



REFU

# Taking care of ourselves and each other





## Helping you live a healthier life

In every family, health and happiness are important – and the SSE family is no different.

We care passionately about your wellbeing, which is why we offer a wide range of support and initiatives to keep you in the best mental and physical health.

In this guide, you'll find practical examples of such support, from mental health workshops and financial advice to medical check-ups and our popular Employee Assistance Programme, all designed to help us look after ourselves and each other.

You'll also hear some inspiring stories from some of the colleagues we've helped.

We hope it comes in useful – and that it helps keep you healthy and happy at work and at home.





## Putting your mental health front of mind



**One in four of us will experience a mental health issue at some point in our lives, which is why it's vital we help each other.**

People with mental health problems can still feel isolated and ashamed, but we're committed to talking and listening to change the way we treat the issue at work.

As part of this ongoing support, we already work closely with leading mental health charity MIND. We've also introduced additional training with our Mental Health First Aiders. And we've even developed a special mobile app so help is available at the press of a button.

We now want to build on our good work and create an open and supportive environment, where we can tackle the causes of stress, anxiety and depression at work.

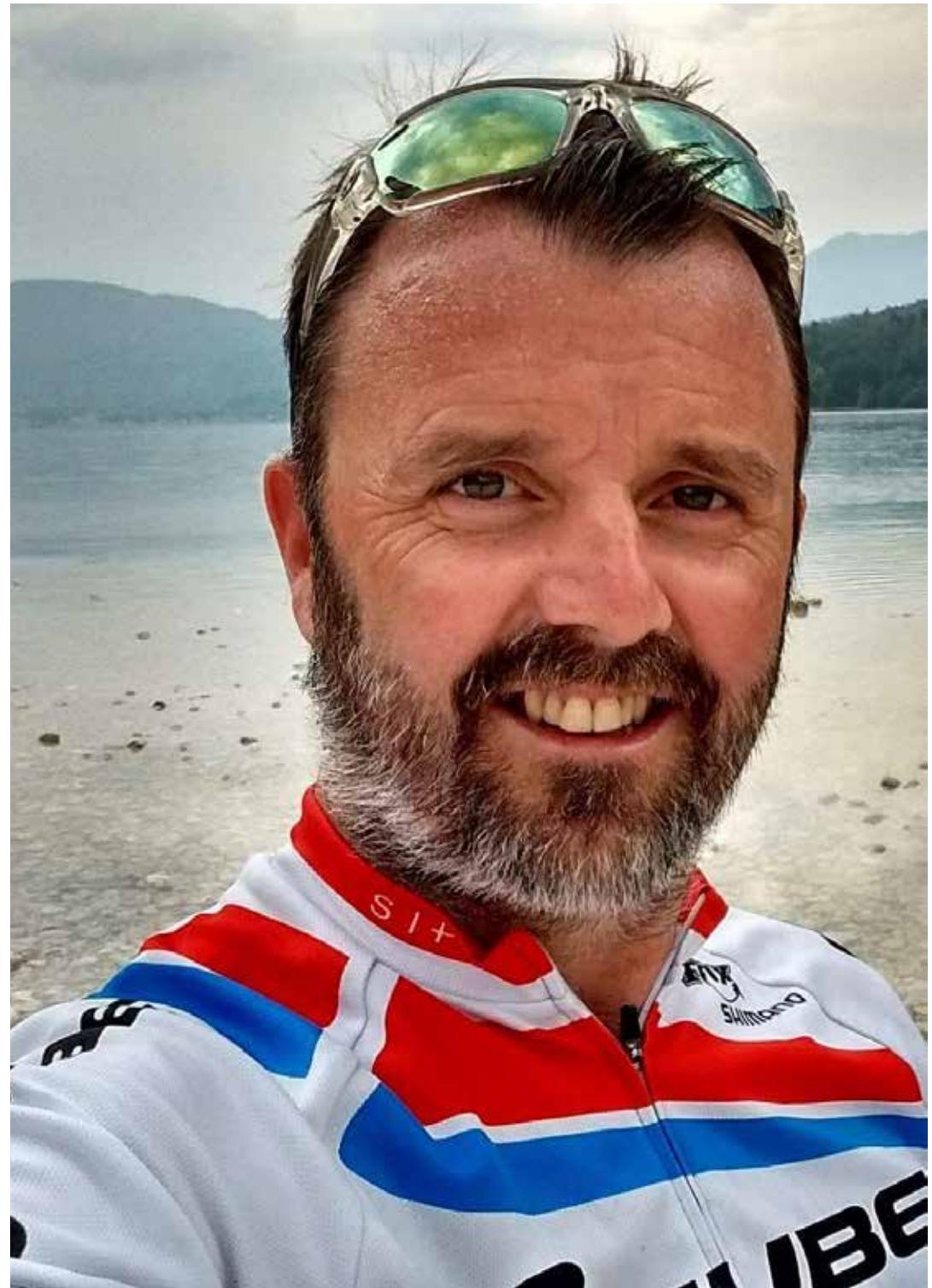
On the following pages, you'll see how we're doing that. You can also read one colleague's battle with anxiety and the invaluable support we were able to offer him – and could offer you.



