

Health & Wellbeing Toolkit

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Introduction:

This six-step evidence-based toolkit will help organisational leaders create a positive workplace culture to promote staff health and wellbeing. It was developed by BNSSG ICB and One Care and contains condensed content from multiple guides, which are referenced at the end of this document.

This toolkit could be of particular use to leaders in general practice working towards the QOF QI health and wellbeing module and associated points. However, anyone interested in boosting the health and wellbeing of their primary care workforce should find it a helpful resource.

Why health and wellbeing?

“The NHS achieves extraordinary things for patients, but safety and health and wellbeing matter just as much for our people. If we don’t look after ourselves, and each other, we cannot deliver safe, high-quality care... leaders, teams and employers must keep offering people support to stay well at work, and keep offering it consistently, across teams, organisations and sectors.” [NHS People Plan](#)



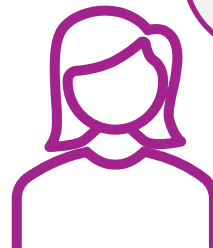
“The [2022 Fuller Stocktake report](#) recommended the need to improve the experience of working in primary care for everyone by making the employment culture more compassionate and inclusive, and listening much more effectively to primary care staff.” [Quality Outcomes Framework 2023-24](#)



“Poor staff health and wellbeing contributes to staff turnover and presenteeism. The cost of staff turnover is £8bn.” [NHS Employers](#)



“Organisations that [take] a strategic and whole-hearted approach to improving mental wellbeing from the top down [tend] to have the most success...best demonstrated by organisations with a preventive and proactive approach to mental wellbeing – that is, they proactively took steps to promote mental wellbeing rather than simply tackling poor mental wellbeing.” [Mental Wellbeing at Work: NICE Guidance 2022](#)





1

Involve
senior
leaders

Find out
how your
staff are

Make a
plan

Embed
and
promote

Review
and
revise

Share
learning



Why?

- Senior leader buy-in, support and role modelling has been shown to be crucial for the success of any workforce health and wellbeing plan in the organisation
- If employees do not see senior leaders enacting behaviours that promote and encourage health and wellbeing, they are less likely to adopt the practices themselves and the culture will remain the same
- Health and wellbeing cannot be the responsibility of just one person – so don't just take this on in isolation, think of who else can join you on this journey

How?

- ✓ Meet with senior leaders in the organisation to talk about staff health and wellbeing – reflect on what has been done in this area so far
- ✓ Include staff health and wellbeing as a standing agenda item in board meetings, senior management meetings or partner meetings to keep the focus in this area
- ✓ Senior leaders should engage the wider team, inspire a shared purpose and work together compassionately so that the health and wellbeing of the workforce is an organisation-wide focus
- ✓ If you are reading this toolkit, you are likely to be a leader in your organisation – think about how you could role model positive and healthy wellbeing behaviours – do you take a lunch break? Do you make sure you get up and move from your desk throughout the day?



Why?

- Good information – written, verbal, and quantitative – can help outline where your organisation is in terms of health and wellbeing: How do your staff currently feel? Are their core needs of [autonomy, competence and belonging](#) being met? How many days are staff taking off sick and why? How many people are leaving the organisation, and for what reasons? What are staff saying in team meetings? What do they think would help?
- Having this information not only helps you to focus your attention, but it also allows you to have a benchmark with which to compare future data

How?

- ✓ Collect workforce data. Use return-to-work and exit interviews to identify frequency and reasons for staff sickness and resignation
- ✓ Consider how your employee voices can be heard. Ask your staff how they are in 1:1s, at team meetings or through anonymous feedback boxes – do they feel their work is valued and meaningful?
- ✓ [Identify your team's wellbeing goals](#) and review your [team's wellbeing culture](#)
- ✓ How does your organisation look when self-assessed against each of the seven domains of the [Health and Wellbeing Diagnostic Framework](#)? This framework is a useful tool for senior managers and leaders in the organisation to review together
- ✓ Staff surveys can help gather information on how staff are feeling. A core question bank from [the NHS Staff Survey can be found here](#). ***The NHS Staff Survey will be rolled out to general practices in the autumn of this year (2023)***

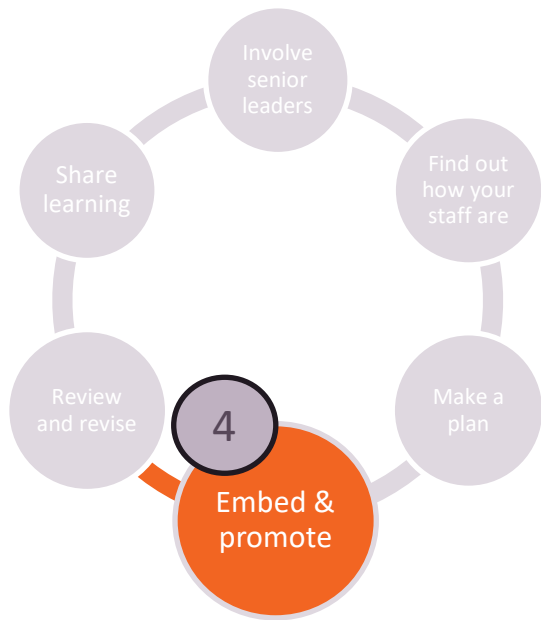


Why?

