

coorie in for

# Winter



Tips for keeping well during the winter period - craft, recipes and support available

# coorie

(definition)

from coor, a scots word  
to nestle or snuggle



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# Welcome to Coorie in for Winter

**The Rt. Hon. Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and Chair of Thrive Edinburgh Assembly, Wendy Bates, Chief Executive, Health in Mind and Dr Linda Irvine Fitzpatrick, Thrive Edinburgh.**

The festive period is usually considered “the most wonderful time of the year” – a time of celebration and connecting with the people around us. However, the winter months can also bring up some difficult emotions, and the change of season can have an impact on our wellbeing. This year may feel particularly challenging for many of us, due to the cost-of-living crisis. That’s why we’re focusing this booklet on the Scottish concept of ‘coorie’ as a way to help us look after our mental health and wellbeing this winter.

Coorie is all about comfort, snuggling, looking after yourself and others.

The theme for this year’s Coorie in for Winter is ***‘Winter Tales of Edinburgh’*** to mark Scotland’s Year of Stories, which celebrates stories inspired by, written, or created in Scotland. The act of telling stories helps us connect to others, create meaning, and better understand our own lives. While we share stories, we are improving our mental health and wellbeing.

This booklet tells these winter tales through stories, poems, recipes and photographs, drawing a focus on the things we can all do to look after our mental health. It also includes a range of support and helpful contacts.

**We hope you enjoy the booklet as you coorie in for winter.**

This booklet has been produced in partnership by Thrive Edinburgh and Health in Mind. Many thanks to our colleagues across Edinburgh who have contributed to the booklet and shared their ideas and resources.

# Christmas Dinner

**Robert Aldridge, The Rt. Hon. Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and Chair of Edinburgh Thrive Assembly.**

Christmas dinner was always a big deal in our family with my brother and sister, my partner, my mum and an elderly neighbour all digging in to a three-course dinner. It was, of course, never ready on time (part of the joy of Christmas) adding an edge of stress to a happy family day.

One particular Christmas we pushed the boat out and for a starter had smoked salmon on top of a small salad. We thought something might be wrong when the usually excitable dog was strangely and ominously silent. We found her next to the table, lying on the carpet looking guilty.

The table was decorated with Christmas crackers, a tablecloth, place mats cutlery and the smoked salmon salad – apart from the smoked salmon. The salad had not been disturbed but there was not a sign of any fish, while the dog gave the game away by wiping her whiskers on the carpet with a smug expression on her face.

We managed perfectly well without a starter, and we had a great Christmas! The dog was pretty happy too.

**Our “Nights are fair drawin’ in” booklet provides lots of information and support on practical health and support over the winter months. You can access it here:**



# Let's Get Married



## Wendy Bates, Chief Executive Health in Mind

I have my own Winter Tale of Edinburgh that I'd like to share with you.

It was Hogmanay of 2001 and I was spending Hogmanay in Edinburgh at Princes Street Gardens where The Proclaimers were headlining.

2001 had been an exciting year - for me - I started a new relationship, got a new job with **Health in Mind** and moved from Glasgow to Edinburgh. In the three weeks leading up to Hogmanay, I lost my voice and was still really struggling to talk - that wasn't going to stop me going out and having fun though - ah the joys of youth! For their last song before the Bells, The Proclaimers sang 'Let's get married' and my boyfriend thought that was a great idea and asked me to marry him under one of the beautiful old trees surrounding the Ross Bandstand.

I guess we will never know if it was his love for The Proclaimers, the fact I'd lost my voice or the New Year celebratory drinks that made him ask, but 20 years later we are still married and love pointing out 'our tree' to our children at every opportunity - much to their disgust!

# It's a Wonderful Life



## Linda Irvine Fitzpatrick, Thrive Edinburgh

For more years than I can remember just close to Christmas Day I watch **It's a Wonderful Life**, I love to go to the cinema to watch it, on my own or, if I can persuade him, with my husband. Every year it's reassuringly familiar but also different - depending on what's happened that year, some parts will seem more poignant or relevant. Regardless though there are some parts I always laugh out loud (when they are dancing and the swimming pool opens up) and some parts where I always cry (that final "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" rendition). So this year I will once again curl up in my cinema seat, with hot chocolate and a candy cane thinking of the year that's been.

**Wishing you all, in the words of George Bailey:**

**"Merry Christmas, movie house! Merry Christmas, Emporium!  
Merry Christmas, you wonderful old Building and Loan!"**

# Peer Support in Edinburgh

If you would like to meet with others who have gone through or who are going through a similar mental health or life challenge, a peer support space or service might be the thing for you.

There are lots of different peer support groups in the city. Some have quite a broad membership and are for anybody experiencing mental health challenges. Other groups are for people with a specific diagnosis or experience, such as hearing voices. There are online and in person group option. All are open to people who would like to be there for others while others are in turn there for them.

For an up-to-date list of peer support groups in Edinburgh, please visit The Peer Community's webpages on iThrive - **[ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/peer-community](http://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/peer-community)**. You'll find information about The Peer Community as well as upcoming peer support groups. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact Health in Mind and ask for a Peer Community leaflet to be sent to you.

The Peer Community is a network for peer workers and is a part of **Thrive Edinburgh**.

It is organised by The Peer Partnership – a partnership between **Health in Mind** and **CAPS Independent Advocacy**.

We're here to support and enable people with lived experience of mental health challenges and recovery to intentionally use their experiences to accompany others through their recovery.

**Contact Health in Mind for more information by emailing [contactus@health-in-mind.org.uk](mailto:contactus@health-in-mind.org.uk) or calling 0131 225 8508**



# Slow Cooking with...

**Councillor Amy McNees-Mechan, Leith Walk**

**The nights are fair drawin' in**, and when it's already dark when you get home after a long day, and you're cold tired and hungry, it's hard to face the thought of cooking. Sometimes it just seems easier to grab a bag of crisps, or gulp down a cup of tea and some biscuits, but that doesn't really leave you feeling better – still tired, just not so hungry. What if you could open your door to the wonderful smell of home cooking?

**That's what slow cookers are all about.** If you have one stuck in the back of a cupboard, now's the time to dig it out. You can get them for as little as £15 at stores like Argos. Some come with a built-in timer, but if not then it's handy to buy a pack of plug-in timers too – they're about £4 and are useful for lots of purposes (If you hate coming into a dark hallway at night, plug a lamp in and set it to turn on about ten minutes before you get home.

Away over the weekend? You can plug in a radio or small lamp and set them to come on once in awhile so it looks like someone's home).

Anyway, once you have your slow cooker the magic can start. Basically it can produce hearty home cooking without you needing to slave over a stove for hours. My autumn-winter favourite? About a dozen different varieties of stew, from basic and hearty to spicy and exotic. Vegetarian or meaty, your choice.



Photo by Amy



**The great thing is that you do not have to do lots of peeling and dicing.** Since many of the vitamins in fruits and vegetables are in the skin, just scrub them thoroughly, slice off the tops or any scraggy bits, then throw them in big chunks into the pot! If I'm cooking neeps or sweet potatoes, they always go in the bottom, and the same with parsnips. You can even cut up a pumpkin after Halloween as long as it's still fresh – but you will have to peel the rind off.

**The only real secret to slow cooking is layering.** Look at all the ingredients you want to combine, and figure out which takes longest to cook. Put in a little bit of cooking oil, just enough to coat the bottom of the slow cooker's ceramic pot. Add the ingredient that takes longest to cook on the bottom, then layer each ingredient in the same order. For example, for a basic beef stew, add potatoes on the bottom, then carrots, then onions, then lay the chunks of beef over them. You can even throw some big pieces of broccoli straight from the freezer on top of that. It will all cook down together deliciously! The final step is to boil some water, fill a jug, and add a couple stock cubes. Stir until it's dissolved.

This is where I add any other seasonings I want – peppercorns, garlic, and a drop of red wine and you basically have the class Beef Bourguignon. Pour the seasoned broth over the ingredients, put the lid on the slow cooker, and set the timer. If I'm going to be home by 6pm, I set the pot to turn on by 3:00. By the time you walk in the door, it'll smell like someone's been in the kitchen cooking for hours. If you prefer soup, add a bit more water before serving.

