



Staying well this winter

Not filled with joy this festive season?

**Many people look forward to the winter holidays.
But not everyone feels the same.**

It is almost impossible to get through the winter holidays without experiencing some level of stress. For some it is indeed a joyful time whilst for others it brings financial pressure, stress, loneliness or can bring back memories of difficult times.

There are practical steps we can take to look after our own mental health and that of those close to us. Here are just a few:

- Don't overindulge
- Take time to relax
- Fit in some time for exercise such as a gentle walk
- If you can, try to be around other people

This booklet gives some handy hints and tips for surviving the festive season and long winter months as well as useful information and telephone numbers for anyone who needs support.



Take care of yourself

Self-care is an important step to help manage difficult feelings.

When things seem a struggle, it's understandable that bigger self-care tasks become difficult. Below are some tips to help improve things:

- Try activity scheduling and planning out your week, maybe breaking days into manageable sections.
- Try to think of things you should do to take care of yourself that you maybe haven't had time to do recently, and ask yourself which of these are achievable.
- Remember it is okay to start with small objectives and, when you feel more able, plan more challenging tasks.
- Be kind to yourself – self compassion is important. We often have high expectations of ourselves and feel frustrated if we don't meet them.
- Some days you may feel more able and productive than others. At times you may feel completely overwhelmed. It's okay to feel this way – most of us will have dealt with similar feelings at some point in our lives.
- Be gentle with yourself when things are getting on top of you – this will help you to feel better more quickly.

- It can be helpful to write things down when you're feeling positive about yourself. Then, on tough days you can go back and read over what you've written to remind yourself that things will get easier again.

- Suicide devastates lives across the country every day of every week. Always ask for help if you're struggling.
- Reaching out to a friend, neighbour or phoning one of the numbers in this booklet could be the first step to feeling better.
- It's good to talk.

**There is only one you.
Take care of yourself.**



Opening hours for public services

Access to health and social work services over the holidays

In Scotland most services will close for the two public holidays at Christmas and New Year.

Public holidays include **25 and 26 December**.
Then **1 and 2 January**.

Although there will be fewer staff available in some of the services during the holiday period, people who require support over this period will receive it through pre-planning. For social work emergency services call **0800 121 4114**.

Remember to contact NHS24 on **111** if your GP surgery is closed for access to any health services.

In emergencies, A&E and **999** services will operate as normal.

To access information on availability of health services over the festive period visit:

nhs.uk/your-health/winter-health/

or call well informed at **0800 073 0918**.

Remember

Make sure you have enough medication to last you throughout the holiday period.

For leisure and culture services, check the websites at:

[activenl.co.uk](https://www.activenl.co.uk)

[culturenl.co.uk](https://www.culturenl.co.uk)



Managing stress and expectations

Tips to minimise holiday stress

- Aim for 'enjoy' not 'perfect'. Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Don't try to make it perfect.
- Recognise that being together 24/7 may cause tensions, and allow for this.
- Minimise "are we nearly there yet?" issues when travelling. It is disappointing to make travel plans in order to promote family togetherness only to get to the destination feeling stressed. Include pre-planned rest stops, drinks and snacks, music and books and lots of activities for the kids in the back. Travel off-peak if possible.
- Find time for yourself. Don't spend all your time providing activities for your family and friends. If you're a parent, remember you need to have fun, and aim for a balance of activities that meets everyone's needs.
- Planning and teamwork: involve the family in plans and share out the work. Children can have some say, and parents' needs count as well.
- Don't try to do it all.

Remember

- Plan out what you need to do over the festive season.
- Make plans with services you are currently receiving such as health and social care workers, support workers or peer supporters.



Cost of Living

We are currently facing a cost-of-living crisis. This is because the cost of everyday essentials like energy and food is rising much faster than average incomes.

The rising cost of living coupled with the time of year makes it more difficult for some of us to stay well. The challenges that many of us are likely to

be facing may have an impact on our mood, our stress levels and our ability to pursue activities that help us stay healthy.

