

# Isolation Wellbeing Pack



# What Is This?

- This pack is for everyone, it was originally put together to be passed to Government Communication Service staff but the following pages do not apply to them exclusively.
- Almost everyone is now working from home, either with our families or on our own. To those who are still going into work, either in Whitehall, to NHS Nightingale or elsewhere, these links will hopefully still be of use to you.
- This pandemic is likely to cause some level of stress, regardless of your own personal fortitude or level of responsibility. There are some links in here that will hopefully be of assistance.
- Following the Government's advice to isolate, public places have for the most part closed however, there are still several companies, institutions and individuals who are producing content to help you out in this trying time, all of which can be done from the comfort of your own home.
- This is a short (and by no means exhaustive) list of some of the online resources available to you at the moment, they have not been picked as an endorsement from the GCS or Civil Service, but rather as a collection of things that caught the eye.

# Wellbeing

During times like these, everyone can experience low mood, anxious thoughts, stress, and a whole host of other, very reasonable, mental health issues. There is nothing to be ashamed of and there is no reason for anyone to face these problems alone. If you are concerned for your wellbeing or that of someone else, please contact someone.

- [Samaritans](#) - 24/7, 365, there is someone there to listen to you. Call 116 123 for free to speak with a volunteer. They have also released their "[Wellbeing in the Workplace](#)" online learning platform.
- [NHS](#) - The NHS offers a free self assessment and set of audio-guides to anyone who is concerned with their [mental wellbeing](#), as well as [links and numbers](#) to many charities, helplines and support groups.
- [Mind](#) - Mental health charity, Mind, have an information page specifically for those who are concerned about COVID-19.
- [Headspace](#) - A mindfulness app, Headspace offers meditation exercises, sleep aids and stress relief to help you look after yourself.
- [Calm](#) - Another mindfulness app, Calm was named "the world's happiest app". It helps you meditate, sleep, relax and more.



# Looking after the wellbeing of others

In the words of John Donne; “No man is an island entire of itself”. Just as we would in the office, we have a moral obligation to look out for our colleagues at the moment. This is a harder task than usual, but not impossible by any means.

- Mental Health First Aiders - Many departments will have mental health first aiders who (as the name implies) provide mental health support for colleagues. Contact your HR team or consult the intranet to find out more about MHFA.
- Team check-ins - every morning hold a quick 10 minute e-huddle as a team, talk about what you've been up to the evening before, ask if there's any work areas people need help with, have a chat with your cup of tea in the morning.
- Video call - If people are self-isolating and don't have housemates or family with them then they may not see someone else all day. While it's not a total replacement for a face-to-face chat, having your meetings via video call is the next best thing.
- Commit to pastoral care - many of us will be doing this anyway, but taking time out of your day to ask a colleague how they are can be invaluable when looking out for colleagues.
- Take breaks - Talk to friends or colleagues about things other than work, get some fresh air in the garden, make a cup of tea. Give yourself 5 minutes to refresh every now and then and you'll be more productive, as will your team if you encourage them to do the same.

# Ways of working

Not all of us are naturals when it comes to working from home. For some it is a relief to not have to commute into work every day, but for others it is a real struggle to deal with the change in routine.

- The [BBC](#) have published some helpful tips on how to work better at home.
- [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) - An evidence based model for wellbeing developed as part of an effort to build wellbeing in the economy.
- [32 tips for working from home](#) - some more tips for being more productive in the home.
- Working from home with children - Several sites have advice for how to adapt your work from home routine to having children around as well, such as the [Independent](#), the [Times](#), [Parents](#), and the [Metro](#).



# Learning

In addition to the [GCS academy](#) for all your comms based learning and development and the [CS learning site](#), there are many free online platforms through which you can improve your knowledge:

- [Futurelearn](#) - Free online courses from some of the world's top universities. Hundreds of courses covering all things from programming to art-crime law, taught by lecturers from Universities (mostly in English) across the globe.
- [Coursera](#) - Like Futurelearn, Coursera is a massive open online course platform hosting courses from top universities and companies.
- [Khan Academy](#) - Providing a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere. The Khan Academy is one of the most well known online learning platforms around, covering all ages (so you can get some help with any homeschooling you may have to do).
- [Duolingo](#) & [Memrise](#) - Two language learning apps that cover a plethora of languages. They are relatively similar, gamifying language learning, so scratch that polyglot itch you might have.
- [BBC Online Education Push](#) - Starting on 20 April, videos, quizzes, podcasts and articles will appear on BBC Bitesize Daily via the BBC iPlayer, red button, BBC Four and BBC Sounds.
- Your home department will also have their own professional development offer, check on your intranet or with colleagues to find out more.



Working from home leads to a more sedentary lifestyle than most of us are used to, you cannot visit your gym or play in your local football/tennis/netball league. This doesn't mean that you can't stay fit during this time:

- [Joe Wicks](#) - Joe is a fitness youtuber who has started producing daily videos for at-home workouts. He holds 9am streams (which are posted as VODs after the fact) for kids and other videos for seniors.
- [Athlean-X](#) - Jeff Cavaliere is a fitness coach and former head physio for the NY Mets baseball team. He has a youtube channel on which he posts free workout videos and has his own set of workout programmes.
- [NHS Fitness Studio](#) - The NHS hosts its own set of 24 instructor-led videos across aerobics exercise, strength and resistance, and pilates and yoga categories.
- [Nike Training App](#) - Workouts galore from one of the world's leading sports retailers. Free, downloadable workouts and a premium "Master Trainer" programme.