If you like a thicker stew, you can stir in a bit of corn starch. A pot of stew will feed a hungry family, or you can reheat it and enjoy it over the next few nights.

Besides soups and stews, slow cookers are good for making desserts like puddings of all sorts. Get creative – chicken and Portobello mushrooms with white wine, pork with apricots, Italian risotto, Cajun beans + rice, vegetarian chilli, corn chowder, your choice!

**Why not share your own ideas? Tweet them to @EdinburghThrive or email them to [ithrive@health-in-mind.org.uk](mailto:ithrive@health-in-mind.org.uk)**

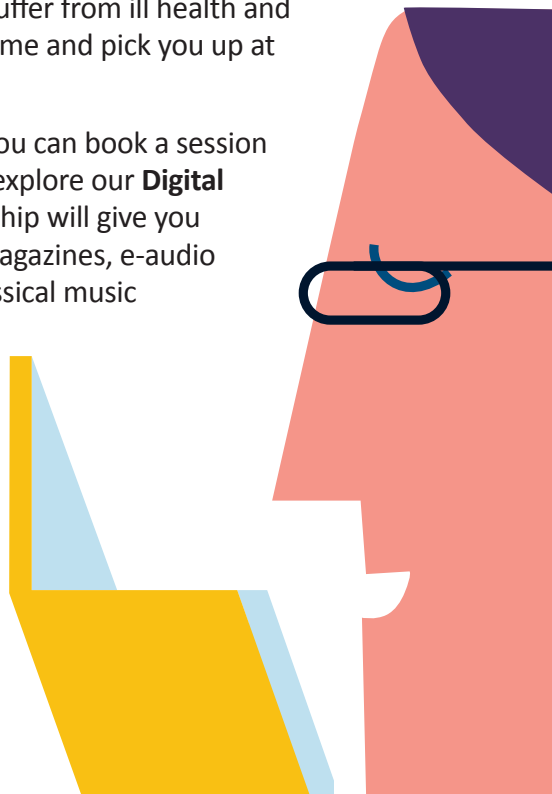
# Did you know - Reading for 6 minutes a day reduces stress by 68% (Guardian 2009) and that 59% of young people said that reading makes them feel better(NLT 2020)

**Edinburgh City Libraries** have 28 libraries across the city, sited at the heart of our communities. Connect with others near you by dropping in to browse or borrow our books, enjoy chatting to others at a book group, listen to an author talk, get creative and find a new hobby or interest by coming along to an event or activity like Knit & Natter, adult colouring in or craft session or bring the wee ones to a storytime or lego club.

If you're older, have a disability or suffer from ill health and can't get to the library then we'll come and pick you up at home with our **Library Link service**.

If **online is more your thing**, then you can book a session for help with your digital device or explore our **Digital library**, where free library membership will give you access to endless e-books, digital magazines, e-audio books, family history and jazz & classical music streaming. You can download thousands of titles direct to your device to let you read and relax wherever you are.

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries)





# ACE IT

Helping people over 50 access  
the digital world

## 10 things to find online support this winter by ACE IT

**City of Edinburgh Council website** – for advice on money, housing, and energy bills – <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/costofliving>

**Moneysupport.scot** – for cost of living advice  
– <https://moneysupport.scot>

**Energyadvice.scot** for help on energy bills  
– <https://energyadvice.scot>

**Advice.scot** – <https://advice.scot/cost-of-living-crisis-how-can-advice-scot-help>

**Your bank** – a number of banks have opened helplines to advise customers on cost of living issues, for example Nationwide  
– <https://www.nationwide.co.uk/help/cost-of-living>

**Citizen's Advice** – <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/debt-and-money/get-help-with-the-cost-of-living>

**Entitledto benefits calculator**, to see what you might be entitled to  
– <https://www.entitledto.co.uk>

**Warm Welcome's warm bank map**  
– <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/#find-a-space>

**The Trussell Trust's Find a Foodbank service**  
– <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank>

**And if you can't access any of these websites, come to ACE IT Scotland!** <https://aceit.org.uk>

# Prappy Campbell, Thrive Edinburgh

I always look forward to Christmas and the festive activities during December month especially in Edinburgh. I love the decorated lights on Princes & George Streets! Seeing the Big Wheel at the German Market is a reminder for me to review my Christmas To Do List! This year we are having lovely young friends joining us on our Christmas day Hillwalking tradition! We secretly plan the toughest route for them as a wee Christmas Treat and a way of thanking them for their home cooked meal afterwards!

**I love Christmas with little fuss  
and little cooking or none in  
my case! Merry Christmas,  
Everyone!**



## Space Kitchen and Café

**Space Kitchen and Café** is a social enterprise based in the Broomhouse Hub, which provides a great place for families to meet up and dine together. They serve fresh, homemade food each day, including soups and healthy options as well as great coffee! Pop in from 9am for breakfast or from 12pm–3pm for lunch.

As well as great food, they offer training opportunities in catering, team building days and special events for local groups and the wider community and individuals with additional support needs.

**Find out more from Space Kitchen  
at [www.spacescot.org/enterprise](http://www.spacescot.org/enterprise).**



# Magda's Magic Mac & Cheese from Space Kitchen and Café

This recipe feeds 4 for £5

## Ingredients

- 2 tbsp butter, plus 1 tbsp melted
- 350g dried pasta (odds and ends can be used up here!)
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped/grated
- 1 tsp English mustard powder
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 500ml whole milk
- 250g mature cheddar, grated (mixed cheeses also work well)
- 50g parmesan (or vegetarian alternative), grated

## Optional extras

- Paprika
- Salt & Pepper
- Handful of breadcrumbs

## Method

1. Boil the pasta for 2 mins less than stated on the pack, then drain. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the garlic and English mustard powder, cook for 1 min, then stir in the plain flour – and paprika, salt and pepper to taste if you are adding!
2. Cook for 1 min more, then gradually whisk in the milk until you have a lump-free sauce. Simmer for 5 mins, whisking all the time until thickened. Take off the heat, then stir in the cheddar cheese and half the parmesan.
3. Stir the pasta and some seasoning into the cheesy sauce. Tip into a large ovenproof dish, or four individual dishes.
4. Scatter over the breadcrumbs if you are using and remaining parmesan, then bake for 20 mins until crisp and golden. Can be frozen before baking – defrost thoroughly before cooking.



# Your Five Ways to Winter Wellbeing

## Health in Mind

We're encouraged to eat at least five fruit and vegetables a day to take care of our physical health, but what about our mental health? Research carried out by the New Economics Foundation found that there are five ways to wellbeing.

### **Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep learning, Give**

As we head into winter, and with everything else that is going on right now, it's important that we take care of our wellbeing.

Many of us are feeling exhausted with all the news surrounding us but the five ways to wellbeing provide ideas of small things we can do each day to support our wellbeing.

**Here are some ideas for winter activities related to the five ways to wellbeing.**

## Connect

Evidence shows that good relationships with family, friends, colleagues and the wider community are important for mental wellbeing. It's important that we make time to connect with the people that matter to us. By nurturing these relationships, we feel happier and more secure, giving a better sense of purpose.

Although throughout the winter it can be difficult to connect with people in person, it is important to do so as often as we can. You can also use letters, phone calls or Zoom calls if we aren't able to get out in the colder months.



## **Ways to connect with others include:**

### **Set up a group chat with friends and/or family to plan winter activities.**

This is such a fun way to stay connected with the people you love. Why don't you set up your own group chat and suggest fun winter activities like visiting the Christmas markets or meeting up for a virtual coffee?

### **Write a card to someone you haven't spoken to in a while (see our Hello Postcard on page 19).**

A festive way to connect with someone is by sending them a handwritten postcard, it's a heart-warming way to reach out to someone and ask how they are doing. Check out our Hello Postcard and connect with someone you haven't spoken to in a while!

