Mind Tools Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Where do I start?

A good place to start is the development needs identified at your appraisal/supervision/1:1. Or you can review the WCC Working for Warwickshire qualities to see which resources are recommended for a particular area e.g. Leadership.

2. Do I have to attend the Mind Tools Club events?

The Club is a voluntary commitment. The events are likely to be bite-sized and are designed to bring Mind Tools to life and give you the opportunity to find out more about how Mind Tools can benefit you in your management development. We would encourage you to attend those that would benefit you personally and are relevant to your current priorities or your role. For example, there may be events specifically for new members or focused on a particular 'hot topic' e.g. Stress and Personal Resilience. They will be useful for learning as well as an opportunity to network and share issues/concerns/solutions with peers from across the council.

3. Can I have a look at the Mind Tools site before I sign up?

You can access the global site via www.mindtools.com which will give you a flavour of the style and categories of content. Without your licence, you won't be able to see the WCC pages or use the interactive elements.

4. Are the people using the forums only from WCC?

No. As Mind Tools is a global website, forum members may come from anywhere in the world and therefore include public, private and voluntary sector. This means you can benefit from ideas, suggestions and experiences of wide variety of perspectives. You just need to remember to keep your postings confidential in line with the WCC social networking policy on forum use.

5. Can I use Mind Tools at home?

Mind Tools can be accessed via any internet connected PC - work or home, as it is an externally hosted website. You will require your Mind Tools ID and password to gain access.

6. Can I download podcasts from Mind Tools onto my PC and transfer to an MP3 player?

The use of either a work or home PC to download podcasts is fine under the licence agreement assuming this is for your own personal development. The podcasts do not have a limited life or expire after any given period following download so it is your responsibility to ensure the podcast is removed once you have completed using it. The ability to transfer podcasts from a WCC PC to a WCC Blackberry is currently under review. If you'd like to download a podcast to your own MP3 device, then this can only be achieved from your home PC.

7. How often am I expected to use Mind Tools?

We would encourage you to use Mind Tools as and when you need it. This may be specific occasions (for a team meeting or in a 1:1/supervision) or particular times of year (mid-year and full appraisals). The expectation is approximately once or twice a month, to ensure the investment is worthwhile for the organisation and for you. If you fall below the required specification of at least 20 times per, when your licence is due for renewal we will cancel and automatically charge you £60-75 as per the agreement.

8. What if Mind Tools or online development doesn't suit my learning style?

Mind Tools has been created to include elements that appeal to most styles of working and learning; there are articles, videos, podcasts, interactive bite-size sessions etc. If you need support in identifying where to start or how to get the most out of Mind Tools, there are a number of options:

- Information and guidance is available on the WCC customised 'Using Mind Tools' page on the Mind Tools homepage
- The face-to-face Club sessions provide an opportunity to see how Mind Tools can support you with real life issues
- Your L&D team and HR Business Partner may be able to offer suggestions that are relevant, e.g. to priorities in your service
- The fortnightly newsletters point you towards hot topics and new material

9. What do I have to do as a learning log?

As with any form of management development activity, we recommend that you record the activity and what you gained from it. Reflection is a key part of learning and if you are accessing the tool, then the log helps to confirm and embed learning.

It is up to you what form this log takes. You may already have a professional CPD log which you can add your Mind Tools activity to. Or, if you do not have a learning log, please contact L&D team for some examples.

10. Are there any health & safety implications with using Mind Tools?

As with any work undertaken on the computer, your use of Mind Tools is related to the Modern & Flexible Working policy and arrangements and the DSE policy. Your use should be in a safe environment and it is your responsibility as an employee to use these tools such as podcasts in a safe manner e.g. don't use them when you are undertaking other activities which require your due care and attention.

11. What happens to my licence if I leave WCC?

Please do let us know if you or a member of your team who has a licence is leaving WCC. We can then contact Mind Tools to reallocate your licence.

12. What are the copyright implications for using Mind Tools in WCC?

Mind Tools terms and conditions state that resources and materials are provided only for your personal use during the term of your membership. Materials are copyright protected. Please ensure that copyrights are respected. You may use materials appropriately with your team members e.g. sharing a resource at a team meeting, printing off resources for an individual as part of a 1:1 and/or using an article or handout as part of a training session/team event. You may not design a whole course or day purely using Mind Tools materials – it needs to be reasonable. If you are unsure, please contact Julie Curtis, Learning & Development Consultant on 01926 738826.