## Joady's story

---

I was first diagnosed with anxiety around five years ago when I was 42. I'm still not sure what caused it, but I lost my father to suicide when I was seven and he was 42, so I sometimes wonder if passing that age milestone myself was the trigger. [Read on >](#)





**At first, I thought I was having a nervous breakdown or mid-life crisis. I didn't know it was anxiety so it took around nine months to get through it.**

It can still be debilitating and all-consuming, and although I don't take any time off, I work hard to control my symptoms and find a happy medium. People with this issue don't pretend to be sick – they pretend to be well.

The cold, dark nights, family or financial issues or bereavements make things worse – you think your negative thoughts are making you a burden. Christmas brings

extra guilt as you don't feel like celebrating. Many people use alcohol to try and suppress such symptoms, but it can be counter-productive. Instead, it's important to talk.

I used our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and saw my doctor and a counsellor. I was given anti-depressants and sleeping pills, and slowly taught myself to recognise the symptoms and how to control them.

As a result, there's a huge difference between my approach then and now. At first, I didn't tell anyone, but now I do. I also

act quickly because the worst thing you can do is nothing – you're not in control and your thoughts are irrational; you're essentially being bullied by your own mind.

Thanks to EAP, I also learned the value of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, which I now use to help. I also learned mindfulness and the benefits of exercise and the outdoors. For me, that means cycling or walking in the mountains. It's where I'm happiest.

---

**Joady MacRae** is a Unit Manager in Perth.

Find out more about the EAP on ssenet, call free on **0800 015 5630** or go to **[eap-carefirst.com](http://eap-carefirst.com)**