### **Make a playlist for someone in your life and chat about it together.**

Health in Mind made an 80's playlist for our 40th anniversary in July and we loved connecting with colleagues about the playlist, whether that was having a dance in the office or getting new song suggestions through an email! Why don't you create a playlist and share it with someone you care about – music is a great conversation starter. If you're an 80s fan you can find our playlist using the QR code.



### **Reduce your screen time when you are in company. Put the phone away, close your laptop, turn off the TV and have a chat.**

Despite all the amazing things we can do with our phones or devices, it's always important to connect with people in person. By listening to someone without a phone or tablet by your side, you can build a deeper relationship with them and have more engaging conversations. If you notice yourself on your phone while speaking to someone in person, try putting it down and out of sight and feel the difference in how engaged you are in the conversation.

## Get Active

Even if it's cold and dark outdoors, you should try to do something active every day. Physical activity is healthy for your body and mind no matter how much you do.

A daily brisk walk can give your body a boost, lift your mood and make everyday activities easier.

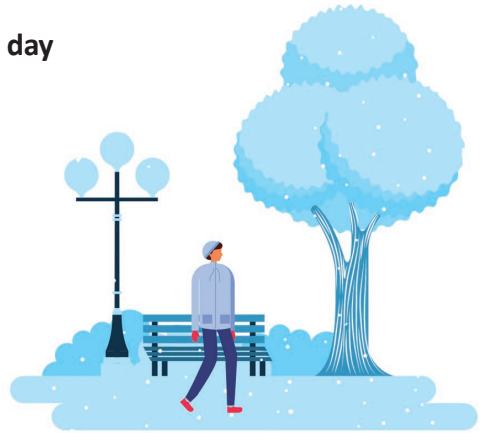
### Other ways to keep active this winter include:

#### **Do stretches or gentle movement that works for you.**

Stretching or including gentle movement into our daily routine can help enhance chemicals in the brain. These chemicals help to decrease your stress levels and improve your mood and wellbeing. Start your day perfectly by stretching or getting active, it sets you up for a productive day.

#### **If you can, try and get outside every day - even for just 5 minutes.**

Getting active and connecting with nature is a great way to boost our mood. Why don't you plan some time to get outside, even if it's cold, get extra layers on. It's a great opportunity to disconnect from the stresses of daily life, relax the mind and improve your physical health too.



#### **Go for a walk to see winter decorations and lights in your local community.**

This is a great way to see beautiful winter decorations and get you feeling festive, as well as allowing you to get active. Make sure the kettle is boiled for a nice cuppa when you get home.



## Take Notice

Paying attention to the present moment - to our own thoughts, feelings and to the world around us can improve our mental wellbeing. Taking notice is sometimes called mindfulness. It is easy to incorporate mindfulness into your life and can be a very powerful tool if learnt and practiced daily.

### Ways you can take notice this winter include:

#### **Take notice of the seasons changing and the effect it has on your surroundings.**

This is a lovely way to practice mindfulness, watching the leaves come from the trees and watching the days getting longer. It's important to recognise how you feel during these times and take notice of what makes you feel good.

#### **Buy an amaryllis bulb and watch it grow throughout the winter months.**

These stunning flowers are believed to symbolise pride, strength and determination. It's a great way to take notice of how it changes and grows throughout the winter months, why don't you try it?

#### **Take up a mindful indoor hobby like journaling or knitting.**

We know the power of connection, and we know how important it is to take notice. So why don't you take up a new hobby that helps you take notice and helps you connect with people in your local community. Check out what local clubs are around you this winter.



## Keep Learning

Not only is learning new things useful, it also positively impacts our mental wellbeing. Learning means different things to everyone. This could mean studying for a new qualification or learning a new recipe in the kitchen.

### Ways you can keep learning notice this winter include:

#### **Try out one of the winter recipes (pages 11, 21, 35).**

The cost-of-living crisis means we need to be mindful of how much we are spending on food. Why don't you try and perfect one of the recipes in the book and share it with a friend or a loved one and see what they think?

#### **Listen to a podcast or audiobook about a topic you don't know about.**

There are so many interesting podcasts and audiobooks out there, whatever subject you are looking to learn about there will be one for you!

#### **Try a new DIY project you've been wanting to do.**

DIY projects can sometimes be difficult to get round to, especially if you're not sure where to start. If you are in need of some inspiration, have a look on YouTube and TikTok, as there are so many hints and tips out there you can get for free! Start that project today and see what you can accomplish.

#### **Ask questions and learn from the people around you.**

Learn from people around you. It's a great way to develop relationships and improve your skillset, if you are unsure on something, find out from a friend how to do it.

## Give

From small acts of kindness to volunteering, giving can give you a sense of purpose, community and connection.

### **Ways you can keep leaning notice this winter include:**

#### **Try to shop locally when buying gifts during the festive period.**

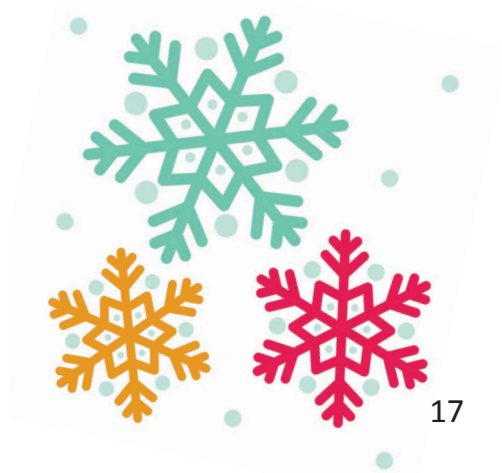
More than ever, small local businesses are struggling to survive. Why don't you try to give back to them and help them through this tough time? Not only will this help them, supporting others will help improve your mood and give you a sense of community.

#### **Donate or volunteer your time to a cause in your community (pages 28 – 31).**

Giving back to your community or a cause close to your heart is a great way to boost your self-esteem and confidence. Knowing you are helping a valuable cause certainly can help to boost your mood. Search online to see what local causes or charities you can donate or volunteer for.

#### **Raise awareness of causes on social media by sharing posts about issues that are important to you.**

Social media is one of the best ways to raise awareness of a cause. A simple share to your story or supporting a local organisations page is a fantastic way to show support and help them grow and reach new audiences.



# #WritingToSayHello Health in Mind's Campaign to Connect

**One of the 5 ways to wellbeing is 'Connect'.** Connecting with others has a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing and is a great way to remind ourselves that we're important and valued by others. With the rise of the internet, everything has increasingly been moving online, including the way we communicate with each other. Now more than ever, we have the ability to keep connected with those around us. Sadly, now more than ever people are reporting that they feel more lonely and lack real connections.

## **What is loneliness?**

We can all feel lonely from time to time and feeling lonely is not always the same as being alone. Loneliness has been said to be the feeling that we get when our need for meaningful and rewarding social contact and relationships isn't being met, and it can have a real negative impact on our mental health.