- Making a plan based on information, feedback and data gathered from your own staff is a good example of evidence-based practice that is tailored to your organisation, and therefore best placed for outlining what you focus on next.

How?

- ✓ Based on your findings in step 2 on how your staff are, identify areas of best practice to celebrate and areas where more focused attention may be required
- ✓ Use the NHS England [Elements of health and wellbeing document](#) as a guide to identify approaches or interventions you could adopt or tailor in your organisation to improve the identified focus area/s
- ✓ Take a look at the [NHS England Inspiration Library](#)
- ✓ Review [Organisational Interventions to Support Staff Health & Wellbeing](#)
- ✓ Detail specific actions that need to be taken in your improvement plan – including who and how actions will be taken forward (SMART) to ensure accountability and action
- ✓ Involve all staff in making the plan and minimise hierarchy so everyone feels they have a voice
- ✓ Ensure practices and processes are in place to support meeting the equality standards outlined in the [NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard](#) and the [NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard](#)



Why?

- Workforce health and wellbeing is not about one single approach or intervention, it's about embedding it as an important and fundamental element of your organisation, which is continually referred to, reflected upon and prioritised in a proactive and preventative way
- Reviewing and promoting staff health and wellbeing on a regular basis in team meetings and leadership meetings will keep it on the agenda, and having a strategy for health and wellbeing will help to monitor progress over time and help highlight what works for your organisation

How?

- ✓ Have staff health and wellbeing as a standing agenda item in team meetings
- ✓ Signpost staff, verbally and through visual aids (posters, hyperlinks/QR codes on desktops etc), to [what support staff can access](#) for their health and wellbeing & [consider what might help](#)
- ✓ Include staff health and wellbeing in all new staff inductions and in 1:1s and consider conducting [stress risk assessments](#). Consider support and 'buddies' for new staff
- ✓ Develop an employee health and wellbeing strategy and policy – and refer to it throughout all your organisational policies
- ✓ Provide training and development opportunities for all staff – embed in personal development plans/appraisals and facilitate regular protected learning time
- ✓ Consider all flexible working requests: [NHS flexible working guidance](#) supporting autonomy
- ✓ Feedback from staff feedback/surveys to show you are listening and intend to take action



Why?

- Health and wellbeing is never 'complete'. It is a continuous process of reviewing and revising what your staff need and how they are doing – as your workforce changes, so will their experience and needs
- Discussing staff health and wellbeing on a regular basis in team meetings and leadership meetings will keep it on the agenda, and reviewing the data and plan/strategy for health and wellbeing will help to monitor progress over time and help highlight what works

How?

- ✓ [Evaluate](#) how any interventions or approaches you put in place were received by employees by asking for feedback at the end of any delivered interventions
- ✓ Revisit the NHS England [Health and Wellbeing Diagnostic Framework](#) at least once a year as an organisation, to self-assess and measure impact
- ✓ Run a staff survey annually (***please note here that for general practice, this will be taking part in the national NHS Staff Survey**). If your organisation is small (less than 11 employees for example), this may not be practical or necessary – other interventions to consider in this situation could be anonymous feedback boxes or discussing in 1:1s
- ✓ Regularly review your sickness absence and retention data and listen to staff – this could also help to measure impact of any interventions or cultural shift – for example, have your sickness absence rates improved?

6

Share learning

Involve senior leaders

Find out how your staff are

Make a plan

Review and revise

Embed

Why?

- Working in isolation can be difficult. Other organisations will be on the same journey as you and a lot can be gained from joining peer support networks focusing on staff health and wellbeing to share learning, ideas and best practice
- Sharing learning in this way can help facilitate innovation and ensure you do not feel alone in your journey

How?

- ✓ Link in with the national NHS England [Health and Wellbeing Champion network](#), which offers access to free resources and training throughout the year
- ✓ Set up your own peer support groups or health and wellbeing team inside your organisation to share learning, ideas and tackle organisation-specific issues on a regular basis
- ✓ Think about using an online platform to share learning and ideas, such as the [FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)



Primary care case study

Organisational profile:

A small independent optometrist based in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG), comprising eight staff members, with a focus on good customer service as a largely retail-based organisation.