---



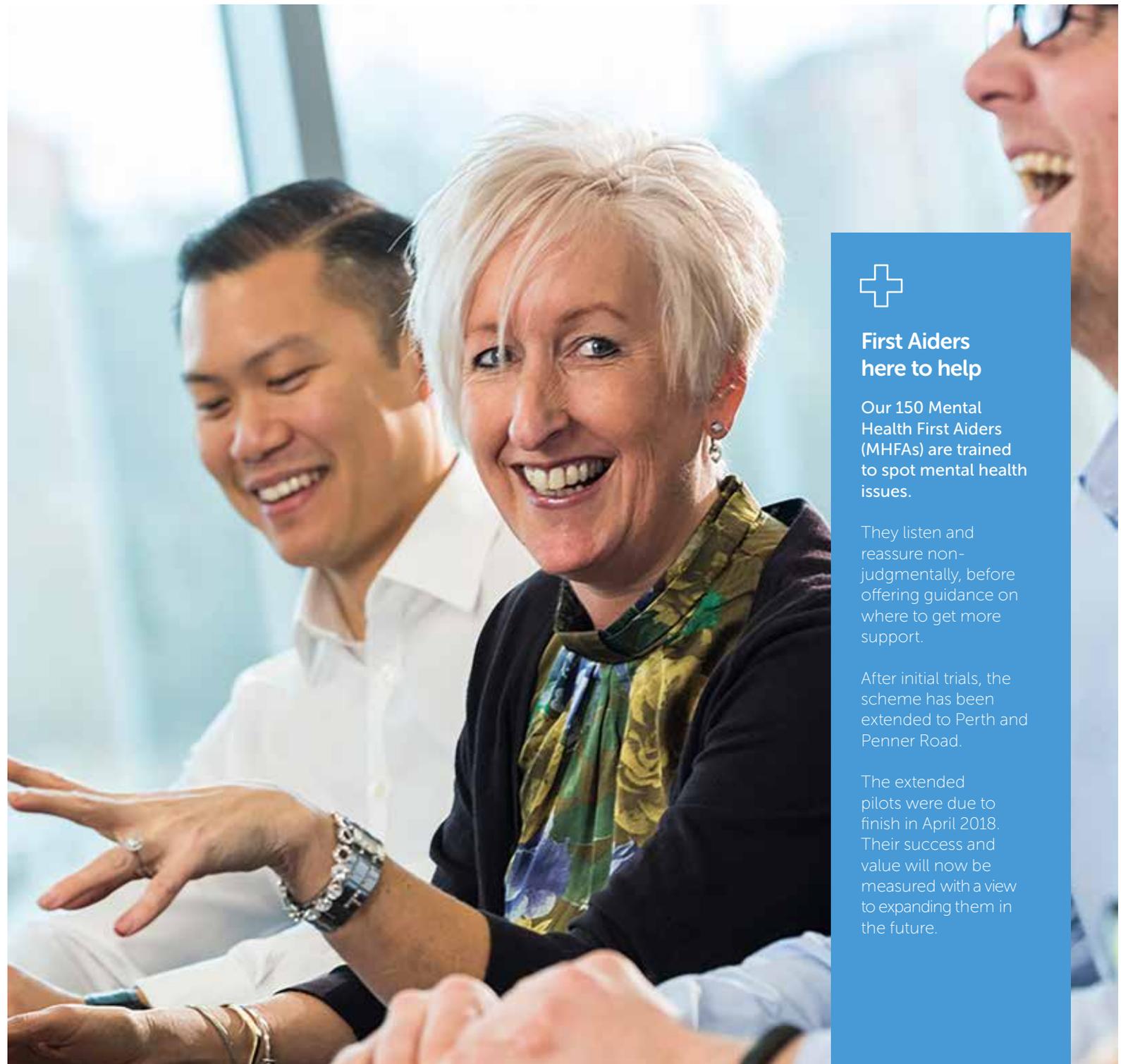
## Advice is at your fingertips

Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) In Your Pocket app offers a range of mental health services so we can all take care of ourselves and each other.

It offers help with stress and anxiety, plus information and advice on everything from relationships to consumer rights and wellbeing.

You'll also enjoy direct access to BACP accredited counsellors and information specialists for help in finding practical ways forward.

See [www.eapinyourpocket.com](http://www.eapinyourpocket.com) and [www.feelstressfree.com](http://www.feelstressfree.com) for more.