## **What you can do to get involved**

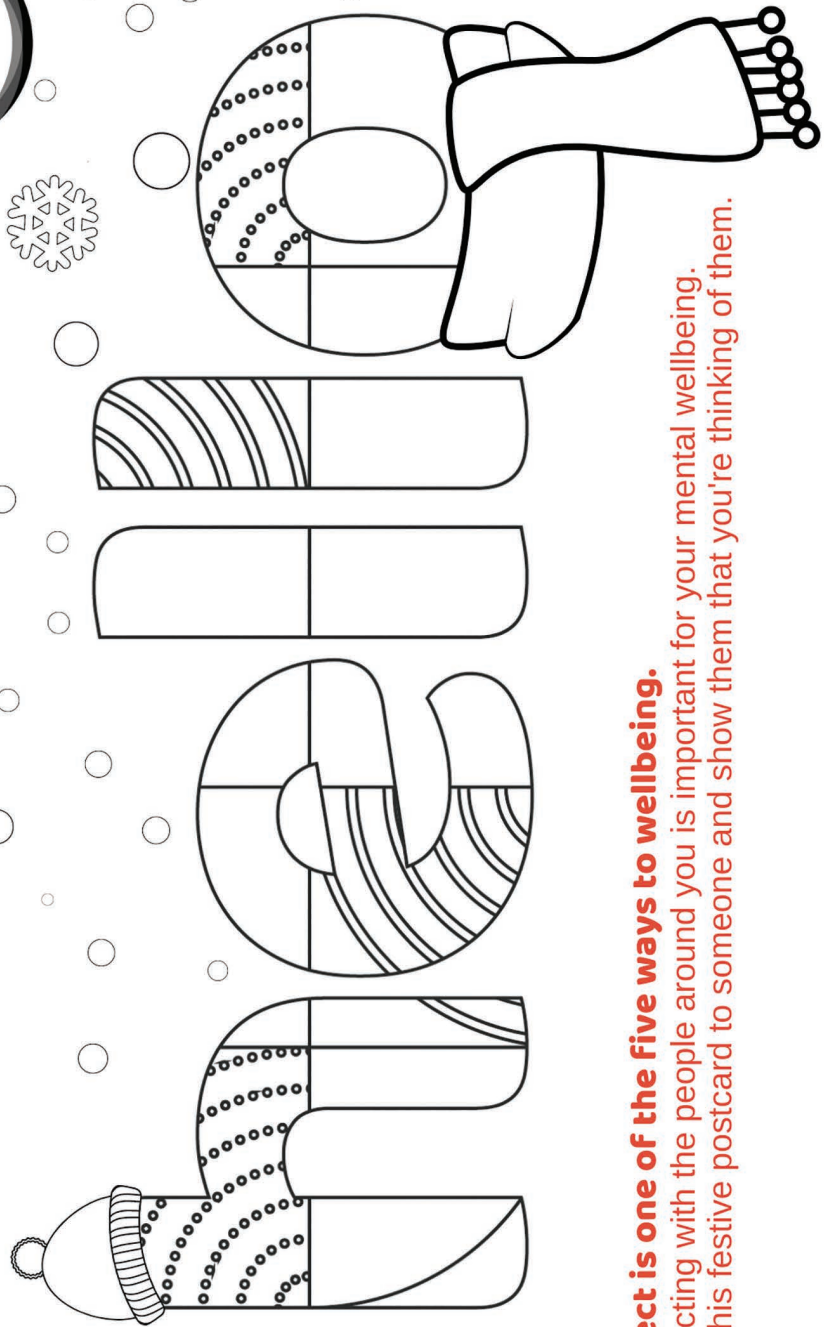
That is why we launched our **#WritingToSayHello** campaign during Loneliness Week in 2020. We want everyone to use the simple act of sending a postcard to build connections and remind others that you are there and are thinking about them.

It's moving conversations away from sending a quick text without much thought, to one in which we slow down and take the time to connect with each other in a meaningful way. The campaign has building relationships and connections at its heart.

We challenge you to make a connection with someone in your community. Whether you decide to write to a friend, your family, colleagues or neighbours, you can take the time to say 'hello' by downloading and printing off our postcard on the right-hand side of this page.

**We'd love to see what you've been sending or receiving, so tag us on social media channels and use the hashtag #WritingToSayHello.**

Health  
in  
Mind



**Connect is one of the five ways to wellbeing.**  
Connecting with the people around you is important for your mental wellbeing.  
Send this festive postcard to someone and show them that you're thinking of them.

**[www.health-in-mind.org.uk](http://www.health-in-mind.org.uk)**

Health in Mind is a Scottish charity with your mental health at heart

**#WritingToSayHello**

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**We rely on donations and fundraising to provide mental health support to people living in Scotland. To support our work please visit our website or call 0131 225 8508.**

Health in Mind is a charity, registered in Scotland SC004128 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland SC124090. The registered office is at 40 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RT.

# Wee T's Tomato and Cannellini Bean Soup

Keep warm and cozy with this midweek dinner (or lunch!)

## Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil (split into two)
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 1 packet small vine tomatoes (rinsed and drained)
- 1 tin cannellini beans (rinsed and drained)
- ½ teaspoon crushed chilli flakes
- ½ teaspoon sweet paprika
- Salt & Pepper
- Pinch of sugar
- 1 onion (finely chopped)
- Tablespoon tomato paste
- ¼ or ½ teaspoon of fennel seed (to your preference)
- 4 garlic cloves (crushed or finely chopped)
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- 4 cups (1ltr) chicken stock
- 1 bunch fresh basil
- ½ packet spinach



## Method

1. Heat 2 Tbsp oil in a large pot over a medium heat, add tinned tomatoes, fresh tomatoes, tomato paste & chilli flakes. Cook undisturbed until caramelized on one side. Break up tomatoes scraping bottom of pot and continue to cook. Scraping and stirring occasionally until mixture is caramelized all over. Transfer into a bowl.
2. Using the same pot add 2 tbsp oil, add the onion, fennel, garlic, pinch of chilli flakes and sweet paprika, cook on a medium heat until vegetables are soft and starting to brown at the edges.
3. Stir in sherry vinegar and tomatoes scraping up browned pieces. Add cannellini beans and stock, bring to the boil and simmer 30 – 45 mins, add pinch of sugar.
4. Tear basil and spinach add to the soup season with salt and pepper and cook until wilted.
5. Ladle soup into bowls and drizzle with oil, serve with crusty bread or garlic bread.



# Space to look up

**Alana Genge, Health in Mind**

**Edinburgh in winter is a special place.** I love walking around the City – smiling and saying hello to strangers – some of whom become friends. It might be cold in temperature but there is a warmth in the connections you can make.

When the City is so busy in the summer with the festival you can get lost in navigating your way from A to B through the crowds. But in the winter things are slower and you have the space to look up and around and take in the spectacular architecture, smells, and tastes from the food stalls and markets that pop up and sing along to the festive music coming from the shops on Princes Street.





# My Wee Happiness Poem

by John Loughton BEM

I.  
cry.  
Try.  
Lead.  
Smile.  
Forgive.  
Eat Well.  
Exercise!.  
Take risks.  
Be curious.  
Be thankful.  
Inspire others.  
Do new things.  
Listen to Music.  
Know My Worth.  
Know Your Worth.  
Help out Strangers.  
Follow My Passions.  
Say “I love you” more.  
Say Yes to things more.  
Do things that Scare me.  
Spend time Alone thinking.  
Laugh every day with others.  
Be willing to Go First at things.  
Spend time getting lost in Nature.  
Teach and help make others better.  
Surround myself with Positive people.  
Learn new things & gain new knowledge.  
Have a strong sense of Purpose for my life.  
Keep track of the things that I’m Grateful for.  
Travel & see as much of this world as possible.  
Accept and love those that are different from me.  
Be Proud of my true Self & never apologise for that.



@JohnLoughton BEM

# Sloe Down!

Michelle Lloyd, Cyrenians

**No, that is not a spelling mistake, my autumn tradition as we head towards Christmas, is picking sloe berries and reminding myself to slow down!**



As the season changes, the leaves start falling and the temperature drops, there is nothing I enjoy more than wrapping up warm, taking an old basket and picking sloes. I can't walk past a berry without picking it! They are best picked from October onwards, just after the first frost.



My arms get a bit scratched and my fingers become purple, but I find it really therapeutic and soothing, and there's the added bonus of being in the fresh air. Occasionally people stop to ask what I am doing so it's also an opportunity to chat to new people sharing stories about winter traditions.

Sloes are small purple/black berries which grow on the black hawthorn bush, often found in woodland areas and next to old railway lines. They look a bit like blueberries but they certainly don't taste like them! Be warned sloe berries cannot be eaten straight off the bush, they're very, very bitter and not to be eaten raw. But once soaked they make a delicious winter drink.

**To make sloe gin**, you need sloes (1kg), gin (1 litre) and sugar (about 250g). For a non-alcoholic cordial, simply use water instead of gin but boil it all up first. Personally, I don't like it too sweet. Prick the berries well, put everything into a large sterilised kilner-type jar and shake every day for about a fortnight. Then store in a dark cupboard until just before Christmas, a bit longer is fine too.

