

Immigration & International Student Advice Newsletter

This social and support newsletter is designed to connect with our community of students and staff, keep you up to date on the support available and give you some ideas about what to do in any free time you might have. The University is updating its advice for staff and students every day on: <https://advice.southwales.ac.uk/a2z/coronavirus-advice-and-guidance/>

Our first priority is to keep everyone in the University community safe, as far as we all can. This means that we're following the evolving instructions and advice of the medical experts, through Public Health Wales and our governments in Wales and the UK.

We intend to publish a new newsletter every week from the 6th April, so there are 2 weeks of activities planned out in this one for you.

There are some basic recommendations for your mental wellbeing and dealing with stress during the outbreak:

- Avoid watching, reading or listening to the news that could cause feelings of distress or anxious. It's fine to catch up on world events, but in the current age of social media, you can be bombarded with information. Be selective about how you engage with the media and only rely on official sources of advice at this time.
- Seek information updates at specific times. The University is publishing updates at 1pm each day – put a reminder in your diary to check in at a set time.
- Have break from social media. To help you maintain your break, turn off social media notifications or delete the apps entirely. Use the time you'd otherwise be on social media to read, exercise, and spend time on some of the activities below.
- Keep up with your daily hygiene. Routine is important
- Stay connected with people.
- Make it productive – with a little more time than usual on your hands, you might find yourself a little more distracted or wondering what to do. You don't need to write a novel or paint a masterpiece, but doing something small and productive each day will really help.

Avoid burnout- do exercise, eat well and stay hydrated

There is lots of University support still available, although some services might be operating in a slightly different way than normal. The next page gives you a guide to support services and how they are currently operating.

Support Currently Available

We fully appreciate that this is a stressful time for students and the recent Government advice may have implications for you. The University has a range of services to help and support you through this time. You can find a full list of Support Services and their current working hours on [Unilife](#).

Health and Medical Needs - If you have any disability or require repeated prescription then contact your local General Practice. Telephone appointments can be made with the [Health Service](#) through Advice Zone Online

Prescriptions – Boots Pontypridd prescription only. If you have registered with Boots for your repeated prescription you can go and order or pick up your repeated prescription. Treforest Pharmacy (62 Park Street) is open as usual at the moment. **Boots Cardiff** is currently operating as normal, but you can check medicines in stock on **029 20664506**.

Immigration and International Student Advice – the team are still working to support students. You can chat with them live on Ask an Adviser, email them or call 01443 482083 if you need to speak to someone

The Chaplaincy are organising a week skype catch up. You can join the catch up by using this link: <https://join.skype.com/krDTJLLuAu7z>.

If you cannot join to the skype call you can also contact the Chaplaincy on **01443 654060** or **03455 76010** out of hours.

Library Services - Due to the Coronavirus public health emergency, all campus libraries will be closed until further notice.

The library services are available to users online. [Visit Unilife](#) for more information.

The Wellbeing Service is no longer offering face-to-face appointments but 30 minutes Telephone and Skype appointments are available. These can be booked via Advice Zone Online. Please include your mobile number or Skype address in the notes section of the online form.

Student Money Advice Team – telephone appointments are available Monday – Friday, pm. Please ensure your mobile number is [up to date on our student records system](#).

Other Support Services – If you don't know where to go to get support, please contact Immigration and International Student Advice. The team will do their best to find the support you need and provide any help they can.

Support in your Own Home

When at home create your space to be comfortable and relaxing. Its important to have a space you want to be in and a space you feel happy in. Some easy things you can do to improve your home environment are:

- Buy flowers or small potted plants and put them in the areas where you will be spending your time. Light a candle, they smell nice and can help you relax.
- Put on led lights and enjoy being in a different atmosphere
- Put on the radio – it's great to hear some music and the presenters will keep you company
- Have a space you can go away from your PC screen / phone screen. You need to take breaks
- Don't sit in bed all day. You will feel better getting up and moving around.

Self-Care Calendar

Many of you may face being at home all day for the first time, either alone or with just a few housemates for company. We have put together some suggested activities below which you might find helpful. We will be updating this self-care calendar each week with new activities and hope you find it useful.

Each day on the calendars has 3 different activity types to choose from.

- Social
- Physical
- Wellbeing

The activities are designed as a guide and you don't have to do everything each day. You could choose your favourite ideas and try mixing and matching to find out what works for you. We have published a 2 week guide here and from Monday 6th April 2020 will be publishing a new weekly guide. We expect these guides to grow, so watch out for future versions.

We understand that the current situation is new and different is a quite full on right now. One of the things you need to do, however, is ask for help when you need it. Either as a friend, contact IISA or check in with one of the services listed on the previous pages. Let people be there for you and accept any help offered.