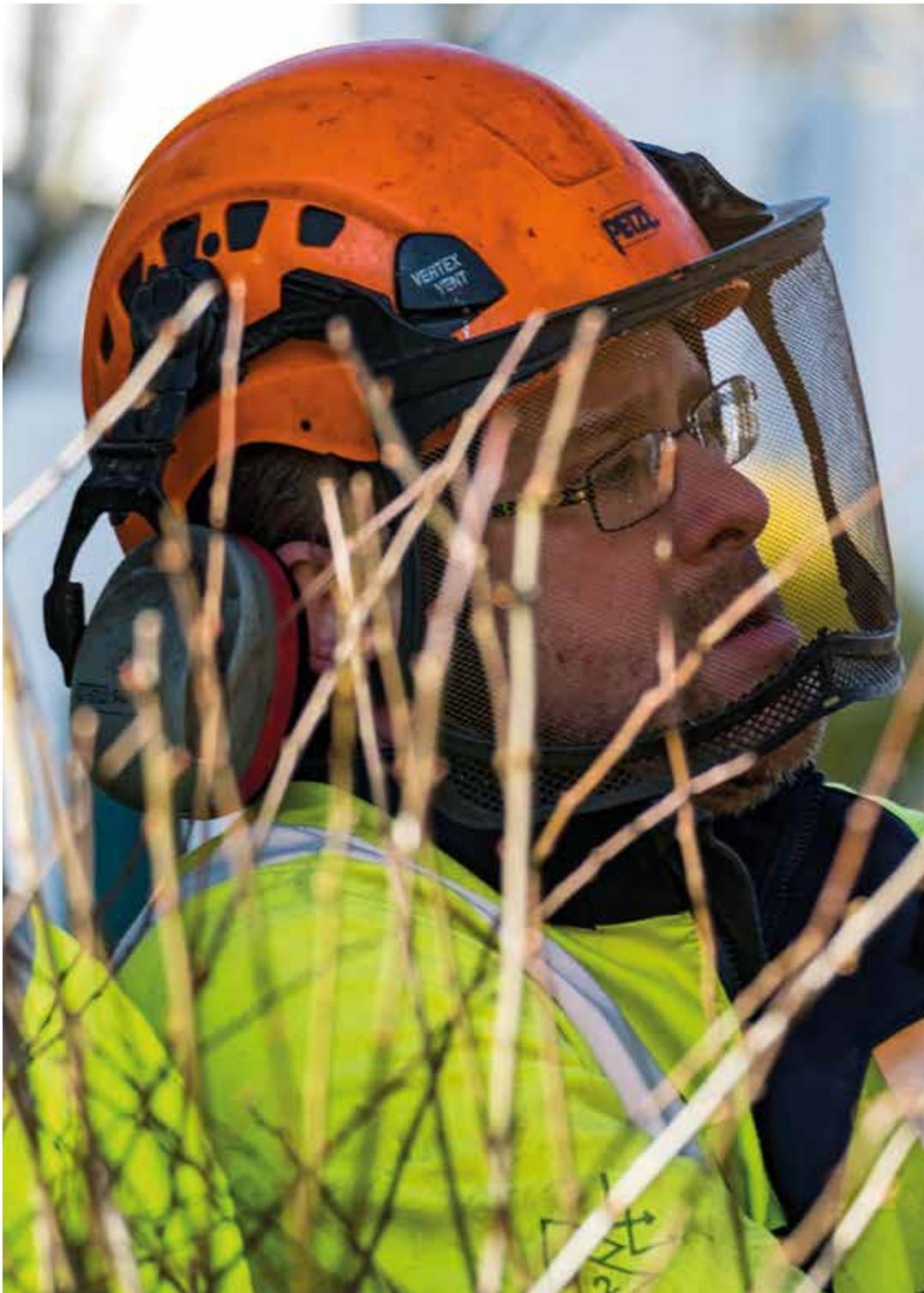
### First Aiders here to help

Our 150 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) are trained to spot mental health issues.

They listen and reassure non-judgmentally, before offering guidance on where to get more support.

After initial trials, the scheme has been extended to Perth and Penner Road.

The extended pilots were due to finish in April 2018. Their success and value will now be measured with a view to expanding them in the future.



