

# Practical steps for working with your members during Covid-19 restrictions



## Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

**Our vision** is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

**Our mission** is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people can make the most of later life.

**Our three strategic aims** are to:



**Help older people to be as well as they can be**



**Promote a positive view of ageing and later life**



**Tackle loneliness and isolation**

## How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

The Age Scotland **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

### For information, advice and friendship



Call us free on: **0800 12 44 222**  
(Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)



Visit **[agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)**  
to find out more.



# Practical steps for working with your members during Covid-19 restrictions

Guide for Age Scotland members October 2020

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# Community Development

Age Scotland's Community Development team works in partnership with our member groups, Regional Ambassadors, and voluntary and statutory organisations across the country to make Scotland's communities better places for older people. Our job is to support the development of strong and vibrant older people's groups and organisations in Scotland. We provide information, advice, resources, and support to assist Age Scotland member groups with the delivery and development of their services and activities.

Our Development Officers are on hand to help with any worry that you may currently have about getting back to group activities or how to interact with your group members whilst we can't meet. Included in this guide is an action plan to help you look at how to keep in touch with your group. Your local Development Officer will be able to assist you to complete the action plan or with anything else that you need help with.

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## Get your group ready for a new normal

We will all live with Covid-19 for some time yet and during new spikes in cases localised lockdowns will be put in place. This guide will provide your group with hints and tips on staying in contact with your members whilst we cannot meet up face to face. For up to date information on Covid-19 visit the **Scottish Government** website **[www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19)**.

With many of us desperate to get back to normal, we must recognise that it will take some time for us to get there. In the meantime, while we learn to live with Covid-19, we may have to change the way we provide group activities to ensure that members are still interacting with the group and with each other.

Many of those who come to your group will, as you know, come for the companionship. Without the group meeting face to face it is important that where possible, groups continue to provide some sort of activity. This can help to reduce the loneliness and isolation that many older people were already feeling, which has been made worse by Covid-19.



## Different ways to connect at home

Many of your group members will have spent a considerable amount of time shielding and alone in recent months. They may be hesitant about when the time is right to come back to the group. Delivering activities whilst we cannot meet provides a link with the group and also with other group members who are in the same situation. This continued support for your members will be invaluable when group activities can start again.

Ensuring that you have the correct contact details for members will enable you to keep in touch during times when we cannot meet face to face.

Recording telephone numbers, email addresses, postal addresses and asking members their preferred way of keeping in touch will let you plan for the best way to keep in contact with members and allow for some group activity to continue.

Our **Keeping older people socially connected whilst physically distant** guide provides hints and tips on ways to stay connected via digital platforms. If it is not possible to hold your group activities via a digital platform, the ideas below show what you could do with your members to keep them active at home:

### Phone circle

You could start a phone circle for the day and time when your group would normally meet. This would give members the opportunity to talk to a member of the group who they would usually have met that day, calls could be limited to 20 mins with two or three calls in the hour, giving people the opportunity to chat to each other. Callers would then be rotated for the next 'meeting' giving members the opportunity to talk to everyone.



## Group chat phone circle

Age Scotland may be able to work with your group to facilitate group telephone circles, where up to 6 people could be on a call at once. For further information please contact your local Community Development Officer.

### Newsletter

A newsletter could allow people to keep up to date with what everyone is doing. The newsletter could also provide links to useful support services and keep members up to date with preparations for getting back to the group.

### Activity packs

You could produce activity packs for members to use by themselves or during a telephone call or online zoom meeting. The packs could include:

**Quizzes:** This could be done via a digital platform or by posting members a copy to complete and then post back. Prizes would be a good incentive for your members to complete the quizzes.

**Jigsaws:** Jigsaws have been proven to be great exercise for our brain, from stimulating concentration to strengthening short-term memory.

**Postcards or letter writing:** For members who find it difficult to communicate over the phone or digitally, letters could keep them up to date with the group's activities and with each other.

**Recipe swaps:** Members could copy their favourite recipe and then post it to another member, who could then make it and then post it on. A wee note or letter could be included to let the next person know how they got on making it.