**Nearer Christmas**, strain through a thin muslin cloth (or coffee filter paper) and bottle for a lovely homemade liqueur (only very small quantities needed) or cordial which can be added to fizzy or soda water. In small bottles it makes lovely home-made presents too.

**Enjoy!**

# Taking in the city

Alayne Costello, Practice Mental Health Nurse and Instagrammer  
@alycoste

Edinburgh-based author Alexander McCall Smith once said of Edinburgh **'This is a city of shifting light, of changing skies, of sudden vistas. A city so beautiful it breaks the heart again and again'**.

Never a truer word spoken, especially in the cooler months. I get so much joy from wandering this amazing city I'm lucky enough to call home. Seeing the alley's and cobbles reflect the warm glow of street lights at dusk. Discovering new hidden corners you'd never previously noticed were there, but now perfectly lit up by the warm radiance that pours from windows.

It's a completely free, and 'freeing' thing to do to wander the old and new towns. Observe life. For me, I let the lens of my camera eternalise these magical moments. But of course, you don't necessarily need a camera to enjoy the simple joys of just absorbing the world around you, and take it all in.

**Find a nice bench – we've so many great spots in this city.** Then for 10 minutes, stop to take in the life, vibrancy, and beauty of the city around you. Especially at Christmas where the smells of street markets, and the sounds of shoppers and music hit your senses. All combining to make you truly take notice, be mindful, and importantly reduce any stresses that may have impacted your day.

Photos by Alayne Costelloi



# ithrive



EDINBURGH

Your online space for  
mental health and wellbeing  
information in Edinburgh

**Find local support that works for you**

.....

**Access to a wide range of self-help materials  
on topics including **anxiety, depression,**  
**sleep problems and anger****

.....

**See what events are taking place in Edinburgh**

.....

**Keep up to date with latest mental health  
and wellbeing news**

[www.ithriveedinburgh.org.uk](http://www.ithriveedinburgh.org.uk)



@iThriveEdin



@iThriveEdinburgh

## Learn more about...

### Relaxation

Relaxation is allowing physical and/or mental tension to be released. Exploring relaxation is a great way to look after yourself when you're feeling stressed or worried.



On iThrive, you can find ideas, resources and local projects and organisations related to our wonderful green spaces in Edinburgh.

### Physical Activity



Physical activity and exercise can really boost your mental health and wellbeing. Studies have shown that exercising is a helpful way to reduce depression, stress and anxiety.

Getting active is also one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

We have put together resources on anxiety, links to organisations, factsheets, videos, podcasts and exercises which can help you better understand different types of anxiety, what causes it and ways to manage it.





## Volunteer Edinburgh

We have long known that people who choose to volunteer benefit in ways that go far beyond doing something good for someone else. Research shows that people who volunteer have better mental and physical health, reduced social isolation, improved life expectancy and increased confidence!

**'The Nights are Fair Drawin' and the winter months can be hard.** Perhaps now is the time to think about doing something that gets you out of the house, lets you meet new people and gets you involved in doing something worthwhile. Why not think about volunteering?

## Making the first step can be hard but help is at hand from Volunteer Edinburgh

- Look at our website [Find volunteering opportunities - Volunteer Edinburgh](#) for information on all sorts of opportunities. There are hundreds!
- If this feels too much or you would prefer to speak with someone, come into our office at 222 Leith Walk or call us on **0131 225 0630**. We will be happy to talk things through and help you find the right thing.
- If you have a health condition that will influence the type of volunteering you might do, lack confidence to get started or need support for other reasons make an appointment with one of our Health & Wellbeing Team. They will chat things over and support you to get involved Volunteering for your health and wellbeing - how we can help. ([volunteeredinburgh.org.uk](http://volunteeredinburgh.org.uk))





Did you know that Edinburgh has a team of over 400 able and willing volunteers who can help with small ad hoc tasks that keep people safe, healthy and connected?

The team of **Community Taskforce Volunteers (CTVs)** was established during the lockdown of Spring 2020 when many people needed help with tasks like shopping, walking dogs and collecting prescriptions.

The lockdown may be over but the need for small bits of help remains – and CTVs continue to give that help. As well as ad hoc tasks, they have supported vaccination clinics by providing a welcoming face when patients arrive and pointing them in the right direction, and have welcomed Ukrainian refugees arriving at Edinburgh Airport, giving much needed reassurance when people arrive in the country.

**Community Taskforce Volunteering is a flexible opportunity.**

There is a short but robust recruitment process and once onboarded you are not committed to a regular time.

You can volunteer whenever they are able. If you

would like to join our team of Community

Taskforce Volunteers or if you, or someone

you know, needs help with a small task

please contact us on 0131 561 8309 or

07958 540438. More information at

**Community Taskforce Volunteers**

**- Volunteer EdinburghCommunity**

**Taskforce Volunteers - Volunteer**

**Edinburgh.**





A support worker contacted us about a person with serious health issues who was concerned that her dog was not getting enough exercise. She could only open her door and let him have a short time in the garden – not enough for a lively 2-year-old Jack Russell! We identified a **Community Taskforce Volunteer** who lived nearby, was comfortable with dogs and was happy to do occasional walks. There were arrangements to be made about times, routes, leads and dog poo bags – then the match was made!

It was love at first sight. He was a well behaved and cheeky dog and the volunteer enjoyed walking him to the park. The owner is delighted and has forged a good relationship with the volunteer. The walks will continue twice weekly until the owner's health improves or a longer-term solution is found.



# Edinburgh in Winter

by Lynne Stanford

Edinburgh is a city of magic.  
Home of Harry Potter,  
we have Markets made of Grass  
and Streets for Princes.  
Our buses take you to The Jewel,  
Or to Trysts with Hunters.

Edinburgh is a city of nature.  
Where others have centres  
built of commerce and worship,  
we have a castle on volcanic rock.  
We're surrounded by water in river, canal, and firth,  
with 7 Peaks rising from the earth.

But most of all Edinburgh is a city of winter,  
where magic and nature collide.

Forests are brought inside,  
Food and drink go out.  
Carollers sing red-cheeked on Walks of Multrees,  
And Tram bells ding like sleigh bells jingle.

Yes, our nights are long and dark,  
but it gives us time to appreciate  
twinkling fairy lights and moonlit walks.

We all see the sunsets and sunrises  
Glowing pink and orange,  
in our expansive skies.

Edinburgh,  
Our magically natural winter city.

Lynne has been published in Poetry 24 and New Writing Scotland, and was shortlisted for the Fish Short Story Competition. Born in Perth, she lived in Edinburgh for five years and currently lives in Linlithgow. When she remembers, she tweets from @Istanford\_4



# Do You Remember Winter in Edinburgh?

## J, Edinburgh

Being the last to leave the office and having snowball fights on the street

Wrapped up in heavy woollen coats, long stripy scarves, and already sopping mittens

The way the wind howled around the windows edge, the single glazed panes keeping only the rain away from the chill tenement flat

Those woollen coats and dried out mittens now useful at home too

Soft soled slippers and 80s leg warmers keeping feet snug in front of the orange glow of an electric heater

Blankets wrapped around our knees keeping our bodies warm

Friends around the table playing games and being merry, warming our hearts

Do you remember?

# My Magic Book

## Cat Young, Thrive Team

Sometimes over Christmas and all year round really, we can find ourselves having some challenges in our relationships and communicating with others. I have recently found a magic little book called **The Art of Communicating** by Thich Nhat Hanh.

I call it magic as I don't read it cover to cover but just open it up and it seems to just give me an answer and helps me feel lighter.

The other night I was feeling a little confused and I happened to open it at page 100 where it told a wonderful story about understanding different perspectives. It truly made me understand my predicament, made things 1000% better, and made me smile again. I recommend this book to everyone to have a read over Christmas time!

**Merry Christmas everyone and wishing everyone a Happy 2023!**



# Kale Paneer

**Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, EVOC**

Kale is so easy to grow or find in Scotland, and this is based on a sag paneer recipe. A super tasty super food, serve with dahl and rice, and chutneys from local SE Asian run supermarkets (much better)!