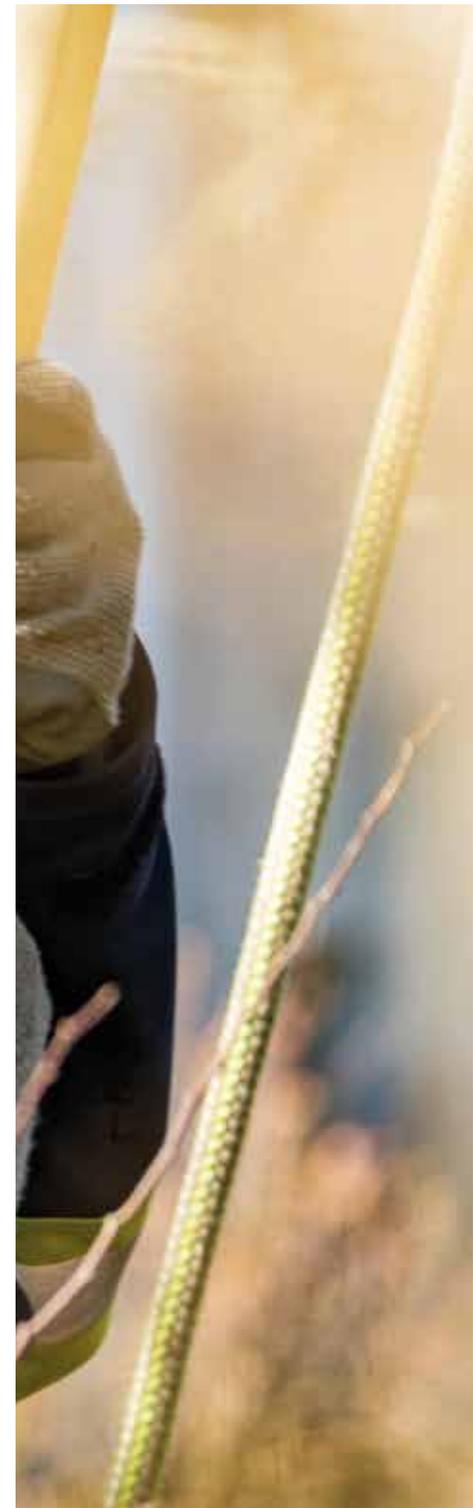
## Learn more on awareness course

To help us understand and support each other more, we now offer a one-day mental health awareness course for managers, plus e-learning courses for all colleagues.

Topics include common mental health problems, the benefits of a healthy workplace, and attitudes to mental health and its associated problems.

You'll also learn about stress in the workplace, the Equality Act, the language to use when discussing mental health, and the various support options available.

Course enrolment is easy – see Harmony for details.





## Playing an active part in your physical health



**Physical activity helps reduce the risk of developing diseases, and improve your quality of life.**

At SSE, we have plenty of ways to help you stay healthy, from gym memberships and wholesome menu choices to cycle to work schemes.

Initiatives like our annual Activity Challenge encourage everyone to change their work habits to improve their lifestyle as well as know your numbers.

Anxiety, stress and depression, and musculoskeletal conditions are some of the most common reasons for absence. To allow us to support, and facilitate a quicker return to work for employees experiencing these conditions, we're running a six month Back to Health pilot with Nuffield Health from February 2018. The pilot will help us understand if services can help a faster recovery. If the service is valuable to SSE, we will extend this more widely across SSE so we can all take care of ourselves and each other and look forward to a healthier future.



## Lyndsey's story

---

I didn't have any symptoms of being unwell and I wasn't under any stress, either professionally or personally. So it was a complete surprise when, after a chance visit to a Minor Injuries Unit, I was diagnosed with high blood pressure. **Read on >**





**I'd hurt my neck and had to attend hospital, where they took my blood pressure as routine. When the reading came back it was over 200, compared to the normal rate of around 120/80.**

I'd never had blood pressure problems before, even during pregnancy. I think the reading took them by surprise too, as they tested it again with the machine and then manually to make sure it was right.

