yet. The virus is very much still out there and we have, of course, had our fair share of personal and collective tragedy to deal with over the past two months or so. Those in our care have also been negatively affected by the pandemic, and we are very aware of the sacrifices they have had to make too.

However, we can all be immensely proud of all our efforts. From us at Connect, thank you all for your sterling efforts!



Credit: <https://www.charliemackesy.com/>

BEING KIND TO YOURSELF - 5 TOP TIPS

The recent Mental Health Awareness Week placed kindness at the heart of its message. Being kind to others often comes naturally but being kind to ourselves may not. So with that in mind, here are 5 ways to show yourself some kindness – this week and beyond.

be kind
to
yourself

1. Talk kindly to yourself

Think about how you speak to the people you love and care about, and then turn that voice on yourself. Be conscious about your inner voice – let it be a friend to you or one that is kind to you, rather than one that is harsh or belittles you. This can help you pick yourself up if things go wrong and help you cope better.

2. Perform acts of kindness to others

Be kind to others. Small gestures have a big impact – whether it's smiling at someone or letting someone go in front of you in a queue, for example. Doing good for others boosts your own wellbeing and at the same time helps brighten someone else's day.

3. Self-care

Keeping healthy routines and rituals are an important way to look after yourself. These might be things like having breakfast, carving out some time for yourself in the day, planning what you eat and performing exercise, and doing some things you enjoy.

4. Be responsible for yourself

If a stressful or busy day tempts you to treat yourself (with alcohol or junk food for example) – think about whether this is a healthy move to make or not. A treat now and then is fine but recognise not to use it as a crutch, as it can sabotage all the efforts you've made to look after yourself. Self-compassion comes with self-respect, not self-sabotage.

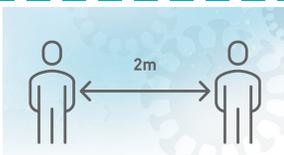
5. Spend time in or around nature

Being around elements of the natural world can be calming and improve your sense of wellbeing. Consider how you can make time to be with elements of the outdoors and natural world. This could be greenery such as your garden, a walk in the park, and green spaces around you. It could also be water, such as a stroll by a canal, lake, or river, or better still a beach or parts of the coast if these are nearby.

Which brings us nicely to our new **Tune of the Week** feature. Send in your requests and we'll choose one each week. This week, what else but Scotland's own Frankie Miller – 'Be Good to Yourself'

Copy and paste the following link to your browser to enjoy .
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPXDSn05fGI>

We would remind all our readers to regularly check Sharepoint and staff messages for the latest up-to-date information regarding Test and Protect and Social Distancing'



KEY INFO

24/7 SUPPORT

Through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) you have access to both advice and one-to-one telephone counselling. This could be related to something in the workplace, stresses outside work, or a combination of both.

To speak to someone in absolute confidence call 0800 854 562 at any time, day or night.

As well as the support of family, friends and colleagues the use of support networks can be a really constructive way of looking after your own mental health and wellbeing. We wanted to highlight a couple of groups that have been recommended to us by readers of Connect

Behind Your Mind

Behind Your Mind (BYM) is a growing local charity set up in East Calder that aims to provide support to those experiencing poor mental health and are now taking referrals from NHS Lothian, Social Work and West Lothian Council.

David Philip, one of the founders, said,

'We are growing very fast. We have the men's group in East Calder which runs on a Wednesday night, the ladies group on a Monday and we are also looking to start a LGBTQIA+ group. We are teaming up with some of the senior groups in the area are also looking to set up a veterans group as well.'

The guys also set up 5-a-Side and Yoga groups, as well as a walking group to encourage exercise and getting out and about to meet new people.

Find out more on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/behindyourmind>



Brothers in Arms is a support group setup in Glasgow and have now released an app that our friends over at Police Scotland alerted us to.

The Brothers in Arms app is powered by Thrive Therapeutic technology and is a clinically proven digital tool that prevents, detects and treats common mental health conditions. It offers a unique depth and range of support in one application. From relaxation techniques such as meditation to thought training, sleep improvement, and goal progress tracking you can improve your mental fitness easily, confident that all you need is in one place.

Despite the name, Brothers in Arms is for women too, Sisters in Arms has its own app.

Covid Sharepoint site

Covid-19 site on Sharepoint is packed full of advice, tips and information on all aspects of the virus and how best to navigate our way through Lockdown. There are some great contributions on the Wellbeing Support tag. We thought the PowerPoint slides extremely useful. Please see them [here](#):



Coronavirus Scams

Unfortunately, we have heard from our partners at Police Scotland that fraudsters are using the coronavirus outbreak to scam people out of money. This has included people attempting to buy protective face masks from fraudulent sellers and coronavirus-themed phishing emails.