For tips and local information to help cope with rising costs, visit northlanarkshire.gov.uk/costofliving

Useful telephone numbers

COST OF LIVING AND GENERAL HELP	
NLC Tackling Poverty Team for a comprehensive debt and benefit advice service. (We will always start by checking to ensure you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to)	01698 332551
NLC Scottish Welfare Fund for crisis* and community care grants	0300 555 0405
NLC Benefits for help with housing benefit	01698 403210
Age Scotland helpline for people over 50 years of age	0800 1244222
Disability Information Scotland helpline for people living with disability	0300 323 9961
North Lanarkshire Carers Together help for carers	01698 404 055
Lanarkshire Carers advice and support for people who care	01236 755 550
Childline for children and young people under 19 years old	0800 1111
Citizens Advice Bureau for support with debt, benefits, housing and employment	Airdrie: 01236 754109 Bellshill: 01698 748615 Coatbridge: 01236 421447 Cumbernauld: 01236 723201 Motherwell: 0808 196 9180 Wishaw: 0808 196 9180

SAFETY AND SECURITY	
Police Scotland for non emergencies	101
Police Scotland for emergencies	999
Fire safety for a home visit	0800 0731 999
Gas leaks national gas helpline for reporting leaks	0800 111 999
Power cuts national power cut helpline	105
Scottish Water for all water supply related issues	0800 0778 778

HOUSING ADVICE	
Council housing offices for help with local housing issues	Airdrie: 01236 758035 Bellshill: 01698 332340 Coatbridge: 01236 812530 Cumbernauld: 01236 632726 Kilsyth: 01236 828120 Moodiesburn: 01236 812530/828120 Motherwell: 01698 274135 Shotts: 01501 824747 Viewpark: 01698 403700 Wishaw: 01698 302920 For help with rent: 01698 524811
Shelter for help and advice with housing problems	0808 800 4444

HEALTH HELP AND ADVICE	
NHS 24 for help If you think you need to visit A&E, but it's not a critical emergency, or you think you need to visit a Minor Injury Unit	111
ALL Emergencies	999
Alzheimer Scotland 24 hour helpline for people living with dementia	0808 808 3000
Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland help for people living with a chest heart or stroke condition.	0808 801 0899
Breathing Space for help with low mood, depression and anxiety	0800 838587
Samaritans help and support for people feeling suicidal	116 123

ENERGY ADVICE	
Home Energy Scotland for help with rising energy bills	0808 196 8660

* For example, help with basics like food and heating costs. If you are applying for a crisis grant you should consider also contacting our Tackling Poverty Team to check that you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

Loneliness and social isolation

Anyone can experience feelings of loneliness. You may feel this way if you have less contact with others than you would like. It might be that you're sociable and in a relationship but still feel lonely. Certain experiences may increase the chances of feeling lonely such as bereavement, retirement, growing older, losing your job, or a relationship break-up. Holiday periods can exacerbate these feelings further.

Social isolation is slightly different, describing the lack of contact that a person has with anyone else. Some people choose to be alone and enjoy living that way. Others are socially isolated because they don't have a support network of friends and family, they are unwell or they are excluded from activities because of money concerns.

Once again winter and in particular the festive holiday period can increase social isolation which for some can be extremely difficult and cause intense feelings of loneliness.

Loneliness can lead to low mood and, in some cases, suicidal thoughts. If you are struggling with loneliness or isolation, contact Well Informed on **0800 073 0918**.



Useful Contacts

Local Support

Well Informed mental health and wellbeing information service **0800 073 0918**

Lanarkshire Mind Matters (scot.nhs.uk)

Calm Distress Online Course Overview - Lanarkshire Mind Matters (scot.nhs.uk)

NHS Inform: Health info that anyone living in or visiting Scotland can trust **Scottish health information you can trust | NHS inform**

Benefits, Welfare & Debt Advice **01698 332551**

Elament Lanarkshire's online mental health and wellbeing information website: **elament.org.uk**

Other support

Samaritans **116 123**

Breathing Space **0800 838 587**
breathingspacescotland.co.uk

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous **0800 9177 650**
visit: **alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk**
email: **help@aamail.org**

Narcotics Anonymous National Helpline
0300 999 1212 or visit: **ukna.org**

ParentLine **08000 28 22 33**

NHS 24 **111**

National Domestic Abuse Helpline
0800 027 1234

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