



International **Men's** Day

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

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SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

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What's it like working for SCRA?

I have worked with SCRA since the organisation was created in 1996. In fact, I was actually a Reporter with Fife Regional Council since 1992 before SCRA existed. I have been a Practice Reporter in the Practice Team (part of wider Practice & Policy) since 2003 and am based in SCRA's Head Office in Stirling.

I love the variety of my job and the people I work with, those in the team and the wider staff group. I'm lucky as my work involves me being in contact with all parts of the organisation and it means I get to work with lots of different people. I really enjoy the work that brings me into contact with operational staff in localities, supporting them in their practice, as it means that even though I'm in Head Office, I'm still in touch with the real reason we're all here in SCRA. Being a Practice Reporter never gets boring as I work on such a wide range of things – from really interesting appeal and higher court work to work on national policy, such as government working groups on the age of criminal responsibility – so my job enables me to have operational and strategic impact in SCRA but also much wider in terms of national policy and legislation.

Part of my role is keeping up to date with legislative and policy change that we have to include in our Practice Direction. Related to that, I also do a lot of training of Reporter staff to ensure we're adhering to the legislation and keeping our knowledge current.

I really enjoy this training and contact with colleagues; it's been hard doing it virtually during COVID-19 and I'm looking forward to getting back out there to localities to do face-to-face training and see colleagues in person again!

It is all very rewarding work. I believe that the training, operational, strategic and national work is all interlinked and it means that everything I do (and what SCRA does) is informed by all these different aspects.

I feel really privileged to be part of SCRA. The organisation has a lot of really good dedicated people who are very inspiring and want to make a difference and that is really humbling. It is a supportive and flexible place to work and the values and purpose of the organisation fit with my own, which means that every day I'm doing something that is fulfilling.

What do you do to stay well?

There are two facets of staying well that are important to me and help me stay healthy: physical exercise and making a contribution in my community. Of course, family is really important too and that was one of the things that was difficult during the pandemic as my adult son was living with friends in Glasgow and so I didn't see him for a long time. But, like everyone else, we kept in touch via Zoom and FaceTime and he was happy so we knew he was okay.

In terms of my physical health, I enjoy running and am an active member of a running club, where I also do coaching. It's a very inclusive club and there are runners from all walks of life and all abilities and I really enjoy meeting and mixing with lots of different people through the club. During the pandemic it was hard as we weren't allowed to meet in a group and I missed that social aspect of running. It was great when we were able to meet back up and the coaching was able to re-start as it brought back that physical connecting with likeminded people. Although I enjoy running with my club around our local park, my favourite running is in the hills – usually in the Lomonds of Fife – as it gets me out of town into beautiful scenery, where every step is different. Running is great as it keeps me physically healthy and clears my head at the same time so it's an all-round win/win for physical and mental health. I also try to get out on my bike occasionally too, but running is my main source of exercise.

The other part of staying well that is important to me is my work with the church and with our local foodbank, where I am a volunteer and a board member. The foodbank work is a mix of operational and strategic work and I can be found working on the laptop in the evenings doing board work and once a fortnight I pack bags ready for distribution to the people who need them. It's very rewarding; not only am I 'giving back' but I am also really helping people who are in dire need.

The work I do with the church is incredibly important to me, as my Christian faith is a fundamental part of who I am and is absolutely integral to my sense of self and well-being. Being part of and involved in my church is a huge part of how I stay psychologically healthy – it gives purpose, community and connection. When COVID-19 hit we quickly moved the church meetings to Zoom and it was amazing as I met people I'd never met before and I've been going to the same church for 25 years! That's one of the good things that came out of the pandemic, helping us all to embrace technology such as Zoom in a way that we didn't before. And even now that restrictions have eased, older members are still attending on Zoom – it's been really wonderful to see – and we'll continue using a hybrid model so that we don't lose that inclusivity.

For me, work is an important part of staying well and I've found a good balance between work and home life – that my work helps the wider community is important too, as is working in an organisation which aligns with my own morals and values. Work gives me purpose and I know that what I do in my working day contributes to making things better for others and that definitely contributes to my sense of overall life satisfaction and well-being.

What advice would you give?

During the COVID-19 pandemic it really hit me how quickly the community came together to support each other.

It really was incredible and heart-warming to witness. There's often a lot of negativity out there, but the community coming together showed the best of what we can do collectively for people less well off than ourselves. In our foodbank, for example, we saw donations sky rocket and we had lots of locals volunteering and helping, whether that was through donations or helping distribute packages to people who needed them.

Thinking back through everything we've been through recently and everything I've spoken about here, it strikes me that human connection is so important to our well-being. It was the thing that was missing during the pandemic and lockdown – whether it was through work, with family, through the church or the foodbank – getting back to seeing people face-to-face has been so positive. That connection with other people is so fundamental to our well-being and when things aren't going so well, human connection can make all the difference to how we feel and how other people feel.

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