

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Mental Health Improvement Team

Mental Health and Long Term Conditions during COVID-19

Long term conditions (LTC's) are health conditions that last a year or longer, impact on a person's life and may require ongoing care and support. In Scotland it is estimated that approximately 40% of the population live with a LTC. Research has shown that the impact of LTC's on mental health and wellbeing is significant and those with LTC's are more likely to experience psychological problems. The outbreak of COVID-19 for those living with a LTC may be causing additional stress and anxiety as many LTC's may put people at a higher risk of COVID-19. Some LTC's may be further exacerbated by increased stress, changes in diet and activity patterns. It is understandable that some people living with a LTC's may be frightened and feel extremely vulnerable during this time and therefore we must try and reassure and offer comfort. Please remember that it is important that anyone living with a LTC's keep all medical appointments unless otherwise instructed.

Below is a selection of some helplines and websites that offer support to those living with some of the most common long term conditions.

NHS Inform: provides information on a range of illnesses and conditions and helps people make informed choices about their health and wellbeing www.nhsinform.scot

Diabetes Scotland: Call 0141 212 8710*, Monday–Friday, 9am–6pm or email helpline.scotland@diabetes.org.uk Confidential helpline (charges apply) that can provide information about the condition and take time to talk through and explore emotional, social, psychological or practical difficulties.

Asthma UK: Speak to an asthma expert nurse on their helpline 0300 222 5800. Also visit their website www.asthma.org.uk which is providing updated information on COVID-19 as they receive it.

Epilepsy Scotland: provide a free confidential helpline that provides information and emotional support to anyone affected by epilepsy. Call 0808 800 2200, Mon-Fri 9.30am -4.30pm. Website hosts a range of information and resources www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk

British Heart Foundation: website which hosts a section on emotional support and wellbeing www.bhf.org.uk

British Lung Foundation: helpline available 03000 030 555, Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm calls cost as local call. Website www.blf.org.uk also provides a range of information.

Anxiety and Stress Disorders: NHS Living Life provides a free telephone based service for people over the age of 16 feeling low, anxious or stressed. Call 0800 328 9655 lines opened Mon-Fri 1pm - 9pm. Visit the Heads Up website which hosts information on a range of disorders insomnia, what helps and how to support someone living with insomnia. <http://headsupscotland.org.uk>

Research: Supporting people with long term conditions during national emergencies

<https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/supporting-people-with-long-term-conditions-ltcs-during-national-emergencies/>

Free online learning: Breathe, Relax and Stay Strong Scotland: experience meditation in this 30 minute session to release stress anxiety in these challenging times. A range of dates to select from and can be accessed below

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/breathe-relax-stay-strong-scotland-tickets-100811824882>