

MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER



FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE

is a small voluntary organisation which aims to enhance the quality of life and well-being of older people by working with those providing practical, pastoral or spiritual care

FiOP hopes that you and your family and friends are keeping well, physically, mentally and spiritually.

It seems hard to believe that we have been in locked down for some weeks and that the prospect of it being lifted entirely is still some weeks or months in some cases away. People have been very resilient in adapting to circumstances both those who are confined to their home and those who are caring for us in hospital, hospices, care homes and at home. We continue to applaud them along with those who enable us to buy food, who provide cleaning services and our transport. We are also fortunate in having an amazing group of people volunteering to ensure that food is distributed, and contact made with those who are alone.

This crisis has highlighted the impact of being alone for many people on their mental health and their sense of self. A range of contacts to support people are given at the end of this newsletter.

Loneliness and isolation has been a particular theme for FiOP and the Church of Scotland Guild and we were pleased to work with a range of voluntary sector organisations to know what services are offered and how we might be able to build our own coping skills. Churches and faith communities play a huge part in supporting people both in their own congregation but also in the wider community. IT has played a great part, but it does not suit everyone. Face to face is critical but the potential of personal visits is much curtailed, and relationships built up could become fragile during this time. We need to be tolerant of the here and now but aware of future change so that we can adapt and change. So many interesting initiatives have been created and we need to take the best of them forward into the future. Talking more – to our family and friends, our neighbours and those who we meet on our walk – is something to hold onto and maintain in the future.

“Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible type of poverty” (Mother Teresa). Loneliness can be viewed as cold and debilitating and can come and go or be a chronic state. We need to increase our awareness of the effect on people around us.

(Loneliness – Reaching out to the elderly and isolated. S. John Dawson and Pete Rugen (Grove Books 2015)

Those people experiencing mental health problems may also feel isolated if their usual support systems are not available and they feel an increased sense of vulnerability feeling confined to home. Enabling someone to talk about their experience and to feel listened to is perhaps something we could achieve in this current strange time.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In the last newsletter we highlighted the importance of recognising the human rights aspects to all the actions that are currently being taken. There has been a call for an inquiry into the wider human rights aspects of the current pandemic. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland (CYCPS) have called for an inquiry by the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee to undertake a probe into the impact of the Covid -19 crisis.

John Wilkes, head of Scotland at EHRC stated in the press release on 17th April 2020 that "this virus and the protections in place impact on people differently. We believe that it will be important to consider the specific effects they may have on certain groups who are already disadvantaged so that they are not left further behind. For many people, the restrictions to everyday life will be hugely disruptive, but ultimately manageable. For others, the implications could be profound".

[What do human rights mean in a pandemic? - Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland](#)

On 23 April, the Scottish Government published its 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making' **Please click on the link below to see the article**

<https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/opinion/what-do-human-rights-mean-in-a-pandemic/#expanded>
www.alliance-scotland.org.uk

SPIRITUALITY

From anecdotal and specific evidence, it appears that the spiritual dimension in our lives is becoming more important as we find different ways of feeding our spirits. More us are joining church services via the internet. A specific example is Shrewsbury Cathedral which usually attracts congregations of between 600 and 700 people each Sunday and about 1,000 on Easter Sunday. This year, however, a total of **11,446** watched the Mass via live-stream, with some tuning in from as far away as Ireland and the United States. The figure represents an increase of 1,044 per cent.

The high point during Holy Week and Easter, however, came on Good Friday when 13,594 people watched the liturgy remotely in their own homes. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39394>

Also see the article in the New Statesman regarding religion and the Coronavirus

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/religion/2020/04/how-coronavirus-leading-religious-revival>

Please do tell us if you have seen similar changes

Let our Care Homes know we are thinking of them ...



It is important to keep the residents and staff in our care homes in our thoughts as well as our NHS staff. They provide so much great care and particularly in the current circumstances. Many residents will be confined to their rooms so do not see other residents and neither will they be able to have visitors who will also be feeling isolated from their family member or friend.

Could you send a card to your local Care Home, so they know they are being thought about?

We invite you to -

FiOP would also like to sustain its on-line blogs and we would like to invite you to send us your reflection of our times and how we can consider what really matters to us.

Please send your contribution of not more than 500 words to Maureen O'Neill at Director@fiop.org.uk. We would love to hear from you.

Edinburgh Interfaith Association

Faith Leaders and representatives were brought together in a video by the Edinburgh Interfaith Association expressing their gratitude to all NHS workers and frontline staff.

EIFA Executive Director Iain Stewart said, "We are all united across our different faith traditions in solidarity to come together to express our gratitude to all NHS workers and frontline staff. In all of our traditions caring for your neighbour is central. Our NHS staff and carers all exemplify what it means to care for another. This short video is just a small way to say thank you from across all the faith communities of Edinburgh. We are eternally grateful for all they do for us, every day putting their lives on the line in order to save the lives of others. There is no greater sacrifice and we just all just want to say thank you."