## Ingredients

- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 450g paneer, cut into cubes
- 500g kale, fresh
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves
- small piece of ginger
- 1 green chilli, roughly chopped & include seeds - spicier
- 1 tsp garam masala
- Juice of ½ lemon



## Method

1. Heat the oil, whisk in with the turmeric and chilli powder, then add the paneer and toss well. Set aside. Steam the kale for 3-5 mins, then place in a sieve, drain and cool, then put in a tea towel and squeeze out most of the water. Roughly chop.
2. Fry the onion with the garlic, ginger and green chilli. Cook the paneer in a large pan over a medium heat for around 8 mins, tossing the pan so they become golden all over. Remove and set aside on a plate, leaving spices behind in the pan. Tip the onion mix into the pan, add a pinch of salt and turn the heat down
3. Fry until coloured of turmeric is all through the mixture, for about 10 mins, adding a splash of water if dry. Add the garam masala, stir to coat all of mixture, fry for 2 mins.
4. Add the kale and cook for a further 2-3 mins, adding some water to release all the flavour! Season to taste. Add the paneer and cook for 2-3 mins to heat through. Squeeze over a little lemon juice, to serve.

# My 3 Top Tips for Enjoying Winter

**Anna, iThrive Edinburgh**

While I love winter, I can struggle with the short days and lack of sunlight that it brings. Come the end of January, I'm always desperate for some signs of Spring. So I like to make sure I have small, easy things to help me get through the winter months more joyfully.

## **Get Outside Whenever You Can**

My mental health can dip when I don't get outside for a while, so I make it a priority to go for a walk every day, even for just a short time. Sometimes I have to force myself to go out, but I never regret it.

**Some of my favourite places to walk are:**

- Along the Water of Leith
- Up a snowy Arthurs Seat
- Through the city centre at night, to look at all the Christmas lights and decorations



## Allow yourself to hibernate

I try not to feel guilty about spending more time in hibernation mode. As the days are becoming increasingly shorter and darker, it's only natural to want to spend more time resting. Don't fight it!

### I embrace it by:

- Going to bed early, with a hot water bottle or a hot drink and a good book
- Taking a nap at the weekend and not feeling bad about it
- Adding new shows and movies to my watchlist to watch with friends

## Treat Yourself to Some Winter Luxuries

I like to treat myself to some little luxuries that help me to enjoy winter more by giving me a little dopamine boost.

### Some luxuries I spend on are:

- A hot chocolate from the Christmas Market
- Going to the cinema to watch a film
- Cooking for friends and family and having a night in



# Arts and Crafts Ideas

**Hands-on activities are a great way to look after your wellbeing.**

Whether you'd like to lower stress levels, express creativity, ease symptoms of depression, or simply improve your mood, crafting can be an enjoyable way to strengthen your mental health by promoting positive thoughts, behaviours and emotions.

The best thing about arts and crafts is that you don't need any special skills to start. We've collected some creative ideas for you to try at home that are fun, inexpensive and could have a positive impact on your wellbeing.

## Creative Craft Idea

Take any square sheet of paper (or notepad) and divide it into small squares (around 3cm x 3cm).

Within each small square make a small drawing for each day to create a visual diary of your week, month or year.

If you are setting yourself wellbeing goals to work towards, you can focus your drawings on your goals. For example, something you saw when you were out for a walk or a picture of all the healthy food you ate for tea.

Fill your pages with drawings of your world, for as long as it is fun, the more you draw, the easier it will become! **Get creative!**

## Collage your vision of a perfect winter day

Think about what a perfect winter day in Edinburgh looks like to and collage it! You can use magazines, print out pictures from the internet, draw or paint.

Once you have finished your collage, take one element from it and try to make it happen that day!





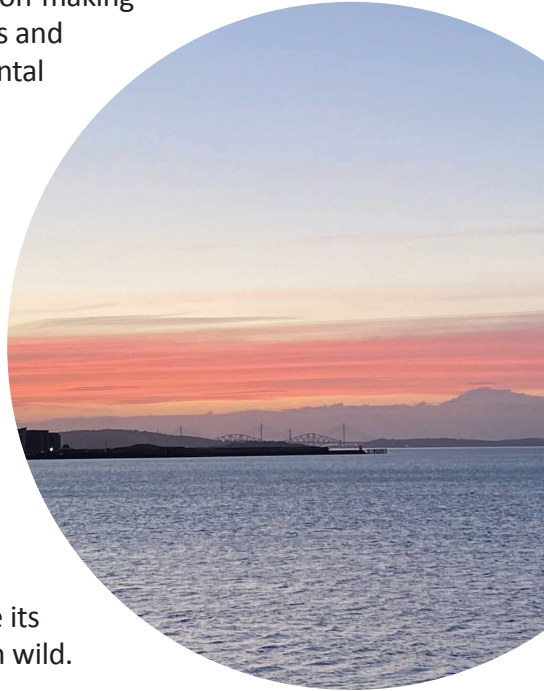
## Write a story

Creative writing can be a great way to improve your mental health. This is because it encourages people to choose words, metaphors and images in a way that really captures what they're trying to convey. This creative decision-making can lead to increased self-awareness and self-esteem as well as improved mental health.

- Sometimes it can be hard to know where to start. Here are some writing prompts you can use to get you going!
- Edinburgh in winter reminds me of ...It was a snowy day by the castle...
- The best thing about winter in Edinburgh is...
- Describe an Edinburgh winter as if it were a person. What is it like? How does it dress? Who are its friends? Let your imagination run wild.
- Write from the point of view of a snowflake falling to earth. What sights does it see as it falls over Edinburgh?

**If winter is something you tolerate instead of celebrate, what makes it pass easier for you?**

If you write a story using one of these prompts, we'd love to hear it! Send it to [ithriveedinburgh@health-in-mind.org.uk](mailto:ithriveedinburgh@health-in-mind.org.uk).



# Winter Wellbeing Box

## Lauren, Edinburgh

The winter season is a time of mixed emotions for me. On the one hand, I love the run-up to Christmas when everything is lit with twinkly fairy lights. On the other hand, I find January and February in Edinburgh to be a very challenging time of year. It seems to drag on and the days feel dark and cold. To cope with these difficult days, I create a wellbeing box full of things that I can use for a pick me up.

### This includes:

- A favourite book and a new book to escape into
- A pair of cosy socks
- I save my loyalty cards up and spend the points and free gifts in January and February. This could be a free coffee, lunch, or money to spend in a book shop.
- A scented candle – the fairy lights might be gone, but the glow of a candle is very soothing.

## Keeping Active in the Winter Months – Edinburgh Leisure

We can all find it hard to make time for ourselves and winter can make this even more challenging - it gets darker earlier, the weather is usually colder and wetter, maybe even icy at times! But making time to get outside is just what we need especially in winter, because not only is it a great way to get our vitamin D it can support our immune system and the mental health benefits of being active or moving can be felt very quickly – people often feel less stressed and more relaxed after some activity or fresh air.

**Edinburgh is a great city for accessing the outdoors**, we really do have something for everyone from parks & gardens to golf courses, the Union Canal to our coastline and beaches, not to mention the seven hills of Edinburgh. **So why not take some time this winter to get to know a new area of the city, re-visit an old haunt or share your favourite outdoor spots with others.**

Here are some of our favourite places to go... **Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden** is stunning. With lots of paved routes around its 70 acres and with plants over 350 years old it is suitable for all ages and ability, and a coffee shop to help warm you up after the walk.

- **Holyrood Park and Arthur's Seat** are in the heart of the city and if you hike up to the top you will be rewarded with panoramic views of the city. But even if you don't want to walk to the top there is a lot to see and do in the park itself, including feeding the swans in St Margaret's Loch or the geese in Duddingston Loch or walking along the **Innocent Railway**, which can be accessed on the side of Salisbury Crags.
- If you're looking to get your 10,000 steps in, then **Portobello Beach** is a great shout – the prom itself is 2.2 miles long (approx. 5,000 steps) so a wander along and back is just the ticket and there are lots of cafes and bars along the prom that you could pop into to warm up.