**Crafting:** Card making and flower pressing are just some examples of crafting that members could do at home.

**Gardening:** Send your members some seeds so that they can grow something on their windowsill or in their garden. Members could take pictures during the growing period and share with others to show how green fingered they are - or not!

**Knitting and crochet:** Whether your members are beginners or experts, they could be asked to knit or crochet a square. Everyone's squares could then be joined together to make blankets, the blankets could then be given out to all members once they were finished.

## Afternoon tea gifts

Members could be sent a boxed-up afternoon tea on a group meeting day for special occasions such as a Christmas or autumn social event. Sharing the experience at a time when members would normally come together and enjoy an outing would give them something to look forward to until the outings can begin.

## Scot's literacy project - Guid Fer a laugh

Guid Fer a Laugh sessions are usually delivered to community groups in South West Edinburgh, however due Covid-19 restrictions the project have adapted some of the materials so anyone can use them at home, and the packs are now available nationally.

The packs provide the opportunity to learn Scots language and auld words, take a look a Scots comedy and writing, and hae a guid laugh at ourselves and others. These activities can be done on your own, in pairs, in groups, with family members or with carers. The activities are informal and provide fun and learning, without needing to use the internet.

For further information or to request a pack please contact **Lydia Markham** on **07719420424** or email **Lydia.markham@ea.edin.sch.uk**.



# Age Scotland health and wellbeing

Lockdown may have had a huge impact on our bodies due to the limitations Covid-19 restrictions have placed upon us. We may not have been doing the activities that we usually do, whether this was go for a daily walk, volunteer or meet up with friends for a coffee. Our lives have changed, and these changes will have had some effect on our ability to get back to normal.

We may not be able to walk as far as we used to, or carry the shopping home, or it might just be a struggle to get out of our chairs.

Your group may not have offered any type of physical activity, but attending the group would have provided your members with some sort of physical exercise. This may have been simply walking from the bus stop to the group or helping with the tea at the break; that little bit of activity will have helped members to keep active and healthy.

Even with restrictions on our lives, it is important that we keep as active as possible. Our health and wellbeing team have produced a fun and inventive way to help us all keep active.

**Around the house in 80 days** starts in November 2020. We have developed a range of movement sets that will be fun and are based around daily activities carried out in the home - these include Bedroom Boogie and Kitchen Capers! From Monday to Friday during November, we will provide three 10-minute movement bites via Age Scotland's YouTube channel every day at 10am, 1pm and 4pm. These are recorded so you can use them later if you are unable to join in at the time.

To complement this, during December and January we will be providing telephone health and wellbeing circles where we will offer support and guidance to help keep you moving more and sitting less. For further information about **Around the house in 80 days** contact Age Scotland on **0333 323 2400**.





## Paths for All

Scotland's walking charity, Paths for All, wants us all to walk more every day and everywhere as we move into our 'new normal'. The charity, who believe that walking is the perfect activity to look after our physical, mental and social health, offers support and guidance to help us all walk more and feel the difference.

Short regular walks can have lots of benefits including:

- preventing a range of health conditions including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity, some cancers, and Alzheimer's
- reducing falls in older adults
- helping you sleep better and manage pain
- boosting self-esteem and reducing anxiety and depression
- combatting loneliness and improving connections with community

For further information email [info@pathsforall.org.uk](mailto:info@pathsforall.org.uk) or call **01786 641851**.

## Walking Challenge

You could set your group a walking challenge - the challenge does not need to be far - it could be as easy as walking 500 steps extra a day. If they are fit and able to do so, encouraging members to walk for 15 minutes a day (even on the spot!) can help them to keep active and avoid deconditioning.



## Strength and balance exercises

These exercises can be tailored to everyone's ability and can be done at home. They will get people moving and soon help them to feel better in body and mind. The most important exercise is the Sit to Stand exercise. It helps us to improve our leg muscle strength and maintain our independence.

You can download printable versions of Strength and Balance exercises and a **12 week walking programme, walker's guide and diary** from the **Paths for All** website [www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk) or ask your local Community Development Officer for further details.