Week1

Monday

Social – create a low-pressure chat group. Why not set up a friends group on your favourite chat app (or try free apps like Slack or Discord). Creating a virtual space for people to gather, talk and be part of a community is fundamental to wellbeing.

Physical – try a free Yoga class online. There are loads to choose from, but why not try [Day 1 of a 30 day YouTube](#) course?

Wellbeing – Start a gratitude Diary. Recall the small moments in your day that bring you the most joy – it's a simple reflection habit which can lead to a happier life, all for a few moments of your time.

Tuesday

Social – Share an online-movie night with friends. Watch a bad movie together, either using a watch party, or other social media. Text, chat and video call during the movie to stay connected.

Physical – Go for a walk. There is nothing better than getting outside and it doesn't have to be for miles. A short 15 min walk is great to blow away the cobwebs!

Wellbeing – Learn about, and try, some adult colouring. There are loads of free pictures and patterns online. You could even try creating your own for your friends to do!

Wednesday

Social – Write a letter. The art of hand written letters is being lost. It's a great way to stay in touch, and everyone loves a letter.

Physical – Learn your favourite dance routine! Free tutorials are everywhere.

Wellbeing – Visit the Zoo! Edinburgh Zoo allows you to view Panda, Koala, Penguin and Tiger [cams live here](#).

Thursday

Social – Have food with your friends or family. You can eat together on video chat and share the foods you love.

Physical – Digital workout. Get all your friends on a video chat and work out together. Either create a workout or YouTube one as a team.

Wellbeing – Ever tried meditation? Everyone can do this differently, so find a tutorial and give it a try. There is no right or wrong way, just what works for you.

Friday

Social – Teach someone to cook. You ate together yesterday, so why not teach each other today? Share favourite recipes and cooking techniques!

Physical – Try a 10 minute workout. The [NHS has lots to try](#), and they are all free. Don't like these? There are different apps you can download for free to keep you active!

Wellbeing – Fika Day. Check out the [Fika app on Unilife](#). Fika is a "5 minute emotional workout app" for students, to help you get emotionally fit so you can thrive at university and beyond.

Weekend: Well it's been a busy week and there are loads of ideas online. Why not research a few ideas yourself, or take a day or two to do your household tasks, and catch up with your normal routine where possible.

We will see you Monday next week with another list of activities and events!

Week 2

Monday

Social – Complete our online employability award, the [GradEdge Award](#), which will help you to develop the skills and attributes employers are looking for. You can complete it with friends.

Physical – Joe Wicks has some great videos online (and is streaming daily PE sessions). [Check out his YouTube](#).

Wellbeing – Lets visit the Louvre. [Online tours are free](#), and a great thing to do alone or in groups.

Tuesday

Social – Share a good news story with a friend or group. Be grateful for small things and share your victories.

Physical – Stretch! It's been a lot of sitting and lying about. Get out and do some stretches – Try the [Dr Jo YouTube](#) stretches.

Wellbeing – Let's clean our social media. Delete apps you don't use, bin accounts you don't want. Let's see how fresh that phone feels.

Wednesday

Social – Rediscover your favourite music, and share links with your friends. Have a half hour where you curate the music of the day and lift everyone's spirits.

Physical – Try a Mindful walk. It doesn't have to be long, and Mindful.org has a [great 10 minute guide](#) to get you started.

Wellbeing – Visit the Zoo! Last week we did Edinburgh, so this week, let's visit Marwood. Our [favourite are the Flamingos](#)!

Thursday

Social – Call a loved one. Catch up and really listen to them. Everyone needs some love, and what you give comes back twofold.

Physical – ever heard of animal flow? No...Well neither had we until a few days ago. Check out [this beginner guide on YouTube](#). Why not try it with friends on video chat – might make you all smile as well.

Wellbeing – Get back to basics and read a book. You could start a social book club and all read the same books to discuss, or you could just read for the pure joy of it.

Friday

Social – Movie Night. So you watched a bad movie last week as a group. Why not share a favourite movie with the group this week? Popcorn at the ready!

Physical – Neck and Shoulders stiff? Well we tried Yoga last week. So let's have another go, this time at [Neck and Shoulder Yoga](#). Check out the lovely dog that's also in the video as a bonus!

Wellbeing – Rearrange your sock drawer. Really, it's great to get organised, but don't stop at socks – have a good reorganise of all your clothes and get tidy. It will make finding your favourite socks etc. much easier to find.

Weekend: How did we get here again? Two weeks of activities and you have tried loads of new things. New guides will go up Monday, so keep an eye out!