What it was like before focusing on a staff health and wellbeing project:

The small, independent optometrist practice initially had a reputation for being a supportive organisation, with a significant number of staff members enjoying flexible work arrangements. However, due to the absence of a HR function, the focus on staff health and wellbeing was limited to directing employees to resources as and when required, rather than integrating it into daily conversations. The primary obstacles identified for promoting staff health and wellbeing were the lack of resources and time constraints

What taking part in a project focusing on staff health and wellbeing was like:

The organisation's lead described taking part in a project focusing on understanding and boosting staff health and wellbeing as 'invaluable,' stating it provided them with a fresh perspective and enabled the development of new ideas and tools for staff health and wellbeing. The project also granted them valuable insight and confidence to implement meaningful actions. Specifically, completing the Health and Wellbeing Diagnostic framework alongside the company director was deemed a particularly worthwhile exercise. The results from the staff survey were described as 'enlightening,' emphasising the necessity for improved clarity regarding available support and how staff can access it to enhance their personal health and wellbeing

How staff health and wellbeing has improved as a result of this project:

The organisation has taken significant steps to enhance the promotion of available support for staff, including the establishment of NHS emails for staff to access national support services. The increased confidence of the organisational lead in their understanding of health and wellbeing has allowed them to organise a training day for all staff, aiming to enhance their knowledge of self-care and wellbeing. The training day has been warmly received, leading to more open conversations among the staff regarding their health and wellbeing

Next steps to maintain these changes and ensure sustainability:

The organisation aspires to expand its team of health and wellbeing champions, aiming to foster a shared responsibility rather than relying on a single individual. This approach will contribute to the long-term sustainability of staff health and wellbeing initiatives. Potential plans to promote and enhance staff health and wellbeing include regular check-ins with the staff, enhancing the physical environment by incorporating plants, and exploring the possibility of fruit delivery to encourage healthy eating and nutrition

Primary care case study

Organisational profile:

A medium sized general practice comprising 50 members of staff, in the BNSSG region, with a patient population of almost 15,000

What it was like before focusing on a staff health and wellbeing project:

While the practice had a health-conscious manager and a GP who prioritised well-being, the staff felt drained due to the high-pressure work environment, resulting in a loss of team cohesion. The manager was under pressure to devise strategies for improvement. Although staff members were being acknowledged and rewarded for their hard work with seasonal vouchers, there was a prevailing sense that more was needed day-to-day

What taking part in a project focusing on staff health and wellbeing was like:

The practice lead discovered that engaging in a structured health and well-being program not only enhanced her understanding and knowledge but also generated momentum and sharpened the focus on their previous efforts in this domain. The opportunity to connect and exchange insights with other practices held great value, considering the often isolating nature of management roles in general practice. By expanding their learning and raising awareness of health and well-being, the practice lead expressed the following sentiment:

“Our foundations have significantly improved due to this program, and I believe that what we build upon now is more likely to be sustainable in the future.”

How staff health and wellbeing has improved as a result of this project:

Staff members assigned to six-hour shifts had developed a tendency to work continuously without taking breaks. However, after the staff survey highlighted musculoskeletal health as a potential issue, the practice took the initiative to promote the importance of breaks and physical movement among these staff members. Movement was even integrated into the existing staff meetings. Additionally, return-to-work interviews now prioritise questions around health and well-being, resulting in staff members returning with a well-defined and supportive plan that makes sense for their situation

Next steps to maintain these changes and ensure sustainability:

To prioritise health and well-being within the organisation and ensure long-term sustainability, a dedicated well-being team has been established, fostering shared responsibility. The practice strongly believes that this team approach will contribute to the lasting success of health and well-being initiatives. In addition, the formal inclusion of health and well-being questions in the return-to-work interview documentation serves as another means of promoting enduring sustainability. Above all, the practice lead expressed a profound sense of undergoing a transformative learning journey that had been successfully shared across the entire practice

Useful resources and references

Online guidance documents and frameworks:

- [NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [NHS England 'Looking after your team's health and wellbeing guide'](#)
- [NICE Guidance on Mental Wellbeing at Work](#)
- [NHS Quality and Outcomes Framework 2023/24 \(p.105 for Health and Wellbeing module\)](#)
- [Health at Work Wellbeing Charter](#)
- [Supporting Our NHS People](#)
- [Organisational interventions to support staff wellbeing – Society of Occupational Medicine](#)

Books:

- [Wellbeing at Work: How to design, implement and evaluate an effective strategy \(Hesketh & Cooper, 2019\)](#)
- [Compassionate Leadership \(West, 2021\)](#)