



International **Men's** Day

Q&A Spotlight on SCRA's male employees - **Staying Well**

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What's it like working for SCRA?

I am fairly new to SCRA. I started here in June 2021 and whilst that's now 5 months ago I still feel relatively new, particularly as I started during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the moment, like most people, I work from home but I will be based at SCRA's Head Office in Stirling once things get back to normal.

So far, I have to say that I really enjoy the variety of the job. I like how busy I'm kept and how my role relates and links into every department and every team; this really gives me the opportunity to get to know a lot of different people across the organisation. I'm looking forward to getting back into the office so I can start to meet even more people and get to know them face-to-face and not over Teams. I also really like that SCRA does so much important work in helping children and young people and I'm really proud to be a part of that.

What do you do to stay well?

I do a lot of different things to stay physically and emotionally healthy, when I'm at work and when I'm not. If I think about my working day I make sure and I go for a walk outside every lunch time and, sometimes if I'm ready early enough in the morning I'll squeeze in a walk before work too.

I also enjoy running and get out for a run at least three times a week. I find being outdoors really helps me feel connected and running really helps me clear my mind and relieve stress.

I also love music and am a musician which contributes to my psychological well-being. I play drums in a local band here in Glasgow and I also play the guitar and both of these are a great way for me to keep emotionally aware and in check. As you can imagine, playing drums is a great way to get rid of stress but, in general, I've found having a creative outlet – whatever it is – is a perfect way to keep my brain distracted and focussed on the positives rather than stressing over things I can't do much about. Positivity is really important. For Christmas last year my sister gave me a mandolin so I've been enjoying teaching myself how to play that over the past year which has been a great wee project to have when the lockdown restrictions have returned.

So, I'd say music and running are my two main hobbies. I recently ran a 10k in Moray which was great mainly because I love having a goal and something to work towards – it gives me that extra bit of motivation to get out and go for run. Even if I'm in two minds about going out I never regret doing it – something I need to keep reminding myself when I'm feeling lazy!

On top of running I walk practically everywhere. I don't drive so I've always relied on walking to get me where I need to go. Where I live in Glasgow is really handy because I can walk into the city centre within 25 minutes and from there I can get anywhere I need to be. There are also lots of lovely parks around where I live too which I'm really lucky to have as greenspace is really important to feel connected to the outdoors. I'm moving out soon and I know that's one of the main things I'm really going to miss when I leave so I'll have to make extra effort to spend time in nature and go a little further afield. It will take more effort but it's very important to me to connect with nature to keep my head clear and my mind focussed. It makes me feel like I'm part of something bigger which is great for grounding me.

The pandemic really impacted on my ability to stay well, definitely. One of the main things I changed during lockdown was my diet. I completely cut out red meat after I read that it can have a negative effect on your mood so, trying to be proactive over my mental health I decided to try it and see if it worked, and it did! I was surprised at how different I felt with that one simple change. I felt a lot healthier and more positive when I cut out red meat and this is something I've really tried to continue. It's proven a little more difficult now I'm able to go out to restaurants and cafes, and have people round for dinner – and there's also a Greggs round the corner from my flat which doesn't

help either! – but I'm happy that I've kept it up as best as I can and will continue to do my best to limit the red meat I eat.

Lockdown was also partially responsible for me applying for this job at SCRA. Before SCRA I was working part-time in the third sector. I enjoyed my job and the company I worked for but being stuck inside during lockdown made me realise that I did need a change and a new challenge in life. It was that feeling that spurred me on to actively seek out new jobs which eventually led to me landing in SCRA in an organisation that has a real impact on people's lives and makes me feel as if I'm contributing to that, because purpose and contribution is important for my well-being too.

What advice would you give?

So much needs to change in so many different areas but when we look at our physical and emotional health, I think our reliance and addiction to our phones needs to change, especially around social media. Social media has so many benefits, it keeps us all connected and up-to-date with what's going on in the world but I think the negative aspects are really damaging especially to young people, and young men. I'm in no way surprised that my generation and those younger than me are more anxious

and have more mental health problems than previous generations and I think social media plays a large role in that. People are always subconsciously comparing themselves to strangers online which can make them feel inadequate, lacking and that their achievements pale into insignificance compared to others, which is rubbish. Every now and again I'll sign out and uninstall social media apps from my phone for a week or two just to give myself a break and I'm always surprised at how different I feel because of it. I'd recommend everyone does it, it can be quite freeing!

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