So, once you've worked out where you want to go our top tips, whether your walking, cycling, jogging, or dancing outdoors are **get a buddy and plan ahead**.

It's important to dress for the weather so check the forecast before you go out and wrap up if it's cold. Layers are best and you can warm up with a warm drink or bowl of soup. It's also harder to cancel if you have arranged to meet someone. Having company can also take your mind off the weather if it's bad.



If you are looking for some support to be active or want to know what's going on in your local leisure centre check out Edinburgh Leisure's website, [www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/home](http://www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/home). It's not just gym and sports - we offer low intensity fitness classes and swimming and our Ageing Well programme for older adults offers dance, walking, cycling and even gardening. These opportunities are ideal for those who feel it has been a long time since they were last active and are looking for a gentle start to help improve their health and wellbeing.

Edinburgh Leisure also delivers physical activity programmes in partnership with NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership and the voluntary sector supporting people with a range of health conditions including mental health. Our Healthy Active Minds programme supports inactive adults (18+) living with mild to moderate mental health conditions such as depression, stress, anxiety, or low mood to improve their mental health and wellbeing by being active.

**If you would like more information on our Healthy Active Minds programme visit:**

**[www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/health-active-minds](http://www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/health-active-minds)**

or contact our Active Communities team using the details below:

**Phone: 0131 458 2260**

**Email: [active@edinburghleisure.co.uk](mailto:active@edinburghleisure.co.uk)**



# Useful Contacts

## Help Now

**Police, Fire, Ambulance (emergency)** Call: 999

**Police (non-emergency)** Call: 101

**NHS 24** Call: 111

Provides urgent care and advice when your GP, pharmacy or dental practice is closed.

**Social Care Direct** Call: 0131 200 2324

Out of Hours call 0800 731 6969.

Open: Monday to Thursday from 8.30am – 5.00pm and Friday from 8.30am – 3.55pm.

If someone needs urgent social care or you think an adult or child needs protection.

**Samaritans** Call: 116 123

Open: 24 hours.

A listening service for people having a difficult time, thinking about suicide or are worried about someone who is having suicidal thoughts.

**SHOUT** Text: SHOUT to 85258

Open: 24 hours.

Free, 24/7 mental health text support service.

**Edinburgh Crisis Centre** Call: 0808 801 0414

Open: 24 hours.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need to talk to someone.

**Mental Health Assessment Service** Call: 0131 286 8137

Open: 24 hours.

For people in crisis who need an emergency mental health assessment.

# Help Now

## **Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline**

Call: 0800 027 1234

Open: 24 hours.

Provides support for anyone with experience of domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members, friends, colleagues, and professionals who support them.

## Parents

**Lone Parent Helpline** Call: 0808 801 0323

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.30am – 4.00pm.

Support and advice for single parents.

**Parentline Scotland** Call: 0800 028 2233

Open: 24 hours.

Advice and support for parents living in Scotland.

**NSPCC Helpline** Call: 0808 800 5000

Open: Monday to Friday from 8.00am – 10.00pm  
and 9.00am – 6.00pm at weekends.

Advice and information for parents or carers who are looking after a child.

## Young People

**Papyrus Hopeline** Call: 0800 068 4141

Text: 07860 039967.

Open: 9.00am – midnight, every day.

A helpline for young people having suicidal thoughts.

**Young Minds** Text: YM to 85258

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.30am – 4.00pm.

Messenger for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

## Older People

**Age Scotland** Call: 0800 124 4222

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Provides information and advice to tackle loneliness and isolation.

**Silverline** Call: 0800 4708 090

Open: 24 hours.

Offering friendship and advice to older people.

**Hourglass** Call: 0808 808 8141 (Press 2 for Scotland)

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Provides information and support for anyone concerned about harm or abuse of an older person.

## Housing and Homelessness

**Shelter's Housing Advice** Call: 0808 800 4444

Open: 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Advice and support services offer one-to-one, personalised help with housing issues and homelessness.

**Emergency Housing (Edinburgh)** Call: 0800 032 5968

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Advice and support for people with emergency housing issues.

**Edinburgh Housing Advice Organisation** Call: 0845 302 4607

Open: Monday to Thursday from 8.30am – 5.00pm

and Friday from 8.30am – 3.40pm.

Provides free housing, advice, information, and representation to tenants of all tenure types in Edinburgh and Midlothian.

# Housing and Homelessness

**Home Energy Scotland** Call: 0808 808 2282

Text: WARM to 81025.

Open: Monday to Friday from 8.00am – 8.00pm,

Saturday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Advice on energy saving and keeping warm at home.

**Citizens Advice** Call 0131 510 5510

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Specialising in confidential information and advice to assist people with housing issues in the UK.

**Access Point** Call: 0131 529 7438

Open: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from

9.00am – 5.00pm, Tuesday from 10.00am – 5.00pm

and Friday from 9.00am – 4.00pm.

Homeless support for people with support needs.

## Money

**Citizens Advice** Call: 0131 550 1000

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Specialising in confidential information and advice to assist people with legal, debt, consumer, housing, and other problems in the UK.

**Scottish Welfare Fund** Call: 0131 529 5299

Open: Monday to Friday from 8.30am – 5.00pm.

Provides grants for people on low income.

**Debtline** Call: 0808 808 4000

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 8.00pm

and Saturday from 9.30am – 1.00pm.

Free and independent debt advice.



## Advocacy and Legal

**Advocard** Call: 0131 554 5307

Open: 9.00am – 5.00pm

Independent and collective advocacy for people in Edinburgh.

**Partners in Advocacy** Call: 0131 478 7723

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Independent advocacy for adults in Edinburgh and children and young people across Scotland.

## Carers

**Voice of Carers Across the Lothians (VOCAL)**

Call: 0131 622 6666

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Working with family members, partners and friends who are caring for someone.

**Edinburgh Carers Council** Call: 0131 322 8480

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Advocacy for carers supporting someone with physical or mental health difficulties.

**MECOPP (Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project)**

Call: 0131 467 2994

Open: Monday to Thursday from 9.00am - 5.00pm,

Friday from 9.00am – 4.00pm.

Support for Black and Minority Ethnic carers to access appropriate support and services.

**Carers Scotland Advice Line** Call: 0808 808 7777

Open: Monday – Friday from 8.00am – 10.00pm,

Saturday and Sunday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Advice line for carers.

## Substance Use

**Alcoholics Anonymous** Call: 0800 917 7650

Open: 10.00am – 10.00pm, every day.

Advice and support for those who feel they have or are developing an addiction to alcohol or are worried about someone who is.

**Drinkline Scotland** Call: 0300 123 1110

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 9.00pm,  
Saturday and Sunday from 10.00am – 4.00pm.

Advice to callers concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

**Narcotics Anonymous** Call: 0300 999 1212

Open: 10.00am – midnight, every day.

Support for people who have a drug problem.

**Gambler's Anonymous** Call: 0370 050 8881

Open: 24 hours.

Advice to callers concerned about their own or someone else's gambling habits.

**Al-Anon** Call: 0800 0086 811

Open: 10.00am – 10.00pm, every day.

Support for families and friends of alcoholics.

**Frank** Call: 0300 123 6600

Support and information about drug use.

# Listening Services

**Samaritans** Call: 116 123

Open: 24 hours.

A listening service for people having a difficult time, thinking about suicide or are worried about someone who is having suicidal thoughts.

**Breathing Space** Call: 0800 83 85 87

Open: Monday to Thursday from 6.00pm – 2.00am,  
Friday from 6.00pm – Monday 6.00am.

A confidential, phone and webchat service for anyone in Scotland over the age of 16 experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

**CALM** Call: 0800 58 58 58

Text: 82111. Open: 24 hours

Open: 5.00pm – midnight, every day.

For people who are down or have hit a wall, who need to talk to find information and support.

**No Panic** Call: 0300 772 9844

Open: 10.00am – 10.00pm, every day.

Advice and support for people living with phobias, OCD and anxiety.