Here's a round-up of some of the scams that have been reported so far:

- Email and door-to-door scammers claiming to be from research companies connected to organisations like the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) offering coronavirus tests, or details of those who have been infected.
- People being encouraged to invest money in the stockmarket as share prices have fallen a lot in recent weeks. The scammers will often tell you this is low risk, high reward, which is a tell-tale sign of a scam. Be very careful of anyone who contacts you out of the blue with a too-good-to-be true investment proposition.
- Emails appearing to be from the government offering money to help you through this difficult time and messages from HMRC offering you tax rebates.
- Many scammers are taking advantage of the fact it is harder to get in contact with providers because shops are closed, and helplines are very busy. Be suspicious if you get a text message, email or phone call saying there is an issue with your payment or bill.
- Scammers have also been contacting people pretending to be from banks offering financial help like no late fees on credit cards and payment holidays on loans, as a way of getting you to reveal your card and bank account details.

The number of scams is only likely to increase and Action Fraud is reporting hundreds of thousands of pounds being lost to scammers since the outbreak began

It's important you remain extra vigilant at all times, make sure any calls and emails you're getting are from legitimate sources and don't give out any personal information.



HOW TO SPOT A SCAM

- **Unsolicited or unexpected contact.** If you have received any kind of contact, but particularly a phone call, out of the blue, it is best to avoid it. Since January 2019, there has been a ban on cold calling about pensions. This means you should not be contacted by any company about your pension unless you've asked them to.
- **Email address.** If you get an email, expand the pane at the top of the message and see exactly who it has come from. If it is a scam, the email address the message has come from will be filled in with random numbers, or be misspelled.
- **If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.** This is something you normally find with pension or investment scams, where the fraudster guarantees you huge returns, but tells you it is low risk.
- **Personal details, PIN codes and passwords.** These are things no legitimate company will ask you for.
- **Quick decisions.** If you are pushed into making a decision on the spot, be suspicious. Scammers don't want you to have time to think about it.
- **Random competitions, particularly if you don't remember entering them, should ring alarm bells.**

RETIREMENT

Mick Grattan - SNC Vice Chairman

This month marks the retirement of the SNC Vice Chairman Mick Grattan, Mick has chosen to retire after 36 years' loyal service with the SPS where he has covered numerous roles including Residential Officer, Regimes Officer, Nurse Practitioner and Scottish National Committee. Mick always provided the organisation with an outstanding and dedicated service though we can all agree that in his role of a trade union rep is where he excelled.

The members of the POA(S) have benefited greatly from Mick's knowledge of the Civil Service Pension Schemes, and the comfort provided to the POAS members and their families during sensitive times has been greatly felt and appreciated throughout the service. Though Mick's knowledge of the Pensions schemes was exceptional we cannot underestimate his role as an active trade unionist locally and at a national level. Mick's appetite for the trade union movement was no doubt born when he worked in the pits back in the 1980's and those who know him or have benefited from Mick's representation know he never lost that appetite or passion in defending workers rights.

We wish Mick and Fiona a long and happy retirement.

Brexit EU Settlement Scheme – important information

In October 2019, SPS issued a staff notice providing guidance to SPS Employees who are EU Citizens. If you're an EU citizen and you do not already have indefinite leave to remain in the UK status, and want to keep living in Scotland you will have to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. This is not something SPS can do on your behalf.

The Covid-19 outbreak has been a worrying time for us all. For EU citizens, the uncertainty over the new regulations for remaining in the UK has added to the anxiety. So, we are pleased to confirm that Home Office support services and application routes have now all fully reopened in line with public health guidance. This includes the reopening of the postal route for submitting identity documents for applicants who are unable to use the [EU Exit: ID Document Check app](#) to verify their identity.

The [EU Settlement Resolution Centre](#) continues to provide support 7 days a week by email and telephone, in line with public health guidance to work from home where possible.

Further support available

There continues to be [a range of support available online](#), by email and telephone for those who have questions or need help applying. Applicants can use the EU Exit ID Document check app to complete the identity stage of their application.

Additional support is available for those who do not have the appropriate access, skills or confidence to apply online through [Assisted Digital](#), which can offer assistance over the telephone.

[Communications materials](#) have been translated into 26 languages and alternative formats can also be requested.

The [ID document scanner locations](#) are currently suspended at this time following the latest public health guidance to protect staff. However, the Home Office and our delivery partners are keeping this situation under constant review and will endeavour to reinstate ID document scanner locations to their original capacity in line with public health guidance.

Deadline for applications

There is still more than a year left before the deadline of 30 June 2021 for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.