

Case study - Colin, gay male, East Dunbartonshire

Colin, who lives in East Dunbartonshire, was unemployed for the first 6 months of the pandemic before being employed temporary as a contact tracer for NHS Track & Trace. As this job is only on an ongoing 'as long as required' basis, Colin worries about the future not knowing how long he will be employed for and how easy it will be to get another job when this one comes to an end.

Colin also does freelance photography and drone work. Before the pandemic he was focussing on promoting this to various organisations and local authorities around the country but as this is mostly events-based work the coronavirus pandemic has put a pause on this work for the moment.

During the pandemic Colin volunteered with Historic Environment Scotland Archives looking at LGBT+ history in Scotland.

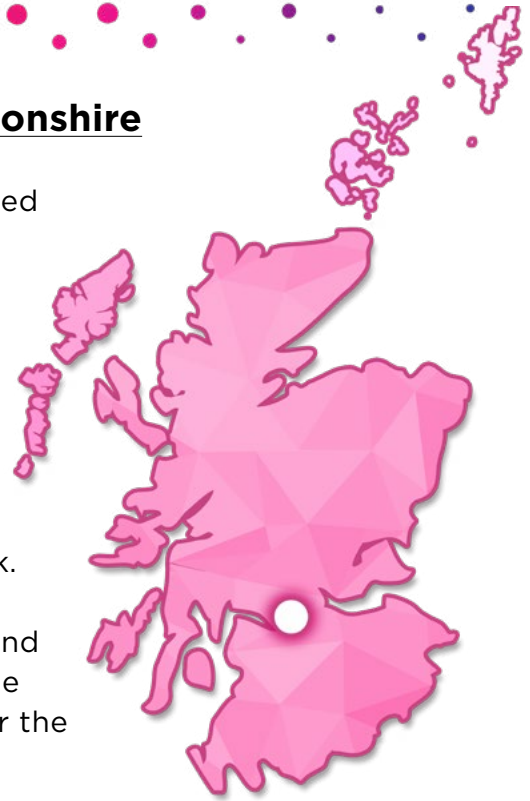
Colin told me that he's very lucky to have his partner living with him and he has helped and supported Colin through the most difficult times over the last 7 months. He explained that he already suffers from acute anxiety and depression but that his mental health has been affected badly by the pandemic.

As soon as he first heard about coronavirus Colin worried and started to warn his family and friends that they should be prepared for this. Colin's main worry was for his mother who lives 3 hours away and who has a hearing impairment and doesn't have English as her first language. He worried about how she would cope, and this is still very much a big concern for him while he's not able to visit her.

Colin only left the house when he had to go for food shopping, and he said that this was only because of the time he had to wait for a home delivery. He also signposted other people who were in a more vulnerable situation that he knew to other help and support which was available.

He found not being able to see his friends difficult also.

Even though they live 3hrs apart Colin helps his mum with any domestic administration she needs support with.



Colin worries about not being able to visit or see his mum for a long period of time if tougher lockdown restrictions are imposed in Scotland and that she will not be able to access local support for food, prescriptions and amenities because of her hearing impairment and language barrier.

He also worries about being able to manage his personal mental health if things get any worse or don't improve soon.

Colin thinks that there should be ongoing funding and support for LGBT+ organisations and events in Scotland to help them get through this pandemic and continue in the future. He feels LGBT+ and Pride events need to be sustainable so that they continue to be there for our community.

“My partner and I weren't really into going out on the 'LGBT scene' before the pandemic but over the last 7 months we've been able to engage with it more through online events and we've really enjoyed feeling part of a bigger community again after such a long time”.

“The pandemic has galvanised the importance of community and social connection that no amount of money can substitute”.