**Switchboard LGBT+** Call: 0300 330 0630

Open: 10.00am – 10.00pm, every day.

Confidential listening service for LGBT+ communities.

**ChitChat Britain** Call: 0800 001 4455

Open: 9.00am – 9.00pm, every day.

Free helpline to just have a chat about how you are feeling.

## Food

**Edinburgh Community Food** Call: 0131 467 7326

Open: Monday to Friday from 8.00am – 4.00pm.

Help for people to access a healthy diet.

**Eat Well Age Well Malnutrition Helpline** Call: 0800 13 88 220

Open: Monday from 9.00am – 4.00pm, Wednesday from

9.00am – 4.00pm, Thursday from 9.00am – 4.00pm.

Provides practical tips and advice about how to stay well-nourished for older people.

**Edinburgh Food Project** Call: 0131 444 0030

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 4.00pm.

Provides emergency food and support to local people.

**Edinburgh Northeast Foodbank** Call: 0131 554 2578

Open: Monday from 1.00pm – 2.30pm, Tuesday from

10.00am – 12.00pm and 1.00pm – 2.30pm, Wednesday

from 4.30pm – 6.00pm, Thursday from 10.00am – 11.30am,

Friday from 10.00am – 12.00pm and 3.00pm – 5.00pm.

Foodbank located in North East Edinburgh.

**Edinburgh Southeast Foodbank** Call: 0131 664 9353

Open: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 10.00am - 1:30pm

Foodbank located in South East Edinburgh.

**Edinburgh Southwest Foodbank (Salvation Army)**

Call: 0131 346 2875

Open: Monday from 1.00pm – 3.00pm, Wednesday from

11.00am – 1.00pm and Friday from 10.00am – 12.00pm

Foodbank located in South West Edinburgh.

**Social Bite** Call: 0131 353 0250

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

A social enterprise that helps give food and advice to homeless people.

# Grief and Bereavement

**Cruse Bereavement Care** Call: 0808 802 6161

Open: Monday from 9.30am – 5.00pm, Tuesday from 9.30am – 8.00pm, Wednesday from 9.30am – 8.00pm, Thursday from 9.30am – 8.00pm, Friday from 9.30am – 5.00pm, Saturday and Sunday from 10.00am 2.00pm.

To support anyone who is bereaving.

**PETAL (People Experiencing Trauma and Loss)**

Call: 01698 324502

Open: Monday to Thursday from 9.00am – 5.00pm, Friday from 9.00am – 4.00pm.

For people experiencing trauma or loss.

**The Scottish Funerals Costs Helpline** Call: 0300 0113 301

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Support making arrangements for funerals.

# Practical Support

**Gas helpline** Call: 0800 111 999

Open: 24 hours.

Support with any queries about gas.

**Electricity Helpline** Call: 105

Open: 24 hours.

Support with any queries regarding electricity.

**Scottish Water Helpline** Call: 0800 0778 778

Open: 24 hours.

Support with inquiries about water supply.

**Edinburgh Council Emergency** Call: 0131 200 2000

Open: 24 hours.

For any emergency repairs required.

## Keeping Safe

**Rape Crisis Scotland** Call: 0808 801 0302

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 4.00pm.

A national rape crisis helpline and email support for anyone affected by sexual violence.

**Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre** Call: 0131 556 9437

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 7.00pm.

Confidential emotional and practical support, information and advocacy to women, all members of the trans community, non-binary people and young people aged 12-18 in Edinburgh, East and Midlothian, who have experienced sexual violence at any time in their lives.

**Scottish Women's Aid** Call: 0800 027 1234

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline.

**Edinburgh Women's Aid** Call: 0131 315 8110

Open: Monday from 10.00am – 3.00pm, Tuesday from 10.00am – 7.00pm, Wednesday from 10.00am – 3.00pm, Thursday from 10.00am – 3.00pm, Friday from 10.00am – 3.00pm, Saturday from 10.00am – 1.00pm.

For support or advice from Edinburgh Women Aid's services.

**Victim Support Scotland** Call: 0800 160 1985

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Provides support and information to people affected by crime and campaigns for victims and witness rights.

**Shakti Women's Aid** Call: 0131 475 2399

Open: Monday to Friday from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Support for Black and Minority Ethnic women and their children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.

# Support Available Over the Festive Period

Here is a list of support that will be available to those living in Edinburgh over the winter months. We'll also be updating iThrive regularly with more information about the support you can access and events as they are shared with us. [ithriveedinburgh.org.uk](http://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk)

## **Mental Health Information Station (NHS Lothian)**

The Mental Health Information Station is a one-stop-shop for anyone affected by mental health and wellbeing difficulties. It provides a source of support, information and signposting. It is staffed by mental health specialists from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), peer support workers, volunteers and third sector partners.

### **Telephone service**

0131 537 8688

Thursdays, 9.30am – 4.30pm

### **Drop-in at Walpole Hall, Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AW**

Thursdays, 10.30am – 3.00pm

[ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/services/mental-health-information-station-nhs-lothian](http://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/services/mental-health-information-station-nhs-lothian)

## **Steps to Hope**

Steps to Hope will be serving Christmas dinner and brand-new clothing on Sunday 25 December, from 1pm.

St Cuthbert's Church in the Cemetery, 5 Lothian Road.

For more information please contact: [info@stepstohope.co.uk](mailto:info@stepstohope.co.uk)  
[www.stepstohope.co.uk](http://www.stepstohope.co.uk)

# Support Available Over the Festive Period

## **Edinburgh Crisis Centre**

Edinburgh Crisis Centre will be open 24/7 with the normal running of their service during the Christmas period.

Services include emotional support over the phone, email, and text - with the potential for in-person and virtual appointments to be arranged.

Edinburgh Crisis Centre, Smith's Place, Edinburgh EH6 5EA

[edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk](http://edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk)

## **Bethany Trust – Welcome Centre**

The Bethany Trust Welcome Centre will be running its services as normal over the festive period. The Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre will also be open as normal for anyone who would otherwise be rough sleeping.

The Bethany Trust Care Van will also be going out on Sunday 25 December. The evening service will be running providing anyone in need with soup, rolls and hot drinks.

65 Bonnington Road, Edinburgh EH6 5JQ

[bethanychristiantrust.com/crisis-intervention](http://bethanychristiantrust.com/crisis-intervention)

## **Grassmarket Community Picture House**

Grassmarket Community Picture House will continue to provide Open Door Meals every Wednesday 5pm–6.30 pm (3 – course meal targeted at individuals who are vulnerably housed, homeless or in temporary accommodation) and our Community Picture House has screenings throughout December 7–10pm.

The Grassmarket Community Project, 86 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh, EH1 2QA

Booking in advance is required: [grassmarketfilms.org](http://grassmarketfilms.org)



## About Thrive Edinburgh

**Thrive Edinburgh is the city's strategy for improving the mental health and wellbeing of all citizens in Edinburgh.**

Thrive Edinburgh is underpinned by the values of kindness, respect and love. Through the Thrive Assembly, chaired by our Lord Provost, we have mobilised the city to ensure that mental health is everybody's business, infused through our collective efforts in housing, education, culture, health and justice. We are committed to listening and learning from each other, making the invisible visible, focusing on social networks, connectivity and relationships, creating a city where every individual realises their own potential.

You can learn more at [www.edinburghthrive.com](http://www.edinburghthrive.com)

## About Health in Mind

**Health in Mind is a Scottish charity with your mental health at heart.**

Health in Mind is based in Edinburgh and has been promoting positive mental health and wellbeing since 1982.

Their hopeful and caring approach supports and empowers each person to live the life they want to live.

You can find out more about Health in Mind and how they can support you at [health-in-mind.org.uk](http://health-in-mind.org.uk)

## iThrive Edinburgh

You can find information about mental health and support available all year round on iThrive Edinburgh. Please check this online space to keep up to date with support available during the winter for Edinburgh's citizens.

[ithriveedinburgh.org.uk](http://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk)







[health-in-mind.org.uk](http://health-in-mind.org.uk)



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Edinburgh **Health and  
Social Care** Partnership



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