Since we cannot eat out as much as we perhaps used to (although with apps such as [Deliveroo](#) and [Uber Eats](#) you can still support local restaurants), people are (re)discovering the kitchen. Not everyone is Gordon Ramsay, but there are plenty of ways for you to level up your cooking game:

- [Bread Ahead](#) - One of London's premier bakeries, Bread Ahead are running daily baking lessons on their [Instagram](#), live at 2pm.
- [Borough Market](#) - Regulars at this speciality food market will be aware that they run daily cooking demos on site. They have brought these online via their [Instagram](#) stories, every day from 1pm.
- [SORTEDfood](#) - A London based Youtube cooking channel, Sorted post videos of recipes, reviews and challenges to show a lighter side of being in the kitchen. They have a [subscription club and meal-pack app](#) to make cooking easy and are live casting their cooking from home on [instagram](#) every day at 4:30pm.
- [Bon Appétit](#) - This New York based food magazine has a tonne of online recipes on it's website, but also has a very successful [youtube channel](#) where members of it's team demo recipes from their test kitchen.
- [Hot Dinners](#) - *"The best online food and drink tutorials and masterclasses during the Lockdown"*. A selection of tutorials from bakers, chefs and bartenders, available anytime.



# Virtual Tours



Just because you are unable to head out to get your culture fix, it doesn't mean you cannot visit some of the greatest collections on the planet. [The Guardian](#) has created a list of their top 10 virtual museum and art gallery tours. Some are listed below.

- [British Museum](#) - The world's first national public museum, with a collection of some 8 million artefacts and works. This London institution has an online collection and a [virtual tour](#) created by Google Arts & Culture, as well as an interactive experience via the "[Museum of the World](#)".
- [The National Gallery](#) - One of the most visited art museums in the world with a collection of over 2300 artworks from the 13th to the 20th century. They have hosted a [virtual tour](#) via google street view.
- [The Benaki Museum, Athens](#) - Established in the 1930s and re-opened in 2000, the Benaki hosts 360° tours of its sites.
- [Musée d'Orsay, Paris](#) - An impressionist and post-impressionist wonderland, the Musée d'Orsay has a [virtual tour](#) created by Google Arts & Culture.
- [Chester Zoo](#) - Chester Zoo are opening their gates and running live-streams from around the zoo on facebook and youtube.

# Music and Theatre

While it's not the same as going to see your favourite band live or hitting up the West End for an evening show, many theatres and musicians are putting on live-broadcasted shows during the lockdown:

- [Royal Opera House](#) - The ROH has announced a programme of live-streamed (and VOD) performances for your viewing pleasure through its #OurHouseToYourHouse programme.
- [The National Theatre](#) - Recordings of award winning plays featuring the likes of James Corden and Arthur Darvill are being streamed from the NT's [youtube channel](#).
- [London Symphony Orchestra](#) - The LSO is always playing. With the closure of their home at the Barbican, the LSO will be releasing their performances online via their [youtube channel](#).
- [The Show Must Go Online](#) - For those who crave a bit of the Bard in their life, the complete works of Shakespeare (in the order they are believed to be written) are being released online, read by volunteers and professionals.
- [The Shows must go on!](#) - In a similar vein, Andrew Lloyd Webber has announced that he is releasing full length recordings of his musicals on youtube, available for 48 hours at a time.

## Travelling from home

Some of us suffer from wanderlust, but are currently only able to head outside for very specific reasons (which do not include travelling the world). While it is no match for the real thing, there are 360° images of some of the best views around:

- [Paris from Sacré-Coeur](#)
- [Barcelona from Turó de la Rovira](#)
- [Singapore from OCBC Skyway](#)
- [Lisbon from Cristo Rei](#)
- [New York City from Top of the Rock](#)
- [Egypt VR](#) - A facebook page highlighting some of Egypt's ancient sites with full 360° images.
- [Mental Floss](#) - A list of views, including a penguin rookery in Antarctica, and Diagon Alley.



# A Bit of Good News

It is worth remembering in times like this that it is not all doom and gloom, and that for all the bad news out there, there is some light. Here are just a few examples of good news out in the world at the moment, but if you look for them, you will find more.

- [The Feelgood Food Feed](#) - Restaurant review site *Hot Dinners* have a continually updated list of cheery news from the food and service industry here in the UK (including things like hotels delivering food parcels to those in need, or free meals to members of the NHS from Deliveroo).
- [SomeGoodNews](#) - John Krasinski of NBC's *The Office* and Amazon Prime's *Jack Ryan* has created a youtube channel where he talks about the good news that is currently happening in the world.
- [Hope in a Time of Crisis](#) - The Guardian have a collection of positive stories on their website.
- [Thank you NHS](#) - As you will all be aware, every Thursday at 8pm, the [#ClapForOurCarers](#) event takes place to thank those working in the NHS. Prince Charles has officially opened the first [Nightingale field hospital](#), 9 days after work began on its conversion.
- [Uplifting stories](#) - the BBC have an updating page of uplifting stories on their website.
- [Good News Network](#) - For the past 20 years, the GNN has compiled sources of positive news to brighten your day.
- [BuzzFeed Feel Good](#) - In classic BuzzFeed style; lists, news and reviews, but only about good news.
- [Positive News](#) - A magazine and website, another fantastic source of positive news.