



Scottish Seniors

Special Edition Update

April 2020

The Newsletter of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum

Coronavirus: Keeping in touch during the Crisis

In this latest update, we wanted to highlight what we, and other organisations, have been doing to help safeguard the welfare and wellbeing of older people during this crisis.

We've put together some important information and contacts, which we hope that you can make use of, as well as highlighting some community initiatives taking place across several local authorities which we think our members, and all older people, could benefit from.

We would like to give special thanks to **Royal Mail** staff for allowing us to keep in touch with our members who may not have access to digital services at this time. **We really couldn't do it without you.**

Don't forget to **Clap for Our Carers** in the **NHS**, if you can, every Thursday at 8PM. I'm sure you'll agree this is the very least they deserve.

And to all workers looking after the needs of older people, **THANK YOU**

Please feel free to get in touch and if you think of anything that may be of interest to others which could be included in our newsletters, please let us know.

Our telephone number is 0141 337 8113. Our website details are www.scottishpensioners.org.uk

We can also keep you updated on Twitter @ScotPensForum and on Facebook too

For more up to date information go to <https://www.readyscotland.org>



Our OPSAF colleagues at **Age Scotland** have seen a record amount of calls coming through to their helpline during this crisis and so it's comforting to know that older people are using the facilities available to them. As always, they are more than happy to help.



As highlighted in our last news update, fraudsters continue to try to profit from this crisis. We urge you to continue to be extra vigilant and we're sure that these handy tips, put together by Trading Standards Scotland, have all the information needed to keep you safe from scammers.



Helping Hands

Advice on dealing with unsolicited callers while self-isolating



SPF Annual Conference 2020, Glasgow

It is with heavy heart that the Scottish Pensioners' Forum have had to cancel our annual conference this June. It is the first time in our 29-year history that this has been done however the wellbeing of our members, and indeed older people across Scotland, is our main priority.

You'll be pleased to know that we have already begun planning to try to reschedule our event as well as holding a special celebration in recognition of UN International Day of Older Persons in October - giving us all something to look forward to!



Prescription Delivery Charges

You may recall in issue 54 of *Scottish Seniors*, we highlighted the issue of prescription delivery charges being implemented by Boots UK for prescriptions not made online. After recent discussion, we have been assured that the charges will be withdrawn, in the interim, and all deliveries made will be free of charge. Please contact your local branch but like all deliveries, slots are filling up fast. We will be keeping on top of this issue and hope to hold further negotiations with Boots UK to have this charge withdraw completely – watch this space!



SPF calls on 'The Big 6' to Step Up, Not Switch Off

Over the past few days, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum have contacted 'The Big 6' energy companies Scottish Power; SSE; Npower; British Gas; E.on and EDF to ask for concessions on bills and standing charges in order to avoid more people facing the consequences of fuel poverty.



Maureen Gardner, SPF Chair, argued

“As more and more people are having to heed the government's demands to stay at home, the surge in energy usage will see many unable to meet the cost of increased energy bills whilst energy companies' profits will soar.”

“Whilst in the past we have challenged energy companies mainly in relation to older people's welfare, this current crisis has only helped to emphasise the many similarities between younger and older generations in terms of fuel poverty.”

“An intergenerational approach must be adopted during this crisis and any challenge must be made as a collective. Many workers are either losing their jobs or being furloughed, giving rise to higher incidences of fuel poverty across Scotland than we already have. We urge the 'Big 6' to give something back”

We hope that by our next news briefing we will be able to give you a favourable response.



Local Heroes

Over the past several weeks, it has been encouraging to see so many community initiatives taking shape so quickly to help older people during this crisis, From intergenerational work through to older people's organisations, here are just a few examples of the wonderful work being done.

Digital Pen Pal
Combating Social Isolation:
An Intergenerational Project

For more information please contact Thriving Places PDC:

07764969429
Meabh.Bradley@westscot.co.uk
@ThrivingPlacesPDC

In Glasgow, Thriving Communities PDC are running a great initiative helping to connect older people in the East End, who may be feeling lonely and isolated, with a digital pen pal. These pen pals are all pupils from St. Mungo's Academy. A great way of keeping in touch. Please see contact details opposite for all the information you need.

Our Executive Committee member Helen Biggins, highlighted a new Wellbeing helpline, set up by **South Lanarkshire Council**, for anyone who is on their own in need of provisions, a hot meal or a chat.
Telephone 0303 123 1009

Bee Busy Be Friend
Offering Friendship and Companionship

We are adapting and extending our befriending service by offering twice weekly telephone calls to people from our trained and experienced befrienders.

Initial provision will be for our most vulnerable, older people who were already experiencing loneliness and isolation before COVID-19 and have now had recent events add to their feelings of loneliness.

Contact Annie Brown
To find out more
tel: 0788-003-5471 email: aniebrown@eav.org.uk

COVID-19

In East Ayrshire, the Bee Busy Befriend service is extending its befriending service to older people already suffering from loneliness and isolation who may be feeling overwhelmed during this worrying time. Contact details opposite.

The Scottish Government are now contacting those people who have been advised to shield and offering grocery supplies for those people living alone and with no-one to help get things for them. If you have received your shielding letter then, if possible, text your CHI number to **07860 064525** to sign up for the text service, You can also choose to receive updates and useful information

Looking after our Mental Health

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

from mentalhealth.org.uk

Sketchnote by @Haypsych

try to avoid speculation and only use reputable sources on the outbreak

good sources:

- Public Health England
- Public Health Wales
- Health Protection Scotland
- NHS
- Gov. UK
- World Health Organization

try to stay connected

- keep in touch with friends and family
- set up private chat groups on WhatsApp
- increase communication with colleagues working from home in isolation

stick to a daily routine

- Keep active
- eat a balanced diet
- have a to-do list
- take a lunch break
- have a regular start and end to your working day

try to manage how you follow the outbreak in the media

- Limit your consumption of the news and social media
- if the news starts to cause you stress and anxiety, take a break from it
- Don't avoid all news as it's important to keep informed and educated about the outbreak

try to anticipate distress

- acknowledge how you are feeling
- talk to someone you trust if you are feeling anxious
- reassure people you know who may be worried
- check in with people you know who are living alone

During this time, It's perfectly natural that many people may well be feeling anxious, particularly as our everyday lives have changed dramatically over the past few weeks.

Bearing this in mind, it's really important to look after our mental health.

This great sketchnote, reproduced by kind permission of Hayley Lewis, is suitable for everyone.

MY ISOLATED DAY

Dayday

Date

Weather: Dry Wet
 Dull Sunny
 Calm Windy
 Warm Cold

No. in same residence: _____

Today I enjoyed



Today I disliked



Our Executive Committee member, Colin Wakeling, came up with the idea that it may be useful to keep a daily diary of our time social distancing/shielding/ in isolation. It would certainly be interesting to look back on and if you like, you could always send them in to us - I'm sure they would prove useful when planning our outreach/community meetings.

We will also make a sheet available for you to download from our website or alternatively, for those without digital access, you could get in touch and we could send more to you. Let us know what you think!

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