## The Still Going project

The Still Going project is funded by the Scottish Government to research what helps people aged 50 and over across Scotland stay active, healthy, and independent for longer in later life. As we age, we lose the ability to do everyday activities in a set order, starting with not being able to cut our toenails and finishing with not being able to eat and drink by ourselves. This is known as the Lifecurve.

The Still Going Project are using the free **LifeCurve™ App**. If your members have smartphones they could download this, find out their position on the Lifecurve then choose from a wide variety of evidence-based activities and access information and advice to help them maintain or improve where they are on the curve. For further information visit [www.stillgoingproject.co.uk](http://www.stillgoingproject.co.uk).



## Luminate

Luminate, Scotland's creative ageing organisation, runs a diverse programme of activities to increase creative opportunities for older people. **Luminate@Home** is a series of online creative activities that have been designed to do at home. There are 30 Luminate@Home films available at **[www.luminatescotland.org/luminateathome](http://www.luminatescotland.org/luminateathome)** which are designed for anyone to take part in using everyday items that we all have at home. For further information email **[info@luminatescotland.org](mailto:info@luminatescotland.org)** or call **0131 668 8066**.

## Dementia inclusive singing network

As singing groups cannot meet right now, the Dementia inclusive singing network is developing a new pack to support people affected by dementia to sing at home. Published in November 2020, it features some songs that are likely to be familiar and some that will be new. Each pack includes printed words and music, as well as recorded accompaniments and films to introduce the songs.

You can get further information, access the resources and order packs online from **<https://singing.luminatescotland.org>** or you can ask for printed copies to be posted out to you by calling **Luminate** on **0131 668 8066**.



## The Big Knit

The Big Knit campaign in partnership with Innocent Smoothies will launch towards the end of 2020. Age Scotland member groups are asked to knit little woolly hats to go on top of innocent smoothie bottles. Your group will receive 15p for each hat you knit.

Whilst we appreciate these are difficult times for many, we hope the campaign will allow you to continue with your knitting success. If you wish to knit again to contribute to the campaign, all hats knitted from now until the end of the campaign will be gratefully received.

Should you require any further information, copies of knitting patterns or have any questions please feel free to get in touch on **[BigKnit@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:BigKnit@agescotland.org.uk)** or telephone **0333 323 2400** to speak to the fundraising team.





# Action plan

Can our group 'meet' differently? i.e. zoom coffee mornings, friendship calls?	
How would we do it?	
Do we have the expertise to manage it? Would we need some training?	
What would members need to participate?	
What do we need to be able to do this? i.e. funding for equipment, training	
Would everyone benefit? How do we ensure that all members are participating in something?	
Could we provide practical activities for members to do at home?	
How do we collate different projects?	



# Keeping your group's information safe

GDPR, (General Data Protection Regulation) applies to any personal data that your group holds about your members. The group must have permission from its members to keep any personal data it holds and must ensure that members understand how this data will be used.

What is meant by personal data?

- name and surname
- home address
- email address
- telephone number

For example, telephone numbers cannot be given to other group members without permission unless when this information was taken it was agreed that it could be passed between members.

All records holding members personal information must be kept in a safe place, preferably in a locked drawer or cabinet or a computer file you have protected with a password.

This information has been prepared by Age Scotland and contains general advice only, it should not be relied on as a basis for any decision or action and cannot be used as a substitute for professional advice.

Age Scotland does not accept any liability arising from its use and it is the reader's sole responsibility to ensure any information is up to date and accurate.

Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Scotland.

## How you can help

### Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial and in helping people access their rights and entitlements, it can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.



### Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- Call **03330 15 14 60**
- Visit **age.scot/donate**
- Text **LATERLIFE** to **70085** to donate £5.\*



### Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



### Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help Age Scotland to continue being there for vulnerable older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

## Let's keep in touch



### Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today by visiting **age.scot/roundup**



### Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



**/agescotland**



**@AgeScotland**



**@age\_scotland**



**/AgeScotland**

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**Contact us:**

**Head office**

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**Age Scotland helpline**

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**Visit our website**

www.agescotland.org.uk

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