Links to the video message can be found below:

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbACHNyoBOE&feature=youtu.be>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/122672657791731/posts/2946977365361232/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EdinInterfaith/status/1253404856590536704>

SOURCES OF HELP AND ADVICE

How RNIB can help during the current Coronavirus situation.

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/scotland/how-we-can-help>

RNIB Helpline

The RNIB Helpline is available on 0303 123 9999 from 8am to 8pm weekdays and from 9am to 5pm on Saturdays. Our advisors can give advice and information and referrals to other services.

RNIB Connect Radio

RNIB Connect Radio will continue to broadcast information and entertainment programmes

aimed at people with sight loss, available on Freeview 730, online at www.rnibconnectradio.org.uk and on 101FM in Glasgow.

RNIB Talking Books library

RNIB's Talking Books library can still post or download the thousands of titles we have available in audio and other formats.

DEAF ACTION – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The following link provides information about the Corona virus and services for people who are deaf <http://www.deafaction.org/coronavirus-info/>

SCOTTISH PARTNERSHIP OF PALLIATIVE CARE

The Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care (SPPC) brings together health and social care professionals from hospitals, social care services, primary care, hospices and other charities, to find ways of improving people's experiences of declining health, death, dying and bereavement. It works to enable communities and individuals to support each other through the hard times which can come with death, dying and bereavement. **Below is the link to information and resources** relating to the CoronaVirus: <https://www.palliativecarescotland.org.uk/content/coronavirus---latest/>

Hourglass, the only UK-wide charity dedicated to calling time on the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people. We provide the only national helpline for people concerned about or experiencing abuse. Our experienced helpline Information Officers can help you make the best choice to keep yourself safe and put you in touch with the appropriate agencies. It's entirely confidential, free to call from a landline or mobile and will not appear on your phone bill.

Call our Helpline on: 0808 808 8141 - Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm

AGE Scotland

Age Scotland has compiled advice for older people and their families on how to avoid exposure to the virus, as well as actions we can all take to help each other.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/>

The Age Scotland helpline is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland. Our team provide information, friendship and advice.

Our helpline is free to call and available Monday - Friday 9-5pm. Call us today on 0800 12 44 222.

ALZHEIMER SCOTLAND



Our 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline is available for you whether you are looking for information, emotional support or just need someone to talk to. We have a team of dedicated and experienced volunteers willing to listen, many of whom have personal experience of caring for someone with dementia.

During these uncertain and worrying times, we want to reassure you that we're here for you.

Call our Helpline on 0808 808 3000

Our mental health

There are things we can do to look after our mental wellbeing during this time. On this page, we are gathering the information, links and resources that we can, to help keep you informed and protect your mental health

SAMH –

<https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-information-hub>

CLEAR YOU HEAD CAMPAIGN

These are worrying and uncertain times. The coronavirus outbreak has changed daily life for us all in Scotland and has had a real impact on how many of us are feeling. It's ok to not feel yourself right now, and we have some great tips to help get you through it.

The Scottish Government's together with other organisations has developed the **Clear Your Head** Campaign has produced animated films now showing on TV plus social media lines and images to use. The campaign gives people tips to help get through the crisis. For information and advice visit www.clearyourhead.scot

LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

British Red Cross

Coronavirus and isolation: helpful things to remember about loneliness

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, one in five of us already said we often or always felt lonely. Over the coming months, many of us will experience uncertainty and lots of change.

We know that loneliness can be triggered by stress, and poor physical and mental health. Significant life changes also spark loneliness – from stopping work to losing someone you love. Today's coronavirus outbreak risks making even more of us feel lonely – and sadly, people who are already isolated and lonely may become more vulnerable than ever.

Visit the website <https://www.redcross.org.uk/stories/disasters-and-emergencies/uk/coronavirus-six-facts-about-loneliness>

The Campaign on Loneliness in Scotland

<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/campaign-end-loneliness-glasgow/>

The Government have announced that anyone over 70 should self-isolate as a precautionary measure against the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). This will have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of millions of older people.

The Director of Campaigns, Policy and Research, Robin Hewings, said: “First and foremost, older people and vulnerable people are at greater risk from Coronavirus and need protection and support. Lives are at risk and protecting them is paramount. But let us not be under any illusions; this is an unprecedented ask. Asking people to go without face to face social contact for months at a time will have a massive impact on many people's health and wellbeing.

The category of 'over 70' covers a huge age range – up to 40 years – and masks a great deal of variation in people's levels of health and resilience. In general, it's important we don't make generalisations and assumptions about what people are capable of due to their age, though we understand why the Government is making this judgement in this unprecedented situation.

People over the age of 70 contribute a huge amount to our society. The reduction in that contribution will be felt by all of us. As a society we have a responsibility to do everything we can to help people over 70, feel cared for and connected. Technology can play a huge part.”

FiOP would welcome your views on this and any other articles – Director@fiop.org.uk

<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/press-release/coronavirus-and-self-isolation-for-over-70s/>

[Interesting article from the Guardian]

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/28/the-extreme-loneliness-of-lockdown-even-though-my-partner-is-here-im-struggling-to-cope>

Third Force News

The following link is to an article around the findings of the Mental Health Foundation on Loneliness and the pandemic - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/coping-with-loneliness>

The Silver Line operates the only confidential, free helpline for older people across the UK that's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year. We also offer telephone friendship where we match volunteers with older people based on their interests, facilitated group calls, and help to connect people with local services in their area.