They were very proactive and arranged a call with my GP the next day. I was taken in for an electrocardiogram (ECG) to check

the heart's rhythm and activity and given a course of treatment. This was followed by a CT scan and an echocardiogram.

They found my left ventricle had thickened, which is not a massive concern, but I'm now aware of it and go for checks every few months. They monitor my blood pressure and also check for any changes to kidney function.

I'm on a course of medication to bring my blood pressure down and have also made some lifestyle changes to help myself.

Again, I've not felt unwell at all – there was no trigger and there might not be for anyone else. I have a reasonable diet and, other than the occasional glass of wine, don't drink a lot, so there's none of the things you might associate with high blood pressure.

I'd advise anyone to use the Know your Numbers initiative and get their blood pressure checked. It only takes a few minutes, and you won't know if you don't go.

---

**Lyndsey Stainton** is Head of Stakeholder Engagement for SSEN in Perth.

---



## Balance work and life better

Our Holiday Plus scheme is just one of the many ways we're creating a better work/life balance at SSE.

The initiative lets you buy extra holidays to add to your existing entitlement. And another new initiative for 2018 means you can now take two emergency short-notice holidays for personal reasons.

New parents are also looked after, with enhanced maternity benefits, increased paternity leave, shared maternity leave and phased return to work for new mums.



## BUPA helps look after you

A regular BUPA assessment gives you an overview of your health, so you can make changes and look after your future.

We offer three levels of assessment, with upgrades for an additional charge.

The BUPA Cash Plan insurance policy also helps you pay for routine healthcare and dental, optical and physio treatment.

And with BUPA Fundamentals health insurance, you're covered for eligible treatment if you're ill or injured, after an NHS consultation.



## Stay in shape with GymFlex

Get in shape and save with our GymFlex scheme and enjoy corporate discounts at over 3,000 gyms, health clubs and leisure centres nationwide.

Signing up could save you and your partner up to 50% on membership costs. Plus your National Insurance contributions will also decrease, saving you even more.

You don't even need to lift a finger – SSE buys the annual membership on your behalf, and the cost is automatically deducted from your salary every month.



## Keep talking, we're listening

Your feedback matters to us, so if you have questions or comments about the Safety Family, please speak to your SHE team member or email us at [safety.team@sse.com](mailto:safety.team@sse.com)



# Here's the full list of services

To find out more about all of these services, visit [SSEnet](#).

## Cycle to Work Scheme

Our cycle to work schemes – CyclePlus and Cycle2Work – let you hire a bike and equipment worth up to £1,000 for commuting.

## Nudge

Nudge's award-winning team advises on managing your budget, sending handy 'nudges' with tips and guidance.

## Alcohol and drugs advice

Our drugs and alcohol policy contains information on testing, help and support, and what to do if a colleague is thought to be under the influence.

## Nuffield Health

Musculoskeletal conditions (MSC) and anxiety, stress and depression (ASD) pilots.

## Holiday Plus

Our Holiday Plus scheme creates a better work/life balance by letting you buy extra holidays.

## Know Your Numbers

With kiosks at eight large sites, Know Your Numbers makes it easy to measure weight, body fat and blood pressure.

## Mental Health First Aiders

Our 150 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) are trained to spot mental health issues.

## GymFlex

Our GymFlex scheme offers discounts at over 3,000 gyms, health clubs and leisure centres.

## A healthier way to eat

Our restaurants offer wholesome menus with salad bars, fresh veg, healthy snacks, vegetarian options and nutritional guidance.

---

## Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

0800 015 5630 (UK)

1800 995 956 (ROI)

## Mental Health awareness courses

Visit [Harmony](#).

## BUPA

A regular BUPA assessment gives you an overview of your health, with three levels of assessment and optional upgrades.

## Boosting activity levels

Our annual Activity Challenge aims to raise energy levels for four weeks, and now includes a focus on mental health to improve wellbeing.