The Silver Line Helpline – 0800 4 70 80 90



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

<https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-community-groups-and-covid-19/>

Please feel free to circulate to your networks.

For information which clarifies some of the basics of data protection, and gives established community groups, services and charities clarity on how to apply the law in this extraordinary time, please see the below link to a blog from the Information Commissioner:

Age Equality, Older People Policy | Age Equality, Older People and Social Isolation & Loneliness Team | Equality Unit | Scottish Government | Area 3H North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | email: Rachel.Smith@gov.scot

OUTSIDE THE BOX - Finding new ways to stay connected

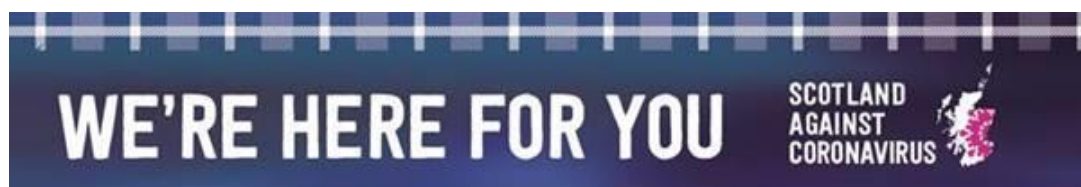
During these unprecedented times, Outside the Box has been busy learning new ways to support people and groups addressing issues which affect them. It has been inspired by the shining examples of compassion and collective strength we've been hearing about from different communities.

As well as learning and adapting how we work, we've been getting used to working from home - many of us [balancing work with childcare](#). Our blog post on ['Tips and Tricks for Working from Home'](#) shares some strategies that work for us!

CHEST, HEART AND STROKE SCOTLAND – advice line

<https://www.chss.org.uk/coronavirus/i-need-help/>

We want to reduce isolation and loneliness to people in Scotland. We have over 4,000 volunteers who can call, collect shopping, dog walking and pick up prescriptions. **We are flexible when we do the calls and shopping so this can be done at evenings and weekends.**



Our Kindness Volunteers are ready to help you or someone you know with:

- Collecting medication or shopping
- A regular check in and chat over the phone
- Dog walking

CALL US ON :
0808 801 0899

Reimagining the Future in Older Age is an exploratory project being developed by Stirling University that aims to develop understanding of the relationship between older age and future time. This project will explore the potential for utopian thinking and arts-based methods to reimagine the future in older age, provide tools for further thinking in these areas, and provide practical guidance for policy makers on how to address what older people might *desire* as well as *need* in older age.

The Project is currently looking for readers. If you are interested please follow the link <https://reimaginingthefutureinolderage.stir.ac.uk/stage-2-intergenerational-reading-groups/>

FiOP is pleased to be participating in the Reference Group for this project.

LUMINATE@HOME Here's some of what's coming up this week ... Join artist Tracy Gorman on Thursday and find out how to use items lingering in your cupboards to make beautiful marbled paper. And on Friday, Lottie Barker leads a gentle Poetry and Movement session to get both your brain and body moving. www.luminatescotland.org

Alzheimer Europe Board adopts recommendations on how to promote the wellbeing of people with dementia and carers during the COVID-19 pandemic

Alzheimer Europe highlights how physical distancing rules affect people with dementia who may find their normal routines disrupted, lack cognitive stimulation, feel lonely and anxious and risk depression. Similarly, their partners, relatives and close friends involved in their care may encounter challenges due to the disruption of normal routines and the loss of support and closure of services. Finally, health and social care professionals are striving to provide appropriate and timely treatment, support and care despite fears for their own safety due to the lack of protective clothing in some countries.

Commenting on the recommendations, Jean Georges, Executive of Director, said: "I am in awe at how quickly Alzheimer associations and health and social care professionals have responded to the COVID-19 challenge and continue to provide essential information, support and care to people with dementia and their carers. They deserve the full support of national governments and I hope our recommendations provide some guidance on how to promote the wellbeing of people with dementia and carers in these difficult times."

The full recommendations adopted by the Alzheimer Europe Board are online here: <https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/Policy/Our-opinion-on/Wellbeing-of-people-with-dementia-during-COVID-19-pandemic>

For further information about the recommendations please contact Jean Georges, Executive Director: jean.georges@alzheimer-europe.org

Alzheimer Europe is the umbrella organisation of national Alzheimer associations and currently has 39 member organisations in 35 European countries. The mission statement of the organisation is to change perceptions, practice and policy to ensure equal access of people with dementia to a high level of care services and treatment options.

To support people with dementia, carers and Alzheimer's associations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation has dedicated a special section of its website to useful resources and links: <https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/Living-with-dementia/COVID-19>

A FINAL THOUGHT

KINDNESS

by Naomi Shihab Nye in

Words Under the Words: Selected Poems

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes any sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.



Faith in Older People

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